al-Mīzān



AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Qur'ān

BY:

al-`Allāmah as-Sayyid Muhammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 1

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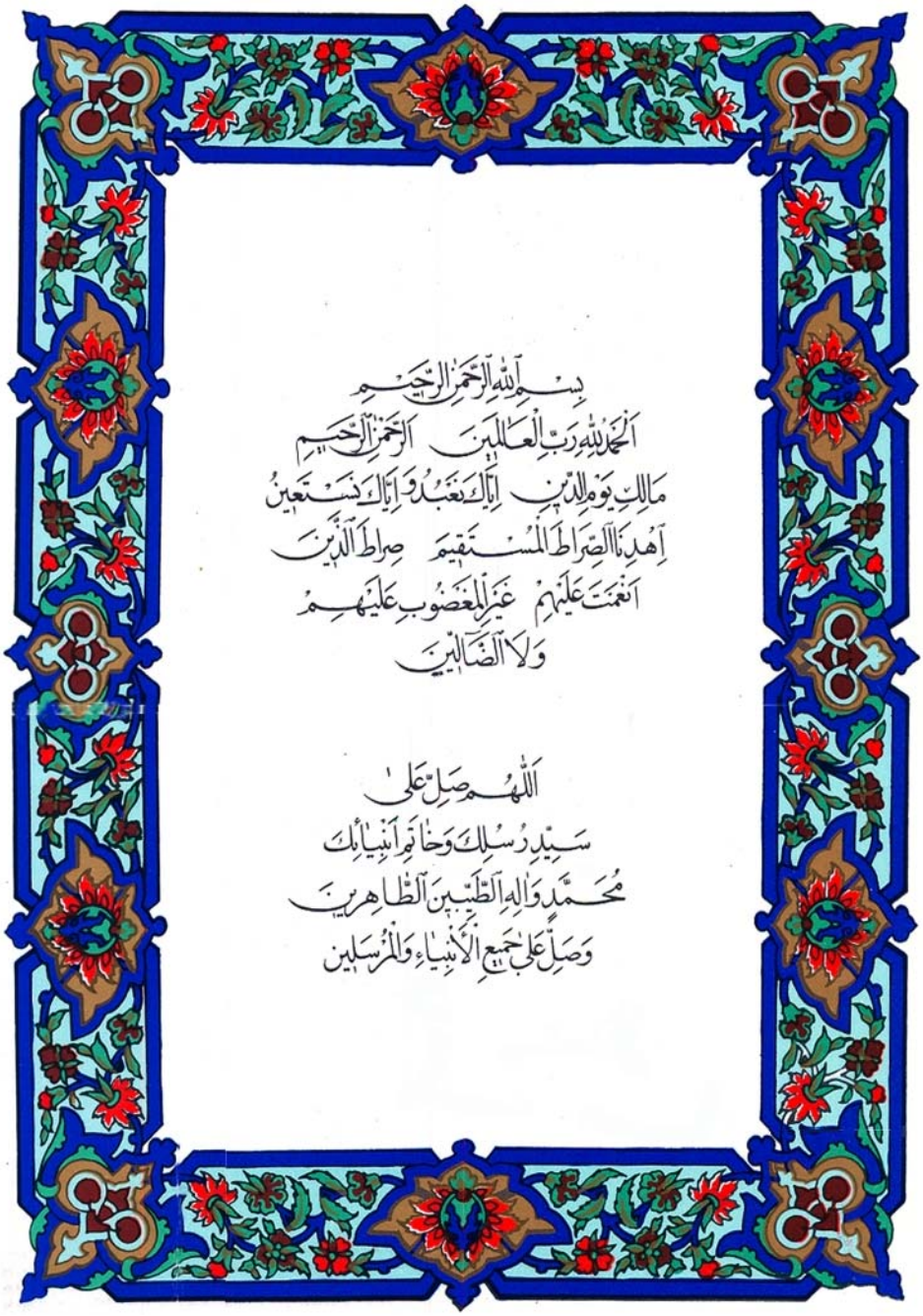
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In the Name of Allãh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allãh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O ' Allãh! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى
سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ
وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْاَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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تصدير

— ١ —

العلاّمة السّيّد محمّد حسين الطباطبائيّ

(١٣٢١/١٩٠٤ — ١٤٠٢/١٩٨١)

العلاّمة الشهير والمفكّر والفيلسوف الاسلاميّ المعاصر السّيّد محمّد حسين بن السّيّد محمّد بن السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائيّ رحمه‌الله رحمة واسعة ينتمي الى الأسرة الطّباطبائيّة في تبريز – ايران، الّتي هي من الأسر العلميّة الشّهيرة في آذربايجان الايرانيّة طيلة القرون الثّلاثة الأخيرة، و هي حسنيّة ترجع بنسبها الشّريف الى الإمام الحسن بن علي عليهما السّلام، و يلقّب أفرادها أيضا بلقب (القاضي).

ولد العلاّمة الطّباطبائيّ في تبريز في ١٣٢١/١٢/٣٠ = ١٩٠٤/٣/١٧، و أحسّ باليتيم منذ أن كان صغيرا فقد توفّي والده العلاّمة سنة ١٣٣٠/١٩١٢، فنشأ و درس المبادئ الأوّليّة والمراحل الأولى للعلوم الدّينيّة و غيرها مما كان ضمن مناهج التّعليم يومذاك في تبريز، و هاجر الى النّجف الأشرف – العراق، أهمّ مركز علميّ للشّيعة الإماميّة حدود ١٣٤١/١٩٢٣، و تلقّى فيها دروسه العاليّة في العلوم الإسلاميّة على الشّيخ (الميرزا) محمد حسين بن (شيخ الإسلام الميرزا) عبدالرّحيم النّائينيّ الغرويّ (١٢٧٧/١٨٦٠ – ١٨٦١ – ١٣٥٥/١٩٣٦) والشّيخ محمّد حسين بن الحاج محمّد حسن (معين التّجار) الاصفهانيّ (١٢٩٦/١٨٧٨ – ١٣٦١/١٩٤٢) الّذين هما و ثالث ثلاثتهما الشّيخ ضياء الدّين بن (المولى) محمّد العراقيّ – (١٢٧٨/١٨٦١ – ١٨٦٢ – ١٣٦١/١٩٤٢) يعدّون من أشهر رجال العلم و ذوي

الرّأي والنّظر في علوم الفقه الإماميّ وأصوله، بل في عامّة العلوم الاسلاميّة في العصر الحاضر والذين أبدعوا كثيرا من النّظريّات والآراء العلميّة المأخوذ بها من قبل من جاء بعدهم، والذين كوّن كلّ واحد منهم مدرسة خاصّة امتازت بخصائصها و طلاّبها، وقد تخرّج عليهم عامّة علماء الإماميّة وفقهائها، ومنهم مراجع التّقليد للشّيعة الاماميّة حتى يومنا هذا. وقد امتاز المحقّق الاصفهانيّ بأنّه كان فيلسوفا قليل النّظير في عصره، أديبا شاعرا باللّغتين العربيّة والفارسيّة، ذا مواهب فذّة لازالت مضرب المثل في الوسط العلمي، كما امتاز المحقّق النائينيّ بارائه الشّهيرة في المجال السّياسيّ والاجتماعيّ للأمة الاسلاميّة.

و قد تأثر السّيّد الطّباطبائيّ من أستاذيه خاصّة المحقّق الاصفهانيّ التأثّر البالغ في تكوين مزاجه العلميّ والفكريّ، كما تأثّر بأستاذه السّيّد أبي القاسم جعفر- ابن السّيّد محمود الموسويّ الخوانساريّ (١٣١٣/١٨٩٥-١٨٩٦-١٣٨٠/١٩٦١) الشّهير بالرّياضيّ، الذي درس عليه العلوم الرّياضيّة، وكان لا يزال يعتزّ بالتّلمذة عليه، و قد ذكر له في الذريعة، ٢/٢٣٢ - ٢٣٣ كتاب حول بعض البحوث الرّياضيّة العالية الّتي طبّق فيه بعض نظريّات أستاذه الخاصّة في هذا المجال.

و درس الفلسفة العالية على السّيّد حسين بن السّيّد رضا بن السّيّد موسى الحسينيّ البادكوبيّ (المنسوب الى بادكوبه = باكو الحالية في اذربايجان السّوفياتية) (١٢٩٣/ ١٨٧٦ - ١٣٥٨/١٩٣٩) من اشهر اساتذة الفلسفة وما يرتبط بها في عصره.

و قد امتاز العلاّمة الطّباطبائيّ بأنّه تلمّذ على قريبه السّيّد (الميرزا) على (اغا) ابن (الميرزا) حسين القاضي الطّباطبائيّ (١٢٨٥/١٨٦٩-١٣٦٦/١٩٤٧) العارف والعالم الأخلاقيّ الشّهير الّذي كوّن مدرسة عرفانيّة و أخلاقيّة لازالت تعيش حيّة ولها منتمون و مرشدون.

و هكذا تكوّن للعلاّمة الطّباطبائيّ مزاج فكريّ و شخصيّة علميّة ذات جوانب عديدة، فبالاضافة إلى أنّه عالم في العلوم الدّينيّة كالفقه و أصوله، فيلسوف ذو رأي و نظر، بل و تجديد و إبداع في الفلسفة، و عارف أخلاقيّ درس العرفان النّظريّ و مارس طرقه العمليّة و تمرّن عليها و إن كانت شهرته العلميّة قد تأطّرت - إلى حدّ كبير - بالفلسفة والعرفان.

رجع العلاّمة الطّباطبائيّ إلى تبريز في ١٣٥٣ / ١٩٣٤، وعاش فيها عالما و مدرّسا خاصة للفلسفة العالية - ولكن في نطاق محدود - إلى أن هاجر في ١٣٦٤/١٩٤٥ إلى قم، أهمّ حاضرة علميّة للشّيعة الإماميّة في ايران، ومنذ أن استقرّ بها تولّى التّدريس العالي و خاصة الفلسفة العالية وعاش فيها إلى ان توفّاه الله

إلى رحمته يوم الأحد، ١٤٠٢/١/١٨ = ١٩٨١/١١/١٥ و قد نبغ له تلاميذ من أشهرهم العلاّمة مرتضى مطهّري (١٣٣٨/ ١٩٢٠ - ١٣٩٩/ ١٩٧٩).

— ٢ —

اشتهر العلاّمة الطباطبائيّ رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره، و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) والذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله السّيّد الطّباطبائيّ في العالم الإسلاميّ، و من آثاره الشّهيرة (أصول فلسفه و روش رئاليسم) (أسس الفلسفة، والمنهج الواقعي) الّذي تناول فيه الفلسفة الإسلاميّة وشتّى الفلسفات المعاصرة المعارضة لها خاصّة الفلسفة الماركسية بالدّراسة المقارنة، والّذي امتاز ايضا بالهوامش والشّروح المفصّلة الّتي كتبها تلميذه المغفور له مطهّري. و(شيعه در اسلام) (التشيّع في الإسلام)، وكان في الأصل مناقشات حول التّشيّع والشّيعة دارت بينه و بين (البروفسور كينيث مورجان Prof. Kenneth Morgan) من جامعة (Colgate) في صيف ١٣٤٨/١٩٦٣، ثمّ جمعت و صدر نصّها الفارسي، ثمّ ترجمتها الإنجليزيّة.

* * *

و تفسير (الميزان) الّذي صدر نصّه العربيّ في عشرين جزءا، أثر يمثّل المزاج العلميّ والمنحى الفكريّ لمؤلّفه العلاّمة الطّباطبائيّ، رحمه الله، أصدق تمثيل، وقد وضع المؤلّف خطّة لعمله هذا رسمها بعناية و دقّة، وألزم نفسه بالسّير عليها بأمانة وإخلاص، وشرحها في فاتحة الجزء الأوّل من التّفسير.

— ٣ —

كان من لطف الله سبحانه بنا أن ألهمنا - منذ سنوات - القيام بنشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم **باللّغة** الإنجليزيّة، يسمو بالقارئ بهذه اللغة إلى المستوى الرّفيع لفهم كتاب الله الحكيم و آياته الخالدة، في الحدود المتيسّرة عمليّا، بما يقرّب معانيه السّامية و أهدافه الإلهيّة إلى الفكر الإنسانيّ، ويشرح الظّروف والملابسات الّتي صاحبت نزول آياته و سوره، ويستعرض النّقاط التي لابدّ من الانتباه اليها في فهم معانيه و استيعاب أغراضه، ولا يغفل السّنّة الكريمة والاستعانة بها في تفسير الكتاب العزيز، و يتناسب - من جهة أخرى - مع الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم و غير المسلم، والمسائل الّتي تثار في ذهنه، والمشاكل الّتي تتطلّب الحلّ النّظريّ لها، بالحدّ **الّذى يرتبط بالقرآن الكريم و تفسيره.**

الإنجليزيّة والمسئول عنها، كما كان العلّامة الطّباطبائيّ، رحمه الله، هو الزّعيم بالتّفسير الّذي اختاره لآيات الذّكر الحكيم، وبالبحوث العامّة الّتي أدرجها ضمن التّفسير، وكان هو المرجع المسئول عن كلّ ذلك.

وقد وضعنا قائمتين: (الأولى) بأسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء الكتاب. (والثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى تعريف أكثر. وقد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بهذا الجزء (الجزء الأوّل) من التّرجمة **الإنجليزيّة** فحسب ولكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

ومن الله نسأل وإليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، وأن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا، وأن يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه وخطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى ونعم النّصير.

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران — ايران

١٤٠٢/١/١٨
١٩٨١/١١/١٥

FOREWORD

- 1 -

The late Islamic scholar, thinker and philosopher, al-`Allãmah as-Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (al-`Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī) came from the celebrated Ṭabāṭabā'ī family of Tabriz. For the last three centuries, this family has produced generation after generation of renowned religious scholars in Azarbayjan (Iran). They are descendants of the second Imãm, al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali (peace be on both of them). The clan is also referred to with the title, al-Qadi.

al- `Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī was the son of as-Sayyid Muhammad ibn as-Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī. al-`Allãmah was born in Tabriz on 30/12/1321 A.H. (17/3/1904 C.F.). His father died in 1330 (1912). The orphaned child grew up in Tabriz, and after completing the religious education there, in *circa* 1341 (1923) he went to an-Najaf al-Ashraf (Iraq), the most important centre of the highest Shi'ah religious learning.

In an-Najaf al-Ashraf, he began his higher studies with such illustrious scholars as ash-Shaykh (al-Mirza) Muhammad Ḥusayn (son of Shaykhu 'l-Islam al-Mirza `Abdu 'r-Raḥim) Na'ini al-Gharawi (1277/1860-1 — 1355/1936) and ash-Shaykh Muhammad Ḥusayn (son of al-Hajj Muhammad Ḥasan, Mu'inu 't-Tujjar) Isfahani (1296/1878 — 1361/1942).

These two, together with ash-Shaykh Diya'u 'd-Din (son of Mawla Muhammad) `Iraqi (1278/1861-2 — 1361/1942), are held in the highest regard in the Shi'ah world. They were amongxxii the most prominent scholars not only in the fields of the Shi'ite jurisprudence and the fundamentals of jurisprudence, but in all Islamic subjects. The opinions they expounded and the theories they established have been followed by all those who came after them. Each of them founded his own school of thought. They trained thousands of Shi `ah scholars and jurists; and all the *marãji`u 't- taqlīd*[1] of the Shi'ite world, to this day, are their students. The Isfahan was a philosopher, unsurpassed in his time, a man of literature and a good poet of Arabic and Persian; he was a genius whose achievements made others to look upon him as their ideal. The Na'ini has carved for himself a niche in the history because of his bold opinions and decrees in the political and social life of the Muslim *ummah.*

a1-`Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabã'ī was much influenced by these two teachers, (and especially by the Isfahan) in the development of his thoughts and knowledge. A third influence was of as-Sayyid Abu '1-Qasim Ja'far (son of as-Sayyid Muhammad al-Musawi) Khwansari (1313/1895-6 — 1380/1961), known as "the mathematician." al-`Allãmah at-Ṭabāṭabã'ī was proud of learning the mathematics from him. Also, he wrote a book on some topics of higher mathematics, applying therein some special theories of his teacher. The book is mentioned in *adh-Dhari `ah, vol. ii,* pp. 232 — 233.

He learned philosophy and metaphysics from as-Sayyid Ḥusayn (s/o as-Sayyid Riḍa s/o as-Sayyid Musa) al-Ḥusayni (1293/1876 — 1358/1939) of al-Badkubi[22] a well-known teacher of philosophy and related subjects in those days.

---

[1] 1. مَراجِعُ التَّقْليد= The highest authorities of the Islamic *fiqh* (الفِـقْه = jurisprudence; rules of *sharī'ah*) whose rulings are followed by others.

2. Now called Baku, capital of Soviet Ãzarbayjan.

In ethical and spiritual field, he received his training from his relatives, as-Sayyid (al-Mirza) `Ali Agha (s/o al-Mirza Ḥusayn al-Qāḍi) Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1285/1869 — 1366/1947), a well-known divine who established a school of spiritual and ethical training which is flourishing to this day.

All those influences combined in al-`Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī to create in him a well-balanced academic and spiritual personality. A well-respected authority on religious subjects of jurisprudence and its fundamentals; a philosopher of independent views and various new theories; an inspired model of ethical and spiritual perfection, who not only taught morality but lived it — this was al-`Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Yet it will be correct to say that his scholarship was overshadowed by his fame and prestige as a philosopher and a spiritual man.

al-`Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī returned to Tabriz in 1353 (1934) where he was welcomed as a religious scholar. There he spent his time teaching higher philosophy to willing disciples — but it was a small place for his talents. In 1364 (1945) he migrated to Qum, the most important centre of religious education in Iran. In Qum, he remained engaged in imparting knowledge of ethics, philosophy and exegesis of the Qur'ān to the students who had already attained to a high level of erudition. There he remained till his death on Sunday, 18/1/1402 (15/11/1981). May Allāh bestow His mercy on him. Amen.

Many religious leaders of the present generation were and are among his students and disciples, the most famous being the late Murtaḍa Muṭahhari (1338/1920 — 1399/1979).

- 2 -

al-`Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's fame rests on his various academic works — the most important being his great exegesis of the Qur'ān, *al-Mīzān fi tafsīri 'l-Qur'ān*. It may correctly be said to be the foundation stone of the academic prestige which

al-`Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī was accorded in the Muslim world.

Among his other works is *Usul-e falsafah wa rawesh-e realism* (The Fundamentals of philosophy and the Doctrine of Realism). This book is a comparative study of Islamic philosophy and various modern anti-Islamic schools of thoughts, especially the Marxism. His disciple, late Murtada Mutahhari, wrote footnotes and explanations to this work, thus making it easily comprehen-

sible to the average man.

A third book *Shi'ah dar Islam* (Shi'ah in Islam), was first published in Persian; later it was published in English also, with the title, *Shi'ite Islam*. This book is based on al-`Allãmah's discussions with Professor Kenneth Morgan of Colgate University, held in the summer of 1384 (1963) about Shi'ah and Shi'ism.

However, it is the tafsīr*, al-Mīzãn* (published in Arabic in 20 volumes) which presents the true picture of the author's academic taste and his way of thinking. Before starting this work, the author made a detailed plan to explain the Qur'ãn with the help of the Qur'ãn itself; and he faithfully fulfilled this pledge upto the end of the book. He has outlined this scheme in his Preface, in volume one.

- 3 -

It was a grace of Allãh that He inspired us a few years ago to prepare and publish *a tafsīr* of the Qur'ãn in English. We wanted it to be *a tafsīr* that would help the reader to understand the divine Book and its verses, as much as practically possible — *a tafsīr* that would bring its sublime meanings and divine themes nearer to the human mind; would explain the context in which the verses and chapters were revealed, would cover the points that are necessary for understanding its meaning and fully comprehending its import — all this without ignoring the traditions of the

Prophet and his *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*) in arriving at the final conclusion. On the other hand, we wanted it to be in sympathy with the mentality of the present day's readers, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, looking at the problems that boggle their minds and the questions that demand responsible and knowledgeable answers — to the extent it is related to the Qur'ãn and its explanation.

After much deliberation, we found that tafsīr*, al-Mīzãn,* satisfies our both requirements to a great extent.

So, seeking the help of Allãh, we decided to get it translated in the English language. Even before embarking on this work, we were fully aware that it was a gigantic task; we understood that the responsibility would be heavy and the efforts to bring this scheme to completion herculean; the expenses would be huge and the difficulties himalayan. We knew all of it, and our only weapon was, and is, our reliance on Allãh. We sought His help to make our dream come true; and to help us reach the end goal and prepare and publish the complete set.

A few years ago, we entered into an agreement with someone to translate the first volume; but he did not fulfil his promise, although we gave him all the time and facilities — and even more — that were needed for it.

At last we requested al-`Allãmah ar-Raḍawi to take this important responsibility on his shoulders, and we are thankful to Allãh that al-`Allãmah ar-Raḍawi fulfilled his promise.

- 4 -

We have written in short about al-`Allãmah as-Sayyid Sa'īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawi (s/o as-Sayyid Abu 'l-Ḥasan [1309/1891 --1394/1974]) in the preface of his book, *The Family Life of Islam,* in which *we, inter alia,* wrote: as-Sayyid ar-Raḍawi is one of the most sincere preachers of Islam and an active scholar, both when he was in Tanzania in

the Bilãl Muslim Mission (an Islamic organization active in Tanzania), and also now that he has returned to his own country of India. In the way of spreading Islam he has rendered enormous services and has been most active.

al-`Allãmah ar-Raḍawi has written scores of books and booklets in English, Urdu and Swahili, many of which have been published; and we have given in the above-mentioned preface some titles which have been published by us. Some of his books have been translated and published by us in French, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, Hausa and some other languages.

Here we must express our thanks to him for the efforts he has made and the difficulties he has overcome in rendering *al-Mīzãn* into English. The original Arabic book is replete with academic terms of all disciplines, Islamic as well as non-Islamic, and with philosophical discussions related mostly to metaphysics. The learned translator has discharged his trust faithfully and conveyed the original idea into English truthfully. What you find in your hands is the true rendering of what al-`Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã'ī wrote in Arabic. The translator has written some footnotes where he thought it necessary — without altering the original text in any way.

- 5 -

We left the entire responsibility of the translation in the hands of the translator, relying on his erudition and knowledge of Arabic language, philosophy and Islamic subjects and his long experience in rendering purely Islamic esoteric ideas into a western language like English. Now he is personally responsible for the English translation, just as al-`Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã'ī (may Allãh have His mercy on him!) was personally responsible for the explanations of the Qur'ãnic verses, and the general discussions he wrote in his *tafsīr, al-Mizãn.*

We have prepared two lists for this book:

1. Names of the authors referred to in the twenty volumes of *al-Mīzãn*.

2. Names of the books which need a somewhat detailed introduction.

These two lists have been added in the first volume of the English translation only; two other lists will be printed with every volume.

We pray to Allãh and beseech Him to make our deed purely for His pleasure, to help us complete the work we have started, and to guide us aright in every step we put forward on this road. Surely, He is the best Guardian and the best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES

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Tehran — **IRAN**.

PREFACE

by

The Author

PREFACE

All praise is for Allãh Who sent down the Qur'ãn to His servant so that he may be a warner to the worlds; and blessings be on him whom He sent as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as one inviting to Allãh by His permission, and as a light-giving torch; and on his progeny from whom Allãh kept away the uncleanliness and whom He purified a thorough purifying.

* * * * *

In this preface we shall describe the method adopted in this bookto find out the meanings of the verses of the Qur'ãn.

at-Tafsīr (التَّفسير = exegesis), that is, explaining the meanings of the Qur'ãnic verse, clarifying its import and finding out its significance, is one of the earliest academic activities in Islam. The interpretation of the Qur'ãn began with its revelation, as is clear from the words of Allãh: *Even as We have sent among you an Apostle from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know* (2:151).

The first exegetes were a few companions of the Prophet, like Ibn `Abbãs, `Abdullãh ibn `Umar, Ubayy (ibn Ka'b)) and others. (We use the word, 'companion', for other than `Ali — a.s.[3]; because he and the Imãms from his progeny

[3] 1. (a.s.): is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase *`alay-hi/hã/himu 's-salãm* (may peace be upon him/her/them).

have an unequalled distinction — an unparalleled status, which we shall explain somewhere else. Exegesis in those days was confined to the explanation of literary aspects of the verse, the background of its revelation and, occasionally interpretation of one verse with the help of the other. If the verse was about a historical event or contained the realities of genesis or resurrection etc., then sometimes a few traditions of the Prophet were narrated to make its meaning clear.

The same was the style of the disciples of the companions, like Mujahid, Qatãdah, Ibn Abi Laylã, ash-Sha'bi, as-Suddī and others, who lived in the first two centuries of *hijrah.* They relied even more on traditions, including the ones forged and interpolated by the Jews and others. They quoted those traditions to explain the verses which contained the stories of the previous nations, or which described the realities of genesis, for example, creation of the heavens and the earth, beginning of the rivers and mountains, the "Iram" (the city of the tribe of 'Ãd), of Shaddãd the so-called "mistakes" of the prophets, the alterations of the books and things like that. Some such matters could be found even in the exegesis ascribed to the companions.

During the reign of the caliphs, when the neighbouring countries were conquered, the Muslims came in contact with the vanquished people and were involved in religious discussions with the scholars of various other religions and sects. This gave rise to the theological discourses, known in Islam as *`Ilmu 'l-kalãm* (عِلْمُ الكَلام). Also, the Greek philosophy was translated into Arabic. The process began towards the end of the first century of *hijrah* (Umayyad's period) and continued well into the third century ('Abbãsid's reign). This created a taste for intellectual and philosophical arguments in the Muslim intelligentsia.

At the same time, *at-taṣawwuf* (التَّصَوُّف) = Sufism, mysticism) raised its head in the society; and people were attracted to-wards it as it held out a promise of revealing to

them the realities of religion through severe self-discipline and ascetical rigours — instead of entangling them into verbal polemics and intellectual arguments.

And there emerged a group, who called themselves people of tradition, who thought that salvation depended on believing in the apparent meanings of the Qur'ãn and the tradition, with-out any academic research. The utmost they allowed was looking into literary value of the words.

Thus, before the second century had proceeded very far, the Muslim society had broadly split in four groups: The theologians, the philosophers, the Sufis and the people of tradition. There was an intellectual chaos in the *ummah* and the Muslims, generally speaking, had lost their bearing. The only thing to which all were committed was the word, "There is no god except Allãh, and Muhammad (s.a.w.a.)[4] is the Messenger of Allãh". They differed with each other in everything else. There was dispute on the meanings of the names and attributes of Allãh, as well as about His actions; there was conflict about the reality of the heavens and the earth and what is in and on them; there were controversies about the decree of Allãh and the divine measure; opinions differed whether man is a helpless tool in divine hands, or is a free agent; there were wranglings about various aspects of reward and punishment; arguments were kicked like ball, from one side to the other concerning the realities of death, *al-barzakh* (البَرزَخ= intervening period between death and the Day of Resurrection); resurrection, paradise and hell. In short, not a single subject, having any relevance to religion, was left without a discord of one type or the other. And this divergence, not unexpectedly, showed itself in exegesis of the Qur'ãn. Every group wanted to support his views and opinions from the Qur'ãn; and the exegesis had to

[4] (s.a.w.a.): is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase *ṣalla 'llãhu `alayhi wa ãlih* (may Allãh's peace and blessing be upon him and his progeny)

serve this purpose.

The people of tradition explained the Qur'ãn with the traditions ascribed to the companions and their disciples. They went ahead so long as there was a tradition to lead them on, and stopped when they could not find any such tradition (provided the meaning was not self-.evident). They thought it to be the only safe method, as Allãh says: . . . *and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say*: *"We believe in it, it is all from our Lord*..." (3:7).

But they were mistaken. Allãh has not said in His Book that rational proof had no validity. How could He say so when the authenticity of the Book itself depended on rational proof. On the other hand, He has never said that the words of the companions or their disciples had any value as religious proof. How could He say so when there were such glaring discrepancies in their opinions? In short, Allãh has not called us to the sophistry which accepting and following contradictory opinions and views would entail. He has called us, instead, to meditate on the Qur'ãnic verses in order to remove any apparent discrepancy in them. Allãh has revealed the Qur'ãn as a guidance, and has made it a light and an explanation of everything. Why should a light seek brightness from others' light? Why should a guidance be led by others' guidance? Why should "an explanation of everything" be explained by others' words?

The theologians' lot was worse all the more. They were divided into myriads of sects; and each group clung to the verse that seemed to support its belief and tried to explain away what was apparently against it.

The seed of sectarian differences was sown in academic theories or, more often than not, in blind following and national or tribal prejudice; but it is not the place to describe it even briefly. However, such exegesis should be called adaptation, rather than explanation. There are two ways of explaining a verse — One may say: "What does the Qur'ãn say?" Or one

may say: “How can this verse be explained, so as to fit on my belief?” The difference between the two approaches is quite clear. The former forgets every pre-conceived idea and goes where the Qur’ãn leads him to. The latter has already decided what to believe and cuts the Qur’ãnic verses to fit on that body; such an exegesis is no exegesis at all.

The philosophers too suffered from the same syndrome. They tried to fit the verses on the principles of Greek philosophy (that was divided into four branches: Mathematics, natural science, divinity and practical subjects including civics). If a verse was clearly against those principles it was explained away. In this way the verses describing metaphysical subjects, those explaining the genesis and creation of the heavens and the earth, those concerned with life after death and those about resurrection, paradise and hell were distorted to conform with the said philosophy. That philosophy was admittedly only a set of conjectures — unencumbered with any test or proof; but the Muslim philosophers felt no remorse in treating its views on the system of skies, orbits, natural elements and other related subjects as the absolute truth with which the exegesis of the Qur’ãn had to conform.

The Sufis kept their eyes fixed on esoteric aspects of creation; they were too occupied with their inner world to look at the outer one. Their tunnel-like vision prevented them from looking at the things in their true perspective. Their love of esoteric made them look for inner interpretations of the verses; without any regard to their manifest and clear meanings. It encouraged the people to base their explanations on poetic expressions and to use anything to prove anything. The condition became so bad that the verses were explained on the-basis of the numerical values of their words; letters were divided into bright and dark ones and the explanations were based on that division. Building castle in the air, wasn't it? Obviously, the Qur’ãn was not revealed to guide the Sufis

only; nor had it ad-dressed itself to only those who knew the numerical values of the letters (with all its ramifications); nor were its realities based on astrological calculations.

Of course, there are traditions narrated from the Prophet and the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*) saying for example: "Verily the Qur'ãn has an exterior and an interior, and its interior has an interior upto seven (or according to a version, seventy) interiors . . ." But the Prophet and the Imãms gave importance to its exterior as much as to its interior; they were as much concerned with its revelation as they were with its interpretation. We shall explain in the beginning of the third chapter, "The Family of `Imrãn", that "interpretation" is not a meaning against the manifest meaning of the verse. Such an interpretation should more correctly be called "misinterpretation". This meaning of the word, "interpretation", came in vogue in the Muslim circles long after the revelation of the Qur'ãn and the spread of Islam. What the Qur'ãn means by the word, "interpretation", is some-thing other than the meaning and the significance.

In recent times, a new method of exegesis has become fashionable. Some people, supposedly Muslims, who were deeply influenced by the natural sciences (which are based on observations and tests) and the social ones (that rely on induction), followed the materialists of Europe or the pragmatists. Under the influence of those anti-Islamic theories, they declared that the religion's realities cannot go against scientific knowledge; one should not believe except that which is perceived by any one of the five senses; nothing exists except the matter and its properties. What the religion claims to exist, but which the sciences reject — like The Throne, The Chair, The Tablet and The Pen — should be interpreted in a way that conforms with the science; as for those things which the science is silent about, like the resurrection etc., they should be brought within the purview of the laws of matter; the pillars upon which the divine religious laws are based — like revelation, angel, Satan, prophet-hood, apostleship, *imãmah* (Imãmate) etc. — are

spiritual things, and the spirit is a development of the matter, or let us say, a property of the matter; legislation of those laws is manifestation of a special social genius, who ordains them after healthy and fruitful contemplations, in order to establish a good and progressive society.

They have further said: One cannot have confidence in the traditions, because many are spurious; only those traditions may be relied upon which are in conformity with the Book. As for the Book itself, one should not explain it in the light of the old philosophy and theories, because they were not based on observations and tests — they were just a sort of mental exercise which has been totally discredited now by the modern science. The best, rather the only, way is to explain the Qur'ãn with the help of other Qur'ãnic verses — except where the science has asserted something which is relevant to it.

This, in short, is what they have written, or what necessarily follows from their total reliance on tests and observations. We are not concerned here with the question whether their scientific principles and philosophic dicta can be accepted as the foundation of the Qur'ãn's exegesis. But it should be pointed out here that the objection which they have levelled against the ancient exegetes — that theirs was only an adaptation and not the explanation — is equally true about their own method; they too say that the Qur'ãn and its realities must be made to conform with the scientific theories. If not so, then why do they insist that the academic theories should be treated as true foundations of exegesis from which no deviation could be allowed?

This method improves nothing on the discredited method of the ancients.

If you look at all the above-mentioned ways of exegesis, you will find that all of them suffer from a most serious defect: They impose the results of academic or philosophic arguments on the Qur'ãnic meanings; they make the Qur'ãn conform with an extraneous idea. In this way, explanation turns into adaptation, realities of the Qur'ãn are explained away as

allegories and its manifest meanings are sacrificed for so-called "interpretations".

As we mentioned in the beginning, the Qur'ãn introduces it-self as *the guidance for the worlds* (3:96); *the manifest light* (4:174), and *the explanation of every thing* (16:89). But these people, contrary to those Qur'ãnic declarations, make it to be guided by extraneous factors, to be illuminated by some outside theories, and to be explained by something other than itself! What is that "something else"? What authority has it got? And if there is any difference in various explanations of a verse — and indeed there are most serious differences — which mediator should the Qur'ãn refer to?

What is the root-cause of the differences in the Qur'ãn's explanations? It could not happen because of any difference in the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence. The Qur'ãn has been sent down in plain Arabic; and no Arab (or Arabic-knowing non-Arab) can experience any difficulty in understanding it.

Also, there is not a single verse (out of more than six thousand) which is enigmatic, obscure or abstruse in its import; nor is there a single sentence that keeps the mind wandering in search of its meaning. After all, the Qur'ãn is admittedly the most eloquent speech, and it is one of the essential ingredients of eloquence that the talk should be free from obscurity and abstruseness.

Even those verses that are counted among the "ambiguous" ones, have no ambiguity in their meanings; whatever the ambiguity, it is in identification of the particular thing or individual from among the group to which that meaning refers. This statement needs some elaborations:

In this life we are surrounded by matter; even our senses and faculties are closely related to it. This familiarity with matter and material things has influenced our mode of thinking. When we hear a word or a sentence, our mind races to its material meaning. When we hear, for example, the words, life, knowledge, power, hearing, sight, speech, will, pleasure, anger,

creation and order, we at once think of the material manifestations of their meanings. Likewise, when we hear the words, heaven, earth, tablet, pen, throne, chair, angel and his wings, and Satan and his tribe and army, the first things that come into our minds are their material manifestations.

Likewise, when we hear the sentences, "Allãh created the universe", "Allãh did this", "Allãh knew it", "Allãh intended it" or "intends it", we look at these actions in frame of "time", because we are used to connect every verb with a tense.

In the same way, when we hear the verses: . . . *and with Us is more yet* (50:35)*, . . . We would have made it from before Ourselves* (21:17), . . . *and that which is with Allãh is best* .. . (62:11) , . . . *and to Him you shall be brought back* (2:28, etc.), we attach with the divine presence the concept of "place", because in our minds the two ideas are inseparable.

Also, on reading the verses: *And when We intend to destroy a town* (17:16), *And We intend to bestow a favour…* (28:5)*, and Allãh intends ease for you* (2:185), we think that the "intention" has the same meaning in every sentence, as is the case with our own intention and will.

In this way, we jump to the familiar (which most often is material) meaning of every word. And it is but natural. Man has made words to fulfil his social need of mutual intercourse; and society in its turn was established to fulfil the man's material needs. Not unexpectedly, the words became symbols of the things which men were connected with and which helped them in their material progress.

But we should not forget that the material things are constantly changing and developing with the development of expertise. Man gave the name, lamp, to a certain receptacle in which he put a wick and a little fat that fed the lighted wick which illuminated the place in darkness. That apparatus kept changing until now it has become the electric bulb of various types; and except the name "lamp" not a single component of the original lamp can be found in it.

Likewise, there is no resemblance in the balance of old

times and the modern scales — especially if we compare the old apparatus with the modern equipment for weighing and measuring heat, electric-current's flow and blood-pressure.

And the armaments of old days and the ones invented within our own times have nothing in common, except the name.

The named things have changed so much that not a single component of the original can be found in them; yet the name has not changed. It shows that the basic element that allows the use of a name for a thing is not the shape of that thing, but its purpose and benefit.

Man, imprisoned as he is within his habitat and habit, often fails to see this reality. That is why al-Ḥashawiyyah and those who believe that God has a body interpret the Qur'ãnic verses and phrases within the fame-work of the matter and the nature. But in fact they are stuck with their habit and usage, and not to the exterior of the Qur'ãn and the traditions. Even in the literal meanings of the Qur'ãn we find ample evidence that relying on the habit and usage in explanation of the divine speech would cause confusion and anomaly. For example, Allãh says: *nothing is like a likeness of Him* (42:11); *Visions comprehended Him not, and He comprehends* (all) *visions*; *and He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware* (6:73)*; glory be to Him above what they ascribe* (to Him) (23:91; 37:159). These verses manifestly show that what we are accustomed to cannot be ascribed to Allãh.

It was this reality that convinced many people that they should not explain the Qur'ãnic words by identifying them with their usual and common meanings. Going a step further, they sought the help of logical and philosophical arguments to avoid wrong deductions. This gave a foot-hold to academic reasoning in explaining the Qur'ãn and identifying the individual person or thing meant by a word. Such discussions can be of two kinds:

i) The exegete takes a problem emanating from a Qur'ãnic statement, looks at it from academic and philosophical

point of view, weighs the pros and cons and with the help of the philosophy, science and logic decides what the true answer should be. Thereafter, he takes the verse and fits it anyhow on that answer which, he thinks, is right.

The Muslim philosophers and theologians usually followed this method; but, as mentioned earlier, the Qur'ãn does not approve of it.

ii) The exegete explains the verse with the help of other relevant verses, meditating on them together — and meditation has been forcefully urged upon by the Qur'ãn itself — and identifies the individual person or thing by its particulars and attributes mentioned in the verse.

No doubt this is the only correct method of exegesis.

Allãh has said: *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* (16:89). Is it possible for such a book not to explain its own self? Also He has described the Qur'ãn in these words: *a guidance for mankind and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination* (between wrong) (2:185); and He has also said: *and We have sent down to you a manifest light* (4:174). The Qur'ãn is, accordingly, a guidance, an evidence, a discrimination between right and wrong and a manifest light for the people to guide them aright and help them in all their needs. Is it imaginable that it would not guide them aright in its own matter, while it is their most important need? Again Allãh says:

And (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways* (29:69). Which striving is greater than the endeavour to understand His Book? And which way is more straight than the Qur'ãn?

Verses of this meaning are very numerous, and we shall discuss them in detail in the beginning of the third chapter, The Family of `Imrãn.

Allãh taught the Qur'ãn to His Prophet and appointed him as the teacher of the Book: *The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your heart that you may be of the warners, in*

plain Arabic language (26:193-4); *and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect* (16: 44); . . . *an Apostle . . . who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom* (62:2).

And the Prophet appointed his progeny to carry on this work

after him. It is clear from his unanimously accepted tradition:

I am leaving behind among you two precious things; as long as you hold fast to them you will never go astray after me: The Book of Allãh and my progeny, my family members; and these two shall never separate from each other until they reach me (on) the reservoir.

And Allãh has confirmed, in the following two verses, this decl- aration of the Prophet that his progeny had the real knowledge of the Book: *Allãh only desires to keep away the uncleanliness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a* (thorough) *purifying* (33:33); *Most surely it is an honoured Qur'ãn, in a Book that is hidden*; *None do touch it save the purified ones* (56:77—79).

And the Prophet and the Imãms from his progeny always used this second method for explaining the Qur'ãn, as may be seen in the traditions that have been narrated from them on exegesis, some of which will be quoted in this book in appropriate places. One cannot find a single instance in their traditions where they might have taken help of an academic theory or philosophical postulate for explaining a verse.

The Prophet has said in a sermon: "Therefore, when mischiefs come to confuse you like the segments of darkened night, then hold fast to the Qur'ãn; as it is the intercessor whose inter-cession shall be granted; and a credible advocate; and whoever keeps it before him, it will lead him to the Garden; and whoever keeps it behind, it will drive him to the Fire; and it is the

guide that guides to the best path; and it is a book in which there is explanation, particularization and recapitulation; and it is a decisive (world), and not a joke; and there is for it a manifest (meaning) and an esoteric (one); thus its apparent (meaning) is firm, and its esoteric (one) is knowledge; its exterior is elegant and its interior deep; it has (many) boundaries, and its boundaries have (many) boundaries; its wonders shall not cease, and its (unexpected marvels shall not be old. There are in it the lamps of guidance and the beacon of wisdom, and guide to knowledge for him who knows the attributes. Therefore, one should extend his sight; and should let his eyes reach the attribute; so that one who is in perdition may get deliverance, and one who is entangled may get free; because meditation is the life of the heart of the one who sees, as the one having a light (easily) walks in darkness; therefore, you must seek good deliverance and (that) with little waiting.

`Ali (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* speaking about the Qur'ãn in a sermon: "Its one part speaks with the other, and one portion testifies about the other."

This is the straight path and the right way which was used by the true teachers of the Qur'ãn and its guides, may Allãh's blessings be on them all !

We shall write, under various headings, what Allãh has helped us to understand from the honoured verses, by the above-mentioned method. We have not based the explanations on any philosophical theory, academic idea or mystical revelation.

We have not put into it any outside matter except a fine literary point on which depends the understanding of Arabic eloquence, or a self-evident or practical premises which can be understood by one and all.

From the discussions, written according to the above- mentioned method, the following subjects have become crystal-clear:

1. The matters concerning the names of Allãh, and His attributes, like His Life, Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight and Oneness etc. As for the Person of Allãh, you will find that the Qur'ãn believes that He needs no description.

2. The matters concerning the divine actions, like creation, order, will, wish, guidance, leading astray, decree, – measure, compulsion, delegation (of Power), pleasure, displeasure and other similar actions.

3. The matters concerned with the intermediary links between Allãh and man, like the Curtain, the Tablet, the Pen, the Throne, the Chair, the Inhabited House, the Heavens, the Earth, the Angels, the Satans, and the Jinns etc.

4. The details about man before he came to this world.

5. The matters related to man in this life, like the history of mankind, knowledge of his self, the foundation of society, the prophethood and the apostleship, the revelation, the inspiration, the book and the religion and law. The high status of the prophets, shining through their stories, come under this heading.

6. The knowledge about man after he departs from this world, that is, *al-Barzakh*.

7. The matters about human character. Under this heading come the various stages through which the friends of Allãh pass in their spiritual journey, like submission, faith, benevolence, humility, purity of intention and other virtues.

(We have not gone into details of the verses of the law, as more appropriately it is a subject for the books of jurisprudence.)

As a direct result of this method, we have never felt any need to interpret a verse against its apparent meaning. As we have said earlier, this type of interpretation is in fact misinterpretation. As for that "interpretation" which the Qur'ãn has mentioned in various verses, it is not a type of "meaning"; it is something else.

At the end of the commentaries, we have written some traditions of the Prophet and the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*), narrated by the Sunni and Shi'ah narrators. But we have not included the opinions of the companions and their disciples, because, first, there is too much confusion and contradiction in

them; and second, they are not vested with any authority in Islam.

On going through those traditions of the Prophet and the Imãms (peace be on them all!), you will notice that this "new" method of exegesis (adopted in this book) is in reality the oldest and the original method which was used by the Teachers of the Qur'ãn (peace of Allãh be on them all!).

Also, we have written separately various topics — philosophical, academic, historical, social and ethical — when there was a need for it. In all such discussions, we have confined our talk to the basic premises, without going in too much detail.

We pray to Allãh, High is He, to guide us and keep our talk to the point; He is the Best Helper and the Best Guide.

Dependent on Allãh,

Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabāʾi.

al-Mīzān

Volume One

Chapter One

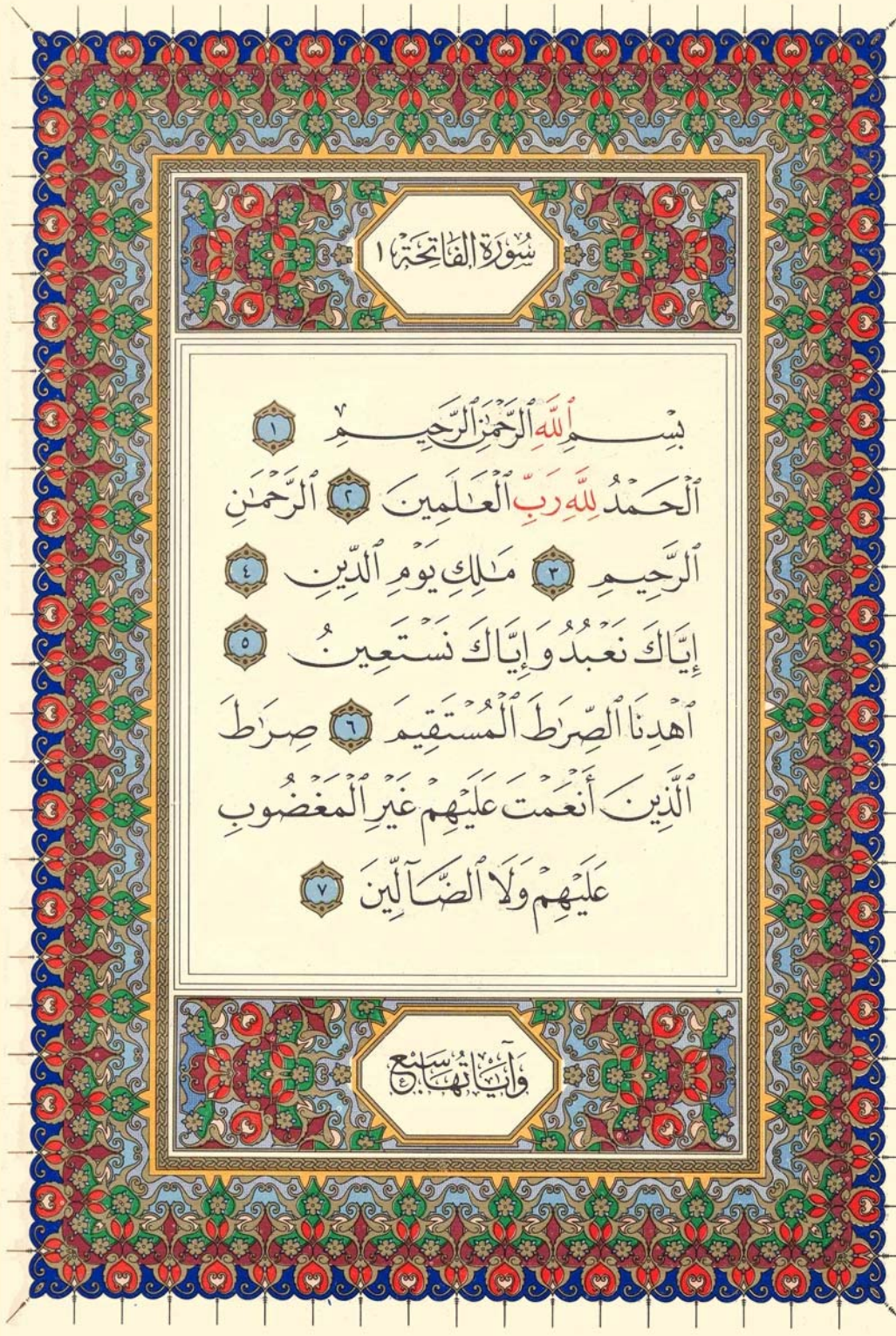
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Chapter One

Fãtiḥatu 'l-Kitãb

(The Opening of the Book)

7 verses — Mecca


سُورَةُ الفَاتِحَةِ ١
بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ١
ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ٢ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ
ٱلرَّحِيمِ ٣ مَٰلِكِ يَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ ٤
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥
ٱهْدِنَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦ صِرَٰطَ
ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ ٱلْمَغْضُوبِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ٧
وَآيَاتُهَا سَبْعٌ

***In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful* (1). *All praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the Worlds* (2). *The Beneficent the Merciful* (3). *The Master of the Day of Judgement* (4). *Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help* (5).**

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful*: People often take the name of one of their great and powerful personalities at the time of doing or beginning a work. By this association, it is believed, the work would achieve success, greatness and blessings; or that it would be a memorial to keep the named one's memory alive for ever. This is also observed in naming a child, a project, a house or an association — they give it the name of a deeply loved or highly respected person, so that his name would continue in this form; for

example, a man names his son after his father, in order to perpetuate the father's memory.

This verse runs on the same line. Allãh began His speech with His Own name — Great is His name — so that the ideas taught in this chapter be stamped by, and associated with it. Also, it teaches a lesson to mankind, showing them the perfect manner of starting all their talks and actions; it guides them to put the stamp of the divine name on all their activities; doing every work for the sake of Allãh, associating it with His good names and attributes. In this way that action would neither be rendered null and void, nor remain incomplete; it has been started in the name of Allãh, and negation and annihilation cannot reach that sacred name.

Allãh has declared variously in the Qur'ãn that what is not for His Person must perish, is in vain; He will proceed to the deeds not done for His sake and shall render them as scattered floating dust; He shall forfeit what they have done and shall nullify their deeds; and that nothing shall remain except His honoured Person.

Therefore, what is done for the sake of Allãh and performed in His name, shall continue and will not perish. Everything, every work and every affair shall have its share of eternity — as much as it is related to Allãh. It is this reality that has been hinted at in the universally accepted tradition of the Prophet: "Every important affair, not begun with the name of Allãh, shall remain incomplete . . ." The word *al-abtar* (الأبْتَر = translated here as "incomplete") means a thing whose end is cut off, an animal whose tail is severed.

The preposition "*bi*" (بـ = in, with), in the phrase "In the name of Allãh", is related to an implied verb, "I begin". This verse, at this particular place, begins the speech which is a single action; this singleness comes from the singleness of its meaning; that is, the meaning intended to be conveyed, the aim and purpose of the speech.

Allãh has mentioned the purpose for which His speech —

the whole Qur'ãn — has been revealed: . . . indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allãh; with it Allãh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety . . . (5:15—16). There are other verses which show that the aim with which the Book — the speech of Allãh — has been sent down is the guidance of the people.

Therefore, the full import of the sentence would be as follows: The guidance, total guidance is begun with the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful; He is Allãh, Whom the servants return to; He is Beneficent, Who has opened the way of His All-encompassing mercy for believers and disbelievers alike, the mercy which provides them with all that is necessary and good for their existence and life; He is Merciful, Who has reserved His special mercy for the believers, the mercy which ensures their happiness in the life hereafter and their nearness to their Lord. Allãh has said: . . . *and My mercy encompasses all things*; *so I will ordain it* (specially) *for those who guard* (against evil) *and pay zakãt, and those who believe in our signs* (7:156). This explanation has been written, putting this verse in the framework of the whole Qur'ãn, of which it is the first sentence.

Again, Allãh has repeatedly mentioned "chapter" in His speech. For example: *Say*: *"Then bring a chapter like this..."* (10:38); *Say*: *"Then bring ten chapters like it, forged . . ."* (11:13); *And whenever a chapter is revealed . . .* (9:86); (This is) *a chapter which We have revealed . . .* (24:1). It shows that Allãh Himself has divided His speech in various parts, each part being called a chapter. It naturally means that every chapter is a single unit in structure and in fullness of meaning; and that that unity is not found between various verses of a chapter or between one chapter and the other. It necessarily follows that the theme of every chapter is different from the other; every chapter is revealed with a certain aim in view, and when that aim is achieved the chapter comes to its end.

Therefore, the verse, “In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful” coming at the beginning of every chapter, refers to the particular theme of that chapter.

Accordingly, this verse, at the beginning of this chapter of “The Opening", refers also to the theme of this chapter. It appears from its semantic flow that its purpose is to praise Allãh and to pledge the believer's servitude (declaring that he worships only Allãh and seeks help from Him only) and then to pray for divine guidance. This speech has been uttered by Allãh, on be-half of His servant, so that the servant may learn how, by repeating these words, he may show his gratitude to, and servitude before, Allãh.

This pledging of servitude is the important work which the servant of Allãh intends to do; and which he begins in the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. In this context, this verse would mean: In Thy name, I pledge my servitude to Thee.

In this first verse of this chapter, therefore, the preposition, “in", is related to the implied verb, “I begin"; and the aim is to perfect the sincere servitude by addressing the pledge to Allãh Himself. Some people have said that the implied verb is “I seek help” (by); although this view is not objectionable, but “I begin” is more appropriate — the chapter explicitly seeks divine help, “and Thee do we beseech for help"; therefore, it is not necessary in the beginning.

“*al-Ism*” (الاِسْمُ = name) is the word that points to the named thing or person. It is derived from *as-simah* (السِّمَة = sign, identifying mark) or *as-sumuww* (السُّمُوّ = height, eminence). In any case, it is the word by which an individual thing or person is spoken of or spoken to. Naturally, it is other than, and separate from, the named thing.

The following is a sample of the academic exercises so much loved by the ancients:

There is a name that means “the person himself seen in

the light of an attribute"; such a name is not separate from the named person; it is the person himself. The word *al-ʻÃlim* (العالِم = The Knower), one of the divine names, points to the Person of Allãh as seen in the light of His attribute of Knowledge. At the same time, it refers to Allãh Who cannot be known except by one or the other of His attributes. Let us explain this matter in another way: "Name" points to the named person; likewise the personal traits and characteristics point to the holder of those traits and characteristics — in this way, we may say that the personal traits are the "names" of the person concerned. "Name", accordingly, can be of two kinds: in words, and in substance. The direct name is of the second type, ,that is, the personal trait that points to its own subjects — for example, the "Knowledge" that points to Allãh, the holder of the knowledge. And the word "the Knower" is in reality an indirect name — it points to the direct name, that is, the attribute of knowledge, which in its turn directly points to its holder, that is, Allãh. "Knowledge" is, thus, the name of Allãh, and "the Knower" is "the name of the name".

The above was the result of the academic analysis (or should we say, mental luxury!) mentioned earlier; but such things should not be imposed on language and literature. "Name", according to the "plain Arabic language", means what we have written earlier. There was a lot of controversy going on among the theologians of the early centuries of Islam: whether the name was separate from the named person or not. Such unnecessary polemics is out of place at present times; it is self-evident that "name" and "named" are two things, and not one. We should not waste time and energy in quoting the ancients' arguments and counter-arguments, and in judging who was right.

"Allãh" (اللّٰه = the divine name) was originally *al-Ilãh* (الاله); the "I" (اِ) in the middle was omitted because of frequent use. *al-Ilãh is* derived from *alaha* (اَلَهَ = he worshipped) or from *aliha* or *waliha* (اَلِهَ or وَلِهَ = he was

bewildered). It is on paradigm of *al-fi`ãl* ( اَلفِعالُ ) in meaning of *al-maf`ũl* (اَلمَفعُول = object-noun); for example, *al-kitãb* (اَلكِتابُ)means *al-maktũb* (اَلمَكْتوبُ = the written); likewise *al-Ilãh* means *al-Ma'lũh* (اَلمَألُوهُ) is, the One who is worshipped, or the One about whom minds are bewildered.

Quite clearly, it has become the proper name of God. It was commonly used in this meaning in Arabic long before the Qur'ãn was revealed. The fact that even pre-Islamic Arabs used this name for God, may be inferred from the following verses:

And if you should ask them who created them, they would certainly say: *"Allãh*". . . (43:87).

. . . *and they say*: *"This for Allãh*" — *so they assert* — *"and this is for our associates*". . . (6:136).

Other divine names may be used as adjectives for this name; for example, "the Beneficent and the Merciful Allãh"; also, this name is used as subject of the verbs derived from other divine names; for example, "Allãh knew", "Allãh had mercy", "Allãh gave sustenance" etc. But the word, "Allãh", is never used as adjective to any other name, nor is the verb derived from it used to describe other names. It is a clear proof that it is the proper name of God.

The divine existence, inasmuch as Allãh is the God of everything, presupposes that He should have all the attributes of perfection; and, as a result, this name points to all perfect attributes. That is why it is said that the name, "Allãh", means "the Person Who is the Essential Being, and Who encompasses all the attributes of perfection". But the fact is that it is the proper name of God and no other meaning (except that related to worship or bewilderment) has been taken into consideration here.

"*ar-Raḥmãn ar-Raḥīm*" (اَلرَّحْمنُ الرَّحيمُ = The Beneficent, the Merciful) are two adjectives derived from *ar-raḥmah* (اَلرَّحْمَةُ = mercy).

When you see someone suffering from a deficiency which he cannot remove by himself, the reaction which you experience and which tells you to provide him with what he needs in order to make up his deficiency, is called mercy. Ultimately, mercy means giving and bestowing to fulfil other's need. It is this latter meaning in which this attribute is used for Allãh.

"*ar-Raḥmãn*" (اَلرَّحْمنُ) is on a paradigm which is used for magnification and exaggeration. "*ar-Raḥīm*" (اَلرَّحِيْمُ) is a paradigm of *as-Sifãtu 'l-mushabbahah* (اَلصِّفَةُ الْمُشَبِّهَةُ = perpetual adjective, inseparable attribute). Therefore, "*ar-Rahmãn*" (translated here as "the Beneficent") relates to that all-encompassing mercy that is bestowed upon the believers and the unbelievers alike. It is used in the Qur'ãn, mostly in this meaning. Allãh says: *The Beneficent* (God) *is firm in power* (20:5); *Say*: *"As for him who remains in error, the Beneficent* (God) *will surely prolong his length of days. . .* (19:75). "*ar-Raḥīm*" (translated here as "the Merciful"), on the other hand, is more appropriate for that mercy which shall remain for ever, the perpetual inexhaustible mercy that shall be bestowed on the believers in the life hereafter. Allãh says: *. . . and He is Merciful to the believers* (33:43); *surely to them* (*i.e.,* the believers) *He is Compassionate, Merciful* (9:117). That is why it is said that the mercy of "*ar-Rahmãn*" *is* common for the believers and the unbelievers, and that of "*ar-Raḥīm*" *is* reserved for the believers.

QUR'ÃN: *All praise is due to Allãh*: It has been said that "*alḥamd*" (اَلحَمْدُ) is to praise someone for a good acquired by his own intention, "*al-madḥ*" (اَلمَدحُ = also translated as praise) is more general — it is used to praise even that good which someone is given without his will and power. If you praise someone for his benevolence, you may use either word — *al-ḥamd* or *al-madḥ* but if you want to praise a pearl for its lustre, you may use the verb *al-madḥ,* but not *al-ḥamd*

because the pearl has not acquired that lustre by its own will and power.

"*al*" (الْـ = translated here as "all") in "*al-ḥamd*" denotes either species or praise, or each and every praise. The end-result is the same in either case; that is why it has been translated here as "all".

Allãh says: *That is Allãh, your Lord, the Creator of every thing* (40:62). Whatever there is, is created by Allãh. Again He says: . . . *Who made good everything that He has created* (32: 7). Everything is good because it has been created by Allãh and is attributed to Him. In other words, a thing becomes good because it is created by Allãh; and everything created by Him is good. Every creature is good and beautiful because Allãh has made it so; and every good and beautiful thing is created by Allãh, attributed to Him. Allãh says: *He is Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (of all) (39:4); *And the faces are humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God* . . . (20:111). In other words, He has created the creatures by His own knowledge, power and will, and not because He was compelled by someone else to do so. Therefore, everything is His own good work, done by His own will.

The above discourse was about Allãh's action. Coming to His names, He has said: Allãh is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names (20:8); And Allãh's are the best names; therefore call on Him thereby, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His names (7:180). It is clear that Allãh is good in His names and good in His actions; and that every good and beauty emanates from Him.

Therefore, Allãh is praised for His good names as He is praised for His good actions. Every praise, uttered by any speaker for any good deed is in reality addressed to Allãh only; because every good (which is the object of praise) emanates from Him only. In short, to Him belongs the species of the praise and all and every praise.

The verse: "Thee do we worship", shows that the whole

chapter is revealed on behalf of man. Allãh teaches him in this chapter how to praise his Lord and how to show his allegiance to, and humility towards, Him. And the phrase, "All praise is due to Allãh", further strengthens this inference, as will be seen in the next paragraph.

The praise means to attribute, to ascribe; and Allãh has declared that He is above all that His servants ascribe to Him. He has said: *Hallowed be Allãh* (for freedom) *from what they ascribe, except the servants of Allãh, freed* (from sins) (37:159 -160). This declaration is general and unconditional; and it is further proved by the fact that not a single verse in the Qur'ãn ascribes the action of "praise" to anyone except Allãh and some of the prophets (who were doubtlessly freed from sins). Allãh addresses Nab (Noah — a.s.) in these words: . . . *Say*: *"All praise is due to Allãh who delivered us from the unjust people*" (23:28). And He quotes Ibrahīm (Abraham — a.s.) as saying: "*Praise be to Allãh, Who gave me in old age Isma `il and Isḥãq* . . ." (14:39) . Also, He told His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), in several places, *And say*: *"Praise be to Allãh* . . ." (27:93). Further, he says about Dãwũd and Sulaymãn (peace be on both of them): . . . *and they both said*: *"Praise be to Allãh . . ."* (27:15). Another exception is of the people of the Paradise — and they also are freed from spite and rancour as well as from vain and sinful words: . . . *and the last of their cry shall be. "Praise be to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds*" (10:10).

As for other creatures, the Qur'ãn never says that they "praise" Allãh — they always "glorify Allãh with His praise". Allãh says: . . . *and the angels declare His glory with the praise of their Lord* . . . (42:5)*; and the thunder declares His glory with His praise* . . . (13:13)*; and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise* . . . (17:44). In all these verses "praise" is preceded by glorifying; rather "glorifying" is the main verb and "with praise" is only a clause, attached to it. None except Allãh may comprehend the beauty and perfection of His work, nor

can anyone else understand the beauty and perfection of His names and attributes. Allãh says: . . *they do not comprehend Him in knowledge* . . . (20:110). In this background, if they were to praise Him it would mean that they had comprehended Him in their knowledge; in other words, Allãh would be surrounded by their limited understanding, confined within the boundary of their comprehension. Therefore, they were careful enough to first declare His glory from all the limits of their comprehension, before starting His praise. Allãh says: . . . *surely Allãh knows and you do not know* (16:74).

So far as His purified servants are concerned, He treats their utterance of praise as though He Himself has said it, because they are free from sins and defects.

From the above discourse, it becomes crystal-clear what the good manner of servitude demands: The servant should praise his Lord in exactly the same words the Lord Himself has chosen for Himself; no deviation from it would be tolerable, as the Prophet has said in an universally accepted tradition; "I do not enumerate Thy praise; Thou art as Thou Thyself hast praised Thyself . . ."

Therefore, the divine word, "All praise is due to Allãh", is a sort of a training to the servant — a training without which he could not know how to declare the praise of Allãh.

QUR'ÃN: *the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Master of the Day of Judgement*: *"ar-Rabb*" (اَلرَّبُ) is the Master Who manages the affairs of His servant. The word, thus, connotes the idea of ownership. Ownership (in our social structure) is a special relationship of one thing with another — a relationship that allows the owner to do with the owned thing as he wishes. When we say, "This thing belongs to us", it shows that it has a special relationship with us that allows us to do with it as we wish;

had it not been for this relationship, we would not have had this authority over it. In this social context, it is an idea which the society has laid down but which has no existence out-side imagination. This idea is derived from another real and positive concept, which too is called “ownership": Our limbs and faculties, like the sight, the hearing, the hands and the feet, belong to us — they exist because of our own existence, they have no independent existence, they depend on us for their existence and continuity, and we use them as we like. This is the real ownership.

The ownership that may be attributed to Allãh is the real one, and not that which is based on subjective outlook. Obviously the real ownership cannot be disjoined from management of the affairs of the owned thing. The owned thing depends on the owner in its existence, as well as in all affairs related to its existence. Allãh is “*ar-Rabb*” *the* Lord of everything because the Lord is the owner who manages the affairs of, and looks after, the owned thing — and only Allãh has this attribute.

"*al-ʻÃlamīn*” (اَلْعَالَمِيْنَ) is the plural of *al-ʻãlam* (اَلْعَالَمُ = the world) which literally means, “what one is known with". This paradigm is used for “instrument ", like *al -qãlab* (اَلْقَالَبُ = the mold, the form), *al-khãtam* (اَلْخَاتَمُ = the seal, , the instrument of sealing), and *aṭ-ṭãbaʻ* (اَلطَّابِعُ = the stamp, the impress). The word *al-ʻãlam* is used for the universe — the whole creation taken together. Also it is used for each genes or species taken separately, for example, the inorganic world, the vegetable world, the animal world, the human world. It is also used for a class of a species, like the Arab world, the African world etc. This last meaning is more appropriate in the context of these verses: The verses that enumerate the good names of Allãh until they come to “the Master of the Day of Judgement". The judgement is reserved for mankind alone or together with the jinn. Therefore, the “worlds” should

refer to the worlds of the human beings and the jinn, that is, their various groups. The word *al-`ãlamin* (the worlds) has been used in this sense in other Qur'ãnic verses too. Allãh says: . . . *and has chosen you above the women of the worlds* (3:42)*; . . . so that he may be a warner to the worlds* (25:1); *What! do you commit an indecency which any one in the worlds has not done before you* (7:80).

"The Master of the Day of Judgement": We have explained above the meaning of ownership, that is, mastership. The word "*al-mãlik*" (اَلْمالِكُ) is derived from *al-milk* (اَلْمِلْكُ = possession, to possess). Some reciters have read this word as "*al –malik*" (اَلْمَلِكُ = the sovereign, the king); it is derived

from *al-mulk* (اَلْمُلْكُ = country; kingdom). The king is the one who has the authority to manage his nation's affairs; nevertheless he does not own the nation or the country. In other words, he holds the authority for management and administration.

The reciters have given the reasons for their preference of either recitation. But the fact remains that Allãh is the Master as well as the King, and both words are equally correct, so far as the divine authority is concerned. Looking at it from linguistic point of view, the word, "King" is generally used in context of time and period. It is said, "the King of that time"; but they do not say "the master of that time", as it would be stretching the meaning too far. In this verse, Allãh has used this word in reference to a certain "day"; therefore, linguistically, it would be more proper to say, "the King of the Day of Judgement". Moreover, Allãh has used the word, "Kingdom" in context of the same day in other verse: *To whom belongs the kingdom of this day? To Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (of all) (40:16).

TRADITIONS

ar-Rich (a.s.) said in explanation *of* the divine words: *In the name of Allãh*: *"*It means: `I mark my soul with one *of* the marks *of* Allãh', and it is (His) worship." He was asked: "What is the `mark'?" He said; "The brand." (*`Uyunu 'l-akhbdr* and *Ma 'ant ʾl-akhbdr*)

The author says: This meaning emanates from the explanation given earlier that the preposition, "in", herein connotes beginning. As the servant marks his worship with the name of Allãh, he brands his soul — real doer of the worship — with one of the divine marks.

It is narrated in *at-Tahdhīb* from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.), and in *`Uyunu 'l-akhbãr* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyãshi from ar-Riḍã (a.s.) that this verse "is nearer to the Greatest name of Allãh than the iris of the eye is from its white".

The author says: This tradition will be explained when we shall talk about the Greatest name.

Amīru 'l-mu'minīn (a.s.) said that (this verse) is from the chapter of The Opening; and verily the Apostle of Allãh used to recite it and count it as one of its verses, and he used to say, "The Opening of the Book is 'the seven oft-repeated' (verses)". (*`Uyunu 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: This matter has also been narrated by the Sunni narrators. ad-Dãr-quṭnī narrates from Abu Hurayrah that he said: "The Apostle of Allãh said: When you recite (the chapter of) The Praise (i.e., The Opening), you shall recite, *In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful,* because it is the source of the Book and (is) the seven oft-repeated (verses), and, *In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful* is one of its verses. aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "What have they done? May Allãh destroy them! They proceeded to the greatest verse of the Book of Allãh, and thought that it would be an innovation (unlawful act)

if they recited it loudly!" (*al-Khiṣãl*)

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "They stole the most exalted verse of the Book of Allãh, (that is) *In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.* It should be recited at the start of every big or small work, so that it may be blessed.

The author says: There are numerous traditons of this meaning coming from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*). All of them prove that the verse (*In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful*) *is* a part of every chapter, except the ninth ("Repentance"); and the Sunni traditions also prove it:

Anas (ibn Mãlik) said that the Apostle of Allãh said: "Just now a chapter has been sent down to me." Then he began reciting, "*In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.*" (*aṣ-Ṣahīh,* Muslim).

Abu Dãwũd narrates from Ibn `Abbãs (and they say that its chain is "correct") that he said: "Verily, the Apostle of Allãh did not know the separation of a chapter (and in another narrative it is 'end of a chapter') until came down to him: *In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.*"

The author says: This matter has been narrated by Shi `ite narrators also from al-Bãqir (a.s.).

It is reported in *al-Kãfī, at-Tawḥīd, Ma`ãni 'l-akhbãr* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyãshi that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a tradition: "And Allãh is God of everything, *ar-Raḥmãn* (the Beneficent) for all His creations, *ar-Raḥīm* (the Merciful) especially for the believers."

as -Sadiq (as.) has said: "*ar-Raḥmãn* (the Beneficent) is a special name with a general attribute; and *ar-Raḥīm* (the Merciful) is a general name with a special attribute."

The author says: The preceding commentary may explain why the mercy of "the Beneficent" is general for the believer and the unbeliever alike, and why that of "the Merciful" is reserved for the believer only. The description

given in this tradition that “the Beneficent is a special name with a general attribute, and the Merciful is a general name with a special attribute", perhaps this refers to the fact that the mercy of the Beneficent is limited to this world and is common or the whole creation; and that of the Merciful is common to this world and the here-after but is reserved for the believer. In other words, the mercy of the Beneficent is reserved for the creative blessings that are bestowed on believers and unbelievers alike; and that of the Merciful is common to the creative and legislative blessings (the latter opening the way to happiness and felicity) and is reserved for believers, because only the bounties bestowed upon them will last for ever, and the (good) end is for guarding (against evil) and for piety.

It is narrated in *Kashfu 'l-ghummah* that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: “A mule of my father was lost. He said: ‘If Allãh brought it back to me, I would thank Him with praises He would be pleased with.’ Shortly afterwards, it was brought before him with its saddle and rein (intact). When he sat on it and arrayed his clothes, he raised his head towards heaven and said: ‘Praise be to Allãh.’ He said nothing more. Then he said: `I did not omit, nor did I leave out, anything; I have declared that all praises are for Allãh, Powerful and Great is He!; because there is no praise but it is included in this (formula).”

It is narrated in *`Uyunu 'l-akhbãr* that Ali (a.s.) was asked about its explanation. He said: “Verily, Allãh has explained to His servants broadly some of His bounties on them, as they can-not know all His bounties in detail — they are beyond enumeration and description. Therefore, He said: Say: ‘All praise is for Allãh on what He has bestowed upon us.’ ”

The author says: The Imãm points to the fact mentioned earlier that the praise, in this verse, is from the servant, and that Allãh has revealed it to teach him the manners of servitude and worship.

FROM PHILOSOPHICAL POINT OF VIEW

Reason tells us that an effect, as well as all its characteristics and affairs, depend on its cause; whatever perfection it may be having, is a shadow of the cause. If beauty or goodness has any existence, then its perfect and independent entity is for Allãh only, as He is the Cause of all causes. The praise and thank is ad-dressed, in reality, to the cause which creates the perfection and excellence referred to. As every perfection is caused by Allãh, every praise and thank, in reality, is addressed to Allãh. There-fore, all praise is for, and due to Allãh.

QUR'ÃN: *Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help*: "*al- 'Abd*" (اَلْعَبْدُ) means slave, a human being who is owned. In its abstract sense, it is applied to other intellectual beings also, as the words of Allãh show: *There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent God as* ("*`abdan"* عَبْداً) *a slave* (19:93). In modern usage, it is commonly translated as 'servant'.

"*al-`Ibãdah*" ( اَلْعِبَادَةُ = to serve, to worship, to obey) is derived from this word. Its inflexion and meaning changes according to the context. al-Jawharī has written in his dictionary, *aṣ-Ṣiḥãh,* that "the basis of *al- `ubũdiyyah* (اَلْعُبُودِيَّةُ = bondage, servitude) is "*al -khuḍu'* (اَلْخُضُوعُ) submission." But this explanation is not of the word; it only shows a concomitant quality of its meaning; because *al-khuḍũ'* is used with the preposition "*li*" (لِـ), and *al- `ibãdah* is used without any preposition.[5]

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[5] This argument seems inconclusive. If two words are synonymous, it is not necessary for them to have the same preposition. *al -Mawlã* (اَلْمَوْلٰى) and *al-awlã* (اَلاَوْلٰى) have the same meaning — guardian, master; but the former is used without a preposition while the latter is followed by the preposition "*b i*" (بِـ = for, with, etc.).

When a servant of Allãh worships Him, he stands before the Lord as a slave stands before his master. That is why worship is diametrically opposed to arrogance and pride — but it is not so opposed to polytheism; after all, a slave may be jointly owned by two or more masters. Allãh says: *Verily those who are arrogant to My worship shall soon enter Hell, disgraced* (40:60). Also He says: . . . *and he should not join anyone in the worship of his Lord* (18:110). It should be noted here that polytheism — joining someone in the worship of Allãh — is a possibility, and that is why it has been made subject of this prohibition; none forbids an impossible thing. But arrogance does not exist with worship, and that is why the expression, "arrogant to my worship ", has been used in the first verse.

Servitude is effective in those affairs which are owned or controlled by the master; and not in other matters related to the slave, like his being son of his father, or having a height of so many centimetres — there is no submission or servitude in such things. But the mastership of Allãh is not limited; His mastership is not shared by anyone else, nor is the servitude of the creatures divided between Allãh and someone else. A master has only limited authority over his servants — he may employ them to perform certain duties, but he cannot kill them or punish them unjustly. But Allãh has total and all-encompassing authority over His servants; He does whatsoever He wills with them and about them. His ownership is unconditional and unlimited; and the servitude of His creatures is likewise unconditional and unlimited. This "ownership" is true and exclusive on both sides: The Lord has the exclusive ownership, and the slave has the exclusive servitude. The construction of the sentence, "Thee do we worship", points to this exclusiveness — the object, "Thee", has been placed before the verb, and worship is mentioned without any condition.

It has been explained earlier that the owned thing exists

and subsists because of, and with, its owner. In this sense, it should not divert an onlooker's attention from its owner. You look at a house belonging to Zayd; if you are looking at it merely as a house, you may possibly lose sight of Zayd; but if you look at it from the angle that it is a property of Zayd, you cannot wean your thoughts from him.

The only true attribute of the universe is that it is created and owned by Allãh. Nothing in the creation can hide the divine presence, nor should looking at these things make one forgetful of Allãh. He is ever present, as He has said: *Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that he is a witness over all things? Now surely they are in doubt as to the meeting of their Lord*; *now surely He encompasses all things* (41:53-54). The true worship, therefore, is that in which the worshipped and the worshipper both are present. Allãh should be worshipped as the One who is present before the worshipper — and that is why the third person of the preceding verses has been changed to the second person in this verse, "Thee do we worship". The worshipper should be present before his Lord, not only with his body but also with his soul; otherwise, the worship would be a body without soul, a form without life. Nor should he divide his attention between his Lord and someone (or something) else — neither openly, (as the idol-worshippers do) — nor secretly (like the one whose mind is on something else while worshipping Allãh, or the one who worships Allãh because he wants to enter the Garden or to save himself from the hell). All these diversions are various facets of poly-theism, and Allãh has forbidden it in His Book: *. . . therefore, worship Allãh, being sincere to Him in religion* (39:2). *Now, surely, sincere religion is for Allãh* (alone), *and* (as for) *those who take guardians besides Him,* (saying): *We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to Allãh, surely Allãh will judge between them in that in which they differ* (39:3).

Worship shall be a true worship when it is done with

pure intention, and this purity has been named as the presence of the worshipper. This will happen only when the attention of the worshipper is not fixed on anyone other than Allãh (otherwise, it would be polytheism); and when his aim of worship is not any other hope or fear like that of the paradise or the hell (otherwise, the worship would not be purely for Allãh). Moreover, he should not be concerned with his own self, as it would tantamount to egotism and arrogance, completely opposite of submission and servitude. Probably the plural pronoun — "we" worship — points to this fact; it negates the individuality of the worshipper as he includes himself in a multitude of people; it removes egotism, creates humility, and effaces the tendency of self-importance.

The declaration of one's servitude with the words, "Thee do we worship", is free from all defects, so far as its meaning and purity are concerned. Yet, as the servant describes the worship as his own act, it could create an impression that he thought to be independent in existence, power and will, while in fact he is only a slave and slave owns nothing. The second sentence, "and Thee do we beseech for help", removes this possible misunderstanding. It means: "We ascribe the worship to ourselves and make this claim only with Thy help; we are never independent of Thee. In other words, the complete verse, "Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help", gives a single meaning, and that is "worship with purity of intention". Probably, that is why both sentences have the same style; otherwise, it could be said, 'Thee do we worship; help us and guide us . . .' The style has been changed in the next verse, "guide us . . ." and its reason will be explained later.

The above-given explanation makes it clear why the pronouns in this verse have been changed from the third to the second person; why the restrictive device of putting the object ("Thee") before the verb has been chosen; why the worship, in "do we worship", is used without any condition; why wor-

shipper includes others with him in this declaration of allegiance and worship; why the second sentence is needed after the first; and why both have the same construction and style.

The scholars have written other fine points about this verse; the reader is advised to refer to their books for this purpose; Allãh is the creditor whose debt can never be repaid.

* * * * *

اهْدِنا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ــ ٦ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ اَنعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ ــ ٧

***Guide us to the straight path* (6), *the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray* (7).**

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Guide us to the straight path . . . nor of those gone astray*: The meaning of "*al-hidãyah*" (اَلْهِدايَةُ = guidance, to guide) may easily be understood, if we consider first the significance of the "path" . "*aṣ-Ṣirãṭ*" (اَلصِّرَاطُ = path) is synonymous with *aṭ-ṭarīq* (اَلطَّرِيْقُ) and *as-sabīl* (اَلسَّبِيْلُ). In these verses, Allãh has commended the path that it is straight and that it is the path taken by those upon whom Allãh has bestowed His bounties and favours. It is this path guidance to which has been asked for. And it is the ultimate goal of the worship: The servant prays to his Lord that his worship, clean from all impurities, be performed in this path.

Allãh has mentioned in His Book that He has laid down a

path for man, nay, for all the creation, a path upon which they are proceeding. He says: *O man! surely thou art striving to thy Lord, a hard striving, until thou art to meet Him* (84:6); . . . *and to Him is the ultimate resort* (64:3); . . . *now surely to Allãh do all affairs eventually come* (42:53). There are many such verses, showing that all are proceeding on a prescribed road and that their destination is Allãh.

So far as the way is concerned, Allãh has said that there are two ways, not one: *Did I not enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should worship Me*; *this is the straight path* (30:60-61). So, there is a straight path, and also there is another path. Again He has said: . . . *then verily I am near*; *I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way* (2:186); *Call upon Me, I will answer you. Verily, those who are arrogant to My worship shall soon enter hell, disgraced* (40:60). Obviously, Allãh is near to His servants, and the nearer path to Him is that of worship and prayer. Compare it with description of those who do not believe in Him: . . . *these shall be called to from a far-off place* (41:44). Obviously, the station of unbelievers is far-off place.

There are thus two ways to Allãh, a near one — the way of the believers — and a distant one, that of the others. It is the first difference between the ways.

Second difference: *Surely* (as for) *those who reject Our signs and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them* (7:40). What is the function of a door? To let authorized people pass through it and bar the entry to unauthorized ones. The verse shows that there is a passage from the lower level to the upper heights. On the other hand, Allãh says: . . . *and to whomsoever My wrath descends he shall perish indeed* (20:81). The word translated here as “shall perish” literally means “shall fall down". Therefore, these is

another passage coming for the upper heights to the lower level. Also He says: . . . *and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has gone astray from* (*i.e.,* has lost) *the right way* (2:108). Allãh uses the term "polytheism" for "going astray".[6] Accordingly, people are divided into three categories: First, those who proceed to the upper heights — those who believe in the signs of Allãh and are not arrogant to His worship. Second, those who fall down to the lower levels — they are those upon whom the wrath of Allãh has descended. Third, those who have gone astray from the right path; they are lost, wandering hither and thither. The last verse under discussion points to these three categories: "the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray."

Obviously, "the straight path" is separate from the last two paths. It is the path of the believers who are not arrogant. At the same time, the following verse shows that the straight path itself may be divided in various "traffic lanes", ways or branches: . . . *Allãh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees* . . . (58:11). This statement needs some elaboration:

Every straying is polytheism and vice versa, as may be inferred from the words of Allãh: . . . *and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has gone astray from the right way* (2:108). The same is the theme of the verse: *Did not I en-join on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should worship Me*; *this is the straight path. And certainly he has led astray a great multitude from among you* (36:60-62). Likewise, the Qur'ãn counts polytheism as injustice and vice versa, as may be seen in the words which the Satan shall utter after the judgement will be delivered against him and his followers: . . . *surely I disbelieved in your associating me with*

[6] As may be seen in the verses 36:60-62, quoted above.

Allãh, before; *surely it is the unjust that shall have the painful punishment* (14:22). Then it counts injustice as straying: *Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who shall be guided aright* (6:82). It should be noted that they shall be guided aright and shall have security against straying or its resulting punishment only if they do not mix their faith with injustice and inequity.

It is clear from looking at these verses together that going stray, polytheism and inequity all have the same effect; all three are adjunct to each other. That is why it is said that each of them is indentifiable by the other two. For all practical purposes the three are one and the same, although they may be different in their literal meaning.

The straight path, then, is different from that of those who have gone astray; it is a path which is far away from polytheism and injustice. There can be no straying in this path — neither in hidden ideas and beliefs (for example, the disbelief or the thoughts disapproved by Allãh); nor in open actions or omissions (like committing a sin or omitting a good deed). It is the true mono-theism in belief and in deeds. And what is there after the truth but error? The above-mentioned verse 6: 82, fits on it completely. That verse guarantees security in the way and promises perfect guidance. The promise is inferred from the fact that the original word translated as "guided aright" is noun-agent, and the grammarians say that such a noun is really made for future. This is one feature of the straight path.

Allãh has identified those bestowed with divine favours, in the verse: And whoever obeys Allãh and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allãh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous ones; and excellent are these as companions (4:69). The belief and the obedience have been explained shortly before it in these words: But no! by your Lord! they do not

believe (in reality) until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then they do not find any straitness in their selves as to what you have decided, and submit with total submission. And if We had prescribed for them: Kill yourselves or go forth from your homes, they would not have done it except a few of them; and if they had done what they were admonished, it would have certainly been better for them and most efficacious in strengthening (them) (4:65 - 66). Those who truly believe are really strong in their servitude and submission, in words and in deeds; in appearance and in secret. Yet such perfect believers shall be placed in a rank behind those upon whom Allãh has bestowed favours; that is why Allãh has said, "these are with those . . ." and not, among those'. They shall be with them, but not of them. It is further strengthened by the last sentence, "and excellent are these as companions". Companions are other than the self.

There is another, somewhat similar, verse in fifty-seventh chapter: *and* (as for) *those who believe in Allãh and His apostles, these it is that are the truthful and the martyrs with their Lord*; *they shall have their reward and their light* . . . (57:19). The believers, thus, shall be included in the ranks of the martyrs and the truthful — in the life hereafter. The fact that it will happen in the next world is inferred from the words, "with their Lord", and "they shall have their reward".

Those bestowed with divine- favours who are the people of the straight path — with whose relationship the straight path is identified — have greater prestige and higher rank than these believers who have cleansed their beliefs and actions from straying, polytheism and injustice. Pondering on these verses together, one feels sure that this group of the believers (with this quality) still continues; it has not come to its end. Had this group completed its term, it would have been counted among (and not, "with") those bestowed with favours; these believers would have gone up and instead of being with those

bestowed with favours, would have become part of them. They probably are among those who have been given knowledge from Allãh, as He says: *Allãh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given know-ledge, in high degrees* (58:11).

The people of the straight path are bestowed with excellent bounties that are more precious than that of the complete faith and perfect belief. This is the second feature of the straight path.

Allãh repeatedly mentions *aṣ-ṣirãt* (path) and *as-sabīl* (way) in the Qur'ãn; but He has never attributed to Himself except one straight path; although He attributes several ways to Himself. *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us. We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways* (29:69).

Likewise, He has never ascribed "the straight path" to any of his servants, the only exception being this verse under discussion which ascribes it to those who are bestowed with divine favours; but He frequently attributes "the way" to one or the other of His chosen servants: *Say*: *"This is my way*; *I invite you unto Allãh*; *with clear sight* (are) *I and he who follows me*" (12:108)*; . . . and follow the way of him who turns to Me* (31:15); . . . *the way of the believers*. . . (4:115). It is an indication that "the way" is other than "the straight path". There may be various and different ways taken by various chosen servants proceeding on the way of worship and submission; but "the straight path" is only one, as Allãh points to it in these words: *Indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allãh*; *with it Allãh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His permission and guides them to the straight path* (5:15-16). See, how the verse refers to "the ways" (in plural), and to "the straight path" (in singular). Now, there may be two explanations for it. Either "the straight path" is the same thing as "the ways", or "the ways" on going further join together and then merge

into the straight path.

There is another difference between the straight path and the way. Allãh says: *And most of them do not believe in Allãh without associating others* (with Him) (12:106). Note how the believers are said to associate others with Allãh. It shows that some sort of polytheism (that is, straying) may co-exist with belief (and the belief is a "way"); in other words the way may co-exist with polytheism. But the straight path cannot do so because it is not the path of those who have gone astray.

Each of these ways has some excellence or some deficiency — but not so the straight path. Each way is a part of the straight path, but is distinguished from the other ways. It may be inferred from the above-mentioned verses as well as from others. For example, Allãh says: *And that you worship Me*; *this is the straight path* (36:61); *Say*: *"Surely,* (*as* for) *me, my Lord has guided me to the straight path*; (to) *a most right religion, the faith of Ibrãḥīm the upright one*" (6:161). The worship and the religion are common to all the ways, and they are *also "*the straight path". The relation of the straight path to the ways of Allãh is that of the soul to the body. The body, during the life, undergoes countless changes, varies from day to day — from infancy to childhood; from adolescence to youth, from middle to old age and to senility. But the soul remains the same, and is always one with body at every stage. Sometimes, the body is inflicted with undesirable effects, which the soul would never accept, if left to itself. But the soul — the creation of Allãh, upon which He created the man — never deteriorates. Yet, in all these states, the body remains one with the soul. Likewise, the ways of Allãh are one with the straight path; but sometimes a way — the way of the believers, of the followers of the Prophet of those who turn towards Allãh or any other way — suffers from some kind of deterioration, although the straight path is immune from all defects and imperfections. You have seen how one of the ways, the belief, sometimes combines with polytheism and

straying, but the straight path does not do so. In short, the ways are of various grades — near or distant; safe or unsafe; clean or unclean — but all are in the straight path, or, let us say, are one with the straight path.

Allãh has mentioned this fact, in a parable of truth and falsehood, in these words: *He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam*; *and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it*; *thus does Allãh compare truth and falsehood*; *then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing*; *and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth*; *thus does Allãh set forth parables* (13:17). It clearly shows that the hearts and mind differ in their abilities and capacities to receive the divine knowledge and spiritual perfection, although all partake of the same divine sustenance. (Its full explanation will be written in the ch. 13).

This was, however, the third feature of the straight path.

From the above analysis it may be seen that the straight path is a sort of controller of all the ways leading to Allãh. We may say that a way leading to Allãh leads a man to Him as long as it remains one with the straight path; but the straight path leads to Allãh unconditionally, without any if or but. That is why Allãh has named it "*aṣ-ṣirsãṭu 'l-mustaqīm*" (اَلصِّرَاطُ اَلْمُسْتَقِيْمُ = the straight path). *aṣ-Ṣirãṭ* means a clear path, and is derived from "*saraṭttu sarṭan*" (سَرَطْتُّ سَرْطاً = I swallowed it completely); in other words, this clear path swallows its walkers without letting them go out. "*al-Mustaqīm*" (اَلْمُسْتَقِيْمُ = straight) literally means the one who stands on his legs, and has full control of himself as well as of the things attached to him. In other words, it is a thing which is not subjected to change or variation. Thus "*aṣ-ṣirãṭu 'l-mustaqīm*" = the straight path is the path which never fails to guide and to lead the walker to his destination.

Allãh says: *Then as for those who believe in Allãh and hold fast unto Him, soon will He admit them to Mercy from Him and* (His) *Grace, and guide them unto Himself* (by) *the straight path* (4:175). Obviously this guidance does not fail; it always succeeds. Also He has said: *Therefore* (for) *whomsoever Allãh intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam, and* (for) *whomsoever He intends that He should leave him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending into the sky*; *thus does Allãh lay uncleanliness on those who do not believe. And this is the path of your Lord,* (*a*) *straight* (path) (6:125-126). That is, this is Allãh's path that never changes, nor does it fail to reach its destination. Again He says: *He said*: *"This is a straight path with Me*; *surely as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who follow thee of the deviators*" (15:41-42). The verse declares that this is His settled course which never varies. In this way, it conveys the same idea which is contained in the verse: *For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allãh*; *and you shall not find any change in the course of Allãh* (35:43).

The above-mentioned discourse has made the following points clear:

First: There are various ways to Allãh, each differing with others in perfection, easiness and smoothness. It all depends on its nearness or remoteness from the basic reality, from the straight path, like the way of submission, of faith, of worship, of purity of intention or of humility before Allãh. Some of the ways leading to the opposite direction are disbelief, polytheism, infidelity, exceeding the bounds, committing sins etc. Allãh has said: *And for all are grades according to what they did, and so that He may pay them back fully their deeds and they shall not be dealt with unjustly* (46:19).

The same is the case with the spiritual knowledge which the human mind receives from Allãh. They vary

according to mental and spiritual capacity of the receivers, and are tinted by colours of visions of the beholders. This fact is shown in the Qur'ãnic parable mentioned earlier: *He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their measure* . . . (13:17).

Second: The straight path controls all the ways. Likewise, the people of the straight path (who have been firmly established in it by Allãh) do enjoy complete authority to guide the other servants of Allãh. Allãh says: . . . *and excellent are these ascompanions* (4:69)*; Verily, your only Master is Allãh and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayer and pay zakãt while they are bowing down* (5:55). The last mentioned verse was revealed about `Ali, the Leader of the faithful (a.s.), as *al-mutawãtir* traditions say; and he (peace be on him) was the first to open this door in Islam. More details of it will be given in the fifth chapter.

Third: The import of the guidance to the way depends on the meaning of the way itself. *al-Hidãyah* (اَلْهِدايَةُ) means to guide, to lead; it accepts two objects, either without any preposition (as in the language of Ḥijãz) or with *ilã* (اِلـٰى = to) before the second object (as in the language of other tribes). This detail has been given in *aṣ-Ṣiḥãḥ* of al-Jawharī, and obviously it is correct.

Before going further, a mistaken notion should be removed. Some people think that the meaning of guidance changes, depending on whether its second object is preceded by the preposition '*ila*' or not. If there is no such preposition, then according to them, guidance means "to convey to the destination"; if it is preceded by then it denotes "to show the path". In evidence, they offer the following verses: *Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allãh guides whom He pleases* (28:56). This verse, in which the verbs, "cannot guide" and "guides", have been used without preposition, says that the Prophet could not guide whom he pleased. But it is known

that he, throughout his life, guided the people, that is, showed them the path of Allãh. There-fore, what has been negated must be the other meaning. What the verse, then, says is this: you cannot convey to the spiritual goal whom you please; but it is Allãh who conveys to that destination whom He pleases. This difference in meaning is more clearly seen in the verses: *And We would certainly have guided them in the right path* (4:68). The verb (in the Arabic text) has been used without any preposition and it refers to the divine guidance — that is, conveyance to destination. And Allãh addresses the Prophet in these words: *and most surely you guide to the right path* (42:52). Here the verb is followed by *ilã* and the sentence attributes to the Prophet the task of guidance, in the meaning of showing the way. According to their reasoning the three verses put together show that when guidance is used in the meaning of "conveying to destination", its second object accepts no preposition; when it is used for "showing the path", the said object is preceded by *ilã.*

But this notion is not supported by the Qur'ãn. Allãh quotes the believer of the people of Pharaoh as saying: "*O my people! follow me, I will guide you to the right course*" (40:38). Here the Arabic text has no preposition and yet it does not mean conveying to destination, it only denotes showing the way.

What has been mentioned in the verse 28:56 (*Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allãh guides whom He pleases*) is the reality or perfection of guidance. The verse shows that the Prophet could not bestow on his people the perfect guidance, the reality of guidance, as it was a task that Allãh has reserved for Himself.

In short, the meaning of guidance does not depend on preposition *ilã* coming or not coming before the second object. In both cases the meaning is the same.

al-Hidãyah means to guide, to show the destination by showing the way, or, let us say, to convey to the destination.

Guidance, in reality, is reserved for Allãh, and He guides His servants by creating such causes that point the destination to them and lead them to their spiritual goal. Allãh says: *Therefore* (for) *whomsoever Allãh intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam* (6:125); . . . *then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allãh*; *this is Allãh's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases* (39:23). The verb "become pliant" is followed by the preposition "to", giving the verb a shade of meaning of inclination and repose. Guidance, thus, means that Allãh creates in the heart an aptitude by which it initiates, accepts, inclines towards and becomes serene in the remembrance of Allãh.

It has been mentioned earlier that there are many ways leading to Allãh. Consequently, guidance for one way would differ from those of the others. Each way has a special guidance of its own. This variation has been hinted at in the verse: *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them unto Our ways*; *and Allãh is most surely with the doers of good* (29:69). A man strives "in the way of Allãh"; and another strives "for Allãh". There is a great difference between the two. The first tries to keep the way safe and free from all dangers and blockades; the second's attention is fixed on Allãh only. It is this man who is praised in this verse — he strives hard for Allãh; thereupon Allãh helps him and guides him on the way most suited to his ability and power; and thereafter keeps guiding him from one way to another until He exclusively attaches him to Himself.

Fourth: The straight path is preserved in the ways of Allãh — the ways that are of various grades and levels. Allãh guides man to it; and the man is thus guided aright. As mentioned above, Allãh may keep guiding a man from one way to the other which is of a higher grade, and then to a third one still higher. The prayer in this verse, "Guide us to the straight path" (revealed on behalf of those whom Allãh has already guided to His worship) points to this very fact. If we

keep this point in view, there would be no room for an objection like the following: The one who utters this prayer is already guided aright — how can he pray afresh for guidance? It would be an attempt to re-obtain a thing which is already in hand, and it is just impossible. Also, the worshipper is already on the straight path — how can he pray to be guided again to the same path? Isn't it an impossibility?

But the explanation given by us clears away the mist of such objections.

Another objection: Our Law is the most perfect and most comprehensive of all the laws sent by Allãh since the dawn of humanity. Why should we ask from Allãh to guide us to the path of those of the previous people upon whom He had bestowed favours?

Reply: Admittedly, the Law brought by Muhammad (s. a. w.a.) is more perfect than any other one. But it does not necessarily mean that all those who follow this Law are more perfect than all those who followed the previous laws. An average follower of the Law of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) cannot surpass Nũh or Ibrãḥīm (a.s.), although their laws were sent long before the Islamic Law. It is one thing to accept and follow a law; it is quite another to get spiritual perfection by total submission — by perfectly moulding oneself in that law's pattern. A believer of previous nations who attained a high spiritual level, who became a mirror of divine attributes, is most certainly better than, and superior to, a follower of this law who did not reach that state — even though the latter would be following the most perfect and comprehensive law, that is, the Law of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). Therefore, it is quite in order for a believer of lower grade (although he may follow a perfect law) to pray to Allãh to help him reach the level of a believer of higher grade (although he might have followed a less perfect law).

An exegete has replied to the above-mentioned objection

in a way that is not free from defects. He has said: The religion of Allãh is one, and that is Islam. The fundamental truths — the belief in One God, the Prophethood and the Day of Judgement and all that results from this belief — are the same in all the laws and revelations sent by Allãh. The Law of Islam has an added distinction, in that it covers all aspects of human life and is, thus, the most comprehensive one. It looks more properly after public welfare. Moreover, its foundation is laid on reasoning — in all its forms: The logic, the admonition and the goodly argumentation. All divine religions are, thus, the same and the fundamental truths are common to all. The previous people have preceded us in this path. Therefore, Allãh has ordered us to look into their affairs, to take lessons from them and to follow them to spiritual perfection.

The author says: The principle upon which this reply is based is against the principles that guide us in exegesis of the Qur'ãn. The reply assumes that the realities of fundamental truths are on the same level in all the religions; that there is no difference in their grades; that the spiritual perfections and religious virtues are of the same quality everywhere. According to this view, the highest ranking prophet is equal to the lowest type of believer in his existence and natural perfection — so far as his creation is concerned. The difference, if any, is based on the subjective outlook of *sharī`ah,* not on any matter of creation. In their opinion, this case is similar to that of a king *vis-à-vis* his subjects — they are not different in their human existence, the difference is in their subjective and assumed positions only which are laid down by people and which do not have any in-dependent existence.

This thinking, in its turn, is based on the theory of material-ism, which teaches that nothing exists but matter; metaphysical "things" have no existence at all (or, at least, we are not in a position to know that they exist). The only exception is God, and we believe in His existence because of

logical evidence.

Those who accepted this view did so because, coming under the influence of natural sciences, they put all their confidence in their five senses. Or because they thought that "commonsense" was enough for explaining the divine words, and therefore, neglected to meditate on the Qur'ãn.

God willing, we shall throw more light on this subject at some other place.

Fifth: The people of the straight path are higher in rank than others, and their path is superior to the others' ways. It is because of their knowledge, and not because of their virtuous deeds. They have that knowledge of divine attributes which is hidden from others. (We have explained earlier that perfection of virtuous deeds is found in some of the inferior ways also. Therefore, deeds cannot be the criterion by which the people of the straight path are given excellence over the rest.) The question arises as to what is that knowledge and how it is acquired. We shall deal with these questions when we shall explain the verse 13:17 (*He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their measure*).

The following verses too point to this fact: *Allãh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge in higher degrees* (58:11); *To Him do ascend the good words*; *and the good deed lifts them up* (35:10). What ascends to Allãh is the good words, that is, true belief and knowledge; good deeds lift up the good words and help them in their ascension, without themselves going up. We shall fully discuss this verse when we shall reach it.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the meaning of worship:

"Worship is of three kinds: some people worship Allãh, because they fear Him — so it is the worship of slaves; and a group worships Allãh, Blessed and High is He, to seek reward — so it is the worship of hirelings; and a group worships Allãh, Mighty and Great is He, because of (His) love — and this is the worship of noble persons, and it is the most excellent worship." (*al-Kãfi*)

Verily, some people worshipped Allãh being desirous (of His reward) — so this is the worship of traders; and some people worshipped Allãh fearing (His punishment) — so it is the worship of slaves, and a group worshipped Allãh in gratitude (to Him) — so this is the worship of noble men. (*Nahju 'l-balãghah*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Verily people worship Allãh in three ways: One group worships Him in desire of His reward, and it is the worship of covetous ones, and it is greed; and others worship Him in dread of the Fire, and it is the worship of slaves, and it is fear; but I worship Him in His love — Mighty and Great is He — and this is the worship of noble ones. (It is) because Allãh has said: *and they shall be secure from terror on that days* (27:89); and He has said, *Say*: *`If you love Allãh, then follow me, Allãh will love you . . .'* (3:31). Therefore, whosoever is loved by Allãh, he shall be among the secure ones; and it is a hidden position, cannot touch it save the purified ones." (*al-'ilal, al-Majãlis* and *al-Khiṣãl*)

The author says: The meaning of these traditions may be understood from the preceding commentary. The Imãms (of *Ahlu 'l-bayt*) have variously attributed the worship of the noble ones sometimes to gratitude and sometimes to love, because in final analysis both are one and the same. Gratitude and thank means putting the received bounty in its proper place. It is the thank of worship that it should be addressed to Allãh, as only He, Himself, deserves to be worshipped. Allãh is worshipped because He is Allãh, that is,

because He alone holds all attributes of beauty and glory. He, of all things, is Beautiful; He alone is loved for Himself. What is love? It is inclination and attraction towards beauty. We say: He is worshipped because He is He; We may express the same idea if we say: He is worshipped because He is beautiful and beloved. Again, the same theme may be explained by saying that He is worshipped because He is the Bestower of favours and is thanked through worship. All three expressions carry the same import.

It has been narrated through Sunni chains that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) explained the verse, "Thee do we worship . . ." in these words: "We do not ask from Thee other than Thee, and we do not worship Thee by substitute and replacement, as do those who are ignorant of Thee, removed from Thee."

The author says: This tradition points to what has been explained in the commentary that worship demands presence (of heart) and purity (of intention) which does not allow diversion to any substitute, to anything else.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said *inter alia* in a tradition: "And whosoever thinks that he worships (Allãh) by (His) attributes without being conscious of Him, he refers (his worship) to an absent one; and whosoever thinks that he worships the attribute and the person (having that attribute) he nullifies monotheism, because the attribute is other than the person; and whosoever thinks that he ascribes the person to the attribute, he belittles the Great One, `and they do not assign to Allãh His proper prestige . . .' " (*Tuhafu 'l- `uqul*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) explained the verse: *Guide us to the straight path,* in these words: "Guide us to adhere to the path that leads to Thy love, and conveys to Thy Garden, (the path that) prevents us from following our desires (lest we be ruined) and from adhering to our opinions (lest we be

destroyed). (*Ma`ani 'l-akhbãr*)

The same book quotes Ali (a.s.) as saying about this verse: “Continue for us Thy help with which we obeyed Thee in our past days, so that we continue to obey Thee in our coming days also.”

The author says: The two traditions point to two aspects of the reply of the previously mentioned objection — that the prayer for guidance, addressed by a person already guided aright, is trying to obtain a thing in hand, and that it was asking for impossible. The first tradition looks at the difference in the grades of guidance, and the second looks at oneness of guidance in its reality.

Again *Ma`ãni 'l-akhbãr* quotes Ali (a.s.) as saying: “The straight path, in this world, is that which stops short of excesses and rises above shortcomings, and remains straight; and, in the next world, it is the path of the believers (leading them) to the Garden."

The same book quotes the same Imãm, explaining the verse: *The path of those. . .,* as follows: “Say: Guide us to the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours by strengthening them for Thy religion and Thy obedience — not (of those whom Thou favoured) with wealth and health because such things are sometimes given even to the disbelievers or to the sinful.” (Then he said:) “And those (bestowed with divine favour) are those about whom Allãh says: *And whoever obeys Allãh and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allãh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous ones, and excellent are these as companions* (4:69).

ar-Riḍã (as.) narrates through his forefathers from Amīr al-mu'minīn (a.s.) that he said: “I heard the Apostle of Allãh saying: `Allãh, Mighty and Great is He, has said: “I have divided the Opening of the Book between Myself and My servant; so, its half is for Me and the (other) half is for My

servant. And My servant shall get what he asks for." When the servant says: *In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful,* Allãh, Great is His Glory, says: "My servant has started with My name, and it is incumbent upon Me that I should complete his works for him and bless him in his affairs." And when he says: *All praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds,* Allãh, Great is His Glory, says: "My servant has praised Me, and he knows that the bounties that are with him are from Me, and that the misfortunates that have been averted from him were so averted by My grace; (O My angels!) I appoint you as My witnesses that I shall add for him the favours of the next world to those of this world, and will avert from him the calamities of the next world as I have averted from him the calamities of this world." And when he says, *The Beneficent, the Merciful,* Allãh, Great is His Glory, says: "My servant bore witness for Me that I am the Beneficent, the Merciful; I make you My witness that I will most surely augment his share in My mercy, and I will most certainly increase his portion in My bounties." And when he says, *The Master of the Day of Judgement,* Allãh, the High, says: "I make you My witness that, as he has acknowledged that I am the Master of the Day of Judgement, I will most certainly make his reckoning easier (for him) on the Day of Reckoning, and I will most certainly accept his good deeds, and look over his sins." And when he says: *Thee do we worship,* Allãh, Mighty and Great is He, says: "My servant is telling truth, He worships Me only. Be My witness that I will most surely give him for his worship a reward that will be the (object of) envy to all who opposed him when he worshipped Me." And when he says, *and Thee do we beseech for help,* Allãh, the High, says: "From Me has My servant sought help, and in Me has he taken refuge. Be My witness that I will most certainly help him in his affairs, and will aid him in his difficulties, and will take his hand in his calamities." And when he says, *Guide us to the right path . .* Allãh, Mighty and Great is He, says: "This (part) is for My servant, and My

servant shall have what he asks for; and I have answered (the prayer of) My servant, and have given him what he hopes for and have protected him from what he is afraid of.”’”(*'Uyũnu 'l-akhbãr*).

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadũq has narrated in ‘*Ilalu 'sh-sharã'i‘,* an almost similar tradition from ar-Riḍa (a.s.). The tradition explains the chapter of The Opening in the frame of the daily prayer. It further confirms the previously mentioned fact that this divine revelation has been sent, as though on behalf of the servants of Allãh, to teach them the manners of servitude; to show them how to praise their Lord and how to declare their allegiance to Him. It is a chapter made especially for the purpose of worship; and no other chapter comes near to it in this respect. For example:-

1. The entire chapter is a divine speech, revealed on behalf of His servant, so that he may recite it when he stands to worship his Lord.
2. It is divided in two parts: one for Allãh and the other for the servant.
3. It contains, in spite of its brevity, all the Qur’ãnic wisdom. The Qur’ãn is a vast treasure of fundamental truths, moral values and the most comprehensive *sharī`ah* which consists of the rules of worship and mutual dealings, as well as the penal and civil codes. Further it is a valuable mine of divine promises and threats, stories of_ previous peoples as well as parables and moral lessons. But, in spite of this wide scope, all its teachings may be returned to four fundamental truths: the Oneness of God, the prophet-hood, the resurrection (with all its details) and the guidance of mankind to its bliss in this world as well as in the next. Needless to reiterate that this chapter contains all these basic realities in these very short, and at the same time very eloquent, sentence.

It will not be out of place to compare the beauty, glory and spirituality of this chapter, used in the Muslims' prayers,

with the Lord's prayer, used by the Christians in their prayer:

Our Father which art in heaven Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Matthews 6:9 - 1 3)

Ponder deeply on the teachings contained in these sentences, supposed to be of divine revelation, and see what manners of servitude does this prayer teach. First it tells them that their Father (i.e. God, in their terminology) is in heaven. Then it prays about the Father that His name be hallowed, His kingdom come and His will be done in earth as it is in heaven. The question is: Who will fulfil these wishes which look more like political slogans than spiritual invocation. Then it makes them ask for their daily bread, and for His forgiveness in lieu of their forgiveness — that He should waive His rights as they have waived theirs. But what right do they possess except that which they have been given by God Himself? Then they beseech Him not to lead them into temptation but to deliver them from evil. This is asking for impossible, because this world is the place appointed for our test and trial, so that we may acquire spiritual perfection. Would not salvation lose its meaning, if there was no test and trial?

And yet some orientalists have temerity to write: “Islam does not have any superiority over other religions, so far as spiritual knowledge is concerned, because all divine religions invite the men to the belief in one God, and ask them to purify them-selves by good character and virtuous deeds. The religions excel one another only in deep -rootedness of their social fruits.”

OTHER TRADITIONS

It is narrated in *Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh* and *at-Tafsīr* of al - `Ayyãshī that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "The straight path is Amīru 'l-mu'minīn (a.s.)."

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "(The straight path) is the path to the knowledge of Allãh. And there are two paths, one in this world and the other in the next. As for the path in this world, it is the Imãm whose obedience is obligatory; whosoever knows him in this world and follows his guidance, he shall proceed on the path which is the bridge over the hell in the next world; and whosoever does not know him in this world, his foot shall slip (over that bridge) in the next world, and he shall fall down into the fire of the hell." (*Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr*)

The same book quotes as-Sajjãd (a.s.) as saying: "There is no curtain between Allãh and His proof, nor is there any screen for Allãh against His proof. We are the gates of Allãh, and we are the straight path, and we are the (treasure) chest of His Knowledge, and we are the interpreters of His revelation, and we are the pillars of His Oneness, and we are the place of His secret."

Ibn Shahrãshũb has quoted from *at-Tafsīr* of Wakī' ibn al-Jarrãh from ath-Thawri from as-Suddī from Asbãṭ and Mujãhid from Ibn `Abbãs that he said about the verse: *Guide us to the straight path*: "Say O group of the servants (of Allãh): Lead us to the love of Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) and his family-members."

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning. Such traditions are based on the "flow" of the Qur'ãn, that is, application of the Qur'ãn wherever it is applicable. It should be noted that the term, "flow" — and it will often be used in this book — has been taken from the

traditions of the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.):-

al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasãr said: "I asked Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the tradition, 'There is no verse in the Qur'ãn but it has an exterior and an interior, and there is no word in it but it has a boundary, and every boundary has a watching place.' (I asked him) what was the meaning of exterior and interior. The Imãm said: 'Its exterior is its revelation and its interior is its interpretation; some of it has already passed (i.e. happened) and some of it has not come about yet; it runs along (or flows) as run the sun and the moon; when a thing of it comes (to its appointed place and time) it happens . . . (*at-Tafsīr,* of al-'Ayyãshi)

This theme is found in other traditions too. It is the convention of the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) that they apply a Qur'ãnic verse to all things it may be applied to. And this convention was correct and reasonable, because the Qur'ãn was revealed as a "guidance to the worlds"; it guides the mankind to correct belief, correct ethics and correct action. The matter of belief that it has explained is eternal truth; it is not limited to a certain time or certain place. The virtue or vice and the rules laid down for them are not confined to one person or one period — they are general and applicable to all relevant persons and times. The traditions explaining the background of revelation of a certain verse — when, why and about whom or what was it revealed — do not affect its general import. The rule is not restricted to that particular person or event; otherwise, it would cease to be valid in other similar conditions, and would die with the death of that person. The Qur'ãnic declaration is general. If it praises some persons, or condemns some others, it is because of the presence of good or evil characteristics in them. And wherever those good or evil characteristics are found, even in later generations, the verse will in all truth be applied to them. The Qur'ãn itself proves it, as Allãh says: *With it* (*i.e.,* the Qur'ãn) *Allãh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety* . . . (5:16); . . . *and most surely it is a Mighty Book,*

falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it (41:41-42); *Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian* (15:9).

There are numerous traditions, perhaps reaching to hundreds, which apply various verses of the Qur'ãn to the Imãms or to their enemies. They are called the traditions of "flow". But now that the general principle has been explained, we shall not include those traditions in this book — except where it becomes necessary for the explanation of a verse or for some reasoning or discussion.

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Chapter Two

al Bagarah (The Cow)

286 verses - Medina


سُورَةُ البَقَرَةِ ٢
بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ
الٓمٓ ١ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ٢ ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَٰهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ٣
وَٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ مِن
قَبْلِكَ وَبِٱلْءَاخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ٤ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَلَىٰ
هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ٥
وَءَايَاتُهَا سِتٌّ وَثَمَٰنُونَ وَمِئَتَانِ

In the name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

***Alif lãm mīm* (1). *This Book, there is no doubt in it,* (*is*) *a guidance to those who guard* (against evil) (2), *Those who believe in the unseen and keep up the prayer and spend* (benevolently) *out of what We have given them* (3), *And who believe in that which has been sent down to thee and that which was sent down before thee and they are sure of the hereafter* (4). *These are on a guidance from their Lord and these it is that shall be the successful ones* (5).**

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

This chapter was revealed piecemeal; therefore, it does not have a single theme. However a major part of it shows a general objective: It emphasizes that a man cannot be a true servant of Allãh unless he believes in all that was revealed to

the apostles of Allãh without making any difference between revelation and revelation, or between apostle and apostle; accordingly, it admonishes and condemns the disbelievers, the hypocrites and the people of the book because they differed about the religion of Allãh and differentiated between His apostles; thereafter it ordains various important laws, like change of the direction to which the Muslims were to turn for their prayers, regulations of *hall,* inheritance and fasting and so on.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Alif lãm mīm*: God willing, we shall describe in the 42nd chapter some things related to the "letter-symbols" that come at the beginning of some chapters. Also, the meaning of the guidance of the Qur'ãn and of its being a book will be explained later on.

QUR'ÃN: *This Book, there is no doubt in it,* (is) *a guidance to those who guard* (against evil), *those who believe in the unseen*: Those who guard against evil, or in other words, the pious ones, are the very people who believe. Piety, or guarding oneself against evil, is not a special virtue of any particular group of the believers. It is not like doing good, being humble before God or purity of intention, which are counted as various grades of the faith. Piety, on the other hand, is a comprehensive virtue that runs through all the ranks of the true faith. It is for this reason that Allãh has not reserved this adjective for any particular group of the believers.

The characteristics of piety, enumerated in these four verses, are five: Believing in the unseen, keeping up prayers, spending benevolently out of what Allãh has given, believing in

what Allãh has revealed to His apostles, and being sure of the hereafter. The pious ones acquire these spiritual qualities by a guidance from Allãh, as Allãh tells us in the next verse: "These are on a guidance from their Lord ". They became pious and guarded themselves against evil because Allãh had guided them to it. When they got that quality, the Qur'ãn became a guidance for them: "This Book . . . (is) a guidance to those who guard against evil".

It clearly shows that there are two guidances, one before they became pious, the other after it. The first guidance made them pious; and thereupon Allãh raised their status by the guidance of His Book.

The contrast is thus made clear between the pious ones on one hand and the disbelievers and the hypocrites (who are admonished in the next fifteen verses) on the other. The later two groups are surrounded by two strayings and two blindnesses. Their first straying causes their unbelief and hypocrisy, and the second one (which comes after their unbelief and hypocrisy) confirms their first error and strengthens it. Look at what Allãh says about the disbelievers: *Allãh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing*; *and there is a covering over their eyes* (2:7). Sealing their hearts has been ascribed to Allãh, but the covering over their eyes was put by the disbelievers themselves. Likewise, Allãh says about the hypocrites: *There is a disease in their hearts, so Allãh added to their disease* (2:10). The first disease is attributed to the hypocrites themselves, and the second one to Allãh. The same reality has been explained in many verses. For example: *He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it! But He does not cause to err by it* (*any*) *except the transgressors* (2:26); . . . *but when they turned aside, Allãh made their hearts turn aside* (61:5).

In short, the pious ones are surrounded by two guidances, as the disbelievers and hypocrites fall between two errors.

The second guidance is by the Qur'ãn; therefore, the first one must have been before the Qur'ãn. They must have been guided by a healthy and unimpaired psychology. If a man's nature is

faultless and flawless, it cannot fail to see that it is dependent on some thing above it. Also, it realizes that every other thing, which it may perceive, imagine or understand, depends likewise on a thing outside the chain of dependent and needy things. Thus, it comes to believe that there must be a Being, unseen and unperceptible through the senses, who is the beginning and end of every other thing. It also sees that the said Essential Being does not neglect even the smallest detail when it comes to creative perfection of His creatures. This makes him realize that the said Creator cannot leave the man to wander aimlessly hither and thither in his life; that He must have provided for him a guidance to lead him aright in his actions and morals. By this healthy reasoning, the man acquires the belief in One God, in the institution of prophethood and in the Day of Resurrection. In this way, his faith in the fundamentals of religion becomes complete. That faith leads him to show his servitude before his Lord, and to use all that is in his power — wealth, prestige, knowledge, power, and any other excellence — to keep this faith alive and to convey it to others. Thus we come to the prayer and benevolent spending. The five virtues enumerated in these verses are such that a healthy nature unfailingly leads the man to them. Once a man reaches this stage, Allãh bestows on him His another grace, that is, the guidance by the Qur'ãn.

The above-mentioned five qualities — correct belief and correct deeds — fall between two guidances, a preceding one and a following one.

This second guidance is based on the first one. This fact has been described in the following verses:

> *Allãh confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter* (14:27).
>
> *O you who believe! fear Allãh and believe in His apostle. He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk . . .* (57:28). *O you who believe! if you help Allãh, He will*

help you and make firm your feet (47:7).

And Allãh does not guide the unjust people (61:7).

. . . and Allãh does not guide the transgressing people (61:5).

The same is the case with error and straying of the disbelievers and hypocrites, as will be seen later on.

The above verses give an indication that man has another life, hidden behind this one. It is by that life that he lives in this world as well as after death and at resurrection. Allãh says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth* . . .(6:122). We shall explain it, God willing, later on.

"Those who believe in the unseen": "*al-Imãn*" (اَلايْمانُ = faith, to believe) is consolidation of belief in heart. It is derived from *al-amn* (اَلامْنُ = safety, to feel safe). The believer, by his belief and faith, gains safety from doubts. (Needless to say that doubt is like a poison to the faith.)

It has already been explained that faith has many grades. Sometimes one is certain of the object of faith; and this certainty has its effects; at other times the certainty increases and includes some concomitants of the said object; and at times it increases to include all the related matters of the object of faith. Naturally, the belief, thus, is of various grades, and so are the believers. "*al-Ghayb*" (اَلْغَيْبُ = the unseen) is opposite of "the perceived". It is used for Allãh, and His great signs, including the revelation, which is referred to in the clause, "And who believe in that which has been sent down to thee and that which was sent down before thee". Also, it includes the hereafter. But in these verses, the beliefs in the revelation and in the hereafter have been separately mentioned. Therefore, "the unseen" must have been used for Allãh only. In this way the belief in the three fundamentals of religion

becomes complete.

The Qur'ãn emphasizes that man should not confine his knowledge and belief to only the perception; it exhorts him to follow healthy reasoning and rational understanding.

QUR'ÃN: *and they are sure of the hereafter*: Instead of only believing in the hereafter, they are sure of it. There is an indication here that one cannot be pious, cannot guard himself against evil, until he is really certain of the hereafter — a certainty that does not let him forget it even for a short time. A man believes in a matter, yet sometimes forgets some of its demands and then commits somethings contrary. But if he believes in, and is sure of, the day when he shall have to give account of all that he has done — big or small — he will not do anything against the divine law, will not commit any sin. Allãh says:. . . *and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allãh*; (as for) *those who go astray from the path of Allãh, for them surely is a severe punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning* (38:26). Clearly it is because of forgetting the Day of Reckoning that man goes astray. It follows that if one remembers it and is sure of it, he will surely guard himself against evil, will become pious.

QUR'ÃN: *These are on guidance from their Lord and these it is that shall be the successful ones*: Guidance is always from Allãh, it is not ascribed to anyone else except in a metaphorical way.

Allãh describes His guidance in these words: *Therefore* (for) *whomsoever Allãh intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam* . . . (6:125). If one's breast is expanded, he will be free from every tightness and niggardliness. And Allãh says that: . . . *whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones* (59:9). Therefore, He says in this verse about

those who are on His guidance that "they shall be the successful ones".

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh: *Those who believe in the unseen*: "Those who believe in the rising of *al-Qã'im* (اَلْقَآئِمُ = one who stands, i.e., al-Mahdi, the twelfth Imãm — a.s.) that it is truth." (*Ma`ani 'l -akhbãr*)

The author says: This explanation is given in other traditions also; and it is based on the "flow" of the Qur'ãn.

According to *at-Tafsīr* of al-`Ayyãshi, aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh: *and spend* (benevolently) *out of what We have given them,* that it means: the knowledge We have given them.

In *Mã'ãni 'l-akhbãr,* the same Imãm has explained it in these words: "And they spread the knowledge We have given them and they recite what We have taught them of the Qur'ãn.

The author says: Both traditions explain the "spending" in a wider sense that includes spending the wealth as well as using other bounties of Allãh in His cause; the explanation given by us earlier is based on this exegesis.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

Should we rely on rational concepts, in addition to the things perceptible through the senses? It is a subject of great controversy among the western scholars of the later days. All Muslim philosophers as well as most of the western ones of ancient times believed that we can rely on the rational as well as the sensual perceptions. They were

rather of the opinion that an academic premises does not look at a tangible and sensual factor as such. But most of the modern scholars, especially the scientists, hold that nothing can be relied upon except what one perceives through the five senses. Their proof is as follows:

> Pure rational proofs often go wrong. There is no test or experiment, perceptible through the senses, to verify those rational proofs or their premises.
>
> Sensual perceptions are free from this defect; when we perceive a thing through a sense, we verify it through repeated tests and experiments; this testing continues till we are sure of the characteristics or properties of the object of test. Therefore, sensual perception is free from doubt, while rational proof is not.

But this argument has many flaws:-

First: All the above-mentioned premises are rational; they cannot be perceived by any of the five senses. In other words, these scholars are using rational premises, to prove that rational premises cannot be relied upon! What a paradox! If they succeed in proving their view-point through these premises, their very success would prove them wrong.

Second: Sensual perception is not less prone to error and mistake than rational proof. A cursory glance at the books dealing with the optics and other such subjects is enough to show how many errors are made by sight, hearing and other senses. If rational proof is unreliable because of its possible mistakes, sensual perception also should be discarded for the same reason.

Third: No doubt, there should be a way to distinguish the right perception from the wrong. But it is not the "repeated testing", *per se,* that creates that distinction in our mind. Rather, it becomes one of the premises of a rational proof which in turn provides that distinction. When we discover a property of an object, and the property remains the same

through repeated tests, a rational proof, on the following lines, is offered by our thinking power.

If this property were not this thing's own property, it would not be found in it so unfailingly;

But it is always found in it without fail;

Therefore, it is its own property.

It is now obvious that sensual perception too depends on rational premises to finalize its findings.

Fourth: Let us admit that practically every sensual perception is supported by test. But is that test verified by another test? If yes, then the same question will arise about this later one. Obviously, it cannot go on *ad infinitum*; there must come at the end a test whose verification depends not on a visible test but on the above-mentioned rational proof. It means that one cannot rely on sensual perception without relying on ration-al concepts.

Fifth: The five senses cannot perceive absolute and major issues; they know only the particular and minor things. Knowledge depends on absolute issues, which cannot be tested in a laboratory nor can they be grasped by the five senses. A professor of anatomy operates upon, or dissects, a number of living or dead human bodies — it does not matter how large or small that number is. He finds that each of the bodies — which he has opened — has a heart, a liver and the like. And after looking at those particular cases, he feels bold enough to teach an absolute proposition that all men have a heart and a liver. The question is: Has he seen in-side "a11" the human beings? If only that much can be relied upon which is perceived by the five senses, how can any absolute proposition of any branchof science be accepted as true?

The fact is that sensual perception and rational concept both have their place in the field of knowledge; both are complementary to each other. By rationality and understanding, we mean that faculty which is the source of

the above examples of absolute principles. Everyone knows that man has such a faculty. How can a faculty created by Allãh (or as they say, by nature) be always in wrong? How can it always fail in the function en-trusted to it by the Creator? The Creator never entrusts any work to an agent until He creates a connecting link between them.

So far as mistakes in rational and sensual faculties are concerned, the reader should look for it in related subjects like logic etc.

ANOTHER PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

Man in his early childhood perceives the objects around him; he knows them without knowing that he knows, that is, without being aware that he has, or is using, a faculty called knowledge or cognition. This continues until a time comes when he finds himself doubting or presuming a thing. Then he realizes that before that he was using "knowledge" in his life affairs. He also gradually comes to understand that his perception or concepts are sometimes wrong, that error cannot be in the materials that he perceives — because those material things are facts and facts cannot be non-facts, that is, cannot be wrong. Therefore, the error must be in his perception. When there is no error in perception, it is knowledge — a perception that leaves no room for opposite ideas.

By these stages, he becomes aware of the basic principle that positive and negative are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive; they are contradictories, they cannot both be present nor can both be absent. This fundamental truth is the foundation-stone of every self-evident or theoretical proposition. (Even if one doubts this statement, he intuitively knows that this "doubt" cannot be present with its negative, with its "non-doubt".)

Man relies on knowledge in every academic theory and

practical function. Even when he feels doubtful about a matter, he identifies that doubt by knowing that it is a doubt. The same applies when he does not know, or only presumes, or merely imagines a thing, he identifies it by the knowledge that it is ignorance, presumption or imagination.

But in ancient Greece, there arose a group, the Sophists, who denied existence of knowledge. They showed doubt in every thing, even in their own selves, even in that doubt. The Sceptics of later days are almost their successors. They deny knowledge of every thing outside their own selves and their own minds. Their "arguments" run as follows:

First: The most potent knowledge (that comes through the five senses) is often wrong and in error. Then how can one be sure of the knowledge obtained through other sources? How can we rely, in this background, on any knowledge or proposition outside our own selves?

Second: When we wish to comprehend any outside object, what we get is merely its knowledge; we do not grasp the object itself. Then, how can it be possible to grasp any object?

Reply to the First Argument: First: This argument negates and annihilates itself. If no proposition can be relied upon, how can one rely on the propositions and premises used in this argument? Second: To say that a source of knowledge is "often" wrong, is to admit that it is also correct many times. Then how can it be rejected totally? Third: We have never said that our knowledge is always correct. The Sophists and the Sceptics affirm that no knowledge is correct. To refute this universal negative proposition, a particular affirmative proposition is sufficient. That is, we have only to prove that some knowledge is correct; and we have done so in the second reply.

Reply to the Second Argument: The issue in dispute is knowledge, which means to unveil an object. The Sceptics admit that when they try to comprehend an object, they get

its know-ledge. Their only complaint is that they do not grasp the objectitself. But nobody has ever claimed that knowledge means grasping the object itself; our only claim is that knowledge unveils some of the realities of its object, that is, of the thing so known.

Moreover, the Sceptic refutes his own views practically in every movement and at every moment. He claims that he does not know anything outside his own self, outside his own mind. But when he is hungry or thirsty, he moves to the food or water; when he sees a wall falling down, he runs away from it. But he does not try to get food when he just thinks about hunger, and does not run away when he just thinks about a falling wall. It means that he does not act on the pictures in his mind — which he claims are the real things, and acts on that feeling or perception which comes to him from outside — which, according to him, does not have any reality and should not be relied upon!

There is another objection against existence of knowledge. They deny existence of established knowledge; and have laid the foundation of today's natural sciences on this rejection. Their reasoning is as follows:

Every single atom in this world is in constant movement; every single thing is continuously moving towards perfection or deterioration. In other words, what a thing was at a given instant, is not the same in the next. Understanding and perception is a function of brain. Therefore, it is a material property of a material compound. Naturally, this process too is governed by the laws of change and development. It means that all functions of brain, including knowledge, are constantly changing and developing. It is, therefore, wrong to say that there is any such thing as established knowledge. Whatever knowledge there is has only relative permanence — some propositions last longer than others: And it is this impermanent conception that is called knowledge.

Reply: This argument is based on the presumption that knowledge is not non-material and abstract; that it is a physical thing. But this supposition is neither self-evident nor proved.

Knowledge is certainly non-material and abstract. It is not a physical and material thing, because the attributes and properties of matter are not found in it:—

1. All material things are divisible; knowledge, *per se*, is not divisible.

2. Material things depend on space and time; knowledge, *per se, is* independent of space and time. An event happens in a certain place and time, but we may comprehend it in any place and at any time without any adverse effect on its comprehension.

3. Material things are admittedly governed by the law of general movement and constant change. But knowledge, *per se,* does not change. Knowledge, as knowledge, is incompatible with change, as one may understand after a little meditation.

4. Suppose that knowledge, *per se, is* subject to constant change like matter and material things. Then one thing or event could not be comprehended with the same details, in exactly the same way, at two different times. Nor could a past event be remembered correctly later on. Because, as the materialists have said, "what a (material) thing was at a given instant is not the same in the next".

These comparisons show that knowledge, as knowledge, is not a material or physical thing. It must be told here that we are not talking about the physical actions and reactions which an organ of a sense or the brain has to undergo in the process of acquiring knowledge. That action and reaction is a process, or a tool, of knowledge, it is not the knowledge itself.

For more detailed discussion of this subject one should study the philosophical works.

* * * * *

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ـ ٦ . خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ـــ ٧ .

***Surely those who disbelieve, alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe* (6). *Allãh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing*; *and there is a covering over their eyes*; *and for them is a great punishment* (7).**

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Surely those who disbelieve . . . will not believe*: They were the people who obstinately clung to rejection of faith and in whose hearts disbelief had established deep roots. This may be inferred from the fact that warning them and not warning them was all alike to them; they would not move from their obduracy. Probably it refers to the disbelievers of Quraysh, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam and who did try their utmost to extinguish the light of faith; they persisted stubbornly in their enmity until Allãh destroyed them in Badr

and other battles. The sentence, "alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe", strengthens this interpretation; because it could not be applied to all the disbelievers of the world — otherwise the door of guidance would be closed. Also, this same sentence has come in Chapter of Yã Sīn (36:10) which is a Meccan chapter. Then it appears in this chapter that is the first chapter revealed at Medina. (It was revealed before the battle of Badr.) Therefore, more probably this verse also refers to the same Meccan group. In other places too the same explanation may be given to the word, "those who disbelieve", unless there is a reason to the contrary.

Likewise, wherever the word, "those who believe", has been used in the Qur'ãn it refers to the first and early Muslims — unless there is any reason to believe otherwise. This style of address was reserved for them as a protocol of honour.

QUR'ÃN: *Allãh has set a seal . . . great punishment*: Allãh has ascribed the sealing to His own action, but the covering over their eyes is attributed to their own selves. It shows that they had put a curtain on their souls against the light of truth — it was their own choice. Then, after their sins and disbelief, Allãh put another curtain or seal over their souls. Their disbelief and misdeeds thus fall between two curtains — the first from themselves, the second from Allãh.

Its further explanation will be given under 2:26; *Surely Allãh is not ashamed to set forth any parable — that of a gnat or any thing above that . . .*

Disbelief, like belief, has various degrees and ranks; and its effects also vary, like those of belief.

TRADITIONS

az-Zubayrī says that he said to aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.): "Tell me how many ways of *al-kufr* (الكُفْر = disbelief, infidelity, to cover) are there according to the Book of Allãh? Mighty and Great is

He ! He (the Imãm) said: `Disbelief, according to the Book of Allãh, is of five types. There is the disbelief of denial (and denial is of two kinds), and the disbelief by neglecting what Allãh has ordered, and the disbelief of disavowal, and the ingratitude. As for the disbelief of denial,it is denial of the Lord-ship; it is the talk of those who say: "there is no Lord (i.e. Creator), nor any Garden nor Fire". It is the word of two groups of disbelievers who are called atheists. And they are those who say: "*nothing destroys us but time*" (45:24). It is a religion invented by them as it seemed good to them, but they have no proof to support their view. That is why Allãh has said (about them): *And they have no knowledge of that*; *they only conjecture* (ibid.), that it is in reality as they say. And He also said: *Surely those who disbelieve, alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe.*' " (*al-Kãfī*)

And as for the second kind, it is the denial after knowing; it means that the denier denies (the existence of God), but he knows (very well) that He is the truth, and he is convinced of it (in his heart). And Allãh has said (about such people): *And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their soul had been convinced of them* (27:14); . . . *and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved, but when there came to them that which they did recognize* (*i.e.* the Prophet) *they disbelieved in him*; *so Allãh's curse is on the unbelievers* (2:89).

So this is the explanation of the two kinds of denial.

And the third way of disbelief is ingratitude to the bounties (of Allãh); and it is as Allãh says quoting (the Prophet) Sulaymãn: "*This is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful*; *and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured*" (27:40); *If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is*

truly severe (14:7). *Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me* (2:152). (In all these verses Allãh has used the word *al-kufr* = disbelief, to denote ungratefulness, and in-gratitude.)

And the fourth way of disbelief is leaving out or neglecting what Allãh has ordered to do. It is as Allãh says: *And when We made a covenant with you*: *You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities*; *then you gave a promise while you witnessed. Yet you it is who slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits*; *and if they should come to you as captives, you would ransom them — while their very turning out was unlawful for you. Do you then believe in a part of the book and disbelieve in the other?* (2:84 -85). In this verse Allãh has charged them with disbelief because they did not follow the commandment of Allãh; (it should be noted that) Allãh has (in this very verse) linked them to belief, yet He did not accept it from them and it did not benefit them before Allãh. So Allãh (further) said: *What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement, and Allãh is not at all heedless of what you do* (ibid.)

And the fifth way of disbelief is disavowal. It is as Allãh says, quoting Ibrãḥīm (a.s.) ". . . *we renounce you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you for ever until you believe in Allãh alone*" (60:4), that is, we disavow and repudiate you. And He says, describing Iblīs and his disowning his friends from mankind on the Day of Resurrection: ". . . *surely I disbelieved in your associating me* (with Allãh) *before*" (14:22). And also He says: *And he said*: *"You have only taken for yourselves idols besides Allãh by way of friendship between you in the world's life, then on the resurrection day some of you shall deny others, and some of*

you shall curse others . . . (29:25), that is, some of you shall dissociate from others.

The author says: This tradition confirms what we have previously mentioned that disbelief has many grades and ranks.

* * * * *

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ — ٨ . يُخَادِعُونَ اللهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ — ٩ . فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللهُ مَرَضاً
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ — ١٠ . وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا
تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ — ١١ . أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ
هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ — ١٢ . وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا
كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ
وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ — ١٣ . وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا
خَلَوْا إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ — ١٤ .
اللهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ — ١٥ . أُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَى فَمَا رَبِحَتْ تِجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا
مُهْتَدِينَ — ١٦ . مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَاراً فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ
مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ — ١٧ .
صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ — ١٨ . أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ
ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ
حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ — ١٩ . يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ
يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ — ٢٠ .

***And there are some people who say**: "We believe in Allãh and in the last day"; while they are not at all believers* **(8)**. *They desire to deceive Allãh and those who believe, and they do not deceive except themselves and they do not perceive* **(9)**. *There is a disease in their hearts, so Allãh added to their disease and for them is a painful chastisement because of the lie they were saying* **(10)**. *And when it is said to them, "Do not make mischief in the land", they say*: *"We are but peace-makers"* **(11)**. *Now surely they themselves are the mischief-makers, but they do not perceive* **(12)**. *And when it is said to them*: *"Believe as the people have believed ", they say*: *"Shall we believe as the fools have believed?" Now surely they themselves are the fools, but they do not know* **(13)**. *And when they meet those who believe, they say*: *"We believe "; and when they are alone with their Satans, they say*: *"Surely we are with you, we were only mocking"* **(14)**. *Allãh pays them back their mockery, and leaves them alone in their rebellion blindly wandering on* **(15)**. *These are they who buy error for the guidance, so their bargain brings* **(them)** *no gain, nor are they guided aright* **(16)**. *Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled a fire, but when it had illumined all around him, Allãh took away their light, and left them in utter darkness — they do not see* **(17)**. *Deaf dumb* **(and)** *blind, so they will not turn back* **(18)**. *Or like an abundant rain from the heaven in which is utter darkness and thunder and lightning; they put their fingers into their ears because of the thunder peals, for fear of death, and Allãh encompasses the unbelievers* **(19)**. *The lightning almost takes away their sight; whenever it shines on them they walk in it, and when it becomes dark to them they stand still; and if*

***Allãh had pleased He would certainly have taken away their hearing and their sight; surely Allãh has power over all things* (20)**.

COMMENTARY

These thirteen verses are about the hypocrites. We shall discuss this subject in detail in Chapter 63 (The Hypocrites) and in some other places.

QUR'ÃN: *They desire to deceive*: *"al-Khad`ah"* (اَلْخَدْعَةُ) is deceit, duplicity.

QUR'ÃN: *When they are alone with their Saṭans*: *"ash-Shayṭãn"* (اَلشَّيْطانُ) means evil, wicked; that is why the Iblis is called the Satan.

QUR'ÃN: *Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled a fire . . . they will not return*: The hypocrites are like a man who is surrounded by a blinding darkness in which he cannot distinguish good from bad, beneficial from harmful; to remove it he kindles a fire, and in its light is able to see to some distance around it; then as soon as it has illumined all around, Allãh, extinguishes it by wind, rain or some other thing like it and he is left as he was before — in utter darkness. And now he is pressed between two darknesses — that of the night and that of bewilderment and nullity of his endeavour. This parable fits exactly on hypocrites. A hypocrite declares himself to be a Muslim, and through it gains some benefits, as he is treated as a Muslim in matters of marriage and inheritance etc. But as soon as death approaches — the time when the real and complete benefits of Islam should have appeared — Allãh takes away the light, nullifies his deeds and leaves him in utter darkness in which he cannot see_ at all. Thus he falls between two darkness — his original one and the one he added with his dark deeds.

QUR'ÃN: *Or like an abundant rain . . . Allãh has power over all things*: "*aṣ-Ṣayyib*" (اَلصَّيِّبُ = abundant rain); "*al-barq*" (اَلْبَرقُ = lightning; flesh of lightning); "*al-ra'd*" (اَلرَّعدُ = thunder that is heard after lightning); "*aṣ-ṣã'iqah*" (اَلصَّاعِقَة = thunderbolt, to strike with lightning).

This is another example for the hypocrites. A man is caught in a rainpour; darkness surrounds him, he is unable to see around and loses his bearings. The rain tells him to run away; to find a shelter somewhere, but darkness prevents him from it; frightening thunder and lightning-bolts have overwhelmed him, yet when lightning appears he tries to take its advantage by walking ahead in its light — but it appears only for a fleeting moment and then disappears; whenever it shines he walks ahead and when darkness I engulfs him again he stops.

A hypocrite is exactly in the same position. He does not like Islam, but has to profess to be a Muslim. His words do not reach his heart; what he says is different from what he believes in his heart. Because of this discrepancy his path is not illuminated as it should have been. The result is that he gropes about aimlessly and stumbles every now and then; he walks a little and then stops. Thus Allãh punishes him with disgrace; and had He wished so, He would have taken away his sight and hearing, thereby disgracing him on the very first day.

* * * * *

يَا أَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ــ ٢١ . ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الأَرْضَ فِرَاشاً وَٱلسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً
وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقاً لَكُمْ فَلاَ تَجْعَلُوا
لِلَّهِ أَنْدَاداً وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ــ ٢٢ . وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا
عَلَى عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ــ ٢٣ . فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَٱتَّقُوا ٱلنَّارَ ٱلَّتِي
وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ــ ٢٤ . وَبَشِّرِ ٱلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا ٱلصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ
كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقاً قَالُوا هَذَا ٱلَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا
بِهِ مُتَشَابِهاً وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ــ ٢٥ .

O men! worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may guard **(against evil) (21)*; Who made the earth a bed*** **(resting place)** ***and the sky a structure*****;** ***and*** **(*Who*)** ***sends down rain from the heaven, thereby brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits*****;** ***therefore do not set up equals to Allãh while you know*** **(22).** ***And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your***

***witnesses besides Allãh if you are truthful* (23). *But if you do* (it) *not — and never shall you do* (it) *— then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel*; *it is prepared for the unbelievers* (24). *And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds that for them are gardens in which rivers flow*; *whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say*: "*This is what was given to us before*;" *and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them*; *and in them they shall abide* (25).**

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *O men! worship your Lord . . . may guard* (against evil): The preceding nineteen verses have described the positions of the three groups category-wise: The pious ones who are on the guidance from their Lord; the disbelievers whose hearts and ears have been sealed and who have their eyes covered; and the hypocrites in whose hearts there is disease so Allãh added to their disease and they are deaf, dumb and blind.

In this background, Allãh calls the men to be His good servants, to worship Him and to join, not the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but the pious ones, those who guard themselves against evil. This context shows that the clause, "so that you may guard (against evil)", is governed by the verb "worship" — you should worship Allãh to join those who guard against evil, who are pious. It may also be governed by the verb, "created" — Allãh created you in order that you may guard yourselves against evil.

QUR'ÃN: *Who made the earth a bed . . . do not set up equals to Allãh while you know*: "*al-Andãd*" (الأنداد) is plural of *an-*

nidd (اَلنِّدُّ = alike, equal, peer). The phrase, "while you know", is unconditional, and grammatically it is circumstantial phrase of "do not set up"; these two factors lend extra-ordinary force to the prohibition of setting up equals to Allãh. The sentence shows that a man who has even a little knowledge should not ascribe any equal or partner to Allãh; he should know that it is Allãh Who has created him and those before him and arranged and managed this system in the creation for their sustenance and survival.

QUR'ÃN: *And if you are in doubt . . . then produce a chapter like it . . .*: It is a challenge which human beings and jinn can never meet. This challenge has been offered to demonstrate the miracle of the Qur'ãn, to show that it is a Book sent down by Allãh, there is no doubt in it; that it has been revealed as an ever-lasting miracle that will remain alive till the end of the world. This challenge has repeatedly been given in the Qur'ãn:

Say: "*If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'ãn, they could not bring the like of it, even though some of them were aiders of the others*" (17:88).

Or, do they say: *"He has forged it?" Say*: *"Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call upon whom you can besides Allãh, if you are truthful*" (11:13)

This context shows that the pronoun "it" in "like it" refers to "that which We have revealed to Our servant", that is, the Qur'ãn. It is a challenge to them to bring a like of the Qur'ãn in its inimitable style and meaning.

The word "*min mithlihi*" (مِنْ مِثْلِهِ = translated here as "like it") may also be rendered as "from like him". In that case it will be a challenge to bring a like of the Qur'ãn written by someone like the Holy Prophet. This Qur'ãn has been brought by a person who was never taught by any teacher, who had not learnt these valuable and marvellous truths from any

human being, nor had he taken this most eloquent style from any mortal. If the disbelievers thought that such a man can write such a Book, then let them bring its like from some such illiterate man. In this light, the verse would have the same import as the following one:

Say: *"If Allãh had desired* (otherwise) *I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you*; *indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it*; *do you not then understand?*" (10:16)

Both explanations have been given in some traditions. Obviously, this and the other challenging verses dare the antagonists to bring, if they can, like of even the shortest chapter of the Qur'ãn — say, the Chapter of *al-Kawthar* or *al-'Aṣr*.

A strange exegesis has been written by someone that "like it" means like this Chapter, The Cow, in which this verse occurs. This explanation is totally devoid of good literary taste. Those who disbelieved in the Qur'ãn, rejected the whole Book as being forged against Allãh. What purpose could be served by challenging them to bring a Chapter like that of The Cow? Such a challenge would, in final analysis, mean this: If you are in doubt the short Chapter of *al-Kawthar* or *al-Ikhlãṣ,* then bring a like of the largest Chapter of The Cow. Absurd, isn't it !

MIRACLE AND ITS QUIDDITY

The claim of the Qur'ãn that it is a miraculous sign, and the challenge to the doubters offered by this verse, contains in reality two claims: First, that miracles, super-natural events, do occur; second, that the Qur'ãn is one of such miracles. If the second claim is proved, the first will automatically be proved. That is why the Qur'ãn has challenged the men to bring its like, as it would prove both aspects of the claim.

How does a miracle happen? After all, it is against the

deep-rooted system of the cause-and-effect which is never negated. The Qur'ãn explains this subject in the following two stages:

First: The miracle is a reality; the Qur'ãn is one of the miracles, which in itself proves the existence of miracles in general; it offers a challenge to its adversaries, and in this way proves its truth.

Second: What is the reality of miracle? How can a thing happen in this world of nature against the universal law of the cause-and-effect?

THE MIRACLE OF THE QUR'ÃN

Undoubtedly, the Qur'ãn has offered a continuing challenge, by which it proves itself to be a miracle. This challenge has been given in many verses of Meccan as well as Medinite period. All of them show that this Book is a divine miracle, a super-natural sign. The verse under discussion, "And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it . . .", is one of those challenges: Produce a chapter like one of the Qur'ãn from someone like the Prophet. It should be noted that it does not purport to prove the prophethood of Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) directly; it does not say, 'if you are in doubt as to the prophethood of Our servant'; instead it says, `if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant'. Likewise, all the challenges given in the Qur'ãn aim to prove that this Book is a super-natural sign from Allãh. And when this fact is established, the prophethood of the Prophet will automatically be proved.

The verses of challenge vary in their scope and generality. The most general is the verse: *Say*: *"If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'ãn, they could not bring the like of it, even though some of them were aiders of the others*" (17:88). The verse is of Meccan period, and it is easy to see that it contains an all-encompassing challenge.

This challenge is not confined to its unsurpassed eloquence and purest style. Otherwise, the challenge would not cover non-Arabs; it could be addressed to only those who spoke pure Arabic before it was debased by foreign influence — in other words, only to the Arabs of the days of paganism or to those whose life-span bridged the time of paganism and that of Islam. But the verse challenges not only the whole mankind but confronts the *jinn* also.

As for other special qualities of the Qur'ãn (like the exposition of spiritual realities, the high morals, the most comprehensive and the fairest legal code, the information of the things unseen as well as other subjects which the man had not even thought of when the Qur'ãn was revealed), they are of such a nature that only a selected group — and not the whole mankind — may appreciate them. But the challenge is general and covers elites and common men and *jinn*. It is clear in this light that it is not confined to any one quality; it defies them to bring a like of this Book in all its qualities together.

The Qur'ãn is a miracle: For a man of eloquence, in its spellbinding sublimity and style; for a sage, in its sagacity; for a scholar, in its knowledge; for a sociologist, in its social system; for a legislator, in its legislation; for a politician, in its politics; for a ruler, in its rule of justice; and for the whole world, in such things which none of them can grasp like the information of the unseen, prophecies of future events, freedom from discrepancy in its laws, knowledge and expression.

The Qur'ãn claims to be a comprehensive miracle, covering all its aspects. It is a miracle for every individual man and *jinn* — an average person or a select one, learned or ignorant, man or woman, of a very high rank of excellence or of a lower level — in short, anyone who has enough intelligence to understand the Qur'ãnic speech. Man, by nature, comprehends a virtue and understands its various grades. Every person should look into an excellence which he

or someone else has got; then he should compare that excellence or virtue with what the Qur'ãn contains of the same; and then he should decide — in all honestly and justice — whether it is in human power to bring a like of the Qur'ãn. Is it possible for a man to bring such divine knowledge, so well-reasoned, as the Qur'ãn has done? Is it within human power to build such character, based on foundation of reality, which may honestly be compared with the Qur'ãnic teaching in purity and excellence? Can human beings legislate perfect laws covering all human activities without blundering into discrepancies, with the spirit of monotheism and the word of piety permeating every order and its every implication, with purity and cleanliness feeding its root and shoots? Can such astonishing comprehensiveness and all-inclusiveness come from an untaught man? A man who was born and brought up among a people whose only share in human virtues was a life sustained with raids, plunders and wars; they buried their daughters alive, and killed their children for fear of poverty; they boasted of their fathers and married their mothers; debauchery was their pride; they condemned knowledge and showed off their ignorance; in spite of their haughtiness and chauvinism, they were preyed upon by every hunter and were easy targets for anyone whowished to conquer them — one day they were under the Yemenite rule, the next day were ruled over Or the Ethiopians; some day Byzantine emperors lorded over them, the other day it was Persia's turn to humiliate them. This is the picture, in miniature, of the Arabs before Islam. And in such environment, the Qur'ãn was brought by the Prophet of Islam.

Again, suppose a man brings a book, claiming that it is a guidance for the worlds. Will he dare to include in it the news and information of the unseen — both past and future — not in one or two places but spread over a lot of topics — in stories, in prophecies, and about the events that are to happen in future? And what will be your judgement if not a single detail proves wrong?

Once again, man is a part of this natural world; this world is constantly changing and developing from perfection to perfection. Is it possible for a man to talk about each and every affair of human life; to give the world knowledge, laws, wisdom, admonition, parables, stories — concerning every matter, big or small — without committing any discrepancy, without showing any trace of gradual development? And especially so, if his talks are not delivered all at one time, are delivered piecemeal in a long period of twenty-three years? And even more so when some topics are repeated again and again, when there are shoots sprouting from a previously planted root? Undoubtedly, it is not possible, because no man can remain unchanged in his knowledge and outlook throughout his life.

When a man ponders over these facts about the Qur'ãn — containing the above-mentioned distinctions besides many more — he can entertain no doubt whatsoever about its divine origin; he will feel sure that it is beyond human power, over and above the natural and material causes. If someone is not in a position to understand this clear fact, he should follow the dictate of his nature — in other words, he should ask those who are knowledge-able about this subject.

Question: Why did not the Qur'ãn confine its challenge to the elite only? What is the use of including general public in this call? After all, a common man is easily_ influenced by such claims and it takes him no time to accept pretensions of every pretender. Don't you see that it was this group that surrendered to al-Bãb, al -Bahã', Mirzã Ghulãm Aḥmad Qãdiyãni and al-Musaylamah, even though what those deceivers brought as their proof was more like a senseless jabber and raving delirium than a sensible talk?

Reply: It was the only way to keep the miracle all-inclusive; the only possible method for discerning the perfection and excellence in a quality that has various ranks and grades. People have different grades of understanding;

likewise, the virtues differ in their perfection. Those who have high level of understanding and correct perception will easily appreciate the high quality of an excellent work. Those who have a lower understanding should refer to the former for their judgement. It is the dictate of nature and demand of human psyche.

A miracle that can be universal and comprehensive, that can be addressed to every individual, in every place and at all times, that can be conveyed to all and can remain alive to the last day of the world, must necessarily be a set of divine know-ledge and spiritual realities. All other miracles were either material objects or a tangible event that were governed by the laws of nature inasmuch as they were confined to a certain time and space. They were seen by only a limited number of people; even supposing, for the sake of argument, that it was observed by all people of that particular place, it could not be witnessed by people of other localities; and suppose that an impossible happened, that is, it was seen by the whole world, it could not continue eternally for the future generations to observe.

It was for this reason that Allãh chose this academic and spiritual miracle, that is, the Qur'ãn, for the Prophet of Islam, so that it may continue its challenge to the whole mankind — in all places and in all generations. And thus the miracle continues in its generality, defying every person, in every area and every era.

FIRST SPECIFIC CHALLENGE: THE KNOWLEDGE IT CONTAINS

Now we come to its specific challenges. It has offered particular challenge concerning the knowledge it imparts and cognition it contains. Allãh says: . . . *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* (16:89); . . . *nor anything green nor dry but* (it is all) *in a clear book*

(6:59). There are many other verses of the same theme. Look at the fundamental teachings given in the text of the Qur'ãn; then see its details for which it has referred the people to the Prophet — as Allãh says: . . . *and whatever the Apostle gives you, take it, and from what-ever he forbids you, keep back* . . . (59:7); . . . *that you may judge between people by means of that which Allãh has taught you* (4:105). Then you will know that Islam has put its attention to all big and small topics relevant to divine knowledge, moral virtues and religious laws — covering worship, mutual dealings, social regulations, penal code, and, in short, everything that affects life and character. All this is based on the foundation of human nature and monotheism. Analyse the details and you will find monotheism as their basis; combine the basis with relevant principles and you will get the details.

Then it has declared that all this knowledge will remain valid to the end of the world; will continue to guide mankind and will always be relevant to human needs and environment. Allãh says: . . . *and most surely it is a Mighty Book*: *Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it*; *a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One* (41:41—42). *Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian* (15:9). In other words, it is a Book which is beyond the reach of the law of change and development; it will never be disturbed by abrogation.

A question may be asked here: The sociologists are of the opinion that the laws and regulations controlling the society must change according to the changes occurring in the structure of society. As the time passes and civilization marches ahead, it becomes necessary to change the laws to cope with the changed situation. Then how can the *shari `ah of* Islam continue without any change or abrogation all these centuries? We shall explain this matter, God willing, under the verse: *Mankind was but one people* . . . (2:213). Here it is enough to point out that the Qur'ãn has built its laws on the foundation *of*

monotheism and excellent ethics that spring from healthy human nature; it declares that legislation must grow up from the seed *of* creation and existence. The scholars *of* sociology, on the other hand, have fixed their eyes on changes *of* society, totally ignoring the spiritual side *of* monotheism and morality. As a result, their word concentrates on material development of the society — and society is not a living organism, it does not have a soul; and the word of Allãh is the highest.

SECOND SPECIFIC CHALLENGE: THE RECIPIENT OF THE REVELATION

Another aspect of this challenge is the personality of the untaught Prophet who brought this Qur'ãn as a miracle in its words and in its meanings. He had not learnt from any teacher, was not trained by any instructor. This challenge is contained in the following words of Allãh: *Say*: *"If Allãh had desired* (otherwise) *I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you*; *indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it*; *do you not then understand?*" (10:16). The Prophet lived among them as one of them. In all those years, he had not risen above them in scholarship, nor was he renowned for any knowledge. He did not deliver any lecture, nor did he compose a single line of poetry, upto his fortieth year — that is to say, for about two-thirds of his total life-span; he did not get any distinction in literature or scholarship all these years. Then, all of a sudden, he brought what he said was the revelation from God, before which giants of literature felt like pigmies, and eloquent speakers became tongue-tied. He published that revelation to the furthest limits of the world, but no one dared to bring its like in all these centuries.

The outmost that his adversaries could say was that he must have learnt those stories from Christian monks during his trade-journeys to Syria. But he had gone to Syria only twice:

First, in his early childhood, with his uncle, Abu Tãlib and then, at the age of twenty-five, with Maysarah, the slave of Khadījah. In both these journeys he was never alone day or night, and no-body ever reported any such meeting with any supposed teacher. Even if we accept for the sake of argument that such training session did take place, many questions will arise from it: Who taught him this divine knowledge of monotheism? Where did he get these wise rules and these realities? And lastly, who gave him this unsurpassed elocution which has kept the silver-tongued elocutionists dumbfounded all these years?

Another suggestion was that he learned these sublime truths from a blacksmith, of Roman origin, who made and sold swords. Allãh replied to this allegation in this verse: *And certainly We know that they say*: *"Only a mortal teaches him". The tongue of him whom they are inclined to blame for it is barbarous, and this is clear Arabic language* (16:103).

A third accusation was that he gained this knowledge from Salmãn, the Persian, who allegedly knew all about various religions and sects. But Salmãn met the Prophet in Medina and thereafter accepted Islam, while the major portion of the Qur'ãn was revealed at Mecca, and that part contained all the principles, know-ledge and stories that were later repeated at Medina — we may say that Meccan revelation had more of these thing, than the verses revealed at Medina. The question is: What knowledge did Salmãn add after his conversion to Islam? Nothing.

Moreover, read the Old and the New Testaments, and compare the stories of the previous prophets and their people written in them with those revealed in the Qur'ãn. You will see that the latter's history and stories are different from the former's. The Bible attributes such sins and evils to the prophets of Allãh which one would be loath to ascribe to an average man of good character. But the Qur'ãn absolves them from such blames. Then you will find in the Bible many topics that have no bearing on, and relevance to, the spiritual knowledge or

moral excellence. The Qur'ãn never talks except about that which is truly beneficial to people in their spiritual upliftment and character-building.

THIRD SPECIFIC CHALLENGE: ITS PROPHECIES AND INFORMATION OF UNSEEN

The Qur'ãn's third specific challenge is concerning its prophecies and the information it gives of the unseen. Such verses may be divided in four categories:

1. The information about previous prophets and their nations: Allãh says about some of these stories: *These are of the tidings of the unseen which We revealed to you*; *you did not know them —* (neither) *you nor your people — before this . . .* (11:49); and He says after the story of Yũsuf: *This is of the tidings of the unseen* (which) *We revealed to you, and you were not with them when they resolved upon their affair, and they were devising plans* (12:102); also, about the story of Maryam: *This is of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you*; *and you were not with them when they cast their pens* (to decide) *which of them should have Maryam in his charge, and you were not with them when they contended one with another* (3:44); and about `Isã: *Such is 'Isã, son of Maryam*; (this is) *the saying of truth about which they dispute* (19:34). There are many verses of the same import.

Prophecies of future events: For example: The Romans would avenge their defeat: *The Romans are vanquished, in a near land*; *and they, after being vanquished, shall overcome, within a few years* (30:2-4); the Prophet would return to Mecca after his *hijrah*: *Most surely He Who has made the Qur'ãn binding on you will bring you back to the destination* (28:85); the vision of the Prophet would certainly come true: *Certainly Allãh had shown to His Apostle the vision with truth*: *You shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allãh pleases, in security,* (some) *having their heads shaved and* (others) *having their hair-cut, you shall not fear* (48:27); the

behaviour, in future, of a group of Muslims: *Those who are left behind will say when you set forth for the gaining of acquisition*: *Allow us* (that) *we may follow you. They desire to change the words of Allãh* (48:15); nobody would be able to harm the Prophet: . . . *and Allãh will protect you form the men* (5:70); the Qur'ãn will remain under the protection of Allãh: *Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian* (15:9). We may include in this category other numerous verses giving good tidings to the believers *and* threatening the disbelievers and pagans of Mecca of various retributions.

In this category come the prophecies of the signs and disturbances appearing soon before the Day of Judgement. For example: *And it is forbidden to a town which We destroyed that they shall not return, until when Gog and Magog are let loose and they shall hasten forth from every elevated place. And the true promise shall draw nigh, then lo! the eyes of those who disbelieved shall be fixedly open: O woe to us! surely we were in heedlessness as to this; nay, we were unjust ones* (21:95-97). *Allãh has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors those before them* . . . (24:55). *Say*: *"He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties*; *and make some of you taste the fighting of to others. . . ."* (6:65).

3. The verses based on such scientific realities which were unknown, and even unthought-of, when the Qur'ãn was revealed, and which have just now been discovered after long researches: *And We send the winds fertilizing* (15:22); *And the earth — We have spread it forth and put in it anchors* (*i.e.* mountains) *and caused to grow in it of everything, weighed* (15:19); *Have We not made the earth a resting place, and the mountains as pegs* (therein)? (78:6-7).

The verses that allude to many great events and disorders that were to happen in the Islamic community, or the world in

general, after the lifetime of the Prophet. For example: *O you who believe! whoever of you turns back from his religion, then soon Allãh will bring a people that He shall love them and they shall love Him, humbled before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allãh's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer*; *this is Allãh's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases* (5:54); *And every nation had an apostle*; *so when their apostle came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And they say*: *"When will this threat come about, if you are truthful?" Say*; *"I do not control for myself any harm, or any benefit, except what Allãh pleases*; *every nation has a term*; *when their term comes, they shall not then remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before* (their time)". *Say*: *"Tell me if His punishment overtakes you by night or by day! what then is there of it that the guilty would hasten on?"* (10:47-50); *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion in natural devotion* (to the truth), *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men*; *. . . and be not of the polytheists, of those who divided their religion and became sects*; *every sect rejoicing in what they had with them* (30:30 -32). There are many verses that come into this category, and we shall describe some of them when explaining the seventeenth chapter (The Night-journey). It should be noted here that this category is one of the specialities of this book of ours.

FOURTH SPECIFIC CHALLENGE: NO DISCREPANCIES IN THE QUR'ÃN

It is one of the challenges of the Qur'ãn that there is no discrepancy in it. Allãh says: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82).

This is a material world, governed by the law of change and development. Every item in this world changes day after day

from weakness to strength, from deficiency to perfection — in its own self as well as in all its concomitants and attachments. Man is no exception to this rule. He also undergoes constant change and development in his existence as well as in effects of his actions and reactions. And this law applies also to what he gets through his perception and intellect. Every man finds that his to-day is a bit more perfect than his yesterday. Every passing hour makes him realizewhat mistakes he had committed in the past hour, what erroneous views he had held a few hours back. It is a fact that no sane person can deny.

In this background, look at the Qur'ãn. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) brought this book piece by piece, one small chapter or a few verses at a time. It continued for twenty-three years in different places, various conditions and divergent situations: In Mecca and Medina, by day and by night, during journeys and at home, in thick of battle and in time of peace, during hard up days and in easy times, when Muslims suffered defeat and when they were victorious, in safety and in danger. It contained all types of subjects — it unveiled spiritual knowledge, taught excellent ethics and ordained laws for every conceivable aspect of life. In spite of all these factors, there is not a whiff of discrepancy in its matter or meaning — it is an oft-repeated book whose parts resemble one with the other. There is not a least difference, contradiction or contrariety in the realities it has explained, in the principles it has laid down. One verse explains the rest, one sentence clarifies the others, as Ali (a.s.) said: "Its one part speaks with the other, and one portion testifies about the others."

No doubt, if such a book would have been from other than Allãh, there would have been a lot of ups and downs in its style; the speech would have bounced between elegance and clumsiness; the themes would have ranged from correct to erroneous. In short, the book would have been uneven, unbalanced and full of discrepancies.

Question: This is a claim without any proof. Non-

Muslim scholars have written many books showing that the Qur'ãn suffers from many discrepancies and mistakes — in construction of sentences (which fall short of the standard of eloquence) as well as in themes and meanings (which contain errors in its views and teachings). The replies given by the Muslims are just piteous attempts to explain away those contradictions and shortcomings. Those are defects that a correct and good speech should not have had in the first place.

Reply: The so-called discrepancies and defects have not been discovered by our adversaries; they have been mentioned (together with their replies) by Muslims in their books of exegesis and other subjects related to the Qur'ãn (not excepting this book of ours); the Muslim authors have used this method to show that what looks at the first glance an unusual style or expression is in fact a gem of highest eloquence. The non-Muslim writers have just picked out those supposed defects and discrepancies and collected them in their books, ignoring the replies that showed the real beauty of those expressions. If eye of love is blind, the eye of enmity is not any brighter.

Question: Well, how can you explain away the difficulty that arises out of abrogation? Many Qur'ãnic verses have been abrogated, as the Qur'ãn itself says: *Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it* (2:106); *And when We change* (one) *communication for* (an-other) *communication, and Allãh knows best what He reveals . . .* (16:101). Abrogation is at least a change of opinion, an inconsistency of thought, if not an outright contradiction in speech.

Reply: Abrogation is neither a contradiction in speech nor a change of opinion or thought. A rule is abrogated when the society, the environment, changes in such a way that the under-lying wisdom of that rule remains no longer valid. The difference, if any, is not in the opinion; it is rather in the subject matter. A clear evidence of it may be seen in the

abrogated verses themselves — they invariably always contained some phrases or clauses to show that the given order was a temporary one, that it would soon be abrogated. For example: *And as for those who are guilty of lewdness from among your women, call to witness against them four* (witnesses) *from among you*; *then if they bear witness confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allãh makes some way for them* (4:15). Note the last sentence and the hint it gives. Another example: *Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith . . . But pardon and forgive* (them) *until Allãh should bring about His command* (2:109). Here too the concluding phrase shows that the rule ordained was not for ever.

FIFTH SPECIFIC CHALLENGE: ITS ELOQUENCE

The Qur'ãn has also challenged its adversaries to bring its like in its eloquence. Allãh says: *Or, do they say*: *"He has forged it?" Say*: *"Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call upon whom you can besides Allãh, if you are truthful." But if they do not answer you, then know that it is revealed by Allãh's knowledge and that there is no god but He*; *will you then submit?* (11:13 -14) These verses were revealed at Mecca. Again Allãh says: *Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say*: *"Then bring a chapter like this and call whom you can besides Allãh, if you are truthful." Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to them* (10:38-39). These are Meccan verses too. All these verses challenge the doubters and disbelievers to bring the like of ten or even one chapter of the Qur'ãn in its style and eloquence, as eloquence was the most accomplished art of the Arabs of those days. Undoubtedly, they had reached the highest peak of eloquence. No preceding, contemporary or following nation ever reached even near them in their mastery

of literature. Their expression was elegant, their style enchanting; their words perfectly fitted their themes and meanings; their talks were always in harmony with the occasions; their words were plain and their sentences beautiful; and their speech had an easy flow and inimitable grace. It was a way of which they were the pioneers and the only walkers. The Qur'ãn challenged such a nation in every possible way, so as to excite their rage, rouse their fury and fire them with determination to meet the challenge. It should not be forgotten that they were extremely proud of their art of eloquence and -never acknowledged the least elocutionary skill to anyone else. In spite of that arrogance of theirs, the Prophet dared them to bring just one chapter like the Qur'ãn. It is a challenge that even now is ringing in the ears of disbelievers, defying them to forge, if they can, just one chapter like it. But the Arabs' only answer was to avoid it; the more forcefully they were challenged, the more evident their helplessness was. Ultimately, they used to hide themselves to avoid hearing its sound. Allãh says: *Now surely they fold up their breasts that they may conceal from Him*; *now surely, when they put their garments as a covering, He knows what they conceal and what they make known* (11:5).

Even after fourteen centuries, no one has been able to bring its like. Those who tried it put themselves to shame and made themselves targets of ridicule. History has preserved some samples of those pathetic attempts. Musaylamah (who posed as a prophet) wrote these words in reply to the Qur'ãn ch. 105 (The Elephant): "The elephant, what is the elephant! And what will make you understand what the elephant is? It has an unwholesome tail, and a long trunk." In another "verse", which he recited before al-Sajãḥ (who also claimed to be a prophetess), he said: ". . . then we penetrate it into you women a hard penetration, and take it out from you forcefully . . ." Look at this rigmarole and decide its worth. A Christian in latter days wrote this "chapter" in reply to the Chapter of The Opening: "All praise is due to the Beneficent, the Lord of the

beings, the king, the Subduer. For Thee is the worship, and from Thee is the help. Guide us to the path of faith."

All attempts to meet this challenge suffered the same fate.

Two Questions:

First: It is unreasonable to say that a speech can reach a level where it would become a miracle, a super-natural work. Language has been made by human ingenuity. How can a product of nature be above the reach of nature? A maker is more powerful than the thing he makes; a cause always encompasses its effect. It is the man who invented the words to meet his social needs, to convey to others' minds what one thinks or feels. The relationship of a word with its meaning is created by man. It is a subjective quality given to the word by man. This quality cannot reach beyond the ability of the maker himself. In other words, it is impossible for a speech to rise above the human ability.

Second: Let us accept for the time being that a particular composition of a speech may reach super-natural level, may be-come a miracle. Every intended theme may be clothed in varioussentences, each differing from the others in grades of perfection; and out of those numerous sentences one would reach a standard which would be beyond human ability and power — and that composition would be a miracle. It means that for every intended meaning there would be one miraculous sentence; and other structures would be below that standard. But we see that the Qur'ãn, more often than not, repeats many themes — and especially the stories — using different compositions and dissimilar styles. Whichever sentence-structure and style is accepted as a miracle, the other ones would fall short of that standard.

Reply: Before replying to these objections one matter should be clarified here.

It were such questions which led some Muslim scholars to believe in the theory of *aṣ-ṣarf* (الصَّرْفُ = to turn away):

They believed like other Muslims that it was impossible for men to bring a like of the whole Qur'ãn; or its ten chapters, or even one chapter. But, according to them, this inability of men was not based on the fact that the Qur'ãnic speech in itself was beyond the human power. The real reason was that Allãh, by His predominant will and decree, has turned away and dissuaded would-be adversaries from bringing its like. Allãh has done so to preserve and protect the sanctity of the prophethood.

This theory was totally wrong. This explanation is not in conformity with the clear import of the challenging verses. Allãh says for example: *Or, do they say*: *"He has forged it?" Say*: *"Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call upon whom you can besides Allãh, if you are truthful." But if they do not answer you, then know that it is revealed by Allãh's knowledge and that there is no god but He*; *will you then submit?* (11:13-14). Ponder on the sentences, "then know that it is revealed by Allãh's knowledge". The challenge was meant to prove that the Qur'ãn was a revelation; that it was not a speech forged by the Apostle; and that it was revealed by Allãh's knowledge and not by the Satãns. The same theme is found in the following verses:

Or, do they say: *"He has forged it." Nay! they do not believe. Then let them bring a talk like it if they are truthful.* (52:33-34). *And the Satãns have not come down with it*; *and it behoves them not, and they have not the power to do* (*it*). *Most surely they are far removed from the hearing* (of it) (26:210-212). On the other hand, this theory *of* "turning away" implies that the reality of the Qur'ãn's miracle was not in its being a revelation from Allãh; the miracle was that Allãh pre-vented the people from bringing a like of it. Again look at the verse: *Or, do they say*: *"He has forged it?" Say*: *"Then bring a chapter like this and call whom you can besides Allãh, if you are truthful." Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to*

them . . . (10:38 -39). This verse clearly says that what made them helpless before the Qur'ãn, what made it impossible for them to bring a like *of* even one *of* its chapters, was the fact that it has a final interpretation whose knowledge is reserved for Allãh — a knowledge which they lacked. It is this inherent quality *of* the Qur'ãn which vanquished the adversaries. It was not that they had ability to bring its like but Allãh pre-vented them from doing so. Then, there is the verse: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82). It shows that the miracle is in the inherent quality *of* the Qur'ãn that it was free from discrepancy in its words and meanings — because it is a quality which is not within the power of any creature — not that there was some discrepancy in this Book, but Allãh prevented people from finding it out.

All these Qur'ãnic declarations prove that the theory *of aṣ-ṣarf* has no leg to stand, and one should not take it seriously.

Now we come to the objections mentioned earlier:

It is a fallacious argument that as the language is a product *of* human ingenuity, it can never reach a level which would be beyond the grasp or ability *of* human beings; language, being a product, cannot be more powerful than its producer. The fallacy lies in the fact that what has been invented by man is simple words for particular meanings. But this congruity *of* the words with their meanings does not teach the man how to arrange those words, how to plan, draft and deliver a talk in the best possible way — in a way that the talk reflects the beauty of the meaning as it is in the mind,and the meaning in its turn becomes a mirror of the reality, remains in complete agreement with the fact. It requires a dexterity in the art of eloquence, an adroitness in elocution; also it depends on sharp intelligence and comprehensive knowledge so that the speaker may be fully cognizant of all aspects of the subject matter. It is this skill and knowledge that differs from man to man, and creates difference between talk and talk in their respective

perfection and beauty.

So, there are three aspects of a human talk; Knowledge of language — a man may be having the most comprehensive know-ledge of the words of a language, without being able to speak it; elocutionary skill — a man may be the most accomplished orator, without being cognizant of material and spiritual realities; Know-ledge of realities — a man may be the most learned scientist or theologian without having the ability to express his views and meanings intelligibly. These three factors may be found separately (as mentioned above) and may also combine together in some people. And on them depend the beauty and the eloquence of a speech.

The fist factor — single words for their meanings — has been invented by social instinct of man. But the remaining two depend on intellectual refinement and delicate discernment.

Human perception, intelligence and discernment is limited and restricted. We cannot comprehend all the details of an event,
all concomitants of a fact. As a result, we cannot be sure of being
right at any time. Furthermore, we are gradually moving from deficiency to perfection, and so is our perception and discernment. Look at any spellbinding orator or enchanting poet; com-
pare his earlier work with his latest and you will see the difference.
In this background, let us look at human speech — any human speech. First, we cannot be sure that it is free from errors
of fact and judgement, because, as mentioned above, no speaker
can have comprehensive knowledge of all the details and concomitants of an event. Second, it will not be on the same level with speaker's former or later speech. Not only that: Even in the

same speech the beginning will surely be on a level different from
that of the end, although we, probably, will not be able to discern it because of the minuteness of difference.

Now, when we find a decisive speech, based on comprehensive knowledge, and free from all types of discrepancy, we will have to admit that it is not the work of a mortal man. This reality has been described in the following verses: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82); (I swear) *by the heaven endued with rotation, and by the earth splitting* (with plants etc.), *most surely it is a decisive word, and it is not a jest* (86:11-14). Note the adjectives used for the heaven and the earth — they point to the constant changes occur-ring therein, because the oath is about a Book which is free from change and difference, inasmuch as it is based on an unchangeable and lasting reality, that is, its "interpretation". (It is a Qur'ãnic terminology that will be explained in ch. 3.) Also, Allãh says: *Nay! it is a glorious Qur'ãn, in a guarded tablet* (85: 21—22); (I swear) *by the Book that makes manifest* (the truth); *surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ãn so that you may under-stand. And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom* (43:2 - 4); *But nay!* (*I* swear) *by the falling of stars*; *and most certainly it is a great oath if you only knew*; *most surely it is an honoured Qur'ãn, in a book that is hidden*; *none do touch it save the purified ones. A revelation by the Lord of the worlds* (56:75 - 80).These and other similar verses show that the Qur'ãn is based on established realities that do not change, that are never altered. And, therefore, the Qur'ãn itself is safe from change, alteration and discrepancy.

To come back to the main objection: Accepted that language has been made by men. But it does not mean that there cannot be found a piece of literature that is beyond the

reach of the very men who made the language. Otherwise, we would have to say that a sword-maker must be the bravest of all the swordsmen, the inventor of chess or lute must be the most accomplished chess-master or lutanist!

The perfect eloquence demands that, first, the word should be in complete harmony with the intended meaning, and, second, the conveyed meaning must be in accordance with the establishedfact. How the words fit the meanings? The structural sequence of the words and their parts should perfectly agree with the natural order of the intended meaning and its parts — bringing the man-made language and sentences in total agreement with the nature. (See for details *Dalã'ilu 'l-i'jãz* of ash-Shaykh `Abdu 'l-Qãhir al-Jurjãni.) As for the meaning, it must be correct and true, based on a real fact existing outside our imagination — and that fact should be of permanent value, unchangeable and unalterable. The first quality (the agreement of the word with meaning) depends on this basic quality of the meaning. A very eloquent sweet-sounding jocular speech cannot stand before a serious talk; nor can an eloquent, serious speech — if it is based on wrong premises — be equal to a talk that reflects true facts and comprehensive wisdom.

A speech attains the highest standard of eloquence when its words are sweet, its style free-flowing, its meaning fitting the occasion and its conveyed proposition based on true facts.

Such a talk, based as it is on reality, can never differ with other realities, can never disagree with other truths. Truth and reality is a non-divisible entity. Truth cannot refute another truth; reality cannot oppose another reality. Lie, on the other hand, may be in opposition to another lie as it surely is against the truth. Ponder on the verse: . . . *and what is there after the truth but error* (10:32). Note that truth is singular, there is no division in it. Again Allãh says: . . . *and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you away from*

His ways . . . (6:153). Lie has many ways, it is not only disunited but also disuniting.

Obviously, there can be no difference whatsoever between one truth and the other; instead, there shall be total union and unison between them — one truth will lead to the other, one reality will guide to the other; thus, one part of the Qur'ãn confirms the others, one sentence testifies for the others.

It is a wonderful quality of the Qur'ãn. Take any verse; it is clear in its meaning; add to it another relevant verse equally clear; and you will find them together pointing to a new reality that was not shown by either verse separately: then put them side by side with a third relevant verse, and you will gain fresh insight into new sublime realities. It is a unique quality of the Qur'ãn, and you will see many examples of this special characteristic in this book. Unfortunately the exegetes had so far neglected this method. Had they followed this way since the early days, they would have discovered by now so much of its hidden treasures.

This lengthy discourse was necessary to show that the two objections laid down against the Qur'ãnic miracle of eloquence were baseless. Miraculous eloquence is not based on words alone. Therefore, it is out of place to say that as it is man who had made the language, how can any speech be above the reach of the man himself? Also, there is no room for the question that as only one out of many possible compositions can be the highest, how is it possible to express one idea in different ways, and then to claim that all were of miraculous standard? Our foregoing explanation has made it clear that the miracle of eloquence depends on meaning — on its agreement with sublime unchangeable reality and on its conformity with the words.

THE REALITY OF MIRACLE: ACCORDING TO THE QUR'ÃN

The Qur'ãn repeatedly asserts the occurrence of miracle — an unusual preternatural phenomenon, which shows the authority of metaphysical forces over the physical and material world. Miracle is not something against self-evident rational truth.

Some people have tried to explain away the verses that describe various miracles; their aim was to make the Qur'ãn fit the principles of modern physical sciences. But such attempts are unacceptable, as they are a forced burden on the language and the Qur'ãn.

We are going to explain, under various headings, what the Qur'ãn teaches us about the meaning and reality of miracle.

1. The Qur'ãn Confirms the General Rule of the Cause-and-Effect

The Qur'ãn says that in this natural world every thing, every effect, has a cause; that there is a system of cause-and-effectpermeating through this world. It is a self-evident reality; and on this truth depend the scientific and academic researches and discussions. Man by nature believes that there must be a cause for every natural phenomenon. Likewise, academic researches try to find out relevant causes for all such happenings. What is a cause? It is such a thing, or a combination of things, that when-ever it occurs, another thing — its effect — unfailingly comes into being. We try to find out by experiments the causes of various things. For example, experience has taught us that if there is any bum, it must have been caused by fire, movement, friction or some such cause. A cause must be unfailable, comprehensive and universal. In other words, whenever and wherever the cause is found, its effect must be found.

This matter is clearly confirmed by the Qur'ãn. It takes this principle for granted when it talks about life, death, sustenance and other heavenly or earthly phenomena — although it ultimately ascribes all the effects, and their causes too, to Allãh.

The Qur'ãn, therefore, confirms the general system of the cause-and-effect; whenever a cause is found (with all its necessary conditions) its effect must come into being, and whenever we see an effect, it surely and unfailingly proves the existence of its cause.

2. The Qur'ãn Affirms Miracles (Super-Natural Events)

The Qur'ãn, nevertheless, narrates many an event that goes against the normal, natural system of the cause-and-effect. It ascribes many super-natural miracles to various prophets, like Nũḥ, Hũd, Ṣãliḥ, Ibrãhīm, Lũṭ, Dãwũd, Sulaymãn, Mũsã, `Isã and Muḥammad (peace of Allãh be on them all!). It should not be forgotten here that those events, although abnormal and uncustomary, were not inherently impossible; they were not like an assertion that 'A positive proposition and its opposite are affirmed together and are negated together'; or like a statement that 'A thing can be separated from its own self'; or that 'One is not a half of two'. We instinctively know that such propositions are impossible, they cannot be.

But the miracles shown by the prophets were not of this category; otherwise, the minds of untold billions of religionists, since the dawn of humanity, would not have accepted them and believed in them. No man accepts an inherently impossible statement, nor does any sane person ascribe such a thing to another.

Moreover, the effects that are called miracle are not unknown to the nature. The natural world is continuously engaged in bestowing on the matter one form after the other, turning one event into another, giving life to the dead, and

death to the living, transforming the misfortune into fortune and the comfort into discomfort. All this is happening daily in the world of nature; the only difference between a natural event and a miraculous one is in the speed and steps required to reach the goal. A natural cause brings about its effect, in special conditions, at a particular time and space, step by step in a long series of changes. The matter present in a walking-stick may one day appear in a running serpent; a disintegrating skeleton may one day become a living man — but in its natural course it will take a very long time, under certain conditions of time and space, with numerous consecutive causes which would constantly change that particular matter from one form to the other, taking it from one step to the next and then to the third and so on, until it appears in the required shape and form. In normal way, it cannot happen without its proper causes, without its necessary conditions; nor can it be brought into being by will-power of a human being. But when it comes to a miracle, it happens just by the will of the prophet, without any material cause and without any lapse of time.

Of course, it is very difficult for a simple mind — as it is for a scientific brain — to understand such super-natural events; man is, after all, accustomed to the natural-causality. On the other hand, no scientist can outright reject occurrence of super-natural phenomena even in this atomic age. Every day someone or the other demonstrates his skill bringing some super-natural events about; people see it, radios and televisions broadcast it, news-papers and magazines publish it; and nobody says that it could not have happened as it was against the laws of nature.

Such phenomena have led many modem scholars to the theory that man, like everything else, is surrounded by unknown magnetic or electric currents; man may, through rigorous training, get control over the surrounding currents, and use them to affect other material things in abnormal and unusual ways, bringing those astonishing feats about.

If this theory is proved correct and all-inclusive, it will

supersede all present theories that explain various happenings and effects in terms of motion and power; it will replace all previous causes with one all-pervasive natural cause: the magnetic currents.

This is their theory. They are right in their belief that every natural phenomenon must have a natural cause if the causal relationship between them is intact.

The Qur'ãn has not identified by name any all-pervasive natural cause that would explain all natural and super-natural events, as it is not within the main purposes of this divine book. But it affirms that every natural phenomenon has a natural cause — by permission of Allãh. In other words, every phenomenon is totally dependent on Allãh, Who has appointed for it a certain procedure, a natural cause through which it gets its existence — the existence that is given by Allãh. Allãh says: *and whoever fears Allãh He will make for him an outlet, and give him sustenance from whence he thinks not*; *and whoever trusts in Allãh, He is sufficient for him*; *surely Allãh attains His purpose*; *Allãh indeed has made a measure for every thing* (65:2- 3). Its first sentence unreservedly declares that whoever fears Allãh and has trust in Him, Allãh is sufficient for him, and He will surely manage his affairs and make him succeed, even if in the normal way it may seem impossible, even if the material causes go against him. It is supported by the following verses: *And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then verily I am very near*; *I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me* (2:186); *Call upon Me*, *I will answer you* (40:60); *Is not Allãh sufficient for His servant?* (39:36).

The next sentence, "surely Allãh attains His purpose", explains the reason of the first declaration. The same theme is found in the verse: . . . *and Allãh is predominant over His affair, but most people do not know* (12:21). This sentence too is all-inclusive and without any condition. Allãh has His own way to let a thing happen, if He so wills — even if the normal ways are

closed, even if usual paths to it are cut off.

This may possibly happen in two ways: First, Allãh may bring that thing into being simply by His will, without resorting to any material or natural cause. Second, there may be an alternative natural cause, unknown to us, which Allãh may have appointed for that phenomenon; it may be hidden from our eyes but the Maker and Creator, Who has prescribed it, knows it and uses it to attain His purpose. This second possibility seems more appropriate in view of the last sentence, "Allãh indeed has made a measure for every thing." This sentence shows that every effect, whether it is in accordance with the normal causality or not, has a measure appointed by Allãh, is related to other beings, has a connection with other things; Allãh may bring that effect into existence through any other related thing, even if the normal cause is absent. What should not be forgotten is the basic fact that it is Allãh Who has bestowed causality on a cause; this relation of cause and effect is not independent of Allãh.

Allãh has created causal relation between various things. He can attain His purpose through any way He wishes. No doubt, there is the system of cause-and-effect in the world; but this chain is in the hands of Allãh, He may use it in any way He wills. There is a real causal relation between a thing and the things that have preceded it; but that reality is not as we know it — that is why no academic or scientific theory is capable of explaining all phenomena of the world; it is really as Allãh knows, makes and manages it.

This basic principle has been referred to in the verses of "decree" or "measure": *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure* (15:21). *Surely We have created every thing according to a measure* (54:49); *. . . and Who created every thing, then ordain for it a measure* (25:2) . *Who created then made complete, and Who made* (things) *according to a measure then guided* (them to theirgoal) (87:2-3). Look also at the following verses: *No misfortune befalls on the earth nor*

in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence (57:22). *No affliction comes about but by Allãh's permission*; *and whoever believes in Allãh, He guides aright his heart*; *and Allãh is Cognizant of all things* (64:11).

These verses (and especially the first) show that the things take their particular identity in accordance with a measure appointed for it by Allãh; that measure gives it its individuality and defines it; and that measure and definition precedes the thing and then accompanies it. A thing can be properly delineated only if it is seen in its perspective, clearly defining its relation to all other things. The other related things serve as a mould that gives this item its peculiar shape and particular form. Every material effect is connected with all things which precede or accompany it. All such things together serve as the cause of this effect; and this one in its turn becomes a part of the cause of other effects that come later.

Also, it may be proved from the following two verses: *That is Allãh, your Lord, the Creator of every thing. . .* (40:62); *. . . there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock*; *surely my Lord is on the straight path* (11:56). Add to them the fact that the Qur'ãn confirms the general system of causality — and you will find the complete picture displayed before your eyes.

1. The first verse says that every thing is created by Allãh, and the second one states that creation is on a single pattern; there is no deviation in it as that would cause chaos and disturbance.

2. The Qur'ãn confirms the general system of causality for all material things.

3. It follows that every material thing and effect is invariably always created by a cause — a cause that precedes it and brings it into being. It makes no difference whether it is a normal and usual cause, or a supernatural one. There must always be a cause.

Many usual causes which sometimes fail to bring about the

expected effects are not the real causes. The real causes are those which never fail to create the expected effects. An example may be given of various diseases and their causes; influenza was previously thought to be caused by cold; but cold did not always create it, now it has been discovered that it is caused by a virus. The same is true about many supernatural feats.

3. Whatever is Caused by Natural Causes is Really Caused by Allãh

The Qur'ãn, while affirming the causal relation between a cause and its effect, ascribes every effect to Allãh. The inference is that these normal and usual causes are not independent in creating their effects; the real cause, in the true sense of this word, is only Allãh. Allãh says: *surely His is the creation and the command* (7:54); *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's* (2:284); *His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth* (57:5); *Say*: *"All is from Allãh"* (4:78). There are numerous such verses showing that everything belongs exclusively to Allãh; He may deal with it in any way He likes; no one else can handle it at all except by permission of Allãh; He allows whomsoever He wishes to manage, influence and effect it to a certain extent. But this divine permission, establishing the relation of causality, does not make that cause independent of Allãh; it is just a permission given by the real owner to use his property. The man having this permission cannot transgress the limits imposed by the owner. Allãh says: *Say*: *"*O *Allãh, Master of kingdom! Thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest* (3:26); *Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal) (2:50); *. . . whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His*; *who is he that can intercede with Him but*

by His permission? (2:255); *. . . and He is firmly established on 'Arsh, regulating the affair*; *there is no intercessor except after His permission* (10:3).

The causes do have the causality because Allãh has given it to them. They have got it, but are not independent of Allãh. It is this factor that has been described in above verses as "inter-cession" and "permission". Permission means that there was an impediment which, but for this permission would have hindered the now-authorized agent from interfering in this affair.

In short, every cause has been given the power to create the relevant effect; but the real authority is yet in the hands of Allãh.

4. The Souls of the Prophets do have Influence Over the Super-Natural Events

Allãh says: *. . . and it was not meet for an apostle that he should bring a sign except with Allãh's permission*; *but when the command of Allãh came, judgement was given with truth, and those who treated* (it) *as a lie were lost* (40:78).

The verse shows that it was the apostle who brought the sign — by permission of Allãh. The souls of the prophets were given a special power to cause the miracle; and that causal power, like all other causes, created its effect with permission of Allãh.

Again Allãh says: *And they followed what the Satans chant* (of sorcery) *against the kingdom of Sulaymãn*; *and not that Sulaymãn disbelieved, but* (it was) *the Satans that disbelieved, they taught men sorcery and what was sent down to the two angels at Babylon, Hãrũt and Mãrũt Yet these two taught no one until they had said, "Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever". Even then men learned from these two that by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife*; *and they cannot hurt with it any one except with Allãh's permission* (2:102).

This verse proves two things: magic has some reality; and it, not unlike miracle, is caused by a psychical factor of the magician, by permission of Allãh.

Take a miracle, a magic, a mysterious wonder of a saint, or a spell bringing skill acquired through rigorous practice — all these extra-ordinary or super-natural deeds emanate from their agents' psychical factors — or will-power — as the above-mentioned verses have shown. But Allãh has made it clear that the psychical cause found in His apostles, prophets and believers is predominant, has the mastery, over all other causes, in all imaginable conditions; it can never be overpowered. Allãh says: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles*: *Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones* (37:171-173). *Allãh has written down*: *I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostle* . . . (58:21). *Most surely We help Our apostles and those who believe, in this world's life and on the day when the witnesses shall stand* (40:51). As you see, these verses do not put any condition or restriction on the promised victory; the apostles and the believers shall be victorious over their adversaries in all conditions and situations.

It may be inferred from it that this divine source is something metaphysical, preternatural. Material things are, in their nature, measured and limited; they get the worst of it if they are faced by another thing which is superior in power. But this preternatural spiritual source, which is assisted by the will of Allãh, is never defeated by any factor; whenever it is faced by any material adversary, it is given by Allãh a far more superior power to achieve victory with flying colours.

5. Whatever is Caused by Psychical Power Depends on a Command from Allãh

Read again the last sentence of the verse 40:78, mentioned at

the beginning of the preceding chapter: "but when the command of Allãh came, judgement was given with truth, and those who treated (*it*) as a lie were lost". You will see that the super-natural event caused by the psychical power of the agent depends on a command from Allãh — in addition to His permission. That command may coincide with the said permission, or may be one with it. The command of Allãh is His creation, described by the word 'Be' in the verse: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, "Be", and it is* (36:82). Also Allãh says: *Surely this is a reminder, so whoever wishes takes to his Lord a way. And you do not wish except that Allãh wishes*; *surely Allãh is Knowing, Wise* (76:29 -30). *It is naught but a reminder for the worlds, for him among you who wishes to go straight. And you do not wish except that Allãh wishes, the Lord of the worlds* (81:27-29). These verses show that the affairs which are within the sphere of the man's will,and under his control and authority, are still dependent on the divine will for their existence. What these verses say is this: The intentional actions of a man are done by his will; but that will itself depends on the will of Allãh.

The verses do not say that whatever is wished by man is wished by Allãh. Had it been the case, no human wish would have remained unfulfilled — because it would have become the will of Allãh! Also, many verses refute this idea; *And if We had wished We would certainly have given to every soul its guidance . . .* (32:13). *And if your Lord had wished surely all those who are in the earth would have believed* (10:99).

Our will depends on the divine will; our action depends on our will, and also they depend — indirectly, through our will — on the will of Allãh. And both our will and action depend on the command of Allãh — on His word, "Be".

Things, affairs and events may be either natural or super-natural; and the super-natural may be either on the side of good, like miracle, or on that of evil, like magic and sooth saying. But all of them come into being through natural causes,

and at the same time they depend on the will of Allãh. In other words, they cannot come into being unless the natural cause coincides, or becomes one, with the permission and command of Allãh. All things are equal in this respect; but when a prophet brings about a miracle, or a good servant of Allãh prays to Him for a thing, an additional factor, that is, the decisive command of Allãh, is added thereto; and the desired effect or event unfailingly comes into being. Allãh says: *Allãh has written down*: *I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostles* (58:21); *I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me. . .* (2:186). See also other such verses quoted in the preceding chapter.

6. The Qur'ãn Attributes the Miracle to an Invincible Cause

The preceding chapters have made it clear that miracle, like other natural and super-natural things, needs a natural cause; and that all causes depend on some metaphysical causes. All these events and effects may, thus, be divided into four categories:

First: The normal events: They come into being by normal apparent causes which are accompanied by real causes — in most cases those real causes are material ones; and those causes depend on the divine will and. command.

Second: The extra-ordinary events of evil nature, like sorcery and sooth saying: They are caused by natural but unusual and abnormal causes, which are accompanied by the real causes; and those causes depend on the divine permission and will.

Third: The extra-ordinary events of good nature, like a prayer answered by Allãh: They are caused by the natural and real cause, with permission and will of Allãh — but such events do not contain any element of challenge, that is, they do not purport to prove the truth of any call or claim.

Fourth: The miracles: The extra-ordinary, super-natural

events of good character, which are brought about as a challenge, to prove the truth of the call or claim. They too are caused by the natural and real causes with permission and will of Allãh.

The third and fourth categories have an extra quality in them: Their cause is fortified by an invincible factor; it can never be overpowered, as it is always accompanied by the decisive command of Allãh.

Question: It is strange to say that miracle is caused by a natural cause. Suppose, we discover the real natural cause of a miracle; will it not then be possible for us to create that miracle? If yes, then miraculousness would be a relative matter; any action would be a miracle in the eyes of those who are unaware of its cause, but quite an ordinary thing for those who know. In the same way, an event that was believed to be a miracle in dark ages would not be so impressive in this age of science and knowledge. If scientific research found out the real natural causes of the miracles, there would be no miracle at all — and no miracle could be used to prove the truth of the prophet's claim. What all this leads to is this: A miracle is not a proof except against him who is ignorant of its natural cause; therefore, it cannot be put asan evidence of the truth of the prophet's claim.

Reply: Miraculousness of a miracle does not depend on unknown ability of its cause; nor is it a miracle because it emanates from an extraordinary or mysterious cause. It is a miracle because it is brought about by such an extraordinary cause which is invincible, which cannot be overcome, cannot be defeated. Let us look at the case of a seriously sick person, who, all of a sudden, is cured by the prayers of a believer. It is called a miraculous event, because it emanates from an invincible cause. We know that patient could be cured by medical treatment, and it would have been a normal process; but this cause, that is, the medical treatment, could be foiled by other more powerful factors; and that is why it is not called a

miracle.

7. The Qur'ān Counts Miracle as a Proof of the Truth of the Claim of Prophethood

Question: What is the connection between miracle and veracity of the claim of prophethood? Reason fails to see any binding relation between the two. But the Qur'ān time and again asserts this concomitancy, as may be seen in the stories of various prophets, for example, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Mūsā, 'Isā and Muḥammad (peace of Allāh be on all of them!). The Qur'ān narrates that no sooner did they announce their claim than they were asked by their people to bring some miracle to prove the truth of their claim; and they responded to it by showing the miracle.

Not only that. Some of them were given their miracle even before their nations had asked them for it. Allāh told Mūsā (a.s.) at the start of his mission: *Go you and your brother with My signs and be not remiss in remembering Me* (20:42). And He says about `Isā (a.s.): *And* (will make him) *an apostle to the children of Israel*: *"That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allāh's permission and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life with Allāh's permission and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your house*; *most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers"* (3:49).

The same is the position of the Qur'ān which was given to the Prophet right at the start of his mission. The reason does not see any connection whatsoever between the truth of the message of an apostle or a prophet on one hand and his ability to show a super-natural sign on the other.

Moreover, the beauty of the principles expounded by the apostles and the prophets, strengthened as it is by irrefutable

proofs, dispenses with the need of any miracle — for an intelligent and knowledgeable person. That is why it is said that miracles are needed for convincing the simple-minded people, because they cannot understand a learned discourse; but knowledgeable persons do not need them.

Reply: The prophets had not brought the miracles to prove any principle of religion, like belief in Oneness of God and the Day of Resurrection etc. — the truth of which could be realized by intellect and reason. They always proved such things with reasoning and logical arguments. For example, Allãh says regarding the existence of the Creator: *Their apostles said*: *"Is there doubt about Allãh, the Master of the heavens and the earth?"*(14:10); and He says about resurrection: *And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain*; *that is the opinion of those who disbelieve*; *then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire. Shall We treat those who believe an and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who guard* (against evil) *like the wicked?* (38:27-28).

Why were, then, the apostles asked to show miracle, and why did they bring it about? It was to prove that they were in fact sent by Allãh; it was meant to authenticate their claim.

The prophets claimed that they were sent by Allãh, that He had revealed His message to them — either directly or through an angel. It was an assertion of a super-natural event; a claim of a reality beyond the physical senses and mental cognization of their people; a fact above the level of man's perception. If that claim was right, it would be a special metaphysical disposition reserved for the prophets only. The difficulty was that the prophets were like any other human being in their humanity and in its characteristics. How could they be favoured for this especial relationship with the world beyond nature?

The disbelievers, therefore, resorted to two methods to disprove the prophets' claim:

First Method: They tried to refute it through such "argu-

ments" as the following:

a) *They said*: *"You are nothing but human being like us; you wish to turn us away from what our fathers used to worship"* (14:10). The apostles were like all other men; and other men do not receive such divine revelation as was claimed by the apostles. If they could be given revelation from God, why could not others get it as well? Were not all of them alike in their humanity?

The apostles replied to it in these words: *Their apostles said to them*: *"We are nothing but human beings like yourselves, but Allãh bestows* (His) *favours on whom He pleases of His servants . . ."* (14:11). They accepted that they were like all men in their humanity, but showed that apostleship was a very especial favour of Allãh, and He bestows it on whom He pleases. It is not difficult to see that being alike does not preclude some of them from being reserved for some especial favours. Of course, if Allãh had pleased, He could have bestowed it on anyone among them, but He chose for this favour whom He pleased. The same was the thrust of their protest against the Prophet: "*Has the reminder been revealed to him from among us?*" (38:8)

b) Of the same nature, but with added sarcasm, were the following remarks of the polytheists of Mecca: *And they say*: *"Why was not this Qur'ãn revealed to a man of importance in the two towns?"* (43:31) *And they say: "What sort of apostle is this that he eats food and goes about in the marts*; *why has not an angel been sent down to him so that he be a warner with him? Or a treasure be thrown down to him, or be for him a garden from which he may eat!"* (25:7-8)

What they wanted to say was this: If the Apostle (of Islam) really has been chosen by God to receive divine revelation, then he must be someone above all the mortals. Then why does he require food to eat, and why is he obliged to go about in the markets to earn his livelihood? If he is truly a representative of God, he should have been accompanied by

an angel to assist him in his work, or he should have been given a treasure to save him the trouble of earning his livelihood in the markets, or a garden should have been bestowed on him, so that he would not need a food like ours.

Allãh answered them in these words: *See how they coin comparisons for thee! So they have gone astray, therefore they shall not be able to find a way . . . And We did not send before thee any messengers but they most surely ate food and went about in the markets*; *and We have made some of you a trial for others*; *will you bear patiently? And your Lord is Ever-seeing* (25:9,20). And in reply to their demand for sending down an angel, it was said in another chapter: *And if We had made him angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused* (6:9).

c) Going further, they raised their demands even higher: *And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say*: *"Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or* (why) *do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted a great revolt* (25:21). According to their thinking, there was no difference between them and the Prophet; all were human beings. Then why should he be reserved for this office of apostleship? They too should be visited by angels; or, even better, they should see the Lord. Allãh replied to them: *On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say*: *"It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited"* (25:22). It means that if they persist in their disbelief, they shall not see the angels except at the time of death, and then they shall not find any joy in it. The same thing has been mentioned in another verse: *And they say*: *"*O *you to whom the Reminder has been revealed! you are most surely insane. Why do you not bring to us the angels if you are of the truthful ones?" We do not send the angels but with truth, and then they would not be respited* (15:6-8).

d) This last verse shows us one more twist of their

"arguments". The Prophet, according to their thinking, was truthful in his claim of revelation, but he was insane; whatever news he brought was a product of his unstable mind and was, therefore, not correct. The same "argument" was put against Nũḥ (a.s.), as the Qur'ãn says: . . . *and they called* (Nũḥ) *mad, and he was driven away* (54:9).

These were the variations of their "arguments" against the claims of the Prophet, the arguments which were based on similarity of the prophets and their people in their humanity.

Second Method: It was to reject outright the claim of the prophets, and demand from them proof of their veracity, asking them to bring some signs to show that they were in fact representatives of Allãh and recipients of His revelation.

The apostles and the prophets claimed a distinction which was intangible and unknowable to their people. They claimed that they were given apostleship and/or prophethood; that they were spoken to by Allãh — either directly or through angels. Now, such a claim could not be verified by any test or experiment. It could be objected against in two ways: (i) There was no proof that such a claim was true; (ii) there was proof that it was not true. Revelation, divine speech, (and the resulting *shari`ah* and religious discipline) could not be experienced by anyone other than the claimant; the normal system of cause and effect was against it. If such a claim were true, it would mean that the Prophet was in direct contact with the world beyond nature; he was tuned to the divine power — the power that can change the course of nature, can make the effect appear without their usual causes. In that case, he should be able to produce some another tangible super-natural effect; after all one super-natural event is like any other super-natural event so far as the divine authority is concerned. If Allãh spoke to the Prophet — a super-natural

effect — He should show on his hands some other tangible super-natural effects in order to prove the truth of his former claim, that is, the claim that he receives revelation from God. If God wanted to guide the people aright by means of a super-natural thing, that is, revelation, then let Him prove the truth of His Prophet by means of another super-natural, that is, miracle.

That was why the people asked for miracles whenever a prophet was sent to them. They wanted miracles to verify his claim of prophethood, and not to ensure the truth of his teachings. Suppose a man is sent by a ruler to his subjects with his commands and laws. He reaches his destination and they ask him for his credentials. Will they be satisfied if, at this juncture, he starts explaining the wisdom underlying each rule and regulation? Certainly not. They will say: All that you have said, just shows that these rules are based on wisdom and meant for our good; but it does not prove in any way that they are from our ruler, nor that you are his deputy authorized to manage our affairs on his behalf. We shall believe in your claim only when you show us a credential to this effect, for example, an appointment letter duly signed by the ruler and having his official seal. It is as the polytheists had said to the Prophet: ". . . *until you bring down to us a book which we may read*" (17:93).

From the above explanation, two things become abundantly clear:

First: Miracle has an inseparable .connection with the truth of the claim of prophethood. Learned and ignorant, elite and common, all men need miracle in order to be able to accept the truth of a prophet's claim.

Second: What the prophet receives and perceives of the revelation is entirely different from those things which we feel by senses or comprehend by intellect. In plain words, revelation is not a function of mind; it is a reality totally separate from "right thinking". This fact is brilliantly clear

from the Book of Allãh; and no one, having an iota of common sense, can entertain any doubt about it.

But in recent times some "scholars" have closed their eyes from this reality, and tried to reinterpret the spiritual facts and divine knowledge in the light of the natural sciences. They have, accordingly, based their explanations on materialistic theory. They believe that human perception and comprehension is a characteristic of matter, emanating from the brain. They are of the opinion that all real merits and perfections — whether of an individual or of a group — are developments of matter only. Based on these premises, they have explained prophethood and all related spiritual factors on the following materialistic lines:

Prophethood is a sort of a sharp mental power, an intellectual genius. The genius who is called prophet, looks at the social conditions of his nation; analyses what they have inherited of the beliefs, ideas, customs and superstitions; and then changes them to conform with the needs of his time and place, in the most suitable manner. In that light, he frames for them the basic social principles and ordains practical rules and regulations — in order to raise their standard of life, to elevate their morality and ethics, to make them better members of society. Basing on this hypothesis, they have declared that:

1) Prophet is an intellectual genius, who calls his people to the good of their social life.

2) Revelation is the good thought which comes into his mind.

3) Divine book is the collection of those good thoughts and ideas, inasmuch as they are free from personal desires and selfish motives.

4) Angels who, the prophet says, come to him, are only the natural material forces which keep the world going. Or, they are psychological traits which lead the man to his perfection.

The Holy Ghost is a higher development of those

material forces, which rains those pure ideas on the prophet's mind.

Satan is a retrogression of the same material forces, which poisons the minds with evil thoughts and incites the people to anti-social deeds.

In the same vein they have explained away all the realities which the prophets have told us about — like the Tablet, the Pen, the Throne, the Chair, the Book, the Reckoning, the Garden, and the Fire.

5) Religions are products of times; they change with the times.

6) The miracles, attributed to the prophets, are nothing more than myths and fictions; which were forged in the interest of religion, to strengthen the belief of common people; or to enhance the prestige of religious leaders in the eyes of their followers.

This in short is their explanation. But prophethood, in this meaning, should rather be called a political device than a divine reality. It is not possible here to throw light on its various facets. What the readers, however, should not overlook is that this interpretation has no resemblance whatsoever to what has been de-scribed in the Books of Allãh and the traditions of the prophets. What led these "scholars" to such interpretations was their total submission to materialistic theories; that was why they rejected every metaphysical reality, and tried to bring it down to the level of lifeless matter.

Such peoples are academic descendants of an earlier group: Many early theologians interpreted every religious reality — the Throne, the Chair, the Tablet, the Pen, the Angels etc. — in material terms, adding, at the same time, that those things existed beyond the grasp of our senses. Needless to say that that interpretation was not based on any actual experiment or sensual perception. Now that the area of physical sciences has expanded so much, and every thing is being analysed, tested and experimented on, this later generation was obliged

to reject the idea of physical existence of those religious realities, because, as mentioned above, their existence could not be proved by any test or experiment. Therefore, they had to invent other meanings for those realities, well within the area of sensual perception. They thought that they were serving the cause of religion in this way — because their interpretation would bring those realities within the sensual and physical recognition, and thus save them from being totally rejected by modern scholars.

Both groups have strayed from the right path. The ancient theologians correctly understood the meanings of these words, without resorting to any allegorical interpretation. But they erred when they thought that those were material things although beyond the purview of sensual perception, not subjected to the laws of matter.

The modern scholars took the wrong way from the very start; they gave these words wrong meanings in their eagerness to makethem conform with material realities; in their attempt to pull these sublime truths down to the level of physical experience.

The correct way is to explain these words according to the dictates of the language and the usage; then shall come the stage of identifying what, how and where, for example, the Pen is. This should be done with the help of other relevant verses. After the Pen is identified, it may be compared with current scientific ideas to check whether it goes against them. If that examination reveals that the identified entity was beyond the domain of matter, then it should not be proved, or disproved, by the principles of physical sciences. The science is concerned with material and physical things. What authority has it got to judge metaphysical or spiritual things? Can we allow a linguist to prove, or disprove, a proposition of astronomy by the rules of grammar? If not, then why should the rules of physical sciences be applied to prove, disprove or interpret metaphysical realities?

QUR'ÃN: *But if you do* (it) *not — and never shall you do* (it) *— then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel*; *it is prepared for the unbelievers. And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are gardens in which rivers flow*; *whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say*: *"This is what was given to us before*;*" and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them*; *and in them they shall abide.*

The chapter began with description of three groups: the pious ones, the disbelievers and the hypocrites. But then all of them were joined together by the words, "O men!", calling them to worship Allãh. In this context, they could be divided in two groups only: those who answered this call (i.e. the believers) and those who did not answer it (i.e. the disbelievers). The hypocrites do not come into this picture, probably because in their appearance they are with the first group, while in reality they are included in the second. Perhaps, that is why the previous designation of the first group (*those who guard against evil*) has been changed here for "those who believe".

"al-Waqũd" (اَلوَقُودُ) is fuel. The verse says that man himself is the fuel of the hell. He is his own fuel, to keep the fire burning, and to get himself burned in that fire. Allãh says: *then in the fire shall they be burned* (40:72). *It is the fire kindled by Allãh, which rises above the hearts* (104:6-7). Man shall be burned in a fire that will be kindled and fuelled by his own self.

The next verse, 2:25, runs parallel to it and we find the same principle at work here also: "whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: `This is what was given to us before;' and they shall be given the like of it". It indicates that man shall get there only what he has himself pre-pared here. The Prophet has said: "As you live so

you will die, and as you die so you will be raised." But the people of the paradise have a pleasant distinction vis-à-vis the people of the fire, because they shall be given ever-increasing rewards by their Lord: *They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet* (50:35).

" . . . of which men and stones are the fuel": The stones referred to here are the idols which the disbelievers worshipped. Allãh says: *Surely you and what you worship besides Allãh are the firewood of hell* . . . (21:98).

" . . . they shall have pure mates in them": The adjective "pure", inasmuch as it qualifies the "mates", refers to purity from all such things as may create aversion and unpleasantness – whether in their bodies or in their behaviour. In other words, the mates given to the believers in paradise will be free from every disagreeable characteristic or trait.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣadũq narrates that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) was asked about this verse and he said: "The pure mates are the ones who shall be free from menstruation and other excrements."

The Author says: Some other traditions have expanded the meaning to include cleanliness from all defective traits, all characteristics causing aversion.

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إِنَّ اللهَ لا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلاً مـا بَعُوضَةً فَمـا فَوْقَهـا فَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّـا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلاً يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيراً وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيراً
وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلاَّ الْفَاسِقِينَ ـ ٢٦ . الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ـ ٢٧ .

Surely Allãh is not ashamed to set forth any parable — (that of) ***a gnat or any thing above that; then as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord, and as for those who disbelieve, they say: "What is it that Allãh means by this parable?" He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it, but He does not cause to err by it*** (any) ***except the transgressors*** (26)***, who break the covenant of Allãh after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allãh has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land; these it is that are the losers*** (27)**.**

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Surely Allãh is not ashamed . . .*: Gnat or mosquito is one of the smallest animals perceptible by naked eyes. These two verses run parallel to verses 19- 2 1 of ch. 13: *Is then he who knows that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth like unto him who is blind? Only those possessed of understanding shall bear in mind, those who fulfil the promise of Allãh and do not break the covenant, and those who join that which Allãh has bidden to be joined, and fear Allãh and fear the evil reckoning.*

The verse clearly shows that there is a straying, a blindness, which afflicts the man as a result of his evil deeds; it is different from that initial straying and blindness which the man opts for by his own free will. Look at the sentence, "but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors". They transgressed first, and it was only then that Allãh made them go astray.

Guidance and misguidance are two comprehensive words; they encompass every felicity and infelicity that comes from Allãh to His good and wicked servants respectively. As Allãh describes in the Qur'ãn, He makes His good servants live a happy life, strengthens them with the spirit of faith, bring them out of the darkness into the light, and gives them a light by which they walk among the people; He has taken them under His protection and guardianship, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve; He is with them, answers them when they call on Him, and remembers them when they remember Him; and the angels come down to them with good news of eternal peace.

Diametrically opposed to it is the condition of evil-doers. Allãh causes them to err, takes them out of the light into the darkness, sets a seal upon their hearts and hearings, and a covering over their eyes; He alters their faces turning them on

their backs; places chains on their necks and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft, and makes a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, then He covers them over so that they cannot see; He appoints for them the Satans to become their associates, and they turn them away from the right path while they think that they are guided aright; those Satans make their misdeeds to seem good to them and they are their guardians; Allãh leads them on by steps from whence they perceive not; and yet He respites them, but His plan is firm; He makes a plan for them and leaves them alone in their rebellion, blindly wandering on.

These are some examples of the conditions of the two groups. On deeper consideration, it appears that man, in this world, lives two lives: there is this life which may be seen and perceived by all, and there is another life hidden behind this one; that hidden life is either good or bad — depending on his faith and deeds. Man will become aware of that hidden life when the veil of secrecy will be removed after death. Then he will see himself in his true form.

Further, it appears from the Qur'ãnic verses that man has had a spiritual life before the life of this world; and he shall have another life after this one. In other words, man has been given three lives — this life in this world is the second one, there was one preceding it and there will be another following. The condition of the third life shall be determined by that of this second life — which, in its turn, is governed by the first one.

Many exegetes have explained away the verses about the first life; they say that it is only a literary style, which presents imaginary pictures as real facts. And as for the verses concerning the life hereafter, they too are misrepresented as allegories and metaphors. But both types of verses are too clear in this meaning to allow such misinterpretations.

We shall explain the verses about the first life under ch. 7. As for the life hereafter, many verses show that the same good or bad deeds which man commits in this life, shall be returned to

him, as their own reward or punishment, on the day of requital. Allãh has mentioned this fact in many verses: . . . *and do not make excuses today; you shall be recompensed only what you did* (66:7) ; *then every soul shall be paid back in full what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.* (2: 281) ; *then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are fuel* (2:24) ; *Then let him summon his council, We too would summon the tormentors* (of the hell) (96 :17 -18) ; *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil* . . . (3:30) *;* . . . *they eat nothing but fire into their bellies* . . . (2:174);. . . *surely they only swallow fire into their bellies* . . . (4:10). There are many verses of the same import.

Then there is the verse 50:22, which by itself is enough to convince one of this principle: *Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp.* The words, "you were heedless of it", indicate that there was something present in this world, to which the guilty one has not paid any attention; "removed from you your veil" means that, but for that veil, he could have seen that reality even in this worldly life. What the man would see on the Day of Resurrection was present even in this earthly life; otherwise, it would not be logical to say that previously you were inattentive to it, or that it was hidden from your eyes, but now that the cover has been removed, you may see it clearly.

There is no allegory or metaphor in these verses. Try to explain in plain Arabic the principle which we have mentioned just now. You will not find a more explicit way than the one used in these verses. Then, how can they be explained away as allegories?

The divine talk here points at two realities:

First: Recompense: What a man will get in hereafter — reward or punishment, paradise or hell — shall be in

recompense of the good or evil he would have done in this life.

Second: Embodiment of the deeds: Many verses indicate that the good or evil deeds themselves turn into their own pleasant or unpleasant recompense. (Or, that the recompense is an inseparable concomitant of the deeds themselves.) It is hidden from our eyes in this life, but we shall see it clearly on the day of reckoning.

These realities are not really two. But we had to explain it in this way to bring it nearer to the minds. The Qur'ãn too says that it uses similitude to make people understand.

QUR'ÃN: *but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors*: *"al –Fisq"* (الفِسقُ = transgression, sinfulness). It is the Qur'ãn that, first of all, used this word in its now prevalent meaning. It is derived from *fasaqati 't-tamrah* (فَسَقَتِ التَّمرَةُ = the date broke out of its outer rind). That is why it has been further explained by the words, "who break the covenant of Allãh after its confirmation" — a thing must be whole before it is broken. Also the transgressors are described at the end of the verse as the losers — one must be owning a thing before he can lose it. Allãh further says: *Surely the losers are they who have lost themselves and their people on the resurrection day* (42:45). All these expressions show how appropriate the adjective, "*al-fãsiqīn*" (اَلـفَـاسِقِـيْـنَ = the transgressors) is in this context.

You should never think that the adjectives used by Allãh in His book for His good servants (like "those who are near to Allãh", "the sincere ones", "the humble ones", "the good ones", "the purified ones" etc.) or for the evil ones (like "the unjust", "the transgressors", "the losers", "those who go astray", etc.) are cheap epithets, or that they are used as literary embellishment. Each adjective has its own significance; each points to a particular stage in man's spiritual journey. Each has its own characteristics, and gives rise to its especial

effects and consequences. On physical level, every age has its own characteristics and powers, which cannot be found before or after that age; likewise, on spiritual plane, every attribute has its own special effects.

AN ESSAY ON COMPULSION AND DELEGATION

The sentence, "but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors", explains how Allãh manages the actions of His servants. Does He compel them to act in a pre-determined way? Or, has He delegated to them all powers in this respect? It is better to solve this knotty problem here and now, by the guidance of the Qur'ãn.

Allãh says: *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's* (2;284); *His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth* (57:5) *; to Him belongs the kingdom, and to Him is due* (all) *praise* (64:1). These and other similar verses prove that to Allãh belongs the whole universe; His ownership is unconditional and unlimited. A man owns a thing, let us say, a donkey; he may use it and take its advantage to a certain extent- only. For ex-ample, he may ride it or use it as a beast of burden; but he can-not starve it to death, nor can he bum it alive. Why? Because his ownership is not absolute; society would condemn him if he were to commit such atrocities. His ownership allows him certain advantages only; and not every possible use.

But when we say that Allãh is the Owner of the worlds, we mean absolute, real and unrestricted ownership. There is no owner except Allãh; the things own, or control, for themselves neither any harm nor any profit, neither life, death no resurrection. It is only Allãh who owns and controls every affair of every creature; He may do with them whatever He pleases; no one can ask Him why; He cannot be blamed or questioned for anything He does, because He is the absolute Owner. He has, of course, allowed some of His creatures to

use some other things to a certain limits; but both the user and the used are His property; and the user cannot exceed the authorized limit. Allãh, as the absolute Owner, cannot be questioned about His dispositions; but others have to give account of how they exercised their authority. Allãh says: *who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?* (2: 255) ; *there is no intercessor except after His permission* (10:3) ; . . . *that if Allãh please He would certainly guide all the people?* (13 :31) ; *And if Allãh please He would certainly make you a single nation, but He causes to err whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases* . . . (16:93) ; *And you do not please except that Allãh please* (76:30) ; *He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and they shall be questioned* (21:23). Allãh disposes and manages His property in any way He pleases; no one can use any other thing except with His permission, because He is the real Owner and Sustainer of every thing.

Now we come to the rules and laws which Allãh ordains for His creatures. He uses the same method which has been adopted by the human society — ordaining what is good and praising and rewarding its doers; forbidding what is bad and condemning and punishing its doers. For example, He says: *If you give alms openly, it is well* (2:271), . . . *evil is a bad name after faith* (49:11). Obviously, the laws ordained by Allãh look at the good of man, and aim at perfecting the human society. Allãh says: . . . *answer* (the call of) *Allãh and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life* (8:24) *; that is better for you, if you know* (61:11); *Surely Allãh enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good* (to others) *and the giving to kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion* (16:90); *Surely Allãh does not enjoin indecency* (7:28). There are many such verses; and they show that the principles which the laws are based upon are always the same — be it a divine commandment or a human legislation. What is good in itself

and ensures the good of the society is allowed, enjoined and prescribed; and what is evil in itself and endangers the social structure is forbidden; man is praised and rewarded for doing the former, and blamed and punished for doing the later. Some of those principles are as follows:-

People do whatever they do because of its underlying wisdom and good. Legislation of laws is no exception to this rule; the laws too are made because of their underlying good and benefit. They reward the law-abiding citizens and chastise, if they so wish, the law-breakers. The said recompense must be correlated to the action done — in its quantity and quality. Also, it is accepted that the enjoinment and prohibition can be addressed to him only who is not under any duress or compulsion who has got freedom of will and choice. The above-mentioned recompense too is related to such actions only which emanate from free will and choice. Of course, if someone, by his own action, puts himself in a tight corner, in a difficult position where he has to transgress a law, he may be justly punished for that transgression, and his plea of helplessness will not be heeded at all.

Allãh uses these same principles in His dealing with His creatures. He does not compel the man to obey or to disobey the divine commands. Had there been any compulsion, rewarding the obedient ones with the paradise and punishing the disobedient ones with the hell would have been absolutely wrong: the reward would have been an unprincipled venture, and the punishment an unmitigated oppression and injustice — and all of it is evil according to reason. Moreover, it would mean favouring one against the other without any justification, without any cause — and this too is a demerit according to reason. Furthermore, it would provide the aggrieved party with a valid argument against Allãh; but Allãh says: . . . *so that people should not have an argument against Allãh after the* (coming of) *apostles* (4:165); . . . *that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would*

live might live by clear proof (8:42).

The above discourse makes the following points clear :

First: Divine laws are not based on compulsion. These rules have been made for the good of man in this life and the hereafter. And they have been prescribed for him because he has freedom of will, he may obey the rule if he so wishes, and may disobey if he so chooses. He will be fully recompensed for what-ever good or bad he does by his free will.

Second: There are things and actions which are not in conformity with the divine sanctity, yet the Qur'ãn attributes them to Allãh, like misleading, deceiving, scheming against some-one, leaving him wandering on in his rebellion, letting the Satan overpower the man and become his associate. All these actions are related to various kinds of misleading and misguidance. But Allãh is above all defects and demerits, and, therefore, these words when attributed to Him, should convey a meaning in keeping with His sacred name. Initial misleading, even in the sense of making inattentive and forgetful, cannot be ascribed to Allãh. What the above-mentioned expressions actually mean is this: When someone by his own free will, opts to go astray, chooses the wrong path and commits sins, then Allãh leaves him in that straying, and, thus, increases his error — it is done as a punishment of his wrong choice. Allãh says: *He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright, by it, but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26). . . . *when they turned aside, Allãh made their hearts turn aside* (61:5). *Thus does Allãh cause him to err who is extravagant, a doubter* (40:34).

Third: The divine decree does not cover the actions of the man inasmuch as they are attributed to him — they are done by the doer, although not created by him. We shall further explain it later.

Fourth: Now that it has been seen that the divine law is not based on compulsion, it should be clearly understood that it is not based on delegation of power either. How can a

"master" issue an authoritative command if he has delegated all his powers to the servant. In other words, this theory of delegation negates the comprehensive ownership of Allãh *vis-à-vis* many of His possessions.

TRADITIONS

A great number of traditions (narrated from the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* — a.s.) says: "There is neither compulsion nor delegation (of power), but (there is) a position between these two (extremes)."

It is reported in *`Uyunu 'l-akhbãr,* through several chains: When the Leader of the faithful, `Ali ibn Abi Ṭãlib (a.s.) returned from Ṣiffīn, an old man (who has participated in that battle) stood up and said : "O Leader of the faithful ! Tell us about this journey of ours, was it by Allãh's decree and measure?" The Leader of the faithful said: "Yes, O Shaykh! By Allãh you did not ascend any elevation, nor did you descend to any valley but by a decree of Allãh and by His measure." The old man, there-upon said : "I leave to Allãh all my troubles (of this journey), O Leader of the faithful!" (`Ali — a.s.) replied: "Have patience, O Shaykh! Perhaps you take it to mean a firm decree and a compulsory measure! If it were so, then there would be no justification of reward or punishment, no sense of command, prohibition or admonition, no meaning of promise or threat; there would not be any blame on an evil-doer nor any praise for a good-doer. Nay, the good-doer would have been rather more deserving of blame than the evil-doer, and the evil-doer rather more worthy of grace than the good-doer. (Beware!) this is the belief of the idol-worshippers and the enemies of the Beneficent God (who are) the Qadariyyah of this *ummah* and its Majũs. O Shaykh! Verily Allãh ordained (the *sharī'ah*) giving freedom of will (to men) and prohibited (evil) to keep us on guard; and He gave plentiful (reward) on meagre (deeds); and He was not disobeyed by being overpowered, nor was He obeyed by

compulsion; and He did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve on account of the fire."

The author says: The topics of the speech of Allãh and His decree and measure were among the earliest about which the Muslims differed among themselves. This second dispute may be described as follows:

The eternal divine will govern every thing in the universe. These things are transient in their quiddity; but when they do exist, they do so because the will of Allãh decreed their existence — and in this way their existence becomes essential — otherwise, the divine decree would be meaningless. Conversely, when a thing does not exist, it is because Allãh did not decree its existence — and in this way its existence becomes impossible — otherwise, the divine will would be meaningless. In short, whatever exists, exists because Allãh has decreed its existence, -thus turning it into an essential being. This principle applies everywhere. But the difficulty arises when it comes to such a human action that issues from our own will and choice. We know that we can do it if we so desire, and can ignore it if we so wish. Their doing and not doing is equally possible to us. The balance is tipped in favour of either side by our own will and choice. Our actions are based on our choice, and our will brings them into existence. The difficulty that arises at this point is this: We have earlier seen that nothing comes into being without the will and decree of Allãh, which turns the thing into an essential being — if so, then how can any action of ours be termed as "possible" one? It must exist because the divine will has decreed it ! Moreover, how can our will affect it in any way when it is governed by the will of Allãh? Also, in this background, it cannot be said that man had power to do a certain work before he did it. And, because he did not have that power, Allãh could not give

him any order or command for or against that work. Going a step further, if Allãh gave him an order and he did not comply, it would mean that Allãh Himself had not wanted that thing to happen; so it was impossible for it to happen. Then the question would arise: How could Allãh order him to perform an impossible task? Conversely, if someone complied with that order, it was because Allãh Himself wanted it to happen. Then why should the man be rewarded without any valid reason? By the same reasoning, a sinner should not be punished, as it would be against justice, a naked oppression. One may go on enumerating the difficulties arising out of this subject. A large number of Muslims felt obliged to admit, and believe in, all these absurdities. They said that:

Man does not have power to do a work before the time comes to do it. The reason has nothing to do with the merit or demerit of any action. Whatever Allãh does becomes good; and whatever He forbids becomes evil.

Accordingly, Allãh may choose an action without any justification; He may give reward without any cause; He may ordain laws beyond the capacity of the doer or agent; He may inflict punishment on a disobedient servant even though the said disobedience and transgression was not of his doing .

It appears that the old man, who had asked the question, thought that the belief in the divine will and decree meant that there was no merit or demerit in any action and that man had no right of any reward (or punishment). Naturally he was disappointed when he heard that the journey was by the decree of Allãh; that is why he said: "I leave to Allãh all my troubles." What he meant was this: My journey to Ṣiffīn and back and my fighting in the way of Allãh had no benefit for me as it was governed and done by the will of Allãh; my share in all this venture was only the trouble and the inconvenience which I underwent. Therefore, I shall leave it to Allãh to balance my account, as it was He Who put me through all these troubles. The Imam (Ali) replied to him by saying, "If it were so, there would be no justification of reward or punishment . . ." The

Imam pointed to the rational principle on which the legislation is based. And at the end he reasoned that Allãh did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain. If Allãh could will the man's actions in a way as to deprive him of his freedom of will and choice, it would mean that He could do things without any purpose and aim; then He could create the whole creation aimlessly and in vain. This in its turn would render the principle of resurrection and reward and punishment invalid too.

It is narrated in *at-Tawhīd* and *`Uyunu 'l-akhbãr* that ar-Riḍã (a.s.) was asked about compulsion and delegation, and he said: "Should I not teach you in this regard a principle by which you shall never differ (among yourselves), and no one will argue with you on this subject but that you shall defeat him (by it)?" We said: "(Teach it to us) if you so please." Thereupon he said: "Verily Allãh is not obeyed through compulsion, nor is He disobeyed by overpowering; and He did not leave the servants remiss in His kingdom; He (still) owns what He has given into their possession, and has power on what He has put into their power. Now, if the servants decided to obey Him, He would not prevent them from it, nor would he put any obstruction to it; and if they decided to disobey Him, then if He pleased to bar their way to it He would do so, and if He did not hinder it and they committed it, then it was not He Who led them into that (sin)." Then the Imam said : "Whoever would accurately delineate the boundaries of this speech would surely overcome his adversary."

The author says: Why did "al-Mujabbirah" (اَلْمُجَبِّرَةُ = the believers in compulsion) say what they said? It was because they pondered on the divine decree and measure, and it led them to the conclusion that when Allãh decrees a thing it must happen inescapably. Their deliberation of this subject was correct, and so was the conclusion arrived at. Where they fell in error was in correlating that conclusion

with reality; they did not understand the difference between a reality and an idea based on subjective approach; they forgot the distinction between essentiality and possibility.

It is correct to say, on the basis of the divine decree and measure, that nothing happens in this world unless it turns an essential being; it is because every thing and every affair comes into being when it is decreed by Allãh, according to the measure prescribed by Him; and then it cannot fail to happen, otherwise the decree of Allãh would fail. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that a transient or possible thing becomes essential because of its sufficient cause. When looked at in conjunction with its sufficient cause, it would be called "essential"; but separated from that cause, it would remain as it was before — a transient or possible thing. Let us look at an action of man which he does by his free will and choice. When we look at it in relation to all things that are necessary to bring it into being — knowledge, will, proper tools and organs, the material, formal, efficient and final causes, and all the conditions of time and space — it will become an essential being; and it is in this context that it becomes subject of the eternal divine will. In other words, it becomes an essential being when all aspects of its sufficient cause are complete. But, looked in relation to each of those aspects separately, it remains only a transient and possible thing. If it is seen *vis-à-vis* its efficient cause only, that is, in relation to the doer only, it will retain its characteristics of transience and possibility — it will not become an essential being.

It is now clear to see at which point the believers in "compulsion" have deviated from the right path. They thought that, inasmuch as the human action was subject to the divine will and decree, man had no power on it; he was not a free agent; he was rather a helpless tool in divine hands. But they did not take into consideration the fact that the divine will takes it into hand only when all aspects of its sufficient cause are complete, and not before that. The divine will decrees that a certain action be

done by Zayd — not unconditionally, but on the condition that it is done by Zayd's free will, at a certain time and a certain place. Therefore, its relation to the divine will itself demands that it should be an action of a free agent, done by his own free will and choice.

Doubtlessly, that action will be called an "essential" one if seen in relation to the divine will; but at the same time and by virtue of the same divine will, it will be a possible and transient action when related to the doer, that is, the man. In other words, there are two wills — the human and the divine; they do not run parallel to each other; the divine will comes after and above the human will — they are in a vertical, and not a horizontal position to each other. Therefore, there is no competition or collision between the two wills. It was a short-sightedness on part of the believers in compulsion to negate the human will in order to establish the divine one.

The Mu`tazilites said that human actions are done by man's free will. But they went to the other extreme, and fell in an error no less objectionable than that of al-Mujabbirah. They too said that if human action was subjected to the divine will man would not have any freedom of will and choice. And then they took a position diametrically opposed to that of al-Mujabbirah, and came to the conclusion that the divine will had no relation whatsoever to the human action. Thus they had to accept another creator — the man himself — for human actions. In this way, they accepted dualism without knowing what they were doing. Going further they fell into traps more harmful than the belief of al-Mujabbirah. As the Imam has said: "The poor al-Qadariyyah, they wanted to emphasize the justice of Allãh, so they removed Him from His power and authority . . ."

A master, showing kindness to one of his slaves, married him to a slave-girl of his; he bestowed on him a property, gave him a well-furnished house and provided him with all the necessities of life. Then there came some people there,

looked at his property, and began arguing among themselves. Someone said: "Even though the master has given this property to his slave and has made him its owner, the slave has no right in, or authority over, this property at all. Does any slave own any thing? The slave together with all his belongings belongs to the master."

Another said : "No. You are wrong. The master has bestowed on this slave the right of property. Now the slave is its absolute owner, and the master has lost all his rights, and authority over this property. We may say that he has abdicated in favour of his slave."

The former was the opinion of al-Mujabbirah; the later that of the Mu`tazilites.

But both were wrong. The correct view would have been to say: The master has got his status of mastership; the slave his position of servitude and bondage. The master has made the slave owner of his (i.e., master's) property. The property belongs to the master at the same time that it belongs to the slave. There are two ownerships — one over the other. This is what the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) have taught us to believe, and what the reason supports.

`Abãyah ibn Rib'i al-Asadi asked Ali, the Leader of the faithful, the meaning of "capability". The Leader of the faithful asked a counter question: "Do you have that capability without God or with God?" When `Abayah remained silent, he told him, "Tell me, O `Abayah!" He said: "What should I say? O Leader of the faithful!" He said : "You should say that you have got that capability by (grace of) Allãh, to Whom it belongs and not to you. If He made you its owner, it would be of His bounties, and if He took it away from you, it would be a trial from Him; and He is the Owner of what He gave into your possession, and has power over what He put under your power . . ." (*al-Iḥtijãj*)

The author says: Its meaning may be understood from the preceding explanation.

al-Mufīd reports in his *Sharḥu 'l-'aqã'id*: It has been narrated from Abu 'l-Ḥasan, the third, (a.s.) that he was asked whether the actions of the servants were created by Allãh. He (a.s.) said : "If He were their creator, He would not have disowned their liability. And He (Allãh) has said: *Verily, Allãh is free from liability to the idolaters* . . . (9:3). It does not mean that Allãh was not responsible for the creation of the idolaters; what Allãh has disowned any responsibility of, is their idol-worship and their evils."

The author says: There are two aspects of a deed — its actual existence, and its relation to its doer. It is only when an action is seen in relation to its doer that it is called obedience or disobedience, good or bad, virtue or sin. So far as actual existence is concerned, there is no difference between marriage and fornication. What distinguishes one from the other is the command of Allãh — marriage conforms with the divine law, and fornication goes against that law. Someone is killed without any reason; another is killed by a lawful authority in reprisal of a murder. A teacher punishes an orphan in order to guide him aright; an oppressor hits at the same orphan unjustly. In all these examples, the actual movements of the actions are identical. But one group is called sin because it does not conform with the divine law or goes against the common weal of the society.

Allãh says: *Allãh is the Creator of everything.* . . (39:62). Every action is a "thing" inasmuch as it exists. And the Imam has said: "Whatsoever may be called a thing is created, except Allãh . . ." Also, Allãh says: *Who made good everything that He has created* . . . (32:7). It may be inferred that everything is good because it is created. Creation and goodness are inseparable factors. But at the same time, we see

that Allãh has named some actions as evil. For example, He says: *Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall not be recompensed but only with the like of it* . . . (6:160). These are obviously the actions done by man; not the factor of recompense which cannot apply to divine actions. Such a deed is called sin. It is evil because it lacks some thing; because it is a nullification of a spiritual virtue or social good. In other words, a sin is sin because it is a negation , a non-being; otherwise it would have been good.

Now, let us look at the following verses of the Qur'ãn:

No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence . . . (57:22); *No affliction comes about but by Allãh's permission; and whoever believes in Allãh, He guides aright his heart* . . . (64:11); *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults) (42:30); *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself* (4 :79) ; . . . *and if a benefit comes to them, they say*: *"This is from Allãh*:*" and if a misfortune befalls them they say*: *"This is from you." Say*: *"All is from Allãh;" but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told* (them)? (4:78). On pondering upon these verses, it becomes clear that these misfortunes are relative evils. A man is bestowed with the bounties of Allãh, like security and peace; health and wealth, and so on; then he loses one or more of these bounties. This misfortune, in relation to that man, is evil because it has nullified some existing things, that is, the bounties which he had previously enjoyed. Thus, every misfortune is created by Allãh, and at that stage it is not an evil. But it is an evil when seen in relation to the man who loses an existing bounty because of it.

Likewise, every sin is a negative factor, and as such, it is

not to be attributed to Allãh at all; though it may be attributed to Him from another angle, inasmuch as it happens by permission of Allãh.

al-Bazanṭi said: I told ar-Riḍã (a.s.) that some of our fellows believe in compulsion and some of them advocate the (belief of) capability. Thereupon he told me: "Write down (as I say): Allãh, Blessed and High is He, has said: `O son of Adam! By My will you have become such that you wish for yourself what you wish; and by My power you discharged the duties imposed by Me (on you); and by My bounty, you got power to disobey Me; I made you hearing, seeing (and) powerful. Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh; and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself. And it is as it is because I have more right on your good deeds than you have yourself; and you are more liable to your sins than Me. And it is because I cannot be questioned concerning what I do and they shall be questioned. Thus, I have arranged for you everything that you want . . .' " (*Qurbu 'l-asnãd*)

This, or nearly the same, tradition is narrated through other chains, of the Sunnis as well as of the Shi'ahs. In short, the deeds that cannot be attributed to Allãh, are the sins *per se.* It further explains the sentence of the preceding tradition: "If he were their creator, He would not have disowned their liability . . . What Allãh has disowned any responsibility of, is their idol-worship and their evils . . ." Abu Ja'far and Abu `Abdillãh (a.s.) said: "Certainly, Allãh is too Merciful to His creatures to compel them to sin and then to punish them for it. And Allãh is too powerful for anyone to think that He would will a thing and it would not happen!" (The narrator) said: "Then they (a.s.) were asked: 'Is there a third position between the (positions of) compulsion and (independent) capability?' They said: 'Yes, broader than (the space) between the heaven and the earth.' " (*at-Tawḥīd*)

Muhammad ibn `Ajlãn said: "I asked Abu `Abdillãh (a.s.) whether Allãh has delegated (the authority of) the affair

to the servants. He said: ‘Allãh is too honourable to delegate (the authority) to them.’ I said: ‘Then has He compelled the servants in their deeds?’ He said: ‘Allãh is too just to compel a servant on a deed and then to punish him for it.’ ” (*ibid.*)

In the same book Mihzam is reported as saying: “Abũ `Abdillãh (a.s.) said: ‘Tell me what is that concerning which our followers (whom you have left behind) have differed among themselves.’ I said: ‘About the compulsion and the delegation?’ He said: ‘Then ask me about it.’ I asked: ‘Has Allãh compelled the servants to (commit) sins?’ He replied: ‘Allãh is too over-powering to do it to them.’ I asked: ‘Then has He delegated (the authority) to them?’ He replied: ‘Allãh has too much power over them to do so.’ I asked : ‘Then what is it (i.e., the correct position)? May Allãh make your affairs right for you!’ ” (The narrator says:) “The Imam turned his hand twice or thrice, then said: ‘If I were to answer you concerning it, you would not believe.’ ”

The author says: “Allãh is too overpowering to do it to them”: Compulsion means that a *force majeure* subdues the subject in such a way that his power of action is nullified. “Too overpowering” (or, more overpowering than that) is the predominant will of Allãh — He has willed that the action would emanate from the doer by his free will and choice, and this is what is actually happening in the world. The divine will has given the man freedom of will; neither the divine will negates the human will, nor the human will collides with the divine will.

It is reported in *at-Tawḥīd* that as-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: “The Apostle of Allãh said: ‘Whoever thinks that Allãh enjoins the evil and indecency, he tells a lie against Allãh; and whoever believes that the good and bad (do happen) without the will of Allãh, he removes Allãh from His authority.’ ”

It is reported that al-Ḥajjaj ibn Yũsuf wrote to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri, `Amr ibn `Ubayd, Wãṣil ibn ‘Aṭa’ and ‘Ãmir ash-

Sha‘bī, asking them to describe what they had got (and what has reached them) in respect of (divine) decree and measure. al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri wrote to him: “The best thing that has reached me is that which I heard the Leader of the faithful, `Ali ibn Abi Ṭãlib (a.s.) saying: ‘Do you think that He Who has forbidden you has (also) acted cunningly against you? Rather, your lower and higher (parts) have cunningly deceived you, and Allãh is free from its liability.’ “And `Amr ibn `Ubayd wrote to him: “The best thing I have heard about the decree and measure is the saying of the Leader of the faithful, `Ali ibn Abi Ṭãlib (a.s.): ‘If perfidy were in reality decreed, the perfidious man, if punished, would have been op-pressed.’ ” And Wasil ibn `Ata' wrote to him: “The best I have heard about the decree and measure is the saying of the Leader of the faithful, `Ali ibn Abi Ṭãlib (a.s.): `Do you think that He would guide you to the path and (then) obstruct you (from moving on)?’ ” And ash-Sha'bi wrote to him: “The best thing I have heard concerning the decree and measure is the word of the Leader of the faithful, `Ali ibn Abi Ṭãlib (a.s.): ‘Whatever you have to seek Allãh's pardon for it, it is from you; and what-ever you thank Allãh for it, it is from Him.’ ” When their letters reached al-Ḥajjãj and he studied them, he said: “Certainly they have taken it from a clear spring.” (*aṭ-Ṭarã'if*)

It is narrated in the same book that someone asked Ja‘far ibn Muhammad as-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) about the decree and measure, and he replied: “Whatever you may blame the servant (of Allãh) for it, it is from him; and whatever you cannot blame the servant (of Allãh) for it, it is the work of Allãh. Allãh will say to the servant: ‘Why did you disobey? Why did you transgress? Why did you drink liquor? Why did you fornicate?’ This is, therefore, the work of the servant. But He will not say to him: ‘Why were you sick? Why were you of short stature? Why did you become white? Why were you black?’(He will not ask it) because it is the work of Allãh.”

Ali (as.) was asked about monotheism and justice (of Allãh), and he said: "Monotheism is that you should not imagine Him; and justice is that you should not accuse Him." (*Nahju 'l-balãghah*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions on this subject; but those quoted above throw light on all the aspects of the topic.

The above-mentioned traditions show various special methods of argument regarding the subject matter.

a) Some of them argue on the basis of legislation itself — order and prohibition; punishment and reward etc. — that man has freedom of will, without any compulsion or delegation of power. See, for example, the speech of the Leader of the faithful, 'Ali (a.s.), replying to the old man. It is similar to the argument we have inferred from the words of Allãh.

b) Others bring in evidence the verses of the Qur'ãn which cannot be reconciled with the theory of compulsion or delegation of power. For example: *And Allãh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth* (3:189); *and your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants* (41:46). Also, there is the verse, *Say*: *"Surely Allãh does not enjoin indecency"* (7:28).

Poser : A deed may be described as unjust or indecent if it is seen in relation to us. But when it is attributed to Allãh it is not called unjust or indecent. Therefore, even if all "our" deeds were actually done by Allãh, it would be perfectly right to say that He is not unjust and does not enjoin indecency.

Reply: The sentence seen in the context leaves no room for such misconceptions. The complete verse is as follows: *And when they commit an indecency they say*: *"We found our fathers doing this and Allãh has enjoined it on us." Say*: *"Surely Allãh does not enjoin indecency. Do you say*

against Allãh what you do not know?" Look at the sentence, "and Allãh has enjoined it on us." The pronoun "it" clearly refers to the indecency committed by them; and it is the same deed which is referred to in the sentence, "Surely Allãh does not enjoin indecency." Allãh does not enjoin what is termed as indecency in context of human activities; it does not matter whether in other framework it is called indecency or not.

c) A third type of reasoning is based on the divine attributes. Allãh has given Himself many good names, and has described Himself with many sublime attributes, which cannot be squared with compulsion or delegation of power. Allãh is the Subduer, the Omnipotent, the Benevolent and the Merciful. These attributes can only be believed in if one believes that everything depends on Allãh in its existence, and that its defects and shortcomings can-not be attributed to Him at all. (Refer to the traditions quoted from *at-Tawḥīd.*)

d) Yet others refer to seeking the pardon of Allãh as well as to the blame which society directs at the wrong-doer. If sin were not from the man himself, there would have been no meaning in asking for divine pardon. If all our actions were done by Allãh why should be we blamed for only some of them and not for the others?

e) Lastly, there are the traditions which explain the words, like causing to err, sealing the hearts and misleading, when they are attributed to Allãh:

ar-Riḍã (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allãh, *and He* (Allãh) *left them in utter darkness — they do not see*: *"*Allãh is not described as leaving something as His creatures do. But when He knew that they would not return from disbelief and error, He held back His help and grace from them and let them alone with their choice." (*`Uyũnu 'l-akhbãr*)

The same book narrates from the same Imam in explanation of the words of Allãh, *Allãh has set a seal upon their hearts*: *"*It is setting a seal on the hearts of the disbelievers as a punishment of their disbelief, as Allãh has

said: . . . *nay! Allãh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a few* (4:155)."

as-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said concerning the words of Allãh, *Surely Allãh is not ashamed to set forth any parable.* . .: "This divine word answers those who think that Allãh makes (His) servants go astray and then punishes them for that straying . . ." (*Majma`u 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: Its meaning may be understood from previous explanations.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

Every species is related to a particular type of action and reaction. In fact it is these special characteristics which identify the species as such. We looked at various kinds of actions and reactions emanating from various groups. Our reason told us that there should be an efficient cause, an agent, to bring each kind of these actions and reactions into being. Therefore, we put every group in a separate category, identifying it as a species. When we compared human characteristics, for example, with those of an animal, and delineated them clearly, we decided that they were two different species, with different characteristics.

When the actions are seen in relation to their subjects, that is, the species, they are primarily divided into two categories:

First: The actions emanating from the nature — where the knowledge of their emanation has no effect at all on their existence. For example, the growth and nutrition of the vegetables; the movement of the bodies; our own health or illness. These things are known to us, present in our own bodies; but our knowing or not knowing them has no effect whatsoever on their coming into being; they totally depend upon their doer — that is, nature.

Second: The actions issuing forth from the doer with his

knowledge — where the said knowledge has a bearing on their being, like the intentional actions of the man and even of some animals. The doer does such an action after knowing and identifying it; and it is the knowledge and perception that gives him that insight. The knowledge makes him realize what would constitute his perfection, and helps him in deciding whether a particular action would lead to that desired perfection. The knowledge distinguishes the means of perfection from other things; and this distinction helps the doer in choosing a particular course of action. And the action comes into being.

The activities based upon ingrained aptitude (like issuing forth of the required voices, when a man speaks), as well as those emanating from natural disposition, or from the dictates of nature (like breathing) and, likewise, those springing from overwhelming grief or fear etc., do not require contemplation or meditation by the doer. Why? Because there is not more than one form of knowledge here, and the doer does not have to delay his activity awaiting a final decision. Therefore, he does it immediately. But in other cases, where the doer has before his eyes two or more possible forms of knowledge to choose from, he has to spend at least a few moments in contemplation and deliberation. For example, Zayd is hungry, and he gets a bread. Its one aspect is that it may satiate his hunger; but there may be other aspects too — it may be another man's property, it may be poisoned, it may have become dirty and so on. Zayd has to reflect whether the bread is legally, morally and hygienically fit for consumption. When he reaches a conclusion, the actions follows without any delay.

The first type of activities is called involuntary, like natural reactions; the second type is called voluntary, or intentional, like walking or talking.

The intentional actions, emanating from man's knowledge and will, are again divided into two categories:

First: When the man decides to do — or, not to do — a

certain work, he may do so entirely on his own, without being influenced by any other fellow. In the example given above, Zayd may decide, on his own, not to eat the bread because it was someone else's property; or he may eat it in spite of that snag. This is called a deed done by man's free will.

Second: When the man opts for a certain course of action under the influence of someone else. A tyrant may force a help-less person to act according to that tyrant's instruction under duress. The poor fellow in this condition commits sins and crimes against his own will. This is called a deed done under compulsion.

Right? But let us look at this second category more closely. We have said that this kind of deed results from the compeller's compulsion; he does not allow any freedom to the doer, who has to take the only way left open by the oppressor. But even then, it is the doer himself who decides to proceed on that way. It is true that the major factor leading to this decision was the tyrant's compulsion; but it is equally true that the decision was taken by the doer himself, even though it was taken to save himself from the tyrant's oppression. In short, even the deeds done under compulsion are done by the will of the doer. It follows that the division of intentional actions into these two categories is not real, not based on actual facts. The intentional action is the one which emanates from a knowledge and a will that tips the balance in its favour. This reality is found in the deed done under compulsion as well as in the one done by free will. It makes no difference that it was some other man's force or fear that tipped the balance in one case and the doer's own thinking that did so in the other. A man sitting near a wall looks up to find that it was about to fall; overcome by fear he sprints away from that place. And we say that he did so by his own free will. Suppose, a tyrant threatens to bull-doze the wall over him if he did not move away. Overcome by fear, he sprints away from there. And we say that it was done under

compulsion. But the fundamentals in both cases are the same. The man is overcome by fear and decides to move away. So, why should we put them in two different categories.

Objection: There is enough difference between the two actions to warrant their assignment to two different categories. The deed done by free will is based on its underlying wisdom (in the eyes of the doer); the doer deserves praise or blame, and gets reward or punishment, for it. All these factors are simply absent in the case of a deed done under compulsion.

Reply: It is true. But these factors are based on subjective approach of the society. They do not have any existence outside the imagination. By talking on these subjective approaches we have crossed the limits of philosophy. Philosophy deals with the things that exist in reality, as well as with those things' natural characteristics. What all this leads to is the conclusion that the discussion whether man is free in his actions is beyond the scope of philosophy.

We may yet bring it back on the track of philosophy from another direction:

A transient (possible) thing has equal relation with existence and non-existence. It, therefore, needs a sufficient cause to tip the balance in favour of existence, so that it may come into being.

The transient thing, when related to its sufficient cause, becomes an essential being — it becomes impossible for it not to exist. That is why it is said that a transient does not come into being unless it becomes an essential being.

A transient, by its definition, must have a sufficient cause for its existence. A transient existing without its sufficient cause is a contradiction in terms. And that cause gives it the essentiality, so long as it exists.

Now look at the universe at a glance. You will find a chain made up of innumerable links, all of which would be

essential beings. In other words, not a single existing thing could be called a transient, so long as it exists.

But this "essential-ness" comes to it only when it is looked at in relation to its sufficient cause.

The sufficient cause may be a single thing or a compound of various causes — the material, the formal, the efficient and the final causes, plus the necessary conditions of time and space as well as other preliminaries. An effect when related to its sufficient cause must invariably exist — because the said cause would make it essential. But when seen with only a part of that cause, or if related to any outside factor, it would not be essential; it would remain a transient as before.

If a transient, on being related to only a part of its sufficient cause (e.g., to its efficient cause only) become essential and come into being, its sufficient cause would be superfluous; and it would be a contradiction in term.

It shows that in this natural world two systems are found simultaneously: one of essentiality and the other of transiency. The system of essentiality covers the sufficient causes and their effects — there is no transiency in any part of this world, neither in any person nor in any action. The stystem of transiency permeates the matter and its potentialities when related to only a part of the sufficient cause. Take any human action; if it is related to its sufficient cause — man (the efficient cause), knowledge and will (the final), matter (the material) and its shape (the formal) plus all conditions of time and space including removal of every hindrance — it would become essential. But if it is seen in relation to only its efficient cause, that is, man, it would remain transient.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the transient things need a cause for their existence because of their transiency. And this need would not end until the chain of cause and effect finally reaches a cause Who is the Essential Being. This observation leads to the following two conclusions:

First: The need of an effect for its cause does not end on

its being related to its transient cause. The need continues until it reaches the Final Cause, the Essential Being.

Second: This need emanates from its transient nature. It needs a cause to bring it into existence with all its characteristics and traits, including its relationship with its various causes, fulfilling all the conditions of its existence.

Now we may ponder upon the question of compulsion and delegation of power, keeping in view the above-mentioned premises:

First: No delegation of power: Man, like all other things and their actions, depends on the will of Allãh, for his existence. In the same way, man's action depends on the will of Allãh in its existence. Therefore, the Mu‘tazilites' view — that human actions have no relation at all to the divine will — is completely baseless. There was no reason at all for them to deny the decree and measure of Allãh in respect of the man's actions.

Second: No compulsion: This relation to the will of Allãh, inasmuch as it is concerned with existence, keeps all the characteristics of the created thing in view. Every effect emanates from its cause — with all its characteristics which have any bearing on its existence. A man's creation is attributed to Allãh, keeping in view all its intermediary causes and condition — the father, the mother, the time, the place, the features, the quantity, the quality and a lot of other concomitants. Likewise, the action of man is attributed to Allãh, keeping in view all its characteristics and conditions. When a man's action is attributed to Allãh and His will, it does not cease to be the man's action; it is still caused by the said man's will. The will of Allãh decrees that the action be done by the man emanating from the man's own free will and choice. Therefore, it would be a contradiction in term to say that the action was no longer done by man's free will because it was related to the divine will. Allãh Himself has decreed it to be a work of the man by his free will; how can it be said that the divine will lost its

effectiveness and the action happened without the man's free will? It is now clear that the view of al-Mujabbirah — that the human action's relation to the divine will nullifies its relation to the human will — is absolutely devoid of truth.

The above discourse shows that the said action has a relation to the human will and a relation to the divine will; neither relation nullifies the other, because each is connected with the other vertically, not horizontally.

Third: The human action, when related to its sufficient cause, becomes essential. But seen in relation to only a part of the sufficient cause, it remains transient. For example, when the action is related to only its sufficient cause, that is, man, it does not become essential, but remains transient as before.

Therefore, what a group of modern materialist philosophers have said — that the whole system of nature is permeated by compulsion, and there is no free will at all in the universe — is totally wrong. As we have said, all effects in relation to their sufficient causes are essential, but, when related to only a part of the said causes, are transient. And it is the foundation on which man's life is based. A man teaches and trains his child and then hopes that his efforts would bear fruit. If there was no freedom in the world, if everything was essential and had to happen anyhow, then all this teaching and training would be of no earthly use; there would remain no place for hope in human life.

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوٰاتاً فَاَحْيٰاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ
يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ــ ٢٨ . هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوّٰيهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوَاتٍ وَهُوَ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ــ ٢٩ .

***How do you deny Allãh and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause you to die and again bring you to life; then you shall be brought back to Him* (28). *He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens; and He know all things* (29).**

GENERAL COMMENT

The talk reverts again to the initial topic. The beginning of the chapter dealt with three categories of mankind; then all were addressed together (verses 21-27) with the words, "O men", Now these verses describe the same subject with a grater detail. The twelve verses, starting from here, depict the reality of man; show the potentialities of perfection which Allãh has endowed him with; delineate the vast scope of his inner being; describe the various stages — death and life, and again death and life; then the return to Allãh — through which he passes in his journey, explaining that the final destination is Allãh. In this context, the verses describe some basic bounties of Allãh upon him — creative as well as legislative. He created for him all that is. in the earth and made the heaven subservient to him. He made him His deputy on the earth, ordered the angels to prostrate before him, put the first man into the Garden, opened for him the door of repentance and enhanced his prestige by guiding him to His worship. In this background,

the opening words, "How do you deny Allãh", serve to emphasize the grace and bounty of Allãh on man.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *How do you deny Allãh . . . you shall be brought back to Him*: The verse is somewhat (though not exactly) similar to the verse 40:11: *They shall say*: *"Our Lord! twice didst Thou give us death, and twice hast Thou give us life, so we do confess our faults; is there then a way to get out?* This (later) is one of the verses that prove an *al-barzakh* (آلـبَـرزَخُ = intervening period or life) between this world and the next. It says that Allãh gives death twice. First is the death that transfers us from this world. But when and where shall we be given the second death? Giving of death presupposes a preceding life. It means that man shall be given a life in the period intervening between this first death and the Day of Resurrection. This argument is solid, and it has been offered in some traditions too.

Question: Both verses have exactly the same connotation. Both mention two deaths and two lives. According to the verse 2:28, the stage before the life of this world has been called the first death. Then comes the first life in this world, followed by the second death transferring the man to the next world, and lastly will come the second life on the Day of Resurrection. The second verse (40:11) too should be interpreted in the same way, because both have the same import. It means that after the death of this world, there is no life before the Day of Resurrection.

Reply: It is wrong to say that the two verses have the same connotation. The verse 2:28 mentions one death, one causing to die and two givings of life; while the verse 40:11 is talking about two givings of death and two givings of life.

There is a world of difference between "death" and "causing to die". "Causing to die" shows a preceding life; while "death" can be used just for absence of life — even when there was no life before it.

The verse 40:11 refers to the death after this life, then the life of the intervening period, then the death after that, and finally to the life on the Day of Resurrection. The verse 2:28 on the other hand, refers first to the lifeless state ("death", and not "causing to die") before coming to this world, then goes on mentioning this life, then death and then the life of the intervening period. There will be some delay before man is returned to his Lord. The conjunctive used "*thumma*" (ثُـمَّ = then) denotes some delay. Its use here supports this explanation because after the life of the intervening period there shall come again a death and only then the man shall be returned to Allãh.

QUR'ÃN : *and you were dead and He gave you life*: It shows the reality of man and his existence. He is a being, ever-changing, ever proceeding on his path of perfection, step by step, stage by stage. Before coming into this world, he was dead, then he was made alive by Allãh and came here; again he will be caused to die and then be made alive again. Allãh says: . . . *and He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an extract, of water held in light estimation. Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit* . . . (32:7-9); . . . *then We did grow it into another creation; so blessed be Allãh, the best of the creators* (23:14); *And they say*: *"What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new generation?" Nay! they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say*: *"The angel of death who is given charge of you shall cause you to die, then to your Lord you shall be brought back"* (32:10-11) ; *From it We created you and into it We shall send you back from it will We raise you a second*

time (20:55). The verses will be explained when we shall come to them; they have been quoted here only to show that man is a part of the earth, he was created from it, gradually developed until he grew into "another creation"; this "another creation" proceeds on the path of his perfection; then the angel of death completely removes this "man" from the body; and he returns to Allãh. This is the path which the man has to take to.

The divine decree has planned the universe in such a way that every thing is related to every thing else; there is a constant action and reaction between it and the rest of the creation. Man too influences, and is in turn influenced by, all that exists in the earth and in the heavens — the elements and their characteristics, the animal world, the vegetable world, the minerals, the water, the air and, in short, every creation of nature. The fact is that the scope of man's activities is much greater, and his circle far bigger than anything else's. He has been given thinking and reasoning powers, and, as a result of this unique gift of Allãh, he influences the other creatures, manages them, arranges and re-arranges them, manipulates them, destroys them, amends them and perfects them, on a scale unheard of outside his circle. Every creature is under his domain. Sometimes he imitates nature by creating synthetic items for his needs; at other times he sets some forces of nature against the others. In short, he obtains, by all possible means, whatever he wants from whatever he wants. Passage of time has further strengthened his hands; now he has deeper insight in the working of nature, and manipulates the system even more effectively. That is so that Allãh may establish the reality by His words, and so that the truth of His speech may be seen even more clearly: *And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself* (45:13). The verse following the verse under discussion, that is, 2:29, states the same fact: *He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heavens, so He made them complete seven heavens.* The

context — description of the bounties of Allãh bestowed on man — shows that it was for the benefit of man that Allãh directed Himself to the heavens and made them complete seven. (Ponder on the point!)

This is the path taken by the man in his journey of existence; and this is the imprint of his activities on the universe; it shows where he began from and what is his final destination.

Man's life in this world originates from nature, as the Qur'ãn confirms. But the same book declares also that this very life emanates from Allãh: . . . *and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing* (19:9); *Surely He it is Who originates and returns* (85:13). Man is a creature that is brought up in the caressing fold of creation, gets his nourishment from the breast of production, and is connected on this level with life-less nature. But, on the level of origination, he is related to the command of Allãh, to His authority: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, "Be"*, *and it is* (36:82); *Our word for a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it, "Be"*, *and it is* (16:40).

This much about genesis. As for the return journey, the path divides in two: the path of happiness, and that of unhappiness.

The path of happiness is the shortest route, leading the man to the sublime spiritual heights. It keeps raising his status and enhancing his rank until it takes him to the divine nearness. The path of unhappiness, on the other hand, is a long route that keeps demeaning and debasing him rendering him lowest of the low, until he reaches the divine presence. *And Allãh encompasses them on every side* (85:20) . This subject has been fully explained under the verse, *Guide us to the straight path* (1:6).

This was a short description of man's path. Details about his life in this world, and before and after it, will be given in their proper place. The verse under discussion is not concerned with those details; it makes only a passing reference to it as it has some bearing on guidance and misguidance, happiness and

unhappiness.

He made them complete seven heavens: We shall write about the heavens in Chapter 32 (*as-Sajdah*), God willing.

* * * * *

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلاٰئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا
أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ
وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ٣٠. وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ
الأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلاٰئِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلاَءِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ـ ٣١. قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ـ ٣٢. قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا
أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ـ ٣٣.

***And when your Lord said to the angels, "Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent"; they said*: *"wilt thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?" He said*: *"Surely I know what you do not know"* (30). *And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then presented them to the angels and He said*: *"Tell Me the names of those if you are right"* (31). *They said*: *"Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou, Thou* (alone), *art the knowing, the Wise"* (32). *He said*: "O**

Adam! inform them of their names. And when he had informed them of their names, He said: "Did I not say to you that I surely know the unseen heavens and the earth and (that) ***I know what you manifest and what you were hiding?"*** (33)**.**

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses tell us why the man has been sent to this world, what is the significance of his appointment as the vicegerent of Allãh in this earth, what are the characteristics and special features of this vicegerency. Unlike other Qur'ãnic stories, it has been told in one place only, that is, in these verses.

QUR'ÃN: *And when your Lord said*: *We* shall explain in vol. IV, what the "speech" or "saying" means when it is attributed to Allãh, to angels and to the Satan.

QUR'ÃN: *they said*: *"Wilt thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it . . . and extol Thy holiness?"*: The angels heard the announcement, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", and at once arrived at the conclusion that the would be vicegerent would make mischief in the earth and shed blood. Apparently they understood the ultimate behaviour of the said vicegerent from the words, "in the earth". A vicegerent appointed in the earth would certainly be created from material components; he would necessarily be bestowed with two basic traits of desire and anger; the earth is a place of unceasing struggle and constant confrontation; its resources are limited, its opportunities finite; but the proposed vicegerent's desire would be unlimited, infinite. The condition of the earth and earthly things was hardly reassuring. Its creatures were subjected to ever-continuing deterioration and disintegration;

its good was always turning into bad; it was a place where an individual could not live without a group having similar characteristics and traits. Keeping all this in view, the angels at once understood that what Allãh intended to create was not only an individual, but a species. The members of that species would have to live together, cooperating with one another; that is to say, they would have to establish a society, a social order. And with a venture like this, they were bound to cause mischief and to shed blood.

On the other hand, they knew that vicegerency — setting one thing in place of another — was unthinkable unless the vicegerent were a true copy of his predecessor in all the characteristics, traits and intrinsic abilities. The proposed earthly creature was to be made vicegerent of Allãh in the earth. Allãh has got for Himself the best names, the sublime attributes; His mercy and power are beyond the comprehension of His creatures; He, in His person, is untouched by any defect; and, in his actions, is free from all kinds of evil and disorder. How could an earthly vicegerent, with all his defects and deficiencies, represent the majesty and splendour of Allãh in the earth? Well, could a lowly creature of earth be a mirror of divine beauty and sublimity?

This was their question — and it was no more than a question. It was not a protest, not an objection; they actually wanted to know the truth. They later asserted their belief that Allãh was the Knowing, the Wise. They believed that what Allãh intended to do was based on knowledge and wisdom; and their question was put in order to learn the underlying wisdom of the decision of Allãh. What their question — or, pleading — amounted to was as follows:

Allãh intends to appoint a vicegerent in the earth, in order that the said vicegerent should represent Allãh by celebrating His praise and glorifying His holiness through his worthy presence. But his earthly nature would not let him do so; it would irresistibly pull him towards mischief and wickedness. So far as the main purpose of this vicegerency

— celebrating Allãh's praise and glorifying His holiness — is concerned, we are already doing it. Therefore, we are Allãh's *de facto* vicegerents; and if Allãh wishes, He may bestow upon us this designation. What is the need, then, of a new creation to act as vicegerent of Allãh in the earth?

For the reply, Allãh used a sentence, "Surely I know what you do not know", and an action, "And He taught Adam the names, all of them".

The context shows that :

First: The vicegerent was to get the vicegerency of Allãh; he was not to become a successor of any earthly creature that had preceded him. If Allãh had wanted the man to take the place of that previous creature, the reply, "And He taught Adam the names, all of them", would be quite irrelevant.

Assuming that man was given vicegerency of Allãh, this prestige would not be restricted to the person of Adam only, his descendants too would be vicegerents of Allãh in the earth. Adam was taught the names; in other words, this knowledge was ingrained in human being in such a manner that, since that first day, it has been constantly bearing newer, fresher and better fruits; whenever man gets a chance, he discovers new avenues of knowledge; and thus he always finds himself imbued with previously unknown potentialities that more often than not turn into real achievements. It is a never ending process; it is a wonder that will not cease, and ever-fresh insight that will never fail to astonish.

That this assumption is correct, and the whole mankind is vicegerent of Allãh, is evident by the following verses: *And remember* (O people of 'Ãd!) *when He made you successors of Nũḥ's people* . . . (7:69); *Then We made you successors in the land after them* . . . (10:14); . . . *and He makes you successors in the earth* (27:62). The word translated here as "successor" is the same that has been translated as "vicegerent" in the verse under discussion.

Second: Allãh did not say that the vicegerent-designate would not cause mischief and bloodshed; nor did He reject the plea of the angels that they celebrated His praise and extolled His glory. By this silence, He confirmed that the angels were right on both counts. But then He made manifest one thing which the angels were not aware of. He showed them that there was a matter which they could not shoulder the responsibility of, while this proposed vicegerent could do so. Man was entrusted with a divine secret which the angels, in their nature, were unable to know or understand. And that divine gift would more than compensate the ensuing mischief and bloodshed.

Allãh told them, first, that surely He knew what they did not know. Then He referred to the same reply by telling them: "Did I not say that I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth?" Looking at the intervening sentences it may easily be understood that the "unseen (secrets)" refer to "the names". It does not refer to Adam's knowledge of those names. The angels were unaware of even the existence of these "names"; it was not that they knew about the names but were not sure whether Adam knew them or not. Had the angels been doubtful only about Adam's knowledge of the names, it would have been enough to tell Adam to inform the angels of the names in order that they would have known that Adam knew. Instead, Allãh first asked them to tell Him "the names of those". The angels had claimed the vicegerency of Allãh for themselves, and had hinted that Adam was not fit for it; but the essential qualification for the vicegerency was the knowledge of the names; therefore, Allãh asked both candidates about the names; the angels did not know them, and Adam knew; it proved that he had the qualification while they lacked it. The question (about this knowledge) addressed to the angels ends with the clause, "if you are right"; it means that they had claimed a position, essential qualification of which was this

knowledge.

QUR'ÃN: *And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then presented them to the angels*: The Arabic pronoun, "them", used in "then presented them", is made for rational beings, those who have life, sense and understanding. Obviously, the names (or, the named ones) were some living and sensible being who were hidden behind the curtain of the "unseen". It follows that the knowledge given to Adam of their names was something totally different from what we understand from the knowledge of names. Merely knowing the names (in the sense known to us) has no distinction; otherwise, the angels too would have become equal to Adam in this respect as soon as they heard those names from Adam. Also, there would have been no distinction for Adam in such a knowledge. The angels could rightly complain to Allãh that He taught those names to Adam, but kept them (i.e. the angels) in dark; had He taught them too, they would have been equal to, if not better than, Adam! Understandably, such favouritism could not have silenced the angels. Surely, it was something deeper then merely knowing all the names.

It would not have been a convincing argument for Allãh to teach Adam a dictionary and then put it as an evidence against the angels — the honoured servants who do not precede Him in speech and who act according to His commandment only — telling them to inform Him of the words which they had not been taught, and which the mankind was to invent in future. Moreover, the only purpose of language is to convey the feelings and ideas to the hearer; but the angels do not need any language for this purpose; they convey and receive the ideas directly without the medium of words; their stage is far higher than that of human beings in this respect.

However, it is clear that the knowledge of the names which the angels got after hearing them from Adam was not

the same as Adam had got by teaching of Allãh — the inferior knowledge of the names they could grasp, but not the superior one which qualified Adam for vicegerency of Allãh.

Adam deserved the vicegerency because he was given the knowledge of the names, and not because he informed the angels of those names. That is why they declared, "Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us". They accepted that they did not possess that knowledge.

The above discourse leads us to believe that Adam was taught the names of the named ones in such a way that he clearly knew their reality and recognized their substantial existence; it was not merely knowing the semantic value of a noun. The named ones were substantial realities, the actual beings that were, at the same time, hidden behind the curtain of the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth. This especial knowledge could be learnt only by an earthly human being, but was quite incomprehensible by a heavenly angel. And this knowledge had an intrinsic bearing upon vicegerency.

"al-Asmã' " (اَلأَسْمَاءُ = the names) , in the sentences, "And He taught Adam the names", is a plural with the definite article "*al*" (اَلْ = the) prefixed to it. Grammatically, it denotes generality, comprehensiveness; and it is followed by the emphatic, "all of them". Clearly, Adam was taught all the names of every named thing, without any restriction or limitation. As described earlier, the pronoun, "them", in the clause, "then presented them to the angels", shows that every name, that is, the named one, was a living being having knowledge and intellect; and at the same time, he was in the curtain of the unseen — the unseen of the heavens and the earth.

"The unseen of the heavens and the earth": It is a genitive case. Somewhere else this phrase may mean the unseen parts of the heavens and the earth. But in this verse, where Allãh

intends to demonstrate His perfect and comprehensive power, and to show the deficiency and incapability of the angels, it must mean a secret which is unseen to all the worlds, to all the heavens and the earth; an unseen beyond the sphere of the universe.

If you look at all the particulars of this verse — that "the names" denotes generality, that the named ones were alive and had knowledge, and that they were unseen to the heavens and the earth — you will agree that it perfectly fits on the theme of the verse 15:21, *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it and We do not send it down but in a known measure.* Whatever is called a thing — whatever is "named" a thing — Allãh has its vast treasures, ever-lasting, never-ending, unmeasured by any measure, unlimited by any limit. Measure and limit come to it when it is created and sent down. The vastness of these treasures is not of the same kind as the multiplicity of number, because a number, no matter how large, is by definition measured, limited and quantified. The said treasure are vast in their ranks and grades. (We shall further explain it in Chapter 15.)

The named ones who were presented before the angels were sublime beings, who were well-protected by Allãh, hidden in curtains of the unseen. He sent them down to the universe with their blessings and benefactions, and created all that is in the heavens and in the earth from their light and splendour. Although they had numerous identities, they were not different in their number or in their persons; whatever difference there was, it was in their ranks and grades.

QUR'ÃN : *and I know what you manifest and what you were hiding*: The sentence stands face to face with the mention of the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth. Probably it refers to those things which are the parts of the heavens and the earth; and in this way both sentences together cover all unseen things — those which are beyond the sphere of the heavens and the earth together with those which are within that sphere.

Instead of saying "and what you hide", Allãh said, "and what you were hiding". This changed style shows that there was something hidden especially in respect of Adam and his appointment as vicegerent. Probably it was the incident described in the next verse: ". . . (the angels) *prostrated except Iblīs. He refused and he showed arrogance, and he was one of the unbelievers*". It shows that Iblīs was an unbeliever before then, and that his refusal to prostrate had sprung from that disbelief, which he had kept hidden upto that moment. Obviously, the prostration of the angels and the refusal of Iblīs had happened after Allãh had told them, "Surely I know what you do not know", but before He said to them, " . . . I know what you manifest and what you were hiding" (i.e. the unbelief kept secret by Iblīs) . It also explains the reason why the former sentence was changed to, "I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth".

TRADITIONS

as-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "The angels could not know what they said (*Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood*) , if they had not (earlier) seen someone who had made mischief in it and shed blood." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshi)

The author says: This tradition may be pointing to an earlier creature that inhabited the earth before the mankind, as some other traditions say. It is not against what we have said that they understood it from the very words of Allãh: *Verily, I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent*; rather the tradition and our explanation are complementary. The tradition, without putting it in the framework of our explanation, would show that the angels too, like Iblīs, had committed the folly of unauthorized analogy — a very objectionable practice.

Zurarah said: "I visited Abu Ja'far (a.s.) and he asked (me): 'What do you have of Shi'ah traditions?' I said: 'I do have a large number of it; and I was thinking of kindling a fire to burn them in it.' He said: 'Hide it (somewhere), you will (naturally) forget what you are not familiar with.' " (Zurarah said) : "Then, I thought about the mankind (and asked him about them). He said: 'How did the angels get their knowledge when they said, *Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood?'* " Zurarah further reports that whenever Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) mentioned this tradition, he said: "It is a shattering blow against al-Qadariyyah (i.e. those who say that man is completely independent of Allãh in his actions)." Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) further said: "Adam (a.s.) had, in the heaven, a friend from among the angels. When Adam got down from the heaven to the earth, the angel felt lonely; he complained (of it) to Allãh and sought His permission. Allãh allowed him and he came down to him (Adam); he found him (Adam) sitting in a desolate region. When Adam saw him, he put his hand on his head and cried aloud." Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) said: "They narrate that (it was such a loud cry that) all the creatures heard it. The angel told him: 'O Adam ! I do not see but that you have disobeyed your Lord and put on yourself a burden beyond your strength. Do you know what Allãh had told us about you, and (what) we had said in His reply?' (Adam) said: 'No.' (The angel) said: 'Allãh told us, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent". We said: "Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood?" Thus, He created you to place you in the earth. Could it be right for you to stay in the heaven?' " Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) said: "Allãh in this way consoled Adam for three days." (*ibid.*)

The author says: The tradition shows that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven. Other traditions on this subject will be given later.

In the same book, Abu 'l-‘Abbãs is quoted as saying that he asked Abu ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh, *And He taught Adam the names, all of them,* (and enquired) as to what Allãh had taught him. (The Imam) said: “The earths, the mountains, the canyons and the valleys.” Then he looked at the rug which he sat upon and said: “And this rug is among the things which He taught him.”

It is reported in the same book that al-Fuḍayl ibn al-‘Abbãs asked Abu ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) what were the names which Allãh taught Adam. He replied: “The names of the valleys and the vegetables and the trees and the mountains of the earth."

The same book narrates from Dãwũd ibn Sarḥãn al-‘Aṭṭãr that he said : “I was with Abu Abdillãh (a.s.); he called for the table - spread and we took our meals. Then he called for the wash-bowl and hand-towel. I said to him: ‘May I be your ransom! The words of Allãh: *And He taught Adam the names, all of them* — was (this) wash-bowl and hand-towel among them?’ He (a.s.) said: ‘The mountain-passes and the valleys.’ Saying this he pointed by his hand this and that way.” as-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: “Verily, Allãh taught Adam the names of His proofs, all of them; then He presented them — and they were the spirits — to the angels, and said: ‘Tell Me the names of these if you are right in your claims that you have more right, than Adam, to the vicegerency in the earth because of your glorifying and extolling (Me).’ They said: ‘*Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou, Thou* (alone), *art the Knowing, the Wise.’* Allãh, Blessed and High is He! said: ‘*O Adam! inform them of their names.’* When he informed them of their names, they knew of their (i.e. those spirits) high rank before Allãh, Great is His name! They realized that they (i.e. those spirits) were more deserving to be the vicegerents of Allãh in His earth, and (to be) His proofs over His creatures. Then

Allãh removed them (the spirits) from their sight, and subjugated them with their (i.e. those spirits) obedience and love; and told them, '*Did I not say to you that I surely know the unseen* (secrets) *of the heavens and the earth and* (that) *I know what you manifest and what you were hiding?' "* (*Ma'ãni''l-akhbãr*)

The author says: The meaning of this tradition may be understood from the commentary given earlier; and it may also be realized that there was no contradiction between this tradition and the preceding ones. It was explained earlier that the verse 15:21 (*And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it . . .*) that every thing originally exists in the treasures of the unseen; the things that are with us came into being on descending from there. The name given to a thing in this existence is in fact the name of that which is hidden in the treasures of the unseen. You may say that Allãh taught Adam every thing that was in His treasures of the unseen — unseen that was hidden from the heavens and the earth. The same idea may be conveyed in these words: Allãh taught Adam the names of all things — the things that were unseen secrets hidden from the heavens and the earth. The sum total of both statements is the same.

It is not out of place here to point to the traditions of aṭṭīnah (اَلطِّيْنَةُ = the substance, of which a thing is made). Such a tradition, narrated in *Biḥãru 'l-anwãr, is* as follows:
Jãbir ibn `Abdillãh said: "I said to the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.): 'What was the first thing which Allãh created?' He said : 'The light of your prophet, O Jãbir! Allãh created it, then created from it every good; then He caused it to stand before Him in the station of "nearness", so long as Allãh wished. Then He divided it into parts; and He created the Throne from one part, and the Chair from another part, and the bearers of the Throne and the occupiers of the Chair from yet another part;

and He placed the fourth part in the station of love, as long as Allãh wished. Then He divided it into parts; and He created the Pen from one part, and the Tablet from another part, and the Garden from yet an-other part; and He placed the fourth part in the station of fear, as long as Allãh wished. Then He divided it into portions, and He created the angels from one portion, and the sun from another portion, and the moon from yet another portion, and He placed the fourth portion in the station of hope, as long as Allãh wished. Then He divided it into portions, and He created the understanding from one portion, and the knowledge and forbearance from another portion, and the (divine) protection and help from yet other portion, and He placed the fourth portion in the station of modesty as long as Allãh wished. Then He looked at it with awe-inspiring eye, and that Light started perspiring, and one hundred and twenty-four thousand drops dropped from it; and Allãh created from each drop the soul of a prophet and apostle. Then the souls of the prophets began breathing, and Allãh created from their breasts the souls of (His) friends and the martyrs and the good ones.' "

The author says: There are numerous traditions of the same type; and on deep pondering they support what we have written earlier; some of them will be discussed later on. You should not reject such traditions outright, thinking that they were forged by the Ṣũfīs. The wonders of the creation are unfathomable; the scientists and the philosophers have spent, and are spending, their lives in discovering some of its secrets; but every solved enigma brings in its wake a lot of fresh previously unthought-of enigmas. Do not forget that this is the unfathomability of this physical world — the smallest in range, the narrowest in scope, the lowest in rank. How can we pass judgement about other worlds beyond this one — the worlds of light, spaciousness and abundance?

* * * * *

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ
وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ـ ٣٤.

And when We said to the angels*: *"Prostrate before Adam", then all prostrated except Iblīs. He refused and he showed arrogance and he was one of the unbelievers (34)**.**

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

It has been explained earlier that the preceding words, "and what you were hiding", show that there was a hidden thing that had, meanwhile, come into open. The last sentence of this verse too leads to the same conclusion. Instead of saying, "He refused and he showed arrogance, and he disbelieved", it says, ". . . he was one of the unbelievers". It was not that he became an unbeliever at that moment; he was an unbeliever long since, but had kept it a secret, and this event brought it into open. Also, it was mentioned that the event of the prostration of the angels must have happened between the divine words, "Surely I know what you do not know", and the words, ". . . I know what you manifest and what you were hiding". It may be asked: Why then has Allãh put this verse after those words? Probably it *has* been done just to create a link between the stories of creation of Adam and his being placed in the Paradise. The twelve verses (28 - 39) were revealed to describe how and when man was made

vicegerent of Allãh, how was he sent down to the earth, and what is to happen to him in this life — the happenings that will have a bearing on his lasting happiness or unhappiness. For this theme, the event of prostration has not much importance — except as a connecting link. That is why it has been mentioned here only briefly without going into details. Perhaps, it is because of the same reason that the Qur'ãn has changed the pronouns referring to Allãh from the third person (*your Lord said*) to the first (*And when We said*).

The angels had not hidden anything from Allãh; it was Iblīs who had done so. Then why did Allãh ascribe this deed to all of them (*you were hiding*)*?* Allãh in this talk used the same method which even the human beings have adopted for their own speeches; we ascribe the work of an individual to the whole group, if the doer is not properly identified or if he tries to remain anonymous. Also, there may be another explanation for it. Apparently the first announcement, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", had shown that the said vicegerent would have authority over the angels too. It may be inferred from the command obliging them to prostrate before Adam. Probably on hearing that first announcement some disturbing thought had come into their minds, as it had never occurred to them that any earthly creature could be given authority over everything including themselves. Some traditions too point to it. In this context the words, "what you were hiding", could easily be addressed to the angels.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN : "*Prostrate before Adam*": Apparently it shows that prostration, *per se,* may be done before other than Allãh, if it is done in conformity with Allãh's command, as a mark of respect to that person. A similar case is found in the story of Yũsuf (a.s.): *And he raised his parents upon the throne and they* (all) *fell down in prostration before him, and he said*:

"O my father! this is the interpretation of my vision of old; my Lord has indeed made it to be true" (12:100).
This topic needs some clarification:

It was explained in the chapter of The Opening what the worship means. The worshipper places himself in the position of servitude and performs what manifests this status, what clearly shows that he accepts the mastership of his master. Those acts must be such as to show the master's mastership or the servant's servitude; for example, prostrating before the master, bowing down to him, standing before him when he sits, walking behind him when he walks etc. The more apt an action is to show this status, the more reserved it becomes to the rites of the divine worship. Prostration is the most significant symbol of the master's status and the servant's low rank, because the man in this act falls down and puts his forehead on the ground. For this reason, it has the strongest connection with the divine worship.

However, prostration is not the same thing as worship. They have two different meanings, and worship is not a quidditative substance of prostration. A quidditative characteristic can never be separated from any being. But prostration may be done with-out any thought of reverence or worship — for example, just to make fun of someone. Keeping this in view, it may safely be said that although the connection of prostration with divine worship is the strongest, that worship is not its quiddity. There-fore, prostration, *per se,* cannot be exclusively reserved for Allãh. If there is any impediment or obstruction, it should emanate from the *sharī'ah* or the reason. What the *sharī'ah* and the reason forbid is ascribing the prerogatives of the lordship to anyone other than Allãh. But they do not forbid honouring someone or according him respect when it is done without elevating him to godhead.

The discourse given above was from purely academic point of view. But the religious good taste, conditioned as it is

by rituals of worship, has strictly reserved the prostration for divine worship; it should not be done for anyone other than Allãh; in Islam, one is forbidden to prostrate before others even as a mark of respect.

Apart from prostration, there is no proof — either from the Qur'ãn and tradition or from reason and logic — against according respect and showing reverence to others than Allãh, especially when it is done as a part of the love of Allãh; examples may be given of revering and loving the good servants of Allãh and paying respects to the graves of the friends of Allãh or to the things attributed to them. There is no reason whatsoever why such actions should be prohibited. (We shall deal with this subject in a more appropriate place, God willing.)

TRADITIONS

Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) said: "When Allãh created Adam and ordered the angels to prostrate before him, it came into the angels' mind : 'We never thought that Allãh had created any creature more honourable than us; we are His neighbours, and we are the nearest of His creation to Him.' Thereupon Allãh said: 'Did I not say to you that I know what you manifest and what you were hiding?' — (it was) a reference to what they had mentioned concerning the affairs of the *jinn,* and had concealed what was in their own minds. So, the angels, who had said what they had said, took refuge with the Throne." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyãshi)

Another tradition of the same theme is narrated in the same book from 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), the last part of which runs as follows: "When the angels realized that they had fallen into error, they took refuge with the Throne; and it was a group of the angels — and they were those who were around the Throne; it was not all the angels (who had thought

so). . . So, they have taken refuge with the Throne till the Day of Resurrection."

The author says: The theme of the two traditions may be inferred from the talk of the angels: "We celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness"; and "Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou, Thou (alone), art the Knowing, the Wise."
It will be explained later that the Throne means the divine knowledge, as the traditions narrated from the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*) say. (Therefore, the angels' taking refuge with the Throne would refer to their confession that they knew only that which Allãh had taught them, and that only Allãh was the Knowing, the Wise.)

According to some traditions, the word "the unbelievers", (in the clause, "and he was one of the unbelievers") refers to the species, *jinn,* to which Iblīs belonged, and which was created before man. Allãh says: *And certainly We created man of clay that gives forth sound, of black mud fashioned into shape. And the jinn We created before of intensely hot fire* (15:26-27).

According to the above-mentioned traditions, the attribution of hiding to the angels (*what you were hiding*) needs no explanation; the clause means exactly what it says; the angels had actually hidden in their hearts the idea of their supremacy.

A third group of traditions says that the said clause refers to Iblīs and his hidden thought that he would not make obeisance to Adam and would not prostrate before him if asked to do so.

There is no contradiction between these various explanations, because all the meanings may be inferred from the Qur'ãnic verses. They are all true and based on fact. Various traditions throw light on various facets of the same fact.

Abũ Baṣīr said: "I said to Abu `Abdillãh (a.s.): 'Did the angels prostrate and put their foreheads on the earth?' He said: 'Yes, as an honour (bestowed on him) by Allãh.' " (*Qiṣaṣu 'l-anbiyã',* ar-Rãwandi)

The Imam said: "Verily the prostration of the angels before Adam was in obedience to Allãh and for their love of Adam." (*Tuḥafu 'l- `uqũl*)

Mũsa ibn J'far (peace be on them both) narrates through his forefathers that a Jew asked Amīru ' l -mu'minīn Ali (a.s.) about the miracles of the Prophet in comparison with the miracles of (other) prophets (in course of which) he said: "This is Adam before whom Allãh ordered His angels to prostrate." "Did He do any thing like it for Muhammad?" (a.s.) said: "It was so. But Allãh ordered His angels to prostrate before Adam; yet their prostration was not a prostration of worship; (it was not) that they had worshipped Adam against Allãh, Mighty and Great is He! It was rather as an acknowledgement of Adam's superiority and a mercy of Allãh towards him. And Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was given what was better than that. Verily Allãh, Great and High is He! blessed him in His omnipotence, and the angels, all of them, prayed for him, and the believers were obliged to pray for him. So this is the increase, O Jew!" (*al-Iḥtijãj*)

Allãh created Adam, and he remained for forty years in (that) shape (i.e. a statue without life). And Iblīs, the cursed, used to pass by him and say: "Why have you been created?" al-`Alīm (i.e. al-Kãḍim-a.s.) said: "Then Iblīs said: 'If Allãh ordered me to prostrate before this, I would certainly disobey Him.' . . . Then Allãh said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam'; all of them prostrated; but Iblīs showed the envy that was in his heart and he refused to prostrate." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

Biḥãru 'l-anwãr narrates, quoting from *Qiṣaṣu 'l-anbiyã',* as-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that he said: "Iblīs was ordered to prostrate before Adam, and he said: 'O my Lord ! By Thy

honour! If Thou excusest me from prostrating before Adam, I would certainly worship Thee a worship no one would ever have worshipped Thee in a like manner.' Allãh, Great is His glory! said: 'I like to be worshipped according to My own pleasure.' "

The Imam also said: "Verily Iblīs cried aloud four times: First, on the day he was cursed, and the day he was dropped down to the earth, and the day Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent (as prophet) after a (long) interval of the apostles, and when the source of the Book was sent down. And he snorted (in satisfaction) twice: when Adam ate from the tree and when he (Adam) was sent down from the Garden."

And he said about the words of Allãh: *so their nakedness appeared unto them* (20:121): "Their nakedness was not seen before, then it was uncovered."

Also he said : "The tree from which Adam was forbidden (to eat) was the spikenard."

The author says: The traditions — and there are many — support what we have written about prostration.

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وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَداً
حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هٰذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ــ ٣٥.
فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ
لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ ــ ٣٦.
فَتَلَقَّىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ــ ٣٧.
قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعاً فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ
فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ــ ٣٨. وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ــ ٣٩.

And We said: *"O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat* (*you* both) *from it* (freely) *a plenteous* (food) *wherever you* (two) *wish and do not approach* (*you* two) *this tree, for then you* (two) *will be of the unjust"* (35). *But the Satan made them both slip from it and drove them out of what they were in; and We said*: *"Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time"* (36). *Then Adam received* (some) *words from his Lord, so He returned to him mercifully; surely He is Oft-returning* (to mercy), *the Merciful* (37). *We said*: *"Get down you there-from all together; and if there comes to*

you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve (38). *And* (*as* to) *those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide"* (39).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And We said*: *"*O *Adam! dwell you and your wife . . . "*: Although the story of the angels' prostration before Adam has been repeated several times in the Qur'ãn, that of his placement in the Garden has been given in three places only:

First: The verses given above, from Chapter 2 (the Cow).

Second: In Chapter 7 (the Elevated Places): *And* (We said): "O *Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden; so eat from where you desire, but do not go near this tree, for then you will be of the unjust"* (19) . *But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them what was hidden from them of their nakedness, and he said*: *"Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may* (not) *become of the immortals"* (20). *And he swore to them both*: *"Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you"* (21). *Then he caused them to fall by deceit; so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them*: *"Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?"* (22). *They said*: *"Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not)

mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers" (23). *He said*: *"Get down, some of you being the enemies of others, and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time"* (24). *He* (also) *said*: *"Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised"* (25).

Third : In Chapter 20 (Ṭã-Hã): *And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination* (115). *And when We said to the angels*: *"Prostrate before Adam*", *they did prostrate, but Iblīs* (did it not) ; *he refused* (116). *So We said. "*O *Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife; therefore let him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put to toil* (117); *Surely it is* (ordained) *for you that you shall not be hungry therein nor bare of clothing* (118) ; *and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun"* (119). *But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to him; he said*: *"*O *Adam! shall I guide you to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not?"* (120). *Then they both ate of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them, and they both began to cover themselves with leaves of the Garden, and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray* (121). *Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided* (him) (122). *He said*: *"Get down you two therefrom, all* (*of you*)*, one of you* (*is*) *enemy to another. So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy* (123). *And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind"* (124). *He shall say*: *"My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?"* (125) *He will say*: *"Even so*: *Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall you be forsaken this day"* (126). *And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the signs of his Lord; and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more lasting"* (127).

The context, and particularly the opening words *of* the story, "Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", clearly show that it was for the earth that Adam was created; it was the original plan that he should live and die in the earth. Allãh had temporarily placed the couple in the Garden to test them in order that their nakedness might be uncovered to them. Also the context in all three places shows that the order to the angels to prostrate before Adam, and then to Adam to stay in the Garden is a single, continuous, story. It all shows that Adam (a.s.) was created specifically for the earth, and the way to send him down was through the Garden as mentioned in the Qur'ãn: It was shown that he was superior to the angels and, therefore, more qualified for the vicegerency of Allãh; then they were told to prostrate before him, in acknowledgement of his superiority; then he was placed in the Garden but forbidden to go near a particular tree; so that on eating from it they should become aware of their nakedness and then be sent down to the earth. It means that the last link in this chain was their becoming aware of their private parts — it was this factor which irrevocably showed that they were fit for this earth, ready for this life. "*as-Saw'ah",*(اَلسَّوْأَةُ , literally means shame, disgrace, private part of the of the body. In this story it has been used in the last meaning, as may be seen from the words, "and they both began to cover them-selves with leaves of the Garden". That is why we have translated it as "nakedness".) However, their awareness of their pudenda proved that in addition to their spiritual qualities, they had also animal instincts and desires ingrained in them. It naturally made them dependent on nutrition and growth. Iblīs wanted them to become aware of their nakedness. Adam and his wife were given earthly, human existence and were at once placed in the Garden without any delay; they were not given time to perceive and understand their nakedness or its concomitants; they had not yet comprehended the life of this earth and its necessities. When they were sent to the Garden their connection with the

spiritual world, including the angels, was strong; their link with it was not weakened. It should be noted that Allãh has said, "what was hidden from them"; He has not said, "what had been hidden from them"; it may be inferred from the expression used that their nakedness could not remain hidden for ever in this life; it was hidden for only a short period when they were placed in the Garden. The uncovering of their nakedness with all its concomitants was a predetermined fact and it depended upon their eating from that tree. That is why Allãh had told them: "therefore let him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put to toil"; thereafter, the Satan "drove them out of what they were in".

It should not be overlooked that even when Allãh pardoned them after their repentance, He did not return them to the Garden — they were sent down to the earth to live therein. If their eating of the tree, the uncovering of their private parts and the life of this world- were not a confirmed divine plan, an irrevocable pre-determined decree, they would have been returned to their place in the Garden as soon as they were forgiven their mistake. In short, it was the divine plan that they should spend sometime in the Garden to get them prepared for the life in this world; and their removal from the Garden, according to the causal relation decreed by Allãh, depended on their eating from the tree and becoming aware of their nakedness, and it happened because they listened to the whispering of the Satan.

Allãh says: "And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot". Which covenant does this verse allude to? Does it refer to the admonition, "and do not approach (you two) this tree, for then you (two) will be of the unjust"? Or to the warning, "surely this (i.e., the Satan) is an enemy to you and to your wife"? Or does it refer to the general covenant made with all human beings in general and with the prophets in particular?

The first possibility is out of question altogether. Allãh says: "But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them . . .

and he said: 'Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals . . .' " Obviously, when Adam and his wife committed the error and tasted of the tree they were aware of the prohibition — even the evil suggestion of the Satan had begun with a reference to it. And Allãh says in this verse that "We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination." It, therefore, could not refer to that prohibition, because Adam had not forgotten it at all.

The second suggestion — that the covenant might refer to the warning against the Satan — is not so wide of mark; still it is not supported by apparent meaning of the verses. The said warning was given to both Adam and his wife, while this verse refers to a covenant made especially with Adam.

It leaves us with the last alternative that the covenant means the general covenant which was made with the whole mankind and more particularly with the prophets. This verse (about the covenant with Adam and his forgetting it) occurs at the beginning of the story in the chapter of Ṭã-Hã; and the story concludes with the words, "So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind. He shall say: 'My Lord! why halt Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?' He will say: 'Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall you be forsaken (literally: forgotten) today.' "

These concluding verses perfectly fit that opening one. To turn away from the remembrance of Allãh is not different from forgetting the covenant of Allãh. Add to it the use of the same verb (*you forgot them*) in the next verse. All these references are perfectly compatible with the covenant made with the souls of the human beings about the Mastership of Allãh and their own servitude. That covenant obliged the man

that he should never forget that Allãh is his Lord, the Ruler and Master of his affairs; nor should he lose sight of the fact that he is a wholly owned slave of Allãh; that he has no authority whatsoever over his benefit or harm; nor does he has any control over his life, death or resurrection; in short he owns neither his person, his characteristics nor his actions.

The error that stands opposite to this remembrance is forgetfulness — man forgets his Lord and His All-encompassing Mastership; he becomes engrossed in his own self, getting bogged down more and more in the mire of this world's attractions.

Look at this world's life, with all its diversity; and see how it spreads its tentacles in all directions. Note how it is shared by the believer and the unbeliever both. And then find out how the two groups respond to its joy and sorrow. How different is their respective attitude towards this life's success and failure, happiness and unhappiness, content and discontent, relief and suffering. These factors affect the two groups — the believers and the unbelievers — in entirely different ways. The believer has the know-ledge of Allãh and the unbeliever lacks this knowledge. And it causes all the differences in their respective behaviour. Every man looks at this world; a world that is submerged in all types of misfortunes and disasters: a life followed by death, a health ruined by disease, a prosperity eaten away by poverty, a comfort destroyed by discomfort, a gain nullified by loss — this is, in a nut-shell, the life of this world. The believer knows that everything and every affair belongs to Allãh; nothing is independent of God, the Lord. Every thing and every affair emanates from Him; and all that originates from Him is good and beautiful; nothing but beauty and splendour, goodness and excellence, can come from Him. And because all things and all affairs issue forth from his Lord and Master, he thinks that all is elegant and fine; he dislikes nothing and fears nothing; everything in his eyes is likeable, except that which his Master tells him to dislike. He subjugates

his likes and dislikes to those of his Master. In short, all his attention is fixed to the pleasure of his Master. He knows that everything is the sole property of God; none else has any share in anything . That being the case, why should he worry how the Master manages His own property? He does not think that he is competent to meddle in the affairs of his Lord. This submission to Allãh creates a perfect tranquillity, a truly happy life, untarnished by unhappiness; a light without darkness, a joy without sorrow, a benefit without harm, and a riches without want. It all happens because he believes in Allãh and in His mastership.

On the other hand is the unbeliever who does not know Allãh. By cutting himself off from the one and only Master, he has to bow his head before every creature. He believes that every-thing is independent in its actions — that it has a power of its own to benefit or to harm, to do good or evil. Consequently, he remains in constant fear of everything; he is ever apprehensive of every real or imagined danger. He is always grieving for want has befallen him, longing for the opportunities he has missed. He feels nostalgia for the prestige or wealth that is gone; breaks his heart for the children, relatives or friends who have left him. He is inextricably trapped by the attractions of the world; he relies on them and has trust in them; and when any thing goes wrong, he sinks into despair. Then as soon as he makes a virtue of necessity and is resigned to that misfortunate, a new calamity overwhelms him. In this way, he is always driven from pillar to post, with a heavy heart and a gloomy countenance; “thus does Allãh lay uncleanliness on those who do not believe”.

It can be seen, in the light of the above discourse, that forgetting the covenant and unhappiness of this world's life, both are interrelated — the later springs from the former. This fact becomes clearer if we compare the wordings of the verse 20: 123 -124 with those used in the verse under discussion. The former says: *So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance,*

his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind. And the same idea has been expressed in this verse in the following words: . . . *then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve.*

It may be inferred from these verses that the forbidden tree was of such a nature that if one ate from it he would certainly be entangled in the troubles and misfortunes of this life — he would spend his life in this world, heedless of his own place, forgetting his Lord. Probably Adam (a. s.) wanted to combine the fruit of that tree with the covenant that he had entered into with his Lord. But he could not succeed; the fruit had its effect, he forgot the covenant and fell into the troubles and toils of this world. Then he was saved when he repented before Allãh and Allãh turned to him with mercy.

QUR'ÃN: *and eat* (*you* two) *from it* (freely) *a plenteous* (food): "*ar-Raghad*" (اَلـرَّغَـدُ) literally means happiness, well-being, good life and affluence. *arghada 'l-qawmu mawãshiyahum* (اَرْغَـدَ الـقَـومُ مَـوَاشِيَـهُمْ) means, "the people left their cattle to graze wherever it liked. "*Qawmun raghad*" (قَـوْمٌ رَغَـدٌ) and "*nisã'un raghad*" (نِـسَـاءٌ رَغَـدٌ) means people (or women) having a life of plenty and opulence.

QUR'ÃN: *and do not approach* (you two) *this tree;* The context shows that actual prohibition was of eating from it; but they were told not even to approach it; the prohibition was couched in these terms for emphasis. What was really forbidden is seen from the verse: *so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them* (7:22), and . . . *they both ate of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them* (20:121).

QUR'ÃN: *for then you* (two) *will be of the unjust* : *"aḍ-*

Ḍālimīn" (اَلـظّـالِـمِـيْنَ) is the *nomen agentis of aḍ-Ḍulm* (اَلـظُّـلْـمُ = injustice, to do wrong). It is not from *aḍ-Ḍulmah* (الـظُّـلْـمَـةُ = darkness), as has been suggested by someone. Adam and his wife acknowledged their wrong-doing, and the Qur'ãn quotes them as saying: "*Our Lord! we have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers"* (7:23).

This clause has been changed in Chapter 20 to "so that you should be put to toil"; and the toil has further been explained in these words: *Surely it is* (ordained) *for you that you shall not be hungry therein* (*i.e.* in the Garden) *nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun* (20:118-119). Clearly, the injustice and wrong-doing, mentioned in the verse 2:25, was to bring in its wake the toil *of* this world — hunger, thirst, nakedness and other discomforts. The injustice or wrong that they had done was against their own selves; it was neither a sin (as this term is used in the *shari'ah*) nor an injustice against Allãh. It shows that the prohibition was in the nature *of* an advice pointing out to them what was good for their own comfort; it did not have the force *of* an ordained law. Adam and his wife did wrong to themselves, because their disregard to that divine advice caused their removal from the Garden.

When a man commits a sin (i.e. an offence, from the *sharī'ah* point of view), he is given a punishment. Then if he repents and his repentance is accepted, the punishment is completely waived off, and he is returned to his previous position as though he had not committed the sin at all. If Adam and his wife were guilty of such a sin, they should have been returned to their place in the Garden soon after their repentance was accepted. But it was not done. It clearly shows that the prohibition did not have the force of an ordained law; it was only an advice. Even so, neglecting it had its natural effect on both *of* them and they had to come out of the Garden. But this removal from the Garden was not a punishment for any sin or

crime; it was the natural consequence of the wrong they had done against their own selves. (We shall write again on this subject, God willing.)

QUR'ÃN : *But the Satan made them both slip from it*: The Satan could have misled them by creating evil thoughts in their hearts, in the same way as he misleads other human beings. But many verses, in the three narratives quoted at the beginning of this commentary, show that the Satan had appeared before Adam and his wife, and had talked to them face to face:

So We said: *"O Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife"* (20:117). Allãh had pointed out the Satan to Adam, not by any verbal description but by showing to him the person of the said enemy. (Note the demonstrative pronoun, "this is".)

(The Satan) *said*: *"O Adam! shall I guide you to the tree of immortality . . ."* (20:120). The speaker, that is, the Satan, must have talked to Adam face to face.

And he (*i.e.* the Satan) *swore to them both*: *"Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you"* (7:21). Obviously, he was visible to Adam and his wife and swore during his talk with them.

. . . and their Lord called out to them: *"Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?"* (7:22) It indicates that the Satan was visible to Adam and his wife. If the Satan had misled them by creating evil thoughts into their minds without appearing before them, they could have said to Allãh that they were not aware that that thought was put into their minds by the Satan; that they mistook it to be their own thought because the Satan had not appeared before them.

They used to see and recognize the Satan. Likewise, other prophets — all of them covered by Allãh's protection — used to see and recognize him if and when he came to them. Many traditions mention such encounters in the stories of Nũh, Ibrãhim,

Mũsã, `Isã, Yaḥyã, Ayyũb, Ismãīl and Muḥammad (may Allãh bless him and his progeny as well as the prophets). The above-quoted verses as well as the verse 7:20 (*and he said*: *"Your Lord has not forbidden from this tree except that . . ."*) also show that the Satan had visited then near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden, talked to them and put evil suggestion before them. He was able to do so because the Garden was not the Garden of eternal abode. The Qur'ãn also says that Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the Garden together. (Of course, Allãh had said to the Satan: "*Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein*" [7:13]. But the pronouns "this" and "therein" may refer to the angels or to the heaven. It may mean: Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven as it is a place of honour.)

QUR'ÃN: *and We said*: *"Get down, some of you being the enemies of others . . .*": The second person pronouns, used in this verse, are plural, which denote at least three persons. Clearly, it was addressed to Adam, his wife and the Satan. The Satan was turned out of the heaven and/or the company of the angels before (as described above). This verse combines in itself that previous order too; and manifests the firm decree of Allãh establishing enmity between Iblīs on one side and Adam and his wife and their descendants on the other. It also promulgates another decree that they shall live in the earth, die therein, and be raised again from it.

It may safely be said that the whole human race (Adam together with his descendants) is covered by the last mentioned decree: *Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised* (7:25). This verse comes at the end of the story (in Chapter 7) which begins with the following words: *And certainly We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels*: "*Prostrate before Adam*" . . . (7:11). In both verses plural pronouns have been used; and it is

an indication that the creation and the decree to live and die in the earth includes more than two, that is, other human beings too besides Adam and his wife.

The story of Adam may have been used by Allãh to represent the rise, fall and rise again of the whole mankind. Adam was the first representatives of humanity, and his life was a symbol, a miniature, of the human beings life-span in this world.

The angels were told to prostrate before Adam, because he was the vicegerent of Allãh in the earth. It has been mentioned earlier that this vicegerency was bestowed on the whole mankind. The angels prostrated before Adam, as he was the symbol of humanity, the representative of his race.

Adam and his wife were placed in the Garden and then were sent down from there because they had eaten of the for-bidden tree. Every man may see his own face in this mirror. His soul, before coming to this world, enjoyed the sublime and lofty existence; his abode was spiritually near to his Lord — a place of joy and happiness, of splendour and light; in the company of purified companions and spiritual friends, near to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds. Then he opted for this transient life, and was at once entangled in the troubles and toils of this world; leaving that purified existence, he was attracted to this tedious and odious life.

Adam at once repented and prayed for the mercy of Allãh. In the same way, man may return to Allãh and consequently to the eternal abode of honour and bliss. But if he took the wrong turning, did not try to return to Allãh, and, in short, followed his base desires, he would change the bounty of Allãh into disbelief and ungratefulness, would direct himself to the place of disgrace — to the hell; and how evil that resting place is!

QUR'ÃN: *Then Adam received* (some) *words from his Lord. so He returned to him mercifully*: "*at-Talaqqī*" (اَلـتَّـلَقّـي = to receive) signifies "to learn". It was this learning of the words that paved the way for the repentance of Adam.

"*at-Tawbah*" (اَلـتَّـوْبَـةُ) literally means to return; generally it is used for repentance, because when a man repents, he returns to his Lord. This verb is at times ascribed to Allãh (as in this verse), and signifies that Allãh returns or restores the servant to His grace and mercy. In other words, He accepts the plea of the servant and forgives his sins. At other times it is attributed to the servant; then it signifies the servant's return to Allãh, that is, his repentance from his sins.

at-Tawbah (repentance) of man is flanked on both sides by two *tawbahs* (mercies) of Allãh. Man can never do without the mercy of Allãh. He needs mercy and help of Allãh to turn away from sins; only then he may return to Allãh, may repent from his sins; then again the mercy of Allãh comes forward, and his repentance is accepted. Therefore, an accepted repentance of man issues forth from the mercy of Allãh, and also ends on His mercy. The verse 9:118 clearly mentions this fact: *then He returned to them* (mercifully) *so that they might return* (i.e. might repent).

What were the words which Adam received from his Lord? Some people think that it refers to their invocation reported in Chapter 7: *They said*: *"Our Lord! We have been unjust to our-selves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers"* (7:23). But this view is not supported by the sequence of the events. Adam and his wife had addressed that invocation before they were told to get down from the Garden (7:24); and it was after getting that order that he "received some words" from Allãh, as is clear from the verse 2: 36-37. Therefore, "some words" cannot refer to that previously uttered invocation.

There may, however, be another explanation: When Allãh announced to the angels that He was going to make a vicegerent in the earth, they said: "Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?" Allãh did not say that their accusation against the would be vicegerent was wrong; His

only answer was that He taught Adam all the names. There must have been some-thing deep, meaningful and relevant in this teaching of the names; otherwise, the angels could not be satisfied, their objection could not be answered. The names taught to Adam must have contained some such thing that would come to the rescue of man if he sinned, would save him from disgrace if he erred. Probably, the words received at the time of repentance were related to the names taught to him in the beginning.

It cannot be denied that Adam (a.s.) did wrong to himself by placing himself in this world — a crossroads of happiness and unhappiness; had he been ensnared by it he would have perished; but he chose to return to his original place of spiritual bliss and was saved; he had to undergo, in this process, untold miseries and unbearable hardships. In any case, he put himself in so much trouble that he became "unjust" to himself. The question arises as to why Allãh selected this hard way to send him from the Garden to the earth. The fact, however, remains that in this process he attained to such heights of eternal bliss and spiritual perfection as would have been impossible to reach without coming down to the earth — and that too with a stigma of mistake.

The events leading to his removal from the Garden and, later, to the acceptance of his repentance showed to him his true reality — how humble, dependent, deficient and servile he was; and at the same time he came to realize that every difficulty of this world leads to manifold ease in the next life; every unpleasantness here results in enhanced pleasantness there; every trouble in the obedience to Allãh brings in its wake the pleasure of Allãh and His unlimited reward; the process continues until the servant reaches the sublime presence of his Lord. Adam knew, through his own experience, taste of many of the beautiful attributes of Allãh: His forgiveness, turning mercifully to the servants, covering their mistakes, bestowing mercy on them, putting them in the shadow of His compassion and grace — these are some of the divine attributes which He

has especially reserved for the sinners. Adam could not know and understand them without passing through the stages which Allãh had decreed for him.

This, however, was his repentance; it made ordination of a *shari`ah* essential. It was necessary for Adam and his descendants to know which path they should take so as to reach their destination, the abode of bliss and happiness. His repentance brought him to the stage where promulgation of religion and ordination of the *shari`ah* was inevitable.

That is why Allãh frequently mentions the repentance before the belief: *Stand fast then* (in the right path) *as you are commanded, as also he who has turned* (to Allãh) *with you . . .* (11:112); *And most surely I am most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good. . .* (20:82). There are many such verses in the Qur'ãn.

QUR'ÃN: *We said*: *"Get down you therefore all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide".*

This is the essence of religion ordained, for the first time, for Adam (a.s.) and his descendants. Allãh has condensed the whole religion in these two sentences; nothing has been added, nor can be added to it upto the Day of Resurrection.

Ponder on this story and particularly the narrative of Chapter 20. You will see that Allãh had issued two decrees in respect of Adam and his descendants. When he ate from the tree, it was decreed that he should get down to the earth and spend his life therein — a life of trouble and toil. And when he repented, it was ordained that he and his descendants should be honoured with divine guidance. The first decree initiated the earthly life for him; the second, issued after his repentance, bestowed dignity and grace to that life, by providing it with divine guidance. From then on, man's life is composed of two lives: A material, earthly

life and a spiritual, heavenly one. It may be inferred from repetition of the order to "get down" in this narrative: "*Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time"* (2:36). *"Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me. . ."* (2:38).

Repentance of Adam (2:37) occurred between these two orders. The sequence shows that Adam had repented before their departing from the Garden, although he had slipped from his earlier position of honour.-It may also be. inferred from the change in the styles of the following verses: Allãh said to Adam, when placing him in the Garden, "*do not go near this tree"* (7:19) ; but when they ate from it, *their Lord called out to them*: *"Did I not forbid you both from that tree. . ."* (7:22). Note the demonstrative pronoun, "this" (for a nearer object) in the former speech, and "that" (for a farther one) in the latter. Also contrast the verb, "said" (showing proximity) of the former with "called out" (showing distance) of the latter. All this together supports the above-given explanation that at the time of the second order Adam was still in the Garden but not in his earlier honoured place.

"Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time" (2:36;7:24). *"Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised"* (7:25). The verses indicate that the life on the earth was very different from that in the Garden. This life is firmly connected with the earth, full of difficulties and hardships. Man, in this life, is created from the earth, then after death is returned into it, and will, on the Day of Resurrection, be raised from it. This life is different from that of the Garden. It follows that Adam had lived a heavenly — and not earthly — life in the Garden.

This observation gives us a certainty that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, although it was not the Garden of eternal abode from which one is never turned out.

What is meant by "the heaven"? We shall, God willing explain it somewhere else.

Now, we come to the mistake of Adam. The explanation given under various verses throws sufficient light on this subject. But the importance of the topic justifies its recapitulation in a systematic way:

The verses obviously say that he had committed a mistake and disobeyed the divine command: ". . . for then you (two) will be of the unjust"; "and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray"; and they too acknowledged their error: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers." But on meditating on the verses, and particularly on the admonition not to eat of the tree, we come to a definite conclusion that the said prohibition was not in the nature of an authoritative command; it was rather like an advice to guide Adam to his good and comfort. The following proof irresistibly lead us to this conclusion:

First: Allãh said in this, as well as in Chapter 7, that eating of the tree would be an injustice, a wrong-doing (*for then you two will be of the unjust*). The same result has been described as "toil" (*so that you should be put to toil*); and the "toil" has been explained in the terms of worldly needs and troubles, because it was ordained "for you that you shall not be hungry therein (i.e., as long as you remained in the Garden) nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun". It seems clear that it was to protect them from these worldly troubles and toils that they were told not to go near that tree. The prohibition, therefore, was not more than an advice; certainly it was not an authoritative command. Going against an advice does not entail a sin, does not involve rebellion against the adviser. The injustice, mentioned in this story, therefore, means their doing wrong against their own selves, putting themselves in this world's hardship and toil; but it cannot mean the sin committed by a servant against his master.

Second: When a servant repents, that is, returns to Allãh, his Lord, and the Lord accepts that repentance, all the effects of the sin are erased, as though he had not committed any sin at all. If the prohibition against eating from the tree had the force of an authoritative command, an ordained law, Adam and his wife should have been returned to their place in the Garden as soon as their repentance was accepted. But they were not. It decisively proves that the prohibition was of advisory nature like telling someone not to put his hand in a fire; if he does not listen to the advice, his hand would certainly burn, and the subsequent apology would not unburn it, even if the apology was accepted. Likewise, Adam and his wife disregarded the advice, and as a result of eating from the tree, had to go out of the Garden and live in the earth a life of trial and hardship. Their repentance could not take them back to the Garden as their coming to the earth was the natural and inevitable result of that action.

The prohibition, in short, was no a law ordained by the Master — like the announcement that a man who neglects to pray would enter the Fire; or the one who disobeys the rules of the *sharī`ah* would be punished. If it were like such a command, the repentance would have rubbed out the effect of disobedience and they would have been sent back to the Garden straight away.

Third: *We said*: *"Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from* Me, *then whoever follows* My *guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide."* These verses have put in a nutshell all the detailed laws, rules, and regulations sent by Allãh for the mankind, through His angels, books and apostles. And it was the first *sharī`ah* which Allãh ordained for the world, the world of Adam and his descendants. It was ordained after the second order to "get down" — and the order to "get down" was not a legislative, but a creative, command, resulting from his eating of the tree.

It means that at the time when Adam partook of the tree, no

sharī`ah was ordained yet, and no law was promulgated. Therefore, whatever Adam did was not a transgression against any law of the *sharī'ah,* nor was there any sin or crime involved in acting against that advice.

Question: The order to the angels and Iblīs co prostrate before Adam was an authoritative command, and it was given before the order to Adam not to go near that tree. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that at that time there was no obligatory law.

Reply: We are talking about Adam and his descendants, and not about the angels and Iblīs. It is irrelevant whether the angels and Iblīs were given a compulsory order before Adam was placed in the Garden.

Question: If the prohibition were of an advisory nature, Allãh would not have described its disregard in the terms of "injustice", "disobedience", and "going astray".

Reply: We have already explained that the "injustice" done by Adam and his wife was against their own selves; it was not a sin against Allãh.

"*al-'Iṣyãn*" (اَلـعِصْيـانُ = disobedience) literary means to resist, or to yield with difficulty. The Arab say; I broke it and it was broken; I broke it *fa-'aṣã* (فَعَصى =) but it resisted, or

"*al-Ghawãyah*" (اَلـغَـوَ ايـَةُ = to go astray) literally means inability of a man to look after his interests; not managing one's affairs properly. This word by itself does not indicate committing a sin or crime. It is the context that determines its value. Its emphasis changes depending on whether the neglected order was an advice or an authoritative command.

Question: Then why did they repent? Why did they say, "and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers?"

Reply: *at-Tawbah* (repentance) means to turn to. And the word can be used in various meanings, depending on context.

A servant rebels against his master, and thereafter returns to him and asks for his forgiveness; the master, if he so wishes, pardons him, and gives him his previous rank and position.

A doctor tells a patient not to eat certain fruits, lest his illness be prolonged or the disease be complicated. The patient

yielded to my pressure with difficulty. Not heeding an order is called *al-`iṣyãn,* because one does not yield to that enjoinment or prohibition. This resistance may occur against an advice as much as against 'a compulsory order. The word in itself does not imply sinning; it all depends on the nature of the order that was disregarded.

Of course, nowadays we, the Muslims, use this word as synonymous to sinning. And now it has become a terminology of the *sharī`ah* (or of the Muslims), used for disobedience to an authoritative command. But this later transformance cannot effect its original or literal meaning for which it was used in the Qur'ãn.

disregards the prohibition and, as a result, puts his life in danger. Now he feels embarrassed and repents before the doctor, asking for his forgiveness, begging him to prescribe for him a

medicine to enable him to regain his health and vigour. The doctor may tell him that now it will be necessary for him to undergo a long and difficult treatment, adding that if he persevered in the prescribed regimen his health would be much better than before.

The significance of the other words used in the narrative, like forgiveness, mercy and loss, may likewise change with the context.

TRADITIONS

al-Qummī (Ali) narrates, in his *at-Tafsīr,* from his father (Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim) who narrates, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) (omitting the chain of intervening narrators, although it was fully described by his Shaykh). He said: "as-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about the Garden of Adam whether it was a garden of this world or one of the hereafter's. He (a.s.) said: 'It was a garden of this world, wherein the sun and the moon rose. Had it been a Garden of the hereafter, he would have not come out of it.' He (a.s.) further said: 'Allāh placed him in the Garden and allowed him its freedom with exception of the tree. (It was done) because here was a creature of Allāh who could not survive without (some) enjoinment and prohibition, nor (could it continue) without food, cloth, shelter and marriage; nor could he know, without divine help, what was beneficial to him from what was harmful.' Then came to him Iblīs and told him: "If you (two) ate from this tree, which Allāh has forbidden you, you (two) would become two angels and would abide in the Garden for ever; and if you (two) did not eat from it, Allāh would turn you out from the Garden;" and he swore to them that he was a sincere adviser to them; as

Allãh quotes his words: *Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may* (not) *become of the immortals. And he swore to them both*: *"Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you."* Adam believed in his words, and they (i.e. Adam and his wife) ate from the tree; and they became as Allãh says: *their nakedness became manifest to them*; what Allãh had clothed them with of the (attires of the) Garden dropped away from them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them: *Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?* They said, as Allãh quotes them: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves;and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers."* Thereupon Allãh said to them: "*Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time." ' "* He (the Imam) said: "that (time) is the Day of Resurrection". He further said: "Then Adam descended on the (hill of) aṣ-Ṣafã — and it got this name because Ṣaf`īyu 'llãh (صَفِـيُّ اللهِ = the sincere friend of Allãh, i.e. Adam) came down on it; and Ḥawwã' (Eve) descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah — and it was named al-Marwah because *al-mar 'ah* (اَلْـمَـرءَ ةُ = the woman) descended on it. The Adam remained in prostration for forty days, weeping for the Garden. So Jibrīl (Gabriel) came to him and said: 'Did Allãh not create you with His hand, and (did He not) breath into you from His spirit, and (did He not) made His angels prostrate before you?' He said: 'Certainly.' (Then Jibrīl said:) 'and He ordered you not to eat from the tree and you disobeyed Him?'

Adam said: 'Iblīs swore to me falsely.' "

The author says: There are other traditions too from *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*) to the effect that the Garden of Adam was of this world; although some of them are from the same Ibrãhīm ibn Hãshim.

The phrase, "a garden of this world", has been used in contrast to the Garden of everlasting abode. It indicates a state between this world and the hereafter. Adam's garden was not the Garden of everlasting abode, but neither was it a garden like that of ours *al-Barzakh* (اَلبَرزَخُ) is the state, place and time between one's death and the Day of Resurrection. The said Garden may be called a Garden of al-Barzakh, and it may well have been situated in this world. The sentences, "Adam descended on the (hill of) aṣ-Ṣafã", and "Ḥawwã' descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah", indicate that, before it, they were somewhereabove this world. The interpretation of "a time" with the "Day of Resurrection" is also revealing. Man remains in al-Barzakh after his death, and at the same time he remains in the earth. Many Qur'ãnic verses use these expressions interchangeably.
For example: *He will say*: *"How many years did you tarry in the earth?" They will say*: *"We tarried a day or part of a day*", *but ask those who keep account. He will say*: *"You did tarry but a little — had you but known* (*it*)*"* (23:112-114). *And at the time when the Hour shall come, the guilty shall swear* (that) *they did not tarry but an hour; thus they used to utter lies. And those who are given knowledge and faith will say*: *"Certainly you tarried according to the decree of Allãh till the Day of Resurrection, but you did not know"* (30:55 - 56).

Apart from that, many traditions of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*) show that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, and that he and his wife descended from the heaven. For the one who is

familiar with the language of traditions, it is not difficult to believe that the said Garden was in the heaven and that they had descended from the heaven to the earth, even if they were created in the earth itself and live therein all along. These expressions are not any different from those which say that the Garden is in the heaven, and yet say that the grave is an orchard from the orchards of the Garden or a pit from the pits of the Fire. Many similar expressions are found in the traditions. Any lingering doubt will be removed when we shall write about the heaven, God willing.

There is no mention in the correct and reliable traditions as to how Iblīs found his way to Adam and his wife, or as to what means he adopted for this purpose. Some traditions mention the serpent and peacock as the two helpers of Iblīs in his endeavour to mislead Adam and his wife; but they are extremely unreliable. Obviously, such traditions were interpolated under the influence of Judaism. This story has been taken from the Jews, and to make this point clear, we are quoting it from the Bible (King James version). The story is given in the book of Genesis:

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth towards the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him

into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them

both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gayest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of the life; And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it,bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know

good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Genesis, ch. 2: vs. 7 to ch. 3: vs. 24)

Compare the narrative of the Qur'ãn with that of the Bible, then ponder on various traditions narrated in the Shi'ah or Sunni books; you will come to know many revealing differences. But we are not going into it because it is beyond the scope of this book.

Question: How could Iblīs enter the Garden and mislead Adam therein? The question arises because:

i) the Garden is a place of cleanliness and purity, *wherein there shall be nothing vain nor any sin* (52:23) ;

ii) The garden is in the heaven, and Iblīs was already turned out therefrom when he refused to prostrate before Adam. *Then get out of it, for surely you are driven away* (15:34). *Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein* (7:13).

Reply: (i) The Qur'ãn disallows vain and sinful acts in the Garden of eternal abode (in which the believers shall be placed after resurrection) and the Garden of al-Barzakh wherein they are placed after death. But it is silent about the Garden of Adam, in which he was placed together with his wife before man was sent to this world and given any authoritative law. Rather, it may be said that it shows not only possibility of disobedience therein, but also its occurrence. Proof: This very disobedience of Adam and his wife.

Moreover, vanity and sin are relative terms; and they do not occur until man comes into this world, and is given some authoritative laws to follow.

ii) The argument may be replied as follows:

a. It cannot be definitely said that the clauses, "get down

of it" and "get down from this" were meant to turn Iblīs out of the heaven, because "the heaven" has not been mentioned in preceding sentences. The order, therefore, could mean, 'get out of the ranks of the angels', or 'get down from the honour and dignity given to thee'.

b. May be, the order to get down or to get out meant only that he could not live or stay in the heaven with the angels. If so, then it was not a prohibition against occasionally going or ascending thereto. This interpretation is supported by the verses which describe the Satans' occasional goings upto the heaven to eavesdrop the conversations of the angels.[1] Also,

c. it has been narrated that before the time of 'Isã (a.s.) , the Satans were going up to the seventh heaven; when he was born they were barred from the fourth heaven and above; then after the birth of the Prophet they were barred from all the heavens.

d. There is no mention in the Book of Allãh that Iblīs had entered the Garden. Therefore, the question does not arise at all. It has, of course, been narrated in the traditions; but they are not *al-mutawãtir;* and possibly the narrators have described the story in their own words, and not exactly as the Imam said. Utmost that may be put as evidence that Iblīs had entered the Garden is the verse: *and he* (*i.e.* the Satan) *said. "Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not become two angels . . ."* (7:19), as he had used the pronoun, "this", ("this tree") which denotes nearness. But if it is taken to mean nearness in place, it would give the same meaning in Allãh's command, . . . *do not go near this tree* (7:18). Surely it, cannot be said that the pronoun

1. For example: *And We have guarded it* (*i.e.* the heaven) *against every accursed Satan, but he who steals a hearing; so there follows him a visible flame* (15:17-18).

indicates that Allãh was in that place near the tree [1]

`Abdu's-Salãm al-Harawi [2] said: "I said to ar-Riḍã (a.s.):

'O son of the Messenger of Allãh! tell me about the tree from which Adam and Ḥawwã' ate, what was it? Because people do have different views about it; some have narrated that it was a wheat-plant, and others have reported that it was the tree of envy.' He said: 'All this is true.' I said: 'Then what do these explanations, with their differences, mean?' He said: 'O son of aṣ-Ṣalt! verily the tree of the Garden bears (fruits of) many kinds; and it was a wheat-plant and (yet) it bore grapes; and it was not like a tree of this world. And when Allãh raised the status of Adam by making the angels prostrate before him and by placing him in the Garden, he said: "Has Allãh created any man superior than me?" And Allãh knew what had came into his mind; so He called out to him: "Raise your head, O Adam! and look at the pillar of the Throne." So, he looked at the pillar of the Throne and found written on it: "There is no god except Allãh; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allãh; ibn Abi Ṭãlib is the Leader of the faithful, and his wife, Fãṭimah is the Chief of the women of the worlds, and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are the Chiefs of the youths of the people of the Garden." Adam said:

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1. The first and third replies seem strange, to say the least. The author himself has said (while commenting on the phrase, " . . . the Satan made them both slip from it") that the order to "get down" or to "get out" may mean, "Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven". But here he rejects the second alternative altogether! The third reply is based on القِياسُ مَعَ الفَارِق an unacceptable analogy — that which overlooks the important differences between the two sides. If the Satan is governed by time and space how does it imply that Allãh too should be governed by them? Moreover, in the same commentary the author has proved on the strength of this same verse that "the Satan had visited them near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden . . . (and) Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the Garden together." This leaves us with the second reply, which is doubtlessly without any flaw and is supported by the Qur'ãn. (tr.)

2. That is, Abu 'ṣ-Ṣalt Abdu 's-Salãm ibn Ṣãliḥ al-Harawī.

"O my Lord! who are they?" He, Mighty and Great is He said: "O Adam! they are (from) your off-springs; and they are better than you and all My creation; and if it were not (for) them, I would have not created you, nor the Garden, nor the fire, nor the heaven, nor the earth. So be careful not to look at them with envious eyes; otherwise, I will turn you out of My nearness." But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank. So, the Satan got the better of him, until he ate from the forbidden tree; and got the better of Ḥawwã', and she looked at Fãṭimah with envious eyes until she too, like Adam, ate from the tree. Thereupon, Allãh turned them out of His Garden, and got them down from His nearness to the earth.' " (*`Uyũnu 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: This matter has been described in many traditions, some more detailed than this; others, more concise. In this tradition, the Imãm has confirmed that the tree was the wheat-plant, and also that it was the tree of envy. The former implies that the tree was not worthy of attention of the people of the Garden; the later indicates that it was too lofty to come within the grasp of Adam and his wife (as a tradition says that it was the tree of the knowledge of Muhammad and his progeny).

Apparently, the two interpretations are totally different from each other, and the tradition seems a problematic one. But if you ponder on the covenant referred to earlier, you will see that both meanings are complementary, and not mutually exclusive. Adam (a.s.) wanted to combine the pleasures of the Garden — a place of nearness to Allãh, where it was necessary to always keep the covenant before one's eyes, and not to let one's attention divert to anyone or anything else — with the forbidden tree — which would bring all the world's troubles in its wake; but he failed in his endeavour, was sent down to the earth because he had been heedless of the said covenant and of

its demands. It was reserved for the Prophet to combine these two seemingly apposite factors; it was he who, for the first time, harmonized this world with the next, synchronized the matter with the spirit, and brought into being a whole man.
However, Allãh again guided Adam aright, chose him for His vicegerency, and as a result of his repentance, raised him above the worldly desires and made him remember again the forgotten covenant.

"But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank": The second clause explains the first; Adam wanted that he too should attain to that status; it was not that he was envious (i.e., had any ill will) against them. Envy is a vice, while aspiring to raise one's status is not.

Now let us look at the following two traditions:

1. ath-Thumãli narrates from Abũ Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "Allãh made a covenant with Adam that he should not go near the tree. But when the time came when, according to the knowledge of Allãh, he was to eat of it, he forgot (the covenant) and ate from it. And that is (the meaning of) the words of Allãh: *And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination.*" (*Kamãlu 'd-dīn*)

2. al-'Ayyãshī narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* from one of the two (i.e., the fifth or the sixth) Imãms, that he was asked as to why Allãh punished Adam for his forgetfulness. He said: "He had not forgotten; and how could he forget when he had remembered it (very well) and (even) Iblīs had told him: *Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may* (not) *become of the immortals*."

The way to harmonize these seemingly conflicting traditions is clear if one applies to them the foregoing explanation.

Abu 's-Ṣalt al-Harawi said: "al-Ma'mũn gathered for `Ali ibn Mũsã ar-Riḍã (a.s.) people of various sects from

among the Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, the Magians, the Sabaeans and all other religions. Nobody stood (for religious discussion with the Imãm) but that he was forced to accept his (Imãm's) arguments and was put to silence. Then stood before him Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm and said to him: 'Do you believe in sinlessness of the prophets? O son of the Messenger of Allãh!' He said: 'Yes.' He (`Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm) said: 'Then what would you do with the words of Allãh: *and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray? . . .*' Then said our master, ar-Riḍã (a.s.):

'Woe unto you! O Ali! Have fear of Allãh (in your heart) and do not ascribe indecencies to the prophets of Allãh, and do not interpret by your own opinion the Book of Allãh (Mighty and Great is He!) Verily Allãh (Mighty and Great is He!) says: . . . *but none knows its interpretation except Allãh and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge* (3:7). As for the words of Allãh, *and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray,* (the fact is that) Allãh (Mighty and Great is He!) had created Adam (to be) His proof in His earth and (to be) His vicegerent in His towns; He had not created him for the Garden; and the disobedience was (done) by Adam in the Garden, and not in the earth; (and it came to pass) so that the measures of the decree of Allãh (Mighty and Great is He) might be fulfilled. So when he was sent down to the earth and was made (Allãh's) proof and vicegerent, he was protected (i.e. became sinless), as Allãh says: *Surely Allãh chose Adam and Nũḥ and the descendants of Ibrãhīm and the descendants of Imrãn above all the worlds.*' " (3:33) (*al-Amãlī,* aṣ-Ṣadũq)

The author says: The sentence, "and the disobedience was . . . in the Garden", points to what we have already mentioned that there was no religious law ordained in the Garden; and that Adam (a.s.) even before his creation, was destined to live in the earth; and, therefore, the disobedience was of an advice, and not of an ordained law. In this context,

there appears no reason why anyone should try (as someone has done) to explain away this tradition in a round-about way.

'Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm said: "I was present in the court of al-Ma'mũn; and Ali ibn Mũsã was there with him. And al-Ma'mũn said to him: 'O son of the Messenger of Allãh! Is it not your belief that the prophets are sinless?' He said: 'Yes.' (al-Ma'mũn) said: 'Then what is the meaning of the words of Allãh, the High: *and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray?'* (The Imãm) said: 'Verily Allãh said to Adam: *dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat* (*you* both) *freely wherever you* (two) *wish and do not approach* (*you* two) *this tree,* (pointing to a tree) *for then you* (two) *will be of the unjust.* Allãh did not say to him:

Do not eat from this tree nor from another tree of its kind. And they did not eat from it; they ate from another (similar) tree because the Satan whispered evil suggestion to them and said: "*Your Lord has not forbidden you from this* (*i.e.* the other similar) *tree;* He has only forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that three *except that you may not both become two angels or that you may not become of the immortals*." *And he swore to them both*: "*Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you*." And Adam and Ḥawwã' had not seen before that anyone swearing falsely in the name of Allãh; thus he caused them to fall by deceit and they ate from that (tree) because they believed in his oath in the name of Allãh. And it all happened before Adam was made a prophet, and it was not a big sin leading one to the fire; it was only a forgiven minor (sin) that is permissible to the prophets before they begin receiving revelation. But when Allãh chose him and made him prophet he became sinless, not committing any minor or major sin. Allãh (Mighty and Great is He!) has said: *Surely Allãh chose Adam and Nũḥ and the descendants of Ibrãhīm and the descendants of 'Imrãn above all the worlds . . .*' " (*`Uyunu*

'l-akhbãr)

The **author says:** aṣ-Ṣadũq (may Allãh have mercy on him!) after narrating the tradition in full, has commented as follows:

"Strange that `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, in spite of his open hostility towards, and enmity and hatred of, *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*), should narrate this tradition."

This comment only looks at the belief of the sinlessness of the prophets which this tradition purportedly proves; but aṣ-Ṣadũq (may Allãh have mercy on him!) did not look deep into its implications. The reported reply is not in accord with the well-known belief of the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* that all the prophets were fully protected from all major and minor sins before as well as after getting the prophethood.

Moreover, the reply presumes that the verse does not mean what it apparently says. According to this tradition, the verse, "Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels . . .", should be read as follows: "Your Lord has not forbidden you from this (i.e. the other similar) tree; He has only forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that tree except that you may not both become two angels . . ." Such deletions are against the norms of eloquence. The quoted speech of the Satan clearly shows that he was instigating them to eat from the very tree that was forbidden, holding out to them the hope of becoming angels or immortals: "*Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may* (not) *become of the immortals.*" *"O Adam! shall I guide you to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not?"* The narrator, that is, `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, had himself been given the correct and complete answer in the court of al-Ma'mũn, as the preceding tradition shows; therefore, there is something wrong in this narration of his, although some parts may be somehow interpreted correctly.

aṣ-Ṣadũq has narrated (through his chain) from al-Bãqir (a.s.), through his forefathers, from 'Ali (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: "Adam and Ḥawwã' stayed in the Garden, (till they were sent out of it) for seven hours according to the (counting of the) days of the world, until Allãh sent them down on the same day."

`Abdullah ibn Sinãn said: "Abu `Abdillãh (a.s.) was asked — and I was present there: 'How long did Adam and his wife stay in the Garden until their mistake removed them from it?' He said: 'Verily Allãh breathed His spirit into Adam after the mid-day on Friday; then created his wife from his lowest rib; then He made His angels prostrate before him and placed him in His Garden the same day. And by God! he did not stay therein but six hours of the same day until he disobeyed Allãh. Thereupon, Allãh removed them both from it after the sunset, and they were put into the courtyard of the Garden till the morning; then their nakedness became manifest to them; and their Lord called out to them: "*Did I not forbid you both from that tree?"* Adam felt ashamed and bowed (his head) and said: "*Our Lord ! We have been unjust to ourselves and we confess our sins; therefore, forgive us* (our sins)." Allãh said to them: "*Get down you both from My heavens to the earth; because no sinner shall remain in My nearness — neither in My Garden nor in My heavens.*" ' " (*at-Tafsīr,* al-`Ayyãshī)

The author says: The tradition gives a new detail, that Adam and Ḥawwã' were removed first from the Garden to its courtyard and then from the courtyard to the earth. There are some indications in the Qur'ãn to support this information:

First: They were twice told to "get down" (vide vs. 2:36 and 2:38). It was a creative, and not a legislative, order, and a creative order takes effect the instant it is given.

If the first order told them to get down to the earth, there was no question of their not getting down to the earth at once;

and, therefore, the second order would be superfluous. But in the light of this tradition the two commands would be perfectly in order.

Second: As mentioned in the commentary, this idea may be inferred from the changed verbs and pronouns of the verses. Allãh describes in these words his talk with Adam when he was being placed in the Garden: *And We said*: "*O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden . . . and do not approach* (*you* two) *this tree ...*" But after they had eaten from the tree, *their Lord called out to them*: "*Did I not forbid you both from that tree?*" The verb, "We said" of the former has been changed to "called out to them" in the latter; as the demonstrative pronoun, "this tree" (showing nearness) was replaced by "that tree" (showing distance). These changes show that Adam had been removed, by the time of the second address, from his original place of nearness in the Garden to a distant place — which the tradition describes as the courtyard. But this tradition says that Ḥawwã' was created from the lowest rib of Adam; it is a Biblical story which has been totally rejected by the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* (as will be seen from the traditions which will be quoted under the verses of the creation of Adam). This tradition, therefore, is unacceptable unless this expression is taken to mean that Ḥawwã' was created from the clay left over from the creation of Adam and which was lying near his lowest rib.

Whether he stayed in the Garden for six hours (as this tradition says) or seven (as the former says) is not very important, because such things are mere approximation.

It is reported from the fifth or the sixth Imãm (peace be on them both) that he said about the verse, *then Adam received* (some) *words from his Lord,* that (the words were as follows): "There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allãh! and praise! I have committed evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and Thou art the best of the forgivers. There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O

Allãh! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. There is no god except Thee; Glory to Thee, O Allãh! and praise! I have committed evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of those who have mercy. There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allãh! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and turn to me (with mercy); surely Thou, Thou alone, art oft-returning (with mercy), the Merciful." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: This theme has been narrated also by aṣ-Ṣadũq, al-`Ayyãshi, al-Qummi and others; nearly the same thing has been narrated through the Sunni chains; and it may possibly be inferred from the apparent meaning, of the verses.

al-Kulayni has written in *al-Kãfī*: "And another tradition says in respect of this verse: (Adam) had asked from (Allãh) by the right of Muhammad and Ali and Fãṭimah and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn."

The author says: This explanation too has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣadũq, al-`Ayyãshi, al-Qummi and others. A nearly similar tradition has been narrated through the Sunni chains. It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthur* that the Prophet said: "When Adam committed the sin that he committed, he raised his head towards the heaven and said: 'I beseech Thee, by the right of Muhammad, to forgive me.' Allãh revealed to him (i.e., asked him through revelation): 'And who is Muhammad?' He said: 'Blessed is Thy name! When Thou created me, I raised my head towards Thy Throne and saw written therein: There is no god except Allãh; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allãh. Thus I knew that no one could be more honoured in Thy presence than him whose name Thou hadst placed with Thy name.' Thereupon, Allãh revealed to him: 'O Adam! Verily he is the last of the prophets, from thy descendants; and if it

were not for him, I would have not created thee.' "

The author says: Although these traditions seem not to be in accord with the apparent meaning of the verse, on deeper consideration this explanation does not look so far-fetched. The sentence, "Then Adam received (some) words,-from his Lord", shows that he was taught those words by the Lord, and that he had got that knowledge before his repentance. Also, it is known that Allãh had taught him all the names. Allãh told the angels that He was going to make in the earth a vicegerent; *they said*: "*Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said*: "*Surely I know what you do not know". And He taught Adam the names, all of them.* There must have been something in those names to wipe out every injustice, to erase every sin and to cure every spiritual and moral disease; otherwise, the objection of the angels could not be answered — Allãh did not say a single word to refute the angels' assertion; all He did was to teach Adam all the names. It means that those names could cure all the ills of humanity; the angels understood it and surrendered to the know-ledge and wisdom of Allãh. We have earlier explained that those names were sublime creations, hidden from the heavens and the earth; they were intermediaries to convey the grace and bounties of Allãh to His creation; and no creature would be able to attain to its perfection without their assistance. At this stage, we may refer to some traditions which say that Adam saw the figures of Muhammad and his *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* and also their light at the time he was taught the names; and the ones which mention that he saw them when Allãh took out his offspring from his back; and the others which describe his seeing them in the Garden.

However, Allãh has not identified those words, and has used it as a common noun, "(some) words"; nevertheless, the Qur'ãn has clearly used the expression, "word", for an individual being, as for example, in the verse 3:45: . . . *Allãh gives you good news of a word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Isã son of Maryam* . . .

Some exegetes have written that the "words", mentioned in this verse, refer to the plea of Adam and his wife reported in Chapter 7: *They said*: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to our-selves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers*."

But the sequence of events does not support this view. The repentance of Adam, according to the narrative of Chapter 2, had occurred after his coming to the earth. The verse (2:37) describing the repentance comes after the verse (2:36) that

mentions his descent to the earth.[1] But they had uttered that plea while they were still in the Garden, before coming down to the earth. The plea is given in verse 7:23; and the order to "get down" comes after that in verse 7:24. Apparently, this plea was in response to their admonition by Allãh: "*Did I not forbid you both from that tree* . . .?"; they wanted to declare their servitude and to surrender themselves to Allãh; acknowledging that all the authority was in the hands of Allãh and He might do what He pleased; He was their Lord, and they had put themselves in danger of loss by being unjust to themselves.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Verily, Mũsã asked his Lord to let him meet Adam; and he was joined with him (i.e., Adam). Mũsã said to him: 'O father! Did Allãh not create you with His hand, and breathe into you of His spirit; and make the angels prostrate before you, and order you not to eat of the

tree? Then why did you disobey Him?' (Adam) said: 'O Mũsã! How long before my creation did you find my mistake (mentioned) in the Torah?' He said: 'Thirty thousand years before.' (Adam) said: 'That is it.' " aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Thus refuted Adam the argument of Mũsã." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

The author says: aṣ-Ṣuyũṭi has narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthũr* approximately similar traditions, through various chains, from the Prophet.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "By God, Allãh had surely created Adam for the world, and He gave him place in the Garden, in order that he might disobey Him and thus He might return him to that for which He had created him." (*'Ilalu 'sh-sharã'i'*)

The author says: A tradition of the same theme, narrated by al-`Ayyãshi from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.), concerning an angel friend of Adam, has been quoted earlier.

A Syrian asked 'Ali (a.s.) as to which valley in the earth was the most honoured. He (a.s.) said: "The valley called Sarandib wherein Adam descended from the heaven." (*al-Iḥtijãj*)

The author says: In contrast to it, there are numerous traditions showing that he had descended at Mecca (and some of them have been quoted above). May be, he first came down to Sarandib and then got down to Mecca.

It has been reported by aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh (in his *al- 'Aẓamah*) and Ibn Marduwayh, from Abu Dharr, that he said: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allãh! What do you say, was Adam a prophet?' He said: 'Yes. He was a prophet (and) an

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1. It is not in accord with the author's earlier assertion that the verse 2:36 describes Adam's removal from the earlier-held place of honour to the courtyard of the Garden; after which he learned "some words" from Allãh and repented (2:37); and it was later that he was sent down from the courtyard to the Garden (2:38). (tr.)

apostle; Allãh talked to him before; He had told him: “O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden.” ’ “

The author says: The Sunnis have narrated almost similar traditions through various chains.

* * * * *

يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أُذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا
بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ ـ ٤٠ . وَآمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ
مُصَدِّقاً لِمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلاَ تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ وَلاَ تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي
ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ ـ ٤١ . وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ٤٢ . وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَآتُوا
الزَّكٰوةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ـ ٤٣ . أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ
وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ـ ٤٤ .

O children of Israel! Remember My bounties which I bestowed on you, and be faithful to (*your*) *covenant with Me, I will fulfil* (My) *covenant with you; and of Me, Me alone, should you be afraid* (40). *And believe in what I have sent down verifying that which is with you, and be not the first to deny it, neither take a mean price in exchange for My signs; and Me, Me alone, should you fear* (41). *And do not mix up the truth with the falsehood, nor hide the truth while you know* (*it*) (42). *And keep up prayer and pay the zakãt and bow down with those who bow down* (43). *What! do you enjoin men to be good and forget your own selves while you read the Book? Have you then no sense?* (44)

GENERAL COMMENT

Now begins the rebuking of the Jews that continues for more than a hundred verses. Allãh reminds them of the bounties bestowed, of the honours given; contrasting it with their ingratitude and disobedience; showing how at every juncture they paid the favours of Allãh with disregard of their covenant, open rebellion against divine commands and even with polytheism. The series reminds them of twelve events of their history — like rescuing them from Pharaoh and his people by parting the river, drowning of Pharaoh and his army, the appointed rendezvous at the mount Sinã'i, the Jews' starting calf-worship in Mũsã's absence, and M a a s order to them to kill themselves, their demand from M ũ s ã to show their Lord to them face to face, their death by lightning and then their arising from dead etc. — all of which shows how they were chosen to receive the especial favours of Allãh. But their ingratitude runs parallel to it. They repeatedly broke the covenants made with Allãh, committed capital sins, heinous crimes and shameful deeds; more despicable was their spiritual poverty and moral bankruptcy — in open defiance to their book and total disregard to the reason. It was all because their hearts were hardened, their souls lost and their endeavours worthless.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: . . . *and be faithful to* (your) *covenant with Me*: "*al-'Ahd*" (اَلـعَـهْـدُ = covenant) literally means guarding and maintenance. By association it has come to mean covenant, oath, testament, will, encounter, house, etc.

QUR'ÃN: . . . *and of Me,. . . should you be afraid:* , "*ar-Rahbah*" (اَلرَّهْبَـةُ = fear) is opposite of *ar-Raghbah* (اَلرَّغْبَـةُ = desire).

QUR'ÃN : . . . *and be not the first to deny it*: That is, first among the people of the book, or first among your own people. This firstness is not all-inclusive, because the disbelievers of Mecca had rejected the Message before the Jews.

* * * * *

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى
الخَاشِعِينَ ــ ٤٥ . الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ
رٰاجِعُونَ ــ ٤٦ .

And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing, except for the humble ones (45)*, who know that they shall meet their Lord and that they shall return to Him* (46).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN : *And seek assistance through patience and prayer*: Man seeks assistance in such affairs and tasks as he cannot manage alone, and in hardships and difficulties which he cannot overcome himself. In reality there is no helper except Allāh. Man can, therefore, manage all his affairs and overcome all his difficulties by courage and steadfastness (i.e. by patience) and by looking towards Allāh (i.e. by prayer). These two factors are the best way to get assistance: patience makes even the great misfortunes look trivial, and putting all his confidence in Allāh awakens the spirit of faith; and thus man

comes to realize that the cause which he is relying upon can never fail to produce the desired effect.

QUR'ÃN: *and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones*: The pronoun "it" refers to the "prayer". It is difficult to relate it to "seeking the assistance", because it will then cover patience too, and the word "the humble ones" will not look appropriate — humbleness does not fit very much with patience. The word used here for humbleness is "*khushũ'*" (اَلْخُشُوْعُ); "*khuḍũ'*" (اَلْخُضُوْعُ) too has the same meaning but with one difference: while the latter shows itself in the limbs of the body, the former refers to the inner feeling.

QUR'ÃN: *who know that they shall meet their Lord . . .*:The word used in this verse for "knowing" is "*yaḍunnũn*" (يَضُنُّونَ) it literally means "they think". But the context, that is, the belief in the hereafter, demands a firm conviction that would leave no room for any doubt or supposition. Allãh says: *and they are sure of the hereafter* (2:4). Or, may be, Allãh, by using this word, makes us realize that even an elementary idea of the hereafter is sufficient to create in a man humility and humbleness before his Lord. Many a knowledge comes to man in stages: (1) first he becomes aware of an idea; (2) then he has some doubts about its correctness; (3) then he becomes inclined to accept it; (4) then gradually the possibility of his accepting the opposite view vanishes completely and he becomes firmly convinced of the truth of that idea — and this firm conviction is called knowledge. If such a knowledge is concerned with some frightening affair, then his worry and disquiet will begin as soon as he reaches the third stage when he is only inclined to accept it — is only "thinking" that probably it may be true. This Qur'ãnic expression, in other words, says that man, for showing humbleness before Allãh, needs only to be aware of the idea that there is a Lord Whom he may return to after his death. In this context only a strong supposition should be enough to make him desist from disobeying his Lord; it would not be necessary, for

this purpose, to reach the stage of firm knowledge. From this point of view, the verse looks almost similar to the verse: . . . *therefore, whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join any one in the worship of his Lord* (18:110).

The above discourse is based on the assumption that the words, "they shall meet their Lord . . ." refer to the Day of Resurrection. But if they are interpreted in another way (as we shall describe in Chapter 7), there should be no difficulty at all in its explanation.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Whenever `Ali (a.s.) faced a difficulty, he used to stand up for the prayer and then recite this verse: *and seek assistance through patience and prayer.*" (*al-Kãfī*)

The same Imãm said about this verse: "The patience means fasting." Also he said: "When a man is confronted by a hard misfortune, he should fast. Surely Allãh says: *and seek assistance through patience,* that is, fast." (*ibid.*)

The author says: al-`Ayyãshi too has narrated the theme of these two traditions in his *at-Tafsīr.* Interpretation of "patience" as fast is based on the "flow" of the Qur'ãn.

Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) said about this verse: "The patience means fast; when a man is visited by a hardship or misfortune, he should fast; surely Allãh says: *And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones.* And the humble one is he who shows humility in his prayer, turning all his attention to it; and it means the Messenger of Allãh (s. a. w. a.) and the Leader of the faithful (a.s.)." (al-`Ayyãshi)

The author says: The Imãm has inferred from this verse the desirability of fasting and praying when one is facing any hardship or turmoil; and likewise, the desirability of seeking the divine help through the medium of the Prophet and `Ali (a.s.) at that time. In this way, the tradition interprets the fast and the prayer as the Prophet and `Ali (a.s.) .

`Ali (a.s.) said about the verse, *who know that they shall meet their Lord* . . Allãh says that they are sure that they would be resurrected. And the supposition *az-zann* (الضَّنُ) here means certainty. (*ibid.*)

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadũq also has narrated this tradition.

al Bãqir (a.s.) said that this verse was revealed about All, `Uthman ibn Maz`un, `Ammar ibn Yasir and (some of) their friends. (*al-Mandqib,* Ibn Shahrashub)

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يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي
فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ـ ٤٧ ـ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْماً لاَ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ
نَفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ هُمْ
يُنْصَرُونَ ـ ٤٨ ـ

O Children of Israel! call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made you excel the nation (47). *And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least; neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped* (48).

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least*: The temporal power and authority, with all its various systems and varying conditions, is based on a necessity of life — the only justification of this institution is that it fulfils this need in the framework of the prevailing factors of the society. It some times exchanges a commodity for another, gives up a benefit

for another, substitutes an order with another — without any hard and fast criterion to regulate such dispensations. The same phenomenon is observed in their judiciary. Logically, a crime must be recompensed with punishment. Yet some times the judge, because of some extraneous reasons, decides not to punish the criminal. Some times the criminal rouses in the judge an overwhelming feeling of pity by his passionate appeal for mercy. Or he wins him over by bribe which induces him to deliver an unjust judgement. Or an influential man intercedes with the judge on behalf of the said criminal and the judge cannot ignore that intercession. Or, the said criminal becomes a state witness leading to the conviction of even greater criminals, and is himself, thus, released without any punishment. Or his tribe or colleagues get him freed from the clutches of the authorities. Whatever the cause may be, it is a well-established custom in the worldly governments and human societies to let the wrong-doers go free at times.

The ancient tribes and the idol-worshippers believed that the life hereafter was an extension of this one; that the customs of this world were valid for that one too, and that the next world was permeated by the same actions and reactions which prevailed in this one. Thus they offered sacrifices and offerings to their deities seeking forgiveness for their sins or assistance in their needs; the offerings were supposed to intercede on their behalf. Some times a sin was expiated or help was sought by offering even a human sacrifice. They carried this idea of continuation of the life so far as to bury with a man all types of necessities of life, not forgetting his ornaments and arms, in order that he might use them on his onward journey; some times even his concubines and soldiers were buried alive with him to keep him company. You may see a lot of such finds in archaeological museums around the world. Some such ideas have persisted even among the Muslims — with all their diverse cultures and languages, albeit in modified forms.

The Qur'ãn has rejected all such superstitious beliefs and

baseless ideas in no uncertain terms:

. . . and the command on that day shall be entirely Allãh's (82:19).

. . . and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder (2:166).

And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were (Allãh's) *associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you* (6:94).

There shall every soul become acquainted with what is sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allãh, their true Master and what they did fabricate shall escape from them (10:30).

There are many similar verses; and they show that the life hereafter is cut off from the natural causes which govern this life, and is quite separate from material connections. Once this principle is understood all the above-mentioned myths would automatically be cleared away. But the Qur'ãn is not content with this general declaration; it refutes each and every myth and superstition described above:

> *And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least; neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped* (12:48).
>
> *. . . before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession* (2:254).
>
> *The day on which a friend shall not avail* (his) *friend aught . . .* (44:41).
>
> *. . . there shall be no saviour for you from Allãh . . .* (40:33).
>
> *What is the matter with you that you do not help each*

other? Nay! on this day they are submissive (37:25-26).

And they worship beside Allãh what can neither harm them nor profit them, and they say: "*These are our intercessors with Allãh." Say*: "*Do you* (presume to) *inform Allãh of what He knows not in the heavens and the earth?" Glory be to Him, and supremely exalted is He above what they set up with Him.* (10: 18) .

. . . the unjust shall not have any friend nor any intercessors who should be obeyed (40:18).

So we have no intercessors, nor a true-friend (26:100-101).

There are many other verses of the same theme, all rejecting the intercession on the Day of Resurrection.

On the other hand, the Qur'ãn does not totally reject the intercession; rather it confirms it to a certain extent. For example, it says:

Allãh is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and He is firmly established on the throne; you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessors; will you not then mind? (32:4)

. . . there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him (6:51) .

Say: *"Allãh's is the intercession altogether"* (39:44).

. . . whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them (2:255).

Surely your Lord is Allãh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods; and He is firmly established on the throne, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after His permission (10:3).

And they say; "The Beneficent God had taken to Himself a son." Glory be to Him! Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and (only)

according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for whom He approves, and for fear of Him they tremble (21:26-28).

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth, and they know (him) (43:86).

They shall have no authority for intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the Beneficent God (19:87). *On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, while they do not comprehend Him in knowledge* (20:109-110)

And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits (34:23).

And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose inter-cession does not avail at all except after Allãh has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses (53:26) .

Some of these verses (like the first three) say that intercession is reserved for Allãh, while the rest declare that others too may intercede with Allãh's permission. In any case, all of them confirm the intercession *per se.* How are these verses related to the preceding ones which totally reject intercession? It is exactly the same relation that exists between the verses that say that the knowledge of unseen is reserved to Allãh and those which declare that others too may have that knowledge with the permission of Allãh. As Allãh says:

Say: "*No one in the heaven and the earth knows the unseen but Allãh"* (27:65).

And with Him are the keys of the unseen, does not know it any except He (6:59).

The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses of an

apostle (72:27).

The same is the case with various verses on the subjects of creating, sustaining, giving death, causity, command, authority and similar things. Some verses reserve them for Allãh, while some say that others too may do these things. It is a well-known style of the Qur'ãn: first it rejects the idea that anyone other than Allãh has any virtue or perfection; thereafter it confirms the same virtue or perfection for others depending on the permission and pleasure of Allãh. When read together, the verses show that nobody has any virtue by his own power and right; whatever excellence there may be, he has got it because Allãh has given it to him. Allãh puts much emphasis to this fact; He attaches the proviso of His will even for those things which are firmly decreed by Him. For example: *So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it; abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; surely your Lord is the* (mighty) *doer of what He intends. And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; a gift which shall never be cut off* (11:106-108). Note that abiding for ever is made de-pendent on the pleasure of Allãh, even in case of the garden, although it is a gift which shall never be cut off. It emphasizes the fact that even when Allãh firmly decrees a thing, it does not pass out of His control or authority; *surely your Lord is* (mighty) *doer of what He intends* (11:107). When Allãh gives a thing, it does not go out of His total possession. When He denies some thing to someone, it is not done to protect Himself against any need or poverty!

In short, the verses that reject intercession — albeit talking about the Day of Resurrection — do so in the context of inter-cession independent of Allãh's authority; while the ones proving it, prove it basically for Allãh and then, depending on His pleasure, for others.

Thus the intercession is proved for other than Allãh with His permission.

Now we should see what is the meaning of intercession? Who may intercede? On behalf of whom? And when? How is it related to the divine forgiveness?

1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF INTERCESSION?

"*ash-Shafã'ah*" (اَلشَّفَاعَةُ = intercession) is derived from "*ash-shaf'* "(اَلشَّفْعُ) which means "even" as opposed to odd — the interceder adds his own recommendation to the plea of the petitioner; in this way the number of pleaders becomes even, and the weak plea of the petitioner is strengthened by the prestige of the intercessor. We are accustomed in our social and communal life to seek others' intercession and help for fulfilling our needs. We resort to it to get an advantage or to ward off a disadvantage. Here we are not talking about an advantage or a disadvantage, a benefit or a harm that is caused by natural causes, like hunger and thirst, heat or cold, illness or health; because in such cases we get what we want through its natural remedies, like eating and drinking, wearing clothes, getting treatment and so on. What we are talking here about is the benefit and harm, punishment and reward resulting from the social laws made by civil authorities. Rising from the very relationship of mastership-and-servitude — and for that matter, between every ruler and ruled — there are some commandments, orders and prohibitions; one who follows and obeys them is praised and rewarded, and the one who disobeys is condemned and punished; that reward or punishment may be either material or spiritual. When a master orders his servant to do or not to do a thing, and the servant obeys him he gets its reward; and if he disobeys he is punished. Whenever a rule is made, the punishment for its infringement is laid down too. This is the foundation which all the authorities are built upon.

When a man wants to get a material or spiritual benefit but is not suitably qualified for it; or when he desires to ward off a harm which is coming to him because of his disobedience, but has no shield to protect himself, then comes the time for intercession.

In other words, when he wants to get a reward without doing his task, or to save himself from punishment without per-forming his duty, then he looks for someone to intercede on his behalf. But intercession is effective only if the person for whom one intercedes is otherwise qualified to get the reward and has already established a relationship with the authority. If an ignorant person desires appointment to a prestigious academic post, no intercession can do him any good; nor can it avail in case of a rebellious traitor who shows no remorse for his misdeeds and does not submit to the lawful authorities. It clearly shows that intercession works as a supplement to the cause; it is not an independent cause.

The effect of an intercessor's words depends on one or the other factor which may have some influence upon the concerned authority; in other words, intercession must have a solid ground to stand upon. The intercessor endeavours to find a way to the heart of the authority concerned, in order that the said authority may give the reward to, or waive the punishment of, the person who is the subject of intercession. An intercessor does not ask the master to nullify his mastership or to release the servant from his servitude; nor does he plead with him to refrain from laying down rules and regulations for his servants or to abrogate his commandments (either generally or especially in that one case), in order to save the wrong-doer from the due consequences; nor does he ask him to discard the canon of reward and punishment, (either generally or in that particular case). In short, intercession can interfere with neither the institution of mastership and servantship nor the master's authority to lay down the rules; nor can it effect the system of reward and punishment. These three factors are beyond the

jurisdiction of intercession.

What an intercessor does is this: He accepts the inviolability of the above-mentioned three aspects. Then he looks at one or more of the following factors and builds his intercession on that basis:

a. He appeals to such attributes of the master as give rise to forgiveness, e.g., his nobility, magnanimity and generosity.

b. He draws attention to such characteristics of the servant as justify mercy and pardon, e.g., his wretchedness, poverty, low status and misery.

c. He puts at stake his own prestige and honour in the eyes of the master.

Thus, the import of intercession is like this: I cannot and do not say that you should forget your mastership over your servant or abrogate your commandment or nullify the system of reward and punishment. What I ask of you is to forgive this defaulting servant of yours because you are magnanimous and generous, and because no harm would come to you if you forgive his sins; and/or because your servant is a wretched creature of low status and steeped in misery; and it is befitting of a master like you to ignore the faults of a slave like him; and/or because you have bestowed on me a high prestige, and I implore you to forgive and pardon him in honour of my intercession.

The intercessor, in this way, bestows precedence on the factors of forgiveness and pardon over those of legislation and recompense. He removes the case from the latter's jurisdiction putting it under former's influence. As a result of this shift, the consequences of legislation (reward and punishment) do not remain applicable. The effect of intercession is, therefore, based on shifting the case from the jurisdiction of reward and punishment to that of pardon and forgiveness; it is not a confrontation between one cause (divine legislation) and the other (intercession).

By now it should have been clear that intercession too is one of the causes; it is the intermediate cause that connects a

distant cause to its desired effect.

Allãh is the ultimate Cause. This causality shows itself in two ways:

First: In creation: Every cause begins from Him and ends up to Him; He is the first and the final Cause. He is the real Creator and Originator. All other causes are mere channels to carry His boundless mercy and limitless bounty to His creatures.

Second: In legislation: He, in His mercy, established a con-tact with His creatures; He laid down the religion, sent down His commandments, and prescribed suitable reward and appropriate punishment for His obedient and disobedient servants; He sent prophets and apostles to bring us good tidings and to warn us of the consequences of transgression. The prophets and apostles conveyed to us His message in the best possible way. Thus His proof over us was complete: *and the word of your Lord has been accomplished with truth and justice, there is none to change His words. . .* (6:115).

Both aspects of causality of Allãh may be, and in fact are, related to intercession.

1. Intercession in creation: Quite obviously the intermediary causes of creation are the conduits that bring the divine mercy, life, sustenance and other bounties to the creatures; and as such they are intercessors between the Creator and the created. Some Qur'ãnic verses too are based on this very theme: *whatever, is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission* (2:255); *Surely your Lord is Allãh, who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is firmly established on throne, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after His permission* (10:3).

Intercession in the sphere of creation is only the intermediation of causes between the Creator and the created thing and effect, in bringing it into being and regulating its affairs.

2. Intercession in legislation: Intercession, as analysed earlier, is effective in this sphere too. It is in this context that Allãh says: *On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with* (20:109); *And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits* (34:23); *And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allãh has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses* (53:26); *. . . and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves. . .* (21:28); *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (him) (43:86). These verses clearly affirm intercessory role for various servants of Allãh — both men and angels — with divine permission and pleasure. It means that Allãh has given them some power and authority in this matter, and to Him belongs all the kingdom and all the affairs. Those intercessors may appeal to Allãh's mercy, forgiveness and other relevant attributes to cover and protect a servant who other-wise would have deserved punishment because of his sins and transgressions. That intercession would transfer his case from the general law of recompense to the special domain of grace and mercy. (It has already been explained that the effect of inter-cession is based on shifting a case from the former's to the latter's jurisdiction; it is not a confrontation between one law and the other.) Allãh clearly says: *. . . so these are they of whom Allãh changes the evil deeds to good ones* (25:70). Allãh has the power to change one type of deed into other, in the same way as He may render an act null and void. He says: *And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust* (25:23); *. . . so He rendered their deeds null* (47:9); *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins* (4:31); *Surely Allãh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is*

besides that to whomsoever He pleases (4:48). The last quoted verse is certainly about the cases other than true belief and repentance, because with belief and repentance even polytheism is forgiven, like any other sin. Also Allãh may nurture a small deed to make it greater than the original: *These shall be granted their reward twice* (28:54); *Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it* (6:160). Likewise, He may treat a non-existent deed as existing: *And* (as for) *those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their off-spring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every man is responsible for what he has done* (52:21).

To make a long story short, Allãh does what He please, and decrees as He wills. Of course, He does so pursuant to His servants' interest, and in accordance with an intermediary cause — and intercession of the intercessors (e.g., the prophets, the friends of Allãh and those who are nearer to Him) is one of those causes, and certainly no rashness or injustice is entailed therein.

It should have been clear by now that intercession, in its true sense, belongs to Allãh only; all His attributes are intermediaries between Him and His creatures and are the channels through which His grace, mercy and decrees pass to the creatures; He is the real and all-encompassing intercessor: *Say: "Allãh's is the intercession altogether"* (39:44); *. . . you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor* (32:4)*; . . . there is no guardian for them nor any intercessor besides Him* (6:51). The intercessors, other than Allãh, get that right by His permission, by His authority.

In short, intercession with Him is a confirmed reality — in cases where it does not go against the divine glory and honour.

2. THE OBJECTIONS AGAINST INTERCESSION

Intercession, as explained above, is a confirmed reality — not in every case but in approved ones. The Qur'ãn and the traditions do not prove more than this. A little meditation on the meaning

of intercession is enough to lead to this conclusion. Intercession is mediation in causality and effectiveness. Obviously causality cannot be limitless and unconditional. No cause can be a cause of every effect, nor can an effect be governed by every cause — otherwise it would render the system of cause and effect null and void. Those who do not believe in intercession have fallen in this very trap — they thought that we affirm the intercession in its totality without any condition or limit. All their objections emanates from this very misunderstanding:

First Objection: Allãh has threatened to punish the wrong-doer; now supposedly He waives the punishment on the Day of Judgement. The question is whether this waiver is justice or in-justice. If it is justice, then the original promise of punishment would be injustice, quite unworthy of divine majesty; and if it is injustice, then the intercession of the prophets, for example, would be a plea for injustice, and it is a folly that should not be attributed to the prophets.

Reply — First: What will they say about those orders that are given only to test the loyalty of a servant and are changed at the last moment, like the order to Ibrãhīm to kill Ismã'īl? Surely its waiver too like the original order was based on justice. Such orders are given only to test the hidden quality of the servant concerned. Likewise, it may be said that salvation is written for all the believers. The laws of the *shari`ah* were ordained — with punishments prescribed for transgressors — in order that the disbelievers should perish because of their disbelief. As for the obedient believers their rank would be enhanced by their good deeds. And as for the disobedient believers, they would be rescued by intercession: that intercession might be effective either totally or partially; in later case, they would have to suffer some of the punishments in al-Barzakh or on the Day of Judgement itself and then they would get deliverance.

Thus the original law with the prescribed punishment for

the defaulters is nothing but justice, and, the subsequent waiver of that punishment too is nothing but justice.

Second: The waiver of the prescribed punishment as a result of intercession could be compared with the previous order — in being based on justice or injustice — only if that waiver were a contradiction of the previous order. But we have explained that it is not so. Intercession is not a contradiction of, or confrontation between one cause (divine legislation) and the other (intercession); it is in fact shifting his case from one jurisdiction (reward and punishment) to the other (mercy and forgiveness).

Second Objection: It is the established practice of Allãh, that His actions are always safe from contradiction and conflict. Whatever He decrees and orders, without any exception, runs on an established pattern. And this is the foundation which the system of cause and effect has been built upon. Allãh says: *This is a straight path with Me*, *Surely, as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who follow thee of the deviators. And surely Hell is the promised place of them all* (15:41- 43); *And* (know) *that this is My path, the straight one, therefore, follow it, and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you away from His way* (6:153); *For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allãh; and you shall not find any change in the course of Allãh* (35:43). And intercession, if effective, would certainly create conflict and contradiction in the actions of Allãh: If intercession caused waiver of punishment from all the sinners, of all their sins, then it would defeat the very purpose of the *shari`ah* and would turn the whole system into a joke. And if only some of the sinners, or only some of their sins were forgiven, then there would occur contradiction in divine actions and change and alteration in Allãh's established course. Certainly, all the sinners are transgressors and every sin is disobedience of divine command. Therefore, forgiving only

some of them or only some of their sins, because of intercession, would be impossible.

Intercession is used in this life of ours, where people are influenced by their desires or social connections. It cannot work in the affairs of the *shari`ah* nor can it influence the divine judgement in any way.

Reply: No one doubts that the path of Allãh is straight and His course without any change or conflict. But it should not be forgotten that this one and unchanged course is based on all His relevant attributes, not on only one or two of them.
Allãh is the One Who bestows on every creature diverse things like life, death, sustenance, bounty and so on. These are the decrees that are contradictory or unrelated to each other; they do not have the same connection with the issuing authority i.e. God. Otherwise the relationship of cause and effect would become null and void. For example, Allãh does not restore a sick man to health by virtue of His death-giving power; rather He does so because He is Merciful, Benevolent, Giver of health and Bestower of bounties. Likewise, He does not destroy an arrogant tyrant by His mercy and beneficence, but because He is the Avenger, the Omnipotent and the Subduer. The Qur'ãn is the best witness of this fact: Whenever it ascribes an event or affair to Him, it invariably always mentions the appropriate attribute by which that affair or event was decreed and managed.

You may say that every affair and every thing is decreed by Allãh because of its underlying benefit and good. And He does whatever He does by His all relevant attributes, and not by only one or some of them. There is always action and reaction between benefits and good of various courses of a certain affair; and Allãh issues His decree as a result of His knowledge that encompasses all those aspects; His vision is not limited to one or two sides only. Had there been one fixed cause or attribute, there would have been no change or difference between a believer and a non-believer, between a

pious person and a debauchee; but there are numerous causes and attributes, and their sum-total often has effects quite different from the effect of its individual parts.

Therefore, intercession, and the consequent waiver of punishment — based on sum-total of numerous causes like mercy, pardon, judgement, and giving everyone his due right — does not entail any change in the established course, nor any deviation from the right path.

Third Objection: Intercession, according to common under-standing, prevails upon the authority to do against his original will. In other words, the original will is abrogated and changed because of the intercessor. A just judge would never accept an intercession unless his knowledge is changed, e.g., his original judgement was wrong, and then he was made to realize that justice demanded a course opposite to his original plan. An unjust judge would accept intercession of his friends knowing fully well that the course suggested was wrong; but he values his personal relations more than the demands of justice and equity. Obviously, both these alternatives are impossible so far as Allãh is concerned; His will is related to His knowledge, and His knowledge is eternal and unchangeable.

Reply: Intercession has nothing to do with change of will or knowledge. What actually changes is the thing willed about or known. Allãh knows that a certain man will pass through various stages in his life; for a time his condition will be excellent — and Allãh wills about him a certain will; and He knows that later his condition will change — and He wills about him another will; and every day He is in a (new) state (of glory). And He has said: *Allãh effaces what He pleases and establishes* (likewise), *and with Him is the basis of the Book* (13:39); *Nay, both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases* (6:64). The same happens with our knowledge and will. We know that soon night will come and we will not be

able to see in darkness, but a few hours later the sun will rise dispelling the darkness. When night comes our will is directed to light a lamp, and later when the morning comes the will is directed to extinguish that lamp. In this case, there was no change at all in our knowledge and will; what changed was the objects of that knowledge and will. And consequently they ceased to be governed by that knowledge and that will. After all, not every knowledge is related to every known object, nor every will is connected to every purpose.

What is impossible for Allãh is disagreement of His knowledge with the thing known, or of His will with its object — while that thing or object remains unchanged. In other words, it is impossible for Him to be mistaken in His knowledge or for His will to be ineffective. We see an apparition far away and take it to be a man; on coming nearer we find that it was a horse. In this case, our "knowledge" did not agree with its object; it was a mistake.

Likewise, we intend to do a certain work, then we realize that it would be wrong to do so; here our "will" was cancelled and became ineffective. But in these cases the objects of our knowledge and will had not changed. Such "disagreement" is certainly impossible for Allãh. But as we have seen, intercession and the subsequent waiver of punishment does not come into this category.

Fourth Objection: Had Allãh promised intercession, or had His prophets brought this message to their nations, the people would have been emboldened to disobey the commandments of Allãh, and to transgress the limits of the *sharī`ah.* It would have defeated the whole purpose behind the institutions of prophet-hood and religion. If we are to avoid this inherent difficulty, we shall have to interpret the relevant Qur'ãnic verses and traditions in a way that does not collide with this basic concept.

Reply — First: What will they say about the verses showing that Allãh's mercy and forgiveness is all-encompassing? For

example: *Surely Allãh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases* (4:48). This verse, as explained earlier, covers the cases other than repentance, as the exception of polytheism shows — because in cases of repentance even polytheism may be forgiven.

Second: The promise or message of intercession could incite people to disregard the rules of the *shari`ah,* if it were accompanied by one of the following factors:

1. If it had pin-pointed either the sinner — by name or description — who was to be forgiven through intercession; or the particular sin that was to be wiped off — unconditionally, definitely and without any ambiguity.

2. Or, if intercession were effective against all types of punishment and at all times.

Read the following sentences to understand what the above conditions mean:

"All men, or a named group of men, will never be held responsible for any sins they commit; nor will they ever be punished for their transgressions."

"A particularly named sin will never be punished for."

Obviously, such declarations would defeat the basic purpose of the *sharī`ah.*

But Allãh has kept both things vague. He has never said what sins or which sinners might benefit from intercession, nor has He said whether all or only some of the punishment would be waived; nor has He made it clear whether or not the intercession would be effective in every condition and at all times. As all these things have been kept vague, no one could be sure of getting the benefit of intercession. In view of this uncertainty, he cannot feel bold to trespass the limits of Allãh. On the other hand the possibility of intercession would save him from losing the hope of divine mercy, will keep him away from despair and despondency, from pessimism and hopelessness. Then there is the verse: *If you avoid great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your*

(small) *sins* . . . (4:31). It clearly says that Allãh will forgive small sins and waive the punishment, provided the servant shuns great sins. If Allãh can say, "If you avoid great-sins, I shall forgive the small ones", He can as easily say, "If you keep your belief pure until you come to Me with unpolluted faith, I shall accept the intercession of intercessors on your behalf." *The important thing is to keep the faith strong; the sins weaken the faith, harden the heart and lead to polytheism. Allãh has said: But none feels secure from Allãh's plan except the people who shall perish* (7:99)*; Nay! rather what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts* (83:14); *Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allãh* . . . (30:10) .

The hope of divine mercy (generated by the belief of intercession), in many cases, leads to repentance, piety and good deeds — and often the servant reaches a stage where intercession is not needed after all. It is in fact the most important benefit of this belief.

Likewise, if it were mentioned who would benefit from intercession or which sins were likely to be interceded about, but it was declared that it would nevertheless entail some types of punishment upto a certain period, the man could not feel bold to commit sins.

And the fact is that the Qur'ãn has nowhere pin-pointed the sin or the sinner likely to benefit from intercession. On the contrary, it speaks only of reverting the punishment from some people. And no objection can be levelled against such a vague expression.

Fifth Objection: Utmost that reason may prove is the possibility, and not the actuality, of intercession — in fact, it does not prove even that much. So far as the Qur'ãn is concerned, it does not show that intercession will actually take place. Some verses refute the idea of intercession altogether, e.g., . . . *the day comes in which there is no bargaining,*

neither any friendship nor intercession (2:254). Other verses say that intercession shall be of no avail, e.g., *So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them* (74:48). Still others, after refuting the actuality of intercession, add the proviso like, *but by His permission* (2:255), *except after His permission* (10:3), *except for him whom He approves* (21:28). This style (a negative followed by exception of divine permission or approval) is used in the Qur'ãn invariably always to emphasize the negative statement; for example, it says: *We will make you recite so you shall not forget, except what Allãh pleases* (87:6-7); *Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases* (11:107). Obviously, there is no definite declaration in the Qur'ãn proving the actuality of intercession. As for the traditions, those giving its details are not reliable; and the reliable ones do not say more than the Qur'ãn does.

Reply: As for the verses refuting the intercession we have already explained that what they reject is the intercession without the permission of Allãh. The verse 74:48, which says that "the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them", is not a proof against intercession; on the contrary it proves its actuality. The verse is in the Chapter, "The Clothed One" and speaks about "them", i.e., a particular group of wrong-doers mentioned in verses 41 to 47; it is they who shall not benefit from the inter-cession of intercessors; it does not speak about all the sinners. Moreover, it uses the phrase, "the intercession of intercessors". There is a difference between saying, "Intercession shall not avail them", and saying, "Intercession of intercessors shall not avail them". When an infinitive verb or verbal noun is used in genitive or possessive case, it proves its actual existence, as ash-Shaykh `Abdu '1-Qãhir has clearly written in *Dalãilu 'l-i`jãz.* Therefore, the expression, "intercession of intercessors" proves that some intercession shall definitely take place on that day, although that particular group shall not be able to benefit from it. Also, the plural, "intercessors" points to the presence of a group of intercessors.

Look for example at the phrases: *she was of those who remained behind* (7:83)*; and he was one of the unbelievers* (2:34); *so he is of those who go astray* (7:175)*; My covenant does not include the unjust ones* (2:124). The plurals in all these phrases would have been irrelevant if they did not mean existence of more than two persons having the attributes mentioned. Like-wise, the verse: *So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them,* instead of refuting the intercession, clearly proves the existence of intercessors and, therefore, intercession. As for the verses that contain the exceptions, "but by His permission", "except after His permission", they clearly prove the actuality of intercession, especially as the infinitive verb "permission" is used in genitive case (*His permission*). No one having a taste of Arabic literature can entertain any doubt about it.

It is childish to say that the two phrases, "but by His permission" and "except for him whom He approves" mean the same thing, i.e., the divine will. Moreover, the Qur'ãn has used various phrases of exception in various places, e.g., "but by His permission", "except after His permission", "except for him whom He approves" and "but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him)". Even if we accept that the divine permission and divine approval mean the same thing, i.e., divine will, can it be said that the last-mentioned phrase (*but he who bears witness of the truth . . .*) too implies the same? Such interpretation implies such inexactness and laxity in talk as even an ordinary Arab would not like attributed to him, let alone an eloquent one. Can we accuse the most eloquent divine speech, i.e., the Qur'ãn, of such inarticulateness?

As for the traditions, we shall show later that they too follow the line adopted by the Qur'ãn.

Sixth Objection: The verses do not say clearly that on the Day of Judgement, the punishment would be averted from the wrong-doers, after the sin has been proved and the

sentence pronounced. The intercession attributed to the prophets means that they were the intermediaries between the Lord and His servant, they received revelation from their Lord and conveyed it to the people and guided them to the right path, leading them to spiritual and ethical perfection. In this sense, they are the intercessors for the believers in this world as well as in the hereafter.

Reply: No doubt, it is one of the aspects of intercession; but intercession is not limited to this much. The prophets called their people to the true faith and repentance, and this is the inter-cession mentioned by the objector. Now let us look again at the verse: *Surely Allãh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases* (4:48). As described earlier, this verse covers the cases other than the true faith and repentance. (True faith and repentance would wipe out the polytheism too.) The exception of polytheism shows that here the talk is about other things — and intercession, in the meaning explained by us, is one of those cases.

Seventh Objection: Reason does not prove that intercession really exists; and the Qur'ãnic verses on this subject are ambiguous — in one place they prove it, at others refute it; sometimes they add some proviso, at the other they speak unconditionally. Therefore, the ethics of religion demands that we should believe in all of them and leave their meaning to Allãh.

Reply: The ambiguous verses, when referred to the decisive ones, become decisive themselves. It is an easy process which is not beyond our ability and power. We shall explain this subject when writing about the verse: *of it there are some verses decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous . . .* (3:7).

3. WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM INTERCESSION?

As explained earlier, it was not in the best interest of religious guidance to pin-point who should benefit from intercession on the Day of Judgement. But vague hints and ambiguous statements can do no harm, and the Qur'ãn has used them to give us a general idea. Allãh says: *Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned, except the people of the right hand, in gardens; they shall ask each other about the guilty*: "*What has brought you into hell?" They shall say*: "*We were not of those who prayed; and we used not to feed the poor; and we used to enter* (into vain discourse) *with those who entered* (into vain discourse); *and we used to call the Day of Judgement a lie, till death overtook us." So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them* (74:38-48). The verses declare that every soul shall remain mortgaged on the Day of Judgement for the sins it has earned, held responsible for the wrongs done in this life. The only exception is of the people of the right hand — they shall be released from that pledge, and shall settle in the gardens. They shall see the wrong-doers who shall be held captive of their sins, and herded into hell; they shall ask them for the reason of their entering into hell, and the guilty shall reply by enumerating four sins as the cause of their disgrace and punishment. And because of those sins, they shall lose the benefit of the intercession of intercessors.

It implies that the people of the right hand would be free from those sins which deprive a man of the benefit of intercession. Allãh shall release them from the fetters of sins and wrongs; and this release shall be as a result of the intercession of intercessors.

The verses are a part of the Chapter 74, (The Clothed One); it was revealed at Mecca at the beginning of the Call, as its con-tents amply prove. At that time the prayer and *zakãt* as known to us were not promulgated. In this context the prayer, mentioned in the verse, "We were not of those who prayed",

could only mean turning one's face towards Allãh with humility and submission; likewise, the verse, "and we used not to feed the poor," could only refer to general spending on the poor in the way of Allãh. *al-Khawḍ* (الخَوْضُ = translated here as entering into vain discourse) literally means to wade into water, to plunge or rush into something. The verse, "we used to enter (into vain discourse). . .", implies entanglement in the vain things of this life, which distract a man from remembrance of the hereafter; it may also mean vilification of the verses which remind one of the Day of Reckoning.

Those wrong-doers, therefore, shall be guilty of four sins: (1) Not turning their faces towards Allãh with humility and sub-mission; (2) not spending in the way of Allãh; (3) vilification of divine revelations; and (4) calling the Day of Judgement a lie. These four evils destroy the foundation of religion. Religion demands following the purified guides, setting one's face towards Allãh, turning away from the worldly distractions, setting one's eyes on the Day of Judgement. If a man succeeds in it, he will be free from the third and the fourth sins, i.e., vilification of divine revelation and calling the Day of Judgement a lie. When, in this way, his fundamental belief is secured, he shall feel the urge to turn towards Allãh and to help fellow human beings. These two factors are represented in these verses by prayer and spending in the way of Allãh. Faith and deed all would thus combine to build the structure of religion. Other elements, like belief in Oneness of God and the prophethood, would naturally follow.

The people of the right hand are the ones who shall benefit from the intercession; and they are the ones whose religion and faith Allãh is pleased with. They may come on the Day of Judgement with perfect deeds — and in that case there will be no need for any intercession; or they may come burdened with some sins — and it is they who shall benefit from the intercession. Therefore, the intercession shall be for those people of the right hand who may have committed some sins.

Allãh says: *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins* (4:31). Therefore, anybody coming on the Day of Judgement with an unexpiated sin shall certainly be guilty of a great sin — had it been a small one it would have been expiated long ago. We have to conclude from this verse that the intercession shall be for those people of the right hand who shall be guilty of great sins.

The Prophet has said: "Verily my intercession is for those of my *ummah* who shall have committed great sins; as for the good-doers, there shall be no difficulty for them . . ."

The designation, "the people of the right hand", is the opposite of "the people of the left hand". These Qur'ãnic terms are based on the fact that man, on the Day of Judgement, shall be given his book of deeds either in his right hand or in the left. Allãh says: (Remember) *the day when We will call every people with their Imãm; then whoever is given his book in his right hand, these shall read their book; and they shall not be dealt with a whit unjustly. And whoever is blind in this, he shall* (also) *be blind in the hereafter; and more erring from the way* (17:71-72). We shall describe, when writing about this verse, that getting the book in the right hand is synonymous with following the rightful Imãm; likewise getting the book in the left hand means following a misguiding leader or Imãm. Allãh says about Pharaoh: *He shall lead his people on the resurrection day, and bring them down to the-fire* (11:98). It means that not only the required four qualities but even the nomenclature, "the people of the right hand", is based on the fact that they followed an approved religion, that Allãh was pleased with them.

Allãh says in another place: *and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves* (21:28). This approval is general and without any condition or qualification. It is not like the one mentioned in verse: . . . *except of him whom the*

Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with (20:109), where approval or pleasure is related to a servant's word. In the verse under discussion the pleasure or approval is related to them, not to their deed; in other words, "whom He approves" means 'whose religion he approves'. Accordingly this verse too has the same import as the previous ones.

Again Allãh says: *The day on which We will gather the pious ones to the Beneficent God as the guests of honour, and We will drive the guilty to hell like* (thirsty) *herd* (to the watering place). *They shall own not any intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the Beneficent God* (19:85-87). The one who has made a covenant with Allãh shall be given possession of intercession. It should not be forgotten that not every guilty servant is an unbeliever. Allãh says: *Whoever comes to his Lord* (being) *guilty, for him is surely hell; he shall not die therein nor shall he live; and whoever comes to Him a believer* (and) *he has done good deeds indeed, these it is who shall have the high ranks* (20:74-75). According to these verses, anyone who is not a good-doing believer is guilty, no matter whether he is an unbeliever or a wrong-doing believer. The latter group, i.e., those who have true belief but have also committed sins, is the one that has made a covenant with God. Allãh says: *Did I not enjoin you* (make a covenant with you), *O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should worship Me; this is the straight path* (36:60 -61). The phrase, "and that you should worship Me", is a covenant in the meaning of order, enjoinment; and the sentence, "this is the straight path", is also a covenant by implication because the straight path leads to felicity and safety. However, such believers shall enter the hell because of sins they had committed, then they shall be rescued by intercession. It is to this covenant that the verse 2:80 alludes: (The Jews) *say*: "*Fire shall not touch us but for a few days." Say*: "*Have you received a promise* (covenant) *from Allãh?"* These verses

too, therefore, lead us to the same conclusion, namely, the group that shall benefit from intercession on the Day of Judgement is that of the believers who would have committed great sins; it is they whose religion and belief Allãh is pleased with and has approved.

4. WHO ARE THE INTERCESSORS?

It has been described that intercession takes place in two spheres: in creation and in legislation. So far as the intercession in creation is concerned, all intermediary causes are intercessors because they are placed between the Creator and the created.

As for the intercessors in the sphere of legislation and judgement, they may be divided into two categories: (1) intercessors in this life, and (2) those in the hereafter.

Intercessors in this life: All the things that bring a man nearer to Allãh and make him eligible for divine forgiveness. The following come into this category:

a. Repentance: Allãh says: *Say*: "*O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allãh; surely Allãh forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord . . . "* (39:53-54). It covers all the sins, even polytheism; if one repents from it and believes in One God, one's previous poly-theism is wiped out and forgiven.

b. True faith: Allãh says: *O you who believe! fear Allãh and believe in His Apostle: He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you* . . . (57:28).

c. Good deed: *Allãh has promised those who believe and do good deeds* (that there is) *for them pardon and great recompense* (5:9)*; O you who believe! fear Allãh and seek an approach* (medium) *to Him* . . . (5:35). There are many verses of this theme.

d. The Qur'ãn: *Indeed has come to you from Allãh a light and a manifest Book whereby Allãh guides him who follows His pleasure, into the ways of peace, and takes them out from darkness towards the light by His will and guides them to the straight path* (5:16).

e. Any thing related to a good deed, like the mosques, holy places and auspicious days.

f. The prophets and the apostles, as they seek forgiveness for their people. Allãh says: *and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allãh, and the Apostle had* (also) *asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allãh oft-returning* (to mercy) , *Merciful* (4:64) .

g. The angels, as they too ask forgiveness for the believers. Allãh says: *Those who bear the throne and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe* (40:7); *. . . and the angels celebrate the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth . . .* (42:5).

h. The believers themselves, as they seek pardon for their believer brothers and for themselves. Allãh quotes them as saying: *and pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us, Thou art our Guardian . . .* (2:286).

Intercessors in the hereafter: We use the term, intercessor, in the meaning explained in the beginning. The following come into this category:

a. The prophets and the apostles: Allãh says: *And they say*: "*The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son." Glory be to Him. Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves . . .* (21:26-28). Those who were called 'son' of God, are in fact His honoured servants and they do intercede for him whom He approves. Among them is 'Īsã,

son of Maryam, and he was a prophet. It means that the prophets do intercede for approved persons.

Again Allãh says: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for* (or, do not own) *intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (him) (43:86).

b. The angels: The preceding two verses prove that the angels too may intercede, because they too were called daughters of Allãh. Moreover, Allãh says: *And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allãh has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses* (53:26); *On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with. He knows what is before them and what is behind them* . . . (20:109 - 110).

The witnesses: Allãh says: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for* (or, do not own) *intercession, but he who bears witness of truth and they know* (him) (43:86). This verse shows that those -who bear witness of the truth do own (or, have authority for) intercession. The witness mentioned here does not mean the one killed in the battlefield. It refers to the witness for the deeds, as was described in the Chapter of the Opening, and will be further explained under the verse: *And thus we have made you a medium* (*i.e.* just) *nation that you may be witnesses over the people and* (that) *the Apostle may be a witness over you* . . . (2:143).

d. The believers: They shall be joined to the witnesses on the Day of Judgement; it follows that they too may intercede like the witnesses. Allãh says: *And* (as for) *those who believe in Allãh and His apostles, these it is that are the truthful and the witnesses with their Lord* . . . (57:19).

5. INTERCESSION: ABOUT WHAT?

The intercession in creation is related to every cause in this world of the cause and effect.

As for the intercession in matters of legislation and judgement, some of them wipe out every sin and its punishment, right from polytheism to the smallest one. For example, repentance done, and true faith acquired, before the Day of Resurrection. Some wipe out effects of some particular sins, like some specified good deeds. As for the issue under discussion, i.e., the intercession of the prophets and other believers on the Day of Judgement, we have already explained that it shall avail those believers who might have committed big sins, but whose faith Allãh is pleased with.

6. WHEN WILL INTERCESSION BE EFFECTED?

We are talking here too about the intercession on the Day of Judgement to waive off the punishment of sins. We have earlier quoted the verses of the Chapter 42 (The Clothed One): *Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned, except the people of the right hand, in gardens they shall ask each other about the guilty* (74:38-41). As explained earlier, the verses clearly say who would benefit from the intercession, and who wont. They also imply that the intercession will get the wrongdoing believers released from fetters of their sins, and protect them from abiding for ever in the hell.

But there is nothing to show that intercession might avail against the turmoils of the Day of Resurrection. Rather, the verse proves that it will be effective only for rescuing the guilty believers from the hell, or preventing them from entering into it.

It may be inferred from the verses that this talk will take place after the people of the garden have settled in the gardens, and the people of the hell in the hell; and that the intercessors shall then intercede for a group of the guilty ones

and rescue them from the hell. The phrase, "in gardens", implies it, as does the question, "What has brought you into hell?" Both phrases imply a more or less permanent abode. Likewise, the comment, "so the intercession . . . avails them not", denotes something occurring in present time i.e. after both groups have settled in their abodes.

As for al-Barzakh (البَرْزَخُ = the period between death and the Day of Resurrection) and presence of the Prophet and the Imãms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*) at the time of death and at the questioning in the grave and the help given by them to the believer to overcome those difficulties (as will be described under the verse: *And there shall not be any one of the people of the book but he must certainly believe in him before his death* (4:159), these things have nothing to do with intercession. It is rather exercising the authority given to them by Allãh over the creation. Allãh says: . . . *and on the most elevated places there shall be men who know all by their marks, and they shall call out to the dwellers of the garden*: "*Peace be on you; they shall not have yet entered it, though they hope". . And the dwellers of the most elevated places shall call out to men whom they will recognize by their marks, saying*: "*Of no avail were to you your amassings and your behaving haughtily. Are these they about whom you swore that Allãh will not bestow mercy on them?" "Enter the garden; you shall have no fear nor shall you grieve"* (7:46-49). It gives a glimpse of The authority or rule vested in them by the permission of Allãh. If we look at the verse 17:71 from this angle, it too throws light on this aspect: (Remember) *the day when We will call every people with their Imãm; then whoever is given his book in his right hand* . . . The intermediary position of the Imãm in calling every people and giving them their books is a sort of authority and rule vested in him by Allãh.

To make a long story short, intercession shall happen at the very last stage on the Day of Judgement; it shall bring the divine forgiveness to the guilty believers, prevent them from

entering into hell and take those out who would have entered into it; it shall be by extension of mercy and/or manifestation of benevolence and magnanimity.

TRADITIONS

al-Ḥusayn ibn Khãlid narrates from ar-Riḍã (a.s.), who narrated through his forefathers from the Leader of the faithful (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Whoever does not believe in my reservoir, may Allãh not bring him to my reservoir, and whoever does not believe in my inter-cession, may Allãh not extend to him my intercession.' Then he (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Verily, my intercession is for those of my *ummah* who shall have committed great sins; as for the good-doers, there shall be no difficulty for them.' " al-Ḥusayn ibn Khalid said: "I asked ar-Riḍã (a.s.): 'O son of the Messenger of Allãh! what is then the meaning of the words of Allãh, Mighty and Great is He: *and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves?'* He (a.s.) said: 'They do not intercede except for him whose religion Allãh is pleased with.' " (*al-Amãli,* as-Ṣadũq)

The author says: The tradition of the Prophet, "Verily my intercession is . . .", has been narrated by both sects with numerous chains; and we have shown earlier that it is based on the theme of Qur'ãnic verses.

Sumã'ah ibn Mihrãn narrates from Abũ Ibrãhīm (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allãh: *may be your Lord will raise you to a praised position*: "The people, on the Day of Resurrection, will remain standing for forty years; and the sun will be ordered so that it will ride over their heads and they will be bridled by sweat — and the earth will be told not to accept any of their sweat. So, they shall approach Adam to intercede for them, and he will direct them to Nũh, and Nũḥ will direct them to Ibrãhīm, and Ibrãhīm will direct them to

Mũsã, and Mũsã will direct them to `Isã, and `Isã will direct them saying: 'You should seek help of Muhammad, the last prophet.' Thereupon, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) will say: 'I'll do it;' and will proceed until, arriving at the door of the garden, he will knock at it. It will be asked, 'Who is it?' (while Allãh knows better!), and he will say: 'Muhammad.' Then it will be said: 'Open for him.' When the door will be opened he will turn to his Lord, falling in *sajdah.* He will not raise his head until he is told: 'Speak up and ask, you shall be given; and intercede, your intercession shall be granted.' He will raise his head and turning to his Lord will fall (again) in *sajdah.* Then he will be promised as before; then he will raise his head. (Thereupon, he shall intercede) until he will intercede even for him who would have been burnt in the fire. Therefore, on the Day of Resurrection, no one among all the nations will be more eminent than Muhammad (s.a.w.a.); and it is (the meaning of) the words of Allãh: *May be your Lord will raise you to a praised position*." (al-`Ayyãshi)

The author says: This meaning is narrated by both sects in great number, in detail as well as in short, with numerous chains; and it proves that the "praised position" means the position of intercession. This tradition is not in conflict with intercession of other prophets, because probably their intercession will be an off-shoot of our Prophet's, and it will begin on his hand.

`Ubayd ibn Zurarah said: "Abũ `Abdillãh (a.s.) was asked whether a believer would have the right of intercession. He said: 'Yes.' Then someone said: 'Will even a believer need the intercession of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) on that day?' He said: 'Yes. The believers too will come with wrongs and sins; and there will be none but he shall need the intercession of Muhammad on that day.'" (`Ubayd) said: "And someone asked him about the words of the Messenger of Allãh: 'I am the Chief of the children of Adam, and I say this without

boasting.' He said: 'Yes.' (Then) he said: 'He will hold the chain-link of the door of the garden and open it; then he will fall in *sajdah,* and Allãh will tell him:

`Raise your head, do intercede, your intercession shall be granted; ask, you shall be given.' So he will raise his head and again will fall in *sajdah;* then Allãh will (again) say to him: 'Raise your head, do intercede, your intercession shall be granted, and ask, you shall be given.' Thereupon he will raise his head and intercede — and his intercession will be accepted; and he will ask and be given." (*ibid.*)

Muhammad ibn al-Qãsim narrates through his chains from Bishr ibn Shurayh al-Baṣri that he said: "I said to Muhammad ibn Ali (a.s.): 'Which verse in the Book of Allãh is the most hope-inspiring?' He said: 'And what do your people say (about it)?' I said: 'They say, (it is the verse,) *Say*: "*O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allãh*." 'He said: 'But we, the people of the house, do not say so.' I said: 'Then what do you say about it?' He said: 'We say (it is the verse,) *And soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased.* (It means) the intercession, by Allãh the intercession, by Allãh the intercession.' " (*at-Tafsīr,* Furãt ibn Ibrãhīm)

The author says: The words of Allãh, *may be your Lord will raise you to a praised position,* refers to the Prophet's glorious position of intercession, as the numerous traditions of the Prophet himself prove. Moreover, the wording of the verse too supports it: "will raise you" shows that it is a position which he will attain in future, i.e. on the Day of Judgement; "praised" is general and unconditional, and implies that he shall be praised by all men, past and present. *al-Ḥamd* (الحَمْدُ) means to praise someone for a good done to you intentionally. This definition shows that the Prophet will do something by his own will and power which will benefit all of them and in return everyone

will praise him. That is why the Imãm said in the tradition of ‘Ubayd ibn Zurarah, “and there will be no one but he shall need the intercession of Muhammad on that day.”

We shall later explain it further.

Now about the declaration that the verse, “and soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased,” is the most hope-inspiring one in the Qur'ãn — especially when compared to the verse, *Say*: “*O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allãh; surely Allãh forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment . . . and follow the best that has been revealed to you . . .*” (39:53 -55). *al-Qunut* (القُنُوطُ = to lose hope, to despair) has been mentioned several times in the Qur'ãn. Allãh quotes Ibrãhīm (a. s.) as saying: *And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord but the erring ones* (15:56). Also He quotes Ya`qũb (a.s.): *surely none despairs of Allãh's mercy except the unbelieving ones* (12:87). But the con-text in both places shows it as referring to losing hope of divine mercy in matters of creation. As for the verse under discussion the context shows that it admonishes against losing hope of divine mercy in matters of legislation and judgement; look for instance at the words, *who have acted extravagantly against their own souls.* They clearly say that one who has committed sins should not despair of the mercy of Allãh. Also Allãh has promised forgiveness for the *faults altogether* without any exception. But this promise is followed by admonition to repent (*turn to your Lord*) and submit to Allãh and follow the divine commandments. The text on the whole demonstrates that a man who might have committed sins need not despair of the mercy of Allãh as long as he is in a position to turn to Allãh, to submit to Him, and to follow His commandments. In short, this mercy is conditional. And there is a vast difference between this conditional mercy and the

all-encompassing, unconditional mercy and unrestricted granting and pleasing which Allãh has promised His Apostle, who himself was a mercy for all the mankind. It is that promise which will make the Apostle of Allãh (s. a. w. a.) well pleased: *and soon will your Lord give you, so that you shall be well pleased.*

This last-mentioned verse occurs in a context where Allãh mentions His grace and bounties to the Prophet; it is a unique promise never made to anyone else. The phrase, "will give you," is unconditional and unrestricted. A promise, somewhat similar, has been made to a group of the people of the garden: *they shall have what they please with their Lord* (42:22); *They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet* (50:35). These verses show that those people shall be given more than they wish for — and man by nature desires all that he can think of happiness, good and felicity. It means that they shall be given more than they can think of, as Allãh says: *So no soul knows what is hidden for them of the joy of the eyes* (32:17). Now this is what Allãh has promised those who believe and do good; and even this is beyond human imagination. Surely, what He shall give to His Prophet as His special grace must be far greater than this.

This much about the grace of Allãh. Now let us reflect upon "you shall be well pleased". Obviously this pleasure has no relation whatsoever to the pleasure a man should have for whatever Allãh gives Him and decrees for him. Allãh is the Master and the servant has nothing of his own except the inherent need and poverty. He must always be happy and grateful for whatever his Master gives him, no matter whether it is more or less, big or small; he must always be pleased with whatever Allãh decrees for him, whether it looks comforting or distressing. This is what is expected of every good believer; surely the Prophet knows this ideal better, and acts upon it more perfectly, than anyone else; in short, he likes for himself only that which Allãh wills for him. Therefore, it would have been superfluous and irrelevant to

say that he would be pleased after he was given something. It follows that this promised pleasure refers to something else. It refers to that happiness or satisfaction which a needy person experiences when his need is fully met. A similar promise was given to some of His virtuous servants: (As for) *those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men. Their reward with their Lord is gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever; Allãh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord* (98:7-8). Its context shows that this too is to show some special divine favour for them, and hence it must be a very exclusive and comprehensive pleasure. At this juncture, it should be mentioned that Allãh has praised His Apostle in these words: *to the believers* (he is) *compassionate, merciful* (9:128).

Keeping all these things in view, ponder on this question:

Can the Prophet be pleased to enjoy the bounties of the garden, or can he be happy with the pleasures of the paradise, when some believers are imprisoned inside the hell? Remember that they are the people who believed in Allãh as the One God, in the Prophet as the true prophet, and in what he brought with him as the true revelation; but they were overcome by their indiscretion and Satan twisted them between his fingers as a toy, and so they committed errors and sins — without any thought of revolting against God, of any arrogance before Him. Even we, when we remember what mistakes we committed in past, what chances of spiritual perfection we missed before, we start blaming ourselves for all the shortcomings; then if we see some inexperienced youth indulging in youthful frolics, we are reluctant to condemn them; we feel compassion for them. But this mercy of ours is a manifestation of the imperfect compassion put in our nature by the Creator. How can we understand the mercy of the Lord of the worlds, in a place where the magnanimity of the compassionate, merciful Prophet and the mercy of the Most Merciful of all have to decide about the indiscretions of a

power-less human being? Especially so when he had undergone all the torments of *al-barzakh* in proportion to his misdeeds?

al-Qummi narrates a tradition in his *at-Tafsīr,* under the verse: *And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits* (34:23), that Abu '1-`Abbas al-Mukabbar said: "A servant of a wife of `Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), named Abu Ay-man, came (to the fifth Imãm — a.s.) and said: 'O Abũ Ja'far! You mislead the people, saying, intercession of Muhammad, intercession of Muhammad.' (Hearing this) Abu Ja'far became so angry that his face took a glowering expression; then he said: 'Woe unto you! O Abũ Ayman! Are you deluded by chastity of your stomach and genitals? Why, when you will see the terrors of the resurrection, you shall certainly be in need of intercession of Muhammad. Fie on you! Would he intercede except for him who would have been sentenced to the fire?' (Then) he said: `There is no one from the early people to the later ones but he will need the intercession of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) on the Day of Resurrection.' Then again Abũ Ja'far said: 'Certainly the Messenger of Allãh has (authority of) intercession for his *ummah,* and we have (authority of) intercession for our Shl'ahs, and our Shi'ahs have (authority of) intercession for their families.' Then he said: 'And surely a believer shall intercede for (very large number of) people like the (tribes of) Rabi'ah and Mudar. And surely a believer shall intercede for his servant, saying: "O my Lord! I owe this to him, he was protecting me from heat and cold." '

The author says: This tradition refers to a general intercession ("There is no one from the early people to the later ones but he will need the intercession of Muhammad . . .") and a particular one ("Fie on you! Would he intercede except for him who would have been sentenced to the fire?"). We find similar idea in al-'Ayyãshi's tradition from 'Ubayd ibn Zurarah mentioned earlier. There are other traditions of the same

theme narrated by both sects. It is supported also by the verse: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (him) (43:86). This verse shows that the prerequisite of inter-cession is the witnessing of the truth. The witnesses are the intercessors, the owners of the intercession. And we shall describe under verse 2:143 (*And thus We have made you a medium* [just] *nation that you may be witnesses over the people and* [that] *the Apostle may be a witness over you*), that the prophets are the witnesses and that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the witness over them; so he (s.a.w.a.) is the witness over the witnesses, and thus he is the intercessor for the intercessors; and without the testimony of the witnesses the foundation of the Day of Judgement would crumble.

The (fifth) Imãm said about the verse, *And intercession will not avail aught with Him save him whom He permits*: "No prophet or apostle may intercede until Allãh permits him, except the Apostle of Allãh, because Allãh has alread given him permission before the Day of Resurrection; and intercession is (allowed) to him and to the Imãms from his progeny, and after that to the prophets." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

`Ali (a.s.) said: "The Apostle of Allãh (s. a. w. a.) said: 'Three (groups) shall intercede with Allãh and their intercession will be accepted: The prophets, then the (religious) scholars, then the martyrs.' " (*al-Khiṣãl*)

The author says: *ash-Shuhadã'* (الشُّهَدَاء) in the Qur'ãnic terminology means witnesses of the deeds; but in the traditions of the Imãms it is generally used for the martyrs who are killed in the way of Allãh. And apparently it is in this meaning that the word has been used in this traditions.

The Imãm said: "We have the (authority of) intercession; and the people who love us have the (authority of) intercession." (*ibid.*)

The author says: Numerous traditions prove that the Lady of paradise, Fãṭimah (a.s.) has the power and authority of inter-cession, as do his descendants other than the Imãms. Likewise, a lot of traditions bestow similar authority on the believers — even to their miscarried foetus. There is a well-known tradition that the Prophet said: "Marry (and) procreate; for I shall boast of you (i.e. your number) against other nations on the Day of Resurrection — even of miscarried foetus; he shall stand at the door of the garden in a restive mood; he shall be told to enter, but he will say: 'No, until my parents enter it …' "

Abũ Abdillãh narrates, through his father and grandfather, from `Ali (a.s.) that he said: "The garden has eight gates: one for the entry of prophets and the truthful ones, the other for the martyrs and the good ones; and five gates are for the entry of our Shi'ahs and lovers — I shall be standing on the *as-Sirat* (الصِّرٰاط = the path; the bridge over the hell) praying and saying: 'My Lord! save my Shi `ahs and my lovers and my helpers and those who followed me in the (life of the) world.' Then all of a sudden there will come a voice from inside the throne: 'Your prayer is granted and your intercession for your Shi'ahs accepted. And every Shi'ah of mine and everyone who loves me, helps me and fights my enemies by (his) deed or word, shall intercede for seventy thousand of his neighbours and relatives — and (there is) a gate from which shall enter all the Muslims who witness that there is no god except Allãh and in whose heart there is not an iota of enmity towards us, the people of the house." (*ibid.*)

Ḥafṣ al-Mu'adhdhin narrates that Abũ `Abdillãh (a. s.) wrote, *inter alia,* in a letter to his companions: "And know that none of the creatures of Allãh shall avail you against Him., neither an angel who is near to Him, nor an apostle prophet nor any one below them. Whoever likes intercession of intercessors to avail him, should ask Allãh to be pleased with him." (*al-Kãfī*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Jabir told Abũ Ja'far (a.s.): 'May I be your ransom, O son of the Apostle of Allãh! Narrate to me a tradition about your grandmother, Fãṭimah.' (Then the tradition continues, mentioning the intercession of Fãṭimah on the Day of Resurrection, until it says:) Abũ Ja'far (a.s.) said: 'Then, by God, no one among the people will remain (unsaved) except a doubting one or an unbeliever or a hypocrite. When they shall be (put) into (various) ranks of the hell, they shall cry out — as Allãh has said — *So we have no intercessors, nor a true friend: But if we could but once return, we would be of the believers* (26:100-102): Then Abũ Ja'far (a.s.) said: 'But oh! how preposterious! They shall be denied what they asked for; *and if they were sent back they would certainly return to what they were forbidden, and most certainly they are liars* (6:28) .' " (*at-Tafsīr,* Furãt ibn Ibrãhīm)

The author says: The Imãm has proved by the sentence, "So we have no intercessors", that intercession will take place on the Day of Judgement. In this light, it is amusing to see our adversaries trying to use it as an argument against intercession! Just as we said about the verse, *So the intercession of intercessors avails them not* (74:48), this verse too shows that intercession will surely take place on that day. If the Qur'ãn wanted to negate the inter-cession altogether, it would have used the singular form (. . . no intercessor nor a true friend). But it has used the plural, "So we have no intercessors"; and it proves that there shall be a group interceding on behalf of some people, but it will not be of any avail to those particular speakers. Moreover, the following sentence, "But if we could but once return, we would be of the believers," shows a desire within the frame of grief. Obviously such a desire is related to that thing loss of which has caused the grief. Therefore, what this sentence implies is this: Would that we could return to the previous life; then we would be of the believers, so that the intercession of

intercessors would avail us too, as it has benefited the believers. The verse, therefore, is a good proof for intercession.

al-Kazim (a.s.) narrated from his father, through his fore-fathers, from the Prophet that he said: "My intercession is for those of my *ummah* who would have committed big sins; as for the doers of good, there shall be no difficulty for them." He was asked: "O son of the Messenger of Allãh! How can the inter-cession be for those who would have committed big sins, while Allãh says, *and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves* (21:28); and a committer of big sins cannot be approved?" He (a.s.) said: "No believer commits a sin but he regrets it and feels ashamed. And the Prophet has said: 'Enough is regret as a repentance.' And also he (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'Whoever is pleased by a good deed and displeased by a bad deed, he is a believer.' Therefore, if there is someone who does not feel remorse for a sin he has committed, he is not a believer, and intercession will not avail him, and he will be an unjust one. And Allãh says: *the unjust shall not have any true friend nor any intercessor who should be obeyed* (40:18)." It was said to him: "O son of the Messenger of Allãh! How is it that he who is not sorry of a sin he has committed, he does not remain a believer?" He said: "Anyone who commits a big sin, knowing that he must be punished for it, will certainly feel remorse for what he has done. And as soon as he is sorry, he is repentant, eligible for intercession. But if he is not sorry, then he is persisting in it, and a persistent (sinner) is not forgiven, because he does not believe in the punishment of what he has done; had he believed in that punishment, he would have been sorry. And the Prophet has said: 'No big sin abides with apologizing, and no small sin remains (small) with persistence.' And as for the words of Allãh, *and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves,* it means that they do not intercede except for him whose religion He approves. Religion is an acknowledgement

that good and bad deeds have to be recompensed. If one's religion were approved, one would feel remorse for the sins one would have committed, because he would know what their result would be on the (day of) resurrection." (*at-Tawhid*)

The author says: The words of the Imãm, "and he will be an unjust one": It gives the definition of "unjust" as applicable on the Day of Resurrection. It alludes to the Qur'anic verse, *Then a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allãh is on the unjust, who hinder* (people) *from Allãh's way and seek to make it crooked and they are disbelievers in the hereafter* (7:44-45). Accordingly, unjust is he who does not believe in the Day of Judgement; naturally, such a man would not be sorry if he neglected to do what he was ordered to do, or if he indulged in sins and crimes. May be, he outright rejects basic truths and teachings of religion; or may be he just does not care, is not worried of punishment of sins on the Day of Reckoning. In later case, his verbal acknowledgement of the Day of Judgement would be but a joke and mockery.

". . . as soon as he is sorry, he is repentant, eligible for intercession": The adjective, repentant, is not used here in its well-known terminological sense — repentance (in the terminological sense) is by itself the best intercessor and saviour. What the Imãm meant here is this: If he feels remorse for the sin committed, he returns to Allãh, his religion is thus approved by Him, and therefore he becomes eligible for intercession.

"And the Prophet has said: 'No big sin abides with apologizing . . .' ": The Imãm narrated this tradition to prove that persistence in a sin (even a small one) changes it from its original smallness to a far greater transgression — it shows one's disbelief in the Day of Judgement and injustice towards the signs of Allãh. And such a thing is not forgiven. A sin is forgiven if the sinner sincerely repents, or if intercession

avails him — and this depends on his religion being approved; and both repentance and approved religion are absent in case of persistence.

A similar theme is found in a tradition quoted in *`Ilalul 'shsharãi`* from Abũ Ishãq al-Laythi that he said: "I said to Abũ Ja'far Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Bãqir (a.s.): 'O son of the Messenger of Allãh! Tell me about a believer, possessing religious understanding when he reaches (a high point in) knowledge and becomes perfect, does he commit fornication?' He said: 'By God! No.' I said: 'Then does he indulge in sodomy?' He said: 'By God! No.' I said: 'Then does he steal?' He said: 'No.' I said: 'Then does he drink intoxicant?' He said: 'No.' I said: 'Then does he commit any of the big sins or indulge in any of these indecencies?' He said: 'No.' I said: 'Then does he commit a sin?' He said: 'Yes, and he is a believer, sinner, submissive.' I said; 'What does sub-missive mean?' He said: 'The submissive (servant) does not persist in it, does not keep doing it . ."

ar-Riḍã (a.s.) narrated through his forefathers that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: "When the resurrection comes, Allãh, Great and Mighty is He, will manifest Himself to His believing servant, and will remind him of his sins one by one; then Allãh will forgive him; Allãh will not let (even) a near angel or an apostle prophet know of his (sins), and will cover it lest anyone becomes aware of it. Then He will say to his bad deeds: 'Be good deeds.' "(*al-Khiṣãl*)

Abũ Dharr said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection; and it will be said: "Show him his small sins; and keep back from him his big sins." Then it will be said to him: "You did so and so on such and such a day." And he will go on confessing, while apprehensive of his big sins. Then it will be said: "Give him a good deed in place of every bad deed." Then he will say: "I had done some sins which I do not see (mentioned) here." ' " Abũ Dharr said: "And I saw the Messenger of Allãh laughing

until his teeth were shown." (Muslim)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "When the Day of Resurrection comes, Allãh, Glorified and Sublime is He, shall spread His mercy until even Iblīs will hope for His mercy." (*al-Amãli,* as-Ṣadũq)

The author says: The last three traditions are of general nature. The traditions about intercession of the Prophet, emanating from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* as well as from the Sunni sources have successively been narrated by so many narrators as to leave no room for any doubt about their authenticity. Altogether they prove that intercession will take place, and that it will avail the believers who might have committed sins; it will prevent them from entering into hell, or will rescue them from it if already sent therein. It is however certain that the sinning believers shall not be allowed to abide for ever in the hell. And we have earlier explained that the Qur'ãn too does not say more than this.

A PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEMPLATION

According to Abu 'Ali Ibn Sīnã, intellectual reasoning cannot give us details concerning the resurrection and judgement (as given in the Qur'ãn and *sunnah*), as it lacks the premises necessary to lead to a conclusion. Nevertheless, it may contemplate the future of man after the soul leaves the body and lives in the form of (Platonic) ideas — how it proceeds on the path of happiness or unhappiness reaching the ultimate station.

Whatever man does in beginning leaves an imprint on his psyche — either of happiness or unhappiness. By "happiness" we mean what is good for him as a man; on the other hand, "unhappiness" denotes what is bad for him as a man. If the action is repeatedly performed the imprint becomes deeper and deeper until it becomes a deep-rooted characteristic, until it

reshapes the psyche in its own mould.

If the mould is good, the resulting shape as well as the actions emanating from it are good and agreeable to the man "as a man", and man is "happy". If on the contrary the mould is bad, the resulting shape and actions become ugly and disagreeable to the man "as a man"; and although the deformed psyche seemingly enjoys those actions, in reality it remains unhappy "as a man". Here we are talking about a man who is happy in his psyche and good in his deed *vis-a-vis* a man who is unhappy in his psyche and evil in his deeds.

It is the former that is the subject of our discussion here. A man may be good and happy in his person, because he has got correct belief of eternal truth; but his psyche has been polluted by the sins and transgressions committed as a result of weakness of flesh and error of judgement and choice. Consequently, psyche becomes "unhappy". But this pollution and unhappiness is a matter of constraint that has been forced on his inherently happy psyche; and we know from intellectual reasoning that constraint does not continue for ever. That soul will most certainly get rid of that unhappiness, pollution and rust in the fire of chastisement in al-Barzakh or on the Day of Judgement — it depends on its own strength and stage of inner perfection.

The opposite is true for the later group. Whatever the effects of good deeds, they are no more than cosmetics; it is a forced appearance not agreeable to its inner-self; and sooner or later it is bound to disappear.

There remains a fifth category: The soul which could not turn its potentials into achievements — good or bad — in this life. They will remain in suspense, waiting for the divine judgement.

This much could be discerned from intellectual reasoning, concerning the reward and punishment, the inseparable results of the deeds.

Reasons also prove that existence has various grades of

perfection — ideally perfect or less so, stronger or weaker. Consequently, the souls have various ranks in relation to the Creator — nearer to, or further from him. They are therefore one above the other, the highest being the nearest to the First Cause. They are the most perfect and ideal souls, like those of the prophets (may peace of Allãh be on them!). They may become the mediums through which the unnatural pollution and rust may be removed from the weaker souls which are further below. It is this role which we call intercession.

A SOCIAL DISCOURSE

Some people say:

"Human society cannot continue without some laid rules, nor without an authority to look after its affairs. When all members maintain discipline and obey the rules, social justice is maintained and strengthened. This system is based on temporal benefits which the society cannot do without, as well as on spiritual and ethical ideals, like truth, sincerity, keeping one's word etc. which the development and good of the society depend upon. For these rules and regulations to have any force and effect, it was necessary for them to be accompanied by punishment laid down for the transgressors. Only in this way the system could be protected against the wilful transgression of some and indifference and negligence of others. That is why when a government (no matter which ideology it follows) is strong and capable enough to make people obey its edicts, the country marches forward, and society proceeds on the path of development. On the contrary when it is weak, the country is overcome by lawlessness and disorder, and plagued by troubles and turmoils.

"In view of the above, it is essential for the good of society to make people believe that they could not escape the consequences if they transgressed the law. Nothing should be

said or done to raise a hope in them that they could avoid the punishment by some means, like intercession, bribe or deception.

"The biggest objection against Christianity is aimed at its belief of atonement: That Christ was crucified in order to atone for the sins of his followers. Now the Christians rely on that atonement to get salvation in the next world, without caring what they do in this life. Religion, in this way, destroys the very foundation of society, retards civilization and pulls it backwards. Data show that lie and injustice is found in ardent followers of religion to a far greater extent than in those who do not follow any religion. Its only reason is that the former are confident that their sins would certainly be wiped off through intercession."

This is in short what some "scholars" hold against the belief of intercession: That it weakens the foundation of civilization and social justice. But neither Islam proves intercession, in the meaning they have given it, nor the intercession which Islam speaks of gives the result they have claimed. Before writing against intercession, as taught by Islam, they should learn what Islam teaches, how it applies its laws to the society, what type of intercession it promises and how, when and to what extent it is to be applied and effected:

First: What the Qur'ãn confirms of the intercession is this: The believers shall not abide in the hell, on the Day of Resurrection, provided they come to their Lord with approved belief and true faith. Thus, it is a conditional promise. Then it has emphasized that the faith remains in grave danger from sins, especially the big ones, and more particularly if one persists in them. Such a believer would be tottering on the brink of eternal damnation. When a believer remembers that promise, his hope of deliverance soars high; when he needs this warning, he is over-come by dread of perdition. His soul remains hovering between hope and fear; he worships his Lord both with love and awe. Thus, he spends his life in a moderate way,

on the middle course. He experiences neither discouragement of pessimism, nor the rashness of over-optimism.

Second: Islam has made comprehensive laws for temporal and spiritual upliftment of the society; these laws cover all aspects of life of an individual and a group. It has prescribed suitable punishments for those who violate any of those rules — from monetary compensation to chastisement to firmly fixed punishment — until a stage comes when the offender is deprived of his rights as a member of society and is condemned to eternal shame, or even death. All this system has been entrusted into the hands of divinely appointed *ulu 'l-amr* (أولُو الامْر = people vested with authority). Then each Muslim has been made responsible for all other Muslims, as he is obliged to enjoin his compatriots to do good and desist from evil. To cap it all, the Muslim nation is obliged to call others to the right path, and the way to affect this call is to give them good news of eternal reward if they do good and to warn them of eternal perdition if they indulge in evil.

It is this knowledge of this and the next world which is the foundation of Islam's character-building. The Prophet promulgated this system; and experiment has proved its effectiveness and potency. Its power to mould the society into divine image was proved during the time of the Prophet and continued to do so until Umayyids came into power. They made the *shari`ah* a toy to play with; put the Islam's penal code in cold storage and behaved as though they were above all law, as if nothing could hinder them in their pursuit of pleasure. The result of that exercise is before our eyes today. The standard of "freedom" has been raised; western civilization is making inroads in our society. In Islamic countries, Islam exists in name only.

It is this manifest weakening of religion and this retrogressive movement of the Muslims which has caused their fall from heights of justice and virtue, and made them slip down the plane of morality and ethics. It is their debauchery and their wallowing in their base desires and sensualities that has made them bold to transgress every limit,

to violate every rule, so much so that even the atheists look down at their debauchery, dishonesty and immorality.

This is the real and only cause of the deterioration of Muslim society. The objector is completely off the mark when he attributes this state of affairs to those sublime religious realities whose only aim, and only effect, was and is the man's felicity and happiness in this world as well as in the hereafter.

The data, mentioned in his argument, are irrelevant here. They have looked at a Muslim society which has got no guardian and no authority to enforce Islamic laws within its jurisdiction, and at an atheist society which has a strong authority to enforce its laws and to keep the people within the limits, with help of education and training of its own choice. Therefore, this comparison is quite clearly unjustified.

* * * * *

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ
يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَٰلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِنْ
رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ـ ٤٩ . وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا
آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ـ ٥٠ . وَإِذْ وَاعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً
ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ـ ٥١ . ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا
عَنْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ـ ٥٢ . وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى
الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ـ ٥٣ . وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ
يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ
فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ـ ٥٤ . وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ
نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ـ ٥٥ . ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُمْ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ـ ٥٦ . وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ
الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَٰكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ـ ٥٧ . وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا
هَٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَداً وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّداً

وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطٰيٰيٰكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ــ ٥٨ . فَبَدَّلَ
ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلاً غَيْرَ ٱلَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزاً
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ــ ٥٩ . وَإِذِ ٱسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا
أَضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ ٱلْحَجَرَ فَٱنْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ ٱثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْناً قَدْ عَلِمَ
كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَشْرَبَهُمْ كُلُوا وَٱشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ ٱللهِ وَلاَ تَعْثَوْا فِي الأَرْضِ
مُفْسِدِينَ ــ ٦٠ . وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يٰا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ
لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَــا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا
وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ ٱلَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِٱلَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ ٱهْبِطُوا
مِصْراً فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مَا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِلَّةُ وَالمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا
بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ ٱللهِ ذٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ ٱللهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ــ ٦١ .

And when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to severe torment, killing your sons and sparing your women, and in this there was a great trial from your Lord (49). *And when We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the followers of Pharaoh while you watched by* (50). *And when We appointed* (a time of) *forty nights with Mũsã, then you took the calf* (for a god) *after him and you were unjust* (51)*; then We pardoned you after that so that you might give thanks* (52). *And when We gave Mũsã the book and the distinction that you might walk aright* (53). *And when Mũsã said to his people*: "*O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf* (for a god), *therefore turn to your Creator* (penitently) *and kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator; so He*

turned to you (mercifully), *for surely He is the Oft-returning* (with mercy), *the Merciful*" (54). *And when you said*: "*O Mũsã we will not believe in you until we see Allãh manifestly," so the punishment overtook you while you looked on* (55)*; then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks* (56). *And We made the clouds to give shade over you and We sent to you manna and quails: Eat of good things that We have given you; and they did not do Us any harm, but they did harm their own selves* (57). *And when We said*: "*Enter this city, then eat from it a plenteous* (food) *wherever you wish, and enter the gate making obeisance, and say, forgiveness, We will forgive you your wrongs and give more to those who do good* (to others) (58). *But those who were unjust changed it for a saying other than that which had been spoken to them, so We sent upon those who were unjust a pestilence from heaven, be-cause they transgressed* (59). *And when Mũsã prayed for drink for his people, We said*: "*Strike the rock with your staff "So there gushed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking place*: "*Eat and drink of the provisions of Allãh and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief"* (60). *And when you said*: "*O Mũsã we cannot bear with one food, therefore pray to your Lord on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions. He said*: "*Will you exchange that which is better for that which is worse? Enter a city, so you will have what you ask for." And abasement and humiliation were brought down upon them and they returned with Allãh's wrath; this was so because they disbelieved in the signs of Allãh and killed the prophets unjustly; this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits* (61).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *and sparing your women*: They left your women alive in order that they (i.e. the women) might serve them. "*al-Istiḥyã'* "(اَلاِستِحيَاءُ) means to wish someone to remain alive. The word may also mean: They behaved indecently with the women until they (i.e. the women) lost their modesty.

"Yasũmũnakum" (يَسومُونَكُمْ) translated here as "they subjected you to", literally means, they imposed upon you.

QUR'ÃN: *And when We parted the sea for you*: *al-Farq* (الفَرقُ) is opposite of *al-jam'* (اَلجَمْعُ)*;* the words mean to separate and to gather, respectively. The same is the case of *al-faṣl* (اَلفَصْلُ) *vis-a-vis "al-waṣl"* (اَلوَصْلُ). To separate the sea means to part its water. "*Bikum"* (بِكُمْ), translated here as "for you", may also mean, "soon on your entering the sea" .

QUR'ÃN: *And when We appointed* (a time of) *forty days with Mũsã*: The same event has been described in Chapter 7 in these words: *And We appointed with Mũsã a time of thirty nights and completed them with ten* (more), *so the appointed time of his Lord was complete, forty nights* (7:142)

This verse mentions the total duration of the two promises together, as a tradition says.

QUR'ÃN: *therefore turn to your Creator* (penitently): *al-Bãri'* (اَلبَارِئُ) is one of the beautiful names of Allãh, as Allãh says: *He is Allãh, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful names . . .* (59:24). This name has been used three times in the Qur'ãn: twice in the verse under discussion and once in Chapter 59, quoted just above. Perhaps Allãh used this name here because it was most

suitable in the context of the event described. While it is nearer in meaning to *al-Khãliq* (اَلْخَالِقُ = the Creator) and *al-Mũjid* **(** المُوْجِدُ = the Inventor), it is derived from *bara'a, yabra'u, bar'an* (بَرَءَ يَبْرَءُ بَرْءً = he separated, he separates, to separate). Allãh thus separates His creation from in-existence, or He separates man from the earth. This name in this context conveys the following idea: No doubt it is very hard to repent by killing your own people. But Allãh, Who now orders you to destroy yourselves by killing, is the same God who had created you. He was pleased to create you when it was good for you; and now He has decreed that you should kill your own people, and this order too is good for you. How can He decide anything for you except that which is good, and He is your Maker and Creator. The phrase, "your Creator", points to a special relation which they have with Him, and it emphasizes the fact that the given command is not for revenge; it is based on divine love, in order to purify them.

QUR'ÃN: *that is best for you with your Creator*: This and the preceding verses (that enumerate their transgressions and sins) are addressed to the whole Jewish nation, although the sins were committed by only some groups of them and not by all. Obviously it is because they were very much united as a nation; if one did a thing, others were pleased with it. It was because of this feeling of their national unity that one group's action is attributed to the whole nation. Otherwise, not all the Israelites had killed the prophets, nor had all of them indulged in the calf-worship, or committed other sins mentioned herein. It proves that the order, "kill your people", actually meant, kill some of your people, i.e., the calf-worshippers. It may also be inferred from the words, "you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf for worship", and the words, "that is best for you with your Creator" (which apparently is the final part of the speech of Mũsã).

The words, "so He turned to you (mercifully)", prove that

their repentance was accepted. Tradition says that their repentance was accepted and sin forgiven when only a few of them had been killed. This forgiveness before the order was fully complied with shows that the command was given as a trial. The case is somewhat similar to the dream of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) and his being told to sacrifice Ismã'īl; before he could reach the ultimate stage, he was told, *O Ibrãhīm! You have indeed made the vision come true* (37:104-105). Likewise, Mũsã (a.s.) told his people "turn to your Creator (penitently) and kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator", and Allãh confirmed the order, yet He took the killing of some as equal to the execution of all, and informed them that their repentance was accepted, "so He turned to you (mercifully)".

QUR'ÃN : *a pestilence from heaven*: "*ar-Rijz"* (اَلرِجْزُ = punishment) .

QUR'ÃN : *do not act corruptly*: "*Lã ta'thaw"* (لاتَعْثَوْا) is derived from *al-'ayth* and *al-'athy* (اَلعَيْثُ ، اَلعَثْيُ); it means the biggest chaos and mischief.

QUR'ÃN: *and its cucumbers and its garlic*: "*al-Khiyãr"* (اَلخِيارُ) is cucumber; "*al-fũm"* (الفُومُ) is garlic or wheat.

QUR'ÃN : *and they returned with Allãh's wrath*: "*Bã'ũ"* (بَاءُوْا = they returned).

QUR'ÃN: *this was so because they disbelieved*: It gives the reason of preceding statement; and the next sentence, "this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits" is the reason of that reason. Their disobedience and perennial excesses caused them to reject the signs of Allãh and kill the prophets. Allãh says in another verse: *Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allãh and used to mock them* (30:10). How was the disbelief

caused by disobedience? One of the coming traditions explains it.

TRADITIONS

Abũ Ja'far (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh: *and when We appointed* (a time of) *forty nights with Mũsã*: "It was thirty nights in the (divine) knowledge and measure, then something else happened (to show that it was not the final decree) and Allãh added ten more; and in this way the appointed time of his Lord, the first and the last, was completed forty days." (al-`Ayyãshi)

The author says: This tradition supports what we have mentioned earlier that the forty was the total of the two appointed times.

`Ali (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh: *and when Mũsã said to his people*: "*O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves. . .* ": "They asked Mũsã: 'How should we repent?' He said: 'Some of you should kill the others.' Thereupon, they took the knives and everyone started killing (the others), even his brother, father and son, without caring, by God! whom he killed. (It continued) till seventy thousand of them were killed. Then Allãh revealed to Mũsã: '*Tell them to stay their hands;' and he who was killed was forgiven and he who remained, his repentance was accepted*." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

The Imãm said: "Mũsã (a.s.) went to the appointed place and time, and then came back to his people; and they had started worshipping the calf; then he told them: '*O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf* (for worship), *therefore turn to your Creator* (penitently) *and kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator.*' They asked him: 'How should we kill our people?' Mũsã said to them: 'Tomorrow everyone of you

should come to Baytu 'l-Maqdis[1] with a knife or a piece of iron or a sword; when I ascend the pulpit of the Children of Israel you should all keep your faces hidden, so that nobody should recognize the other at his side; then you should kill each other.' Thus seventy thousand of those who had worshipped the calf assembled in Baytu 'l-Maqdis. When Mũsã finished praying with them and ascended the pulpit, they started killing each other. (This continued) until Jibrīl came down and said: 'Now tell them, O Mũsã! to stop killing (each other), because Allãh has accepted their repentance.' And (by that time) ten thousand of them had been killed. And Allãh revealed: *that is best for you with your Creator; so He turned to you* (mercifully), *for surely His is Oft-returning* (with mercy), *the Merciful. "*(*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: According to this tradition, the sentence, "that is best for you with your Creator", was said by Mũsã (a.s.) and was also used in the divine speech. In this way, Allãh con-firmed the word of Mũsã (a.s.), and made it clear that what had actually happened — the execution of ten thousand calf-worshippers — was all that was intended from the very beginning; and that the order of Mũsã was carried out in full, and not partially. According to what appears from the wording of Mũsã (a.s.), it was best for them if all of them were killed; but only some of them got killed, not all. By repeating the same words, Allãh made it clear that what Mũsã (a.s.) had meant from the words, "the best for you", was not the execution of all.

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1. Mũsã was called to the Mount Sinã' and given Torah while the Israelites were still in the wilderness. And it was at that time that the events in question took place. They had not entered Palestine at that time and Baytu 'l-Maqdis was not built yet. Therefore, the word "Baytu 'l-Maqdis" used in this tradition must mean the tent which Mũsã erected for divine worship.

The same *at-Tafsīr* says about the words of Allãh: *and We made the clouds to give shade over you*: "When Mũsã crossed the sea with the Israelites, they landed at a desert. They said: 'O Mũsã ! you have really destroyed and killed us, by bringing us from an inhabited land to a desert where there is , either any shadow or tree nor even water.' At daytime a cloud appeared over them to protect them from the sun; and at night, manna came down to them, settling on leaves, trees and stones, and they ate it; and at dinner time roasted birds fell on their dinner-spread, and when they finished eating and drinking, the birds (became alive and) flew away. And Mũsã had a stone which he used to place in the midst of the station (of the caravan) , striking it with his walking-stick and, lo! twelve springs quashed from it, as Allãh described, every spring going to the station of a particular tribe — and they were twelve tribes." (*ibid.*)

Abu '1-Ḥasan al-Hãdī (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh: *and they did not do Us any harm but they did harm their own selves*: "Surely Allãh is too powerful and too unassailable to be harmed or to ascribe any harm to Himself. But He has joined us to Himself and took any injustice done to us as an injustice done to Him, and treated our love as His love; then He revealed it in a (verse of the) Qur'ãn to His Prophet, and said: *and they did not do Us any harm, but they did harm their own selves.* The narrator says: "I said, 'This is the revelation?' He said, 'Yes.' " (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: Nearly the same thing has been narrated from al-Bãqir (a.s.).

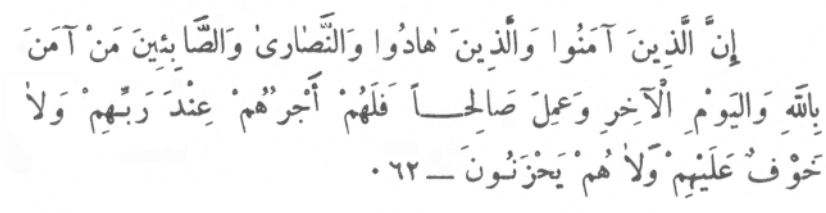
. . too unassailable to be harmed": It is the explanation of the Qur'ãnic expression, "they did not do Us any harm"; the next sentence, "or to ascribe any harm to Himself", rejects also the opposite proposition. Allãh can neither be harmed nor does He do any injustice Himself. Why did the narrator ask the question, "This is the revelation?" Obviously, for a negative sentence to be plausible there should be a real or hypothetic possibility of

a positive connection between the subject and its predicate. We do not say, "This wall does not see". Why? Because wall has no possible connection with seeing. Now, Allãh can have no possible connection at all with injustice or oppression. Therefore, the sentence, "they did not do Us any harm", would seem a superfluous and implausible assertion, because there was no need for saying that Allãh could not be harmed nor did He harm anyone — unless it was meant to convey some fine point to the listeners. And that point is this: Great persons often speak on behalf of their servants and dependants; likewise, Allãh in this verse is speaking on behalf of Muhammad and his progeny (peace be on them all), joining them to Himself in this declaration.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) recited the verse: *this was so because they disbelieved in the signs of Allãh and killed the prophets unjustly; this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits,* and then said: "By God, they did not hit them with their hands, nor did they kill them with their swords; but they heard their talks and announced it (to their enemies); so the prophets were caught on that charge and killed; this was the killing, the exceeding the limit and the disobedience." (al-'Ayyãshi)

The author says: A similar tradition from the same Imãm is found in *al-Kãfī.* Apparently, the Imãm inferred it from the words, "this was so because they disobeyed . . ." Needless to say that murder, and especially of the prophets, and rejection of the signs of Allãh cannot be termed as mere disobedience. It should be the other way round. But if we take the disobedience to mean disclosing the secrets then it would be perfectly right to say that they killed the prophets, because they (disobeyed them and) did not keep their secrets and thus delivered them into the hands of their enemies who killed them.

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إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ٦٢

Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allãh and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve (62).

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COMMENTARY

The verse first mentions the believers, and then says, "who-ever believes in Allãh . . ." The context shows that the latter phrase refers to the real belief, the true *[man,* and that the word, "those who believe", (mentioned at first) refers to those who call themselves believers. The verse says that Allãh gives no importance to names, like the believers, the Jews, the Christians or the Sabaeans. One cannot get a reward from Allãh, nor can he be saved from punishment, merely by giving oneself good titles, as they, for example, claim that: *no one will*

enter the Garden except he who was a Jew or a Christian (2:111). The only criterion, the only standard, of honour and happiness is the real belief in Allãh and the Day of Resurrection, accompanied by good deeds. It should be noted that Allãh did not say, 'who-ever of them believes'; otherwise it would have accorded some recognition to these titles, and would have implied that there was, after all, some benefit in acquiring these names.

This theme has been repeatedly expounded in the Qur'ãn. The honour and felicity depend entirely on true and sincere servitude; no name, no adjective, can do any good unless it is backed by correct belief and good deeds. This rule is applicable to all human beings, right from the prophets to the lowest rank. Look how Allãh praises His prophets with all beautiful and excellent attributes, and then says: *and if they had set up others* (with Him) *certainly what they did would have become ineffectual for them* (6:88). Also, He describes the high status and great prestige of the Holy Prophet and his companions, and then ends it with these words: *Allãh has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward* (48:29). Ponder on the significance of the phrase "among them".

Then we find that Allãh had given a man some of His signs but he went astray: *and if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby, but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire . . .* (7:176).

There are many verses clearly showing that the honour and respect with Allãh depends on reality, not on appearance.

TRADITIONS

Salmãn al-Fãrisi said: "I asked the Prophet (s. a. w. a.) about the people of that religion which I followed (prior to Islam), and I described their (way of) prayer and worship. Then it was revealed: *Surely those who believe, and those who are*

Jews. . . " (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

The author says: Various other traditions with different chains of narrators, say that this verse was revealed about the people of Salmãn.

Ibn Faḍḍãl said: "I asked ar-Riḍã (a.s.) why "*an-Naṣãrã"* (النَّصَارى = the Christians) were given that name. He said: 'Because they were from a village called an-Nãṣirah (النّاصِرَةُ = Nazarath) in Syria.[1] Maryam and 'Isã settled there after they returned from Egypt.'" (*Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: We shall comment on this tradition when writing on the stories of 'Isã (a.s.) in Chapter 3 (The House of `Imrãn), God willing.

The same tradition says that "*al- Yahũd"* (اليَهُودُ = the Jews) got this name because they are descended from Yahũda, son of Ya`qũb. (*ibid.*)

The Imãm said: "The Sabaeans are a people, neither Zoroastrian nor Jews, neither Christians nor Muslims; they worship the stars and planets. (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

The author says: It is idol-worship of a special type; they worshipped only the idols of the stars, while others worshipped whatever idol caught their fancy.

A HISTORICAL DISCUSSION

Abu Rayḥãn al-Bīrũnī writes in his book *al- Ãthãru 'l-bãqiyah*:

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1. In those days, all the land now divided into Syria, Jordan, Lebnon and Palestine, was called Syria or Greater Syria.

"The earliest known among them (i.e., the claimants of prophethood was Yudhasaf.[1] He appeared in India at the end of the first year of the reign of Tahmũrth; and he brought the Persian script. He called to the Sabaean religion, and a great many people followed him. The Bishdadian kings and some of the Kayanis who resided in Balkh held the sun, the moon, the stars and the planets together with other elements in high esteem and believed that these luminaries were very sacred. It continued until Zoroaster appeared at the end of the thirtieth year of Peshtasav's reign. The ramnants of those Sabaeans are now in Ḥarrãn, from which they have got their new name, Ḥarrãniyyah. Also it is said that this nomenclature refers to Hãrãn, son of Tãrukh (Terah) and brother of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), as he allegedly was one of their religious leaders and its staunchest follower.

"Ibn Sancala, the Christian, has written a book against Sabaeans. In that book he has attributed many ridiculous things to this Hãrãn. For example, he describes the Sabaeans' belief about Ibrãhīm (a.s.) in these words: 'Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was removed from their community because a white spot had appeared on his foreskin, and the Sabaeans believed that a person having a white spot was unclean, and avoided mixing with such person. To remove that defect, Ibrãhīm cut his foreskin, i.e. circumcised himself. Then he entered one of the temples; and lo! an idol called out to him: "O Ibrãhīm! you went away from us with one deflect and came back with two; get out and do not ever come back to us." Ibrãhīm was enraged;

1- It is now almost certain that Yudhasaf is a corruption of Budhastav, the title of Gautama Buddha, the founder of Bhuddhism.

he smashed the idols; and went out. After some time, he felt remorse for what he had done, and decided to sacrifice his son on the altar of Jupiter, as it was their custom to kill their children to please the deities. When Jupiter was convinced of the sincerity of his repentance, it sent a lamb to him to slaughter in place of his son.'

" 'Abdu 'l-Masīḥ ibn Isḥãq al-Kindi wrote a book in reply of a book by `Abdullah ibn Ismail al-Hãshimi. In that book `Abdu 'l-Masīḥ writes about the Sabaeans:

" 'It is generally believed that they indulge in human sacrifice, although nowadays they cannot do so openly. But so far as our own information goes, they are monotheists who believe that God is free from every defect and evil, they describe God in negative, not positive, terms; for example, they say: Allãh cannot be defined or seen, He is not unjust or oppressive. According to them, the beautiful divine names may be used for God, but only in an allegorical sense, because no divine attribute can truly describe the reality.

They believe that the management of all affairs is done and controlled by the sky and the heavenly bodies; the sky and those bodies are living things having the characteristics of speech, hearing and sight. They revere the light and the luminaries. One of their legacies is the dome above the niche in the Umayyad mosque of Damascus; it was their prayer house, and at that time even the Greeks and the Romans followed the same religion. Then it came under Jewish control and they turned it into a synagogue. Later, the Christians took it over and converted it into a church. Then came the Muslims, and they changed it into a mosque. The Sabaeans had their numerous places of worships, and their idols were named after various names of the sun, and shaped with fixed patterns, as has been described by Abu Ma'shar al-Balkhi in his book, *The Houses of Worship*. For example, there was the temple of Ba'labak which housed the idol of the sun; of Qirãn, which was related to the moon and

built in the moon's shape, like a shawl worn over head and shoulders. And there is a village nearby, Salamsīn by name; it is a corruption of its original name, صَنَمْ سِيْن (Sanam Sīn = the idol of the moon). Likewise, another village is called Tara`ũz, that is, the gate of venus. They do also claim that the Ka'bah and its idols belonged to them, and that the Meccan idol-worshippers were of the Sabaean religion. According to them the idols, Lãt and `Uzza, represented Saturn and Venus. They have many prophets in their hierarchy, most of them being the Greek philosophers, for example, Hermes of Egypt, Agadhimun, Walles, Pythagoras and Babaswar (maternal grandfather of Plato) and many others like them. Some of them do not eat fish — lest it be spume; nor poultry, because it is always hot. Also, they do not use garlic, because it creates headache and burns the blood and semen (which is the source of continuity of the human race); and they avoid beans, because it dulls the intelligence and also because it had first sprouted in a human skull. They observe three compulsory prayers: at sunrise (eight *rak`at*); at noon (five *rak`at*); and at the third hour of the night.

" 'They prostrate three times in each *rak'ah*. Also, they observe two optional prayers — at the second and ninth hours of the day.

" 'They pray with *ṭahãrah* and *wuḍũ'*; they take bath after *janãbah;* but they do not circumcise their children because they have not been told to do so. Most of their laws concerning marital and penal codes are like the *sharī'ah* A of Islam; while the rules about touching a dead body are similar to Torah's. They offer sacrifices to the stars, their idols and the temples; the sacrificial animals are killed by the priests and witch-doctors, who read in it the future of the man who offers the sacrifice and answer to his questions.

" 'Hermes is sometimes called Idrīs, who is mentioned in Torah as Akhnũkh. Some of them say that Yũdhasaf was Hermes.

" 'Some others have said that the present-day Ḥarrãniyyah

are not the real Sabaeans; rather these are mentioned in the books as heathens and idolaters. The Sabaeans were those Israelites who stayed behind at Babylon when their majority returned to Jerusalem in the reigns of Cyrus and Artaxerxes. They were favourably disposed to Zoroastrian beliefs, as well as to the religion of Nebuchadnezzar. What resulted from this exercise was a mixture of Judaism and Zoroastrianism — like the Samaritans of Syria. Most of them are found in Wasit and the rural areas of Iraq around Ja'far and Jamidah; they trace their genealogy to Enosh, son of Seth. They criticize and oppose the Harraniyyah and their religion. With exception of a few things, there is no similarity between the two religions: The Sabaeans face towards the North Pole in their prayers, while the Harraniyyah face towards the South Pole.

" 'Some people of the book have said that Methuselah had a son (other than Lamech), named Sabi, whom the Sabaeans have descended from. The people, before the *shari`ah* spread and before Yudhasaf appeared on the scene, followed Samanian beliefs; they lived in the eastern part of the world and worshipped idols. Their remnants are found in India, China and Taghazghaz, and the people of Khurasãn call them Shamnãn. Their relics, places of worship and idols are seen in eastern Khurasãn adjoining India. They believe in eternity of the universe and transmigration of soul. According to them, the sky is falling down in an endless vacuum, and that is why it is moving round and round.'

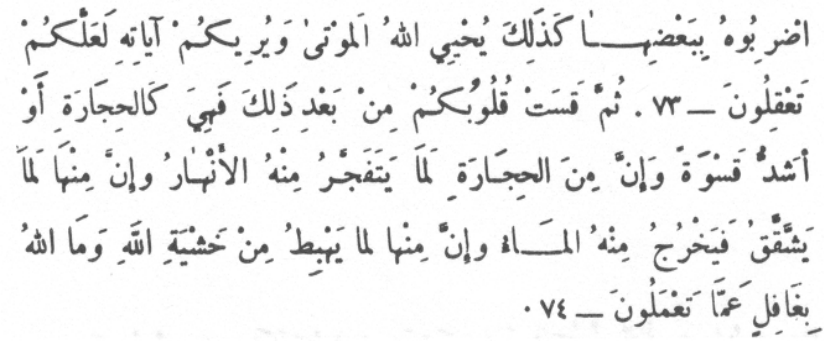
"According to some writers, a group of them rejects the theory of eternity of the universe and says that it came into being one million year ago."

The author says: All the above description has been taken from the book of al-Bīrũnī. The opinion, attributed to some writers, that Sabaeans' religion was a mixture of Judaism and Zoroastrianism flavoured with some elements of Ḥarrãniyyah's beliefs, seems better suited in this context; after

all, the verse obviously enumerates the groups which followed a divinely-inspired religion.

* * * * *

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا
آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ــ ٦٣ . ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ
مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ ــ ٦٤ . وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ
فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ــ ٦٥ . فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالاً لِمَا بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ــ ٦٦ . وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ
إِنَّ اللهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُواً قَالَ أَعُوذُ
بِاللهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ــ ٦٧ . قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ
لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لاَ فَارِضٌ وَلاَ بِكْرٌ عَوَانٌ
بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ــ ٦٨ . قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ
لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ
النَّاظِرِينَ ــ ٦٩ . قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ
عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِنْشَاءَ اللهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ــ ٧٠ . قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لاَ
ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الأَرْضَ وَلاَ تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لاَ شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا الآنَ
جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ــ ٧١ . وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْساً
فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ــ ٧٢ . فَقُلْنَا


اضربوهُ ببعضِهـــا كذلكَ يُحيِي اللهُ الموتىٰ ويُريكُمْ آياتِهِ لعلَّكُمْ
تعقلونَ ــ ٧٣ . ثُمَّ قَستْ قلوبُكُمْ مِنْ بعدِ ذلكَ فهيَ كالحجارةِ أوْ
أشدُّ قسوةً وإنَّ مِنَ الحجارةِ لَمَا يتفجَّرُ مِنهُ الأنهارُ وإنَّ مِنها لَمَا
يشَّقَّقُ فيخرُجُ مِنهُ المـــاءُ وإنَّ مِنها لما يهبِطُ مِنْ خشيةِ اللهِ وما اللهُ
بغافلٍ عمَّا تعملونَ ــ ٧٤ .

And when We took a promise from you and lifted the mountain over you”: *“Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and bear in mind what is in it, so that you may guard* (against evil)” (63). *Then you turned back after that; so were it not for the grace of Allãh and His mercy on you, you would certainly have been among the losers* (64) . *And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, so We said to them*: *“Be apes, despised and hated”* (65). *So We made them an example to those who witnessed it and those who came after it, and an admonition to those who guard* (against evil) (66). *And when Mũsã said to his people*: “*Surely Allãh commands you that you should sacrifice a cow”; they said*: *“Do you ridicule us?” He said*: *“I seek the protection of Allãh from being one of the ignorants”* (67). *They said*: *“Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is”. Mũsã said*: *“He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age between that* (and this); *do therefore what you are commanded”* (68) . *They said*: “*Call on your Lord for*

our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is." Mũsã said: *"He says, Surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow, giving delight to the beholders"* (69). *They said*: *"Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and if Allãh please we shall surely be guided aright"* (70). *Mũsã said*: *"He says, Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land, nor does she irrigate the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her." They said: "Now you have brought the truth;" so they sacrificed her, though they had not the mind to do* (it) (71). *And when you killed a man, then you disagreed with respect to that, and Allãh was to bring forth that which you were going to hide* (72). *So, We said*: "*Strike the* (dead body) *with part of the* (sacrificed cow)*", thus Allãh brings the dead to life, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand* (73). *Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather worse in hardness; and surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth, and surely there are some of them which split asunder so water issues out of them, and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allãh, and Allãh is not at all heedless of what you do* (74).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And lifted the mountain over you*: "*aṭ-Ṭũr"* (الطُّوْرُ) is mountain; that is why has been substituted by *"al-jabal"* (اَلجَبَلُ = mountain) in verse: *And when We wrested away the*

mountain over them as if it were a covering overhead (7:171). "*an-Natq"* (اَلنَّتْقُ = to wrest away; to pull out). The verse at first mentions taking of a promise; and ends with the command to take hold of what they were given and to bear in mind what was in it; in between it refers to the lifting of the mountain over them, without saying why it was lifted. But the context clearly shows that it was done to frighten them without putting them under compulsion, in order that they might obey what they were told — if Allãh had wished to compel them, there was no need to take any promise before.

Objection: If we were to take the sentence, "and lifted the mountain over you", in its literal meaning, it would be a miraculous sign that would have forced the Israelites to obey the given command under duress and coercion; but Allãh says: *There is no compulsion in the religion* (2:256)*; . . . will you then force men till they become believers?* (10:99).

Reply: The objection is baseless. The sentence shows only that they were threatened and frightened. Just lifting the mountain over their head was not enough to coerce and force them to believe and obey. Otherwise, most of the miracles shown by Mũsã (a.s.) could be termed as "compulsion"! The said questioner has tried to explain away this sentence in this way: "The Israelites were at the foot of the mountain; it was shaken violently and during that convulsion its summit loomed over them, until they thought that it was going to fall over them. It is this natural phenomenon that has been described as pulling out the mountain and lifting it over them."

Such misinterpretations emanate from rejection of the principle of "miracle" altogether. We have already written in detail on this subject. If we were to explain away the verses of miracle in this way, no speech would remain safe from distortion; and no sentence could be taken to mean what it says; as a result, all the norms of eloquence and literature would lose their value.

QUR'ÃN: *so that you may guard* (against evil): *"La'alla"* (لَعَلَّ) is a particle meaning "perhaps", "may be"; it denotes hope — the speaker may be hoping for something, or the person spoken who gives rise to the hope, or the situation justifies the hope although the speaker or the listener does not feel optimistic himself. In any case, it implies some uncertainty about the final outcome. When this particle is used in a divine speech, it indicates hopefulness either with reference to the listener or in context of the situation; but it can never refer to the speaker, that is, Allãh, because He can never be uncertain of any result. It has clearly been explained by ar-Rãghib in his *al-Mufradãt*. There-fore, whenever this word is used in the Qur'ãn, it is translated as "so that . . .", "in order that . . ."

QUR'ÃN: *Be apes despised*: *"Khãsi'īn"* (خَاسِئِيْنَ = despised, humiliated).

QUR'ÃN: *So We made them an example*: *"an-Nakã"*(اَلنَّكَالُ) means exemplary punishment meted out to one in order that others may desist from such transgression.

QUR'ÃN: *And when Mũsã said to his people*: *"Surely Allãh commands you that you should sacrifice a cow . . . "*: This is the story of the cow of the Israelites, and it is these verses which have given this chapter its name, the Cow.

The Qur'ãn has used a dramatic style for this story. It opens with the middle of the story (verses 67 to 71), followed by its beginning (verse 72) and ending with its conclusion (verse 73). Another thing to note is the changes of the pronouns — up to verse 66, the Israelites were directly addressed in second person; but verses 67 to 71 are addressed to the Prophet mentioning the Israelites in third person; then it reverts again to the original second person (verses 72 -73).

However, let us follow the narrative in the light of the

Qur'ãn. Allãh addresses the Prophet referring to the Israelites in third person: "And when Mũsã said to his people: 'Surely Allãh commands you that you should sacrifice a cow'; they said . . . " Obviously the order given to sacrifice a cow with subsequent description of its various characteristics and qualities, contained in these five verses (67-71), is like a parenthetic statement which clarifies the meaning of the next two verses (72-73), addressed to the Israelites: "And when you killed a man, then you disagreed with respect to that, and Allãh was to bring forth that which you were going to hide. So We said: 'Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow),' thus Allãh brings the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you may understand."

The five verses (67-71) also show how ill-mannered the Israelites were; how offensive their behaviour was towards their prophet. See how off-handedly they accused their prophet of speaking idle words, how arrogantly they made demand after demand of the Lord to make His command clear and plain, as though there was any ambiguity in the divine command or the prophetic utterance. Add to it their insulting mode of referring to God: Mũsã had told them, " Surely Allãh commands you . . ."; but they repeatedly used the words, "Call on your Lord for our sake . . .", as though He was not their Lord. Then again they went on repeating the demand to be told "what she is", "what her colour is"; and when all was explained to them, they arrogantly claimed, "surely to us the cows are all alike". It should be noted that they did not say that that particular cow seemed indistinct to them; they instead claimed that all the cows were alike in their eyes — implying that the cows *per se* were the same, and if a certain individual cow had some special quality, this much description was not enough for identification purpose; they did not realize that it was not the cow, but the divine will, which produced the desired result. They were given a simple command to sacrifice "a cow", that is, any cow; they should have acted on that general unrestricted command, but they went on asking for more and more particulars; this was in

itself a height of arrogance.

Then, look at their rudeness in asking their prophet, "Do you ridicule us?" It cast an aspersion on the prophet that he was, God forbid, an ignorant person who talked aimlessly. That is why he vehemently defended himself saying, "I seek the protection of Allãh from being one of the ignorants". Even then, they had the temerity to say at the end of the story, "Now you have brought the truth", implying that the previous explanations were not "the truth", that the preceding divine speech and prophetic messages were, God forbid, untruths!

This story is not mentioned in the current Torah. There-fore, it was better not to address it to the Israelites. This may be another reason of changing the mode of address — the story was initially addressed to the Prophet, and after establishing the base, the pronouns were again changed to the original second person directly addressing the Israelites. Nevertheless, the Torah contains an order that implies that some such events must have taken place:

"If one be found slain in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn the yoke: And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley: And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord the God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried: And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: And they shall answer and say: Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O

Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them." (Deut., 21:1-8)

It must now be clear that the story as given here is not intended as a simple narrative. The main theme is taken up in verse 72 (*And when you killed a man . . .*), but before that, a part of the story is narrated to the Prophet in some detail in verses 67-71 for obvious reasons.

Let us now recapitulate what has been explained above, The verses 67-71 (*And when Mũsã said to his people*: "*Surely Allãh commands you . . .*), addressed to the Prophet, is a prologue to the forthcoming episode (verses 72-73), although the listeners do not know it yet. As the audience does not know why the Israelites were told to sacrifice a cow, its curiosity is aroused and the suspense continues until the relation between the sacrifice of the cow and detection of the murderer is revealed. It was this apparent irrelevance of the former to the latter that prompted the Israelities to accuse Mũsã (a.s.) of ridiculing them, of joking with them. This accusation showed that they were completely devoid of discipline, were very arrogant and disobedient. They were not inclined to obey any command without knowing its why and wherefore. They were not ready to believe in that which they could not see — belief in the unseen was against their grain. They were the people who had said to Mũsã (a.s.):

"O Mũsã! we will not believe in you until we see Allãh manifestly" (2:55).

Their trouble was that they wanted total independence in every affair, no matter whether it was within their domain or not. They erroneously thought that the unseen could be brought down to the level of the seen. Consequently, they wanted to adopt a deity which they could see by their naked eyes: *They said*: "*O Mũsã! make for us a god as they have* (their) *gods." He said*: "*Surely you are a people acting ignorantly"* (7:138).

No wonder that they did not understand the sublime status of their prophet Mũsã (a.s.) and thought that he, like themselves, followed his own desires and joked with, and ridiculed, the people. They accused him of joking and acting like ignorant ones. And Mũsã (a.s.) had to refute this charge: "I seek the protection of Allãh from being one of the ignorants". Why did Mũsã (a.s.) seek the protection of Allãh? Why did not he say straight away that he was not an ignorant person? It was because Mũsã (a.s.) preferred to rely on the divine protection which cannot fail, rather than on his own virtues.

The Israelites believed that one should not accept anything without proof. This principle is correct, of course. But they were mistaken in believing that man must know the reason of every order in full detail; that a command of general nature was not enough. That is why they went on asking for more and more detail about the cow they were told to slaughter. They thought that the cow, by its nature, could not bring a dead body to life; if somewhere there was a particular cow possessing this unheard of quality, it should be pin-pointed with accurate and detailed description. It was this trend of thought which prompted them to say: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is". They unnecessarily put themselves into a corner; and Allãh, on this uncalled for demand, gave them a few particulars; "Mũsã said: 'He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age (i.e. not passed the calf-bearing age) nor too young (i.e. not virgin, nor one that has not given birth to a calf yet) of middle age between that (and this)." "*al-'Awãn* " (الْعَوَانُ) means a female in middle of child-bearing age. Then their Lord took mercy on them and admonished them not to indulge in too much questioning, and to be content with that which they were told: "do therefore what you are commanded". But they did not listen to the divine advice and said: " 'Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is.' Mũsã said: 'He says, Surely she is a yellow cow, her colour is intensely

yellow, giving delight to the beholders.' " This much explanation should have been enough for them, as by then the cow's age and colour had been described to them. But no, it was not enough for the Israelites who unhesitatingly repeated their first question, shamelessly accusing Mũsã — and God too — of not giving them clear description as yet: "They said: 'Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and if Allãh please we shall surely be guided aright.' "So, Allãh further particularized her nature and characteristics, saying: "Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough land, nor does she irrigate the tilth"; and then He put a further restriction about her colour, "sound, without a blemish in her." Now that they were given all the details and could not think of any more questions, they said: "Now you have brought the truth." The sentence shows that they had to accept the command because they could not think of any more excuses to avoid it — but even then they put the blame of their previous disobedience on Mũsã — and by implication on Allãh: that they had not complied with the order before because Mũsã (a.s.) and Allãh had not explained it correctly. All this is implied in the last clause, "so they sacrificed her, though they had not the mind to do (it)."

QUR'ÃN: *And when you killed a man. . . .*: It is the beginning of the main story. "*at-Taḍaru'* " (التَّدَارُءُ = translated here as disagreed") is derived form *ad-dar'* (اَلدَّرْءُ = repulse) and literally means to push one another. A man was killed and every group was disowning its responsibility, putting the blame on others. But Allãh was to disclose what they wanted to hide.

QUR'ÃN: *So We said*: "*Strike the* (dead body) *with part of the* (sacrificed cow)": The Arabic text contains two pronouns — the first (masculine) refers to the dead body and the second (feminine) to the cow. The translation omits the pronouns replacing them with the nouns they stand for.

Someone has denied the actuality of this story, suggesting that the verses simply describe the promulgation of a law (as given in the Deut., 21:1-8, quoted above). According to him, raising someone from the dead (mentioned in these verses) merely means finding out the identity of the killer — as Allãh says: *And there is life for you in* (the law of) *retaliation* (2:179). In short, he claims that there was no miracle involved, nor was there any dead body brought back to life. But the context of the story leaves no room for such misinterpretation — especially if we look at the words, "So We said: 'Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow)', thus Allãh brings the dead to life."

QUR'ÃN: *Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather worse in hardness*: "*al-Qaswah*" (القَسْوَةُ = sternness) in heart is like "hardness" in rock. "Aw" (اَوْ = or) is used here in the meaning of *bal* (بَلْ = rather). The next sentences show why their hearts were worse than rocks in hardness: "and surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth". The sentence offers a contrast between rocks and water. Rocks are used as examples of hardness, while water is proverbialy used to denote softness. Even then, there are some rocks — with all their hardness — from which streams of water — with all its softness — burst forth; "and surely there are some of them which split asunder so water issues out of them". The hard rocks send forth the soft waters; but the Israelites' hearts were so hard as never to allow any truth to issue out of them.

QUR'ÃN: *and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allãh*: We see how the rocks and stones fall down — big rocks on the summits of mountains crack up, and then an ordinary earthquake is enough to dislodge them causing an avalanche. Also, the cracks fill up with ice and snow during winter, then the warmth of spring melts the ice sending the streams down the valleys. This phenomenon is related to its

natural causes, yet Allãh says that the rocks fall down from fear of Allãh. Why? Because all the natural causes ultimately return to the First Cause, that is, Allãh. Rocks, when they fall down because of the natural causes, are in fact obeying the divine decree which put them under the influence of those secondary causes. It may, therefore, be said that they understand the command of their Lord — an under-standing that is created nature. They obey the decree of Allãh inasmuch as they are thus moulded by Him. Allãh says: *and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification* (17:44)*; all are obedient to Him* (2:116). Fear too is based on perception, as are the glorifying and the obeying. It may therefore be said that the rocks fall down for fear of Allãh. This sentence is of the same genre as the following ones: *And the thunder declares His glory with His praise, and the angels too for awe of Him* (13:13); *And whoever is in the heavens and the earth makes obe'Isãnce to Allãh only, willingly and unwillingly, and their shadows too at morn and eve* (13:15). Here the sound of thunder has been counted as the declaration of divine glory and the shadow is said to prostrate for Allãh. There are many verses of the same style and all are based on the same analysis as mentioned above.

However, the sentence, "and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allãh", further shows how the Jews' hearts were worse than rocks in hardness: The rocks are afraid of Allãh and do fall down for His fear, but there is no fear of Allãh in the Jews' hearts, they are not afraid of divine wrath.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) was asked about the words of Allãh: *Take hold of what We have given you with firmness,* whether it meant the strength of the bodies or the firm resolution of the heart. He (a.s.) said: "Both together" (*al-Mahasin*).

The author says: This tradition has also been narrated by al-‘Ayyãshi in his *at-Tafsīr.*

al-Ḥalabī narrates in explanation of the words of Allãh; *and bear in mind what is in it,* that he said: “Bear in mind what is in it and also bear in mind the chastisement that is laid down for its negligence.” (al-‘Ayyãshi)

The author says: It has been inferred from the position of this clause — it follows the threat implied in lifting the mountain over them.

Abũ Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: “If the children of Israel had not said: *and if Allãh please we shall surely be guided aright,* they would have never been given (respite). And had they (in the beginning) taken any cow and slaughtered her, it would have been enough for them; but they went on pressing (for more and more particulars), so Allãh made it harder (and harder) for them.” (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

Ibn Faḍḍãl said: “I heard Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) saying: ‘Surely Allãh ordered the children of Israel to slaughter a cow — and what they needed was its tail. (But they asked for more and more details) so Allãh made it harder (and harder) for them.’ “(*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

al-Bazanṭi said: “I heard ar-Riḍã (a.s.) saying: ‘A man from the children of Israel killed one of his relatives, then he took the body and put it in the path (leading) to the best of the Israelities' clans. Thereafter he came demanding (the revenge of) his blood. Mũsã (a.s.) was informed that such and such a clan had killed such and such a man, and he was asked to tell them who the killer was. Mũsã said: “Bring me a cow.” They said: “*Do you ridicule us?”* He said: “*I seek the protection of Allãh from being one of the ignorants*.” And had they taken any cow, it would have been enough for them, but they

pressed (for more particulars); therefore Allãh made it harder for them. *They said*: "*Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is". Mũsã said*: "*He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age between that* (and this)". Even then, if they had taken any cow (fitting this description) it would have been enough. But they pressed for more, so Allãh made it harder for them. *They said*: "*Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is*" *Mũsã said*: "*He says, Surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow, giving delight to the beholders*". Even then if they had taken any such cow, it would have been enough for them. But they persisted (in asking for more details) and Allãh made it even harder for them. *They said*: "*Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and if Allãh please we shall surely be guided aright". He said*: "*He says, Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land, nor does she irrigate the filth, sound, without a blemish in her." They said*: "*Now you have brought the truth*". They began their search and found such a cow with an Israelite youth. He said: "I shall not sell it but for a hide full of gold." Thereupon they came to Mũsã and informed him. He told them to buy it. So they bought and brought it. And *Mũsã* ordered it to be slaughtered. Then he ordered them to strike the dead body with its tail. As soon as they did so, the murdered man rose from the dead, and said: "O messenger of Allãh! Surely it is my cousin who had killed me, and not the man against whom he has lodged his claim." In this way, they knew who the killer was. Thereafter, a companion of the messenger of Allãh, *Mũsã,* said to him: "There is a story behind this cow". He asked: "And what is it?" He said: "(That) Israelite youth was very devoted to his father. And he purchased some goods, and came to his father (who was asleep) and keys were under his head. And he did not like to awaken his father, and cancelled the deal.

When his father woke up, he told him about it. The father said to him: 'Well done! Take this cow; it is a recompense for what you have lost.' "The messenger of Allãh, Mũsã, said to him: "Look at the faithfulness and good deed, where does it take its people to?" ' "

The author says: The traditions perfectly fit the description which we inferred from the verses.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ABOUT MAKING THE DEAD BODIES ALIVE AND ABOUT METAMORPHOSIS

This chapter describes several miraculous signs in the stories of the Israelites and the others — for example, parting the sea and drowning the followers of Pharaoh (*And when We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the followers of Pharaoh . . .*); giving death to the Israelites by thunder-bolt and then raising them again from dead (*And when you said*: "*O Mũsã! we will not believe in you . . .*"); making the clouds to give shade over them and sending for them manna and quails (*And We made the clouds to give shade over you . . .); making the streams to gush out from the rock (And when Mũsã prayed for drink . . .); lifting the mountain over them (. . . and lifted the mountains over you . . .*); transforming some of them into apes (*. . . so We said to them*: "*Be apes. . .* ") and bringing a dead body back to life by hitting it with a part of a slaughtered cow (*So We said*: "*Strike the* [dead body] *with part of the* [sacrificed *cow . . .*]"). Among the non-Israelites, there are many stories of dead men and/ or animals brought back to life — for example, a large group that had fled their homes for fear of death (*Did you not see those who went forth from their homes . . .*); a chosen servant of Allãh who passed by a ruined town (*Or like*

him who passed by a town and it had fallen down upon its roofs . . .) and the birds which were raised from dead through the agency of Ibrãhīm (*And when Ibrãhīm said*: "*My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead . . .*). Altogether, there are twelve miracles, most of them occurring among the Israelites. The Qur'ãn has narrated them; and we have already shown that miracles do occur, and super-natural events do take place. We have also shown that such happenings are not in conflict with the system of the cause and effect. It was clearly proved that it is not justified to interpret the verses of miracle in such a way as to deny their apparent meanings. Of course, the miracle is not related to an inherently impossible proposition, like dividing three in two equal wholes, or birth of a child that would be his own father. But if something is possible in itself and the Qur'ãn says that it did happen, one should not try to explain it away as an allegory or a metaphor.

However, some miracles, like raising someone from dead and transformation, that is, metamorphosis, require a somewhat detailed study because they are sometimes criticized from philosophical point of view.

Objection: It is an accepted fact that if an existent thing, a being, having a potentiality of perfection, converts it into actuality, then it is impossible for it to retrace its steps and turn that actuality back into the same potentiality. Likewise, a more perfect being does not change, in its forward march, to a less perfect one.

When a man dies, his soul is released from the fetters of matter; he becomes an immaterial "idea" or a spiritual being. Both these stages are above the matter; the existence in these planes is much more stronger than that in the material sphere.

Therefore, it is impossible for a soul — once death has separated it from the body — to re-establish its connection with that material body. Otherwise, it would mean that a thing,

having converted its potentiality into actuality, again retrogressed to the same potentiality — and as we have explained above it is not possible.

Also, man is on a higher level of existence than that of the animals. Therefore, it would be impossible for a man to change, by metamorphosis, into an animal.

Reply: Accepted that once a potentiality is turned into reality it cannot be regressed to the self-same potentiality. But raising someone from dead in this world, as well as metamorphosis, is outside the domain of this law.

Perception and reason show that a vegetable substance, when consumed by an animal, proceeds to its ultimate perfection, that is, animality, and takes the animal form. This form in itself is an incorporeal and immaterial thing. Having reached this stage, the vegetable has turned its potentiality into actuality. Now it cannot turn back to vegetable kingdom.

The animality is the fountain-head of the animal's conscious actions and perceptions. When it performs a deed an impression is outlined on its psyche. When it indulges in the same activity over and over again, that impression gets deeper and deeper until it becomes an ineradicable trait. This new trait may become the building block of an animal species with pronounced characteristics; for example, the fox with its cunning, the pig with its lascivious lust, the panther with its predatory stalking. If, on the other hand, it fails to acquire any characteristics, the psyche remains at its original level of simple animality. It is like the case of a vegetable which fails to reach the threshold of animality and remains at the original level of vegetable-kingdom.

Likewise, an animal, becoming a part of a human being, progresses forward on the path of humanity. A human being has the capacity of perceiving his self in absolute incorporeal terms. When it thus changes its potentiality to this actuality, it is impossible for it to go back to the self-same potentiality. The humanity too, by repeatedly doing a certain type of deed,

acquires especial traits and characteristics — and it creates various kinds of human beings with their particular properties in the same way as happens in animal kingdom.

Now, let us suppose that a dead man was returned to life in this world, and his soul re-established its relation to the matter, that is, the body. Obviously, it would not affect the incorporeality of the soul — it was incorporeal in the first life, remained so after that connection was severed, and would remain in this second life too. Body is the tool by which the soul carries on its material and intellectual activities, just as an artisan makes articles with the help of his tools and equipments. When the man died, the soul lost that tool; when he was revived the soul regained the possession and control of that tool. Now, it may use that tool to acquire new talents, to attain to a higher level of perfection than before. It cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be said to be a retrogression or a retreat from perfection to imperfection, nor is it a change from reality to potentiality.

Objection: The scenario given above entails perpetual compulsion, which is obviously a false and void proposition. An incorporeal and immaterial soul, separated by death from the body, does not have any more potentials of acquiring further perfection through re-establishment of its relation to the body. Remember that only a negligible number of people are claimed to have risen from the dead. And the multitude of human beings remain unrevived. If it were in their nature to acquire new perfections through re-establishing their link with their bodies and - yet they were denied that opportunity, they would be perpetually deprived of what their nature demanded. And this perpetual deprivation is nothing but perpetual compulsion.

Reply: There is no compulsion involved here at all. The soul has already progressed from its potentiality to the actuality. It reached a certain level and died. Now, at present it does not have any more potentiality. It will continue to possess the actuality it has already acquired. Let us suppose that there is a

man who did some good and some bad deeds, and then died. Had he remained alive he could have added to his deeds and acquired a somewhat different spiritual form, either lovelier or uglier than before. Likewise, if he is returned to life, he may acquire better or worse traits than before. But if he is not revived, then he already owns his actuality, and will accordingly be re-warded or punished in al-Barzakh, until he acquires a spiritual form according to his earned qualities. Even then, if he is returned to this world, he would get new potentiality for spiritual perfection, and may acquire another spiritual form by using the material tool, for example, his body. But, if he is not returned, there is neither any potentiality nor any question of compulsion, perpetual or otherwise.

We should not forget that mere deprivation of a possible perfection is not a compulsion. Otherwise, every happening in this world could be called a perpetual compulsion. Every event, every development here affects each and every thing of the universe, directly or indirectly. There is a never-ending struggle and conflict going on in the universe; and it affects the whole system — including the ability of a man to fully attain to his perfection. That effect may be beneficial or harmful. But nobody claims that because he was prevented, by the circumstances beyond his control, from obtaining a possible benefit, he was under perpetual compulsion.

If a talent for a certain perfection is ingrained in someone's nature and then he is prevented from achieving it, either by some factors in his own nature or some external forces bent on nullifying that talent, then only it may be called a perpetual compulsion — because in this case, putting that talent or potentiality in that species be a vain thing, an aimless venture.

Now we come to metamorphosis. If a man's figure is trans-formed to that of a pig or an ape, it is just an external change. He is still a man in the form of an animal; not that his humanity was erased and replaced by the nature of pig or ape. We have already described that when one repeatedly carries on

an activity, its impression is etched on one's psyche. When a man repeatedly indulges in debauchery, his psyche turns into that of a pig; and it is not impossible for that figure to appear in his facial features in this world too — as it would certainly appear in the next world. Such a man is still a man, albeit a transformed one; not that he has lost his humanity.

By the way, we sometimes read, in the newspapers and magazines, reports of academic conferences in Europe and America that tend to prove that it is possible to revive a man after his death, and that a man's facial figures may change to something else. Of course, we do not base over belief on such news and reports; nevertheless, we expect our adversaries not to forget today what they had read yesterday.

Poser: Then there is no difficulty in believing in transmigration of the souls.

Reply: There is a world of difference between metamorphosis and transmigration of the souls. In metamorphosis the same body changes its figure to look like something else; while the believers in transmigration of the souls say that a soul, after attaining its perfection and leaving the body, establishes a new connection with a new body. Obviously, it is an impossible proposition. A question may be asked whether or not the new body was already connected to a soul of its own. If it already belonged to another soul, it would entail domination of one body by two souls, which is impossible — two persons cannot have one body, nor can one body be governed by two personalities. If, on the other hand, the body did not have a soul already, it would mean that an accomplished and developed soul was burdened by an unaccomplished and undeveloped body. It would certainly be a regression from actuality to potentiality — just like returning a wise old man to his infancy! And this too is impossible.

Also, it should be apparent from what we have explained that it is certainly impossible for a human soul, after leaving its human body, to be incarnated in a vegetable or animal body. In short, the belief in transmigration of the souls entails impossibility after impossibility.

AN ACADEMIC AND ETHICAL DISCOURSE ON UNQUESTIONING ADOPTION OF CONCEPTS AND RULINGS

The nation, most frequently described in the Qur'ãn, is that of the Israelites; and the prophet most numerously referred to therein is their prophet, Mũsã (a. s.) , son of ‘Imrãn. His name has been mentioned in one hundred and thirty six places, twice as many as the second most numerously mentioned name, that is, of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), who has been named sixty-nine times only — as some people have calculated.[1]

It is not difficult to understand the reason for these frequent references. Islam, the true religion, is based on the belief of monotheism; its present foundation was laid by Ibrãhīm (a.s.); and Allãh completed and perfected it for His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), as He says: . . . *the faith of your father Ibrãhīm; He named you Muslims before and in this* . . . (22:78). And the Israelites were the most disputatious and most quarrelsome of all the nations; they were the most obstinate and most abstruse of all when there was a question of submitting to the truth. And the heathens of Arabia, whom the Prophet of Islam had to contend with, were of the same mould, so much so that Allãh said to His Prophet: *Surely those who disbelieve alike is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe* (2:6) .

Every vice, every depravity found in the Israelites could be found in them; they, in their hard-heartedness and impertinence were the mirror-image of the Israelites.

Ponder over the stories of the Israelites, as narrated in the Qur'ãn; look at the picture of their characters and morals as it emerges from those narratives. You will find a nation deeply

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1. Vide *al-Mu‘jamu 'l-mufahras,* by Muhammad Fu'ãd ‘Abdu'l-Bãqi.

submerged in sensualism and materialism. They did not believe in what was beyond the reach of their external senses; for them spiritual happiness was a word without meaning; their only ambition was the pursuit of sensual pleasure; their eyes could not focus on intellectual progress or spiritual perfection, so their only aim in life was the material development. And to this day, they have not changed a whit. It was this tendency which made their mind and will totally subservient to the matter and the material phenomena. They did not understand except that which they could see, hear, touch, taste or smell; they did not strive but for some tangible and material goals. Their servitude to the sensual phenomena prevented them from accepting any thing outside the domain of the five senses — even if it was truth; their thraldom to matter encouraged them to accept every thing told by their materially advanced big bosses — even if it was false. It created a clear contrariety and inconsistency in their words and deeds. They condemned every adoption of others' concepts, ridiculing it as blind following, if that concept was unperceivable by the external senses — no matter how correct it was. And at the same time, they appreciated every adoption of others' concepts, label-ling it as the pleasure of life, if it conformed with their material base desires — no matter how wrong that concept was. This trait became deeply rooted in their psyche during their long sojourn in Egypt, where the Egyptians humiliated them, enslaved them and castigated them; they subjected them to severe torment, killed their sons sparing their daughters, and in this was a great trial for them from their Lord.

However, it was this deep-rooted trait which made them heedless to what their prophets and divine scholars told them about what was good for them in this life as well as in the hereafter. (Remember their disputations with Mũsã and others!) And these very people were ever ready to accept and follow what their big bosses called them to, for gratification of their worldly desires.

Today the truth and reality has been afflicted by this very tragedy. The modern civilization, presented to the humanity by the western world, is likewise based on sensual perception and material outlook. It is not prepared to accept any proof for something which is not perceivable by the external senses; and does not ask for any proof of validity, if a thing gives material and sensual pleasure. This has resulted in weakening of the hold of human instincts, and in disappearance of deep knowledge and high morals from our society. This trait has exposed the edifice of humanity to ruin, and is confronting the society with chaos and disorder. And you will surely see its real face in a not too distant future.

Actually, not every proof is asked for, nor every unquestioning adoption of others' ideas and concepts is objectionable. Man proceeds on the road of perfection through his intentional activities. His actions emanate from his will, and the will springs from thought and notion. Thinking, therefore, is the foundation of his perfection. Man depends on practical or intellectual cognition to which his perfection is directly or indirectly related. This cognition creates in his mind the need for individual or collective actions; this knowledge leads to intention and will which produces the desired activity.

Man, by his instinct, tries to find out the cause of every event, happening inside or outside his self. He does not do any action without knowing its reason; he does not accept any theory without ascertaining its proof. It is his unfailing trait; he always looks for the cause of the events and actions; it is his nature and the nature never deviates from its set course.

But this trait puts an unbearable burden on him. No individual can accomplish all the academic and practical processes required for his material and spiritual well-being. It is this burden which led the man to establish a society and cooperate with other human beings. Various people were given

responsibilites to per-form various tasks, in order that the society, taken as a whole, might collectively accomplish all tasks, and fulfil all the needs of all its members put together.

Human needs are expanding by leaps and bounds; various branches of knowledge — sciences, technologies, arts etc. — are growing larger and larger, to such an extent that every subject has grown into hundreds of subjects — each requiring its own specialists. Look for example, at medical science. In old days it was a branch of physics; now it has branched out into hundreds of independent subjects, and no single physician or surgeon may gain expertise in more than one or two of them.

This vast multitude of special fields has instinctively led man to limit his inquiry for cause, and his search for proof, to only those branches of knowledge in which he has gained some expertise; and accept and follow the verdicts of other specialists in other fields. A sane person invariably always relies on the experts in the fields of their expertise. The confidence in their expertise creates a certainty that what has been said or done is correct; and this serves as the proof demanded by human nature.

The nature dictates that man should try his best to find out the detailed proof of the rightness of his idea and action in the fields of his speciality; and as a corollary it directs that he should unquestioningly accept the concepts and verdicts of others in other fields. In short, an ignorant man should follow the decree of a learned one. It is impossible for one man to be an expert in all the branches of knowledge, or independent in all the activities necessary for his life and well-being. Therefore, it is impossible for any man to be free from blindly following a lot of experts in numerous avenues of life. Anyone claiming contrary to this, is a fool.

Of course, it is a shame if a man remains content with un-questioning following, even where he can form an independentopinion based on detailed knowlege; as it is a shame if he forms independent opinion without acquiring

necessary knowledge. Both trends are undesirable, both are ruinous to a healthy civilization, both are dangerous to the society.

It is the prerogative of Allãh that His decrees and orders be followed without any questioning, without any if or but; because He is the First and Final cause, an no other cause or reason is needed when He has spoken.

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أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ
كَلَامَ اللهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ــ ٧٥. وَإِذَا
لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوا
أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ ــ ٧٦. أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا
يُعْلِنُونَ ــ ٧٧. وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ
هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ــ ٧٨. فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ
يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ــ ٧٩. وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّاماً
مَعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللهِ عَهْداً فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ
عَلَى اللهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ــ ٨٠. بَلَى مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ
خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ــ ٨١. وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ــ ٨٢.

Do you then hope that they would believe in you? While a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of Allãh, then altered it after they had understood it, and they know (this) (75). *And when they meet those who believe they say: "We believe"; and when they are alone one with another they say: "Do you talk to them of what Allãh has disclosed to you that they may argue with you by this before your Lord? Do you not then understand?"* (76). *What! Do they not know that Allãh knows what they conceal and what they proclaim?* (77). *And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only lies, and they do but conjecture* (78). *Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say: "This is from Allãh", so that they may sell it for a small price; therefore woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn* (thereby) (79). *And they say: "Fire shall not touch us but for a few days." Say: "Have you taken a promise from Allãh, then Allãh will never fail to keep His promise, or do you speak against Allãh what you do not know?"* (80). *Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the Fire; in it they shall abide* (81). *And (as* for) *those who believe and do good deeds, these are the dwellers of the garden; in it they shall abide* (82).

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COMMENTARY

The context shows that the unbelievers, and especially those of Medina, thought that the Jews were the likeliest people to help and support the Apostle of Allãh at

his advent. The pagan tribes of Aws and Khazraj lived with the Jews of Medina, and they knew that the latter followed a divine religion and a revealed book. Thus it was not too much to expect them to believe in the latest in the series of divine religions and books.

This was the basis of their hope that the Jews would accept the Apostle of Allãh as the true prophet, and would strengthen the cause of religion, and actively participate in the propagation of truth. But no sooner did the Prophet migrate to Medina than the Jews showed their latent hostility. The hope was shattered and the expectation turned to disappointment. That is why Allãh addresses the believers, saying: "Do you then hope that they would believe in you?" Concealment of truth and alteration of divine words was their deep-rooted life-pattern. Why wonder if they go back on what they used to say before the advent of Islãm?

QUR'ÃN: *Do you then hope. . . and they know this:* The speech is now addressed to the Prophet and the believers, referring to the Jews in third person. This same style was used in the preceding story of the Cow, because the Jews had omitted the event from the Torah. These verses continue that mode of address because it exposes their habit of altering and manipulating the divine book.

QUR'ÃN: *And when they meet those who believe. . . and what they proclaim:* The two conditional clauses, "when they meet those who believe" and "when they are alone one with another" are not in opposition to each other — as were the clauses in the verse: *And when they meet those who believe, they say: "We believe"; and when they are alone with their Satans, they say: "Surely we are with you, we were only mocking* (2:14). Here the two clauses simply describe two instances of the Jews' transgressions and ignorance:

First: They indulge in hypocrisy, showing that they have

accepted Islãm, and trying in this way to protect themselves from trouble, ridicule and even death.

Second: They want to deceive Allãh, forgetting that He is the Knower of the seen and the unseen, Aware of what they conceal and what they proclaim.

We may infer from the verses that the Jewish laity in Medina sometimes talked openly with the believers, telling them of some of the foretellings about the Prophet or giving them some information that proved the truth of Islãm and its Prophet.

But their leaders used to admonish them for it, telling them that it was a thing revealed to them, it should not be disclosed to the believers, lest they argued with the Jews before the Lord — as though if the believers did not argue with them before God, He would not know of it! Such thinking implies that Allãh knew only the apparent, not the hidden and concealed things or thoughts. Allãh refuted this foolish idea and said: "What! Do they not know that Allãh knows what they conceal and what they proclaim?" It is our, and not God's, knowledge which is limited to the seen and does not comprehend the unseen, because our perception depends on the senses which in their turn depend on body organs — equipped with nervous instruments, surrounded by space and time, influenced by a hundred other material causes.

This talk also throws light on the materialistic outlook of the Israelites. They were so steeped in that belief that they applied the human limitations to God too. They thought that God was present and active inside the matter and prevailed over it. But that presence and that control and management were based on the same principles as a material cause brings out and controls a material effect. Such a belief was not a speciality of the Jews; it was and is held even by those followers of Islãm who believe in fundamentality of matter. For these people, God's life, know-ledge, power, choice, will, decree, order and management have the same meanings as do their own life, knowledge etc. It is a disease for which there is no cure. And

the signs and warnings can avail nothing to a people who do not understand. Such views have made Islãm a laughing-stock in the eyes of those who have no access to the true faith and correct Islãmic knowledge. Those detractors say: The Muslims ascribe to their Prophet the saying, "Allãh created Adam in His likeness"; and these followers of the Prophet have created a god in the likeness of Adam. One group of the Muslims ascribes to its Lord all the qualities of the matter. Another group does not understand anything of God's beautiful attributes; consequently it reduces all divine attributes to negatives. It says that the names and adjectives, which are used for both God and His creatures, have quite different meanings in both cases. When we say, "God is Existent, Knowing, Powerful and Alive", the words denote some divine qualities totally incomprehensible to us, completely different from the meanings they have when they are applied to a human being. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce these words to their negatives. What the above sentence, for example, means is this: "God is not non-existent, not unaware, not powerless and not lifeless." Such explanation implies that they believe in that which they do not understand, worship that which they are uncertain about and invite others to believe in that which neither they nor anyone else knows anything about.

The word of truth is enough to dispel such falsehoods. The people have been admonished by the true religion to hold fast to the essence of reality and steer clear between the above-mentioned two extremes. They should know that Allãh is not like His creatures, nor is He a set of negative propositions. The true religion directs common people to believe that Allãh is a thing, unlike other things; that He has knowledge, unlike our knowledge; power, unlike our power; and will, not produced by contemplation; that He talks, not with a mouth; and hears, not with ears. As for the people of higher understanding, they must ponder on His signs and acquire deep knowledge of His religion. He has said: *Say: "Are those who know and those who do not know alike?"*

Only those possessed of understanding shall bear in mind (39:9). The people of higher understanding are not equal to a common man in their knowledge of truth and religion; likewise, the two are not alike in their respective responsibilities. This, therefore, is the teaching of religion for both groups respectively; it is there for them to follow, would they do so?

QUR'ÃN: *And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only lies and they do but conjecture; "al-Ummiyy"* (الأمّيُّ = one who does not read or write) is related to *"al-umm"* (الأمُّ = mother) . It is as though the excessive love of the mother prevented her from entrusting her child to a teacher to teach and train him; consequently he could learn only from his mother. *"al-Amaniyy"* (الأمَانِيُّ) is plural of *"al-umniyyah"* (الأمْنِيَّـةُ = lie). The verse says that some of the Jews were literates who didread and write the book — but making alterations in it; and the rest were illiterates who knew nothing of the book except the lies of the former group.

QUR'ÃN: Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands. . . : "al-Wayl" (الوَيْلُ = woe, disaster, severe punishment, adversity, affliction) ; "al-ishtira' " (الاشتِرَاءُ = to sell) .

QUR'ÃN: *therefore, woe to them for what their hands have written . . .:* The pronouns may refer either to all Jews or only to the interpolators among them. If the former view is taken then the woe and condemnation would cover the illiterates too.

QUR'ÃN: Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side . . . : "*al-Khaṭī'ah*" (الخَطِيئَـةُ = translated here as "sins") actually refers to the psychical condition resulting from evil-doing. That is why the verse speaks first of his evil-doing and then of the effects of the sins besetting him on every side. When he is beset by his sins on every side, there should remain

no opening for the guidance to reach him; he, therefore, will go to Hell and abide there forever.

Had there been an iota of faith in his heart, or some good traits like justice in his character, it would have been possible for the rays of guidance to penetrate to him. The overwhelming besetting of sins on every side, therefore, is possible in case of polytheism, as Allãh says: *Surely Allãh does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases* (4:48) ; and also in case of disbelief and denial of the divine signs, Allãh says: *And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in and belie Our signs, they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide* (2:39). In short, the earning of evil and being beset by sins on all sides is a broad expression covering all that would make one to abide in the Hell forever.

The two verses under discussion are almost similar to the verse: *Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allãh and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward . . .* (2:62).

Both show that the basis of salvation and eternal happiness is the true belief and good deeds. The only difference between the two sets of the verses is that the verse 2:62 shows that mere taking to oneself nomenclatures like the Muslim, the Jew etc. is of no use; while the verses under discussion show that mere claiming of salvation is of no worth at all.

TRADITIONS

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *And when they meet those who believe . . .*: "Some of the Jews (who were not inimical to the Muslims and were not a party to the Jewish conspiracy against them), on meeting the Muslims, used to narrate what the Torah contained of the description of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) ; so their elders forbade them to do so

and said: 'Do not in-form them of what the Torah contains of the attributes of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), lest they argue with you by that before your Lord.' Thereupon, this verse was revealed." (*Majma`u 'l- bayãn*)

It is narrated from the fifth or the sixth Imãm that he said about the words of Allãh, *Yea! whoever earns evil. . .*: "If they deny the *wilãyah* (اَلوِلايَةُ = friendship, overlordship) of the Leader of the faithful, then they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭũsī has narrated in his *al-Amãlī* a tradition of nearly the same theme. The two traditions are based on the principle of the "flow" of the Qur'ãn and fit the verse on one of its best example. Allãh has counted the love of, and submission to, the Prophet's family-members as a good deed, as He says: *Say: "I do not ask of you any recompense for it except the love for* (my) *near relatives; and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein* (42:23). Also, the tradition may be taken as another explanation of the verse, as we shall describe in the Chapter 6 (The Table) that "the good" means complying with the demands of the belief of monotheism. If so, then the tradition particularly mentions `Ali (a.s.) because he was the first of this *ummah* to open this door.

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وَإِذْ أَخَذْنا مِيثاقَ بَني إِسْرائِيلَ لاٰ تَعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ اللهَ وَبِالْوالِدَيْنِ
إِحْساناً ، وَذِي الْقُرْبىٰ وَالْيَتامىٰ وَالْمَساكِينَ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً
وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلاٰةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكوٰةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ
مُعْرِضُونَ ــ ٨٣ . وَإِذْ أَخَذْنا مِيثاقَكُمْ لاٰ تَسْفِكُونَ دِماءَكُمْ وَلاٰ
تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِيارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ
ــ ٨٤ . ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هٰؤُلاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقاً
مِنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيارِهِمْ تَظاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوانِ وَإِنْ
يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسارىٰ تُفادُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْراجُهُمْ
أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَما جَزاءُ مَنْ
يَفْعَلُ ذٰلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلاَّ خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تُرَدُّونَ
إِلىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذابِ وَمَا اللهُ بِغافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ــ ٨٥ . أُولٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
اشْتَرَوُا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيا بِالآخِرَةِ فَلاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذابُ وَلاَ هُمْ
يُنْصَرُونَ ــ ٨٦ . وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنا مُوسَى الْكِتابَ وَقَفَّيْنا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ
وَآتَيْنا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّناتِ وَأَيَّدْناهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّما
جاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِما لاٰ تَهْوىٰ أَنْفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقاً كَذَّبْتُمْ
وَفَرِيقاً تَقْتُلُونَ ــ ٨٧ . وَقالُوا قُلُوبُنا غُلْفٌ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللهُ
بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلاً مَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ــ ٨٨ .

And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship (any) but Allãh and (you shall do) *good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy, and speak to men good (words) and keep up prayer and pay the zakãt. "Then you turned back except a few of you and* (now too) *you turn aside (83). And when We made a covenant with you: "You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities;" then you gave a promise while you witnessed (84). Yet you it is who slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits; and if they should come to you as captives, you would ransom them — while their very turning out was unlawful for you. Do you then - believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement, and Allãh is not at all heedless of what you do (85). These are they who have bought the life of this world for the hereafter, so their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped (86). And most certainly We gave Mũsã the Book and We sent apostles after him one after another; and We gave 'Isa, the son of Maryam, clear evidence and strengthened him with the holy spirit. What! whenever then an apostle came to you with that which your souls did not desire, you were insolent, so you called some* (of them) *liars and some you slew (87). And they say: "Our hearts are covered." Nay, Allãh has cursed them on account of their unbelief; so little it is that they believe (88).*

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship (any) but Allãh. . . ."*: To begin with, the verse refers to the Children of Israel in third person, and then ends by addressing them in second person, "Then you turned back . . ." The first sentence mentions making a covenant with them — which must naturally be in words — then describes that covenant; this in its turn begins with a declarative sentence, "You shall not worship (any) but Allãh", and ends up with some imperative ones, "and speak to men good words . . ." When the stories of the Israelites began, they were addressed in second person, because the verses contained a lot of admonition and reprimand; it continued to the story of the Cow when, because of demands of eloquence, it was changed to third person. Consequently, this verse too began with third person, but when time came to quote the verbal covenant, the style reverted to the second person.

"You shall not worship (any) but Allãh": It is a prohibition in the form of an information. This style shows the utmost importance attached to the ban by the speaker — it is as though the speaker has no doubt whatsoever that the order shall be complied with, and that, in this case, the servants will not dare to go near idolatory.

The same style is continued in the next clause, "and (you shall do) good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy."

The change over to second person, although resorted to for the purpose of quoting the covenant, has put the speech back to the original style and has linked the last clauses of the covenant to the fresh admonitory ones: "and keep up prayer and pay the *zakãt*. Then you turned back . . ."

QUR'ÃN: *and* (you shall do) *good to* (your) *parents . . .*: As

translated here, it is a declarative sentence with the sense of imperative. It may also be translated as an imperative sentence: "and (do) good . . ." The verse gives, in descending order of importance, the list of those whom one should do good to. The parents are the root of man's existence, and nearest of all to him. Then come the near of kin. Going outside the circle of relatives, the orphans are most deserving of kindness and beneficence, because in their small age they are deprived of their father — their guardian, protector and bread-earner. Other needy persons come after them.

"and to the orphans" : *"al –Yatīm"* (اليَتِيمُ = orphan) is he whose father has died. The word is not used for him who has lost his mother. Also, it is said that a human child is called "orphan" if his father dies, but in animals, the adjective is used for one whose mother dies.

"and the needy": *"al –Masãkīn"* (اَلمَسَاكِيْنُ) is plural of *al-miskīn* (المِسْكِيْنُ = needy, impoverished, destitue, lowly).

"and speak to men good (words)": *"Ḥusnan"* (حُسْنًا = beauty, excellence) is an infinitive verb, used for adjective (beautiful, excellent, good) to give emphasis. Some reciters have recited it *ḥasanan* (حَسَنًا = beautiful, excellent, good). However, the sentence enjoins them to speak nicely to the people; it is an in-direct way of ordering them to maintain good social relations to behave with people nicely, gently and good-manneredly — no matter whether the opposite party is a believer or an unbeliever. It cannot be said to be abrogated by the verse of fighting, because the two verses are not contradictory to each other; the place and time of social contact is other than the place and time of fighting. For example, using hard words when admonishing a child to correct his behaviour is not contrary to maintaining good social relation.

QUR'ÃN: "*You shall not shed your blood . . .":* This too is a prohibitory order, in the form of an information — the same style which was used in, "You shall not worship (any) but

Allãh". *"as-Safk"* (السَّفْكُ = to shed blood).

QUR'ÃN: *backing each other up against them: "at-Taẓãhur"* (التَّظـاهُرُ = to help each other). *Aẓ-ẓahīr* (الظَّهِيْر = helper); it is derived from *Aẓ-ẓahr* (الظَّهْرُ = back) as though the helper strengthens the back of the helped one.

QUR'ÃN: *while their very turning away was unlawful for you:* Its literal translation will be, 'while it was unlawful for you their very turning out.' The pronoun "*it*" *is* not related here to any previously mentioned noun etc., it is a pronoun used to begin a sentence. In the verse, *Say: "He, Allãh is one"* (112:1), the pronoun "He" has the same grammatical significance.

QUR'ÃN: *Do you believe in a part of the Book . . .:* Why should you follow the rule of paying ransom for them and disobey the prohibition of turning them out? Are not both rules in the same book? Do you believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other?

QUR'ÃN: *And We sent apostles after him one after another: "at-Taqfiyah"*(التَّقْفِيَـةُ = to send someone after someone else).

QUR'ÃN: *and We gave 'Īsã son of Maryam, clear evidence:* This subject will be dealt with in Chapter 3, (The Family of `Imrãn) .

QUR'ÃN: *And they say: "Our hearts are covered": al-Ghulf* (الغُلْـفُ) is plural of *al -aghlaf* (الاَغْلَـفُ). It is derived from *ghilãf* (غِلافُ = cover). They say: Our hearts are protected under various covers and veils — your call cannot reach our hearts. The sentence has the same import as the verse: *And they say: "Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us* (41: 5) .

TRADITIONS

Abũ Ja'far (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *and speak to men good* (words) : "Speak to men the best of that which you would like to be said about yourself." *(al-Kãfī)*

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about this verse: "Speak to men, and do not speak but good until you know what it is."

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "Speak to men the best of that which you would like to be said about yourself; for certainly Allãh, Mighty and Great is He, dislikes an Abũser, curser, speaker of evil against the believers, indecent, shameless (and) begger, and He loves the modest, mild-tempered, chaste (and) moderate." *(Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr)*

The author says: A tradition, similar to the first one, has been narrated in *al-Kãfi* from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) with another chain of narrators; and similarly in al-`Ayyãshi.

Another tradition, like the second one has been written from the same Imãm in *al-Kãfī;* and one like the third is narrated from al-Bãqir (a.s.) in al-`Ayyãshi. Apparently these meanings of the "good word" have been inferred from general usage.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Verily Allãh sent Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) with five swords: So (there is) a sword against *a dhimmi* (ذِمِّـيّ = free non-Muslim subject of an Islãmic country). Allãh said: *and speak to men good* (words) ; it was revealed about the *dhimmīs,* then it was abrogated by another verse, *Fight those who do not believe in Allãh . . .* (9:29) (al-`Ayyãshi)

The author says: In this tradition the Imãm has taken the "speech" to mean behaviour. We say: Do not speak to him but good; what we mean is: Do not deal with him but in a good and decent manner. This meaning will apply only if we take the word, "abrogated" in its terminological sense. But it may also be taken in its literal sense (as we shall explain

under the verse: *Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten . . .* 2:106); and in that case this verse will not be in conflict with that of the fighting. It should be pointed out that such uses of words in their literal meanings (as against their terminological ones) are not infrequent in the traditions of the Imãms.

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وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَهُمْ
وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا
عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ــ ٨٩ . بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْا
بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ بَغْيًا أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ــ ٩٠ . وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ قَالُوا نُؤْمِنُ
بِمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ
قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ٩١ . وَلَقَدْ
جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ
ظَالِمُونَ ــ ٩٢ . وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ
الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاسْمَعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا
وَأُشْرِبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ
إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ٩٣ .

* * * * *

And when there came to them a Book from Allãh verifying that which they have, and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved, but

when there came to them that which they did recognize, they disbelieved in him; so Allãh's curse is on the unbelievers (89). *Evil is that for which they sold their souls — that they should deny what Allãh has revealed, out of envy that Allãh should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases; so they returned with wrath upon wrath, and there is a disgraceful punishment for the unbelievers* (90). *And when it is said to them, "Believe in what Allãh has revealed," they say: "We believe in that which was revealed to us;" and they deny what is besides that, while it is the truth verifying that which they have. Say: "Why then did you kill Allãh's prophets before if you were indeed believers?"* (91) . *And most certainly Mũsã came to you with clear evidence, then you took the calf* (for a god) *in his absence and you were unjust* (92). *And* (remember) *when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain over you: "Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and listen* (to Our words)". *They said: "We hear and disobey." And they were made to imbibe* (the love of) *the calf into their hearts on account of their unbelief Say: "Evil is that which your belief bids you if you are believers"* (93).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And when there came to them a Book:* The context shows that "a Book" refers to the Qur'ãn.

QUR'ÃN: *and aforetime they used to pray for victory*

against those who disbelieved: It appears that whenever the pagans of Arabia clashed with the Jews, the latter prayed for victory by the right of the Prophet, and by his prophethood and emigration; and that this was their usual custom before the advent of the Prophet, so much so that even the pagans knew it of them. It all is implied in the word, "they used to".

QUR'ÃN: *but when there came to them that which they did recognize:* They knew that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was the awaited Prophet, because all the attributes and particulars mentioned in their books fitted on him perfectly. And yet they denied his truth.

QUR'ÃN: *Evil is that for which they sold their souls. . .: "Baghyan"* (بَغياً = out of envy) is in accusative case, explaining the reason why they disbelieved in Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) even after recognizing him. What they did was "out of envy", "that Allãh should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases" was the object of their envy. "so they re-turned with wrath upon wrath", that is, they returned doubly enraged. It may also mean that they invited double wrath of Allãh upon themselves — the first because they disbelieved in Torah and the second because they disbelieved in the Qur'ãn.

The verse says that they were partisans of the Prophet long before he was born; they prayed to Allãh for victory by his name and his Book. When the Prophet was sent and the Qur'ãn was revealed, they very well recognized that he was the Prophet in whose name they used to pray for victory, and whose coming they awaited. But they were overwhelmed by envy and arrogance. No sooner did the Prophet begin his call then they denied his truth, and forgot all that they used to tell about the awaited prophet. It was not surprising as they had earlier disbelieved in Torah too. Thus they committed disbelief after disbelief, and invited the wrath of Allãh upon themselves, not once but twice.

QUR'ÃN: *and they deny what is besides that:* That is, they claim that they do not believe in any book other than Torah; but the fact is that they do not believe even in Torah.

QUR'ÃN: *Say: "Why then did you kill Allãh's prophets. . ."*: The conjunctive, "then", serves to relate this question to their claim, "We believe in that which was revealed to us". If this claim of yours is correct then why did you kill the prophets of Allãh? And why did you disbelieve in Mũsã by taking the calf for a god? And why did you say, "We hear and disobey", when We took a promise from you and lifted the mountain over you?

QUR'ÃN: *and they were made to imbibe* (the love of) *the calf into their hearts: "al-Ishrãb"* (اَلاِشْرَابُ = to make to imbibe, to make to drink). Instead of saying 'the love of the calf', the verse says, "to imbibe the calf", for emphasis, as though they had drunk the calf itself into their hearts. The sentence thus contains two metaphors — "the calf" for the love of the calf, and imbibing into hearts for loving.

QUR'ÃN : *Say: "Evil is that which your belief bids you . . .":* It is a derisive expression ridiculing them for their killings of the prophets, their disbelief in Mũsã and their arrogance in committing sin after sin and then claiming that they were the true believers. The verse tauntingly asks them: Is this what your belief bids you?

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) explained the verse, *and when there came to them a Book from Allãh verifying that which they have . . .,* in this way: "The Jews found in their books that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) , the Messenger of Allãh, would migrate and settle between `Ayr and Uḥud. So, they went out looking for that

place. They passed by a mountain called Ḥadãd[1] ; and they said: 'Ḥadãd and Uḥud are the same'. So they dispersed nearby; some of them settled at Taymã', and some others at Fadak and yet others at Khaybar. Those at Tayma' once desired (to see) some of their brethren (at another place). A Bedouin from (the tribe of) Qays passed by them and they hired (his camels).

He told them: 'I shall take you from between 'Ayr and Uḥud.' They told him: 'When you pass between the two, tell us.' When they reached the land of Medina, he said: 'That is 'Ayr and this is Uḥud.' They descended from his camels and said to him: 'We have now found (the place of) our desire; now we do not need your camels, you may go wherever you wish.' Then they wrote to their brethren at Fadak and Khaybar: 'We have found the place, come therefore to us.' They wrote in reply: 'Now we have settled in this place, and have acquired properties; and we are so near to you. Therefore, when it will happen (i.e., when the Prophet will come to Medina), we shall rush to you.' Those Jews acquired properties in the land of Medina. When their wealth increased, its news came to the ears of Tubba'[2] and he attacked them. They fortified themselves and he laid siege to them. (And they used to take pity on the weekly soldiers of Tubba' and throw dates and barley to them at night. This came

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1. In the printed copy of *at-Tafsīr* of al-`Ayyashi (vol. 1, P. 49) and what has been quoted from him in *al-Bihãr* (vol. 15, p. 226), *al-Burhãn* (vol. l , p. 128) and *Majma`u 'l-bayãn* (vol. 1, p. 158) the name has appeared as Ḥadãd. But we could not find such a name in geographical dictionaries. Perhaps it is a corruption of Ḥadãd which is a mountain over-looking Taymã'; (see *Mu`jamu 'l-buldãn,* vol. 2, p. 229; *al-Qãmũs,* vol. 1, p. 287 and *Tãju 'arũs,* vol. 2, p. 333) or it may be another reading of Ḥadãd. (*ed.*)

2. التُّبَّع (at-Tubba') was the title of the kings of Yemen.

to the notice of Tubba‘ and he softened towards them.)[2] He assured them of their safety and they came down to him. He told them: ‘I do like this place of yours and I am inclined to settle down here.’ They said: ‘It is not for you. It is the migration place of a prophet; and no one may settle down here until that happens.’ Thereupon he said: ‘Then I am leaving among you some of the members of my clan, so that when it happens they shall help and assist him.’ Thus he left behind the two tribes you see today, the Aws and the Khazraj. When these two (tribes) increased in number, they used to grab the properties of the Jews. At that time, the Jews used to warn them: ‘Oh! when Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is sent (by Allãh) we shall certainly turn you out from our town and properties.' But when Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent as Prophet, it was the Helpers (the Aws and the Khazraj) who believed in him and the very Jews denied him! This is the meaning of the words of Allãh, *and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved . . .”* (al-`Ayyãshi)

Ibn Isḥãq, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Ḥãtam and Abũ Na'īm (in his *Dalã'ilu 'n-nubuwwah)* have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said: “The Jews used to pray for victory against the Aws and the Khazraj by the right of the Messenger of Allãh, before he was sent as prophet. However, when Allãh raised him from the Arabs, the same Jews disbelieved in him and denied what they used to say about him. Mu`ãdh ibn Jabal, Bishr ibn abi ’l-Barã' and Dãwũd ibn Salamah told them: ‘O Jews! Fear Allãh and accept Islãm; because it was you who used to pray for victory against us by

2. The sentences in parenthesis are not in *al-Mizãn*. They have been added from the quotation of al-`Ayyashi, given in *Bihãru 'l-an wãr,* vol. 15, p.226. (tr.)

the right of Muhammad, while we were polytheists, and you used to tell us that he would (soon) be sent, describing to us his attributes.' Salãm ibn Mushkim, one of the tribe of Banu an-Naḍīr, said to them: 'He has not brought to us anything we know; and he is not the prophet we were telling you about.' Then Allãh sent down (the verse): *And when there came to them a Book from Allãh . . .' " (ad-Durru 'l-manthũr)*

Abũ Nu'aym has narrated in his *Dala'ilu 'n-Nubuwwah* from the chains of 'Aṭã' and aḍ-Ḍaḥḥãk, from Ibn 'Abbãs that he said: "The Jews of Banu Qurayzah and Banu an-Naḍir, before Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent as prophet, used to pray to Allãh for victory, invoking Him against the disbelievers and saying: 'O Allãh! We seek Thy help, by the right of the untaught prophet, to let us triumph over them.' And they were given victory. But when there came to them that which they did recognize (i.e., Muhammad — s.a.w.a.), and actually they had no doubt whatsoever about him, they disbelieved in, and denied him. (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

The author says: Similar traditions have been narrated by various other chains also.

A commentator, after pointing to the last mentioned traditions and others like them, says: "These traditions — weak as their narrators are and incompatible as they are with the narrated traditions — are anomalous in their meaning too, because theymaintain that the prayer for victory was made 'by the person of the Prophet' or, as some traditions say, 'by the right of the Prophet'; and such a prayer is against the *sharī`ah;* and no one has any right on Allãh. How could prayer be offered with the help of such a non-existent right?

Reply: This objection results from not understanding the meaning of "right" and oath. Oath is used to join and bind a proposition, order, request or exclamation to an honourable and sublime thing — if that proposition etc. is wrong, the honour and sublimity of the thing bound to it, is tarnished and

damaged. When you say, "By my life, Zayd is standing", you have bound the honour of your life to the truth of your statement; if that statement be wrong, your life would loose its honour. When you say, "By my life, I shall do this work", or "I entreat you, by my life, to do this work", you have, in the same way, put the honour of your life at stake for that work; if you did not do it, or if the second party did not heed to your entreaty, your life would loose its honour, its dignity. Two things emerge from this explanation:

First: Oath is the strongest method of emphasizing a talk, as the scholars of literature have confirmed.

Second: The thing by which one swears, must be more honourable and more important than the proposition etc. which it is related to; because a proposition cannot be emphasized with the help of a less important thing. Allãh has sworn, in His Book, by His own name and attributes. For example, *So, by your Lord, We would most certainly question them all* (15:92). Also, He quotes others swearing by His name and attributes: *By Allãh, our Lord . . .* (6:23) ; *Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life* (38:82). But He has also sworn by His Prophet, His angels and His books, as well as by His creatures like the heaven, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the night, the day, the mountains, the rivers, the towns, the man, the tree, the fig and the olive. It could not be possible unless these things had a real dignity of their own bestowed on them by Allãh; every such thing must have an attribute reflecting one of the divine attributes, or an activity related to the divine sublimity — and every dignity and honour emanates from Him.

Now, what objection can be raised against a suppliant, if he prays to Allãh for something entreating Him by one of the above-mentioned things — considering the fact that Allãh Himself has sworn by those things and has given them a sublimity and dignity? Why an exception should be made in case of the Apostle of Allãh only? Is it not an affront to the

Prophet to remove him from this common way of showing respect? By my life, Muhammad, the Apostle of Allãh (s. a. w. a.) is not less honourable in the eyes of Allãh than an Iraqi fig or a Syrian olive! These people forget that Allãh Himself has sworn by His Prophet : *By your life! they were blindly wandering on in their intoxication* (15 :72).

Now we should have a look at the "right". Right, as opposed to wrong, means a factual thing, existing outside imagination, like the earth and the man; in short, every real and substantial thing, as opposed to illusory and imaginary ones. Monetary and other social rights come within this category because they are firmly established by the society.

The Qur'ãn has nullified all the rights claimed by man, except that which is laid down and confirmed by Allãh — in creation as well as in legislation. Right in the legislative and social spheres is that which Allãh Himself has established, like the monetary rights, the rights of the brothers and the rights of the parents etc.

It is necessary to mention here that no one can lay down a right against Allãh, no one can make it incumbent upon Allãh to do or give something. But it is possible for Allãh to make it incumbent upon Himself to do something, or to give someone something, all in the sphere of legislation. Then that "someone" shall have a right on Allãh which Allãh Himself has established. For example, Allãh says: *even so* (now) *it is a right on Us* (that) *We deliver the believers* (10:103) ; *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles: Most surely they shall be assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones* (37:171-173)

The assistance, promised here, is general and unconditional,not restricted by any proviso. Getting deliverance is the right of the believers on Allãh, and getting assistance is, in the same way, the right of the apostles. By establishing this right on Himself for the apostles, Allãh has

enhanced their dignity and honour. And there is nothing to prevent a suppliant from entreating Allãh to help and deliver him from his difficulties, by the right of His apostle or apostles. Allãh Himself has laid down that right and He Himself swears by every honourable thing, showing us that such oaths and adjurations are in fact liked by Him.

In short, there is no hitch in entreating Allãh by His Apostle or by the right of His Apostle. The same applies to entreating Him by His friends, or by the right of His friends. He has established a right for them on Himself that He will surely assist them in the path of happiness, with every related assistance.

The claim that "no one has any right on Allãh" is just a nonsense. Of course, no one can lay down a right for himself on Allãh; no one can make it incumbent on Allãh to do some thing. But a suppliant does not pray to Allãh by a right forced on Allãh by someone else; he pleads to Him by a right which He Himself has established pledging His Own word; and His Promise is never broken.

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LIST OF THE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS DEALT WITH IN THIS VOLUME

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—	Miracle and its quiddity.	—	86
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APPENDIX "A"

In this book the references of the Qur'ãnic verses have been given by writing serial number of the relevant chapter, followed by a colon (:) that is followed by the number/s of the verse/s. The names of the chapters have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The names of the chapters with their serial numbers are given here for the guidance of the readers.

To find, for instance, the verse 5:67 in the Qur'ãn, the reader should open the fifth chapter, that its, *al-Mã'idah* (= The Table) and then find the 67th verse.

S.	Arabic Names of	Transliteration	Meaning
1.	فاتِحَةُ الكِتاب	*Fatihatu 'l-kitãb*	The Opening of The Book
2.	البَقَرة	*al –Baqarah*	The Cow
3.	آل عِمران	*Ãl 'Imrãn*	The House of Imran
4.	النِّســاء	*an-Nisã'*	Women
5.	المَـائِدة	*Al-Mã'idah*	The Table
6.	الأنعـام	*Al –An'ãm*	Cattle
7.	الأعراف	*al-A'rãf*	The Battlements
8.	الأنفـال	*al-Anfãl*	The Spoils
9.	التَّوْبَة	*At-Tawbah*	Repentance
10	يُونُس	*Yunus*	Jonah

S.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
11.	هُود	*Hũd*	Hood
12.	يُوسُف	*Yũsuf*	Joseph
13.	الرَّعد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder
14.	اِبراهيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham
15.	الحِجْر	*Al–Ḥijr*	El-Hijr
16.	النَّحل	*An-Naḥl*	The Bee
17.	الاِسْرآء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey
18.	الكَهْف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave
19.	مَريَم	*Maryam*	Mary
20.	طه	*Tã Hã*	Ta Ha
21.	الأنبيآء	*al-Anbiyã'*	Prophets
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage
23.	المؤمِنون	*al-Mu'minũn*	The Believers
24	النّور	*an-Nũr*	Light
25.	الفُرقان	*al-Furqãn*	Discrimination (Salvation)
26.	الشُّـعَراء	*ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets
27.	النَّمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ant
28.	القَصَص	*al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Stories
29.	العَنْكَبُوت	*al-'Ankabũt*	The Spider
30.	الرُّوم	*ar-Rũm*	The Greeks
31.	لُقْمان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman
32.	السَّجْدة	*as-Sajdah*	Prostration
33.	الأحزاب	*al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates
34.	سـبَأ	*Saba'*	Sheba
35.	فاطِر (المَلائِكة)	*Fãṭir (or, al-Malã'ikah)*	The Originator (or The Angels)
36.	يـس	*Yã Sīn*	Ya Sin
37.	الصّـافات	*aṣ-Ṣãffãt*	The Rangers
38.	ص	*Ṣãd*	Sad

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
39.	الزُّمَر	*az-Zumar*	The Companies
40.	المُؤْمِن	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished
42.	الشُّورى	*ash-Shũrã*	Counsel
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments
44.	الدُّخان	*ad-Dukhãn*	Smoke
45.	الجاثِية	*al-Jãthiyah*	Hobbling
46.	الأحقاف	*al-Aḥqãf*	The Sand-Dunes
47.	مُحَمّد(ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory
49.	الحُجُرات	*al Ḥujurãt*	Apartments
50.	ق	*Qãf*	Qaf
51.	الذّاريات	*adh-Dhãriyãt*	The Scatterers
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭũr*	The Mount
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon
55.	الرَّحمن	*ar-Raḥmãn*	The All-merciful
56.	الواقِعَة	*al-Wãqi'ah*	The Terror
57.	الحَديد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron
58.	المُجادَلة	*Al-Mujãdalah*	The Disputer
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering
60.	المُمتَحَنة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman Tested
61.	الصَّف	*aṣ-Ṣaff*	The Ranks
62.	الجُمُعة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation
63.	المُنافِقُون	*al-Munãfiqũn*	The Hypocrites
64.	التَّغابُن	*at-Taghãbun*	Mutual Fraud
65.	الطَّلاق	*at-Talãq*	Divorce
66,	التَّحْريم	*at-taḥrīm*	The Forbidding
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
68.	القَلَم	*al-Qalam*	The Pen
69	الحَاقَة	*al-Ḥãqqah*	The Indubitable
70	المَعارج	*al-Ma'ãrij*	The Stairways
71	نُوح	*Nũḥ*	Noah
72	الجِنّ	*al-Jinn*	The Jinn
73	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped
74	المُدَّثِّر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded
75	القِيامَة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection
76.	الدَّهر (الإنسان)	*ad-Dahr* (or, *al -Insãn)*	The Time (or, Man)
77	المُرسَلات	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones
78	النَّبأ	*an-Naba'*	The Tiding
79	النّازعات	*an-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers
80	عَبَس	*'Abas*	He Frowned
81	التَّكْوير	*at-Takwīr*	The Darkening
82	الإنفِطار	*al-Infiṭãr*	The Splitting
83	المُطَفِّفين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters
84	الإنشِقاق	al-Inshiqãq	The Rending
85	البُروج	*al-Burũj*	The Constellations
86	الطّارق	*at-Ṭãriq*	The Night-star
87	الأعلى	*al-A'lã*	The Most High
88	الغاشِيَة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper
89	الفَجْر	*al-Fajr*	The Dawn
90	البَلَد	*al-Balad*	The Land
91	الشَّمْس	*ash-Shams*	The Sun
92	اللَّيل	*al-Layl*	The Night
93	الضُّحى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon
94	الإنشِراح	*al-Inshirãh*	The Expanding

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
95	التِّين	*at-Tīn*	The Fig
96.	العَلَق	*al-'laq*	The Blood-clot
97.	القَدر	*al -Qadr*	Power
98.	البَيِّنَة	*al -Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign
99.	الزِّلزال	*az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake
100	العَاديات	*al-'Ãdiyãt*	The Chargers
101	القارعَة	*al-Qãri'ah*	The Clatterer
102	التَّكاثُر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry
103	العَصْر	*Al-'Aṣr*	Afternoon
104	الهُمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter
109	الفيل	*al-Fīl*	The Elephant
106	قُرَيْش	*Quraysh*	Quraish
107	الماعُون	*al-Mã'ũn*	Charity
108	الكَوْثَر	*al-Kawthar*	Abũndance
109	الكافِرون	*al-Kãfirũn*	The Unbelievers
110	النَّصر	*an-Naṣr*	Help
111.	تَبَّت	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab)*	Perish (or,The Flame)
112.	الإخْلاص (التَّوحيد)	*al Ikhlāṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd)*	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)
113	الفَلَق	*al-Falaq*	Daybreak
114	النَّاس	*an-Nãs*	Men

APPENDIX 'B'

AUTHORS REFERRED TO IN THIS VOLUME (OF *AL -MIZÃN)* AND OTHER VOLUMES

NOTE: For reference to some of their work/s see Appendix D.

Abãn ibn Taghlib ibn Rabãh al-Bakri al-Jurayri (? — 141/758), the great Imãmite traditionalist and commentator.

Abãn ibn `Uthmãn Abũ `Abdillãh, al-Aḥmar (? — c. 200/815), the reliable Imãmite traditionalist.

`Abdullãh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal — Abũ Muhammad ash-Shaybãni al-Baghdãdī (213/828—288/901), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

`Abdullãh ibn `Ãmir ibn Yazīd — Abũ `Imrãn al-Yaḥṣabi ad-Dimashqi (8/630 — 118/736), one of the seven reciters of the Holy Qur'ãn.

`Abdu 'r-Razzãq ibn Hammãm, Abũ Bakr aṣ-Ṣan'ãni (126/744 — 211/827), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Abũ `Amr ibnu 'l-`Ala' — Zabbãn ibn `Ammãr al-Mãzini al-Baṣrī (70/690 - 154/771), one of the seven reciters of the Holy Qur'ãn.

Abũ `Awãnah — Ya`qũb ibn Isḥãq ibn Ibrahīm an-Naysãbũrī ash-Shãfi`ī (230/845 — 316/928), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Abu 'l-Baqã' — `Abdullãh ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn `Abdillãh al-`Ukbarī al-Ḥanbali (538/1143 — 616/1219), the Sunnī scholar.

Abũ Dãwũd — Sulaymãn ibn al-Ash‘ath al-Azdi as-Sajistãni (202/817 — 275/889), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Abũ Dãwũd aṭ-Ṭayãlisi — Sulaymãn ibn Dãwũd al-Qurashi al-Baṣrī (133/750 — 204/819) , the Sunnī traditionalist.

Abũ Dharr al-Harawī — `Abd ibn Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Anṣãri al-Mãliki (355/966 — 434/1043), the Sunnī scholar.

Abu ’l-Faraj al-Iṣfahãnī — `Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad al-Umawi (284/897 — 356/967), the famous scholar.

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Abu ’l-Fidã' — Ismã‘īl ibn `Ali ibn Maḥmũd al-Ayyũbi ash-Shãfi`ī (672/ 1273 — 732/1338), the famous Sunnī historian.

Abu ’l-Futũḥ ar-Rãzī — al-Ḥusayn ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad al-Khuzã'i (? — c. 560/1165), the famous Imãmite commentator.

Abũ Ḥanīfah — an-Nu`mãn ibn Thabit al-Kũfī (80/699 — 150/767), the Ḥanafite Imãm.

Abũ Hanfah al-Miṣrī — al-Qadi, Ibn Hayyun, an-Nu` man ibn Muhammad ibn al-Manṣũr at-Tamīmī (c.270/884 -363/974), the famous Shiite scholar.

Abũ Ḥãtim — Muhammad ibn Idrīs ibn al-Mundhir al-Ḥanẓali ar-Rãzī (195/810 — 277/890), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Abũ Ḥayyãn al-Undulusi — Athīru 'd-Dīn, Ibn Ḥayyãn, Muhammad ibn Yũsuf al-Gharnãṭi ash-Shãfi`ī (654/1256 — 745/1344), the Sunnī scholar.

Abu ’l-Hudhayl al-`AllÃf — Muhammad ibn al-Hudhayl al-Baṣrī (135/753— 235/850), the famous Mu‘tazilite scholar.

Abu ’l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī — Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Mu'tazili al-Ḥanafī ( ? — 436/1044), the famous Mu`tazilite scholar.

Abũ Isḥãq ath-Thaqafi — Ibrãhīm ibn Muhammad ibn Sa‘īd al-Kũfī (? — 283/896), the great Imãmite traditionalist.

Abũ Naṣr as-Sijizzi — `Ubaydullãh ibn Sa‘īd ibn Ḥãtim al-Wã’ilī (? — 444/1052) , the Sunnī traditionalist.

Abũ Nu'aym al-Iṣfahãni — Aḥmad ibn `Abdullãh ibn Aḥmad ash-Shãfi`ī (336/948 — 430/1038) , the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Abu ’l-Qãsim al-‘Alawi — `Ali ibn Aḥmad al-Kũfī (? — 352/963), the Imãmite scholar.

Abũ 'ṣ-Ṣalãh al-Ḥalabi — Taqi ibn an-Najm ibn `Ubaydillah (374/984 — 447/1055), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Abũ 'sh-Shaykh — Abũ Muhammad, `Abdullãh ibn Muhammad al-Ḥibbãnī al-Iṣfahãnī (274/887 — 369/979), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Abũ `Ubayd — al-Qãsim ibn Sallãm al-Harawi (157/774 — 224/838), the famous Sunnī scholar.

Abu 'l-Walīd aṭ-Ṭayālisī — Hishām ibn `Abdi'l-Malik al-Baṣrī (133/750 — 227/741) , the Sunnī traditionalist.

Abū Ya`la — Aḥmad ibn `Ali ibn al-Muthannā at-Tamīmī al-Mawṣili (210/825 — 307/919), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Abū Ya`la al-Ja'fari — Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali ibn Ḥamzah al-Baghdādī (? — 463/1071), the famous Imāmite scholar.

Aḥmad — Abū `Abdillāh, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ḥanbal ash-Shaybāni (164/780 — 241/855), the Ḥanbalite Imām.

Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Isā — Abū Ja'far al-Ash'ari al-Qummī ( ? — during 2nd half of the 3rd/9th c.), the famous Imāmite traditionalist. al-Ājurrī — Abū Bakr, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn `Abdillāh al-Baghdādīash-Shāfi`ī (? — 360/970), the Sunnī traditionalist.

`Ali ibn Ḥarb — Abu 'l-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭā'i al-Mawṣili (170/786 — 265/879), the Sunnī historian and traditionalist.

al-`Allāmah al-Ḥillī — Abū Manṣūr, Jamalu 'd-Dīn, al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn `Ali ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Asadi (648/1250 — 726/1325), the celebrated Imāmite scholar.

al-Ālūsī — Abū 'th-Thanā', Shihābu 'd- Din, Maḥmūd ibn `Abdillāh al-Baghdādi ash-Shāfi`ī(1217/1802 — 1270/1854), the Sunnī commentator.

al-Āmidī — Abu 'l-Fatḥ, `Abdu 'l-Wāḥid ibn Muhammad ibn `Abdi 'l-Wāḥid at-Tamīmī (? — c. 550/1155), the traditionalist.

al-Amin — as-Sayyid Muḥsin ibn `Abdi 'l-Karim al-Ḥusaynī al-'Āmili (1282/1865 — 1371/1952), the famous Imāmite scholar.

al-Amini — ash-Shaykh `Abdu 'l-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad at-Tabrizī an-Najafi (1320/1902 — 1390/1970), the famous Imāmite scholar.

`Amr ibn `Ubayd — Abū `Uthmān at-Taymi al-Baṣrī (80/699 — 144/761), the Mu'tazilite Imām.

al-Anbāri — Abū Bakr, Muhammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Muhammad al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbali (271/884 — 328/940), the Sunnī scholar.

al-`Arūsi — ash-Shaykh `Abd `Ali ibn Jumu'ah al-Ḥuwayzi (? — 11th/17th c.), the Imāmite commentator.

al-Ash'arī, Abu 'l-Ḥasan — `Ali ibn Ismā'il ibn Abi Bishr al-Baṣrī (260/874 or 270/883 — 324/936), the Ash'arite Imām.

`Aṣim ibn Abi 'n-Najūd (Bahdalah) al-Asadi al-Kūfī' (? — 127/745), one of the seven reciters of the Holy Qur'ān.

al-'Askari, Abū Aḥmad — al-Ḥasan ibn `Abdillāh ibn Sa'īd al-Baṣrī (293/906 — 382/993), the famous scholar.

al-'Askari, Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn Sa'īd ibn `Abdillāh (? — 305/917),the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-'Askari, Abũ Hilãl — al-Ḥasan ibn `Abdillãh ibn Sahl al-Baṣrī (? — a.d. 395/1005), the famous scholar.

`Aṭa' ibn Muslim ibn Maysarah al-Khurãsãni (50/670 — 135/752), the commentator and traditionalist.

al-ʻAtīqī — Abu ’l-Ḥasan, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Baghdãdī (367/977 — 441/1049) , the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-`Ayyãshi — Abũ 'n-Naḍr, Muhammad ibn Masʻũd al-Sulami as-Samarqandi (? — 2nd half of the 3rd/9th c.) , the Imãmite commentator and tranditionalist.

al-Azhari — Abũ Manṣũr, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Azhar al-Harawi (282/895 — 370/981), the famous linguist.

al-Baghawi — Abu ’l-Qãsim, `Abdullãh ibn Muhammad ibn `Abdi 'l-`Aziz, Ibn bint Manīʻ al-Baghdãdī ash-Shãfi`ī (214/829 — 317/929), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Bahã'u 'd-Dīn al-`Ãmilī — Muhammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn `Abdi 'ṣ-Ṣamad al-Ḥãrithī, ash-Shaykhu 'l-Baha'i (950/1543 — 1030/1621), the celebrated Imãmite scholar.

al-Baḥrãnī — as-Sayyid Hãshim ibn Sulaymãn ibn Ismãʻīl al-Ḥusaynī (? — 1107/1696), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Balãdhurī — Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyã ibn Jãbir (? — 279/892) , the famous historian.

al-Balãghi — Muhammad Jawãd ibn Ḥasan ibn Ṭãlib ar-Rabaʻi an-Najafi (1282/1865 — 1352/1933), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Balkhi — *see* al-Kaʻbi.

al Bãqillãni — Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib ibn Muhammad al-Baṣrī, al-Baghdãdī al-Ash`ari al-Mãliki (338/950 — 403/1013), the famous Ashʻarite scholar.

al-Barqãni — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Khwãrazmī ash-Shãfi`ī (336/948 — 425/1034), the Sunnī scholar.

al-Barqi — Abũ Ja'far, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khãlid al-Qummī (? — 274/888), the Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Bayãdī — Zaynu 'd-Dīn, Abũ Muhammad, `Ali ibn Yũnus an-NabaṭI al-`Ãmili (791/1389 — 877/1472), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Baydãwi — Naṣiru 'd-Dīn, Abũ Said, `Abdullãh ibn `Umar ibn Muhammad

al-Ash'ari ash-Shãfi`ī (?685/1286), the famous Sunnī commentator and scholar.

al-Bayhaqi — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn an-Naysãbũrī (384/994 — 458/1066), the Shãfi`ite scholar.

al-Bazzar — Abũ Bishr, Harun ibn Ḥãtim al-Kũfĩ (? — 249/863),the Sunnī historian and traditionalist.

al-Bazzaz — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn `Amr ibn `Abdi'l-Khaliq al-Baṣrī (210/825 — 292/905), the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Bazzi — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Abdillãh al-Makki (170/786 — 243/857), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

al-Bīrũnī Abũ Rayḥãn, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad al-Khwãrazmī (362/973 — 440/1048) , the famous Shi'ite scholar in astronomy, chronology, history, mathematics, medicine, philosophy and phisics.

al-Bisṭãmi — Nawrũz `Ali ibn Muhammad Bãqir al-Khurãsãnī (? — 1309/1892) , the Imãmite scholar.

al-Bukhãri — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Ismã'il (194/810 — 256/870), the celebrated Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Burũsawi — Abu 'l-Fida', Isma'īl Ḥaqqi ibn Muṣṭafã al-Ḥanafī (1063/1653 — 1137/1725), the Sunnī Ṣũfi commentator.

aḍ-Ḍaḥḥãk ibn Muzahim — Abu 'l-Qãsim al-Hilãlī al-Balkhi (? — 105/723), the Sunnī *tãbi `i* traditionalist and commentator.

Da'laj ibn Aḥmad ibn Da'laj — Abũ Isḥãq, as-Sijizzi al-Baghdãdī (260/874 — 351/962), the Sunnī traditionalist.

ad-Dãmãd — as-Sayyid Muhammad Bãqir ibn Shamsi 'd-Dīn, Muhammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Istarabãdi, al-Mird-Dãmãd (c. 960/1553 — 1041/1631), the famous Imãmite scholar and philosopher.

ad-Dãnī — Abũ `Amr, `Uthmãn ibn Sa`īd ibn `Uthmãn al-Andulusi (371/981— 444/1053), the famous Sunnī scholar and commentator.

ad-Dãrimī — Abũ Muhammad, `Abdullãh ibn `Abdi 'r-Raḥmãn as-Samarqandi (181/797 — 255/869), the Sunnī traditionalist.

aḍ-Ḍarīr al-Ḥīrī — Abũ `Abdi 'r-Raḥmãn, Isma`īl ibn Aḥmad ibn `Abdillãh an-Naysãbũrī ash-Shãfi'ī (361/972 — 430/1039), the Sunnī traditionalist.

ad-Dãr-quṭni —Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn `Umar al-Baghdãdī ash-Shãfi`ī (306/919 — 385/995), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

ad-Daylami — Abũ Manṣũr, Shahr-dãr ibn Shīrũyah al-Hamadãnī ash-Shãfi`ī (483/1090 — 558/1163), the Sunnī traditionalist.

ad-Daylami — Abũ Muhammad, al-Ḥasan ibn Abi'l-Ḥasan (fl. 8th/15 c.), the Imãmite scholar.

ad-Daylamī — Abũ Shujã', Shīrũyah ibn Shahr-dar al- Hamadan ash- Shafi;i (445/1053 — 509/1115), the Sunnī traditionalist.

adh-Dhahabī — Shamsu 'd-Dīn, Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn

`Uthmãn ad-Dimashqi ash-Shãfi`ī (673/1274 — 748/1348), the famous Sunnī scholar.

aḍ-Ḍiyã' al-Maqdisī — Ḍiyã'u d-Dīn, Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn `Abdi 'l-Wãḥid as-Sa'dī al-Ḥanbali (569/1173 — 643/1245), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

ad-Dũlãbī — Abũ Bishr, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥammãd al-Anṣãri

ar-Rãzī al-Ḥanafī (224/839 — 310/923), the famous Ḥanafite traditionalist.

ad-Dũrī — Abũ `Umar, Ḥafṣ ibn `Umar ibn `Abdi 'l-`Azīz al-Azdi (150/767— 246/860), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

al-Fãḍil al-Jawãd — Abũ `Abdillãh, Shamsu 'd-Dīn, Muhammad Jawãd ibn Sa`d (-i 'llah) ibn Jawãd al-Kãẓimī (? — 1065/1655), the Imãmite scholar.

al-Fãḍil al-Miqdãd — Abũ `Abdillãh, al-Miqdãd ibn `Abdillãh ibn Muhammad as-Suyũri al-Asadī al-Ḥillī (c. 740/1340 — 828/1423) , the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Faḍl ibn Shãdhãn — Abũ Muhammad al-Azdī an-Naysãbũrī (c. 195/811 — 1260/873), the great Imãmite scholar.

Fakhru 'l-Muḥaqqiqīn — Fakhru 'd-Dīn, Abũ Ṭãlib, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan (al-`Allãmah al-Ḥillī) al-Asadi (682/1283 — 771/1370), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Fãriyãbī — *see* al-Firyãbi.

al-Fattal — Abũ `Ali, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn `Ali an-Naysãbũrī (? — 514/1120) , the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Fayḍ al-Kãshãni — Muhammad Muḥsin (1010/1599 — 1091/1690), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Fīrũzãbãdi — Majdu 'd-Dīn, Muhammad ibn Ya`qũb ash-Shãfi`ī (729/1329 — 811/1415) , the famous Sunnī scholar.

al-Firyãbī — Abũ Bakr, Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan (207/822 — 301/913), the Sunnī scholar.

Furãt ibn Ibrãhīm ibn Furãt al-Kũfī (? — c. 300/913) , the Imãmite commentator and traditionalist.

al-Ganji — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Yũsuf ibn Muhammad ash-Shãfi`ī (? — 658/1260), the Sunnī scholar.

al-Ghazãli — Abũ Ḥãmid, Muhammad, ibn Muhammad at-Tũsī (450/1058-505/1111), the famous Shãfi`ite scholar.

Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymãn ibn al-Mughīrah — Abũ `Umar al-Asadī al-Kũfī (90/709-

180/796), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

al-Ḥãkim — Abũ `Abdillãh, Ibnu 'l-Bayyi', Muhammad ibn `Abdillãh aḍ-Ḍabbi an-Naysãbũrī ash-Shãfi`ī (321/933 — 405/1014), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Ḥãkim al-Ḥasakãnī — `Ubaydullãh ibn Aḥmad an-Naysãbũrī al-Ḥanafī (? — a.d. 490/1097), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Ḥãkim at-Tirmidhi — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn al-Ḥasan (? — c. 320/932), the Sunnī Ṣũfi scholar.

(as-Sayyid) Ḥãmid Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad Quli al-Mũsawi al-Kantũrī (1246/ 1830 — 1306/1888), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ḥammãd ibn `Īsã — Aba Muhammad al-Juhanī al-Kũfī (c. 124/742 — 209/ 824) , the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Ḥammũyī — Abũ Isḥãq, Ibrãhīm ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Juwayni ash-Shãfi`ī (644/1246 — 742/1322), the Sunnī scholar.

Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb ibn `Umãrah at-Taymi az-Zayyãt al-Kũfī (80/700 — 156/ 773), one of the seven reciters of the Holy Qur'ãn.

Hannãd ibnu's- Sariyy ibn Muṣ`ab at-Tamīmī al-Kũfī (152/769 — 243/857), the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbũb ibn Wahb - Aba `Ali as-Sarrãd (az-Zarrãd) al-Bajalī

al-Kũfī (149/766 — 224/839), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Ḥasan ibn Muhammad ibn Samã`ah — Abũ Muhammad al-Kindi, aṣ-Ṣayrafī al-Kũfī (? - 263/877), the reliable Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyãn ibn `Ãmir — Abu 'l-`Abbãs ash-Shaybãni an-Nasawī ash-Shãfi`ī (213/828 — 303/916), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ḥasan ibn Sulaymãn ibn Khãlid al-Ḥillī (? — a.d. 757/1356), the Imãmite scholar.

al-Haythami — Naru 'd-Dīn, Aba Bakr, `Ali ibn Abi Bakr ibn Sulaymãn al-Miṣrī ash-Shãfi`ī (735/1335 — 807/1405), the Sunnī scholar.

Hibatullãh ibn Salãmah — Abu 'l-Qãsim al-Baghdãdī (? — 410/1019), the Sunnī commentator.

al-Ḥimyari — Abu 'l-'Abbãs, `Abdullãh ibn Ja'far ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Qummi (? — a.d. 297/910) , the reliable Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Ḥīrī — Abũ Sa'īd, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`īd an-Naysãbũrī ash-Shafi`i (288/901—353/964), the Sunnī commentator and traditionalist.

Hishãm ibn al-Ḥakam — Abũ Muhammad ash-Shaybãni al-Kũfī (c. 105/723—189/805), the celebrated Imãmite traditionalist and scholar.

al-Ḥumaydi — Abũ Bakr, `Abdullãh ibn az-Zubayr al-Asadi al-Makki (? — 219/834), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ḥumrãn ibn A'yan — Abu ’l-Ḥasan ash-Shaybãni al-Kũfī (? — c. 130/748), the famous Imãmite traditionalist and reciter of the Holy Qur’ãn.

al-Ḥurr al-`Ãmilī — Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan (1033/1625 — 1104/1693), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa‘īd ibn Ḥammãd al-Ahwãzi (? — c. 250/864), the reliable Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibn `Abdi 'l-Bãrr — Abũ `Umar, Yũsuf ibn `Abdillãh al-Qurṭubi al-Mãliki (368/978 — 463/1071), the famous Sunnī scholar.

Ibn `Abdi 'l-Ḥakam — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn `Abdillãh al-Miṣrī al-Mãliki (182/798 — 268/882), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn `Abd Rabbah - Abũ `Umar, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Qurṭubi (246/ 860 — 328/940) , the famous Sunnī man of letters.

Ibn Abi `Aqīl — Abũ Muhammad, al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali al-Ḥadhdhã' al- `Umãnī (fl. 4th/ 10th c.), the Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Abī Dãwũd - Abũ Bakr, `Abdullãh ibn Sulaymãn ibn al-Ash‘ath al- Azdi as-Sajistãni (230/844 — 316/929) , the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Abi 'd-Dunyã — Abũ Bakr, `Abdulla h ibn Muhammad al-Umawī al-Bagh-
dãdi (208/823 — 281/894), the Sunnī historian and traditionalist.

Ibn Abi Ḥãtim — Abũ Muhammad, `Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Muhammad al-Ḥanẓali ar-Rãzī (240/854 — 327/938), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Abi Jumhũr — Shamsu 'd-Dīn, Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Ibrãhīm al-Aḥsã'i
(? — c. 880/1475), the Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Abi Laylã -'Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Yasar al-Anṣãri al-Kũfī (18/639 — 82/701), the famous *tãbi`ī* traditionalist.

Ibn Abi Naṣr al-Bazanṭi — Abũ Ja'far, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Amr al-K ũ f ī (? — 221/836), the great Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibn Abī Shaybah — Abũ Bakr, `Abdullãh ibn Muhammad al-`Absī al-Kũfī (159/776 — 235/849), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Abi Shaybah — Abũ ‘l-Ḥasan, `Uthmãn ibn Muhammad al- `Absi al- Kũfī (150/767 — 239/853), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Abi Shaybah — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn `Uthmãn al-'Absi al-Kũfī (c. 205/821 — 297/910), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Abi `Umayr — Abũ Muhammad, Muhammad ibn Abi `Umayr (Ziyad) ibn `Isã al-Azdī al-Baghdãdī (? — 217/832), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibn Abī Usãmah — Abũ Muhammad, al-Hãrith ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Usãmah at-Tamīmī al-Baghdãdī (186/802 — 282/895), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn `Adiyy — Abũ Aḥmad, `Abdullãh ibn `Adiyy al-Jurjani ash-Shãfi`ī (277/ 890 — 365/976), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibnu'l-Anbãri — *see* al-Anbãri.

Ibn al-'Arabi — al-Qãḍi, Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn `Abdillãh ibn Muhammad al-Undulusi al-Ash'ari al- Mãliki (468/1076 — 543/1148), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn al-'Arabi al-Ḥãtimi — Muḥyi 'd-Dīn, Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad aṭ-Ṭã'i al-Undulusi (560/1165 — 638/1240), the famous Sũfī Imãm.

Ibn `Asãkir — Abu 'l-Qãsim, `Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibatillãh ad-Dimashqi ash-Shãfi`ī (499/1105 — 571/1176), the famous Sunnī historian and traditionalist.

Ibn Ashtah — Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn `Abdillãh al-Iṣfahãnī (?—360/ 971), the Sunnī commentator.

Ibnu 'l-`Aṣṣãr — Abũ'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn `Abdi'r-Raḥīm ibn al-Ḥasan as-Sulamī al-Baghdãdī (508/1114 — 576/1180), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn A'tham — Abũ Muhammad, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Kũfī (? — 314/927), the historian.

Ibnu 'l-Athīr — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Izu 'd-Dīn, `Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jazari ash-Shãfi`ī (555/1160 — 630/1233), the famous Sunnī historian and traditionalist.

Ibnu 'l-Athīr — Abũ's-Sa`ãdãt, Majdu 'd-Dīn, al-Mubarak ibn Muhammad al-Jazari ash-Shãfi`ī (544/1149 — 606/1210), the famous Sunnī scholar.

Ibn `Aṭiyyah ad-Dimashqī — Abũ Muhammad, `Abdullãh ibn `Aṭiyyah (? — 383/993), the Sunnī commentator.

Ibn `Aṭiyyah al-Gharnãṭi — Abũ Muhammad, `Abdu 'l-Ḥaqq ibn Ghãlib al-Muḥãribi al-Mãlikī (481/1088 — 542/1148), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn `Ayyash al-Jawhari — Abũ `Abdillãh, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Ubaydillãh (? — 401/1011), the Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Babawayh — *see* aṣ-Ṣadũq.

Ibn Babawayh, Abu 'l-Ḥasan — `Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Mũsã al-Qummi (c. 260/874 -329/941), (the father of aṣ-Ṣadũq), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibnu 'l-Barrãj — al-Qãḍī, Sa`du 'd-Dīn, `Abdul-`Azīz ibn Niḥrīr ibn `Abdil-`Azīz aṭ-Ṭarãbulusi (c. 399/1008 — 481/1088), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Baṭṭah — Abũ `Abdillãh, `Ubaydullãh ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Hamdan al-'Ukbari al-Baghdãdī al-Ḥanbali (304/917 — 387/997), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibnu 'l-Biṭrīq — Abũ'l-Ḥusayn, Yaḥyã ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Asadi al-Ḥillī (523/1129 — 600/1204), the Imãmite scholar.

Ibnu 'd— Daylami — *see* ad-Daylami, Abũ Manṣũr.

Ibn Dhakwan — Abũ `Amr, `Abdullãh ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr al-Fihrī ad-

Dimashqī (173/789 — 242/857), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

Ibnu 'd-Durays — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Ayyũb ibn Yaḥyã al-Bajali ar-Rãzī (200/815 — 294/906), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Faḍḍãl — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali al-Kũfī (c. 206/821 — c. 280/893), the reliable Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibn Faḍḍãl — Abu 'l-Ḥusayn, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali al-Kũfī (? -- 260/874) , the reliable Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibn Faḍḍãl — Abũ Muhammad, al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali ibn Faḍḍãl al-Kũfī (? — 224/839), the reliable Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibn Fahad — Abu 'l-`Abbãs, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Asadi al-Ḥillī (756/ 1355 — 841/1437), the Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Ḥajar al-`Asqalãni — Shihãbũ 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Faḍl, Aḥmad ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad ash-Shãfi`ī (773/1372 — 852/1449), the famous Sunnī historian and traditionalist.

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī — Abu 'l-`Abbãs, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Anṣãri ash-Shãfi`ī (909/1503 — 973/1566), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Ḥamzah — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Ḥamzah aṭ-Ṭũsī al-Ḥã'iri (? — a.d. 560/1165), the Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Ḥanbal — *see* Aḥmad.

Ibn Ḥasnun — Abũ Aḥmad, `Abdullãh ibn al-Ḥusayn as- Sãmarri al-Miṣri (295/908 — 386/996), the Sunnī commentator.

Ibnu 'l-Ḥaṣṣãr — `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrãhīm al-Khazrajī al-Fãsi al-Mãliki (? — 611/1214), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Ḥibbãn — Abũ Ḥãtim, Muhammad ibn Hibban at-Tamfmi al-Busti ash-Shãfi`ī (270/884 — 354/965), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Hishãm — Abũ Muhammad, `Abdu 'l-Malik ibn Hishãm al-Baṣrī (? — 213/828), the famous Sunnī historian.

Ibn Idrīs — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn Manṣũr ibn Aḥmad al-`Ajlī al-Ḥillī (543/1148 — 598/1202), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Isḥãq — Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn Isḥãq ibn Yasãr al-Muṭṭalibī al-Madani (c. 85/704 — 151/768), the famous historian and traditionalist.

Ibn Jammãz — Abũ ' r-Rabī` , Sulaymãn ibn Muslim az- Zuhri al-Madani (? — a.d. 170/787), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

Ibn Jarir al-Imãmi — Abũ Ja' far, Muhammad ibn Jarīr ibn Rustam al-Ãmulī aṭ-Ṭabarī (fl. 4th/ 10th c.) , the Imãmite scholar.

Ibnu 'l-Jawzī — Abu 'l- Faraj, `Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad al-Baghdãdī' al-Ḥanbali (508/1114 — 597/1202), the famous Ḥanbalite scholar.

Ibn Jinnī —Abũ 'l-Fatḥ, `Uthmãn ibn Jinnī al-Mawṣili al-Baghdãdī (c.

328/ 940 — 392/1002), the famous scholar.

Ibnu 'l-Junayd — Abũ `Ali, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibnu 'l-Junayd, al-Kãtib al-Iskafi al-Baghdãdī (? — 381/991), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Jurayj — Abu 'l-Walīd, `Abdu 'l-Malik ibn `Abdi 'l-`Azīz al-Makkī (80/699 — 150/767), the famous commentator and traditionalist.

Ibn Kathīr — `Imãdu'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Fida', Ismã'īl ibn `Umar ad-Dimashqiash-Shãfi`ī (701/1302 — 774/1373), the famous Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Kathīr al-Makki — `Abdullãh ibn Kathir ad-Dārī (45/665 — 120/738), one of the seven reciters of the Holy Qur'ãn.

Ibn Khãlawayh — Abũ `Abdillãh, al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadãni al-Ḥalabi (? — 370/980), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Khaldũn — Abũ Zayd, `Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Muhammad al-Ishbīlī (732/1332 — 808/1406), the famous Sunnī scholar.

Ibnu 'l-Kharã 'iṭi —*see* al-Khara 'iṭi.

Ibn Khuzaymah — Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn Isḥãq ibn Khuzaymah as-Sulamī an-Naysãbũrī ash-Shãfi`ī (223/838 — 311/924), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn al-Maghãzili — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jullãbi al-Wãsiṭi ash-Shãfi`ī (? — 483/1090), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Mãjah — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Yazīd ar-Raba'ī al-Qazwinī (209/824 — 273/887), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Mandah, Abũ `Abdillãh (I) — Muhammad ibn Yaḥyã al-`Abdi al-Iṣfahãni al-Ḥanbali (220/835 — 301/914), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Mandah, Abũ `Abdillãh (II) — Muhammad ibn Isḥãq ibn Muhammad ibnYaḥyã al-Ḥanbali (310/922 — 395/1005), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Mandah, Abũ Zakariyyã — Yaḥya ibn `Abdi 'l-Wahhãb ibn Muhammad ibn Isḥãq al-Ḥanbali (434/1043 -511/1118), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Manī' — Abũ Ja'far, Aḥmad ibn Manī' al-Baghawi al-Baghdãdī (160/777 — 244/859), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Manẓũr — Abu 'l-Faḍl, Jamalu 'd-Dīn, Muhammad ibn Mukarram al-Ifriqī (630/1232 — 711/1311), the famous linguist.

Ibn Marduwayh — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn Mũsã al-Iṣfahãnī (323/935 — 410/ 1019) , the Sunnī commentator and traditionalist.

Ibn Maysarah — Abu 'l-Walīd, Hisham ibn `Ammãr ibn Nuṣayr as-Sulamī ad-Dimashqi (153/770 — 245/859), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn and traditionalist.

Ibn Maytham — Kamālu 'd-Dīn, Maytham ibn `Ali ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī (636/1238 — 699/1299), the famous Imāmite scholar.

Ibn Miqsam — Abū Bakr, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ya`qūb al-`Aṭṭār al-Baghdādī (265/878 — 354/965), the Sunnī commentator.

Ibn Miskūyah — Abū `Ali, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ya`qūb (c. 325/937 — 421/1030) , the famous scholar and historian.

Ibnu 'l-Mubārak — Abū `Abdi 'r-Raḥmān, `Abdullāh ibn al-Mubārak ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Ḥanẓali al-Marwazī (118/736 — 181/797), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn al-Munādī — Abū 'l-Ḥusayn, Aḥmad ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī (256/871 — 336/947), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibnu 'l-Mundhir — Abū Bakr, Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm an-Naysābūrī al-Makkī (242/858 — 319/931), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibnu 'l-Muṭahhar — Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn, `Ali ibn Yūsuf ibn `Ali al-Asadi al-Ḥillī (635/1238 — 710/1310) , the Imāmite scholar.

Ibnu 'n-Najjār — Muḥibbu 'd-Dīn, Abū `Abdillāh, Muhammad ibn Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī ash-Shāfi`ī (578/1183 — 643/1245), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

ibn Qāni` — Abu 'l-Ḥusayn, `Abdu 'l-Bāqī ibn Qāni` ibn Marzūq al-Umawī al-Baghdādī (265/879 — 351/962), the famous traditionalist.

Ibnu 'l-Qayyim — Abū `Abdillāh, Shamsu 'd-Dīn, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah ad-Dimashqi (691/1292 — 751/1350), the student of Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqiyyu 'd-Dīn.

Ibn Qūlawayh — Abu 'l-Qāsim, Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far ibn Mūsā al-Qummi (c. 285/898 — 368/979), the famous Imāmite scholar.

Ibn Qutaybah — Abū Muhammad, `Abdillāh ibn Muslim ad-Dīnawarī (213/828 — 276/889) , the famous Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Rāhwayh — Abū Ya`qūb, Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Makhlad al-Ḥanẓali al-Marwazī (161/778 — 238/853), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibnu 'r-Rāzī — Abū Muhammad, Ja'far ibn Aḥmad al-Qummī (fl. 4th/10th c.), the Imāmite traditionalist.

Ibnu 'ṣ-Ṣabbāgh — Nuru 'd-Dīn, `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Aḥmad as-Safāqisī al-Mālikī (784/1383 — 855/1451), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Sa'd — Abū `Abdillāh, Muhammad ibn Sa`d al-Baghdādī, Kātibul-Wāqidī (168/784 — 230/845), the famous Sunnī historian.

Ibn Sa'īd al-Ḥillī — Abū Zakariyyā, Yaḥya ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥya al-Ḥudhali (601/1205 — 690/1291), the famous Imāmite scholar.

Ibn Sayyidi 'n- Nās, Fatḥu 'd-Dīn — Abu 'l-Fatḥ, Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ya'muri, al-Ishbīlī, ash-Shāfi`ī (671/1273 — 734/1334), the famous

Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Shãhīn — Abũ Ḥafṣ, `Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn `Uthmãn al-Baghdãdī (297/909 — 385/995), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Shahrãshũb — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn `Ali as-Sãrawī al-Mãzandarãnī (489/1096 — 588/1192), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ibnu 'sh-Shaykh — Abũ `Ali, al-Ḥasan ibn (Shaykhu 'ṭ-Ṭa'ifah) Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Tũsī (? — c. 515/1121), the Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Shu'bah — Abũ Muhammad, al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali ibn Shu'bah al-Ḥarrãni (? — 4th/11th c.), the Imãmite traditionalist.

Ibnu 's-Sikkīt — Abũ Yũsuf, Ya`qũb ibn Isḥãq al-Baghdãdī (186/802 -- 244/858), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ibn as-Sunnī — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isḥãq ad-Dīnawari (284/897 — 364/974), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Ṭalḥah — Kamalu 'd-Dīn, Abũ Sãlim, Muhammad ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Muhammad al-'Adawi ash-Shãfi`ī (582/1186 — 652/1254), the Sunnī scholar.

Ibn Ṭãwũs — Ghiyathu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Muẓaffar, `Abdu 'l-Karīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Mũsã ibn Ja'far al-Ḥasani al-Ḥillī (648/1250 — 693/1294), the great Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Ṭãwũs — Jamalu'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Faḍã'il, Aḥmad ibn Mũsã ibn Ja'far al-Ḥasani al-Ḥillī (c . 592/1196 — 673/1274), the great Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Ṭãwũs — Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Qãsim, `Ali ibn Mũsã ibn Ja'far al-Ḥasani al-Ḥillī (589/1193 — 664/1266), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Ibn Taymiyyah — Majdu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Barakãt, `Abdu 's-Salãm ibn `Abdi-llah al-Ḥarrani al-Ḥanbali (590/1194 — 653/1255), the famous Hanbalite scholar.

Ibn Taymiyyah — Taqiyyu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-`Abbãs, Aḥmad ibn `Abdi 'l-Halim ibn `Abdi 's-Salim al-Ḥarrani al-Ḥanbali (661/1263 — 728/1328), the famous Ḥanbalite scholar.

Ibn 'Uqdah — Abu 'l-`Abbãs, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'īd al-Kũfī (250/864 — 332/944), the famous Shī'ite traditionalist.

Ibn `Uyaynah — Abũ Muhammad, Sufyãn ibn `Uyaynah ibn Maymũn al-Hilãli al-Kũfī (107/725 — 198/814), the famous traditionalist.

Ibn Wãḍiḥ — *see* al-Ya`qũbi.

Ibn Wahb al-Miṣrī — Abũ Muhammad, `Abdullãh ibn Wahb ibn Muslim al-Fihri al-Mãliki (125/743 — 197/813), the famous Mãlikite scholar.

Ibn Zayd — `Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Zayd ibn Aslam al-'Adawī al-Madani (? — 182/798), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Ibn Zuhrãh — `Izzu 'd-Dīn, Abu ’l-Makãrim, Ḥamzah ibn `Ali al-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥalabi (511/1117 — 585/1189), the great Imãmite scholar.

Idrīs Ibn `Abdi 'l-Karīm — Abu ’l-Ḥasan al-Ḥaddad al-Baghdãdī (199/815—292/905), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ãn.

al-Ījī al-Qãḍi `Aḍudu 'd-Dīn, `Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Aḥmad ibn `Abdi 'l-Ghaffãr ash-Shīrãzi al-Ash‘ari ash-Shãfi`ī (708/1308 — 756/1355), the famous Ash‘arite scholar.

`Ikrimah ibn `Abdillãh, Abũ `Abdillãh al-Barbarī (25/645 — 105/723), the Khãrijite *tãbi`ī* scholar.

‘Imãdu'd-Dīn aṭ-Ṭabari — Muhammad ibn Abi'l-Qãsim, `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Amuli (? — c. 525/1131), the Imãmite traditionalist.

Imãmu 'l-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī — Diyã 'u 'd-Dīn, Abu ’l-Ma`ãli, `Abdu'l-Malik ibn `Abdillãh ibn `Abdi 'l-Malik an-Naysãbũrī al-Ash'ari ash-Shãfi`ī (419/1028 — 478/1085), the famous Ash‘arite scholar.

al-Irbilī — Bahã 'u 'd-Dīn, `Ali ibn `Īsã ibn Abi 'l- Faṭh (625/1228 — 692/1293) , the famous Imãmite scholar.

`Īsã ibn Wardãn, Abu ’l-Ḥãrith al-Ḥadhdhã' al-Madani (? — c. 160/777), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ãn.

al-Iṣfahãnī — *see* ar-Raghib.

al-Iṣfahãnī — Abũ Muslim, Muhammad ibn Baḥr (254/868 — 322/934), the famous Mu‘tazilite scholar and commentator.

al-Iṣfahãnī al-Madīnī — Abũ Mũsã, Muhammad ibn `Umar ibn Aḥmad ash-Shafi`ī (501/1108 — 581/1185), the famous Sunnī scholar.

al-Iṣfahãnī al-Malanjī — Abũ Mas‘ũd, Sulaymãn ibn Ibrãhīm ibn Muhammad (397/1007 — 486/1093), the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Iṣfahãni at-Taymī — Qawamu'd-Dīn, Abũ'l-Qãsim, Ismã‘īl ibn Muhammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Qurashī ash-Shãfi`ī (457/1065 — 535/1141), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Isḥãq ibn Ibrãhīm ibn `Uthmãn — Abũ Ya`qũb al-Marwazi al-Baghdãdī (? — 286/899), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ãn.

al-Istarabãdī — Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Ibrãhīm (? — 1028/1619), the Imãmite scholar.

Jãbir ibn Yazīd ibn al-Ḥãrith — Abũ `Abdillãh al-Ju‘fi al-Kũfī (? — 128/745), the Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Jãḥiẓ — Abũ `Uthmãn, `Amr ibn Baḥr al-Baṣrī (163/780 — 255/869), the famous Mu‘tazilite man of letters.

al-Jaṣṣaṣ — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn `Ali ar-Rãzī al-Ḥanafī (305/917 — 370/980), the Ḥanafite scholar.

al-Jawharī — Abũ Isḥãq, Ibrãhīm ibn Sa‘īd al-Baghdãdī al-Ḥanbali (?

247/861) , the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Jawhari — Abũ Naṣr, Ismã‘īl ibn Ḥammãd an-Naysãbũrī (? — 393/ 1003), the famous linguist.

al-Jaza'irī — ash-Shakh Aḥmad ibn Ismã‘īl ibn `Abdi 'n-Nabi an-Najafi (? — 1151/1738), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Jazã’irī — Shamsu 'd-Dīn, Abu ’l-Khayr, Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Umari ash-Shãfi`ī (751/1350 — 833/1429), the famous Sunnī traditionalist and reciter of the Holy Qur’ãn.

al-Jubbã'ī — Abũ `Ali, Muhammad ibn `Abdi 'l-Wahhãb al-Baṣrī (235/ 849 — 303/916), the famous Mu‘tazilite scholar.

al-Jubbã'ī — Abũ Hãshim, `Abdu's-Salãm ibn Muḥammad al-Baṣrī (247/ 861 — 321/933), the famous Mu‘tazilite scholar.

al-Ka‘bī al-Balkhī — Abu ’l-Qãsim, `Abdullãh ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmũd al-Mu‘tazilī al-Ḥanafī (273/886 — 319/931), the famous Mu`tazilite scholar.

al-Kalbī — Abu ’l-Mundhir, Hishãm ibn Muḥammad al-Kũfī (? — 204/ 819), the famous Imãmite historian and traditionalist.

al-Kalbī — Abũ 'n-Naḍr, Muhammad ibn as-Sã‘ib al-Kũfī (? — 146/763), the famous Imãmite historian and traditionalist.

al-Karãjikī — Abu ’l-Fatḥ, Muḥammad ibn `Alī ibn `Uthmãn (c. 369/950 — 449/1057), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Kãshãnī — Fatḥullãh ibn Shukrillãh (? — 988/1580), the Imãmite scholar and commentator.

Khalaf ibn Hishãm — Abũ Muḥammad al-Bazzãr al-Asadī al-Baghdãdī (150/ 767 - 229/844), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ãn.

Khallãd ibn Khãlid — Abũ `Isã, aṣ-Ṣayrafī ash-Shaybãni al-Kũfī (? — 220/835), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ãn.

al-Khara'iṭī — Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn Ja‘far as-Sãmarrī (240/854 — 327/ 938), the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Kharkũshī — Abũ Sa‘īd, `Abdu'l-Malik ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrãhīm

an-Naysãbũri (? — 407/1016), the famous Sunnī traditionalist. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdãdī — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn `Ali ibn Thãbit ash-Shãfi`ī (392/1002 — 463/1072), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Khaṭīb al-Khwãrazmī — Abũ'l-Mu'ayyad, al-Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad

al-Ḥanafī. (484/1091 — 568/1172), the famous Sunnī scholar. al-Khaṭṭãbī — Abũ Sulaymãn, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Busti (319/931— 388/998), the Sunnī scholar.

Khaythamah ibn Sulaymãn — Abu ’l-Ḥasan al-Qurashi aṭ-Ṭarãbulusī (250/ 864 — 343/955), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Khãzin — `Alau 'd-Dīn, `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrãhīm al-Baghdãdī ash-Shãfi`ī (678/1280 — 741/1341), the Sunnī commentator.

al-Kisã'ī — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn Ḥamzah ibn `Abdillãh al-Asadi al-Kũfī (119/737 — 189/805), the famous scholar and reciter of the Qur'ãn.

al-Kishshi — Abũ `Amr, Muhammad ibn `Umar ibn `Abdi 'l-`Azīz (? —c. 340/951), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Kulaynī — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn Ya`qũb ar-Rãzī (? — 328/9 = 940/1), the celebrated Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Lãlikã'i — Abu 'l-Qãsim, Hibatullãh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Manṣũr at-Ṭabari ash-Shãfi`ī ( ? — 418/1027), the Shãfi`ite scholar.

Layth ibn Khãlid — Abu 'l-Ḥãrith. al-Baghdãdī (? — 240/854), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

al-Madã'inī — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn `Abdillãh al-Baṣrī (135/752 — 225/840), the famous historian.

al-Maḥãmilī — Abũ `Abdillãh, al-Ḥusayn ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad aḍ-Ḍabbī al-Baghdãdī (235/849 — 330/941), the famous traditionalist.

al-Majlisī (I) — Muhammad Taqī ibn Maqṣũd `Ali (1003/1595 — 1070/1660), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Majlisī (II) — Muhammad Bãqir ibn Muhammad Taqī, al-`Allãmah al-Majlisī (1037/1628 — 1110/1699), the celebrated Imãmite scholar.

Mãlik ibn Anas — Abũ `Abdillãh al-Aṣbaḥī al-Madanī (93/712 — 179/795), the Mãlikite Imãm.

al-Maqrīzī — Taqqiyu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-`Abbãs, Aḥmad ibn `Ali ibn `Abdi 'l-Qãdir al-Miṣri, al-Ḥanafī (769/1367 — 845/1441), the famous historian.

al-Marwazī — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Naṣr (202/817 — 294/906), the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Marzubãnī — Abũ Abdillah, Muhammad ibn `Imrãn ibn Mũsã al-Baghdãdī (297/910 — 384/994), the famous Imãmite scholar.

al-Mãwardī — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī ash-Shãfi`ī (364/974 — 450/1058), the Sunnī scholar.

Mu`ãwiyah ibn `Ammãr — Abu 'l-Qãsim ad-Duhnī al-Kũfī (100/974 — 175/791), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

al-Mubarrad — Abu 'l-`Abbãs, Muhammad ibn Yazīd ibn `Abdi'l-Akbar al-Azdī al-Baṣrī (210/826 — 286/899), the famous linguist and historian.

al-Mufīd — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn an-Nu`mãn, Ibnu 'l-Mu`allim al-Mufīd al-`Ukbarī al-Baghdãdī (336/948 — 413/ 1022), the celebrated Imãmite scholar.

Muhammad `Abduh (ash-Shaykh) ibn Ḥasan Khayrillāh (1266/1850 — 1323/1905), the famous Egyptian scholar.

Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ash-Shaybānī (? — 2nd half of the 7th/ 13th c.).

Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ash`ath — Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Kūfī al-Miṣrī (? - fl. 313/925), the Imāmite traditionalist.

Muhammad ibn Muslim — Abū Ja'far ath-Thaqafī al-Kūfī (c. 80/723 — 150/767),the celebrated Imāmite scholar and traditionalist.

Muhammad ibn Naṣr — Abū `Abdillāh al-Marwazi (202/817 — 294/906), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Muḥaqqīq al-Ardabīlī — ash-Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muhammad an-Najafī (c. 910/1505 — 993/1585), the great Imāmite scholar.

al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī — Najmu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Qāsim, Ja`far ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Yaḥya ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Sa'īd al-Ḥudhalī (602/1206 — 676/1277), the celebrated Imāmite scholar.

al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī — Nūru 'd-Dīn, `Ali ibn `Abdi 'l-`Āli al-`Āmilī (c. 868/1463 — 940/1534), the famous Imāmite scholar.

al-Muḥaqqiq al-Khwānsāri — al-Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad ibn al-Husyan (1016/1608 — 1098/1687), the famous Imāmite scholar.

al-Muḥaqqiq as-Sabzawārī — Muhammad Bāqir ibn Muhammad Mu'min (c. 1000/1592 — 1090/1679), the famous Imāmite scholar.

al-Muḥibb aṭ-Ṭabari — Muḥibbu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-`Abbās, Aḥmad ibn `Abdillāh ibn Muhammad al-Makki ash-Shāfi`ī (615/1218 — 694/1295), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Muḥsin al-Fayḍ — *see* al-Fayḍ

Mujāhīd ibn Jabr — Abū 'l-Ḥajjāj al-Makkī (21/642 — 104/722), the famous commentator).

al-Mundhirī — Zakiyyu 'd-Dīn, Abū Muhammad, `Abdu'l-`Aẓim ibn `Abdi 'l-Qawī al-Miṣrī ash-Shāfi`ī (581/1185 — 656/1258), the famous traditionalist.

Muqātil ibn Ḥayyān — Abū Biṣṭām an-Nabaṭi al-Balkhi (? — c. 150/767), the Sunnī commentator.

Muqātil ibn Sulaymān — Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Azdī al-Balkhī (? — 150/767), the famous Sunnī commentator.

al-Murtaḍā — ash-Sharīf, Abu 'l-Qāsim, `Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, `Alamu 'l-Hudā, al-Mūsāwī (355/966 — 436/1044), the celebrated Imāmite scholar.

al-Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī — Abu 'l-Fayḍ, Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ḥusaynī (1145/1732 — 1205/1791), the famous linguist.

Mūsā ibn `Uqbah — Abū Muhammad al-Qurashī al-Asadī (? — 141/758), the Sunnī historian.

Musaddad ibn Musarhad ibn Musarbal — Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Asadi al-Baṣrī (? —

228/843), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

Muslim — Abu ’l-Ḥusayn, Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Qushayrī an-Naysābūrī (204/820 — 261/1875), the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Muttaqī al-Hindī — `Alā'u 'd-Dīn, `Ali ibn Ḥusami 'd-Dīn al-Burhānfūrī (885/1480 — 975/1567), the Sunnī scholar.

Nāfi‘ ibn `Abdi 'r-Raḥmān ibn Abi Nu‘aym al-Laythī al-Madanī (? — 169/785), one of the seven reciters of the Holy Qur’ān.

an-Naḥḥās — Abū Ja'far, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ismā`īl (? — 338/ 950) , the Sunnī scholar.

an-Najāshī — Abu ’l-Abbās, Aḥmad ibn `Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn al-`Abbās al-Asadi

al-Baghdādī (372/982 — 450/1058), the famous Imāmite scholar.

an-Najjād — Abū Bakr, Aḥmad ibn Salmān ibn al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī al-Ḥanbalī (253/867 — 348/960), the Sunnī traditionalist.

an-Naqqāsh — Abū Bakr, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muhammad al-Mawṣilī as-Shāfi`ī (266/880 — 351/962), the Sunnī scholar.

an-Nasafi — Abu ’l-Barakāt, `Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥanafī (? — 710/1310), the Sunnī commentator.

an-Nasā'i — Abū `Abdi 'r-Raḥmān, Aḥmad ibn `Ali ibn Shu‘ayb (215/830 — 303/915), the famous Shāfi`ite traditionalist.

Naṣiru 'd-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī — Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan (597/ 1201 — 672/1274), the celebrated Imāmite scholar.

(as-Sayyid) Nāṣir Ḥusayn ibn Ḥāmid Ḥusayn al-Mūsāwi al-Kantūrī (1284/ 1867 — 1361/1943), the famous Imāmite scholar.

Nasr ibn Muzāḥim — Abu ’l-Faḍl, al-Minqārī al-Kūfī (c . 120/738 — 212/ 827) , the famous Shi‘ite historian.

an-Nawawī — Muḥyi 'd-Dīn, Abū Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf ad-Dimashqī ash-Shafi`ī (631/1233 — 676/1277), the famous Sunnī scholar. an-Nawbakhti — Abū Muhammad, al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā ibn al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī (? — c. 310/922), the famous Imāmite scholar.

an-Nawbakhtī — Abū Sahl, Ismā‘īl ibn `Ali ibn Isḥāq al-Baghdādī (237/851 — 311/923), the famous Imāmite scholar.

an-Naysābūrī al-A‘raj — Niẓāmu 'd-Dīn, al-Ḥasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Qummi (? — a.d. 850/1446), the Sunnī commentator.

an-Naẓẓām — Abū Isḥāq, Ibrāhīm ibn Sayyār al-Baṣrī (c . 160/776 — 231/845) , the famous Mu‘tazilite scholar.

Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād — Abū `Abdillāh al-Marwazī (? — 229/844), the Sunnī traditionalist.

an-Nu`mānī — Abū `Abdillāh, Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'far, Ibn Abi Zaynab al-Kātib (? — c. 360/971), the Imāmite scholar.

an-Nūrī — al-Mīrzā Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad Taqī aṭ-Ṭabarsī (1254/1838 — 1320/1875), the famous Imāmite traditionalist.

al-Qāḍī `Abdi 'l-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad ibn `Abdu 'l-Jabbār al-Hamadānī al-Mu'tazilī ash-Shāfi`ī (320/932 — 415/1025), the famous Mu'tazilite scholar.

al-Qāḍī `Iyāḍ ibn Mūsā ibn `Iyāḍ — Abu 'l-Faḍl, al-Yaḥṣabī as-Sabtī al-Mālikī (476/1083 — 544/1149), the famous Mālikite scholar.

Qālūm — Abū Mūsā, `Īsā ibn Minā' ibn Wardān al-Madanī (220/738 — 220/ 835), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ān.

al-Quḍā'ī — Abū `Abdillāh, Muhammad ibn Salāmah ibn Ja'far al-Miṣrī ash-Shāfi`ī (? — 454/1062), the Sunnī scholar.

Qatādah ibn Di'āmah — Abu 'l-Khaṭṭāb as-Sadūsī al-Baṣrī (61/680 — 118/ 730, the famous commentator and traditionalist.

al-Qummī — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim (? — fl. 307/920), the Imāmite traditonalist.

Qunbul — Abū `Umar, Muhammad ibn 'Abdi 'r-Raḥmān ibn Muhammad al-Makhzūmī al-Makkī (195/810 — 291/904), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ān.

al-Qundūzī — Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muhammad al-Ḥanafī (1220/1805 — 1294/1877), the Sunnī scholar.

al-Qurṭubi — Abū `Abdillāh, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abi Bakr al-Anṣāri al-Mālikī (? — 671/1273), the Sunnī commentator.

al-Qushayrī — Abu 'l-Qāsim, `Abdu'l-Karīm ibn Hawāzim an-Naysābūrī al-Ash'ari ash-Shāfi`ī (376/986 — 465/1072), the Sunnī Sūfī scholar.

ar-Raḍī — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥusayn, ash-Sharīf ar-Raḍī al-Mūsāwi (359/970 — 406/1015), the famous Imāmite scholar.

ar-Rāghib — Abu 'l-Qāsim, al-Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad ibn al-MuFaḍḍāl al-Iṣfahānī (? — 502/1108) , the Ḥanafite scholar.

Rashīd Riḍā Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā ibn `Ali Riḍā at-Tarābulusī al-Miṣrī (1282/1865 — 1354/1935), the Sunnī scholar.

ar-Rāwandī — Quṭbu 'd-Dīn, Sa'īd ibn Hibatillāh al-Kāshānī (? – 573/1187), the famous Imāmite scholar.

Rawḥ ibn `Abdi 'l-Mu'min — Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Hudhalī al-Baṣrī (? – 234/848), the famous recite of the Holy Qur'ān.

Razīn ibn Mu`āwiyah ibn `Ammār — Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-`Abdarī as-Saraqasṭī al-Mālikī (? — 535/1140), the Sunnī traditionalist.

ar-Rummānī — Abū 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn `Īsā al-Baghdādī (296/908 — 384/ 994), the famous Mu'tazilite scholar and commentator.

Ruways — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn al-Mutawakkil al-Lu'lu'ī al-Baṣrī (? — 238/853), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

Sadru 'l-Muta'allihīn — Ṣadru 'd-Dīn, Muhammad ibn Ibrãhīm ibn Yaḥyã al-Qawãmī ash-Shīrãzī (979/1571 — 1050/1640), the celebrate Imãmite philosopher.

aṣ-Ṣadũq — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, Ibn Bãbawayh al-Qummī (c. 306/919 — 381/991), the celebrated Imãmite traditionalist. aṣ-Ṣaffãr — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Farrũkh al-Qummī (? — 290/903), the Imãmite traditionalist.

aṣ-Ṣafwãnī — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn `Abdillãh al-Quḍã`ī (? — a.d. 352/963), the Imãmite scholar.

Ṣafwãn ibn Yaḥyã — Abũ Muhammad al-Bajali al-Kũfī, Bayya`u's-Sabin (? — 210/825), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

Ṣahibu 'l-Ma`ãlim — Abũ Manṣũr, al-Ḥasan ibn Zaynu 'd-Dīn al-`Ãmilī (959/1552 — 1011/1602), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr — Abũ `Abdillãh al-Asadī al-Kũfī (45/665 — 95/714), the famous *tãbi'ī* scholar.

Sa'īd ibn al-Manṣũr — Ibn Shu'bah, Abũ `Uthmãn al-Marwazi (c. 152/969 — 227/842), the Sunnī commentator and traditionalist.

Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab ibn Ḥazn, Abũ Muhammad al-Makhzũmī al-Madanī (13/634 — 94/713), the famous *tãbi'ī* scholar.

Sallãr — Abũ Ya'lã, Sallãr (Sãlãr) ibn `Abdi 'l-`Azīz ad-Daylamī (? — 448/1056), the famous Imãmite scholar.

as-Sam'ãnī — Abũ Sa'd, `Abdu 'l-Karīm ibn Muhammad ash-Shãfi`ī (506/1113 — 562/1166), the famous Sunnī historian and traditionalist.

as-Sammãn — Abũ Sa'd, Ismã'īl ibn `Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ar-Rãzī (363/974— 447/1055), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Sammũyah — Abũ Bishr, Ismã'īl ibn `Abdillãh ibn Mas'ũd al-'Abdī al-Iṣfahãnī (? — 267/880), the Sunnī traditionalist.

ash-Sha`bī — Abũ `Amr, `Ãmir ibn Sharãḥil al-Ḥimyarī (19/649 — 103/ 721), the famous *tãbi`ī* traditionalist.

ash-Shãfi`ī — Abũ `Abdillãh, Muhammad ibn Idrīs (150/767 — 204/820), the Shãfi`ite Imãm.

ash-Shahīd al-Awwal — Shamsu 'd-Dīn, Muhammad ibn Makkī ibn Muhammad al-Jazzinī al-`Ãmilī (734/1333 — 786/1384), the celebrated Imãmite scholar.

ash-Shahīd ath-Thãnī — Zaynu d-Dīn ibn `Ali ibn Aḥmad al-Jaba'ī al-`Ãmilī (911/1505 — 966/1559), the celebrated Imãmite scholar.

Sharafu 'd-Dīn — as-Sayyid `Abdu 'l-Ḥusayn ibn Yũsuf al-Mũsãwi al-`Ãmilī

(1290/1873 — 1377/1957), the famous Imãmite scholar.

Sharafu 'd-Dīn al-Istarabãdī — as-Sayyid `Ali al-Ḥusaynī al-Gharawi (an-Najafi) (? — 2nd half of 10th/16th c.), the Imãmite scholar.

ash-Sharif al-Jurjãni — `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Ash'ari al-Ḥanafī (740/1340 — 816/1413), the famous Ash'arite scholar.

ash-Shãshī — Abũ Sa'īd, al-Haytham ibn Kulayb ibn Shurayḥ (? — 335/ 946), the Sunnī traditionalist.

ash-Sharīf al-Murtadã — *see* al-Murtaḍã.

ash-Sharīf ar-Raḍī — *see* ar-Raḍī.

ash-Shawkãnī — Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad al-Yamãnī (1173/ 1760 — 1250/1834), the Sunnī scholar.

ash-Shaykh — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn `Ali, Shaykhu 'ṭ-Ṭa'ifah, aṭ-Ṭũsī (385/995 — 460/1067), the celebrated Imãmite scholar.

ash-Shiblanji — Mu'min ibn Ḥasan ibn Mu'min al-Miṣrī ash-Shãfi`ī (1252/1836 — 1322/1904), the Sunnī scholar.

ash-Shīrãzī — Abũ Bakr, Aḥmad ibn `Abdi 'l-Raḥmãn ibn Aḥmad (? — 407/1017), the famous Sunnī scholar.

Shu'bah ibn `Ayyãsh ibn Sãlim — Abũ Bakr al-Azdī al-Khayyãṭ al-Kũfī (95/714 -193/809), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

Shubbar — as-Sayyid `Abdullãh ibn Muhammad Riḍã al-Ḥusaynī (1188/ 1774 — 1242/1827) , the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī — Shamsu 'd-Dīn, Abu 'l-Muẓẓafar, Yũsuf ibn Qizã'ughlī ibn `Abdillãh al-Ḥanafī (581/1185 — 654/1256), the famous Sunnī scholar.

as-Silafī — Abũ Ṭãhir, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad al-Iṣfahãnī (475/1082 — 576/ 1180) , the Sunnī scholar.

Simãk ibn Ḥarb ibn Aws — Abu 'l-Mughīrah adh-Dhuhlī al-Kũfī (? — 123/741), the *tãbi'ī* traditionalist.

as-Subkī, Tãju 'd-Dīn — Abũ Naṣr, `Abdu 'l-Wahhãb ibn `Ali ibn `Abdi 'l-Kãfī al-Miṣrī ash-Shãfi`ī (727/1327 — 771/1370), the famous Sunnī scholar.

as-Subkī, Taqiyyu 'd-Dīn — Abu 'l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn `Abdi 'l-Kafi al-Anṣãri ash-Shãfi`ī (683/1284 — 756/1355), the famous Sunnī scholar.

as-Suddī (al-Kabīr) — Ismã'īl ibn `Abdi'r-Raḥmãn al-Kũfī (? — 128/745), the commentator.

Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilãlī (? — c. 90/709), the Imãmite *tãbi`ī* traditionalist.

Sunayd ibn Dãwũd — Abũ `Ali al-Muḥtasib al-Miṣṣīṣī (? — 226/841), the Sunnī commentator and traditionalist.

as-Sũsī — Abũ Shu'ayb, Sãliḥ ibn Ziyãd ar-Raqqī (173/790 — 261/874), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur'ãn.

as-Suyũṭi — Jalãlu 'd-Dīn, `Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muhammad ash-

Shãfi`ī (849/1445 — 911/1505), the famous Shãfi`ite scholar.

aṭ-Ṭabarãnī — Abu ’l-Qãsim, Sulaymãn ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayyũb (260/873 — 360/971) , the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī — Abũ `Ali, al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl (? — 548/1153), the Imãmite commentator.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī — Abu ’l-Faḍl, `Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl (6th/12th c.), the Imãmite scholar.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī — Abũ Manṣũr, Aḥmad ibn `Ali (? — 620/1223), the Imãmite traditionalist.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī — Abũ Naṣr, al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan (? — 6th/12th c.), the Imãmite traditionalist.

at-Taftãzãnī — Sa`du 'd-Dīn, Mas‘ũd ibn `Umar ibn `Abdillãh al-Ash'ari ash-Shãfi`ī (712/1312 — 793/1390), the famous Sunnī scholar.

aṭ-Ṭahãwī — Abũ Ja'far, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salãmah al-Miṣrī al-Ḥanafī (239/853 — 321/933), the Ḥanafite scholar.

Ṭanṭãwī ibn Jawharī al-Miṣrī (1287/1870 — 1358/1940), the Sunnī Egyptian commentator.

aṭ-Ṭayãlisī — *see* Abũ Dãwũd aṭ-Ṭayãlisī.

aṭ-Ṭayyibī — Sharafu 'd-Dīn, al-Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad ibn `Abdillãh (? 743/1342), the famous Sunnī scholar.

ath-Tha`labī — Abũ Isḥãq, Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrãhīm (? — 427/ 1035), the Sunnī commentator.

ath-Thawrī — Abũ `Abdillãh, Sufyãn ibn Sa‘īd ibn Masruq al-Kũfī (97/716 — 161/778), the famous traditionalist.

ath-Thumãlī — Abũ Ḥamzah, Thãbit ibn Dīnãr al-Azdī al-Kũfī (? — 150/ 767), the famous Imãmite traditionalist.

at-Tirmidhi — Abũ `Isa, Muhammad ibn `Īsã as-Sulami (209/824 — 279/ 892) , the famous Sunnī traditionalist.

aṭ-Ṭurayḥī — Fakhru 'd-Dīn ibn Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Ṭurayḥ an-Najafī (979/1571—1087/1676), the great Imãmite scholar.

aṭ-Ṭũsī — *see* ash-Shaykh.

al-`Uqaylī — Abũ Ja'far, Muhammad ibn `Amr ibn Mũsã al-Makkī (? — 322/934), the Sunnī traditionalist.

al-Wãḥidī — Abu ’l-Ḥasan, `Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn Muhammad an-Naysãbũrī ash-Shãfi`ī (? — 468/1076), the Sunnī commentator.

Wakī‘ — Abũ Bakr, Muhammad ibn Khalaf ibn Ḥayyãn aḍ-Ḍabbī (? —

306/918), the Sunnī traditionalist.

Wakī‘ ibn al-Jarrāḥ — Abū Sufyān ar-Ru'āsī al-Kūfī (129/746 — 197/812), the Sunnī commentator and traditionalist.

al-Wāqidī — Abū `Abdillāh, Muhammad ibn `Umar as-Sahmī al-Madanī (130/747 — 207/823), the famous historian.

Warrām ibn Abī Firās al-Ḥillī (? — 605/1208), the Imāmite scholar.

Warsh — `Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd ibn `Adiyy al-Miṣrī (110/728 — 197/812), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ān.

Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā' — Abū Ḥudhayfah al-Ghazzāl al-Baṣrī (80/699 — 131/748), the Mu‘tazilite Imām.

Yaḥyā al-Baḥrānī (?)

Yaḥyā ibn Sallām ibn Abi Tha‘labah at-Taymī al-Baṣrī (124/742 — 200/815), the Sunnī commentator and traditionalist.

Ya`qūb ibn Isḥāq ibn Zayd — Abū Muhammad al-Ḥaḍramī al-Baṣrī (117/ 735 — 205/821), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ān.

al-Ya`qūbī, Ibn Wāḍiḥ — Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq (? — a.d.292/905), the famous historian.

Yazīd ibn al-Qa`gā‘ — Abū Ja'far al-Makhzūmī al-Madanī (? — 132/750), the famous reciter of the Holy Qur’ān.

al-Yazīdī — Abū Muhammad, Yaḥyā ibn al-Mubārak ibn al-Mughīrah al-‘Adawī al-Baṣrī (138/755 — 202/818), the famous linguist and reciter of the Holy Qur’ān.

Yūnus ibn `Abdu 'r-Raḥmān — Abū Muhammad al-Yaqṭīnī al-Baghdādī (c. 125/742 — 208/823-824), the famous Imāmite scholar and traditionalist.

az-Zajjāj — Abū Isḥāq, Ibrāhīm ibn as-Sarī ibn Sahl al-Baghdādī (241/855 - 311/923), the famous linguist.

az-Zajjaji — Abu ’l-Qāsim, `Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn Isḥāq an-Nahāwandī (? - 337/949), the famous scholar.

az-Zamakhsharī — Abu ’l-Qāsim, Jārullāh, Maḥmūd ibn `Umar ibn Muhammad al-Mu‘ tazilī al-Ḥanafī (467/1075 — 538/1144), the Sunnī scholar.

az-Zarkashī — Badru 'd-Dīn, Abū `Abdillāh, Muhammad ibn Bahādur ibn `Abdillāh al-Miṣrī ash-Shāfi`ī (745/1344 — 794/1392), the famous Sunnī scholar.

az-Zubayr ibn Bakkār ibn `Abdillāh al-Qurashī az-Zubayrī (172/788 — 256/870) , the famous Sunnī historian.

Zurārah ibn A‘yan — Abu ’l-Ḥasan ash-Shaybānī al-Kūfī (c. 60/680 — 150/767), the celebrated Imāmite scholar and traditionalist.

az-Zurqãnī — `Abdu ' l-Bãqi ibn Yũsuf ibn Aḥmad al-Mãlikī (1020/1611 — 1099/1688), the famous Mãlikite scholar.

* * * * *

APPENDIX `C'

WORKS REFERRED TO IN THIS VOLUME (OF *AL -MĪZÃN)* AND OTHER VOLUMES

NOTE: For reference to the full name of the authors and other information, see Appendix C.

Aḥkãmu 'l-Qur'ãn — Ibn al-`Arabī, al-Qãḍī, Abũ Bakr.
Aḥkãmu 'l-Qur'ãn — al-Jaṣṣãṣ.
al Akhlãq — Abu 'l-Qãsim al-`Alawī.
Alã 'u 'r-Raḥmãn (fi tafsīri 'l-Qur'ãn) — al-Balãghī.
al-Amãlī (al-Majãlis) — Ibnu 'sh-Shaykh.
al-Amãlī (al-Majãlis) — al-Mufīd.
al-Amãlī (al-Majãlis) — aṣ-Ṣadũq.
al-Amãlī (al-Majãlis) — ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭũsī.
Amanu 'l-akhṭãr — Ibn Ṭãwũs, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.
Anwaru 't-tanzīl (wa asraru 't-ta'wīl) (Tafsīr) — al-Baydãwī.
Asbãbũ 'n-nuzũl — al-Wãḥidī.
al-Aṣfã (Tafsīr) — al-Fayḍ al-Kãshãni.
*al-Ash`athiyyãt* — Muhhammad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ash`ath.
al-Asma' wa 's-ṣifãt — al-Bayhaqī.
al-Ãthãru 'l-bãqiyah 'ani 'l-qurũni 'l- khãliyah) — al-Bīrũnī.
Ayãtu 'l-aḥkãm — al-Istarabãdī.
al-Baḥru 'l-muḥīt — Abũ Ḥayyãn al-Undulusī.
Baṣã'iru d-darajãt — aṣ-Ṣaffãr.
al-Bayãn (fi akhbãr ṣãḥibi 'z-zamãn) — al-Ganjī.

Biḥãru 'l-anwãr — al-Majlisī (II).
Bishãratu 'l-Muṣṭafã (li shi'ati 'l-Murtaḍã) — `Imãdu 'd-Dīn aṭ-Ṭabarī.
al-Burhãn (fī Tafsīri 'l-Qur'ãn) — al-Baḥrani.
Da`ã'imu 'l-Islãm — Abũ Ḥanīfah al-Miṣrī.
ad-Da`awãt (Sulwatu 'l-ḥazīn) — ar-Rãwandī.
Dalã'ilu 'n-nubuwwah — al-Bayhaqī.
Dhakha'iru 'l-`uqbã (fi manaqibi dhawi 'l-qurbã) — al-Muḥibb aṭ-Ṭabarī.
Dhakhīratu 'l-ma`ãd — al-Biṣṭãmī.
ad-Durru 'l-manthũr (fi tafsīri kitãbi 'llãhi 'l-ma'thũr) — aṣ-Ṣuyũṭī.

Faḍīlatu 'l-Ḥusayn — ?
Fara'idu 'ṣ-ṣimṭayn — al-Ḥammũyī.
Fatḥu 'l-qadīr — ash-Shawkanī.
Fiqhu 'l-Qur'ãn — ar-Rãwandī.
al-Fuṣũlu 'l-muhimmah (if manãqibi 'l-a'immah) — Ibnu 'ṣ-Ṣabbãgh.

al-Ghadīr — al-Amīnī.
Gharã'ibu 'l-Qur'ãn (Tafsīr) — an-Naysãbũrī, *al-*A'raj.
al-Ghãrãt — Abũ Isḥãq ath-Thaqafī.
Ghawãliyu 'l-la'ãlī— Ibn Abi Jumhũr.
Ghãyãtu 'l-marãm — al-Baḥrãnī.
al-Ghaybah — an-Nu`mãnī.
al-Ghaybah — ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭũsī.
Ghuraru 'l-ḥikam (wa duraru 'l-kalim) — al-Ãmidī.

Ḥilyatu 'l-awliyã' — Abũ Nu'aym al-Iṣfahãnī.
al-Hudã ilã dīni 'l-Muṣṭafã — al-Balãghī.

al-Iḥtijãj — aṭ-Ṭabrisī, Abũ Manṣũr.
al-Iḥyã' (Iḥya' 'ulumu d-Dīn) — al-Ghazālī, Abũ Ḥãmid.
al-Ikhtiṣãṣ — al-Mufīd.
`Ilalu 'sh-sharã'i' — aṣ-Ṣadũq.
I`lamu 'l-warã (bi a`lãmi 'l-hudã) — aṭ-Ṭabrisī, Abũ `Ali.
al-Igbal — Ibn Tawas, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.
al-Irshãd — al-Mufīd.
Irshãdu 'l-qulũb — ad-Daylamī, Abũ Muhammad.
*al-Istī`ãb (fi ma'rifati 'l-asḥãb)* — Ibn `Abdi'l-Bãrr.
al-Istibṣãr (fī-mã khtalafa mina 'l-akhbãr) — ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭũsī.
Ithbãtu 'l-waṣiyyah — al-Mas'ũdī.

al-Itqãn (fi `ulũmi 'l-Qur'ãn) — as-Suyũṭī.

al -Ja`fariyyãt* (see *al-Ash`athiyyãt) .
Jamãlu 'l-usbũ' — Ibn Ṭãwũs, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.
al-Jãmi` li aḥkãmi 'l-Qur'ãn — al-Qurṭubi.
*Jãmi`u l-uṣũl* — Ibnu 'l-Athīr, Abũ 's-Sa`ãdãt.
al-Jãmi'u ṣ-ṣaghīr — as-Suyũṭī.
Jam`u 'l-jawãmi` — as-Ṣuyũṭī.
al-Jawãhir (Tafsīr) — Ṭanṭãwī ibn Jawharī.
Jawãmi`u 'l-jãmi` — aṭ-Ṭabrisī, Abũ `Ali.

al-Kãfī — al-Kulaynī.
Kamãlu 'd-Dīn (wa tamãmu 'n-ni'mah) — aṣ-Ṣadũq.
al-Kãmil (fi 't-tãrīkh) — Ibnu 'l-Athīr, Abu 'l-Ḥasan.
Kãmilu 'z-ziyãrah — Ibn Qũlawayh.
Kanzu 'l-fawã'id — al-Karãjikī.
Kanzu 'l- `irfãn (fī fighi 'l-Qur'ãn) — al-Fãḍil al-Miqdãd.
Kanzu 'l- `ummãl (fī sunani 'l-aqwali wa 'l-af`ãl) — al-Muttaqī al-Hindī.
Kashfu 'l-ghummah (fī ma'rifat 'l-a'immah) — al-Irbilī.
Kashfu 'l-maḥajjah (li thamarati 'l-muhjah) — Ibn Ṭãwũs, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.
al-Kashshãf — az-Zamakhsharī.
al-Kharã'ij wa 'l-jarã'iḥ — ar-Rãwandi.
al-Khasã'isu 'l-`alawiyyah — an-Nasã'ī.
al-Khiṣãl — aṣ-Ṣadũq.
Kifayatu 'ṭ-ṭãlib (fī manaqib Ali ibn Abī Ṭãlib) — al-Ganjī.

Lisãnu 'l-'Arab — Ibn Manẓũr.
Lubãbu 't-ta'wīl (fi ma`ani 't-tanzīl) — al-Khãzin.
Lubbu 'l-lubãb — ar-Rãwandī.

Ma`ãni 'l-akhbãr — aṣ-Ṣadũq.
Madãriku 't-tanzīl — an-Nasafī, Abu 'l-Barakãt.
al-Maḥajjatu 'l-bayḍã' (fī īḥã'I 'l-iḥyã') — al-Fayḍ al-Kãshãnī.
al-Maḥãsin (wa 'l-ãdãb) — al-Barqi.
Majma'u 'l-baḥrayn — aṭ-Ṭurayḥī.
Majma'u 'l-bayãn — aṭ-Ṭabrisī, Abũ `Ali.
Majma'u 'z-zawã'id (wa manba'u 'l-fawã'id) — al-Haythamī, Nũru 'd-Dīn.
Majmũ`at Warrãm (Nuzhatu 'n-nãẓir wa tanbīhu 'l-khãṭir) — Warrãm ibn

Abi Firãs.
Makãrimu 'l-akhlãq — aṭ-Ṭabrisī, Abũ Naṣr.
al-Manãqib — al-Khaṭīb al-Khwãrazmī.
Manãqib Ali ibn Abī Ṭãlib — Ibn al-Maghãzilī.
al-Manãqib (Manaqib ãl Abī Ṭãlib) — Ibn Shahrãshũb.
al-Manãr (Tafsīr) — ash-Shaykh Muhammad `Abduh and Rãshid Riḍã.
Manhaju 'ṣ-ṣãdiqīn (Tafsīr) — al-Kãshãni.
Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh (Faqīhu man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh) — aṣ-Ṣadũq.
al-Maṣãḥif — Ibn Ashtah.
Masãliku 'l-afhãm (fī ãyãti 'l-aḥkãm) — al-Fãḍil al-Jawãd.
Maṭãlibu 's-sa'ũl (fī manãqib ãli 'r-rasũl) — Ibn Ṭalḥah.
al-Mawã'iẓ (wa 'z-zawãjir) — al-'Askarī, Abũ Aḥmad.
Misbãḥu 'z-zã'ir — Ibn Ṭãwũs, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.
Mishkãtu 'l-anwãr — aṭ-Ṭabrisī, Abu 'l-Faḍl.
al-Mufradãt — ar-Rãghib.
Muḥkamu 'l-Qur'ãn wa mutashãbihahu — Ibn Shahrãshũb.
Muntakhab (Mukhtaṣar) baṣã'iri d-darajãt — Ḥasan ibn Sulaymãn.
Munyatu 'l-murīd — ash-Shahīd ath-Thãnī.
al-Muqni'ah — al-Mufīd.
al-Musnad — Abũ Dãwũd aṭ-Ṭayãlisī.
al-Musnad — Aḥmad (ibn Ḥanbal).
al-Mustadrak ('ala 's-saḥīḥayn) — al-Ḥãkim.
al-Muwaṭṭa' — Mãlik ibn Anas.

Nahju 'l-balãghah — ar-Raḍī (ash-Sharīf).
Nahju 'l-Bayãn ('an kashfi ma`ãni 'l-Qur'ãn) — Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan ash-Shaybãnī.
an-Nãsikh wa 'l-mansũkh — an-Naḥḥãs.
an-Nawãdir — Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Isã.
an-Nawãdir — ar-Rãwandī.
an-Nihãyah (fī gharībi 'l-ḥadīth) — Ibnu 'l-Athīr, Abũ 's-Sa`ãdãt.
an-Nubuwwah — aṣ-Ṣadũq.
Nuru 'l-abṣãr (fī manãqib ahli 'l-bayti 'l-aṭhãr) — ash-Shiblanjī.
Nũru 'th-Thaqalayn — al-`Arũsī.

Qalãidu 'd-durar — al-Jazã'irī.
al-Qãmũsu 'l-muḥīṭ — al-Fīrũzãbãdi.

Qiṣaṣu 'l-anbiyã' — ar-Rãwandi.
Qiṣaṣu 'l-anbiya' ('Arãisu 'l-majãlis) — *ath-Tha'labi*.
Qurbu 'l-isnãd — al-Ḥimyari.

Rawḍãtu 'l-Kãfī — see *al-Kãfī*.
Rawḍatu 'l-wã`iẓīn — al-Fattãl.
Rawḥu 'l-jinãn wa ruḥu 'l-janãn (Tafsīr) — Abu 'l-Futũḥ ar-Rãzī.
Ruḥu 'l-Bayãn — al-Burũsawī.
Ruḥu 'l-ma`ãnī — al-Ãlũsī.

Sa'adu 's-su`ũd — Ibn Ṭãwũs, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.
aṣ-Ṣãfî (Tafsīr) — al-Fayḍ al-Kãshãni.
aṣ-Ṣahīfah as-Sajjadiyyah — al-Imãm Zaynu 'l-`Abidīn (a.s.).
aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ — see *as-Sunan* — at-Tirmidhī.
aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ — al-Bukhãrī.
aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ (al-Jãmi'u 's-ṣaḥīḥ) — Muslim.
as-Sarã'ir — Ibn Idrīs.
ash-Shãfī — al-Murtaḍã (ash-Sharīf).
Shawãhidu 't-tanzīl (li qawã'idi 't-tna'wīl) — al-Ḥãkim al-Ḥasakãnī.
ash-Shihãb (Shihãbu 'l-akhbãr) — al-Quḍã'ī.
ash-Shihãb (fi 'l-ḥikami wa 'l-ãdãb) — Yaḥyã al-Baḥrãnī.
Shu'abu 'l- Īmãn — al-Bayhaqī.
aṣ-Siḥãḥ — al-Jawharī.
as-Sīrah (an-Nabawiyyah) — Ibn Hishãm.
aṣ-Ṣirãṭu 'l-mustaqīm (ilã mustaḥiqqi 't-taqdīm) — al-Bayãḍī.
as-Sunan — Abũ Dãwũd.
as-Sunan (al-kubrã) — al-Bayhaqī.
as-Sunan — ad-Dãrimī.
as-Sunan — ad-Dãr-quṭnī.
as-Sunan — Ibn Mãjah.
as-Sunan (al-Mujtanã) — an-Nasã'ī.
as-Sunan (al-Jãmi'u 's-Ṣaḥīḥ) — at-Tirmidhī.

at-Tabaqãt (al-Kabīr) — Ibn Sa`d.
Tadhkirat Khawãṣi 'l-`ummah (bi dhikri manãqibi 'l-a'immah) — Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī.
at-Tafsīr — al-`Ayyãshī.

at-Tafsīr — Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm.
at-Tafsīr — Ibn Kathīr.
at-Tafsīr — an-Nu`mānī.
at-Tafsīr — al-Qummī.
at-Tahdhīb = Tahdhību 'l-aḥkām — ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭūsī.
Tāju 'l `arūs (fī sharḥi 'l-qāmūs) — al-Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī.
Talkhiṣu 'sh-shāfī — ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭūsī.
aṭ-Ṭarā'if — Ibn Ṭāwūs, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.
at-Targhīb (wa 't-tarhīb) — al-Iṣfahānī at-Taymī.
at-Targhīb (wa 't-tarhīb) — al-Mundhirī.
at-Ta`rīf — aṣ-Ṣafwānī.
at-Tārīkh (al-Bidāyah wa 'n-nihāyah) — Ibn Kathīr.
at-Tawḥīd — aṣ-Ṣadūq.
Ta'wīlu 'l-āyāti 'l-bāhirah (aẓ-ẓāhirah) (fi 'l-'itrati 'ṭ-ṭāhirah) — Sharafu 'd-Dīn al-Istarabādī.
Ṭibbu 'l-a'immah — `Abdullāh and al-Ḥusayn ibn Bisṭām ibn Sābūr az-Zayyāt. *at-Tibyān (fī Tafsīri 'l-Qur'ān)* — ash-Shaykh at-Tūsī.
Tuḥafu 'l- `uqūl — Ibn Shu'bah.

al- `Udadu 'l-qawiyyah — Ibnu 'l-Muṭahhar.
`Uddatu d-dā'ī — Ibn Fahd.
al-Umm — ash-Shāfi`ī.
Usdu 'l-ghābah (fī ma'rifati 'ṣ-ṣaḥābah) — Ibnu 'l-Athīr, Abu 'l-Ḥassan.
`Uyūnu 'l-akhbār (`Uyunu akhbāri 'r-Riḍā(a.s).) — aṣ-Ṣadūq.

al-Wāfī — al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī.

Yanābī`u 'l-mawaddah — al-Qundūzī.
al-Yaqīn (fī imrati Amīri 'l-mu'minīn) — Ibn Ṭāwūs, Raḍiyyu 'd-Dīn.

Zādu 'l-ma`ād — Ibnu 'l-Qayyim.
Zawā'idu 'l-musnad — `Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.
Zubdatu 'l-Bayān (fi aḥkāmi 'l-Qur'ān) — al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ardabīlī.
az-Zuhd — al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd.
Zuhdu 'n-nabī — Ibnu 'r-Rāzī

* * * * *

al-Mīzān



AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān

BY:

al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 2

Translated by:

Sayid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi

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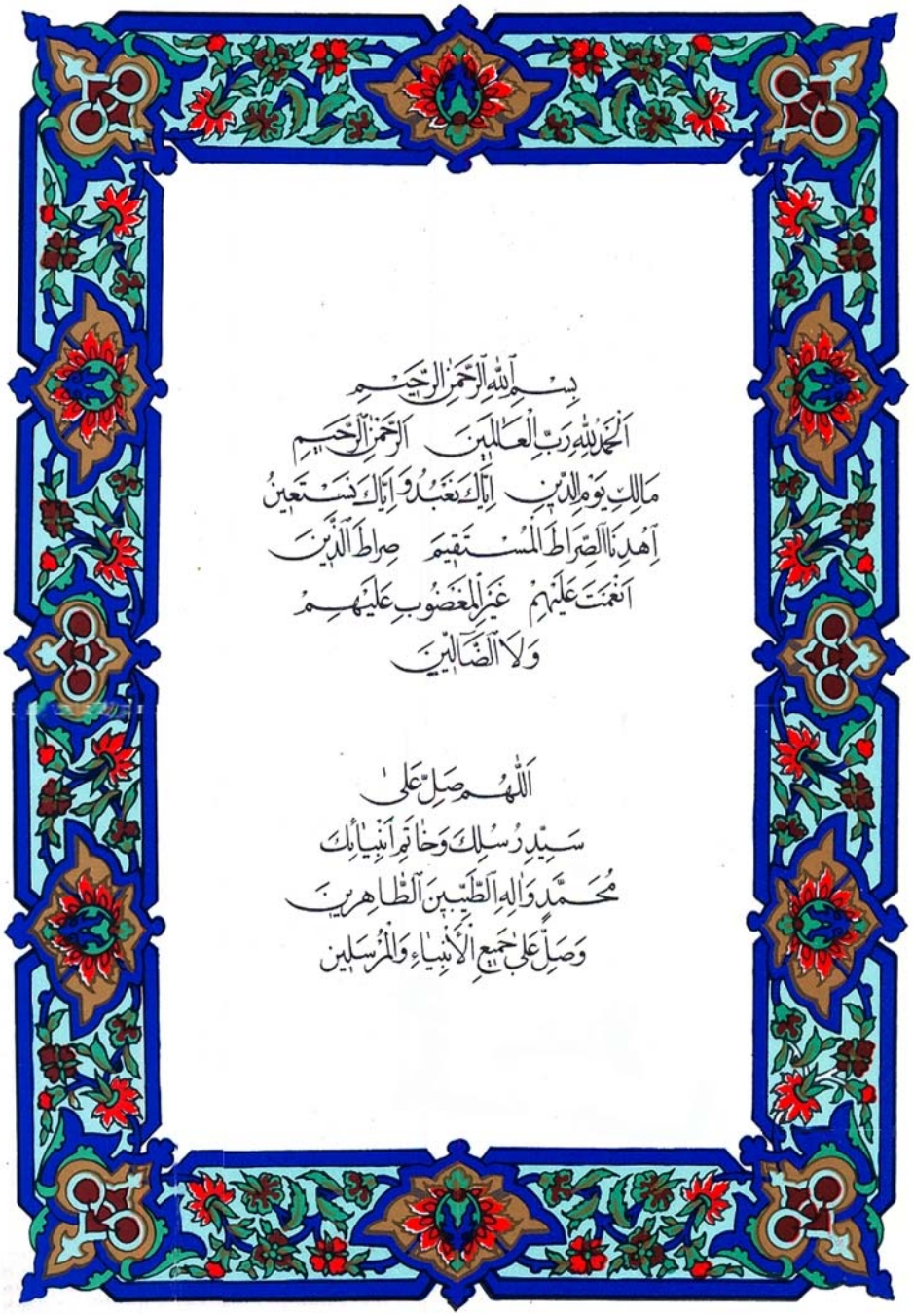
Tehran – IRAN.

In the Name of Allãh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allãh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O ' Allãh! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ

اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى

سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

وَصَلِّ عَلٰى جَمِيعِ الْاَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteraion
ء	’	ك	**k**
ب	**b**	ل	**l**
ت	**t**	م	**m**
ث	**th**	ن	**n**
ج	**j**	ه	**h**
ح	**ḥ**	و	**w**
خ	**kh**	ي	**y**
د	**d**	ة	**ah, at** (construct state)
ذ	**dh**		
ر	**r**	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	**z**		
س	**s**		
ش	**sh**	**Long Vowels**	
ص	**ṣ**	آ	**ã**
ض	**ḍ**	و	ũ
ط	**ṭ**	ي	**ī**
ظ	**ẓ**		
ع	‘	**Short Vowels**	
غ	**gh**		**a**
ف	**f**		**u**
ق	**q**		**i**

تصدير

١- العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤-١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه‌الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان.

٢- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه‌الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، وبعد مداولات واستشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لأنّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، و كفاءته الأدبيّة في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه‌الله هوالزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤- و نحن إذ ننشر (الجزء الثانى من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة لتفسير (الميزان) و يطابق النّصف الثّانى من الجزء الأوّل للنّصّ العربيّ، لنرجو من الله سبحانه أن يأخذ بأيدينا و يعيننا على إعداد التّرجمة الكاملة للكتاب و نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين: (الأولى) بأسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة إلى التّعريف، وقد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة، ولكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

* * *

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى و نعم النّصير.

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الاسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران — ايران

١٤٠٤/٦/٢٠
١٩٨٤/٣/٢٤

FOREWORD

1. al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Ḥusayn at-Tabataba'i (1321/1904 – 1402/1981) – may Allãh have mercy upon him – was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzãn*.

2. al-'Allamah at-Tabataba'i is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al Mizan fi Tafsīri 'l-Qur an* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the 'Allamah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur'ãn in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzãn* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur'ãn and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-tistadh al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Said Akhtar ar-Radawi to undertake this task because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-'Allamah at-Tabataba'i was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the second volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān.* This volume corresponds with the second half of the first volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allãh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mizãn:* One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * * *

We implore upon Allãh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allãh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(***Board of Writing, Translation and Publication***)

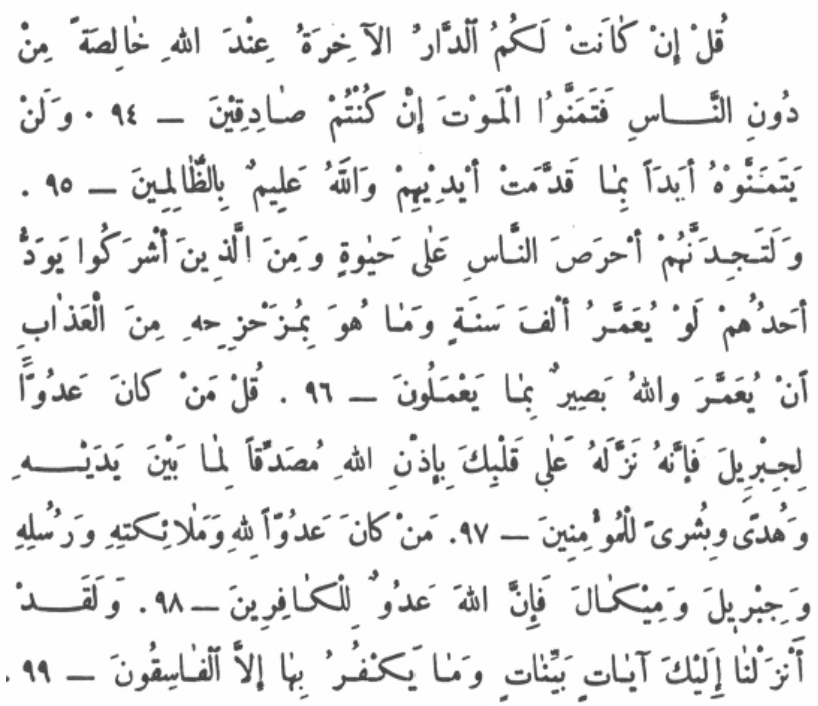
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AL-MĪZĀN

Volume Two

ch.2, vrs.94 - 182


قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللهِ خَالِصَةً مِنْ
دُونِ النَّـــاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ــ ٩٤ . وَلَنْ
يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَداً بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ــ ٩٥ .
وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيٰوةٍ وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ
أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحْزِحِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ
أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ واللهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ــ ٩٦ . قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا
لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ مُصَدِّقاً لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْـــهِ
وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ٩٧. مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوّاً لِلهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ــ ٩٨ . وَلَقَـــدْ
أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلاَّ ٱلْفَاسِقُونَ ــ ٩٩ .

Say: "If the future abode with Allãh is purely for you to the exclusion of the people then invoke death if you are truthful" (94)*. And they will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent before, and Allãh knows the unjust ones* (95)*. And you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for life, and* (greedier) *than even those who are polytheists; every one of them loves that he should be granted a life of a thousand years, and his being granted a long life will in no way remove him*

further off from the chastisement, and Allãh sees what they do (96). *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel – for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allãh's Command, verifying that which is before it, and guidance and good news for the believers* (97). *Whoever is the enemy of Allãh and His angels and His apostles and Gabriel and Michael – so surely Allãh is the enemy of the unbelievers"* (98) . *And certainly We have revealed to you clear signs, and none disbelieve in them except the transgressors* (99).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Say: "If the future abode . . . ":* The Jews claimed, *"Fire shall not touch us but for a few days"* (2:80). When they were told to believe in what Allãh had revealed, they declared: *"We believe in that which was revealed to us"* (2:91). All this implied that only they would be saved on the Day of Resurrection to the exclusion of all the others; that their deliverance and happiness in the next world would be unmarred by any unpleasant experience as the Fire shall not touch them but for a few days – equal in number to the day they worshipped the calf. To remove that self-delusion and conceit, Allãh put a challenge to them, to show them their true face, to make them realize that their claims were without any substance. He (Allãh) told His Apostle to say to them: "If the future abode . . . is for you . . ." The "future abode" points to the felicity and happiness of that abode; the owner of a house arranges and manages it in the best possible way, and decorates it according to his taste and liking. "with Allãh", that is, firmly established with Allãh, by His order and His permission; the phrase has the same import here as in the verse: *Surely the religion with Allãh is Islãm* (3:19). "purely", that is, unmixed with punishment or humiliation – utmost that you think possible is a punishment of just a few days. "to the exclusion of the people", because you presume that all religions, except your own, are false. If you really think so, "then invoke death if you are truthful".

This challenge is similar to the one given in verse: *Say: "O you who are Jews, if you think that you are the friends of Allãh to the exclusion of other people, then invoke death if you are truthful"* (62:6). The argument is very clear about which nobody can have any doubt whatsoever. Any man (nay! even an animal having a limited perception and sensitivity), if given total freedom to choose between comfort and discomfort, will at once opt for the comfort, without any hesitation, without any contemplation. Put before him a life polluted with trouble and turmoil and another clean and pure, and tell him to take hold of any one; naturally, and without any doubt, he will grab at the pure one. If for any reason he is prevented from the life of his choice, he will always dream of it, and will remain looking for any opportunity to lay his hands upon it.

If the Jews are truthful in their claim that the other world's pure happiness belongs to them to the exclusion of others, then they must yearn for it with their hearts, words and deeds.

"And they will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent before", for example, the killings of the prophets, the disbelief in Mũsã (a.s.) and breaking of the covenants, "and Allãh knows the unjust ones".

QUR'ÃN: *on account of what their hands have sent before:* It is a metaphorical reference to the "deeds". Most of the external deeds are done by hands; then the finished product is sent to the one who wants it or may benefit from it.

The sentence has two allegorical allusions: it counts every deed as having been done by hands; and it ascribes the action of "sending" to the hands while in fact it is the man who sends his deeds before.

Actions of a man, and especially those done regularly, are a clear mirror of his unconscious and sub-conscious personality. Evil deeds expose the evil nature of the doer – and such a nature does not like meeting its Lord or staying in the abode of His friends.

QUR'ÃN: *And you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for life:* It is an explanation of the divine word, "And they will never invoke it . . ." They do not yearn for death because they are greediest of all men for the life of this world. It is this greed and avid craving to remain in this world which prevents them from looking forward to the next abode. The word, "life", is used in this verse as a common noun – it is to show how insignificant and trifling this life is; Allãh has said: *And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play, and as for the next abode, that most surely is life – did they but know* (29:64).

QUR'ÃN: *and* (greedier) *that even those who are polytheists:* Apparently the conjunctive, "and", joins this clause to the word, "men", that is, you will find them greedier than even the polytheists for life.

QUR'ÃN: *and his being granted a long life will in no way remove him further off from the chastisement:* The verse's literal translation: and it is not a remover of him from the chastisement his being granted a long life. *"mã"* (ما = not, no, particle of negation); the pronoun "it" is that of *sha'n* and *qiṣṣah* (ضَميرُ الشّأن و القصّة) "his being granted a long life" is the subject preceded by the predicate, that is, "is not a remover of him . . ."

The sentence may also be syntactically analysed in another way: the pronoun, "it", may refer to the love each of them had of being granted a life of a thousand years. It would accordingly mean that that love of theirs would not ward off the Divine Chastisement from them; in this case, the clause, "his being granted a long life" will be a description of that love.

---

* *Sha'n* (ضَميرُ الشّأن) is a personal pronoun (third person, masculine) which is used to begin a sentence. That of feminine gender is called the pronoun of *qiṣṣah* (ضَمير القصّة). The nearest thing to it in the English grammer is the indefinite demonstrative pronoun. (tr.)

Anyhow, what the verse says is this: They shall never invoke the death, and I swear that you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for this base and insignificant life which prevents them from the happy and good life of the next abode; you will find them greedier than even the polytheists for this life, although the latter do not believe in the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, and consequently their love for this life should be unparalleled; every one of them loves that he should be granted the longest life, but even the longest life cannot remove him further off from the Divine Chastisement, because life, no matter how long it is, is limited and has to come to an end.

QUR'ÃN: *every one of them loves that he should be granted a life of a thousand years:* that is, the longest life. "a thousand" is used to denote numerousness. In Arabic, it is the highest denomination which is described by a single word. Higher denominations are shown by repetition and combination, for example, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, a thousand thousand (i.e., a million).

QUR'ÃN: *And Allãh sees what you do: "al-Baṣīr"* (البَصيرُ) is one of the beautiful names of Allãh; it signifies that although He does not have a body or an eye, He is fully cognizant of all things which we perceive with our eyes. It shows a facet of the name, *al-'Alīm* (العَلْيمُ = the Knowing).

QUR'ÃN: *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel – for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allãh's Command:* Apparently the verse was revealed as a reply to something the Jews had said – they arrogantly refused to believe in what was revealed to the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), on the pretext that they were enemies of Gabriel who had the charge of bringing the revelation to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). Allãh replied to them in two verses – concerning the Qur'ãn and Gabriel both. Also the traditions giving the background of the verses confirm it. The verses contain four replies to their arrogance in denial of the Qur'ãn.

First: Gabriel has revealed the Qur'ãn to your heart by Allãh's Command, not by his own wish. Therefore, even if they feel enmity towards Gabriel, it should not prevent them from believing in a revelation sent down by Allãh's Command.

Second: The Qur'ãn verifies the Divine Book which was revealed before it and which they have in their hands. How can they believe in a book and deny another which verifies it?

Third: The Qur'ãn is a guidance for those who believe in it.

Fourth: It is also a good news for the believers. How can a sane person turn his face away from guidance and good news, even if it is brought to him by a supposed enemy of his?

So far as their professed enmity towards Gabriel was concerned, they were replied as follows:

Gabriel is one of the angels of Allãh; he has no authority except to follow and obey the Divine Command – just like Michael and other angels. They are honoured servants of Allãh; they do not disobey His command, and they do as they are told. Likewise, the apostles of Allãh have no authority except by Allãh and from Allãh. To have enmity towards them, to harbour hatred for them is enmity and hatred towards Allãh Himself. Therefore, whoever is the enemy of Allãh and His angels and His apostles and Gabriel and Michael, so surely Allãh is his enemy.

All these replies are clearly given in these two verses.

QUR'ÃN: *for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allãh's Command:* Apparently, it should have been "to my heart"; instead, it says, "to your heart". The pronoun has been changed from the first to the second person to draw attention to an important factor: So far as the revelation of the Qur'ãn is concerned, neither Gabriel has any choice or authority of his own in bringing it down (he is subject to the Divine command, which he faith-fully carries out) nor the Apostle of Allãh (s. a.w. a.) has any choice or authority of his own in receiving it and conveying it to his *ummah;* his heart is the receptacle of revelation, on which he has no control at all and which he is bound to convey to his people.

The Jews have been mentioned in these verses sometimes in the second person, and sometimes in the third. Their admonition and condemnation has continued for a long time; and the Speaker wants to show that they do not deserve the honour of being addressed by Him. That is why He frequently changes the styles, again and again going from the second to the third person pronouns. The audience gets the impression that the Speaker does not like to speak to them – because of their heedlessness and depravity, but at the same time does not like to leave them as they are without pronouncing His judgment against them.

QUR'ÃN: *the enemy of the unbelievers:* Instead of saying, "their enemy", the verse uses the word, "enemy of the unbelievers"; it serves to show also the reason of that enmity. Allãh is their enemy, because they are unbelievers, and Allãh is the enemy of the unbelievers.

QUR'ÃN: *and none disbelieve in them except the transgressors:* It explains the cause of their disbelief; they disbelieve because they are transgressors. Or, may be the definite article "the", in "the transgressors" refers to the group mentioned in the beginning of the chapter: *but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors, who break the covenant of Allãh after its confirmation* . . . (2:26-27)

As for Gabriel and how he brought the revelation to the heart of the Apostle of Allãh (s. a.w. a.) , we shall explain it, God willing, in another place; the same applies to Michael and other angels.

TRADITIONS

Ibn ''Abbãs explained the reason of the revelation of the verse, *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel. . .",* in these words: "When the Prophet came to Medina, Ibn Suriya and some Jews of Fadak asked him (some questions). They said: 'O Muhammad! How do you sleep? Because we have been told about the sleep of the Prophet who would come in the last days?'

He said: 'My eyes sleep while my heart is awake.' They said: 'You are right, O Muhammad! Now tell us about the child whether it is from the man or from the woman?' He said: 'As for the bones, the nerves and the veins, they are from the man; and as for the flesh, the blood, the nails and the hairs, they are from the woman.' They said: 'You are right, O Muhammad! Then why is it that sometimes the child resembles his paternal uncles, without having a least likeness of his maternal uncles? And sometimes he resembles his maternal uncles without having any likeness at all to his paternal uncles?' He replied: 'He resembles to that parent's (side) whose fluid dominates the other's.' They said: 'You spoke the truth, O Muhammad! Now, tell us about your Lord, what is He?' Then Allãh revealed (the Chapter 112) : *Say: "He, Allãh is One . . ."* Then Ibn Suriya said: 'One (more) thing; if you tell (us) about it, I shall believe in you and follow you. Which angel is it that brings to you that which Allãh reveals to you?' He said: 'Gabriel.' (Ibn Suriya) said: 'He is our enemy; he brings the (order of) fighting, hard-ship and war. And Michael brings comfort and happiness. Had it been Michael who came to you (with revelation) we would have believed in you.' "

The author says: Very many traditions (nearly *mutawãtir* in number) have been narrated by both Sunni and Shi'ah narrators, that (when) the Apostle of Allãh (s. a.w. a.) (slept) his eyes used to sleep but his heart kept awake. Sleep did not make him unaware of himself; when asleep, he was well aware that he was asleep; when he dreamt he knew that he was dreaming. Not too often, this happens to some other good persons too when their souls are clean and they keep in touch with the Divine sublimity. When the soul rises to that level, it can never be oblivious of the various changes occurring to itself in its worldly life, nor can it forget its relation to its Lord. At this stage, it may look at the world and its life taking the whole spectrum at one glance, as a man looks at a tree and perceives it all at once. In this detached manner, it observes that all human beings are asleep – not only those who are manifestly asleep, but those too who are thought to be awake.

Almost all men have taken shelter under sensual perception; have bound themselves to the fetters of materialism. They are in fact asleep, even when they think they are awake. ‘Ali (a.s.) has said: “The people are asleep; when they die they will wake up . . .”

This topic will be further explained in other place; other sentences of this tradition too will be explained later

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أَوَ كُلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا عَهْداً نَبَذَهُ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ — ١٠٠ . وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا
مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللهِ وَرَاءَ
ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ — ١٠١ .

What! whenever they make a covenant, a party of them cast it aside? Nay, most of them do not believe (100). *And when there came to them an Apostle from Allãh verifying that which they have, a party of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allãh behind their backs as if they knew nothing* (101).

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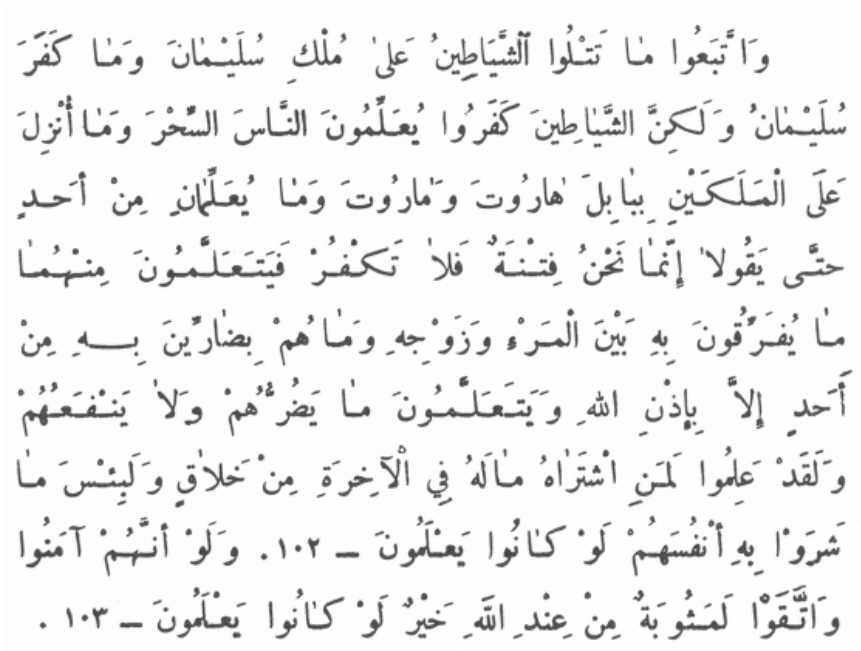
COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *cast it aside: "an-Nabdh"* (النَبْذ) to throw away, to renounce).

QUR'ÃN: *And when there came to them an Apostle from Allãh . . .* : The word, "an Apostle", definitely means the Apostle of Allãh, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) ; it does not refer to any other apostle who might have come "verifying that which they have", because "when there came" does not mean "whenever there came"; in other words, it does not signify a recurring incidence, but an event that happened once only.

The verse points to the Jews' adverse attitude towards the truth: they were so steeped in falsehood that they concealed the foretellings of the Torah about the Prophet of Islam, and refused to believe in the Qur'ãn which verified that which they hod in their hands.

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وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ وَمَا كَفَرَ
سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَٰكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ
عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ
حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا
مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ
أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ
وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا
شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ـ ١٠٢. وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا
وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ـ ١٠٣ .

And they followed what the satans chanted (*of sorcery*) *against the kingdom of Sulaymãn; and Sulaymãn was not an unbeliever, but the satans disbelieved; they taught men sorcery and what was sent down to the two angels at Babylon, Hãrũt and Mãrũt. Yet these two taught no one until they had said: "Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever." Even then men learned from these two, that by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife; and they cannot hurt with it any one except with Allãh's permission; and they learned what harmed them*

and did not profit them; and certainly they knew that he who bought it should have no share (of good) *in the hereafter, and vile was the price for which they sold their souls; had they but known* (this) (102). *And if they had believed and guarded themselves* (against evil), *reward from Allãh would certainly have been better; had they but known* (this) (103).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And they followed what the satans chanted* . . . The exegetes have disputed among themselves about each and every aspect of this verse; so much so that the resulting picture of the differences is almost unparalleled in the whole Qur'ãn. A list of the differences is given below:

"they followed ": Does the pronoun, "they", refer to the Jews of the Sulaymãn's time, or to those at the time of the Prophet, or to all?

"chanted": The Arabic word is *"tatlu"* (تَتْلُوْا) which may be translated as "chanted", "recited", "told a lie about", "faked" or "followed and acted according to". In which sense the word is used here? Every meaning has some supporters.

"satans": Does it refer to the satans of *jinn?* Or to those among the human beings? Or to both?

"about": The Arabic participle is " *'alã* "(عَلٰى = against, on, about, upon). Does the phrase mean, about the kingdom of Sulaymãn? Or, during the reign of Sulaymãn? Or, against his kingdom? Or, on his reign?

"the satans disbelieved" : Some say, they disbelieved because they published the sorcery among the people. Others say, they disbelieved because they ascribed the sorcery to Sulaymãn. Still others say, the disbelief, as mentioned here, actually means sorcery.

"they taught men sorcery": It means they instructed them as a teacher instructs his students. No! it means that they buried the chants under Sulaymãn's chair, and then directed the men to it who brought it out and learnt it.

"and what was sent down": The word translated here as "what" is *"mã"* (مَا) which is a relative pronoun ("what"); also, it is a particle of negation ("not"). "And" is mostly used as a conjunctive; but not infrequently, it is also used to begin a new sentence. A group says that *"mã"* means "what", and the conjunctive joins it to "what the satans chanted" (the Jews followed what was sent down). Another party is of the opinion that the conjunctive joins it to "sorcery" (the satans taught them sorcery and that which was sent down). A third group thinks that *"mã"* means "not", and the word "and" begins a new sentence (And sorcery was not sent down to the two angels, contrary to what the Jews claimed).

"sent down": Was it sent down from the heavens? Or from the highlands?

"the two angels": They were the angels from the heaven. No! They were two good men, or men who feigned to be good. No! It is not *"al-malakayn"* (المَلَكَيْن = two angels) ; it is *"al-malikayn"* (المَلِكَيْن = two kings).

"Babylon": It is the famous ancient city of Iraq. No! It is a city in Damawand (Iran); Wrong! It is the land between Naṣibayn (Turkey) and Ra'sul 'Ayn.

"these two taught no one": Teaching is used in its common meaning of instruction. No! It means, these two apprised no one.

"do not be a disbeliever" : By learning sorcery? Or, by practising it? Or, by both?

"the men learned from these two": The "two" refers to the two angels. No! It means, they learned from the two subjects, sorcery and disbelief. Wrong! They learned the practice of sorcery, in place of the advice given by the angels.

"that by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife": Some exegetes say that they caused love or hate between the couple with the help of their sorcery. Others think that they misled one of the spouses to disbelief and polytheism, and the apostasy caused the separation mentioned here. A third group say that they created hatred and enmity between the couple with their calumny and

slander.

This, in short, gives a glimpse of the differences of opinions concerning the explanations of the words and clauses of the verse. There are still more differences about the event referred to – whether it narrates an actual happening or is just a parable; and so on and so forth. Compute the differences mentioned above and you will get nearly one million and two hundred sixty thou-sand possible explanations ($4 \times 3^{9} \times 2^{4}$)!!

It seems an astounding quality of the Qur'ãn, that a verse that is subjected to so many divergent interpretations, still maintains its highest standard of eloquence; that in spite of all these vagaries of the exegetes, its meaning is not disjointed, nor its beauty marred.

A similar treatment has been meted out to the verse: *Is he then who has with him clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from him recites it and before it* (*is*) *the Book of Musã, a guide and a mercy* (11:17).

However, it appears from the context that this verse deals with a hitherto unmentioned affair of the Jews, that is, their wide-spread use of sorcery. They based this practice on one or two stories, which were very popular among them.

The Jews were addicted to making alterations and interpolations in, and omissions from, their Divine books, let alone the historical narrations. They used to change their books and records fitting them to the prevalent moods of their times. A story narrated by them was not to be relied upon. But this Qur'ãnic admonition is based on their own belief, because it was they who used to narrate these stories.

The verse proves that the practice of sorcery was prevalent among the Jews, and that they ascribed it to Sulaymãn (a.s.). They presumed that Sulaymãn (a.s.) got the kingdom and subjugated the *jinn,* the human beings, the animals and the birds – all with the help of sorcery; and all the supernatural miraculous events related to him depended on witchcraft. And they claimed that some of the enchantments in their hands had come down to them from him. The remaining portion was attributed to the two angels at Babylon, named Hãrũt and Marũt.

The Qur'ãn refutes the stories, saying that the prophet

Sulaymãn (a.s.) never indulged in witchcraft and sorcery. How could he, when sorcery was nothing but disbelief in Allãh? Sulaymãn (a.s.) could not be an unbeliever as he was a sinless, innocent prophet. All this is clearly seen from the words of Allãh: "and Sulaymãn was not an unbeliever, but the satans disbelieved, they taught men sorcery"; "and certainly they knew that he who bought it should have no share (of good) in the hereafter". Sulaymãn's position was too distinguished, his rank too high, and his name too sacred to be associated with disbelief and sorcery. He was the prophet whose outstanding position has been eulogized in several places in the chapters of Meccan period, long before this Chapter of the Cow was revealed. See, for example, the chapters of the Cattle (6th), the Prophets (21st), the Ant (27th) and Sad (38th). You shall find therein that Sulaymãn (a.s.) was an excellent servant of Allãh, a prophet and an apostle; Allãh gave him the knowledge and the wisdom; and granted him a kingdom which was not fit for any one after him. Obviously, Sulaymãn could not indulge in sorcery; it was just a mythical story invented by the satans, which they dictated to their human friends; and it was the satans who disbelieved because they misguided the men by teaching them sorcery.

As for the story of the two angels at Babylon, the Qur'ãnic stand is as follows:

The two angels, Hãrũt and Maria, were certainly given some sorcery as a means of test and trial for the human beings – and no objection could be raised against that; after all, Allãh has taught the human nature the ways of evil too in order that He may test them with it. Likewise, sorcery was sent down to the two angels; but they did not teach it to anyone until they had said to him: Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not become a disbeliever by using it for wrongful purposes; you must use it only to nullify the effect of witchcraft, to expose the viles of the sorcerers and things like that. But the men learned from them that by which they might destroy the domestic peace and turn the love between husband and wife – the best of the things ingrained in human nature – into hatred, causing a

separation between them. Also they learned what harmed them and did not benefit them.

The verse therefore may be explained as follows:

And they (i.e., the Jews coming after the reign of Sulaymãn – every generation passing on the legacy to the later one) followed what the satans from among the *jinn* faked and lied about the kingdom of Sulaymãn. *"Tatlũ"* (تَتْلُوْا = translated here as recited or chanted) actually has the connotation of "lied about " or "faked about", because it is followed by the preposition " *'alã "*(عَلٰى = on) which has changed its semantic value. Why do we say that the satans were from the *jinn?* The following two verses read together provide the answer to this question: *And of the satans there were those who dived for him and did other work beside that, and We kept guard over them* (21:82); *and when he fell down, the jinn came to know plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have tarried in abasing torment* (34:14). The first verse shows that the satans were reduced to subjection by Sulaymãn (a.s.) who kept them away from mischief by assigning to them very heavy task; and the second verse refers to the same slavish group as the *jinn.*

QUR'ÃN: *and Sulaymãn was not an unbeliever:* "and" is used here in the meaning of "while". Sulaymãn did not indulge in sorcery; therefore, it was not he who disbelieved; rather it was the satans who disbelieved, because they misled the people by teaching them sorcery.

QUR'ÃN: *and what was sent down:* The Jews followed that which was sent down – through inspiration – to the two angels at Babylon, Hãrũt and Mãrũt. Yet these two did not teach any one any thing of the sorcery, without warning him not to practice it. They admonished every one who wanted to learn sorcery: Surely we are only a trial for you. What we teach you is but a means of test for you. Beware! Don't become an unbeliever by practising sorcery.

QUR'ÃN: *Even then men learned from these two*: that is, from

the two angels, Hãrũt and Maria. "that by which they might cause a separation", that is, the sorcery which caused separation "between a man and his wife".

QUR'ÃN: *and they cannot hurt with it any one except with Allãh's permission:* It is a parenthetic sentence, to remove a possible misunderstanding: One could assume, on hearing that the sorcerers caused separation between a husband and his wife, that the sorcerers were powerful enough to disturb the divinely ordained arrangement of the world; that they could undo the Divine Decree and change the system created by Allãh. This sentence clears the air and emphasizes the fact that sorcery draws its strength from the Divine Decree; it cannot affect any thing but with the permission of Allãh. Therefore, the sorcerers act within the framework of the system designed by Allãh.

This sentence was placed where it is because only the preceding sentence (*that by which they might cause a separation . . .*) mentions the effect of sorcery. Therefore, it was explained that whatever effect it had was based on the permission of Allãh. The following clause (*and they learned what harmed them and did not profit them*) *is* not concerned with this aspect of sorcery, and the above-mentioned clarifying parenthetic sentence, if placed after it, would have looked out of place.

QUR'ÃN: *and certainly they knew that he who bought it should have no share* (of good) *in the hereafter:* They knew it because their reason and intellect told them that the sorcery was the most wicked source of disorder in the society. Also, they were made aware of it by Mũsã (a.s.) when he had said: *and the magician shall not be successful wheresoever he may come from* (20:69).

QUR'ÃN: *and vile was the price for which they sold their souls; had they but known* (this): They knew that sorcery was bad for them and ruinous for their future abode; yet it was as though they did not know it – because they did not act according to their knowledge. If a knowledge fails to lead the knower to the straight

path, then it is not knowledge; it is ignorance. Allãh says: *Have you then seen him who takes his low desire for his god, and Allãh has made him err in spite of* (his) *knowledge . . .* (45:23). Therefore, it was completely in order to wish for them know-ledge and guidance, even if they had had the knowledge before.

QUR'ÃN: *And if they had believed and guarded themselves . . . .*: If they had followed the dictates of belief and piety, instead of following the satans' yarns and practising sorcery which is nothing short of disbelief, they would have got its reward from Allãh. This verse indicates that the disbelief emanating from sorcery is a disbelief within the sphere of action, like that which results from withholding *zakãt;* it is not a disbelief within the sphere of faith. Had the sorcery been a disbelief within the sphere of faith, Allãh would have only said, "And if they believed", without adding "and guarded themselves (against evil)". The Jews had believed, no doubt; but they did not guard themselves against evil and did not desist from the things forbidden by Allãh; therefore, Allãh did not attach any importance, any value, to their belief, and they were called the disbelievers.

QUR'ÃN : *reward from Allãh would certainly have been better; had they but known* (this): that is, better than the rewards and profits they seek through sorcery and amass through disbelief.

TRADITIONS

al Bãqir (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* explaining the words of Allãh, *And they followed what the satans chanted* (of sorcery) *against the kingdom of Sulaymãn . . .*: "When Sulaymãn died, Iblīs invented sorcery and wrote it in a book; then folding it, wrote on its back: 'This is the valuable treasure of knowledge which Asif ibn Barkhiya produced for the king Sulaymãn ibn Dãwũd. Whoever wanted such and such thing, should do so and so.' Then he buried it under his throne. Thereafter, he unearthed it for the Jews and recited it (before them). The disbelievers said: 'Sulaymãn had not

gained supremacy over us but because of this.' And the believers said: 'Nay! He was a servant of Allãh and His prophet.' Thus Allãh, Great is His remembrance! said: *And they followed what the satans chanted* (of sorcery) *against the kingdom of Sulaymãn."* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyãshi, al-Qummi)

The author says: This tradition says that it was the Satan, that is, Iblīs, who invented sorcery and wrote and recited it. There is no discrepancy between this statement and the verse under discussion which ascribes these things to the satans from among the *jinn.* Even their deeds are ultimately attributed to the Iblīs, because he is the source of all evil; it is he who instigates his friends to wickedness and evil. Such usage is common in the traditions.

It appears from this tradition that the verb, *"tatlu"* in this verse is derived from *"at tilãwah"* (التِّلاوَةُ = to recite, to chant). It not in conflict with the interpretation given by us in the commentary that it gives the meaning of "lied about" or "faked about"; because, as we said there, this connotation emerges from the preposition, " *'alã* " which has changed its semantic value. The sentence, therefore, may be interpreted as follows: The satans chanted the sorcery, reciting it, and faking it, lying about the kingdom of Sulaymãn.

Etymologically, *talã, yatlũ, tilãwatan* (تَلا ، يَتلوا ، تِلاوَةً) returns to *waliya, yali, wilãyatan* (وَلِي ، يَلِي ، ولايَةً) which has the semantic value of being near to, governing and following; one owns a thing gradually, one part following the other – reciting is called *at-tilawah* simply because in recitation one word follows the other.

A fuller discourse of this subject will be given under the verse: *Verily, your guardian is only Allãh and His Apostle and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay zakãt while they bow down* (5:58).

ar-Riḍã (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in his discussion with al-Ma'mũn: "And as for Hãrũt and Marũt, they were two angels; they taught sorcery to the people in order that they could protect themselves from the enchantments of the sorcerers, and could

nullify their devices. And they did not teach any one any (enchantment) until they had said to him: *'Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever.'* But a group became disbelievers by practising what they were warned against; and they caused a separation between a man and his wife with their practice (of sorcery). Allãh has said: *and they cannot hurt with it any one except with Allãh's permission."* (*'Uyunu 'l-akhbãr*)

ON SOME SPURIOUS TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarir has narrated from Ibn ''Abbãs that he said: "Whenever Sulaymãn wanted to enter the toilet or to attend to some of his affairs, he gave his ring to al-Jaradah, his wife. When Allãh decided to test Sulaymãn in the way He tested him, one day Sulaymãn gave his ring (as usual) to al-Jarãdah. Then Satan came to her in the likeness of Sulaymãn and said: 'Give me my ring.' So he took it and put it on. As soon as he did so, the satans (from the *jinn* and the human beings) came under his control. Then came Sulaymãn and said to her: 'Give me my ring.' She said: 'You are a liar; you are not Sulaymãn.' So Sulaymãn knew that it was a trial to test him. The satans got a free hand, and wrote, in those very days, some books containing enchantments and disbelief, and buried them under the chair of Sulaymãn. Thereafter they unearthed them and recited them before the people. And they said: 'It was because of these books that Sulaymãn dominated over the people.' Thus the people avoided Sulaymãn and accused him of disbelief. (It continued) until Allãh sent Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and revealed to him: *and Sulaymãn was not an unbeliever, but the satans disbelieved."* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

The author says: This story is found in other traditions too. It is a long story forming a part of a multitude purporting to show the supposed sins and mistakes of the prophets.

Said ibn Jarir and al-Khaṭīb (in his *at-Tãrīkh*) have quoted Nãfi' as saying: "I went on a journey with Ibn 'Umar. When the

night was coming to its end, he said: 'O Nãfi'! Look at the red star*, has it risen?' Twice or thrice I said: 'No.' Then I said: 'It has risen.' He said: 'No welcome to it!' I said: 'Praise the Lord! (It is but) a star, subjugated, obedient (and) submissive!' He said: 'I have not told you except that which I heard the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) saying. He said: "The angels (once) said: 'O Lord! How doest Thou bear with the mistakes and sins of the children of Ãdam?' (Allãh) said: 'I have put them to trial and given them some dispensation.' They said: 'If we were in their place, we would not have disobeyed Thee.' He said: 'Then select (for trial) two angels from among yourselves.' They spared no effort in the selection and (finally) selected Hãrũt and Mãrũt. They came down (to the earth) ; and Allãh created in them the lust." (At this juncture, Nãfi' said: 'And what is lust?' He said: 'Sexual urge.') "Then there came a woman, az-Zuhrah (i.e., Venus) by name, and both felt attracted towards her, each concealing his feeling from his companion. Then one of them asked the other: 'Do you feel in your heart what I do in mine?' The other said: 'Yes!' Thereupon, they asked her for themselves. She said: 'I will not give you power (over myself) until you teach me the name by which you ascend to, and descend from, the heaven.' They refused to do so. Then they asked her again; and again she refused. At last they did (teach her the name). When she flew (to the heaven), Allãh effaced her into a star and cut her wings. Then the (two angels) sought pardon from Allãh; and He gave them an option, saying: 'If it is your wish, I shall let you return to the position you held before, and then you shall be punished on the Day of Resurrection. Or, if you wish, I shall chastise you in this world, and when the Day of Resurrection comes you shall be reinstated to your previously held position.' So one of them said to the other: 'The punishment of this world will come to an end and will be short-lived.'

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* The red star refers to the Mars, but as will be seen later, Ibn 'Umar is supposed to talk about the Venus. Obviously, the man who forged this "tradition" did not know the difference between the Mars and the Venus. (*tr.*)

Therefore, they opted for this world's chastisement against the punishment of the next world. And Allãh revealed to them to go to Babylon. They went there and the earth swallowed them up; they are hanging upside-down between the heaven and the earth, undergoing punishment up to the Day of Resurrection." ' " (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

The author says: Something like this has been narrated in some Shī'ah books too from al-Bãqir (a.s.). aṣ-Ṣuyũṭī, the Sunni traditionalist, has narrated more than twenty traditions of the same theme about Hãrũt, Mãrũt and the Venus; some of those traditions have been confirmed as having "correct" chains of narrators; and the chains end on various companions, like Ibn ''Abbãs, Ibn Mas'ũd, 'Ali, Abud-Dardã', 'Umar, 'Ã'ishah and Ibn 'Umar.

These are fictitious stories, which collectively ascribe to the angels of Allãh the worst type of polytheism and the most heinous sins, that is, idol-worship, murder, fornication and liquor-drinking. Could the angels indulge in such sins, when they are known to be the honoured servants of Allãh who are purified from all sins and mistakes? And they accuse the planet Venus to be a woman of loose character, who was transformed into a luminary body – have you ever heard of such a punishment!! – while it is known to be a heavenly body, free from any defect in its creation or any flaw in its system; a planet by which Allãh swears in the Qur'ãn: *But nay! I swear by the stars that run their course* (and) *hide themselves* . . . (81:15-16). Moreover, the astronomy has today unveiled its reality, and found out in detail the elements it is made of, as well as their quantity and combination – in short all matters related to it.

This story, like that given earlier (about Sulaymãn and his ring), is in complete agreement with the legends popular among the Jews. They remind one of the Greek mythology related to the stars and the planets.

A discerning reader will agree that these traditions, like those slandering and defaming the prophets and apostles, are but a few samples of the intrigues and machinations of the Jews.

Their prevalence in the Muslims' books of traditions is a living proof of the hold they held on the Muslims' minds in the early days of Islam. The Jews toyed with the Muslim traditions in any way they liked; and the Muslim traditionalists were their willing partners in these interpolations.

But Allãh has kept His Book under His Own protection. The enemies of truth cannot play with it. Whenever one of their satans tries to steal a hearing he is chased away by a visible flame. Allãh has said: *Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most certainly be its guardian* (15:9) ; *and most surely it is a Mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One* (41:41- 42) ; *And We reveal of the Qur'ãn that which is a healing and mercy to the believers, and it adds only to the perdition of the unjust* (17:82). The promise given in these verses is unconditional. Every interpolation, every alteration is repulsed by the Qur'ãn. The Book of Allãh unmasks the true face of the interpolators, adding to their perdition. Also, the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said: "Whatever is in conformity with the Book of Allãh, take it; and whatever is against it, leave it." The *ummah* has been given this frame of reference; it is this yardstick with which all the traditions attributed to the Prophet and his *Ahlu 'l-bayt* are to be measured. The Qur'ãn removes every falsehood and exposes every deception. Allãh says: *Nay! We cast the truth against falsehood, so that it breaks its head, and lo! it vanishes* (21:18) ; *and Allãh desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words . . . that He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, even though the guilty ones disliked* (8:7-8). Allãh confirms the truth and erases the falsehood by showing the true faces of both.

Some people, and especially those with materialistic out-look, who are overawed by the western civilization, have used the above-mentioned historical fact as a pretext to throw away all the traditions attributed to the Prophet. They looked at some traditionalists and al-Haruriyyah and found that they accepted every tradition – without any scrutiny whatsoever. They reacted to it by going to the other extreme and rejecting every tradition – without any scrutiny

whatsoever.

It needs not much intelligence to realize that the total acceptance of the traditions is as bad as its total rejection. Its unconditional acceptance nullifies the standard laid down for the purpose of differentiating between the truth and the falsehood; and encourages one to ascribe lies to the Prophet. Likewise, its indiscriminate rejection casts aside the said standard and leads one to the rejection of the Book of Allãh itself – the Mighty Book that falsehood does not come to it from before it nor from behind it. Allãh has said in this Book: *and whatever the Apostle gives you, take it; and from whatever he forbids you, keep back* (59:7); *And We did not send any apostle but that he should be obeyed by Allãh's permission* (4:64). If the sayings of the Prophet had no authority, or if his words – reported to his contemporaries who were absent from his gathering or to the generations coming after his time – had no validity then nothing of the religion could survive at all.

Man by his instinct relies and accepts the reports brought by others – he cannot survive without it. As for the alterations and interpolations, it is not a disease peculiar to the traditions of the Prophet. The society depends on the reported news and information; and the motives to tell lies, to make changes and alterations to suit one's purpose, to twist the words and to quote them out of context, are much more stronger in the case of the worldly affairs. So, what do we do? Do we reject all reports and information? No! We scrutinize every report with the help of some well-established and relevant standard; what passes the test, is accepted as truth; and that which fails is thrown aside as falsehood; and if no clear result emerges from the test, if we are unable to decide whether the report was true or not, we reserve our judgment – as our nature tells us to do in such cases.

The above procedure is applied regarding the subjects we have some expertise about. As for a subject outside our specialty, the common practice is to refer it to the specialists in that field and accept their judgment.

This is, in short, the dictate of human nature for the smooth running of the society. The self same system is adhered to

in religion for distinguishing truth from falsehood. The litmus-paper of this test is the Book of Allãh – if a tradition conforms to it, its truth is confirmed; if it clearly goes against it, its false-hood is known; and if no definite stand may be taken because of some ambiguities, then the judgment is reserved. This system has been explained in the *mutawãtir* traditions of the Prophet and the Imãms (of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt – a.s.*). It applies to all the traditions that are not concerned with jurisprudence; as for those dealing with the law and jurisprudence, they are governed by the Principles of Jurisprudence.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON SORCERY AND WITCHCRAFT

It is a common knowledge that many unusual events do take place which are outside the frame of the established natural system. It is difficult to find someone who has not seen, or heard about, some abnormal or seemingly supernatural events. But we find after scrutiny that most of them are not enigmatic and mysterious at all; rather they arise from normal and natural causes. Often they result from practice and training, for example, eating poison, lifting heavy load, walking or dancing on tight-rope etc. Some are based on natural causes that are not known to the general public, for example, a man walks into flaming fire without coming to any harm, (he applies some chemicals like talc to his body) ; or sends a sheet of blank paper and the addressee understands the message it contains. (He writes with an invisible ink which becomes visible if heated by fire or treated with some chemicals.) A third set depends on the sleight of hand like jugglery. All these seemingly abnormal feats actually emanate from the normal causes, although the causes remain hidden from a common man's eyes; they may even be beyond his ability.

Yet there are other strange happenings that cannot be attributed to any normal physical cause. For example, giving information of the unseen, and particularly foretelling the future events; the charms for love and hate, the spells harmfully or beneficially affecting

man's virility; hypnotism; mesmerism; spiritualism; telekinesis and so on. It is known that such events do take place from time to time; we have seen some demonstrations ourselves; and similar reports were brought to us by reliable sources. Today there are many people in India, Iran and the western countries, who demonstrate such extraordinary feats – and their authenticity is beyond doubt.

It appears from close investigation of their methods and regimen that these feats spring from the will-power of the doer, and from his unshakable confidence in effectiveness of his work. The will-power emanates from the confidence, which in its turn arises from the knowledge. Sometimes the will acts independently and sometimes it needs some help: for example, writing a certain charm with a certain ink in a certain place at a certain time (for the amulets of love or hate) ; or fixing a mirror before a certain child (in the seances of spiritualism) ; or chanting a certain incantation a certain number of times, and so on and so forth. When the conditions are fulfilled the will is strengthened to bring the desired effect into being. When the knowledge becomes one with the knower, it influences his senses to such an extent that he sees the end product, that is, the desired effect, with his eyes. You may verify this statement yourself. Just tell yourself that a certain person is present before you and that you are looking at him; then put your imagination to work to bring his form before your eyes; this should be raised to such a high level of certainty that you become oblivious of all contrary thoughts and ideas. And then you will actually see him standing before you – as you had imagined. Many is a doctor who, acting on this principle, restored to health his incurable patients – simply by creating in them the confidence that they would soon get their health back.

Taking this principle a step further, if someone's will-power is extraordinarily strong, it might create an impression on other's psyche too – as it had created on his own self in the foregoing example. That impression might, or might not, depend on fulfillment of some conditions, as indicated earlier.

From the above discourse, we may deduce the following

three principles:

First: The appearance of such extraordinary events depends on the firm "knowledge" and strong conviction of the doer. But it is irrelevant whether that "knowledge" is true to the fact or not. That explains why the conjurations of the priests of the sun-god and the moon-goddess etc. seemed to work – although they believed that the heavenly bodies had souls, which they claimed to bring under their control by their magic. Probably the same applies to the angels and satans whose names are "discovered" and invoked by many practitioners of the magic art. The same is true for spiritualism and its séance and spirit communication – and the spiritualists' belief that the spirits attend their sittings. Utmost that may be claimed regarding those sessions, is that the spirit appears in their imagination or, let us say, before their senses – and this "perception" emanates from their firm belief in their art. But it can never be said that the spirit actually presents itself at those sittings – otherwise all the participants in the sitting should have perceived its presence, because everyone of them has the same senses as the medium has.

By accepting this principle, we may solve many problems related to the séance and spirit communication. For example:

1 – Sometimes the spirit of a living man is called to present itself at a séance, and supposedly it comes there. But at that very moment, that man is busy attending to his affairs, and he never feels his spirit leaving him even for an instant. The question is: As a man has only one spirit, how was it possible that his spirit presented itself to that séance without his being aware of it?

2 – The spirit is an immaterial essence which has no relation whatsoever with space and time. How can it present itself at a certain place at a certain time?

3 - Why is it that often a single spirit appears before different mediums in different forms?

4 – Why is it that sometimes when the spirits are called to a séance, they tell lies and give wrong answers? And why do the various spirits sometimes contradict each other?

All these problems will be solved if the principle is accepted that it is not any spirit that presents itself to the séance; it is only the firm belief and conviction of the spiritualist and his medium that is at work, making the medium see, hear and feel the spirit. It is all a play of his imagination and will; and nothing more.

Second: Some of the people, holding the strong and effective will-power, rely on their own power and their own being, in bringing about the desired effect, the intended super-natural events. Such events are bound to be limited in strength, confined in their scope – in their own imagination as well as in reality.

On the other side, there are some persons, like the prophets and the friends of Allãh who, in spite of their most effective will-power, totally rely on their Lord. They truly worship Him and have full trust in Him. They do not wish any thing but from their Lord, and by His permission. Theirs is a pure and clear will, untainted by any personal feeling of their own. It does not depend except on Allãh. This is a Divine Will – not limited in any way, nor restricted in any manner.

The super-natural events that are brought into being by the first group may be of many kinds: If they are based on enquiry of, or help from, *a jinn* or a spirit etc., then it is called *"al-kihãnah"* (اَلكِهَانَةُ) = divination, sooth-saying, fortune-telling); and if it comes about by means of a charm, amulet, telesm or other such instruments or portions, then it is called magic.

The super-natural events shown by the prophets and friends of Allãh are also of many kinds: If it is produced as a challenge, in order to prove the truth of the claim of prophethood, then it is called miracle; and if it is not offered as a challenge, then it is named *"al-karãmah* (اَلكَرَامَةُ) which literally means nobility, mark of honour; and in Islamic terminology is used for a miraculous event shown without a challenge; and if it happens as a result of the prayer to Allãh, then it is called, "answer to the prayer."

Third: As the whole thing depends on the will-power of the doer, its strength varies according to the strength (or weakness) of the will. That is why some of them may nullify the others, as, for

example, the miracle annihilates the sorcery.

Also, a weak agent fails to impose his will on a stronger psyche, as is often seen at the sessions of mesmerism, hypnotism and seances.

We shall further explain this subject somewhere else.

AN ACADEMIC DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS KINDS OF MAGIC

There are many fields of study dealing with various awe-striking feats and extraordinary deeds; and it is very difficult to classify them so as not to leave any thing out. However, we give here a list of the more commonly used branches of this art:

a) ***as-Sīmiyã':*** It deals with the ways of combining the will-power with particular physical and material forces for manipulating the natural order and, thus, producing extraordinary effects. Under this head comes the manipulation of thought, also known as the eye-enchantment.

It is the most deserving candidate for the title of magic.

b) ***al-Līmiyã':*** It teaches how one may establish a connection between his psyche and the higher and stronger spirits, in order that one may bring them under one's control, for example, the spirits of the stars, or the *jinn,* etc.

It is also called the knowledge of subjugation of the spirits.

c) ***al-Hīmiyã':*** It explains how the powers of the higher spiritual world may be combined with the base elements of this world to produce awe-inspiring effects. It is also called talisman. The stars and their configuration have some relation to the material happenings of this world, in the same way as the elements and compounds and their physical qualities affect those phenomena. Supposedly if the heavenly forms, pertaining to a certain event, for example, A's life or B's death, could be combined with the relevant material forms, the desired effect would take place without fail.

d) ***ar-Rīmiyã':*** It trains one how to control and manipulate the qualities of various things, to produce seemingly super-natural

effects. It is also called *"ash-Sha'badhah"* (اَلشَّعْبَذَةُ) = sleight of hand, jugglery, magic).

These four fields of knowledge, together with the fifth, called *"al-Kīmiyã'"* (اَلكِيمياءُ) = alchemy, the forerunner of chemistry, primarily the attempt to transmute base metals into gold or silver) formed what the ancients called the five secrets, mysterious branches of knowledge.

ash-Shaykh al-Bahã'ī has said: "The best book written on these subjects was the one I saw in Harãt, *'Kulãh-e sar'* (the head's cap) by name. Its name was an acronym, made of the first letters of the five subjects, that is, *al-Kīmiya', al Līmiya', al-Hīmiyã', as-Sīmiyã'* and *ar-Rīmiyã'"*.

The- standard books of these subjects are the epitome of the books of Minds, *Rasã'il,* al-Khusraw Shãhī, *adh-Dhakhīrah,* al-Iskandariyyah, *as-Sirru 'l-maktũm* (by ar-Rãzī), *at-Taskhirat* (by as-Sakkaki) and *A'mãlu 'l-kawakib as-Sab'ah* (by al-Ḥakīm Ṭamṭam al-Hindī).

Supplementary to the above are the following subjects:

e) The knowledge of numbers (numerology): It shows the relation of numbers and letters with the desired effect. The relevant letters or numbers are filled in a magic square or triangle etc. in a particular sequence.

f) ***al-Khafiyah:*** (اَلخَافِيَةُ) = the hidden knowledge): It breaks down the name of the desired effect or other relevant names, and finds out the names of the angels or the satans managing the said effect; and then composes the invocations made of those names.

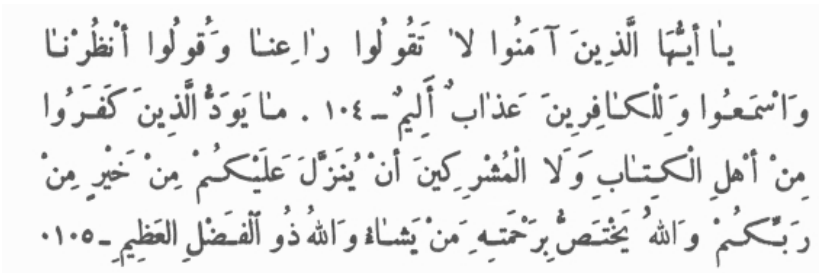
The books written by ash-Shaykh Abul-'Abbãs al-Bũni and as-Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Akhlãṭi are the standard works of the above two subjects.

Then there are various modern arts covering this field, which have gained wide currency nowadays; for example, mesmerism, hypnotism and spirit communication. As described earlier, these are based on the impression created on the imagination by the will-power. There are numerous well-known books and magazines dealing with these subjects.

We have given all this detail here, so that it may be ascertained which of them could be classified as magic or sorcery

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يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لا تَقُولُوا رٰاعِنٰا وَقُولُوا أَنْظُرْنٰا
وَاسْمَعُوا وَلِلْكٰافِرِينَ عَذٰابٌ أَلِيمٌ ـ ١٠٤ . مٰا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتٰابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ
رَبِّكُمْ وَاللهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشٰاءُ وَاللهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ـ ١٠٥

O you who believe! do not say, "Have regard for us", and say, "Wait for us"; and listen; and for the unbelievers there is a painful chastisement (104). *Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book do not like, nor do the polytheists, that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord; and Allãh chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy, and Allãh is the Lord of mighty grace* (105).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe!:* It is the first place in the Qur'ān where the believers have been addressed in this way, "O you who believe!" This mode of address has been used in some eighty-five places in the Qur'ān.*

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* Eighty-eight, to be exact. Vide *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras,* (by Muhammad Fu'ād 'Abdul '1-Bāqī). (*tr.*)

Addressing the believers as "O you who believe!", or describing them as "those who believe", is a special distinction accorded to this *ummah.* Otherwise, the previous nations are variously described as "the people" (e.g., *"the People of Nũḥ,* and, *"the People of Hũd"; 'He said: 'O my people! have you considered if I have a clear proof from my Lord . . . ' "* [11: 88]); and *"the dwellers"* (*e.g., "the dwellers of Madyan", "the dwellers of the Rass");* and *"the children"* (*e.g., "the Children of Israel", ''O Children of Israel !'').* The epithet, "those who believe", is, therefore, a mark of honour awarded to the believers of this *ummah.*

It appears from deep meditation of the Qur'ãn that the import of the words, "those who believe", is somewhat different from that of the words, "the believers". (For an example of the latter, see the verse: *and turn to Allãh all of you, O believers!* [24:31]) .

Allãh says in the Qur'ãn: *Those who bear the throne and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe: "Our Lord! Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore grant forgiveness to those who turn* (to Thee) *and follow Thy way, and save them from the punishment of the hell. Our Lord! and make them enter the gardens of perpetuity which Thou hast promised to them and those who do good of their fathers and their wives and their offsprings, surely Thou are the Mighty, the Wise"* (40:7-8).

It shows that the angels and the bearers of the throne ask forgiveness for "those who believe" ; then the same group has been referred to as "those who turn (to Thee) and follow Thy way". ("turn" actually means, return.) The prayer continues to "make them (i.e., those who believe) enter the garden" and then joins to them the doers of good from among "their fathers and their wives and their offspring." If the epithet, "those who believe", were to include all those who believed in the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) irrespective of the quality of their belief, then it would have covered their fathers, wives and children as well (who do good) ; and there would have been no need to mention

them separately; all would have equally benefited from the prayer for those who believe.

Also, have a look at the verse: *And* (as for) *those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every man is responsible for what he has wrought* (52:21): If the offspring who followed them in faith, were included in the epithet, "those who believe", there would be no sense in saying that the offspring would be united with them. Even if we were to say that the verse refers to the generation after generation of the believers, that every succeeding generation will be united to the preceding one (provided both believed in the Apostle of Allãh – s.a.w.a.), the meaning would not seem very proper in the context. If that were the import of the verse, then why this "uniting"? Also, what purpose would be served by the sentence, "and We will not diminish to them aught of their work"? Such an interpretation may prove correct for one generation only, that is, the last one before the Day of Resurrection – that they would be united with the preceding generation. But nobody has suggested this meaning as it goes clearly against the context. What such an interpretation would boil down to is as follows:

All the believers are united, one of them being from another; all of them are of one rank; none has any excellence over the others; nor has an earlier believer any superiority over the later ones; their main qualification is the true belief, and all of them are equal in it. Such a meaning would not fit the wording of the verse which clearly shows that the preceding believers have a sort of superiority over their offspring, who would be raised to the rank of their progenitor as a token of honour to the latter.

The phrase, "and their offspring follow them in faith", proves that the preceding word, "those who believe" refers to a particular group of the believers – the foremost and the first of the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed the Apostle in the hour of straitness. The epithet, those who believe, is a title of honour bestowed on that distinguished group.

Other two verses too point to this fact:

(It is) *for the poor who fled . . . and those who made their abode in the city and in the faith before them . . . and those who came after them say: "Our Lord! forgive us and those of our brethren who had precedence of us in faith, and do not create any spite in our hearts towards those who believe; our Lord! surely Thou art Kind, Merciful"* (59:8-10). This verse uses two phrases, "who had precedence of us in faith", and "those who believe". If the import of both were the same, a pronoun would have looked better in place of the second phrase. By not using a pronoun, Allãh has made it clear that each phrase has its own significance.

Muhammad is the Apostle of Allãh; and those with him are severe against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves, you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allãh and pleasure; . . . Allãh has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward (48:29).

All this shows that the phrase, "those who believe", is a title of honour, reserved for the first and foremost of the believers. Most probably, the opposite phrase, "those who disbelieve", has the contrasting significance, and refers to the polytheists of Mecca and others who were the first and foremost of those who disbelieved in the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). For example, *Surely those who disbelieve alike is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe.* (2:6)

Objection: This interpretation means that when the Qur'ãn says, " O you who believe! ", it addresses a special group that was present in the Prophet's time, to the exclusion of all other believers. But all the Muslims agree that such verses are general in their import and that what is said therein applies to all the believers, whether they were present in the Prophet's days or not; and that this mode of address includes all the believers – in reality, not metaphorically.

Reply: Yes! It is a title of honour, reserved for a selected few. But it does not mean that what is said in those verses is in any way restricted to those few. Whatever order or prohibition

is given in such verses is general and applies to all the believers. The matter of legislation – whether a given order is general or exclusive – is quite different from that of a speech – whether it is addressed to all the believers or to a few of them. Also, it makes no difference whether a verse ordaining a law is addressed to the believers (*O you who believe!*) or to the Prophet in person (*O Prophet!; O Apostle!*), or is revealed without any address at all. The ordained law in all these cases is applicable to all the Muslims, and covers all the believers; although the verse may be addressed to the Prophet or to those who believe as a mark of respect to him or them.

Nevertheless, one should not indiscriminately interpret the phrase, "O you who believe!" and "those who believe", as referring to the first and foremost believers of the Prophet's time; rather one should look at the context, before deciding the true connotation of these phrases in a given verse. For example, look at the verse: *Surely* (as for) *those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allãh will not forgive them nor guide them in the* (right) *path* (4:137); and the verse which quotes Nũḥ (a. s.) as saying: *and I am not going to drive away those who believe; surely they shall meet their Lord* (11:129). Obviously, the phrase, those who believe, used in the above verses cannot refer to the above-mentioned group.

QUR'ÃN : *do not say, "Have regard for us", and say, "Wait for us"; and listen:* That is, use the phrase, Wait for us, instead of saying, Have regard for us. And if you failed to comply with this command, it would be tantamount to disbelief, and for the disbelievers there is a painful chastisement. It is a very strong admonition against saying, *"rã'inã"* (راعِنا) = Have regard for us). This phrase has also been mentioned in another verse, which gives an indication of its connotation: *Of those who are Jews* (there are those who) *alter words from their places and say: "We have heard and we disobey"; and: "Hear, may you not be made to hear!" and "rã'inã", distorting* (the word) *with their tongues and taunting about religion* (4:46). Obviously,

the Jews used the phrase, *"Rã'inã"* for something similar to the phrase, "Hear, may you not be made to hear!" And that is why such a mode of addressing the Prophet was prohibited. This explanation agrees with what the tradition says: When the Prophet talked with the Muslims, they used to tell him: *"Rã'inã* (have *regard for us*) O Apostle of Allãh!" – that is, wait for us, so that we may properly understand what you are saying.* But this word carried a connotation of abuse in the Jews' language. The Jews seized upon this opportunity, addressing the Prophet with this phrase, pretending to show respect to him while their intention was nothing short of abuse. And in their usage it meant, "Hear, may you not be made to hear". Thereupon, Allãh revealed: *Of those who are Jews* (there are those who) *alter words from their places and say: "We have heard and we disobey"; and: "Hear, may you not be made to hear!" and: "rã'inã ", distorting* (the word) *with their tongues and taunting about religion; and if they had said* (instead): *"We have heard and we obey", and "hearken", and "onẓurnã"* (wait for us), *it would have been better for them and more upright* (4:46). The believers too were told not to use this phrase and say instead, *"onẓurna ";* the Qur'ãn guided them: "do not say, 'Have regard for us', and say, 'Wait for us' ".

QUR'ÃN: *and for the unbelievers there is a painful chastisement***:** that is, for those who disobey this rule. It is one of the occasions when disobedience of a law of religion has been termed as disbelief.

QUR'ÃN: *Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book . . .:* Obviously, the phrase, "the People of the Book", refers here exclusively to the Jews, because the preceding verses

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* It is more or less equivalent to the English idiom "I beg your pardon". But with a slight change of accent it may come to mean, stupid or cattle tenderer. (*tr.*)

too dealt with them. If so, then the phrase would serve as a pointer to the cause why they did not like that any good should be sent down to the believers from their Lord. The Jews were given a Book before and they were not happy when the Qur'ãn was sent down to the Muslims, as it deprived them of their distinction as being the People of the Book. They showed avarice about a thing they did not own; they wanted to stand against Allãh when He bestowed His mercy and grace on His servants; "and Allãh chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy; and Allãh is the Lord of mighty grace".

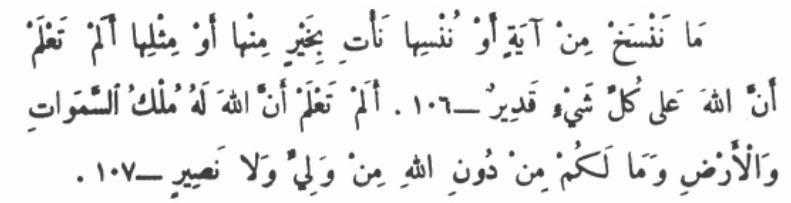
On the other hand the phrase, as used in this verse, may include all the People of the Book – the Jews and the Christians both. If so, then the verse would serve to widen the scope of the admonition; it would be a generalization after exclusiveness. Both groups shared many characteristics – and especially their enmity to Islam. Some verses coming afterwards strengthen this interpretation. For example: *And they say: "None shall enter the garden except he who is a Jew or a Christian"* (2:111) ; *And the Jews say,* "*The Christians do not follow anything* (good)", *and the Christians say,* "*The Jews do not follow any-thing* (good)" . . . (2:113)

TRADITIONS

Abu Nu'aym has narrated in *Ḥilyatu 'l-awliyã'* from Ibn 'Abbãs that he said: "The Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Allãh has not revealed any verse (beginning) with, " O you who believe!" but that 'Ali is its head and leader.' " **(ad-Durru 'l-manthũr)**

The author says: This tradition supports what we shall be quoting in various places that a certain verse was revealed about 'Ali (a.s.) or *Ahlu 'l-bayt;* for example: *You are the best of the nations raised for* (the benefit of) *men* (3:110); . . . *that you may be witnesses over the people* . . . (2:143);. . . *and be with the true ones* (9:119).

* * * * *


مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنْسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلِهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ
أَنَّ اللهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ــ١٠٦ . أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ــ١٠٧ .

Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allãh has power over all things? (106). *Do you not know that Allãh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allãh you have no guardian or helper?* (107).

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COMMENTARY

The verses deal with the subject of abrogation. The word, abrogation, when used as a term of Islamic *fiqh,* means as follows: To show that the time of an order has come to its end; that it is no more valid, is no longer in force. This definition is based on the above verse; and is one of the manifestations of its connotations.

QUR'A-N : *Whatever signs We abrogate . . .: "an-Naskh"*( ) النَّسْخُ is removal, to remove, to annul. The Arabs say: *Nasakhati* 'sh-*shamsu 'z-zilla* (نَسَخَتِ الشَّمْسُ الظِّلَّ) = the sun removed the shadow). Allãh says: *And We did not send before you any apostle or prophet, but when he desired, the Satan made a suggestion*

respecting his desire; but Allãh annuls that which the Satan casts, then does Allãh establish His signs; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise (22:52). Also, they say: *Nasakhtu 'l-kitãb* (نَسَخْتُ الكِتابَ) = I copied the book) ; it is as though the writing was removed and its place changed. That is why another verse uses the word *"at-tabdīl"* (التَّبْديلُ) = to change) in place of abrogation: *And when We change* (one) *sign for* (another) *sign, and Allãh knows best what He reveals, they say: "You are a forger". Nay, most of them do not know* (16:101).

Abrogation, however, does not entail obliteration of a verse, turning it into a non-being. Its only effect is the cancellation of the order which the verse had promulgated. It should be noted that the Qur'ãnic verse has been described as a "sign", that is, a mark that points to another thing – a verse is a sign pointing to a Divine Command. The second verse, "Do you not know that Allãh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth . . .", gives the reason as to why Allãh abrogates some Qur'anic verses. All these factors indicate that abrogation removes a verse as far as its quality as a sign, as a symbol, is concerned. When abrogated, the verse remains in existence as before, but loses its quality as a sign – no longer does it point to an order, as the order is now cancelled. The next phrase, "or cause to be forgotten", clearly supports the foregoing explanation. *"al-Insã' "*(اَلإِنْسَاءُ) is to make one forget, to erase out of memory, to eradicate from knowledge. By putting the two phrases side by side, the Qur'ãn makes it clear that abrogation entails erasure of a verse's effect, while *"al-insã'"* causes eradication of the verse itself from the memory.

Symbolism – the quality of being a sign of something – varies with various signs having various aspects and directions. The Qur'ãnic verses are the signs of Allãh because the *jinn* and the men are jointly and severally unable to bring its like; the rules ordained by Allãh are His signs inasmuch as they create piety in man and bring him nearer to his Lord; every created thing is His sign, because it, by its existence, proves the existence of its Creator, and by the qualities of its being, leads to His

attributes and names; the prophets and the friends of Allãh are His signs inasmuch as they, with their words and deeds, call the humanity to Allãh, and so on and so forth. Consequently, a sign may be great or small, strong or weak; that is why Allãh says: *Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord* (53:18).

Also, a sign may contain only one aspect of symbolism, and another may comprise of various such aspects. The former, when abrogated, is obliterated in its entirety, is completely destroyed. But in the case of the latter, it is possible to abrogate only one aspect of its symbolism, leaving the other ones intact; for example, a Qur'ãnic verse could be abrogated as far as its law was concerned, and yet continue as a Divine Sign because of its eloquence and miraculous qualities.

This generalized meaning of abrogation has been inferred from the reasoning given in the second verse: "Do you not know that Allãh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth . . ." There are only two objections possible against the factuality of abrogation; or, as the reports say, these were the two arguments advanced by the Jews against it.

First: A sign given by Allãh contains an actual benefit which cannot be obtained from any other thing. If that sign is abrogated, its inherent benefit would be lost; nothing could take its place to preserve that benefit. Allãh is not like His creatures, nor is His knowledge like theirs. His knowledge does not change with the changes in external factors. It is not that one day He knew one thing and issued an order according to that knowledge; then next day the knowledge changed and He became aware of another factor which He did not know before, and therefore He had to cancel the previous order, replacing it with a fresh one. Such inconsistency is not worthy of Divine Sublimity. Of course, it is all right for us mortals, because we cannot comprehend all the aspects of an affair; and as a result of this incomplete knowledge, our decisions are frequently changed and amended. But we should not compare Divine Knowledge without limited and defective perception.

Here it is necessary to point out that such an objection arises from a notion that the power of Allãh is neither comprehensive

and all-encompassing nor unrestricted and unconditional.

Second: Accepted that the Divine Power is all-encompassing and limitless. But once a thing is created it goes beyond the sphere of that power, and cannot be changed. Even in our case, we have power to do or not to do a certain work – so long as we have not done it ; but once we have done it, it becomes an essential being, and goes beyond the limits of our power.

This argument is based on the rejection of the all-encompassing ownership of Allãh; it presupposes that once Allãh has managed a certain affair in a certain way, He cannot change that arrangement in another way. This Jewish belief is portrayed in the verse: *And the Jews say: "The hand of Allãh is tied up"* (5:64).

Allãh replies to the first objection with the question: "Do you not know that Allãh has power over all things?" He certainly has power over all things. Therefore, He may replace a sign with an equally good or even a better sign. The second objection is dealt with by the next question: "Do you not know that Allãh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allãh you have no guardian or helper?" Allãh is the Owner of the heavens and the earth; He can do whatever He likes with His property. No one besides Him owns any thing; otherwise, that owner could interfere in the management of Allãh or put restriction on His authority and control. None else owns any thing – neither in his own rights nor even when Allãh gives to him a partial ownership. When we transfer the ownership of a property to another person, the transferee gets all the rights which we had in that property, and our rights are rendered null and void. But when Allãh gives a property into someone's possession, Allãh's ownership of the property is not disturbed in any way – it does not come to an end, is not even diminished. He continues to be the real Owner and Controller of the property which He has given to others. His is the unrestricted ownership and unconditional management.

If we look at what He has put under our ownership – with-out our having any independent authority over it – then He is our Guardian. And if we look at the apparent independence

enjoyed by us, with His grace – although it is a poverty in the shape of plenty, a dependence disguised as independence – then too we cannot manage our affairs without His help; and He is our Helper.

The above explanation is based on the sequence and style of the two verses. First, there is the exclusivity of the declaration: "Allãh's is the kingdom . . ." Then there is the sequence: "Do you not know that Allãh has power over all things? Do you not know that Allãh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth . . .?" The two sentences have not been joined with any conjunctive, a sure indication that each is independent of the other, and that the first sentence deals with one objection and the second with another. The last sentence, "and that besides Allãh you have no guardian or helper", gives a finishing touch to the above replies: Even if you are oblivious of Allãh's all-encompassing power and ownership, and are looking at this nominal ownership of yours, you will know that it is not a permanent or independent ownership; you cannot manage it independently; you need a guardian to look after your interests – and Allãh is that guardian. He can and does manage your affairs and your property as He likes.

On the other hand, if your eyes are so fixed on this possession as to make you forget your dependence; if you think that you are the independent and absolute owner of your property, even then you will have to admit that you cannot manage your own affairs, cannot obtain the results you want, without the help and assistance of a super power. And Allãh is your real Helper; it is He who manages your affairs and your property for you. From whatever angle you look at this matter, Allãh's power over all things and His ownership of every thing remain unchallenged and undisputed.

"and that besides Allãh you have no guardian or helper": Apparently it should have been 'besides Him.' Then why did the Qur'ãn use the noun instead of the pronoun? It was to indicate that the foregoing sentences contain the complete replies, and this sentence is not their integral part; rather it is an independent declaration to stengthen those replies.

This discourse leads us to the following conclusions:

First: Abrogation is not a thing confined to only the religious laws; it holds its place in the sphere of creation too.

Second: Abrogation cannot take place without two sides: (i) The abrogated thing or verse, (ii) the abrogative, that is, the thing or verse that abrogates.

Third: The abrogative contains all the benefits and the perfection that was found in the abrogated thing.

Fourth: Although the abrogative differs from the abrogated in its form, both have one thing in common – the perfection and the benefit. When a prophet dies and another is sent in his place – and both of them are the signs of Allãh, one abrogating the other – it takes place in total conformity with the natural system. Life, death, sustenance and other such things often replace each other, the succeeding factors abrogating the preceding ones. It all depends on the varying needs of the society's welfare, on ever-changing level of the man's perfection. Like-wise, when a religious law is replaced by another, the abrogating one has the same power as the abrogated one had, to lead to the spiritual and temporal well-being of the individual and the society; each perfectly suitable for the time it was, or is, in force; each more beneficial in the context of its time. For example, the order to "forgive" in the beginning of the call when the Muslims had neither the manpower nor the armaments, and the command to "fight" when Islam had gained some strength, when the Muslims had gathered enough force and the disbelievers and the polytheists were frightened of them. However, seldom is an abrogated verse devoid of some phrase showing that it was a transitory order which would be abrogated in due course. For example: The verse: *But pardon and forgive* (them) *until Allãh should bring about His command* (2:109), which was abrogated by the verse of fighting; and: . . . *confine them until death takes them away or Allãh makes some way for them* (4:15), which was abrogated by the verse of flogging. The phrases, "until Allãh should bring about His command", and, "or Allãh makes some way for them", give clear indication that the order given therein was temporary and transitory which would soon be abrogated.

Fifth: The relation between the abrogative and the abrogated is quite different from that which is found between a general statement and a particular, between an unconditional clause and a conditional, or between an unspecified proposition and a specified.

What removes the apparent contradiction between the abrogative and the abrogated, is the society's and the individual's good and well-being which is found in both of them. But the apparent contradiction between a general statement and a particular, between an unconditional clause and a conditional, or between an unspecified proposition and a specified, emanates from the strong (or weak) manifestation of the intended meaning. The true intention of the speaker is reflected much more strongly and clearly in a particularized statement, a conditional clause and a specified proposition; and that strength and clarity removes the above-mentioned apparent contradiction – by explaining the general in the light of the particular, the unconditional with the help of the conditional and the unspecified in the frame of the specified. These things are the subject of the Principles of Jurisprudence. The same applies to the decisive and the ambiguous verses, as we shall explain under the verse: . . . *of it there- are some verses decisive, they, are the basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous* . . . (3:7)

QUR'ÃN: *or cause to be forgotten: "Nunsihã"* (نُنْسِهَا) is derived from *"al-insã' "* (to cause to be forgotten; to erase from memory or knowledge), as we have described earlier. It is a general and unconditional statement. It is not restricted to the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.); nay, it does not include him at all. Allãh had said about him: *We will make you recite so you shall not forget, except what Allãh pleases* (87:6 -7). It is a Meccan verse, while the verse of abrogation is of Medina period. Obviously the Apostle could not forget anything after the promise of Allãh, "so you shall not forget".

Question: This claim is untenable because the promise has the proviso, "except what Allãh pleases". It means that the

Apostle (s.a.w.a.) could forget what Allãh was pleased to make him forget.

Reply: Such exceptional clauses serve only to emphasize the power of Allãh; they do not necessarily mean that the thing mentioned in that clause would actually take place. Look for example at the verse: . . . *they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord pleases* . . . (11:108). It just shows that Allãh does have power to change the arrangement made; but all the Muslims agree that the people of the paradise will never be taken out of it. The same is the import of the exceptional clause, "except what Allãh pleases", in this verse.

Moreover, if the said clause were to prove that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) could actually forget the things taught by Allãh, depending on the pleasure of Allãh, there would be no sense in putting him under obligation by promising him, "you shall not forget". Any human being who remembers any thing, or forgets it, does so by the pleasure of Allãh. The same is true about the animals who remember and forget by His pleasure and decree. And the Prophet too, before this promised grace of Allãh, remembered by the pleasure of Allãh, and forgot by the pleasure of Allãh. What new grace was added here if the promise meant only a quality which the Prophet had already had? If that promise were to make any sense, it would have to mean that the Prophet could never forget anything, although Allãh had full power to make him forget.

Some people have recited the word as *"nansa'ahã"* (نَنْسَأهَا) **,** derived from *"an-nas' "* (اَلنَّسْأ) = to delay). According to this recitation, the meaning would be as follows: Whatever signs We abrogate by nullifying it, or put it off by delaying its appearance, We bring one better than it or like it, and the Divine management in advancing something or putting it off, does not diminish its perfection or benefit.

The fact that the Divine Management always brings out a thing's perfection and benefit, is inferred from the clause, "We bring one better than it or like it". The goodness emanates from the perfection of a thing or benefit of a laid down rule.

The abrogated thing or rule was surely good; and the abrogating thing or rule too is at least as good, if not better. So, every Divine Management is the ideal of goodness, perfection and benefit.

TRADITIONS

Innumerable traditions have been narrated by both sects, from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), his companions, and the Imãms of his *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* that there are abrogated and abrogating verses in the Qur'ãn.

The Commander of the faithful ('Ali - a.s.) said, after enumerating various abrogated and abrogating verses: "And the word of Allãh: *And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me* (51:56) was abrogated by His word: *and they shall continue to differ, except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for this did He create them* (11:118 - 119), that is, for the mercy did He create them." (*at-Tafsīr,* an-Nu'mãni)

The author says: In this tradition the Imãm has used the word, abrogation, in a wider sense than its terminological meaning. The latter verse mentions a reality which restricts the reality described by the former. The first verse affirms the Divine Worship as the purpose of creation. While doing a work, Allãh keeps a purpose in view; and He cannot be defeated in His purpose. On the other hand, he has decreed that they should choose their own path, and consequently some of them progress on the right path, while others go astray. Those who by their own choice choose the path of guidance are covered by the mercy of Allãh, and it is for this mercy that He has created them. In this way, the second verse affirms another purpose for the creation: The mercy which accompanies the worship and guidance. This goal is reached by only a selected few, while the first verse had affirmed a goal for all the *jinn* and the men, and that is the Divine Worship. Some people are created for some others, and those others for yet others; this chain continues till it reaches the group which sincerely worships Allãh. Looking

from this point of view, it is easy to understand why all the *jinn* and men have been said to be created for the worship. We plant a garden and nurse the trees for their fruits. The real purpose is the fruits, but the trees and their branches and leaves are planted, protected and looked after because they are the means to get the fruits. And it will be quite right to say that the garden's purpose was its fruits.

In the same way, the second verse "abrogates" the generality of the first verse, focusing its sight on the true worshippers who are the recipients of the mercy of Allãh.

The same book narrates from the same Imãm that he said: "And the word of Allãh: *And there is not one of you but shall come down to it; this is a decided decree of your Lord* (19:71), was abrogated by His word: *Surely* (as for) *those whom the good has already gone forth from Us, they shall be kept far off from it; they will not hear its faintest sound, and they shall abide in that which their souls long for. The great fearful event shall not grieve them* (21:101-103)."

The author says: It must be noted that the relation between these two verses is not that found between a general declaration and a particular one. The first verse says that it is a decided and unavoidable decree of Allãh; and such a decree cannot be rendered null and void, it cannot be cancelled. What the "abrogation" mentioned in this tradition means will be explained, God willing, in the exegesis of the verse 21:101, mentioned above.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "Among the (various types of) abrogation is "*al-badã'*"* (اَلبَدآءُ) contained in the word of Allãh:

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* *al Badã'* (اَلبَدآءُ) is a terminology of Shi'ite theology. It means that Allãh makes known His plan to His chosen servants only to that extent which is beneficial to the mankind or which is necessary to make a test meaningful. When the time comes when the angel, Prophet or Imãm concerned thinks that the plan of work is coming to its end, a new development extends the plan or brings it to an unexpected end. The saving of the People of Yũnus and the intended sacrifice of Ismã'īl are among its examples. (tr.)

Allãh effaces what He pleases and establishes (likewise), *and with Him is the basis of the Book* (13:39); and (demonstrated in) the saving of the People of Yũnus." (al 'Ayyãshī)

The author says: Its reason is clear.

Some traditions of the Imãms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) count the death of an Imãm and his being succeeded by another Imãm as an example of the abrogation.

The author says: We have already explained this matter. The number of the traditions containing this theme reaches to nearly *mutawãtir*.

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Abu Dãwũd (in his *an-Nãsikh wa 'l-mansũkh*) and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Qatãdah that he said: "(During the lifetime of the Prophet) a verse used to abrogate (another) verse; and the Prophet of Allãh used to recite a verse, and a chapter, and as much as Allãh wished of a chapter, then it was raised (i.e. erased) and Allãh caused His Prophet to forget it. So, Allãh said narrating it to His Prophet: *Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it;* He says: There is (some) ease in it, some allowance in it, some order in it, (and) some prohibition in it." (*ad-Durru '1-manthũr*)

The author says: The same book quotes numerous traditions on the theme of "causing to be forgotten"; but all of them have to be discarded because they go against the teaching of the Book of Allãh, as we have explained in the meaning of this word.

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أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْئَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَمَنْ يَتَبَدَّلِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ــ ١٠٨ .
وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّاراً
حَسَداً مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا
حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ــ ١٠٩ . وَأَقِيمُوا
الصَّلَوٰةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَوٰةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ــ ١١٠ . وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا
مَنْ كَانَ هُوداً أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ــ ١١١ . بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ــ ١١٢ . وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ
النَّصَارَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ
الْكِتَابَ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ــ ١١٣ . وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ
مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ
لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ــ ١١٤ . وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ــ ١١٥ .

Or, do you wish to put questions to your Apostle, as Musã was questioned before? And whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has lost the right way (108). *Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on their part,* (even) *after the truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and forgive* (them) *until Allãh should bring about His command. Surely Allãh has power over all things* (109). *And keep up prayer and pay the zakãt, and whatever good you send before for yourselves you shall find it with Allãh; surely Allãh sees what you do* (110). *And they say: "None shall enter the garden except he who is a Jew or a Christian ". These are their vain desires. Say: "Bring your proof if you are truthful"* (111). *Yes! whoever submits his self entirely to Allãh and he is the doer of good, he has his reward with his Lord, and there is no fear for them nor shall they grieve* (112). *And the Jews say: "The Christians do not follow anything* (good) ", *and the Christians say: "The Jews do not follow anything* (good) ", *while they recite the Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like to what they say; so Allãh shall judge between them on the Day of Resurrection in what they differ* (113). *And who is more unjust than he who prevents* (men from) *the mosques of Allãh, that His name shall not be remembered in them, and strives to ruin them?* (*As* for) *those, it was not for them that they should have entered them except in fear; they shall meet with disgrace in this world, and they shall have great chastisement in the hereafter* (114). *And Allãh's is the East and the West; therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allãh's face; surely Allãh is Ample-giving, Knowing* (115).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Or, do you wish to put questions to your Apostle . . . :* It appears from this sentence that some of the Muslims – although

believing in the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) – had put some questions to him not unlike the questions put to Mũsã (a.s.) by the Jews. That is why they have been placed here in line with the Jews for admonition.

The tradition too supports this interpretation.

QUR'ÃN : *the right way:* that is, the straight path.

QUR'ÃN : *Many of the People of the Book wish . . .:* Reportedly it refers to Ḥuyayy ibn al-Akhṭab and other Jews who were with him.

QUR'ÃN: *But pardon and forgive* (them): According to the exegetes this order was abrogated by the verse of fighting.

QUR'ÃN: *until Allãh should bring about His command:* As indicated above, this clause alludes to a command that was to be revealed in not too distant a time about the Jews. The case is similar to the verse: (As for) *those, it was not for them that they should have entered them except in fear* (2:115), when read together with the verse: *the idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this* (very) *year . . .* (9 :29). The clause, "except in fear", had hinted to the intended ban that was promulgated later.

We shall explain the meaning of *"al-amr"* (الأمْرُ) = command) under the verse: *And they ask you about the soul. Say: "The soul is from the command of My Lord"* (17:85).

QUR'ÃN: *And they say: "None shall enter the garden except he who is a Jew or a Christian":* The verse explicitly joins the Christians with the Jews; from now on the sins and crimes of both will be enumerated together.

QUR'ÃN: *Yes! whoever submits his self entirely to Allãh and he is the doer of good, he has his reward with his Lord:* It reiterates for the third time the basic principle that the spiritual felicity does not depend on name or nomenclature, that no one

can get honour with Allãh except by true faith in, and total surrender to, Him. The first declaration was in the verse: *Surely those who believe and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaens, whoever believes in Allãh and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward* . . . (2:62); the second one was in the verse: *Yea! whoever earns evil. . . And* (as for) *those who believe and do good deeds, these are the dwellers of the garden* . . . (2:81-82); the third is this verse under discussion.

A comparison of this verse with the previous two shows that the true belief entails submitting one's self entirely to Allãh; and *"al- iḥsãn"* (اَلإِحْسَانُ) = to do good) is synonymous to the good deeds.

QUR'ÃN: *while they recite the Book:* that is, while they follow the Book revealed to them. They should not say such things because they have the Book with them and it clearly shows them where the truth is.

This explanation is supported by the next sentence, "Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like to what they say". The word, "those who have no knowledge", refers to the unbelievers (other than the People of the Book) and the polytheists of Arabia. They used to say, "The Muslims do not follow anything good", or "The People of the Book do not follow anything good".

QUR'ÃN: *And who is more unjust than he who prevents. .* Apparently it refers to the unbelievers and polytheists of Mecca. These two verses were revealed not long after the Apostle of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) emigrated to Medina.

QUR'ÃN: *it was not for them that they should have entered them except in fear:* The verb, "was", shows that the sentence describes a past event. It perfectly fits the pagans of Mecca and their misdeeds. The traditions say that "he who prevents" refers to the unbelievers of Mecca, it was they who prevented the Muslims from praying in the Sacred Mosque (*Masjidu 'l-Ḥarãm*)

and in other mosques within the precinct of the Ka'bah.

QUR'ÃN: *And Allãh's is the East and the West:* The east and the west – any direction, whatsoever – really belong to Allãh. His is the true mastership that cannot be altered or transferred; it is not like the possession known to us in our society's framework. Allãh's ownership permeates the possessed thing itself as well as its benefits and effects, unlike our ownership that covers only the benefits and effects, and not the thing itself.

A property, possession, *per se,* cannot stand except with its owner. Therefore, the east and the west, nay, all the directions whatsoever, exist because of Allãh – the Owner. Allãh preserves and manages the directions, and encompasses them. Anyone turning to any of the directions, turns in reality to Allãh.

The east and the west are relative terms. They cover al-most all the directions, except the two imaginary points of the true north and the true south. That is why Allãh left the clause, "whither you turn", unconditional, and did not say, 'whither you turn of these two directions'. To whatever direction one turns one's face, it is bound to be either east or west. The sentence, "And Allãh's is the East and the West", therefore, implies that all the directions belong to Allãh.

The east and the west were selected for special mention because man fixes the directions with the help of rising and setting of the sun and other heavenly bodies.

QUR'ÃN: *therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allãh's face:* It puts the cause in place of the effect. What the sentence implies is as follows: To whichever direction you turn, it is allowed to you, because Allãh's face is in that directions too.

The concluding clause, "surely Allãh is Ample-giving, Knowing", supports this interpretation.

"al-Wãsi'" (الواسعُ) = translated here as "ample-giving") literally means extensive, abounding, far-reaching. It implies that Allãh's ownership is extensive and all-pervading and every direction belongs to Him. He is All-knowing too; therefore, He knows what your aim and intention is, no matter whichever

direction you turn your face to. He is not like human beings or other creatures – if we want to see some physical object, we have to turn to a particular direction in order to bring it into focus. But Allãh is not confined to a particular direction; turn to any direction, you are turning to Allãh, and Allãh knows it.

The verse gives a latitude about the *qiblah,* as far as its directions is concerned, but not apropos its location as may be inferred from the clause, "And Allãh's is the East and the West", inasmuch as it mentions the directions only.

TRADITIONS

Muhammad ibn al-Ḥusayn said: "It was written to al-'Abdu 'ṣ-Ṣãliḥ: 'A man prays in a cloudy day in an open space and he does not know the (direction of) *qiblah,* he prays; and when he has finished his prayer, the sun appears and (he finds that) he had prayed against *qiblah.* Should he regard his prayer (as valid) or should he repeat it?' He wrote: 'He should repeat it if the time (of prayer) is not over. Does he not know that Allãh says – and His word is true: *therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allãh's face?'"* (*at-Tahdhīb*)

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said about the word of Allãh: *And Allãh's is the East and the West . . .:* "Allãh has revealed this verse especially for the voluntary prayer; *therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allãh's face; surely Allãh is Ample-giving, Knowing.* And the Apostle of Allãh prayed on his camel by making gestures (for the actions of the prayer) wherever it turned to, when he proceeded to Khaybar, and also when he returned from Mecca – and the Ka'bah was behind his back." (al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: al-'Ayyãshī has narrated another tradition of nearly the same meaning through Zurarah from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.); and so have done al-Qummi and ash-Shaykh from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) and aṣ-Ṣadũq from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.).

If you study the traditions of the Imãms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* related to the exegesis of the Qur'ãnic verses – the general and

the particular; the unconditional and the conditional – you will see that often they infer one rule from the general verse, and another rule from the same when read together with the particular one. For example, the general verse implies a voluntary rule; but read with the particular one it promulgates an obligatory law. The same applies to the cases of disliked and forbidden things. And so on.

The above is a key factor in understanding the traditions narrated from the Imãms; and on it depends the knowledge of a multitude of their traditions.

You may infer from it two important principles of the Qur'ãnic knowledge:

First: Every Qur'ãnic clause or sentence, taken alone, describes an established reality or rule; when it is joined to another revealed qualifying clause, it indicates another reality or rule; add to it another qualification or condition and you get a third set of confirmed reality or law; and so on. For example, look at the verse: *Say: "Allãh; then leave them sporting in their vain discourses"* (6:91). It indicates four separate meanings depending on the word we stop at: First, "Say: Allãh"; second, "Say: Allãh; then leave them"; third, "Say: Allãh; then leave them in their vain discourses"; fourth, "Say: Allãh, then leave them sporting in their vain discourses". Many such examples may be found in the Qur'ãn.

Second: If two stories or two themes are joined in one sentence or clause, both of them must be having a common base.

These two esoteric principles of exegesis open the way to many Qur'ãnic secrets – and Allãh is the true Guide.

* * * * *

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللهُ وَلَداً سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَهُ قَانِتُونَ ـ ١١٦ . بَدِيعُ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِذَا قَضٰى أَمْراً فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ـ ١١٧ .

And they say: "Allãh has taken to himself a son". Glory be to Him; rather, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him (116). *The Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, "Be", and it is* (117).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN : *And they say: 'Allãh has taken to himself a son ":* Obviously the pronoun "they" refers to the Jews and the Christians; the former said that 'Uzayr was the son of God; the latter claimed the same thing for Jesus Christ. The verse takes the admonition of the People of the Book a step further.

The People of the Book initially used the phrase, son of God, for their prophets etc. as a mark of respect for them – in the same way as they used the words, sons of God and His chosen people, for themselves. Gradually, the metaphorical sense gave way to the real one, and 'Uzayr and Jesus Christ were believed to be the sons of God in the real sense of the word.

Allãh refuted their claim in these two verses. They contain

two proofs against them.

The first proof is given in the words: "whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him." How does one beget a son? A physical being removes some of his parts from himself and develops and nurtures it into another member of the species, similar to himself. Now, nothing can be similar to Allãh; He is far above such things; whatever is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him, is His property; every thing is made existent by Him, is managed by Him; it is by nature obedient to Him, subservient to Him. Things being as they are how can any thing be similar to Allãh? Does God belong to a species? How can He beget someone of the same "species"?

The second proof is given in the second verse: "The Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, **'Be',** and it is." *"al-Badī' "* (اَلبَدِيْعُ) = translated here as the Originator) is used for the one who invents and originates a thing without any previous model, without any existing blue-print. Only Allãh is the Originator in the true sense of the word. He originates every thing; no creature of His resembles any fellow creature. His creation is not like others' production inasmuch as He does not make any thing by imitation; He does not create gradually, nor with the help of the secondary causes; when He decides an affair, He only says to it, "Be", and it is – without any need of any previous model or gradual development. How can such an Originator be said to take to himself a son? After all, begetting a son entails gradual development.

These are the two incontestable proofs which expose the fallacy of the belief that God has begotten a son. The verses also prove the following two facts:

First: The command to obey Allãh and to worship Him is all-pervading; it is binding to all that is in the heavens and in the earth.

Second: The actions of Allãh are not gradual. It follows that every thing that comes into being gradually, must have another non-gradual existence which emanates from the Divine Command. Allãh says: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, 'Be", and it is* (36:82).

And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye (54:50). A detailed discussion of this Qur'ãnic reality will be given, God willing, under the verse 36:82, quoted just above.

QUR'ÃN: *Glory be to Him: "subḥãn"* (سُبْحَانَ) *is* an infinitive verb, synonymous to *"at-tasbīḥ"* (اَلتَّسْبِيْحُ) = glorification of God). It is always used as a first member of genitive construction – the second member always being the name, 'Allãh' (or a pronoun referring to Him). Grammatically it is in accusative case pointing to a deleted verb. Originally it was, *sabbaḥtuhu tasbīḥan* (سَبَّحْتُهُ تَسْبِيْحاً = I glorified Him as He should be glorified) ;
but the verb was deleted and the infinitive verb was joined to the pronoun 'Him' in genitive construction, to stand in place of the verb.

By using this phrase here, Allãh has taught the believers the manner of declaring His glory whenever something unworthy of His sacred name is ascribed to Him.

QUR'ÃN: *all are obedient to Him: "al-Qunũt"* (اَلقُنُوْتُ = to worship; self-abasement).

QUR'ÃN : *The Originator of the heavens . . .*: Originating implies that the thing so created is not like any other thing.

QUR'ÃN : *and it is:* The sentence branches out from the word, "Be". The preceding clause is not a conditional one; that is why this verb is not in apocopate form, that is, its last vowel has not been cut off.

TRADITIONS

Sudayr aṣ-Ṣayrafi said: "I heard Ḥumrãn ibn A'yan asking Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: *The Originator of the heavens and the earth.* Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said: 'Verily Allãh, Mighty and Great is He!, originated all things by His (Own) Knowledge, without there being any previous model. So, He originated the heavens and the earth, and there were no heavens

or earth before them. Do you not listen to His word, *and His throne was on the water?' "* (*al-Kãfī; Baṣã'iru 'd-darajãt*)

The author says: The tradition points to yet another fine point. It shows that "the water", mentioned in this verse, is something different from the water known to us. The Imãm has quoted this verse to prove that Allãh's creation is based on originality. And the Divine authority and power, before the creation of these heavens and this earth, was firm on the water. Obviously, the water mentioned here was not the water of this earth, or like this earthly water.

We shall explain it further under the verse: *and His throne was on the water* (12:7).

AN ACADEMIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE CREATION

The experience as well as the philosophical argument proves that any two things are different from each other in their respective particulars even if they are united in their common and general characteristics. Even if the two are so alike as to make it difficult for the senses to discern any dissimilarity between them, when seen or tested with the help of scientific instruments clear differences come before the eyes. It means that every creation is unique and original; no two things are made of one model.

Now we should look at this matter from the philosophical point of view. Let us take any two things sand see why they are distinct from each other. If the basis of distinction is not a thing within their own selves, then it must be an outside factor. In that case, their selves must be absolute and indivisible entities. But an absolute and indivisible entity cannot be duplicated nor repeated. In other words, the two distinct entities would become one and the same. And it is a contradiction in terms. Therefore, we have to admit that every being is different in its own self from all other beings. It follows that every thing is unique; and

does not have any similarity or likeness to any other thing. And it is Allãh who has given every thing its uniqueness, distinction and originality, as He is the Originator of the heavens and of the earth.

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وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلاَ يُكَلِّمُنَا اللهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ
بَيَّنَّا الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ـ ١١٨ . إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيراً
وَنَذِيراً وَلاَ تُسْئَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ ـ ١١٩ .

And those who have no knowledge say: "Why does not Allãh speak to us or a sign come to us?" Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say; their hearts are all alike. Indeed We have made the signs clear for a people who are sure (118). *Surely, We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner, and you shall not be questioned as to the companions of the flaming fire* (119).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And those who have no knowledge say:* It refers to the polytheists and the unbelievers other than the People of the Book. It is set in contrast with the verse 113: *And the Jews say, "The Christians do not follow anything* (good)", *and the Christians say, "The Jews do not follow anything* (good), *while they recite the Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like to what they say.* In this verse, the People of the Book were joined to the polytheists and unbelievers of Arabia; and the verse

under discussion joins those polytheists and unbelievers to the People of the Book: "And those who have no knowledge say: ' Why does not Allãh speak to us or a sign come to us?' Even thus said those before them (i.e., the People of the Book, including the Jews) the like of what they say", because the Jews had disputed with their prophet, Mũsã (a.s.) and demanded from him the like of what these pagans say.

The People of the Book and the pagans of Arabia are alike in their way of thinking; the former say the like of what the latter say, and vice versa: *their hearts are all alike.*

QUR'ÃN: *Indeed We have made the signs clear for a people who are sure:* It is the rebuttal of the demand of those who have no knowledge. The signs they are demanding have already come to them, already been made clear to them. But they cannot benefit from them because only those who are sure of those signs may get their benefit. As for these people who have no knowledge, their hearts are submerged into ignorance, sick with the disease of prejudice and envy. That is why they have lost the ability to benefit from the signs sent by Allãh.

The above explanation makes it clear why they have been described as "those who have no knowledge".

After exposing the falsity of their demand, Allãh directs His speech to the Apostle, declaring in clear terms that he has surely been sent by Allãh "with the truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner". The verse was meant to bring comfort to the Prophet's heart and to make him realize that these adversaries were the people of the Fire, and they would not come to the path of guidance.

QUR'ÃN: *and you shall not be questioned as the companions of the flaming fire:* Its import is similar to that of the verse: *Surely those who disbelieve alike is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe* (2:6).

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وَلَنْ تَرْضىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلاَ النَّصارىٰ حَتّٰى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ
قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللهِ هُوَ الْهُدٰى وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوٰاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي
جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مٰا لَكَ مِنَ اللهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلاَ نَصِيرٍ ــ ١٢٠ .
الَّذِينَ آتَيْنٰاهُمُ الْكِتٰابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلاٰوَتِهِ أُولٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ
وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ــ ١٢١ . يٰا بَنِي إِسْرٰائِيلَ
اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعٰالَمِينَ ــ١٢٢.
وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لاَ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهٰا
عَدْلٌ وَلاَ تَنْفَعُهٰا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ ــ ١٢٣ .

And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the Christians until you follow their religion. Say; "Surely Allãh's guidance, that is the (*true*) *guidance". And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no guardian from Allãh, nor any helper* (120)*. Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it aught to be read. These* (*it is who*) *believe in it; and whoever disbelieves in it, these it is that are the losers* (121)*. O Children of Israel, call to mind My bounty which I bestowed on you and that I made you excel the nations* (122)*. And be on your guard against a day when no soul shall avail another in the least neither shall any compensation be accepted from it, nor shall intercession profit it nor shall they be helped* (123).

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the Christians . . .:* The Speaker turns again to the two groups, after a cursory glance at the others. These two verses give the sum and substance of the foregoing talk. After all those admonitions and reprimands of the Jews and the Christians, Allãh turns to His Apostle and says: They will never be pleased with you until you follow their religion which they have invented according to their desires, composed of their own opinions. Then He orders him to confute their views and tell them: "Surely Allãh's guidance, that is the (true) guidance". Why should a man follow the other for guidance? And the only guidance is the guidance of Allãh; that is the truth which must be followed. There is no guidance in any thing else; and certainly not in your religion. And what is that religion? Just an amalgam of your desires glorified as religion.

"Allãh's guidance" stands for the Qur'ãn – revealed by Allãh and, therefore, attributed to Him. The sentence, "Surely Allãh's guidance is the (true) guidance", restricts the guidance to that of Allãh. Conversely, it means' that their religion is devoid of guidance; in other words, it is just a set of their desires.

It follows that what the Prophet has got is knowledge, and what they hold in their hands is ignorance. Therefore, Allãh says to the Prophet: "And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no guardian from Allãh, nor any helper."

One cannot help admiring this verse: How logical, solid and well-grounded is the argument it offers; how many fine points of eloquence it holds, in spite of its brevity; how lovely is the language and how clear is the style!!

QUR'ÃN : *Those to whom We have given the Book . . .:* The restriction of the clause, "These (it is who) believe in it", gives rise to the belief that this verse is a reply to an unspoken question. The preceding words, "And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the Christians . . .", gave an indication that there was

no hope of their believing in the Prophet. If so, then how any of them could be expected to believe? Was it not in vain to invite them to Islam? This verse clears the air, and says: Those to whom We have given the Book (i.e., the Torah or the Injīl) and who read it as it aught to be read, these it is who truly believe in their Book and as such they shall believe in you.* Or that, they believe in a revealed book; and therefore shall believe in any other book revealed by Allãh. Or that, these it is who shall believe in the Qur'ãn.

(According to some of the above interpretations, the pro-noun, 'it', in the phrase, "believe in it", would stand for more than one noun by turns.)

The phrase, "Those to whom We have given the Book", refers to a group of the Jews and the Christians, who did not follow their desires, who wanted to follow the truth. "the Book" refers to the Torah and the Inji1.

Another possible explanation: "the Book" might be referring to the Qur'ãn, and, "Those to whom We have given the Book", to the believers. In that case the meaning would be as follows: Those to whom We have given the Qur'ãn and who read it as it should be read, these it is who believe in the Qur'ãn, and not the Jews and the Christians who follow their desires.

The restriction, in this case, would give a converted pro-position.

QUR'ÃN: *O Children of Israel!. . . nor shall they be helped:* These two verses are almost similar to the verses 47 and 48. Here the present talk with the Children of Israel comes to its end. The Qur'ãn, by repeating the prologue in the epilogue neatly ties the two ends together.

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* Because their books foretell of the Apostle's coming. (*tr.*)

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said, explaining the word of Allãh, *Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it aught to be read:* "They recite its verses slowly, and understand it, and act according to its orders, and hope for its promise, and are afraid of its threat, and take lesson from its stories, and obey its commandments, and desist from what it prohibits. By God, it does not mean memorizing its verses, and studying its letters, and reciting its chapters, and learning its one-tenths and one-fifths. They remembered its words and neglected its boundaries. And what it means is meditating on its verses and acting according to its orders. Allãh, the High, has said: (It is) *a Book We have sent down to you abounding in good, so that they may ponder over its verses"* (38 :29). (*Irshãdu 'l-qulũb,* ad-Daylami)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the word of Allãh, *read it as it aught to be read,* that : "(It is) stopping at (the description of) the Garden and the Fire." (al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: What the Imãm means is the meditation on the Qur'ãn.

The same Imãm said about the verse, *Those to whom We have given the Book . . .,* that: "They are the Imãms." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: This explanation is based on the principle of the "flow of the Qur'ãn", and gives the best example of those to whom Allãh has given the Book.

* * * * *

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ
لِلنَّاسِ إِمَاماً قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لاَ يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ـ ١٢٤ .

And (remember) *when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words, then he fulfilled them: He said: "Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men."* (Ibrãhīm) *said: "And of my offspring?" He said: "My covenant will not include the unjust"* (124).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

Beginning with this verse, the Qur'ãn throws light on some aspects of the life of Ibrãhīm (a.s.); these verses prepare the minds for the ones promulgating the change of *al-qiblah* (اَلقِبْلَة = direction of prayer) as well as the rules of the *ḥajj.* These stories also explain the reality of the pure Islamic religion – with its different grades and levels – looking at its fundamental beliefs, moral teachings and some rules of the *sharī'ah;* among other things they show how Allãh bestowed on him *al-Imãmah* (اَلإمـَامَة = leadership) of the people, how he built the Ka'bah, and how he prayed to Allãh to send an Apostle among them.

QUR'ÃN: *And* (remember) *when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words, then he fulfilled them:* It refers to the occasion

when Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was given the *Imãmah.* It had happened during the end period of his life; it was the time when he had become very old, after Ismã'īl and Isḥãq both had been born, and he had brought Ismã'īl and his mother to reside in Mecca, as some other exegetes also have taken note of this fact. This timing is clearly pointed at by his words, "And of my offspring? ", when Allãh told him: "I am going to make you an Imãm for men." Obviously he did not know, nor did he even expect, that he would get any offspring, until the angels brought to him the good tidings of Ismã'īl and Isḥãq. Even when the angels told him that he was to get children, he responded to those tidings in such words as could apparently be construed to have sprung from despair and pessimism. Allãh says: *And inform them of the guests of Ibrãhīm: When they entered upon him, they said: "Peace" He said: "Surely we are afraid of you."; They said: "Be not afraid, surely we give you the good news of a boy, possessing knowledge. "He said:" Do you give me good news* (of a son) *when old age has come upon me? – of what then do you give me good news!" They said: "We give you good news with truth; therefore, be not of the despairing"* (15:51-55). The same was the reaction of his wife when she was given that good news, as Allãh says: *And his wife was standing* (*by*)*, so she laughed; then We gave her the good news of Isḥãq, and after Isḥãq, of* (a son's son) *Ya'qũb. She said: "O woe to me! Shall I bear a son when I am an* (extremely) *old* (woman) *and this my husband an* (extremely) *old* (man)? *Most surely this is an amazing thing." They said: "Do you wonder at the decree of Allãh? The mercy of Allãh and His blessings be on you, O people of the house, surely He is Praised, Glorious"* (11:71-73).

As you see, the talks of both Ibrãhīm and his wife show that by that time they had lost all hope of getting any child. That is why the angels replied to them in those words to give them hope and make them happy. Clearly neither he nor his wife knew before that time that they would be given any off-spring. But on this occasion, we see that as soon as Allãh told him, "I am going to make you an Imãm for men", he pleaded, "And of my offspring?" This prayer brings before our eyes the image of a man who is sure

of having an offspring. How can a man, and particularly one like Ibrãhīm, the friend of Allãh (who very well knew the nuances of the language), speak before his Lord about a thing he knew nothing about? If he had uttered these words before getting any children, it would have been necessary for him to add some proviso, like "if Thou givest me any offspring". This event, therefore, must have taken place in the end period of Ibrãhīm's life some time after he had been given the good news.

Moreover, the words, "And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words, then he fulfilled them. He said: 'Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men' ", show that his *Imãmah* was bestowed to him after Allãh had tried him with certain trials. These consisted of various sufferings and tests which Ibrãhīm (a.s.) underwent in his life. And according to the Qur'ãn, the clearest and hardest of all was the trial of the sacrifice of Ismã'īl. Allãh says: *And when he reached* (the age of) *working with him, he said: " O my son! surely I am seeing in dream that I am sacrificing you; consider then what you see." He said: " O my father! do what you are commanded; if Allãh please, you will surely find me of the patient ones." So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead, and We called out to him* (saying) : *" O Ibrãhīm! You have indeed proved the vision true; surely thus We reward the doers of good. Most surely this is a manifest trial"* (37:102-106). This manifest trial had taken place in the extreme old age of Ibrãhīm, because even the birth of Ismã'īl had taken place when Ibrãhīm had become very old, as Allãh quotes him as saying: *"Praise be to Allãh, Who gave me in old age Ismã'īl and Isḥãq; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer"* (14:39). And the *imãmah* was given to him after these trials.

Now we come back to the verse under discussion:

"And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm" : *"al-Ibtilã'"* (اَلإبْتِلاَءُ) and *"al-balã'"* (البَلاَءُ) both have the same meaning: to try, to put to test. You give someone an order, or put him in a difficult situation, in order to find out his inner strength, his spiritual sublimity; thus you bring out his hidden qualities like

obedience, bravery, generosity, chastity, knowledge, faithfulness (or their opposite traits) ; it is only then that you may say, "I have tested him", "I have put him to trial". One cannot be tested except through action; it is the action which brings out the hidden qualities of a man, and not the word; words may lie but not the actions. Allãh says: *Surely We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden.* . . (68:17); . . . *Surely Allãh will try you with a stream* . . . (2:249).

Now Allãh says that He tried Ibrãhīm with certain words. This sentence looks at the "words" inasmuch as they are related to actions – they are the vehicles to carry the commands of the speaker to the listerner. For example, Allãh says: . . . *and speak to men good* (words). . . (2:83), that is, behave with them properly.

"With certain words, then he fulfilled them": *"al-Kalimãt"* (اَلكَلِماتُ) is plural of *al-kalimah* (اَلكَلِمَةُ = word). Of course, the word, "word", has sometimes been used in the Qur'ãn for a substance, a corporeal being (instead of a talk or speech) as Allãh says: . . . *a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Isã son of Maryam.* . . (3:45). But this usage is based on the fact that 'Isã, like Ãdam, was created by a word from Allãh as the Qur'ãn says: *Surely the likeness of 'Īsã is with Allãh as the likeness of Ãdam; He created him from dust, then said to him: "Be", and he was* (3:59).

Otherwise, whenever the Qur'ãn attributes the "word" to Allãh, it means speech and saying. For example:

and there is none to change the words of Allãh (6:34).

there is no changing the words of Allãh (10:64).

and Allãh desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words (8:7).

Surely those against whom the word of your Lord has proved true will not believe (10:96).

But the word of punishment proved true against the unbelievers (39:71).

And thus did the word of your Lord prove true against those who disbelieved that they are the inmates of the Fire (40:6).

and had not a word gone forth from your Lord till an appointed time, certainly affair would have been decided between them (42:14).

and the word of Allãh, that is the highest (9:41).

He said: "The truth then (it) *is and the truth do I speak"* (38:84).

Our word for a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it: "Be", and it is (16:40).

These and similar verses use "word" in the meaning of "talk" because the talk conveys to the hearer the proposition which the speaker intends to communicate, or the command which he wants him to obey. It is for this reason that sometimes the Qur'ãn describes the "word" as being complete ! It is as though a "word" emanating from the speaker remains incomplete until it is implemented, and then it becomes complete, is proved true. Allãh says: *And the word of your Lord has been accomplished* (completed) *truly and justly; there is none to change His words* (6:115) ; *and the good word of your Lord was fulfilled* (completed) *in the Children of Israel* (7:137).

The above explanation does not go against the fact that Allãh's word is Allãh's action. His word and His action are not two different things, they are one and the same. Realities and facts have their own rules, and literary demands and semantic values are governed by other rules. Whatever realities Allãh wishes to disclose to one of His prophets or other servants, and whatever command He wants to impose on someone, it is His talk and speech, inasmuch as it fulfils the same purpose which a talk or speech does – it conveys information, and proposition as well as His order and prohibition. Not frequently, the word, "word", is used for ideas, intentions and actions if they have the same import as "word" has. We say: "I will surely do this because I have already said so, and have given my word." In fact, you have never before uttered a single word about it; all that your "given word" actually means is that you do have a firm intention to do it, without any wavering will, without listening to any intercessor. The Arab poet, 'Antarah, said:

"And (it was) my word (to my soul) whenever it was in

turmoil or excitement: Be at ease; you will either earn the accolade or will go to (final) rest." Obviously, he had not talked with his soul or spirit; what he means by "word" is that he had made up his mind to fight bravely, and to face the enemy without retreating from his stand; because if he was victorious, his people would sing his praise, and if he was killed, he would get the rest and tranquility.

In this light it is easy to see that the phrase, "when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words", refers to the difficult situations he had to face, and the Divine covenants he had entered into, for example, his conflict with his people regarding the stars and the idols, his test by fire and emigration, his supreme trial of sacrificing his son, and other such things. Allãh has not specified which tests those "certain words" refer to, because this information had nothing to do with the theme of the verse. But one thing is certain: As it was only after the fulfillment of those words that Allãh said to him, "Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men", the words must have been such as to prove his capability for the status of the *Imãmah.*

This much about the "words". Now comes the next phrase: "then he fulfilled them". If the pronoun "he" refers to Ibrãhīm (a.s.), then it would mean that he fulfilled the task which was expected of him, he obediently did what he was told to do. If on the other hand the pronoun refers to the Lord (as it obviously does) then it would mean that his Lord helped him to do what was expected of him.

Somebody has said that the phrase, "certain words", refers to the Divine Speech, "Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men. . . My covenant will not include the unjust." But it is an explanation which does not carry any weight, because nowhere in the Qur'ãn the word "words" has been used for "sentences".

QUR'ÃN: *"Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men":* That is, I am going to make you a leader for men; they will adhere to you and follow in your footsteps, in words and deeds. *al-Imãm* (اَلإِمـَام = leader) is the one whom the people follow. That is why many exegetes have said that *al-Imãmah* (اَلإِمـَامَةُ = leadership)

in this verse means prophethood, because a prophet is followed and obeyed by his *ummah* in their religion; Allãh has said: *And We did not send any apostle but that he should be obeyed by Allãh's permission* (4:64). But this interpretation has no leg to stand upon. Because:-

First: The word *Imãman* (اِمَاماً = Imãm, leader) is the second accusative of the causative *jã'iluka* (جَاعِلُكَ = literally, maker of you; translated here as "going to make you"), which is a nomen agentis; and a nomen agentis is never used in place of a past tense; if used in place of a verb it always gives the meaning of present or future tense. When Allãh used these words in His talk with Ibrãhīm (a.s.), He in effect gave him a promise to make him an Imãm in future – in other words, to give him a status which he did not have at that time. And Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was already a prophet: Remember that this talk itself was a revelation sent to him in his capacity as a prophet. He was a prophet long before he was given the status of the *Imãmah.* There-fore, the *Imãmah* in this verse cannot mean prophethood. (This reply is given by another exegete.)

Second: We have described earlier that Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was given the *Imãmah* in his later days after setting the good news that he would be given offspring, Isḥãq and Ismã'īl; and the angels had given him that news while they were on their way to destroy the *ummah* of Lilt; and Ibrãhīm at that time was a prophet and an apostle. He was a prophet and apostle before he got the *Imãmah;* therefore, his *Imãmah* was different from his prophethood and apostleship.

Why are such interpretations offered by exegetes from time to time? The reason lies in the banality – because of repeated use during all these centuries – which has degraded the sublime meanings of the Qur'ãnic words in people's minds.

The word, *Imãmah,* has been debased in similar way. Some people say that it means prophethood, precedence, being in authority; others interpret it as *al-khilãfah* (اَلخِلافَة = successorship), *al-wiṣãyah* (اَلوصَايَة = regency) or headship in spiritual and temporal affairs. But all this is wrong. "Prophethood" means receiving news from Allãh; "messengership" means conveying that message

to people; "authority" implies that others have to follow one's example and obey one's orders. Now this authority is a concomitant of prophethood and messengership; *khilãfah* and *wiṣãyah* both mean successorship to a prophet; likewise, headship in spiritual and temporal affairs is a sort of the above-mentioned authority; and all of it is different from the correct meaning of the *Imãmah.* The *imãmah* implies that a man has an intrinsic quality because of which people should follow him faithfully, making their words and deeds to conform with his words and deeds; but none of the above-mentioned interpretations brings out this meaning. Ibrã-hīm (a.s.) was already a prophet whose obedience was obligatory for all men. What would be the sense in telling him that Allãh was going to make him a prophet for men? Or, to make his obedience compulsory in all that he said and did? Or, a head of his *ummah* to order or forbid in matters of religion? Or, a successor? Or, *a khalīfah* in the earth to decide between the people by the order of Allãh?

The difference between the *Imãmah* and all the above-mentioned words is not only verbal; it is the realities behind those words that differ from one another. When a man is given prophethood, it becomes obligatory for the people to obey him. Therefore, it would be wrong to say to that prophet, "I am going to make your obedience compulsory for men although I have already made it compulsory". Nor will it be correct to convey the same idea in other words, because the same problem will arise again. When Allãh gives someone some status, he does not get merely a new title or name; bounties of Allãh are not empty words; there are real things behind those words. Therefore, the *imãmah* has its own reality, different from other words' realities.

We find in the Qur'ãn that whenever it mentions *Imãmah* it puts guidance side by side – it looks as though Allãh was using the latter to explain the former. Allãh says in the story of Ibrãhīm: *And We gave him Isḥãq and Ya'qub as a further gift; and We made* (them) *all righteous ones; and We made them Imãms, to guide* (people) *by Our command. . .* (21:72 - 73); and He says in another place: *And We made of them Imãms to guide by Our command as they were patient, and they were certain of Our signs* (32:24). Here the *imãmah is* explained, or rather defined, in terms

of guidance, and then further qualified with the proviso, "by Our command". Clearly, the *Imãmah* does not mean any type of guidance; it is a guidance which emanates from the command of Allãh. And the reality of that command is described in these words: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it: "Be", and it is. Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of every thing. . .* (36:82-83); *And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye* (54:50). We shall explain, when writing about these verses, that the Divine Command (which the former verse also calls "the Kingdom") is the sublime side of the creation, with which they face towards Allãh; it is pure, free from fetters of time and space, and untouched by change and variation. It is also the real meaning of the word "Be", because the Divine Command "Be", is nothing other than the actual existence of the thing concerned. This "command" is in contrast to *al-khalq* (اَلخَلْقُ = creation) which is the other side of the things – it is subject to changes and variations; it grows by and by and deteriorates in the same way; it works within the framework of time and space. (We shall fully explain this theme in its proper place, Allãh willing.)

To sum it up, *Imãm is* a leader who guides by a Divine Command which is closely associated with him. The *Imãmah,* in its esoteric sense, is *al-wilãyah* = (اَلولايَـةُ guardianship, authority) over the people in their actions and activities; and its guidance entails conveying them to the final destination by the command of Allãh. It is different from that guidance which only shows the way – and which is usually done by the prophets and messengers of Allãh as well as by other believers who guide the people towards Allãh with sincere exhortation and good advice. This second type of guidance is mentioned in the following verses:

> *And We did not send any apostle but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly; then Allãh makes whom He pleases err and He guides whom He pleases. . .* (14:4).
>
> *And he who believed* (*i.e.,* the believer from the family of Pharaoh) *said: "O my people! follow me, I will guide you to the right course"* (40:38).

> *Why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may acquire* (proper) *understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them, so that they may be cautious?* (9:122)
>
> (We shall further explain it later on.)

Then Allãh describes the reason why He gave them the *Imãmah,* in these words, *as they were patient, and they were certain of Our signs.* (See 32:24, quoted above.) The criteria, therefore, are patience and absolute certainty. They were steadfast and patient in the cause of Allãh. Patience, in this verse, is unconditional; therefore it means remaining patient and steadfast in all matters and all conditions with which Allãh may choose to test the submission and servitude of a servant. And they possessed highest degree of certainty. Going through the stories of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), we find the following words of Allãh in the Qur'ãn: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure* (6:75). The verse clearly indicates that showing of the kingdom to Ibrãhīm was the prelude to the bestowal of absolute certainty on him. It proves that certainty is an inseparable concomitant of looking at the kingdom. This is also the theme of the following verses:

> *Nay! if you had known with a knowledge of certainty, you should most certainly have seen the hell* (102:5 – 6). *Nay! rather, what they used to do has become* (like) *rust upon their hearts. Nay! most surely they shall on that day be shut out away from their Lord. . . . Nay! most surely the record of the righteous shall be in the 'Illiyyīn. And what will make you know what 'illiyyīn is? It is a written book; see it those who are near* (to Allãh) (83:14 – 15; 18–21).

These verses prove that the "near ones" are those who are not shut out away from their Lord; on their hearts there are no rust or coverings of sin, ignorance and doubt; they are the ones who have absolute certainty about Allãh, and they see the *'illiyyīn* as they see the hell.

In short, it is essential for an Imãm to be a man of absolute certainty, who sees the world of the "kingdom" of Allãh which is based on the "words" of Allãh. And we have explained earlier that the kingdom is the command of Allãh, which, in its turn, is the esoteric side of the universe.

Now let us have a fresh look at the verse 21:73 (and 32:24) quoted earlier. "And We made them Imãms, to guide (people) by Our command:" it very clearly proves that whatever is the subject of guidance (i.e., the hearts and the deeds), the Imãm has its inner reality; he is constantly in touch with its another side – the side of the command, which is never hidden from him. It is known that the hearts and the deeds, like any other thing, have two sides, one of the "command" and the other of the "creation"; therefore, the reality of the deeds of the men – both good and bad – is always within the vision of the Imãm, always under his observation; and he has authority over both ways – the one of happiness and bliss and the other of unhappiness and distress. Also, Allãh has said: (Remember) *the day when We will call every people with their Imãm* (17:71). (We shall explain when writing about this verse that the "Imãm" here means the true leader, and not the scroll of deeds, as some people think.) There-fore, the Imãm is the one who shall lead the people to Allãh *on the day when hidden things shall be tried,* as he leads them to Him in the manifest and esoteric lives of this world. The last quoted verse also shows that there cannot be a single period, a single moment, without an Imãm, because Allãh says, "every people". (The detailed proof of this statement will be given under that verse.)

The *Imãmah is* such an exalted and sublime position that it cannot be given except to one who is extremely virtuous by his own self. If someone's soul is polluted, even in a minute degree, by any injustice or sin, then he needs someone else to guide him back to the right way. And Allãh has said: *Is he then who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go right unless he is guided?* (10:35). Here Allãh puts two groups opposite to each other: one is that which guides to the truth; and the other, that which does not go right unless guided

by someone else, in other words, the one which needs a helping hand to be guided aright. This contrast means that the one who guides to the truth, is rightly guided by himself; conversely, the one rightly guided by another person cannot guide to the truth.

It follows from the above discourse that:-

First: The Imãm must be *al-ma'ṣũm* (اَلمَعْصُوْم = sinless; protected from error and sin). Otherwise, he would not be rightly guided by himself, as explained above. Also, the following verse proves their *al-'iṣmah* (اَلعِصْمَة = sinlessness): *And We made them Imãms to guide* (people) *by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good* (deeds) *and the establishing of prayer and the giving of* zakãt, *and Us* (alone) *did they worship* (21:73). According to this verse, all the deeds of the Imãm are good, he is guided to them, not by any other person, but on his own by Divine help. The phrase translated above as "the doing of good (deeds)" is *fi 'la 'l-khayrãt* (فِعْلَ الخَيْرَاتِ = to do good deeds) ; it is *al-maṣdar* (اَلمَصْدَر = roughly translated as infinitive verb), used as the first construct of a genitive construction; and such *a maṣdar* proves that the action has surely taken place. Let us explain it in another way: If Allãh would have said, 'We revealed to them: Do good deeds', it would not have shown that they actually obeyed the command and did good; but when He says, *We revealed to them the doing of good,* it means that whatever they did was good and it was by Divine inspiration and heavenly help.

Second: Conversely, whoever is not *ma'ṣũm,* can never be an Imãm, a guide to the truth.

Now, it is clear that the adjective, "the unjust", (in the Divine declaration, "My covenant will not include the unjust") covers everyone who might have done any injustice, for example, polytheism, idol-worship or any other sin, in any period of his life, even if he may have repented and been good afterwards.

One of our teachers (may Allãh have mercy on him!) was asked as to how this verse could prove that the Imãm must be *ma'ṣũm.* He replied:

Logically, we may divide mankind into four groups: (1) One who remains unjust throughout his life; (2) One who was never unjust in any period of his life; (3) One who was unjust

in the beginning, but became just later on; and (4) One who was just in the beginning, but became unjust afterwards, Ibrãhīm was too sublime in position to ask for the *Imãmah* for the first or the fourth group. This leaves two groups (the second and the third) which could be included in his prayer. And Allãh rejected one of them – the one who was unjust in the beginning but became just later on. Now, there remains only one group who could be given the *Imãmah* – the one who was never unjust in any period of his life; that is, who was *ma'ṣũm.**

To sum it up, the verse shows that:

First: *Imãmah is* a Divinely-made status.

Second: The Imãm must be *ma'ṣũm,* by Divine *'iṣmah;* in other words, he must be protected by Allãh from sins and errors.

Third: The earth cannot remain without a rightful Imãm, as long as there is a man on it.

Fourth: It is essential for an Imãm to be supported by the Divine help.

Fifth: The deeds of the people are not hidden from the Imãm.

Sixth: The Imãm must have knowledge of all that is needed by the people for their good in this world and the next.

Seventh: It is impossible for any other person to surpass the Imãm in any virtue.

These seven are among the basic factors of the *Imãmah,* and this verse, read with other relevant verses, leads us to them, and Allãh is our Guide.

Objection: As the *Imãmah* means to guide by the command of Allãh, and as that guiding to the truth is concomitant with the Imãm's being rightly guided by Allãh (as has been inferred from the verse: *Is he then who guides to truth more worthy to be followed* . . .), then all the prophets should certainly be called Imãms. Obviously, prophethood of a prophet comes into being only when

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* It is a simplified version of the argument given by al-Qãḍī Nũrullãh Tustari (ash-Shahīd ath-Thãlith) in his *Ihgaqu 'l-hagq.* (Vide the new ed. with footnotes by Ayatullah Sayyid Shahabuddin Mar'ashi Najafi, Matba'ah Islamiyyah, Tehran, vol. II, pp. 367 – 369.) (tr.)

he is rightly guided by Allãh through revelation; a prophet is not guided by any other person through teaching or advice etc. Therefore, bestowal of prophethood would be synonymous with that of the *Imãmah.* And the objection you had put against the interpretation of the *Imãmah* with prophethood would be turned *in toto* against your explanation.

Reply: What we have inferred from the foregoing description is that if one guides to Allãh by His command, he must be guided aright not by any other person but by Allãh Himself. But the Qur'ãnic verses have not shown that its contrary proposition is also true, that is, it has not been proved that whoever is rightly guided by Allãh should also be a guide to Allãh. Therefore, it is not necessary that every prophet should be called an Imãm. In one place, Allãh declares about various prophets that they were rightly guided by Him, and yet does not join it with the statement that they guided their people to the truth. He says: *And We gave to him* (*i.e.,* Ibrãhīm) *Isḥãq and Ya'qũb; each did We guide, and Nũḥ did We guide before, and of his descendants, Dãwũd and Sulaymãn and Ayyũb and Yusuf and Harun; and thus do We reward those who do good; and Zakariyya and Yahya and 'Isã and Ryas; every one was of the righteous* (ones) *and Ismã'īl and Ilyasa ' and Yũnus and Lut; and every one We did exalt over the worlds; and from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren; and We chose them and guided them to the straight path. This is Allãh's guidance, He guides thereby whom He pleases of His servants; and if they had set up others* (with Him), *certainly what they did would have become ineffectual for them. These are they to whom We gave the book and the wisdom and the prophethood; therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have* (already) *entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it. These are they whom Allãh guided, therefore follow their guidance. Say: "I do not ask you for any reward for it; it is but a reminder to the worlds"* (6:86 - 90). *

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* This reply does not seem to meet the objection. The verse clearly says that these prophets were guided by Allãh. Also, it is accepted that all the prophets, including (cont. next page)

The context of the above verses shows that this Divine Guidance is an unalterable firm decree; it will continue in this *ummah* even after the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and will remain confined within the progeny of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), as the verses 43:26 – 28 prove: *And when Ibrãhīm said to his father and his people: "Surely, I am clear of what you worship;* (*I* worship) *but* (only) *Him Who created me, for surely He will guide me." And He made it a word to continue in his posterity, so that they may return* (to God). When Ibrãhīm (a.s.) declared to his people that he was clear of what they worshipped and that he worshipped only Him Who had created him, he had already achieved that guidance which contemplation and logical reasoning can produce. Then he told them of his expectation that Allãh would surely guide him. This subsequent guidance was obviously different from the earlier one; it was a guidance by the command of Allãh. Thereafter, Allãh says that He made this Divine Guidance "a word to continue" in Ibrãhīm's posterity. This is one of those verses in which "word" has been used not for speech but for a substance – it refers to the guidance as "a word". The same is the interpretation of "word of piety" in the verse: *and made them keep the word of piety, and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it* (48:26).

The above explanation makes it clear that the *Imãmah* after Ibrãhīm (a.s.), is confined to his descendants. The sentences, "(Ibrãhīm) said: 'And of my offspring?' He said: 'My covenant will not include unjust'", point to this fact. Obviously, Ibrãhīm (a.s.) had asked for the *imãmah* not for all but only for some of his descendants, and he was told that it would not be given to the unjust of his descendants. Needless to say that not all of his descendants were unjust; therefore, this reply disqualifies only one group and not all. In other words, it grants the request for a selected group of his offspring and further sanctifies it as a covenant, and on

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those mentioned in this verse, guided their people aright, and that they did so by the command of Allãh. Thus, all the characteristics of the *Imãmah* were found in every prophet who called his people to the right path. (tr.)

that basis it says that the covenant of Allãh will not include the unjust ones.

QUR'ÃN: *"My covenant will not include the unjust":* This expression shows how far removed are the unjust from the circle of the Divine Covenant;* therefore, it is an example of *isti'ãrah bi 'l-kinãyah.*

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Verily Allãh (to Whom belong Might and Majesty) accepted Ibrãhīm as a servant before making him a prophet; and verily Allãh made him a prophet before appointing him as a messenger; and verily Allãh appointed him as a messenger before taking him as a friend; and verily Allãh took him as a friend before making him an Imãm. When He combined for him all (the above-mentioned) things, *He said, 'Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men.'"* The Imãm further said: "It was because of the greatness of it (i.e., *Imãmah*) in the eyes of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) that he said: *'And of my offspring?' He said: 'My covenant will not include the unjust.'"* The Imãm explained: "A fool will not be Imãm of a pious." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: The same meaning has been narrated from the same Imãm through another chain of narrators, and from al-Bãqir (a.s.) through yet other chain; and al-Mufid has narrated it from as- Sadiq (a.s.).

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* Its literal translation: My covenant will not reach the unjust. Note that Allãh did not say: The unjust will not reach My covenant, because it would have implied that it was within the power of man – albeit a just one – to reach the status of the *Imãmah.* The present sentences does not leave room for any such misunderstanding; it clearly shows that getting the *imãmah is* not within human jurisdiction, it is exclusively in the hand of Allãh and He gives to whom He pleases. (tr.)

The Imãm has said that Allãh accepted Ibrãhīm as a servant before making him a prophet. This theme is inferred from the Qur'ãnic verse: *And certainly We gave to Ibrãhīm his rectitude before, and We knew him fully well. When he said to his father and his people: "What are these images to which you* (as devotees) *cleave?" They said: "We found our fathers worshipping them." He said: "Certainly you have been* (both) *you and your fathers, in manifest error." They said: "Have you brought to us the truth, or are you one of the triflers?" He said: "Nay! your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who brought them into existence, and I am of those who bear witness to this"* (21:51 – 56). This story shows how Allãh took Ibrãhīm (a.s.) as a servant in the beginning of his spiritual journey.

It is one thing that someone is a slave or servant of Allãh, and a quite different thing that he is taken or accepted by Allãh as His slave. Being a slave of Allãh is a concomitant of existence and creation; anyone who is created and has perceiving faculties is inescapably a slave of Allãh; this servitude does not depend on Divine acceptance. Man, for example, owes his existence to his Lord, is created and made by Him; he may behave in his personal life according to this servitude's dictates by surrendering himself to his Lord the Almighty, or he may act rebelliously, but his submission or rebellion does not alter the fact that he is a born slave of Allãh. Allãh says in the Qur'ãn: *There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent Allãh as a servant* (19:93).

But if he does not act as a slave should do, if he behaves in the earth with arrogance and rebellion, then he does not deserve to be called a slave or servant of Allãh, because he does not fulfill the conditions of servitude. A servant surrenders himself to his Lord, and leaves all his affairs in his Master's hands. Therefore, only he deserves to be called a servant of Allãh who is His slave in his person as well as in his action – only such a man can truly be called a slave of Allãh. Allãh says: *And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness. . .* (25:63). Accordingly, when Allãh accepts a man as His servant, He takes masterly interest in that servant's affairs; in other words,

Allãh becomes his *waliyy* and guardian, and takes all his affairs in His Own hands. Such a servitude is the key to *al-wilãyah* (اَلولايَـةُ = guardianship). The verse 7:196 points to this reality: *"Surely my guardian is Allãh, Who revealed the Book, and He takes in hand* (the affairs of) *the good."* The adjective "good", refers to those who are worthy of Divine guardianship and friendship. Allãh has referred to the Prophet in several places in the Qur'ãn as His servant, for example, . . . *Who revealed the Book to His servant. . .* (18:1); . . . *Who sends down clear signs upon His servant. . .* (57 : 9) ; . . . *when the servant of Allãh stood up calling upon Him* . . . (72:19). In short, to say that Allãh accepted someone as His servant, is another way of saying that Allãh took him under His *wilãyah* and guardianship.

The Imãm said: ". . . and verily Allãh made him a prophet before appointing him as a messenger". The difference between a prophet and a messenger, as shown by the traditions narrated from the Imãms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt, is* as follows:

A prophet sees in his dream what Allãh intends to reveal to him; and a messenger sees the angel and talks to him.

The same gradual progress is seen in the history of Ibrãhīm (a.s.). Allãh says: *And mention Ibrãhīm in the Book; surely he was a truthful* (man), *a prophet, when he said to his father: "O my father! why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least"* (19:41 – 42). The verse shows that he was a prophet when he said this to his father. It was a confirmation of what he had told his people as soon as he arrived among them: "*Surely I am clear of what you worship;* (I worship) *but* (only) *Him Who created me, for surely He will guide me"* (43:26 – 27). Then we read the verse 11:69 which says: *And certainly Our messengers* (*i.e.,* angels) *came to Ibrãhīm with good news. They said: "Peace." "Peace," said he.* This event, in which Ibrãhīm saw the angels and talked to them, had taken place in his old age long after he had left his father and his nation.

The Imãm said: "And verily Allãh appointed him as a messenger before taking him as a friend." It is inferred from the words of Allãh: *And who is better in religion than he who . . . follows the faith of Ibrãhīm, the upright one? And Allãh took Ibrãhīm*

as a friend (4:125). Apparently it shows that Allãh took him as a friend because of the same upright faith and religion which he had promulgated by the command of his Lord; the theme of this verse is to describe the distinction and excellence of that upright religion which so much raised the status of Ibrãhīm that he was taken as a friend of Allãh.

al-Khalīl (اَلخَلِيْلُ) is more exclusive than *aṣ-Ṣadīq* (اَلصَّدِيْقُ), although both are generally translated as "friend". When a friend is sincere and truthful (*aṣ-Ṣãdiq*) in his dealings with the other friend, he is called *aṣ-Ṣãdiq;* thereafter, if he turns away from all else, confining his needs and requirements to that friend only, he is called *al-khalīl,* because *al-khullah* (اَلخُلَّةُ) means need and requirement.

The meaning of the Imãm's sentence, "and verily Allãh took him as a friend before making him an Imãm," may be understood from the foregoing commentary.

The words of the Imãm: "A fool will not be Imãm of a pious," point to the verse 2:130 – 131: *And who forsakes the religion of Ibrãhīm but he who makes himself a fool, and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, Submit* (yourself), *he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds."* In this verse Allãh says that whoever turns away from the religion of Ibrãhīm – in other words, whoever is unjust – is a fool; then he contrasts this foolishness with Divine selection – a selection which has been explained in the next sentences as "Islam" or submission to God. (Ponder on the clause, *When his Lord said to him, Submit yourself*). Then we see that *al-Islãm* (اَلإِسْلامُ = submission) and *at-taqwã* (اَلتَّقْوى) = piety, fear of Allãh) have been made one, or applicable to one meaning, in the verse: *O you who believe! fear Allãh as is due to Him, and do not die but as Muslims* (3:102). (Think deeply on it.)

al-Mufīd has narrated from Durust and Hishãm from the Imãms (of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt*)*:* "Ibrãhīm was a prophet, and he was not an Imãm until Allãh, Blessed and High is He, said (to him): *"Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men."* (Ibrãhīm)

said: *"And of my offspirng?"* Then Allãh, Blessed and High is He, said: "My *covenant will not include the unjust."* Whoever had (ever) worshipped an idol or a sculpture or an image, cannot be an Imãm."

The author says: Its meaning is clear from the above explanations.

It is narrated in *al-Amãli of* aṭ-Ṭũsī (with complete chain of narrators) and in *al-Manãqib* of Ibn al-Maghãzili (as *a marfũ'* tradition) from Ibn Mas'ũd from the Prophet that he said (explaining the words of Allãh to Ibrãhīm in this verse) : "Whoever prostrated before an idol, leaving me, I will not make him an Imãm." Then the Prophet said: "And that prayer was fulfilled in me and my brother Ali; neither of us ever prostrated before any idol."

Wakī' and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭãlib (a.s.) that the Prophet said (in explanation of the words of Allãh, *My covenant will not include the unjust*)*:* "There is no obedience except in good." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd narrated from 'Imrãn ibn Ḥusayn that he said: "I heard the Prophet saying: 'There is no obedience of a creature in disobedience of Allãh (i.e., a man should not be obeyed if he tells you to disobey Allãh).'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: The meanings *of* those traditions are easily understood from the earlier explanations.

al-'Ayyãshī has narrated in his *Tafsīr,* through several chains, from Safwan the camel-driver, that he said: "We were at Mecca; and the talk gradually reached the words of Allãh, *And* (remember) *when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words, then he fulfilled them."* (The Imãm) said: "That is, he completed them with Muhammad and 'Ali and the Imãms from the descendants *of* 'Ali, as Allãh says: *Offspring, one from the other"* (3:34).

The authour says: This tradition takes the "word" in the meaning *of* the *Imãmah;* a similar explanation is given to "word"

in the verses: . . . *for surely He will guide me. And He made it a word to continue in his posterity* . . . (43 : 27 – 28). According to this tradition, the verse would mean as follows: And remember when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words, that is, his own *imãmah,* and that of Isḥãq and his progeny; then He completed it with the *imãmah* of Muhammad and of the Imãms from his family members, who were from the progeny of Ismã'īl; then Allãh made it known to Ibrãhīm telling him: "*Surely lam going to make you an Imãm for men."* Ibrãhīm said: "*And of my offspirng?"* Allãh said: "My *covenant will not include the unjust."*

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وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَأَمْناً وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَقَامِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمٰعِيلَ أَنْ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ
لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ــ ١٢٥ . وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ
رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَٰذَا بَلَداً آمِناً وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ
مِنْهُمْ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلاً ثُمَّ
أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ــ ١٢٦ . وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمٰعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ــ ١٢٧ . رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا
أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ
الرَّحِيمُ ــ ١٢٨ . رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ ــ ١٢٩ .

And (remember) *when We made the House a rendezvous for men and a* (place of) *security, and take* (for yourselves) *a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrãhīm. And We enjoined Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl* (saying): *"Purify* (*you* two) My *House for those who make circuit and those who abide* (in it for devotion) *and those who bow down* (and) *those who prostrate themselves"* (125). *And* (remember) *when Ibrãhīm said. "My Lord! make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allãh and the last day" He said: "And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the Fire; and it is an evil destination"* (126). *And* (remember) *when Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl were raising the foundations of the House: "Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing* (127). *Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us* (mercifully), *surely Thou art the Oft-returning* (with mercy), *the Merciful* (128). *Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise"* (129).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And* (remember) *when We made the House a rendezvous for men and a* (place of) *security:* It refers to the legislation of the *ḥajj* and the sanctuary offered by the House. "*al-Mathãbah*" (اَلمَثَابَـةُ = rendezvous; a place to which one returns) is derived from *thãba, yathũbu* (ثَـابَ ، يَثُـوبُ = he returned, he will return).

QUR'ÃN: *and take* (for yourselves) *a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrãhīm:* The conjunctive "and" joins this order with the preceding sentence turning that also into order.

In that case the complete sentence would have the following connotation: And when We told the people, return to, and do the *ḥajj* of the House and take (for yourself) a place of prayer. . . Other alternative, suggested by some exegetes, is to imply a deleted word "We said". Accordingly, the meaning would be: and We said, take (for yourselves) a place of prayer .. .

al-Muṣallã (اَلمُصَلّى) is deverbal noun of place, derived from *aṣ-ṣalãh* ((اَلصَّلوةُ) = to pray, to invoke) ; the sentence means: take (for yourselves) a place of prayer and invocation at the place where Ibrãhīm (a.s.) had stood.

Apparently, the preceding sentence is a sort of introduction, pointing to the reason why prayer in that place was prescribed; that is why this sentence does not put emphasis on "prayer" – in other words, it does not say, and pray in the standing-place of Ibrãhīm; it literally says, and take on the standing-place of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) a place of prayer.

QUR'ÃN: *And We enjoined Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl* (saying): *"Purify* (you two) *My House . . .": al-'Ahd* (اَلعَهْدُ = to enjoin, to obligate). The order to purify the House may mean to keep it exclusively reserved for the worship by those who go around it making circuits, those who abide in it for devotion, and those who pray in it. In this sense, it would be an *isti'ãrah bi 'l-kinãya,* and would imply: keep My House exclusively reserved for My worship. Alternatively, the order may be to keep it clean; to be on guard lest it is dirtied by careless people.

ar-Rukka' (اَلرُّكَّعُ) and *as-sujũd* (اَلسُّجُودُ) are plurals of *ar-raki'* (اَلرَّاكِعُ) = one who bows down) and *as-sãjid* (اَلسَّاجِدُ) = one who prostrates, one who does *sajdah*) respectively, the phrase refers to those who pray.

QUR'ÃN: *And* (remember) *when Ibrãhīm said: "My Lord! make it a secure town . . . ":* In this way Ibrãhīm (a. s.) called on his Lord to bestow security and safety as well as sustenance on the residents of Mecca; and the prayer was granted. Far be it from Allãh to quote in His speech an unaccepted prayer without hinting at its rejection; if He were to do so, His talk would

amount to a vain ridicule – far beneath the sublime dignity of His truthful speech. He says: . . . *and the truth do I speak* (*38:83*)*; Most surely it is a decisive word, and it is no a jest* (86 :13 – 14).

The Qur'ãn has quoted numerous prayers which this great prophet had pleaded before his Lord for; for example, his prayer for himself in the beginning of his life; his prayer at the time of his emigration to Syria; his invocation to keep his good name alive; his prayer for himself, for his progeny and parents, and for the believing men and women; his invocation, after building the House, for the residents of Mecca; his prayer and pleading for a Prophet to be sent from among his progeny. His prayers and the favours he asked from Allãh are a canvas which graphically shows his hopes and expectations, creates before our eyes a clear picture of his endeavours and efforts in the way of Allãh, and provides a glimpse of his sublime spiritual virtues. In short, these prayers show his status before Allãh and his nearness to Him. One may write a detailed history of his life, basing it on his stories and the laudatory phrases used for him in the Qur'ãn; and we shall write something on these lines in Chapter 6 (The Cattle).

QUR'ÃN : *such of them as believe:* Ibrãhīm (a. s.) asked his Lord to give the residents of Mecca security and provide them with fruits. At the same time he realized that not all of the residents would be believers, that some of them would be unbelievers; also he understood that his prayer for their sustenance was general – it covered the believers as well as the unbelievers; and he was aware that he had already declared himself to be separate from the unbelievers and their idols (as Allãh says about him: *but when it became clear to him that he, that is, his father, was an enemy of Allãh, he declared himself to be clear of him* [9:114] . Here Allãh bears witness that Ibrãhīm [a.s.] had declared his separation from every enemy of Allãh, not expecting even his father). In this background, as soon as he realized that his prayer included both the believers and the unbelievers, he added the proviso, "such of them as believe. . .", although he was well aware that, according to the social structure of this world, sustenance could not be given

only to the believing group, to the exclusion of the unbelievers; yet he qualified his prayer. Even so, Allãh knows better how He should decide about His creatures and what He should decree concerning them. Therefore, Ibrãhīm's prayer was granted for the believers, and was extended to cover the unbelievers also. The reply given to Ibrãhīm (a.s.) implies that Allãh would give them sustenance according to the system He has created in this world; in other words, believers and unbelievers both would be given their livelihood, because restricting it to the believers would entail unnecessarily breaking the usual and established system.

Ibrãhīm (a.s.) could have said: and provide the believers of this town with fruits; but he did not, because what he wanted to ask was an attraction, a dignity, for the town which would be centred around the Sacred House of Allãh. That House was built in a valley devoid of every agricultural produce; and if it were not provided with fruits and food-stuff, nobody would settle in it, and the place would remain uninhabited.

QUR'ÃN: *"And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while :* The word translated, "I will grant him enjoyment", has been read *umti'uhũ* (أُمْتِعُهُ) and *umatti'uhũ* (أُمَتِّعُهُ) from the verbal noun's paradigms *al-if'ãl* (اَلإِفْعَالُ) and *at-taf-'īl*(اَلتَّفْعِيلُ) respectively. Meaning of both readings is the same.

QUR'ÃN: *then I will drive him to the chastisement . . . ":* It further shows the great dignity of the House and is meant to give even more pleasure to Ibrãhīm (a.s.). The import of the verse is as follows: I have granted your prayer (to increase this House's honour by giving sustenance to its believing residents) and have decided to include even the unbelievers in that livelihood; but the unbelievers should not be deluded by that; they should not think that the sustenance comes to them because they have got any honour in the eyes of Allãh; it is actually in honour of this town, because I have accepted your prayer and given you more than you had asked. As for the unbeliever, I will surely drive him to the chastisement of the Fire and it is an evil destination.

QUR'ÃN: *And* (remember) *when Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl were raising the foundations of the House: al-Qawã'id* (اَلقَوَاعِدُ) is plural of *al-ga'idah* (اَلقَاعِدَةُ) which literally means that part of building which "sits" in the earth' ; hence it has been translated as foundation, upon which the rest of the building is raised. "Raising the foundations" is an allegorical expression, it counts the walls (which were raised upon foundations) as a part of the foundation; another allegorical aspect is to ascribe the rise to the foundations alone without mentioning the walls, although it were the walls which were raised. The words "of the House", point to the intended allegory.

QUR'ÃN: "*Our. Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing :* The prayer comes direct from Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl, without any introductory clause like "They said" or "They prayed"; such a clause is not even implied here. When we read the words, "when Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl were raising the foundations of the House", the scene is flashed before our eyes; it is as though we see them busy building the walls, and then we dramatically hear their voices and their prayer directly from them – there is no need of any intermediary to report to us what they said or did. Such dramatic presentation is often used in the Qur'ãn, and it is among its most beautiful styles – and all its styles are beautiful. It presents the story in the most effective way, bringing it within the purview of our senses. It is a style which surpasses all manners of narration and reporting.

Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl did not mention the thing or action which they prayed to Allãh to accept, that is, they did not say, accept from us this construction' of Thy House. It shows their humbleness and humility before their Lord; they thought that it was a very insignificant work on their part and was not worthy of their Lord. This omission of the object has given the following connotation to their prayer: Our Lord! accept from us this in-significant deed, although it is not worthy of Thy name; surely Thou art hearing our prayers, knowing our intentions.

QUR'ÃN: *Our Lord! And make us both submissive to thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting to Thee.* The words translated here as submissive and submitting are *muslim* (مُسْلِم) and its feminine *muslimah* (مُسْلِمَة), respectively. Obviously, the definition of Islam, with which we are familiar, and which comes to our minds as soon as we hear the word, Islam, is just the elementary grade of servitude; it distinguishes a professed convert from the one who openly rejects the faith. This elementary Islam means professing the matters of faith and doing necessary deeds, no matter whether it is done with true belief or hypo-critically. Now, Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was a prophet, a messenger and one of the five *ulu 'l-'azm* apostles, who gave us the upright faith. It is unthinkable that such a great prophet had not attained, at the time when he was praying, this most elementary grade of Islam. Likewise, his son, Ismã'īl (a.s.), was a messenger of Allãh and had been offered as sacrifice in His way. Can it be said that they had got that much Islam but were unaware of it? Or that, although they were aware of having attained to that Islam but wanted to continue on it? Just look at the context of the prayer: Those who prayed were so near to Allãh; they were praying while building His Sacred House; they knew whom they were praying to, and who He was and how great His splendour is. Could they, in that position, ask for such a trivial grade from the Lord Almighty? Moreover, this grade of Islam is among those things which are within the power of man himself; and that is why man can be ordered to accept it; as Allãh says: *When his Lord said to him: "Be a Muslim", he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds"* (2:131). Obviously, such a quality or action cannot be attributed to Allãh; likewise, it is meaningless to ask from Allãh to do a work which has been placed within the power of the man himself. (Of course, it may be done if there is some special condition which makes Divine interference justifiable.)

Therefore, the Islam they had asked for was not that Islam whose definition we are familiar with. Islam has many grades, as may be see in the verse quoted above: *When his Lord said to him* (*i.e.,* Ibrãhīm) : *"Be a Muslim", he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds"* (2:131). Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was ordered to be a Muslim at a time when he was already a Muslim. Clearly, the Islam which he was told to attain was other

than the Islam he had already attained. There are many such examples in the Qur'ãn.

This sublime grade of Islam – which we shall explain in detail later on – means total servitude, unconditional surrender of all a servant has got to his Master. No doubt it is within a man's power to prepare the conditions facilitating its attainment. Yet, when we look at an average man and the usual condition of his heart and mind, such a high standard seems beyond his power to attain. In other words, it is not possible for him – in the conditions surrounding him – to get to that sublime Islam. From this point of view, that Islam is not different from other positions of *al-wilãyah* (الولايَةُ = friendship of Allãh) and its lofty stages, or from other grades of perfection – all of them are beyond the reach of an average man, because he cannot fulfil their necessary conditions. In this sense, it is possible to count that Islam as a Divine gift which is beyond a man's power to attain by himself. Consequently, it is perfectly right for a man to pray to Allãh to bestow on him that sublime quality and make him a Muslim of that high rank.

Moreover, there is another deeper connotations: It is only actions which are attributed to man and emanate from his free will and power; as for his attributes and deep-rooted traits (which are etched on his psyche by repeated actions), they are in fact beyond his power. Therefore, they may be – or let us say, should be – attributed to Allãh, especially if they are good and virtuous attributes which should better be attributed to Allãh rather than to man. This observation is based on the style used in the Qur'ãn. For example:

"My *Lord! make me keep up prayer, and from my off-spring* (too) " (14:40) ;

" . . . *and join me with the good ones"* (26:83) ;

"My *Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Thy bounty which Thou has bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as Thou art pleased with, and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones"* (27:19);

"Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise)

from our offspring a group submitting to Thee (2:128).

It is now clear that the Islam which Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl had asked for was something different from the Islam to which the verse 49:14 refers: *The dwellers of the desert say: "We believe." Say: "You do not believe but say: 'We submit* (we accept Islam)'; *and faith has not yet entered into your hearts."*

The Islam they prayed for was of a high rank and sublime grade which we shall explain later on.

QUR'ÃN: *and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us* (mercifully), *surely Thou art the Oft-returning* (with mercy), *the Merciful:* This also points to the sublime meaning of Islam, just referred to *al-manãsik* (اَلمَناسِكُ = translated here as ways of devotion) is plural of *al-mansak* (اَلمَنسَكُ) which means "worship" or "act of worship", as Allãh says: *And to every nation We appointed* (acts of) *worship. . .* (22:34). It is *a maṣdar* used as the first construct of a genitive case. We have explained earlier that *a maṣdar* used in this way proves the existence of that work or action. Therefore, the phrase, "our ways of devotion", refers to those acts of worship which they were doing or had already done; it does not refer to any action which they intended to do in future. In this context, the phrase "show us" does not mean "teach us" or "help us to do"; rather it means "strengthen us by showing us the realities of our acts of worship", as we pointed out earlier while writing the verse: *and We revealed to them the doing of good* (deeds) *and the establishing of prayer and the giving of zakãt* (21:73). And later on we shall explain that the revelation mentioned in this verse means to strengthen the doer of that deed; it does not mean teaching them their responsibilities and obligations. Probably, it is to this reality that the verses 38: 45 – 46 refer: *And remember Our servants, Ibrãhīm and Isḥãq and Ya'qũb, men of strength and insight. Surely We purified them by a pure quality, the remembering of the* (final) *abode.*

The above explanation makes it clear that this prayer was for an Islam and an insight into worship completely different from ordinary meanings of these terms. The same is the case with their prayer, *tub 'alaynã* (تُبْ عَلَيْنا = usually translated as, forgive us) ;

Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl both were prophets, protected by Allãh from every error and sin; they could not make any mistake or error; they did not need Allãh's forgiveness and pardon as we do when we commit sins, (that is why we have translated it in literal way: *turn to us* mercifully).

Question: It is all right to interpret Islam, showing the ways of devotion and forgiveness in the way you have done maintaining the dignity of Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl (peace be on them both). But it is not necessary to apply the same meanings when these words are used for their offspring. Ibrãhīm (a.s.) did not include his offspring with himself and Ismã'īl, except in the prayer for Islam, and that also in a separate sentence. They did not say: Make us and a group of our offspring submissive to Thee; instead they prayed for themselves, and after that separately pleaded for their offspring, saying, "and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee". There should be no difficulty in believing that what they had in mind was Islam in its general meaning covering all its ranks and grades – even the most elementary one. Even this elementary grade of Islam gives good results and is instrumental in creating good environment in the society. It would not be wrong if Ibrãhīm (a.s.) asked his Lord for this Islam; even the Prophet invited people to just that type of Islam – if they testified that there was none to be worshipped except Allãh and Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was His Messenger, they were accepted as Muslims, their lives were protected, marriage with them was allowed and they became entitled to inherit from their Muslim relatives. Therefore, it should be perfectly right to say that the two sentences refer to two separate ranks of Islam: "Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee", would mean the highest rank of Islam in conformity with the prestige of Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl; "and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee", would refer to the elementary grade of Islam befitting a nation which included hypocrites and people of weak faith as well as those with firm belief – and all are called Muslims.

Reply: Position of legislation for the guidance of people is totally different from the position of praying to Allãh, and

each has its own rules; what is valid on one plane is not necessarily good on the other. The Prophet prescribed a minimum standard for his *ummah,* that is, to utter the two testimonies of the Oneness of Allãh, and his own prophethood; it was done with a view to widen the circle of Islam and to protect the healthy religious system – that manifest Islam protected the essence of Islam as a shell protects the kernel.

But the plane of invocation and prayer to Allãh is much higher than that. At this level, appearances loose their value; it is the reality that matters here; the objective here is actuality and truth, and the desire is for nearness to Allãh. At this level, the prophets are not influenced by appearance. It was not because of any worldly love of his offspring that Ibrãhīm (a.s.) prayed for his progeny. Had it been so, he would have prayed first of all for his father and would not have declared his separation from him as soon as he came to know that he was an enemy of Allãh. Also, if he would have been concerned with appearances, he would not have prayed in the following words: *And disgrace me not on the day when they are raised, the day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allãh with a heart submissive* (26:87 – 89) ; nor would have he said: *And make for me a truthful tongue among the posterity* (26:84), instead he would have said, make for me a remembering tongue among the posterity.

Keeping all this in view, it is easy to understand that when he asked from his Lord to raise a Muslim group from among his offspring, he did not mean the elementary rank of Islam; he wanted for them the reality of Islam. The Qur'ãnic words, "a group submitting to Thee", support this interpretation. If he wanted only the appearance of Islam and not its essence, it was enough to say, "a group submitting", there was no need to add, "to Thee". (Ponder on this point.)

QUR'ÃN: *Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves . . . :* He was praying for the Prophet; and the Prophet used to say: "I am the prayer of Ibrãhīm".

TRADITIONS

al-Kattānī said: "I asked Abu Abdillāh (a.s.) about a man who forgot to pray two *rak'ahs* near the standing-place of Ibrāhīm, in *aṭ-ṭawāf* (اَلطَّوَافُ = circuit, circumambulation) of the *ḥajj* and *'umrah.* He (a.s.) said: 'If he is still in the town (Mecca), he should pray the two *rak'ahs* near the standing-place of Ibrāhim, because verily Allāh says: *and take* (for yourselves) *a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrāhīm;* and if he has departed (from it) then I will not order him to return.' " (*al-Kāfi*)

The author says: Almost similar traditions have been narrated by ash-Shaykh in *at-Tahdhīb* and by al-'Ayyāshī in his *at-Tafsīr* with several *asnād* (*i.e.,* chains of narrators). Particulars of this rule (i.e., prayer should be offered near or behind the standing-place – as is narrated in some traditions that: "No-one should pray the two *rak'ahs* of *aṭ-ṭawāf* except behind the standing-place . . .") are inferred from the word *min* (مِنْ = from; here translated as *on*) used in the order, *and take. . . a place of prayer on* (or, from) *the standing-place.. .*

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allāh: *Purify* (you two) *My House . . .:* "Keep the polytheists away from it." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: " Verily Allāh, Mighty and Great is He! says in His Book: *'Purify* (you two) My *House for those who make circuit and those who abide* (in it for devotion) *and those who bow down* (and) *those who prostrate themselves.'* Therefore, it is proper for a servant not to enter Mecca except that he is clean, (and) has washed away his sweat and dirt and has purified himself."

The author says: This meaning has been narrated in other traditions also. The idea, that if the place of arrival is clean then the one who arrives should make himself clean, may be inferred from other verses too. See, for example, the verse: *and the good things are for good ones and the good ones are for good things* (24:26).

Ibn ‘‘Abbãs said: “When Ibrãhīm brought Ismã‘īl and Hãjar, he settled them at Mecca; and a time passed; and the people of (the tribe of) Jurhum came to settle there and Ismã‘īl married a woman from that tribe; and Hãjar died; and Ibrãhīm asked permission of Sãrah (to visit Ismã‘īl) ; so she allowed him but imposed a condition on him that he would not come down (from his riding animal). Thus Ibrãhīm arrived (at Mecca) and Hãjar had died, so he went to the house of Ismã‘īl; and he asked his wife: ‘Where is your husband?’ She told him: ‘He is not here, he has gone hunting.’ And Ismã‘īl used to go outside al-Ḥaram (اَلحَرَم = the boundary) to hunt and then return. Ibrãhīm said to her: ‘Do you have anything to entertain a guest?’ She said: ‘I have nothing and there is nobody with me.’ Then Ibrãhīm said to her: ‘When your husband comes, tell him (my) *salãm* and tell him to change the threshold of his door.’ And Ibrãhīm went away. Then Ismã‘īl came and felt the scent of his father. So he asked his wife: ‘Had anyone come to you?’ She said: ‘An old man had come to me with such and such features (describing him scornfully).’ (Ismã‘īl) said: ‘Then what did he say to you?’ She said: ‘He said to me to give you (his) *salãm* and to tell you to change the threshold of your door.’ So, Ismã‘īl divorced her and married another (woman). Thereafter, Ibrãhīm remained (at his place) as long as Allãh wished him to remain (there). Then he asked permission of Sãrah to visit Ismã‘īl; and she allowed him, but (again) imposed the (same) condition that he should not come down (from his riding animal). Then Ibrãhīm came until he reached the door of Ismã‘īl. And he asked his wife: ‘Where is your husband?’ She said: ‘He has gone for hunting and, Allãh willing, he will come back just now; you come down, may Allãh have mercy upon you!’ He asked her: ‘Do you have anyting to entertain a guest?’ She said: ‘Yes.’ Then she brought milk and meat. (Ibrãhīm) thereupon prayed and blessed her. Had she brought on that day bread, wheat, barley or date, (Mecca) would have become the most plentiful of all the world in wheat, barley or date. Then she said to him: ‘(Please) come down so that I may wash your head.’ But he did not come down. So she brought (the stone which thereafter was known as) the standing-place (of Ibrãhīm) and put it on his (right) side, and he put

his foot on it, and his footmark was impressed on it; (in this way) she washed the right side of his head; then she shifted the stone to his left side and washed the left side of his head, and (again) his footmark was imprinted on it. Thereupon (Ibrãhīm) said to her: 'When your husband comes, give him (my) *salãm* and tell him that the threshold of his door is now in order.' When Ismã'īl (a.s.) came back, he felt the scent of his father, and asked his wife: 'Had anyone come to you?' She replied: 'Yes, a venerable (old) man, of loveliest features and most pleasant fragrance; he said to me this and this and I told him this and this; and I washed his head and this is the imprint of his feet on (his) standing-place.' (Hearing this), Ismã'īl said to her: 'That was Ibrãhīm.'' "(*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: al-Qummi has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr a* nearly similar tradition.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Verily, Ibrãhīm settled in a valley of Syria. When he got his son Ismã'īl from Hãjar, Sãrah was extremely grieved because she hereself had no child. And she used to hurt Ibrãhīm and make him unhappy with respect to Hãjar. So Ibrãhīm complained to Allãh about it, and Allãh sent a revelation to him: 'The likeness of woman is like the curved rib; if you leave it (as it is), you will benefit from it, but if you (try to) make it straight, you will break it.' Thereafter, (Allãh) ordered him to remove Ismã'īl and his mother (from that place). He said: 'O Lord! to which place?' (Allãh) said: 'To My holy place, and My sanctuary, and the part of the earth which I created first (of all the earth); and it is Mecca.' Then Allãh sent Jibrīl down to him with *al-Burãq*;* and (Jibrīl) made Hãjar, Ismã'īl and Ibrãhīm ride on it. And whenever Ibrãhīm passed a good place with trees, cultivation and date-palms, he used to say: 'O Jibrīl! here? here?' And Jibrīl used to reply: 'No, go on, go on.' (It continued) until they reached Mecca and (Jibrīl) made them alight in the place where the House is.

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* *al-Burãq* is the name of the animal which was also sent to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to ride during *al-Mi'rãj* (اَلمِعْراج = Ascension). (*tr.*)

And Ibrãhīm had given Sãrah a promise that he would not come down until he came back to her. When they alighted in that place, there was a tree there; Hãjar spread on that tree a sheet she had with her, and thus they found a shade under it. When Ibrãhīm arranged their affairs and settled them there, he wished to leave them to return to Sãrah. Hãjar said to him: 'O Ibrãhīm! Are you leaving us in a place where there is neither human being to keep company nor water nor cultivation?' Ibrãhīm said: 'Allãh, Who has ordered me to settle you in this place, will suffice you.' Then he took leave of them. When he reached Kada' (a mountain in Dhu Ṭuwã), Ibrãhīm turned around and said: "O *our Lord! surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivable near Thy Sacred House, our Lord!, that they may establish prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits, haply they may be grateful"* (14:37). Then he went away, and Hãjar remained (there). When the sun rose high, Ismã'īl became thirsty; Hãjar stood at the running-place*, and she ascended the Ṣafã, and mirage glittered before her in the valley and she thought that it was water; so she descended to the valley and ran (to it). When she reached Marwah, she could not see Ismã'īl, therefore, she returned until she reached Ṣafã and again she looked (around, with the same effect) ; until she did likewise seven times. When she was on Marwah, in the seventh round, she looked at Ismã'īl and lo! water had appeared from under his feet. She returned and gathered sand around the water – the water was flowing and she "reined" (Arabic: زَمَّتْ = *zammat*) it with (the sand) which she put around it, and that is why it was called *zamzam.* And the (tribe of) Jurhum had come down at *Dhu 'l-majaz* and *Arafat.* When water appeared at Mecca, the birds and wild animals gathered around it; the Jurhum saw this gathering of the birds and animals at that place and followed them until they found a woman and a child settled there – they were sitting in the shade of the tree and the water had appeared for them.

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* The place between Ṣafã and Marwah where the *ḥãjis* (pilgrims to Mecca) run seven times. (*tr.*)

They said to Hãjar: 'Who are you? And what is the matter with you and this child?' She said: 'I am the mother of the son of Ibrãhīm, the friend of Allãh, and this is his son; Allãh has ordered him to settle us here.' They asked her: 'Would you allow us to remain near you?' She told them: 'Until Ibrãhīm comes.' When Ibrãhīm came to visit them the third day, Hãjar said: 'O friend of Allãh! there are some people of Jurhum here; they request you to allow them to settle near us; so will you allow them?' Ibrãhīm said: 'Yes.' Then Hãjar allowed them and they settled near them, and erected their tents. In this way Hãjar and Ismã'īl got on friendly terms with them. When Ibrãhīm came to see them the second time, he looked at the large number of people around them, and he was extremely happy. When Ismã'īl grew up – and each one of the Jurhum had presented one or two goats to Ismã'īl – so Hãjar and Ismã'īl supported themselves with them. When Ismã'īl came of age, Allãh ordered Ibrãhīm to build the House . . . When Allãh ordered Ibrãhīm to build the House, he did not know where to build it; so Allãh sent Jibrīl and he drew a line at the site of the House . . . So, Ibrãhīm built the House and shifted Ismã'īl from Dhũ Ṭuwã. And he raised (the House) nine hands in height. Then (Jibrīl) led him to the place of the (Black) Stone, and Ibrãhīm took it out and fixed it in the place where it is at present. When he built it, he made two doors for it, one in the east and the other in the west; and the door that was in the west is (now) called al-Mustajãr. Then he put on it tree (-trunks) and *al-adhkhar* (اَلأَذْخَرْ = a sweet smelling grass) (as roof). And Hãjar put on the door a sheet she had with her and under which they used to sit. When he built and completed it, Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl performed their *ḥajj*. Jibrīl came to them on the day of *at-tarwiyah,* that is, 8th *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah,* and said: 'O Ibrãhīm! stand up and quench your thirst from water' (because there was no water in Minã or 'Arafãt) ; that is why it was named the day of *at-tarwiyah* (اَلتَّرويَةُ = to quench thirst). Then (Jibrīl) took him out to Mina and he stayed there in the night, and Jibrīl did with Ibrãhīm what he had done with Ãdam. Thus, when Ibrãhīm completed the construction of the House, he said: 'My *Lord! make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them*

as believe in Allãh . . .' " The Imãm explained the fruits as the fruits of the hearts, that is, make people love them, so that they may befriend them and return to them (year after year). (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

The author says: This is the gist of this story, and it covers many of the traditions narrated about this subject. Some other traditions say that there had happened many miraculous things in the history of the House. For example, some traditions say that the House in the very beginning was a dome of light; it had descended on Ãdam and settled in the place where in later days Ibrãhīm built the Ka'bah; and that dome remained in the place till the deluge of Nũḥ; when the earth was submerged in water, Allãh took that dome up; and its site was not submerged, that is why the Ka'bah is called the Ancient House.

Other traditions say that Allãh sent the foundation of the House down from the Garden.

Yet others say that the Black Stone came down from the Garden – and it was whiter than snow – then it turned black when it was touched by the unbelievers.

Also it is narrated from al-Bãqir or aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that he said: "Verily Allãh ordered Ibrãhīm to build the Ka'bah and to raise its walls and to show the people their ways of devotion (i.e., *ḥajj*). Thereupon, Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl built the House, every day (the height of) a knee until it reached the place of the Black Stone." And al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "Then the (mountain) Abu Qubays called to him: 'I have something in trust for you;' and it gave him the (Black) Stone, and he put it in its place." (*al-Kãfī*)

ath-Thawrī says: "I asked Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the Stone. He said: 'Three stones came down from the Garden: the Black Stone which was put in place by Ibrãhīm, and the Standing-place of Ibrãhīm, and the stone of the Israelites.' " (al-'Ayyãshī)

And a tradition says that the Black Stone was an angel.

The author says: There are very many such traditions narrated by both the Shī'ah and the Sunni narrators; and although

these traditions are *ãḥãd* and do not reach, in words or meanings, the standard required for *a mutawãtir* narration, still they are not unique in the field of religious descriptions, nor is there any reason to discard them altogether.

As for the narration that the dome was sent down to Ãdam or that Ibrãhīm rode *al-Buraq* for his journey to Mecca and other such miraculous happenings which have a super-natural character, there is no reason to say that they were impossible. Moreover, Allãh had given His prophets many such miracles and super-natural signs, and the Qur'ãn mentions many such events.

So far as the coming down of the foundations of the House, the Black Stone and the Standing Stone (which is said to be fixed in the structure now known as the Standing-place of Ibrãhīm) and other such things are concerned, there are many such examples found in the Qur'ãn and *ḥadīth.* Many vegetables and fruits etc. are said to be from the Garden, or from the Fire and its out-burst. Of the same genre are the traditions of "substance" saying that the substance of the good people is from the Garden and that of the evil ones is from the Fire; or that they are from *al-'illiyyīn* (اَلعِلِّيِينُ = lofty place; the Book of the deeds of the virtuous) and *as-sijjīn* (اَلسِّجِينُ = prison; the Book of the deeds of the evil ones), respecttively. Of similar nature are the traditions to the effect that the Garden of *al-barzakh* (the period between death and the Day of Judgment) is in some specified place on this earth, and the Fire of *al-barzakh* in some other place in it; and that the grave is either a section of the Garden's or a pit of the Fire's. There are many such informations which one is sure to come upon while studying the traditions. And, as we said earlier, they are so huge in number that the whole lot cannot be discarded, nor is it possible to question its authenticity. They are parts of the Divine realities expounded by the Qur'ãn and followed by the traditions. The fact is that all the things seen in this material world have been sent down by Allãh; whatsoever is good and lovely, or is a means to or a receptacle of good, has come down from the Garden and will return to it; and whatsoever is bad and evil, or is a means to or a receptacle of evil, has come down from the Fire and will return

to it. Allãh says: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure* (15:21). It shows that everything exists with Allãh, and it is an existence without any limit or measure; when it is sent down – a gradual descent – then it becomes subject to limits and measures. This verse describes the descent of all things in general. But there are also in the Qur'ãn specific examples of this descent. Allãh says: . . . *and He has sent down for you eight of the cattle in pairs*. . . (39:6)*; . . . and We have sent down the iron . . .* (57:25) *; And in the heaven is your sustenance, and what you are promised* (51:22). We shall further explain the meanings of these verses in their proper places, Allãh willing. They however prove that every thing descends to this world from Allãh. Other verses show that they are also to return to him, as He says: *And that to your Lord is the end goal* (53:42)*; Surely to your Lord is the return* (96:8)*; . . . to Him is the eventual coming* (40:3) *; . . . now surely to Allãh do all affairs eventually come* (42:53). There are many verses in the Qur'ãn of the same connotation.

Also, Allãh has made it clear that every thing – and all things presently are in middle of their journey – follows a course demanded by its origin, and that origin has some effect on its success and failure, its good and evil, as the Qur'ãn says: *Say: "Every one acts according to his own manner . . ."* (17:84) ; *And every one has a direction to which he should turn . . .* (2:148). We shall explain all these verses in their places; here they have been quoted just to complete the picture, and make the subject of our discussion clearer. What these verses prove is this: There is reason to believe that the traditions which say about a material thing that it came down from the Garden or from the Fire (when that thing has some connection with the next life's happiness or unhappiness) are on the whole correct, because they are, generally speaking, in conformity with the Qur'ãnic principles – although it does not mean that each and every such tradition is correct or trustworthy. Ponder on this point.

Someone has said: "The Divine words: *And* (*remember*) *when*

Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl were raising the foundations of the House . . ., manifestly show that the two prophets built this House for the worship of Allãh in that country of the idol-worshippers. But the story-tellers and those exegetes who followed them have embroidered what Allãh had said. They have added a lot of fanciful details, as, for example, that the House was from the very beginning and Ãdam did its *ḥajj;* that it was taken to the heaven during Null's flood; that the Black Stone was one of the stones of the Garden. Their main purpose was to present the religion in an attractive garment, adorning it with fascinating narratives. Such myths may impress the masses; but the people who have knowledge and wisdom know that spiritual excellence depends on Divine bestowal – it is Allãh Who makes one thing to excel the others. The Ka'bah has excellence because it is the House of Allãh, that is, attributed to Him; the Black Stone is excellent because people have been ordered to kiss it – in this respect it represents the hand of Allãh. It has no bearing on its excellence whether originally it was a ruby or a pearl or some other rock; nor do such tales add to its real glory. In reality it makes no difference in the eyes of Allãh whether a stone is black or white. The Ka'bah has got its distinction and honour because Allãh has called it His House, and has appointed it as the centre for various acts of worship which cannot be performed in any other place – its glory does not lie in the fact that its stones are more valuable than other stones, or that its site is the most attractive of all, or that it was sent down from the lofty heavens. Likewise, the excellence of the prophets is not based on any distinctive feature of their bodies nor on the quality of their apparel. They got excellence because Allãh chose them especially, and selected them for His prophethood which is a spiritual thing; otherwise many people in the world were far superior to them in their adornments and enjoyed greater worldly bounties."

He continues to say: "These traditions are untrustworthy because they contradict each other and some are self-contradictory; they are unauthentic because their chains of narrators are not correct; they are unacceptable because they go against the apparent meaning of the Qur'ãn."

He further says: "These traditions are Israelite myths, propagated among the Muslims by unbelieving Jews to make Islam look ridiculous, in order to keep the People of the Book away from it."

The author says: There is a grain of truth in some things he has said: But he has gone far beyond the limit in disputation, and consequently has lost his bearings and arrived at a hypothesis much more atrocious and repugnant, Let us have a critical look at his arguments:

Objection: "These traditions are untrustworthy and unacceptable because they contradict each other and are against the Qur'ãn."

Reply: The fact that some of them contradict the others could be a matter of worry if we were to accept them one by one as separate independent units. But when we accept the whole in their collective capacity (i.e., when we say that the whole lot should not be discarded because, taken all together, they do not tell us anything that is against reason or against the Qur'ãn or accepted traditions), then it is of no importance if there some minor discrepancies between individual traditions. But one point must be made clear here: What we have said just now, concerns the traditions narrated from the infallible sources like the Prophet and his sinless family members. So far as other exegetes among the Companions and their disciples are concerned, they, in this respect, are just like any other people; for us it makes no difference whether their talk is free from contradiction or riddled with it.

In short, there is no justification to discard a tradition, or a group of traditions, unless it goes against the Qur'ãn or other authentic traditions, or the marks of forgery and lie are stamped on it. (However, when it comes to the basic religious knowledge and fundamental beliefs, the only thing accepted as proof is the Book of Allãh and the authentic traditions of the Prophet and his sinless progeny; nothing else counts in this area.)

It is now clear that there are some things which must be accepted, that is, the Qur'ãn and the authentic traditions; and

there are others which must be rejected, that is, all that goes against the Qur'ãn and the authentic traditions. Then there is a third group: the traditions concerning which there is neither any proof compelling us to reject it, nor forcing us to accept it. These are the traditions which are neither impossible in reason nor unacceptable according to the Qur'ãn and authentic traditions – and there is no reason why they should be discarded altogether.

Objection: These traditions are unauthentic according to their chains of narrators.

Reply: The above given explanation also dispels this doubt, because weakness of the chains of narrators does not oblige us to reject the whole group, unless it is against the reason, the Qur'ãn or the authentic traditions.

Objection: They are against the words of Allãh; *And* (remember) *when Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl were raising the foundation of the House.. .*

Reply: I wish I knew how this verse proves that the Black Stone was not from the Garden! Or, that the dome did not come down to that place in Ãdam's time (and there was, therefore, no question of its being taken up at the time of the flood)! The only thing the verse says is that this construction, made of stone and mud, was built by Ibrãhīm. What has this got to do – either for or against – the traditions mentioned earlier. The only difficulty with those traditions is that the objector does not like them. And this dislike is based, not on the principles of religion, but on his biased views. He does not believe that the prophets had any spiritual realities within them; he does not think that the exoteric side of religion is based on its esoteric aspect; he unconsciously is so much over-awed by today's natural sciences that he tries to find a material cause not only for material happenings but even for spiritual things – if they have even a slight connection with matter. For him, the matter rules over all happenings, not excepting the sociological principles.

This man should have pondered on this point: The natural sciences deal with the matter; its properties and its various

compounds; they look at the relationship of a natural effect with its cause. Likewise, the various sociological disciplines study the social relationships among various event taking place in society.

But the natural and sociological sciences have no concern at all with the realities which are beyond the sphere of matter, outside its field of action; they have no jurisdiction even over immaterial connections existing between a material thing and an event taking place in the visible world. The natural sciences and disciplines have no authority or right to confirm or reject these immaterial realities. It is within the jurisdiction of natural science to say that construction of a house depends on things like mud, stone and mason; it may explain how black stones may take the shape of a room. Likewise, sociological disciplines may describe the factors which led to the building of the Ka'bah – it may explain a part of Ibrãhīm's biography, Hãjar's life, Ismã'īl's story, history of Tahamah, arrival of the tribe of Jurhum and things like that. But these sciences and disciplines have no right to discuss what was the relation between a certain stone on one hand and the Garden or the Fire on the other; nor have these branches of knowledge any right to express any affirmative or negative opinion about such narratives.

And you have seen that the Qur'ãn clearly says that even material and physical things have been sent down from the treasure which is with Allãh, and that they would ultimately return to Him – either to the Garden or to the Fire. Also, the Qur'ãn says that the deeds and actions – which are but physical movements and positions – ascend to Allãh acid arrive at His presence: *To Him do ascend the good words, and the good deed lifts them up* (35 :10) ; again it says: *to Him reaches the piety on your part* (22:37), and piety is but action or a characteristic acquired through repeated actions. It is essential for a student of religion to meditate on these verses and to understand that the religious realities do not have any relationship with material or sociological matters *per se;* they depend on the facts which are beyond the reach of material disciplines.

Objection: The excellence of the prophets, and the things

attributed to them like the Ka'bah or the Black Stone, is not based on a material quality; it is a spiritual excellence bestowed by the Divine Grace.

Reply: What he says is right. But he should understand what is the real meaning of what he says. What is that spiritual reality which creates excellence? Is it a mentally posited abstract idea created by social needs, like the designations and offices found in every nation, for example, presidency, leadership of the party, the high price of gold and silver, respect of the parents, sanctity of the laws of the land? All these are subjective and imaginative abstract forms which the societies have laid down to meet their own needs; but they have no existence outside the imagination, beyond subjective consideration. Such honours and distinctions cannot be found outside the social life which created them to fulfil its needs; and Allãh is too sublime for such needs to reach His presence. Therefore, such social distinctions have no relevance to an excellence given by Allãh to any of His creatures.

If the objector thinks that the excellence of the prophets is just like the above-mentioned imaginary and unreal honours, then why should a house or a stone be denied a similar excellence? And if he believes that an excellence given by Allãh is the real one, as is found in light *vis-à-vis* darkness, in knowledge *vis-à-vis* ignorance, and in wisdom *vis-à-vis* idiocy, then of course it would be a real and actual excellence. In that case, the quiddity of the existence of a prophet would be different from the quiddity of other human beings – even if our senses are unable to grasp it. And such real excellence and distinction is in keeping with the sublimity and sanctity of the Divine actions and wisdom. Allãh says: *And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know* (44:38 – *39*). Such a distinction is real, spiritual, metaphysical and beyond the reach of physical nature. And if such real excellence may be given to the prophets, why can it not be bestowed on some other things, like the Ka'bah and the Black Stone etc.? And, may be, it is this real immaterial excellence which has been

described in such words that the people could easily understand.

Would that I knew what would such people do about those Qur'ãnic verses which say that the people of the Garden will be given cups, ornaments and dresses of gold and silver. These two metals have no inherent excellence except that their price remains high because of their scarcity. If so, then why should they be used for exalting the people of the Garden? What wealth will they represent in the Garden? After all, the economics of this world will not be valid there!

These and other such Divine words and exoteric expressions are the curtains which hide the esoteric realities; they are the veils covering Divine secrets. And if such expressions are accept-able for the realities of the next world, they can as easily be used for some facts of this one.

az-Zubayri says: "I said to Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.): 'Tell me about the *ummah* of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), who are they?' He said: 'The *ummah* of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) are the Children of Hãshim in particular.' I said: 'And what is the proof that the *ummah* of Muhammad are his family members you have mentioned, to the exclusion of the others?' He said: '(It is) the words of Allãh: *And* (remember) *when Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl were raising the foundations of the House: "Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a group* (ummah) *submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us* (mercifully), *surely Thou art the Oft-returning* (with mercy), *the Merciful."* When Allãh answered the prayer of Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and did (promise to) raise from their offspring a submissive *ummah* and raised up in them an Apostle from among themselves, that is, from among that *ummah* itself, to recite to them His communications, and to teach them the Book and the wisdom, Ibrãhīm beseeched Allãh for another bounty; and asked for that *ummah* purity from polytheism and idol-worship in order that the affair of that Apostle might remain firm and strong among them and they might not need to follow anyone other than themselves. That is why Ibrãhīm said: *"and save me and my sons from worshipping idols:* My *Lord! Surely they have led*

many men astray; then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful" (14:35 – 36). It proves that the Imãms, and the submissive *ummah* in which Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) was raised, cannot be except from the offspring of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), because he had said: *"save me and my sons from worshipping idols" ' ".* (al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: The argument of the Imãm is absolutely clear. Ibrãhīm (a. s.) had asked this submissive *ummah* to be from his offspring in particular; and the next sentence, *"Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves. . ."*, show that the same submissive group is the *ummah* of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) – and the word, *ummah,* as used here, does not refer to the people whom Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent to; nor to those who answered his call and believed in his prophethood, because that *ummah is* not confined to the offspring of Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl; the word in the present context refers to a particular submissive *ummah* from the offspring of Ibrãhīm (a.s.). There-after, Ibrãhīm (a.s.) prayed to his Lord to protect him and his sons from idol-worship, to keep them away from polytheism and error – and this Divine protection is *'iṣmah* (infallibility; sinlessness). Also we know that there were a lot of people among the offspring of Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl – the Arabs of the Muḍar, or particularly the Quraysh – who had gone astray and worshipped idols. It proves that when Ibrãhīm (a.s.) prayed for his "sons" to be protected from idol-worship, he did not mean all his sons; he was praying only for his infallible offspring, that is, the Prophet and his purified progeny. These, then, are the *ummah* of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) in the prayer of Ibrãhīm (a.s.). Probably, it was for this fine distinction that Ibrãhīm (a.s.) changed the word, "offspring", to "sons"; this view is strengthened by the phrases following this prayer, *"then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful"*. Note the opening word, "then", which shows that what follows is based on what has preceded; thereafter, he confirms that those who would follow him would be from him, a part of him; but then

he stops and does not say anything about the opposite group, as though he does not recognize them, they are strangers to him. (Think it over.)

The Imãm said that Ibrãhīm (a.s.) "asked for that *ummah* purity from polytheism and idol-worship". Actually, he had asked protection only from worshipping the idols; but then he mentioned why he had asked for that protection: surely the idols have led many men astray. In this way, the original prayer for protection from idol-worship became an all-encompassing prayer for protection from all types of straying and error, ranging from idol-worship to small sins – because every sin is a sort of polytheism, as we have already explained under the verse: *The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours . . .* (1:7).

The Imãm said: "It proves that the Imãms, and the submissive *ummah* in which Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) was raised, cannot be except from _ the offspring of Ibrãhīm (a.s.)." That is the Imãms are the submissive *ummah,* and they are from the offspring of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), as explained above.

Objection: You say that the word, *ummah,* in this verse refers to a small group of the Muslims, and not to the whole nation; you use the same interpretation in some other verses, for example, *You are the best nation raised up for* (the benefit of) *men . . .* (3:110). But this obliges us to interpret the word in a metaphorical way – without any justifiable reason. Moreover, the Qur'ãn addresses itself to the whole *ummah* who believed in the Prophet; it is a self-evident fact which does not need any proof.

Reply: It was long after the revelation of the Qur'ãn and the spread of Islam that the phrase, *ummah* of Muhammad, was popularly used for "all those who believe in his prophethood". It is a later usage.

The original meaning of this word is "people", "nation", "group", as Allãh says: *and blessing on you and the people* (*umam* = plural of *ummah*) *from among those who are with you; and there shall be people* (*umam*). . . (11:48). This word is sometimes used even for one person; *Surely Ibrãhīm was a*

"people" (devoutly) *obedient to Allãh* (16:120). Therefore, it is the context or the intention of the speaker which decides how big or small a circle this word describes in a sentence. Now the words, *Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting to Thee,* were spoken in prayer, and as explained earlier, they could refer to only a selected group out of the multitude who believe in the Prophet. Likewise, the verse, *You are the best nation raised up for* (the benefit of) *men,* was revealed to show the favour of Allãh on the people thus addressed; its import is to increase their prestige and enhance their dignity. Surely, these words could be addressed to the whole *ummah* who call themselves Muslims. How could it apply to the Pharaohs and Dajjals of this *ummah* who did not leave any vestige of the religion without destroying, and who did not come across any religious virtue without crushing it? (We shall explain it in detail when writing on this verse.) In short, this verse is like the talk of Allãh with the Children of Israel: *and that I made you excel the nations* (2:47) ; we should not forget that a man like Qãrũn was one of them, and surely this talk does not include him. Likewise, the complaint of the Prophet, "O *my Lord! surely my people treated this Qur'ãn as a forsaken thing"* (*25:* 30), cannot cover all his *ummah* – there are among them the lovers of the Qur'ãn, *the men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allãh.* On the other hand, there is the verse 2:134, which is addressed to the whole *ummah,* and covers all those who believed in the Prophet and even those to whom he was sent: *This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they did.*

AN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Ponder on the story of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) ; study his life; see how he took his son and wife to the land where now Mecca stands, and settled them there; how their lives progressed until finally the "sacrifice" of Ismã'īl took place and, in the last moment,

he was ransomed by Allãh; read how they together built the Ka'bah. You will find that it is a complete cycle of devotional journey. It shows how a servant proceeds from his "self" to his Lord, from a far away station to the centre of "Divine Nearness"; how the journey is accomplished avoiding the vanities of this world, shunning its protection, keeping away from its desires – prestige, wealth, women and children – freeing oneself from the intrigues of satans, not letting them pollute the purity of intention, and turning with total surrender and progressing with complete devotion to the Lord, the Great, the High.

These apparently unrelated events are in fact of an unbroken series. They are historical narratives, but they describe the stages of the spiritual journey of a servant from self to the Lord. They teach us the discipline of that journey, instruct us in the rules and manners of seeking nearness to Allãh, of reaching His presence. The more you meditate on his story, the deeper will be your spiritual understanding – you will come to know the demands of Divine love and sincere devotion.

Allãh ordered His friend, Ibrãhīm, to promulgate the *ḥajj* for the people, and He says: *And proclaim among men the ḥajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path. . .* (22:27). We do not know the details of the laws of the *ḥajj* as promulgated by Ibrãhīm (a.s.). But we know that the *ḥajj* continued as an event of great religious importance even among the Arabs of the days of ignorance. Then Allãh sent the Prophet and he gave us the rules of the *ḥajj* as we know them. One thing is certain: He did not go against the rules laid down by Ibrãhīm (a.s.) ; what he did was to complete and perfect them. This fact may be inferred from the words of Allãh: *Say: "Surely,* (as for) *me, my Lord has guided me to the straight path;* (to) *a most right religion, the faith of Ibrãhīm, the upright one" . . .* (6:161); *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nũḥ and that which We have revealed unto you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrãhīm and Mũsã and* 'Isã . . . (42:13).

In any case, all the devotional acts of the *ḥajj* – the *iḥrãm,* staying at 'Arafãt, staying overnight at Mash'ar, sacrificing an

animal, throwing pebbles at the pillars, running between the Ṣafã and the Marwah, going around Ka'bah, praying near the Standing-place – all these acts commemorate the events that had happened to Ibrãhīm, and represent the stands taken by him and his family; and how admirable stands they were – the pure and sublime Divine stands to which they were led by Divine mercy and urged on by the humility of servitude.

The prescribed acts of worship – on their promulgator be the best of *salams!* – are the symbols of the stands of the perfect ones, the prophets, *vis-à-vis* their Lord; every act of worship is a photo which shows to us a stage in their spiritual journey to the station of nearness to Allãh, as Allãh says: *Certainly* (there) *is for you in the Messenger of Allãh an excellent example. . .* (33: 21). This is a basic reality. And there is much evidence pointing to this theme in the traditions which have come down to us regarding the philosophy of various acts of worship and the esoteric aspects of their legislation and prescription, as any diligent scholar may find out.

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وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرٰهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدِ اصْطَفَيْنٰهُ
فِي الدُّنْيٰا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصّٰالِحِينَ ــ ١٣٠ . إِذْ قٰالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ
أَسْلِمْ قٰالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعٰالَمِينَ ــ ١٣١ . وَوَصّٰى بِهٰا إِبْرٰهِيمُ بَنِيهِ
وَيَعْقُوبُ يٰا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰى لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلاٰ تَمُوتُنَّ إِلاّٰ وَأَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ ــ . أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدٰاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قٰالَ لِبَنِيهِ
مٰا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قٰالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلٰهَكَ وَإِلٰهَ آبٰائِكَ إِبْرٰهِيمَ
وَإِسْمٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحٰقَ إِلٰهاً وٰاحِداً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ــ ١٣٣ . تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ
قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهٰا مٰا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مٰا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلاٰ تُسْئَلُونَ عَمّٰا كٰانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ــ ١٣٤ .

And who turns away from the religion of Ibrãhīm but he who makes himself a fool; and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter, he is most surely among the good ones (130). *When his Lord said to him, Submit* (yourself) *he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds"* (131). *And the same did Ibrãhīm enjoin on his sons and* (*so* did) *Ya'qũb: "O my sons! surely Allãh has chosen for you* (*this*) *faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims"* (132). *Or, were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qũb, when he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and Isḥãq, one God only, and to Him do we submit"* (133).

This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they did (134).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And who turns away from the religion of Ibrãhīm but he who makes himself a fool: "ar-Raghbah"* (اَلرَّغْبَةُ) followed by the preposition *'an* (عَنْ = away from; off) means "to turn away", "to dislike"; when followed by *fī* (فِيْ = in), it denotes "to incline towards", "to desire". The verb, *safiha* (سَفِهَ = made a fool; became a fool) is used both as transitive and intransitive. Some exegetes have taken this word here as a transitive verb – according to them, the word *nafsahu* (نَفْسَهُ = himself; his self) is its object; others have taken the verb in the intransitive sense and in that case *nafsahu* will be *at-tamyīz* (اَلتَّمْيِيْزُ = a specification), not an object. In any case, the meaning will remain the same: Whoever turns away from the religion of Ibrãhīm is a fool; he does not recognize what is beneficial to him from that which is harmful. From this verse we may infer what we have been told in the *ḥadīth:* "Surely wisdom is that by which the Beneficient (God) is worshipped."

QUR'ÃN: *and most certainly We chose him in this world: "al-Iṣṭifã' "* (اَلإصْطِفاءُ) means to choose, to separate best parts of a thing from other parts (if they were mixed together). Looking at the positions of *al-wilãyah* (اَلولايَةُ = love of Allãh), this choosing, this selection fits the sincerity of servitude. A person so chosen behaves in all his affairs as a sincere slave and servant, totally surrendering himself to his Lord. In other words, religion is embodied in all his affairs. After all, what is religion if not total servitude to Allãh in all matters whether of this world or of the hereafter, accepting gladly whatever the Lord decides for His servant in any given situation, as He says: *Surely the religion with Allãh is Islam* (3:19). Clearly it shows that the position

of "selection" is not different from that of "Islam", that is, surrender. As a further proof, look at the next verse: "When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself) he said: 'I submit my-self to the Lord of the worlds' ". Obviously, the adverb "when" is related to the preceding verb "We chose him". It means that Ibrãhīm was chosen when his Lord said to him to submit and he responded by submitting himself to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds. In other words, the verse 131 (*When his Lord said to him, Submit, he said. "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds",*) *is* like an explanation of the words, "most surely We chose him".

In these verses pronouns have been changed from the first person to the third, and again from the second to the third. After saying, "We chose him", it would have been more usual to say: "When We said to him"; but Allãh says, "When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself)"; then in reply, Ibrãhīm (a.s.) should have said: "I submit myself to Thee"; instead he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds". The reason is a follows:

"When his Lord said to him": It points to the fact that the talk was a secret between Ibrãhīm and his Lord, at a level where there was no one else to listen to that confidential conversation. Had Allãh said, "When We said to him", it would have implied that the hearers of this verse were present at that sublime station and could be addressed to by Allãh – after all, the audience has a direct relationship with the speaker. Therefore, Allãh referred to Himself in the third person, cutting the connection between Himself and the hearers of the verse, showing that at the level where He spoke with Ibrãhīm, no one else was present; the conversation between Allãh and Ibrãhīm was a confidential matter veiled in secrecy. In short, it was a talk between two close friends which others were excluded from.

"I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds". As mentioned above, the preceding phrase shows that Allãh bestowed His grace exclusively on Ibrãhīm and enhanced his rank by this friendly confidential conversation. But Ibrãhīm knew how to speak in Divine presence; he was a servant of Allãh; he should not forget the dictates of humility; it was a sign of his excellence, of his humbleness, that he did not start talking with Allãh in a friendly

way, did not consider himself as worthy of that exclusive proximity, of that sublime friendship. He continued to see in himself a humble and powerless servant who is sustained by his Master's grace. That is why he submitted to the Lord to Whom all the worlds surrender, and said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds".

"al-Islãm" (اَلإِسْلاَمُ), *"at-taslīm"* (اَلتَّسْلِيمُ) and *"al-istislãm* (اَلإِسْتِسْلاَمُ), all are from the same root *s-l-m* (س-ل-م) and have the same meaning, that is, to submit, to surrender. These verbs are used when a man or a thing submits to another thing, in such a way that the first never disobeys the second, never goes against it. Allãh says: *Yes! whoever submits himself entirely to Allãh.. .* (2:112); *Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth. . .* (6:79). It is with the face that one turns towards someone. So far as Allãh is concerned, the whole being, the whole existence, of the thing turns to Him. When a man surrenders to Allãh, he obeys and accepts whatever comes to him from Allãh – the creative matters like the measure and the decree, as well as the legislative ones like order and prohibition.

As men differ in degrees of their submission to Divine Decrees or legislations, so does their Islam.

The first stage of Islam is to accept and obey the exoteric commandments, orders and prohibitions, by reciting *ash-shahãda-tayn* (اَلشَّهَادَتَيْن) = the two testimonies, that is, testifying to the Oneness of God and Messengership of Muhammad, (s.a.w.a.), no matter whether the belief has entered into the heart or not. Allãh says: *The dwellers of the desert say: "We believe". Say: "You do not believe but say, 'We submit'; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts". . .* (49:14)

This Islam is followed by the first stage of *al-īmãn* (اَلإِيْمَانُ) = faith, belief); and that is the sincere belief in the above-menioned *shahãdatayn*; such a believer faithfully obeys most of the rules of the sharī'ah.

This first stage of *al-īmãn* is followed by the second stage of Islam. It is the sincere acceptance of all true beliefs in detail, with its necessary concomitant, that is, good deeds – although

occasional slips are not impossible. Allãh says praising the pious ones: *Those who believed in Our signs and were submissive* (43: 69). Also, He says: *O you who believe! enter into submission one and all* (2:208). These verses show that there is an Islam which comes after *al-īmãn;* obviously this Islam is other than the previously mentioned one.

This Islam is followed by the second stage of *al-īmãn;* and it is the believing, with full details and reasoning, in the realities of the religion. Allãh says: *The believers are only those who believe in Allãh and His Messenger then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allãh; they are the truthful ones* (49:15). Again, He says: *O you who believe! shall I lead you to a merchandise which may deliver you from a painful chastisement? You shall believe in Allãh and His Messenger, and struggle hard in Allãh's way with your properties and your lives* (61:10-11). This verse directs the believers to believe; obviously the second *Īmãn* is other than the first one.

This second stage of *al-īmãn* paves the way for the third stage of Islam. When the soul is sufficiently imbued with the above-mentioned īmãn, and acquires its characteristics, then man's all animalistic and beastly faculties are subdued to the sublime powers of his intellect and spirituality. He keeps all his desires – pulling him to the material attractions and transient trinkets of this world – under firm control. Thereupon, he reaches a stage where he worships Allãh as though he was seeing Him – and if he was not seeing Allãh, then Allãh was seeing him. There is nothing in his hidden life and inner-self, that is not submissive to Allãh's orders and prohibitions; he is never annoyed with any decree or measure of Allãh. Allãh says: *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their selves as to what you have decided, and submit with total submission* (4:65).

This Islam is followed by the third stage of *al-īmãn.* Allãh says: *Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers and who keep aloof from what is vain.. .* (23:1–3). It is this stage that the words of Allãh refer to: "When his Lord

said to him, Submit (yourself), he said: 'I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds.' "

Sometimes the second and the third stages are counted as one. The sublime virtues, for example, being pleased with Divine Decree, submitting to the commands of Allãh, forbearance and patience for the love of Allãh, self-denial, piety, and love and hate for the sake of Allãh are concomitants of this stage of *al-īmãn.*

The fourth stage of Islam follows the third stage of *al-īmãn.* In the above-mentioned stage of *al-īmãn* the condition of a man *vis-à-vis* his Lord is like that of a slave with his master when a slave faithfully follows the dictates of his bondage – when he totally surrenders to the will of his master and accepts his likes and dislikes. Obviously there is no comparison between the ownership and authority a master has over his slave and the ownership and authority the Lord of the worlds has over His creatures. His is the real possession, the real ownership; nothing else has any independent existence – neither in person or characteristics nor in actions.

Sometimes, when a man reaches the third stage of surrender and submission, the Divine Grace takes him under its wing; he is shown the reality, and sees with his heart's eyes that the Kingdom belongs to Allãh, nothing else owns anything at all – except when Allãh bestows it to someone; there is no Lord other than He.

This realization, this unveiling of reality, is a Divine Gift, a bestowal by Allãh, to whom He pleases; a man cannot reach this sublime stage by his own will or effort. Probably it is to this Islam that the prayer of Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl refers: *Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submissive to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion* . . . (2:128). Compare this to the verse: "When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself), he said: 'I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds' ". Obviously the latter is a legislative, not a creative, order. Ibrãhīm was Muslim by his own will and choice, responding to the Divine Invitation, obeying the orders of Allãh. It was an order he received in his early life. Now the former verse shows him, in the twilight of his life, praying with

his son, Ismã'īl, for Islam and for being shown their ways of devotion. Undoubtedly, he was asking for something which was not in his hand; or was praying to be kept firm on something which was not in his power. In short, the Islam, which Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl prayed for, was of this fourth and sublime stage.

This Islam is followed by the fourth stage of *al-īmãn.* It happens when the above-mentioned conditions permeates the believer's whole being, and submerges all his conditions and actions. Allãh says: *Now surely the friends of Allãh – they have no fear nor do they grieve; those who believed and were pious* (10:62 -63). The believers mentioned here must be having the certainty that nothing is independent of Allãh, and no "cause" has any causative power except by His permission. It is this certainty which insulates them from grief when a tragedy strikes them, and protects them from fear if a danger looms ahead. It is only because of this factor that they have been praised in these terms.

This īmãn comes after the above-mentioned Divine Gift of Islam. Ponder on this point.

QUR'ÃN: *and in the hereafter he is most surely among the good ones: "aṣ-Ṣalãḥ"* (اَلصَّلاحُ) literally means: capability, ability. In the Divine Speech, this word and its derivatives, have been used sometimes for the man himself, and, at other times, for his actions and deeds. Allãh says: . . . *he should do good deeds*.. . (18:110); also, He says: *And marry those among you who are single and those who are good* (*i.e.,* fit) *among your male slaves and your female slaves*. . . (24:32)

No clear explanation is found in the Book of Allãh as to what constitutes goodness of deeds. But the Book attributes to it some effects, which may be helpful in understanding its meaning. For example:-

1. A good deed is good for the pleasure of Allãh: *And those who are patient, seeking the pleasure of their Lord*. . . (13:22); *and you do not spend but to seek Allãh's pleasure* . . . (2:272)
2. It is good for the reward of Allãh: *Allãh's reward is better for him who believes and does good*. . . (28:80)

3. It lifts up the good words which ascend to Allãh: *To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed lifts them up . . .* (35:10)

These descriptions show that, so far as actions are concerned, a "good deed" means an action that is fit to receive honour from God, is capable of lifting the good words to Allãh. Allãh says: *. . . but to Him reaches the piety on your part . . .* (22:37)*; All do We aid – these as well as those – out of the bounty of your Lord; and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:20).

As for the persons, the following verses show what constitutes their goodness: *And whoever obeys Allãh and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allãh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good ones; and excellent are these as companions!* (*4:69*)*; And We caused them to enter into Our mercy; surely they were of the good ones* (21:86). Again Allãh quotes Sulaymãn (a.s.) as saying: *. . . and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones* (27:19). Also, He says: *And* (as for) *Lũṭ, We gave him wisdom and knowledge. . . and We took him into Our mercy; surely he was of the good ones* (21:74 – *75*). The mercy referred to in these verses is not the general Divine Mercy which encompasses everything; nor does it mean that mercy which is ordained for the pious believers, as Allãh says: *. . . and* My *mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it* (especially) *for those who are pious. . .* (7:156). The great personalities mentioned in the verses earlier referred to were "the good ones", and they were a selected group from among the pious believers; they were "fit" for the exclusive mercy mentioned in those verses. We know that some of the mercies of Allãh are reserved for some especial groups to the exclusion of others. Allãh says: *and Allãh chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy* (2:105).

Also, this expression does not refer to the general honour of *al-wilãyah* in other words, it does not say that Allãh man-aged or manages their affairs for them. Of course, the good ones had that honour too; certainly they were among the honoured

al-awliyã' (الأوْلياءُ = friends of Allãh), as we have explained in the exegesis of the verse 1:5 (*Guide us to the straight path*)*;* but this *wilãyah* is an attribute which is also shared by the prophets, the truthful ones and the martyrs. If they had only this honour to their credit they could not be counted as a separate group distinguished from the other three.

So, what is the distinctive feature of the "goodness"? The answer is that Allãh takes a "good one" into His especial mercy and grants him comprehensive protection from chastisement. These two effects are mentioned in the Qur'ãn: *Then as to those who believed and did good, their Lord will make them enter into His mercy* (*i.e.,* into the Garden) (45:30) ; *They shall call therein* (*i.e.,* in the Garden) *every fruit in security* (44:55).

Now ponder on the following verses: *And We took him into Our mercy* (21:75) ; *and We made* (them) *all good ones* (21:72). Note how Allãh attributes these actions to Himself, not to the people concerned. Also look at the fact that according to the Divine declarations, reward is always given in lieu of actions and efforts. Keeping all this in view, you will realize that the "personal goodness" is a especial honour which cannot be earned as a reward of good deeds or by one's own will. Probably, it is to this reality that the verse refers: *They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet* (50:35): Possibly, the first clause (*They have therein what they wish*) refers to the reward of their deeds; and the second one (*and with Us is more yet*) concerns what they shall be given not in lieu of action, but purely by Divine Mercy. We shall elaborate it, Allãh willing, in the exegesis of this verse.

Now look at the life of Ibrãhīm (a.s.). He was a prophet, a messenger of God, one of the *ulu 'l azm* prophets and an Imãm; many of the prophets and messengers coming after him were his followers; and he was of the good ones, as the words of Allãh clearly say: *and We made* (them) *all good ones* (21:72). This verse also shows that he was made, in this very world, one of the good ones. Consider also the fact that many prophets of lesser rank were made, in this very world, among the good ones. Then why does he pray to Allãh to join him to the good ones?

It is clear from this prayer that there was a group of the "good ones" who had gone ahead of him, and now he was praying to Allãh to join him to them. Allãh granted him his prayer "in the hereafter", as is mentioned in the Qur'ãn in three places – one of which is the verse under discussion: *and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the good ones* (2:130). Other two verses are: . . . *and We gave him his reward in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the good ones* (29:27). *And We gave him good in this world, and in the hereafter he will most surely be among the good* (16:122).

If you ponder on the foregoing details, you will know that "goodness" has many ranks, one above the other. Therefore you should not be astonished if you are told that Ibrãhīm (a.s.) had asked to be joined to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his purified progeny (a.s.), and that Allãh granted him his prayer in the here-after, not in this world. Ibrãhīm (a.s.) had prayed to Allãh to join him with the good ones, while Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) unambiguously claims this honour for himself: *Surely my guardian is Allãh, Who revealed the Book, and He takes in hand* (the affairs of) *the good ones* (7:196). It is obvious that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) claims the *wilãyah* for himself. In other words, the Prophet, according to his claim mentioned in the verse, had already got the "goodness"; and Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was praying to be joined to a group of "good ones" who had already been given that rank, and that group was Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny.

QUR'ÃN: *And the same did Ibrãhīm enjoin on his sons:* that is, the same religion.

QUR'ÃN: . . . *therefore die not unless you are Muslims:* Death is something beyond one's control; and *"at-taklīf"* (اَلتَّكْلِيْفُ = commandments of the *sharī'ah*) covers only those things which are under one's control. Then why did Ibrãhīm and Ya'qũb (peace be on them!) tell their progeny not to die unless they were Muslims? The fact is that this admonition concerned a matter which was fully under their power. The real meaning is like this:

Beware lest the death comes to you and you are not Muslims; always remain Muslims; keep on Islam, so that whenever death comes to you, you are Muslims.

The verse gives a hint that the religion means Islam, as Allãh says: *Surely the religion with Allãh is Islam* (3:19).

QUR'ÃN: *"We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and Isḥãq":* The verse uses the word "father" for the grandfather, the uncle and the father – and it has been used without any reason of *"at-taghlib"* (اَلتَّغْلِيْبُ) that is, all groups are equal in number; there were not more "fathers" than the grandfather and the uncle to justify the use of this word for the whole group. It proves that the word "father" may correctly be used for uncle, as we shall show, Allãh willing, that Ibrãhīm (a.s.) addressed his uncle Ãzar, as "father".

QUR'ÃN: *"one God only":* This sums up the preceding detailed description, "your God and the God of your fathers . . ."; it serves to remove any possible misunderstanding that his God was other than the God of his fathers – as the idol-worshippers thought that there were many gods. '

QUR'ÃN: *"and to Him do we submit";* It refers to the subject of their talk, that is, worship. They made it clear that their worship of Allãh would be totally in accordance with the dictates of Islam. The reply shows that the religion of Ibrãhīm was Islam. Accordingly, the religion which was inherited by his offspring, for example, Isḥãq, Ya'qũb and Ismã'īl, and which continued in the Children of Israel and Ismã'īl, was Islam, and nothing else. It was this religion which Ibrãhīm (a.s.) brought from his Lord; and nobody had any right to turn away from it or to call to any other religion.

TRADITIONS

Samã'ah narrates from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that he said: "The position of īmãn (faith) *vis-à-vis* Islam is like that of the Sacred

Ka‘bah *vis-à-vis* the Sanctuary; sometimes one may be in the Sanctuary without being in the Ka‘bah, but he cannot be in the Ka‘bah without being in the Sanctuary." (*al-Kãfī*)

Also he narrates from the same Imãm that he said: "Islam is to bear witness that there is no god except Allãh, and to accept the truth of the Messenger of Allãh; it is by this that the bloods are spared (i.e., lives are protected) and marriages and inheritance are validated; and the multitude of people are on its apparent (meaning); and the īmãn (*i.e.,* faith and belief) is the guidance, and (it is) that characteristic of Islam which is firmly placed in the hearts." (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning; and they explain the above-mentioned first stage of the Islam and īmãn.

al-Barqi has narrated from ‘Ali (a.s.) that he said: "Islam is submission and submission is conviction." (*ibid.*)

Kahil said that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "If a people worshipped Allãh – the One, there is no partner to Him – and established prayer, and paid the *zakãt* and did the *ḥajj* of the House, and kept the fast of the month of *Ramadan,* and then said about-something done by Allãh or done by the Messenger of Allãh, 'Why did he not do it in another way?', or (even if) they felt (like) it in their hearts, they would become polytheists because of it . . ." (*ibid.*)

The author says: The foregoing two traditions refer to the third stages of the Islam and īmãn.

ad-Daylami narrates in his *al-Irshãd* – and he gives two *sanads* for this *ḥadīth* which is one of the traditions of Ascension – that Allãh said: "O Ahmad! Do you know which way of living is happier and which life more durable?" (The Messenger of Allãh) said: "No, O Allãh!" (He) said: "As for the happy way of living, it is that in which the (living) person is not tired of remembering Me, and does not forget My bounties, and does not ignore My rights (on him); he seeks My pleasure day and night.

And as for the ever-lasting life, it is (realized) when (the person) works for his (spiritual) benefit until the world looses its significance for him, and looks small in his eyes; and the hereafter becomes great for him; and he gives preference to My pleasure over his own desire, and seeks My pleasures, and thinks the right of My bounty (as) great (on him) ; and keeps in mind what I have done for him (i.e., for his benefit); and watches Me day and night whenever he is tempted to commit any wrong or sin; and keeps his heart clean from all that I dislike; and hates Satan and his whisperings, and does not let Satan establish a hold over, or a passage to, his heart. When he acts (like) this, then I put (My) love into his heart until I make his heart, as well as his leisure and engagement, and his thought and speech, a part of (My) favours which I have bestowed on those of My creatures who love Me; and I open his heart's eye and ear, so that he hears with his heart, and looks with his heart to My Majesty and Greatness; and I make the world straitened for him; and make him hate it with all its pleasures; and I caution him of the world and all that it contains, as a shepherd protects his sheep from dangerous pasture lands. When it happens, then he flees from people, and transfers from the house of termination to the abode of eternity, and from the house of Satan to the seat of the Beneficent (God), O Aḥmad ! and I adorn him with dignity and majesty. So, this is the good way of living and the eternal life; and it is the station of those who are pleased (with Me). So, whoever acts for My pleasure, I give him three characteristics: I teach him gratitude which is not polluted by ignorance, and remembrance that is not adulterated with forgetfulness, and love – so that he does not prefer the love of creatures to My love. Then when he loves Me, I love him, and I open the eye of his heart to My Majesty, and do not keep My (very) special creatures hidden from him. And I converse with him secretly in the dark of night and the light of day, until he ceases talking with the creatures and sitting with them; and I make him hear My talk and the speech of My angels; and I make My secret known to him – which I have kept hidden from (all) My creation. And I dress him in modesty, until all the creation is awed of him. And he walks

on the earth (and all his sins are) forgiven. And I make his heart hearing and seeing ; and do not hide from him anything of the Garden or the Fire; and I make known to him what terror and affliction are going to happen to the people on the Day of Resurrection, and the things I will question the rich and the poor, as well as the learned and the ignorant, about. And I will make him sleep (in peace) in his grave, and I will send Munkar and Nakīr to him for questioning him; and he will not see the sorrow of death, nor the fright of the prelude (of the next world). Then I will erect his weighing scale for him, and will unroll his book (of deeds), then I will put his books in his right hand, and he shall read it unfolded; then I will not keep any interpreter between Me and him. So these are the attributes of the lovers. O Ahmad ! make your concern one concern, and make your tongue one tongue, and make your body (i.e., your person) alive that is never oblivious (of Me). Whoever is oblivious of Me, I do not care in which valley he perishes." (*Biḥãru 'l-anwãr*)

al-Majlisī quotes the following tradition from *al-Kãfī, Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr* and *an Nawãdir* of ar-Rãwandi, with various chains of narrators, from aṣ-Ṣãdiq and al-Kãẓim (a.s.) – and the text given here is from *al-Kãfī* – that the Imãm said: "The Messenger of Allãh met Ḥãrithah ibn Mãlik ibn an-Nu'mãn al-Anṣãrī, and said to him: 'How are you? O Ḥãrithah ibn Mãlik an-Nu'mãnī!' He said: 'A believer in reality, O Messenger of Allãh!' The Messenger of Allãh then said to him: 'There is a reality for everything ; so what is the reality of your word?' He said: 'O Messenger of Allãh! I turned myself away from the world, so I kept my night awake (in worship) and my days thirsty (in fast) ; and (it is) as though I am looking at the throne of my Lord which has been set up for (taking) the (people's) account; and as though I see the people of the Garden visiting one another in the Garden, and as if I hear the howling of the people of the Fire in the Fire.' Thereupon, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'A servant that Allãh has enlightened his heart. You have seen, so be firm.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: The two traditions describe the fourth stage of the Islam and īmãn mentioned above. There are many traditions

explaining particulars of these two; and, Allãh willing, we shall quote some of them in various places of this book; and they are supported by the Qur'ãnic verses.

Also it should be kept in mind that for each stage of the Islam and īmãn, there is an opposite stage of *al-kufr* (اَلكُفْرُ = disbelief) and *ash-shirk* (اَلشِّرْكُ = polytheism). And it is known that the higher and subtler the meaning of the Islam and īmãn, the more difficult it is to protect oneself from its opposite *kufr* or *shirk*.

Obviously, a lower stage of the Islam or īmãn does not exclude the possibility of a subtler *kufr* or *shirk*.

These two principles should be kept in mind. It follows that the verses of the Qur'ãn have some esoteric meanings which are applied to the situations which its exoteric meanings cannot be applied to. Please keep this hint in mind until we explain to you its details.

al-Qummi writes about the words of Allãh, *and with Us is more,* that the Imãm said: "Looking towards the mercy of Allãh." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The Prophet said: "Allãh says: 'I have prepared for My good servants that which no eye has ever seen, nor any ear ever heard, nor has it ever passed from the heart of any man.' " (*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: The meaning of the two traditions may easily be understood from what we have written about the meaning of "good ones"; and Allãh is the Guide.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *Or, were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qũb . . .:* "It is applied to *al-Qa'im* (اَلقَـآئِمُ = the one who stands – i.e., with sword to establish the way of Allãh). (al 'Ayyãshī)

The author says: The author of *aṣ-Ṣãfī* writes: "Perhaps the Imãm meant that it was about the Qã'im from the progeny of Muhammad, because every Qa'im of them asks his children the same question at the time of his death, and they reply him as the children of Ya'qũb had replied."

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُوداً أَوْ نَصارىٰ تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْراهِيمَ حَنِيفاً
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ــ ١٣٥ . قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْباطِ وَمَا
أُوتِيَ مُوسىٰ وَعِيسىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لاٰ نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ
مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ــ ١٣٦ . فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدِ
اهْتَدَوْا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ ــ ١٣٧ . صِبْغَةَ اللهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
عَابِدُونَ ــ ١٣٨ . قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا
أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ــ ١٣٩ . أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ
إِبْراهِيمَ وَإِسْمٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْباطَ كَانُوا هُوداً أَوْ نَصارىٰ
قُلْ أَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللهِ وَمَا
اللهُ بِغافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ـ ١٤٠ . تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ
وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلاٰ تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ـ ١٤١ .

And they say: 'Be Jews or Christians, you will be rightly guided" Say: "Nay! (we follow) *the religion of Ibrãhīm, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheist"* (135).

Say: "We believe in Allãh and (in) *that which has been revealed to us, and* (in) *that which was revealed to Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and Isḥãq and Ya'qũb and the tribes, and* (in) *that which was given to Mũsã and Isa, and* (in) *that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit"* (136). *If then they believe in like of what you believe in, they are indeed on the right course, and if they turn back, then they are only in great dissension; so Allãh will suffice you against them, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing* (137). (We have received) *the dyeing of Allãh, and who is better than Allãh in dyeing? and Him do we worship* (138). *Say: "Do you dispute with us about Allãh? and He is our Lord and your Lord; and for us our deeds and for you are your deeds; and we are sincere to Him* (139). *Or, do you say that Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and Ya'qiib and the tribes were Jews or Christians?" Say: "Are you better knowing or Allãh? And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allãh? And Allãh is not at all heedless of what you do"* (140). *This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they did* (141).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *And they say: "Be Jews and Christians, you will be rightly guided":* The preceding verses made it clear that the true religion followed by the children of Ibrãhīm – Ismã'īl and Isḥãq as well as Ya'qũb and his descendants – was the same Islam which was the religion of Ibrãhīm, the upright one. It means that the differences and divisions, the schisms and sects, which the proponents of Judaism and Christianity call to, have actually originated from their own desires; they are just a few toys manufactured by them. They are in great disputations, schisms and

disagreements, they are divided into numerous sects and religious groups, they have dyed the religion of Allãh – the religion of Unity, the religion of Oneness – with colours of their bias and prejudice, their desires and ambitions. But the religion is not divided; it is one, in the same way as God, Who is to be worshipped, is One; it is the religion of Ibrãhīm; the Muslims should firmly keep hold of this original religion, discarding the differences and dissensions of the People of the Book aside.

Although the life in this world looks like a constant phenomenon, in reality it is continuously changing. The same applies to all the natural world. Even the rites, customs and manners of various nations and groups are not immune from this propensity to change. More often than not, it causes changes and deviations even in religious matters. Sometimes extraneous things are inserted in religion; at other times, an essential part is declared anathema; worldly goals and ideals replace the Divine and religious goals and aims. What a tragedy is it for religion! When it happens, the religion is dyed in national or tribal colour, and starts calling to a goal other than the original one; it focuses its sight on innovations, forgetting its original purpose. In a short while, the evil (i.e., the innovation) becomes virtue. People support and defend it, because it agrees with their desires and cravings. And the virtue is treated as evil; it has no protector or defender to stand for it. Ultimately, the things deteriorate to unbelievable extent, as we are seeing with our own eyes today.

However, the sentence: "And they say : 'Be Jews or Christians' ", stands for the sentences, "The Jews say: 'Be Jews, you will be guided aright' ; and the Christians say: 'Be Christians, you will be rightly guided.' " They make such divergent claims because of their divergences and differences.

QUR'ÃN: *Say: "Nay!* (we follow) *the religion of Ibrãhīm, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists":* It is the reply of their claims. The Prophet should tell them: Nay! we follow the religion of Ibrãhīm, the upright one; because it is the one religion which was followed by all your prophets – Ibrãhīm and all those who came after him. Ibrãhīm, who brought this religion,

was not a polytheist. Had there been so many divisions in his religion – the divisions which were attached to it by the innovators – he would have become a polytheist: That which is not a part of Allãh's religion cannot invite towards Allãh, it will surely call to something other than Allãh – and this is what polytheism means. The religion of Ibrãhīm is the religion of unity; it does not contain anything that is not from Allãh.

QUR'ÃN: *Say: "We believe in Allãh and* (in) *that which has been revealed to us, and* (in) *that which was revealed to Ibrãhīm . . .":* After mentioning the claim of the Jews and the Christians, Allãh describes the truth – and He always tells the truth. The truth consists of the testimony of belief in One God and belief in all that was brought by the prophets – without making any distinction between them. This is what is called the Islam. Belief in Allãh was the fundamental part of that which was revealed to the prophets; yet it has been mentioned here separately. The reason is that the belief in the Creator is a natural instinct, it does not depend on prophetic proofs and arguments.

After that fundamental belief, Allãh mentions "that which has been revealed to us", that is, the Qur'ãn or the knowledge contained in it. Then He mentions "that which was revealed to Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and Isḥãq and Ya'qũb". Thereafter is described "that which was given to Mũsã and 'Isã"; these two have been especially mentioned because the speech is addressed to the Jews and the Christians who call only to these two prophets, respectively. Finally the testimony includes "that which was given to the prophets". This sentence covers all the prophets and thus paves the way for the next declaration: "we do not make any distinction between any of them".

Note the variation in style: That which is with us and that which was with Ibrãhīm, Ismã'īl, Isḥãq and Ya'qũb, is listed as "revealed" to us and them, respectively; while that which was with Musa, 'Isã and other prophets is referred to as "given" to them.

Probably the reason is this: The basic idea may be conveyed by the word, "giving", as Allãh says after mentioning Ibrãhīm and other prophets who came before or after him: *These are they to*

whom We gave the book and the wisdom and the prophethood (6:89). But this word does not clearly and necessarily mean "revelation"; for example, Allãh says: *And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqmãn* (31:12) ; *And certainly We gave the book and the wisdom and the prophecy to the Children of Israel. . .* (45 :16). Now both the Jews and the Christians counted Ibrãhīm, Ismã'īl, Isḥãq, Ya'qũb and the tribes as following their religions respectively – the Jews claimed that those prophets were Jews; the Christians claimed that they were Christians. They believed that the true religion was the Judaism or the Christianity that was given to Mũsã or 'Isã respectively. In this background, if Allãh had said, 'that which was given to Ibrãhīm. . ., it would not have clearly shown that those prophets themselves had brought a religion, which was revealed to them by Allãh; the Jews or the Christians could have claimed that what was given to them was the same thing which was given to Mũsã or 'Isã – peace be on them all – and that their names have been mentioned, like that of the Children of Israel, just because they followed the self-same religion! It was to remove this possible misunderstanding that Ibrãhīm and those named prophets (peace be on them all) were separately mentioned and it was clearly said that they had got that religion by Divine revelation. As for the prophets who came before Ibrãhīm (a.s.), the Jews and the Christians did not lay claim on their religion, and there was no chance of any misunderstanding; therefore, their religion was referred to as "given" to them.

QUR'ÃN: *and the tribes: 'al-Asbãṭ"* (اَلأسْباطُ) of the Israelites has the same meaning as *"al-qabã'il"* (اَلقَبَائِلُ) of the Ismã'īlites, and that is, the tribes. *Ṣibṭ,* like *qabīlah,* refers to the descendants of one forefathers. There were twelve tribes in the Israelites, each one descended from one of the twelve children of Ya'qũb; thus each became a distinct group in itself.

If the word "tribes" refers to the whole groups, then it is used metaphorically, because the prophets who received the revelation were from those tribes. On the other hand, it may

refer to the individuals, that is, the prophets themselves. In any case, it does not include the brothers of Yusuf (a.s.) because they were not prophets.

A similar verse is found in the Chapter of 'The Women' : *and We revealed to Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and Isḥãq and Ya'qũb and the tribes, and 'Īsã and Ayyũb and Yũnus and Hãrũn and Sulaymãn . . .* (4:163).

QUR'ÃN: *If then they believe in like of what you believe in, they are indeed on the right course:* What Allãh actually means is this: If they believe in what you believe in, then they are on the right course. But He has added here the word "like" (*If then they believe in like of what you believe in . . .*), to cut the root of disputation and argumentation. Had they been invited to believe hi what the Muslims believed in, they could have replied – as they used to say – No, we believe in that which has been revealed to us and we reject what is besides that. Therefore, this verse teaches the Muslims a different way of expressions: We believe in that which contains nothing but pristine truth; therefore, you too should believe in that which contains only pristine truth like it. Addressed in this way, they will not find any loop-hole, nor will they be able to resort to their obstinate wrangles. And then they will realize that what they have had is not the unadulterated truth.

QUR'ÃN: *in great dissension: "ash-Shiqãq"* (اَلشِّقَاقُ) means hypocricy, disputation, dissension.

QUR'ÃN: *so Allãh will suffice you against them:* It was a promise to the Messenger of Allãh to help him against them; and Allãh fulfilled this promise. And the same favour shall be completed for the Muslim nation when Allãh wills.

This verse is a parenthetic statement between the preceding and the following verses.

QUR'ÃN: *the dyeing of Allãh, and who is better than Allãh in dyeing?: "aṣ-Ṣibghah"* (اَلصِّبْغَة) means a kind of dyeing. The verse means: The above-mentioned belief is a Divine colour in

which Allãh has dyed us; and it is the best of the colours – it is not a dye of the Judaism nor of the Christianity, which emanate from dissensions in religion, when people fail to keep on the right track.

QUR'ÃN: *and Him do we worship:* Grammatically the sentence describes the condition; it gives the reason of the preceding phrase: "the dyeing of Allãh . . ."

QUR'ÃN: *Say: "Do you dispute with us about Allãh?":* It is a rebuke to the People of the Book regarding their disputation with the Muslims. The next sentences show how and why their argumentations were wrong and in vain: "and He is our Lord and your Lord; and for us are our deeds and for you are your deeds; and we are sincere to Him". When the followers dispute with each other concerning their leader, the dispute may emanate from one or more of the three causes:

First: They follow different leaders; and each wants to show the superiority of his leader over the other's, for example, a dispute between an idol-worshipper and a Muslim.

Second: They follow the same leader, but each claims a close relationship with the leader, denying a like privilege to the other.

Third: One party wants to show that the other party, because of his unbecoming behaviour and immoral character, has lost the right to be counted among the followers of the leader; his claim of being a follower of the leader is an insult to the latter.

Now, why should the Muslims and the People of the Book dispute with each other? The first reason does not apply, because both worship the same God. The same goes for the second reason, because one group's deeds do not clash with those of the other – "for us are our deeds and for you are your deeds". Coming to the third cause, the Muslims are sincere in their devotion to Allãh. So why should the People of the Book dispute with them, when they have got no reason at all.

In this way, Allãh first rebuked them for their disputation with the Muslims, and then dismisses all three causes of disputation one by one.

QUR'ÃN: *"Or, do you say that Ibrãhīm . . . were Jews or Christians?"*: Both groups say that Ibrãhīm and the other prophets named in the verse were from them; implying that they were Jews or Christians. Or, they clearly claimed that they were Jews or Christians, as may be understood from the words of Allãh: *O People of the Book! why do you dispute about Ibrãhīm, when the Torah and the Injil were not revealed till after him? Do you not then understand?* (3:65)

QUR'ÃN: *Say: 'Are you better knowing or Allãh?":* Because Allãh has informed us and you in the Book that Mũsã and 'Isã and their books came after Ibrãhīm and the prophets mentioned in this verse.

QUR'ÃN: *"And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allãh?":* That is, he who conceals a testimony, a fact known to him, that Allãh has informed in His Books that the *sharī'ah* of Judaism and Christianity were sent after Ibrãhīm and the other named prophets. The "testimony", thus, refers to a fact known to one.

The verse may alternatively refer to him who conceals the testimony of Allãh that Ibrãhīm and those prophets had passed away long before the Torah and the Injil were revealed. In this case, the "testimony" would refer to giving evidence, to bearing witness.

But the first meaning is more appropriate in the context of this verse.

QUR'ÃN: *This is a people that has passed away. . .:* It will do you no good to dispute about other people as to which group they belonged to; nor will silence on this matter do you any harm. You must spend your time in those things which you will be asked about tomorrow.

This verse has been repeated here because the Jews and the Christians talked (and they still do) too much on this subject – which would be of no avail to them on the Day of Judgment; especially when they knew very well that Ibrãhīm had passed away long before Judaism and Christianity came into being.

In other contexts, discussion about the prophets and messengers is a very beneficial thing ; the Qur'ãn exhorts us to look into, and learn about, their teachings and their spiritual virtues; and it is with this aim that it repeatedly narrates their stories and orders us to meditate on them.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the verse: *Say: Nay!* (we follow) *the religion of Ibrãhīm. . .:* "Verily, the upright religion is the Islam." (al- 'Ayyãshī)

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "The upright religion (of Ibrãhīm, a.s.) did not leave anything (unguided), so much so that it includes the trimming of the moustache, and cutting of nails, and circumcision." (*ibid.*)

"Allãh revealed the upright (religion) to Ibrãhīm, and it is cleanliness; and it is (made up of) ten (things), five (of them) in the head and (the other) five in the (rest of the) body. As for those which are in the head, they are: Trimming of the moustache, and letting the beard grow, and dressing the hair, and brushing the teeth, and (using) the tooth-pick; and as for those which are in the (rest of the) body, they are: removing the hair from the body, and circumcision, and cutting the nails, and the bath of *al - janabah* (*a:.* = the ritual uncleanliness resulting from sexual intercourse or ejaculation), and cleansing (the body) with water. And this is the pure upright (religion) which Ibrãhīm (a.s.) brought; it was never abrogated, nor will it ever be abrogated until the Day of Resurrection." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

The author says: Dressing the hair means to trim it and grow it. There are a lot of traditions of the same or similar meaning, narrated by both sects in their books.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh: *Say: We believe in Allãh. . .:* "Allãh has meant Ali, and Fãṭimah, and al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn, in this verse; and after them it has continued in the Imãms . . ." (*al-Kãfī;* al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: This theme may be inferred from the words, *and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting to Thee* (2:128), which were used in the invocation of Ibrãhīm (a.s.). There is no contradiction between this tradition and the fact that the verse is addressed to all the Muslims and obliges all of them to believe in the things mentioned therein; because the circle of such verses may be widened or shortened in different contexts, according to various stages of application – as we have explained with reference to various stages of the Islam and *īmãn.*

al-Qummi narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* from al-Bãqir or aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.), and aṣ-Ṣadũq narrates in *Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr* from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that he said explaining the words of Allãh, *the dyeing of Allãh . . .:* "The dyeing is the Islam**."**

The author says: It is clear from the context of the verses.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "(Allãh) dyed the believers with *alwilãyah* (الولايَةُ = love and obedience of the Prophet and his *Ahlu 'l-bayt*) in (i.e., at the time of) *al-mīthãq* (المِيْثاقُ = the covenant taken from the souls)." (*al-Kãfī; Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: It refers to the esoteric meaning of this verse, as we shall explain later on; we shall then also explain the meaning of *al-wilãyah* and *al-mithaq,* Allãh willing.

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سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّيٰهُمْ عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا
قُلْ لِلّٰهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ـ ١٤٢ .
وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطاً لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ
الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيداً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلاَّ لِنَعْلَمَ
مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلاَّ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ
لَرَؤُفٌ رَحِيمٌ ـ ١٤٣ . قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ
قِبْلَةً تَرْضَيٰهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ
فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ـ ١٤٤ . وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ
قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذاً لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ـ ١٤٥ . الَّذِينَ
آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقاً مِنْهُمْ
لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ـ ١٤٦ . الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلا تَكُونَنَّ
مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ـ ١٤٧ . وَلِكُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ

أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمُ اللهُ جَمِيعاً إِنَّ اللهَ عَلىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
ـ ١٤٨ . وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ـ ١٤٩ . وَمِنْ
حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ
فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلاَّ يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلاَّ
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَلاَ تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُونَ ـ ١٥٠ . كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولاً مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمْ مَا لَمْ
تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ١٥١ .

The fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from their qiblah which they had?" Say: "The East and the West belong only to Allãh; He guides him whom He likes to a straight path" (142). *And thus We have made you a medium nation so that you may be witnesses for the people and the Messenger may be a witness for you. And We had not made the qiblah which you had but that We might know him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels; and though this was surely hard except for those whom Allãh has guided aright; and Allãh was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allãh is Affectionate, Merciful to the people* (143). *Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt be pleased with; turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it; and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord; and Allãh is not at all heedless of what they do* (144). *And even if you bring to those who have been given the Book every sign they would not follow your qiblah, nor can you be a*

follower of their qiblah, neither are they the followers of each other's qiblah; and if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you shall most surely be among the unjust (145). *Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons; and a party of them most surely conceal the truth while they know* (it) (146). *The truth is from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters* (147). *And every one has a direction to which he would turn; therefore, hasten to* (do) *good works; wherever you are, Allãh will bring you all together; surely Allãh has power over all things* (148). *And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and surely it is the very truth from your Lord, and Allãh is not at all heedless of what you do* (149). *And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are turn your faces towards it, so that people shall have no argument against you, except such of them as are unjust; so do not fear them, and fear Me*; *and so that I may complete* My *favour on you and that you may walk on the right course* (150). *Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know* (151).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

Ponder on these verses and you will find them well-connected with each other, a common context joining them together like a strand running through the beads. These verses together talk about the appointment of the Ka'bah as the *qiblah* (the direction of prayer etc.) for the Muslims. Therefore, no attention should be paid to those who say that there was a change

of sequence in the arrangement of these verses, or that some of them have abrogated the others. Although they narrate some traditions to this effect, but they do not deserve any comment because all of them go against the clear meaning of these verses.

QUR'ÃN: *The fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from their qiblah which they had?":* It is the second introductory sentence for the soon-to-be-promulgated order to make the Ka'bah as the *qiblah* of the Muslims. Also, it teaches the reply of the objection which the "fools among the people", that is, the Jews and the pagans of Mecca, were expected to raise: The Jews because of their partisanship of their own *qiblah,* Baytu '1-Maqdis; and the pagan Arabs because they were always on the look out for any new thing which they could object to.

Allãh prepared the minds for change of *qiblah,* first by revealing the story of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) and various honours be-stowed on him by Allãh, as well as the honour accorded to his son, Ismã'īl; their prayers for the Ka'bah and Mecca, as well as for the Prophet and the Muslim group; their construction of the House and the order they received to cleanse it for the worship of Allãh.

It is recognized that the change of *qiblah* from Baytu '1-Maqdis to the Ka'bah was an event of greatest religious significance, one of the most important commandments given to the Muslims after the *hijrah* of the Prophet to Medina, when the roots of Islam were firmly taking place and its knowledge and realities were being spread. Understandably, the Jews were not going to remain silent in face of this legislation: According to their thinking this change negated one of their greatest religious prides, that is, *qiblah;* hitherto the Muslims were following them in their *qiblah,* and the Jews could claim a precedence over the Muslims in this religious symbol. Moreover, this new legislation was a manifest advancement in the Muslims' religion – it made all of them to face a single point in their worship and other religious rites. It saved them from looking towards divergent directions – physically; and from difference of opinions – spiritually. Facing towards the Ka'bah had rather more influence and deeper impression on the souls of

the Muslims than the rules of cleanliness and invocation etc.; and their enemies, and particularly the Jews, understood it, and they resented it. Their stories, as narrated in the Qur'ãn, prove that they were a nation which did not give any credence to anything in this world which was beyond the reach of the five senses. As spiritual things were not of any importance in their eyes, they used to accept the spiritual rules without any protest – they did not consider it worth arguing about. But whenever they were given a Divine Commandment which had any connection with the physical world, which had a material form – like war, emigration, *sajdah,* polite speech etc. – they stood up against it, and opposed it very vehemently.

In short, Allãh informed His Messenger what the enemies of Islam were going to say against the change of *qiblah,* and taught him how they should be replied, how their arguments should be refuted.

Their objection: The first *qiblah* was prescribed by Allãh for the previous prophets. Why was it changed to another House which had no such distinction? Was this change affected by the order of Allãh? How could Allãh contravene His Own previously ordained rule, or abrogate His Own law? (We have mentioned under the verse of "Abrogation" that the Jews do not believe in abrogation.) Or, was it done without any order from Allãh? If so, then the Muslims have deviated from the right path and have left guidance for misguidance. (This objection has not been mentioned in so many words in the Qur'ãn, but the suggested reply points to it.)

Reply: When Allãh prescribes a house like the Ka'bah as *qiblah,* it is not based on any specialty of that house or stone; there is no unalterable and inseparable quality in that building which could demand that honour as a right. Being chosen as a *qiblah is* not an inviolable and natural characteristic of any building. Every article, every building and every direction is equally capable of being selected for this purpose; and none has any especial claim for it. Everything belongs to Allãh, He issues orders about it, whatever He likes, in any way He likes, and whenever He likes.

Whatever He decrees, it is for the guidance of the people, for their individual and collective good and perfection. He does not order but for guidance, and He does not guide except to the way which leads directly to their perfection and well-being.

QUR'ÃN: *The fools among the people will say:* It means the Jews and the polytheists of Arabia; and that is why they have been referred to as "the people". They have been called "fools" because their mentality was not right, and their ideas about the Divine Law were unsound. And that is what foolishness is: crookedness of mind and unsoundness of opinion.

QUR'ÃN: *What has turned them . . ..* When the verb, *"at-tawliyah"* (اَلتَّوْلِيَةُ) is joined to its object (without preposition), it means, to turn your face towards that thing, to keep it facing you; as Allãh says: "so We shall surely turn thee to *a qiblah* which thou shalt like". When it is followed by the preposition '*an* (عَنْ), it gives the opposite meaning, that is, to turn away from, to turn one's face from. The verse means: What has turned them away, or turned their faces, from the *qiblah* which they were using hitherto, that is, Baytu 'l-Maqdis towards which the Prophet and the Muslims used to pray during his stay at Mecca and for a few months after his emigration to Medina.

QUR'ÃN: *from their qiblah:* The *qiblah is* attributed to the Muslims, although the Jews were using it centuries before the Prophet. Obviously, their turning from their own *qiblah* looks more surprising, and gives more room for objection.

And it was for the same reason that the opening phrase says: "What has turned them", instead of saying, "What has turned the Prophet and the Muslims." It would not have looked objectionable in the least if they had said: "What has turned the Prophet and the Muslims from the *qiblah* of the Jews?"

QUR'ÃN: *Say: "The East and the West belong only to Allãh":* Only these two directions were mentioned, because it is through them that all other cardinal and compound directions are fixed,

like the North, the South and all the intermediate directions between any two cardinal ones. The East and the West are relative directions which are fixed by the rising and setting of the sun and the stars; they cover all places of the earth (except two imaginary points of the true North and South Poles). Perhaps, it was for this reason that only these two were chosen to represent all the directions.

QUR'ĀN: *He guides him whom He likes to a straight path:* The word *"ṣirāt"* (صِرَاطٌ = path) is mentioned here without a definite article *"al"* (اَلْ), since it is a common noun, and does not specify a defmite path, because nations differ in their paths due to their differences in ability to attain perfection and happiness.

QUR'ĀN: *And thus We have made you a medium nation that you may be witnesses for the people and the Messenger may be a witness for you:* Apparently it means as follows: As We are going to change very soon the *qiblah* for you in order that We may guide you to a right path, in the same way We have made you an intermediary nation.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESCRIPTION OF *QIBLAH* AND *UMMAH* BEINGWITNESSES FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE MESSENGER BEING WITNESS FOR THE *UMMAH*

Someone has explained it in the following way: And like this wonderful making, We have made you a medium nation. Such an explanation deserves no comment.

Another explanation given by another exegete is as follows:– They were made a "medium nation" to "be witnesses for the people". What does it mean? "Medium" is a thing in the centre, neither to this side nor to that. This *"ummah"* has the same position *vis-à-vis* "the people" – that is, the People of the Book and the polytheists. The polythesists and the dualist emphasize the physical aspects of life. Their whole attention is fixed to this worldly life; their plans are centred on its trinkets and

comforts. They do not believe in the Resurrection or the hereafter; spiritual perfection and esoteric virtues are not so important to them. On the other extreme are some groups, like the Christians, who put utmost emphasis on the spiritual aspects to the detriment of the physical ones. They teach monasticism and rejection of the world. They seem heedless to the fact that the Creator has made the physical perfection a means by which man may reach the goal for which he has been created. In short the latter – the "people of spirit" – nullified their goal by nullifying the means; and the former – the "people of body" – nullified their goal by focusing their whole attention to the means as though it was the goal in itself. Allãh has made this *ummah* a "medium", by giving them a religion which leads them to the straight and upright path, in the middle – inclined neither to this side nor to that. It strengthens both sides – the body as well as the soul – according to what each of them needs and deserves; it is a religion which encourages and invites man to combine the virtue of both. Man is, after all, a combination of body and soul; he is neither body alone nor spirit alone. If his life is to be a happy one, he must unite physical perfections with the spiritual one.

This *ummah* then is the medium and well-balanced one; it is a criterion to judge and weigh both sides of extremes. It is, therefore, the witness for all the people who have deviated from the middle way going to this side or that. And the Prophet – the most perfect and the ideal example of this *ummah – is* the witness for this *ummah.* The Prophet is the criterion to judge the condition of this *ummah's* individuals; and the *ummah,* in its turn, is the criterion to judge the condition of other people; it is the point to which the two extremes are expected to return.

COMMENT : What this exegete has said is true in itself, but it does not explain the wordings of this verse. The *ummah,* by virtue of its position in the middle, may be called a criterion to judge the extremes, as well as a point to which the people of the two extremes should return. But it does not make it a "witness" for the two extremes, nor it gives the *ummah* ability to observe the said extremes. Apparently, there is no correlation between

being a medium (in the above-mentioned sense) and being a witness. Also, there is no reason why the Messenger of Allãh should be made a witness for them; there is no correlation between the two witnessings. But the verse clearly says that the Messenger of Allãh shall be a witness for the *ummah,* because the *ummah* shall be a witness for the people, and it shall acquire that status because it is a medium *ummah.*

Moreover, the witnessing, referred to in this verse, is one of the Qur'ãnic realities, which has been mentioned repeatedly in the Divine Speech; and looking at various contexts where it has been referred to, we find that its connotation differs completely from the above-quoted meaning. Allãh says: *How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a witness for these?* (4:41) ; *And on the day when We will raise up a witness out of every nation, then shall no permission be given to those who disbelieve, nor shall they be made to solicit favour* (16:84); *. . . and the Book shall be laid down and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up . . .* (39:69). Note that witnessing in these verses is unconditional, and the obvious meaning is that they shall be witnesses for the deeds of their nations, and will also testify that the messengers of Allãh did convey the Divine Message to those nations, as is made clear in the verse: *Most certainly then We will question those to whom* (the messengers) *were sent, and most certainly We will question the messengers* (7:6). No doubt they will give the evidence in the hereafter; but they must have seen the events in this life, as may be inferred by the words of 'Isã (a.s.) quoted in the Qur'ãn: *. . . and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst take me* (away) *completely, Thou were the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things* (5:117);*. . . and on the Day of Resurrection he* (*i.e.,* 'Isã) *shall be a witness against them* (4:159).

Obviously, our normal senses, with all their powers, cannot perceive except the exterior forms of deeds and actions, and that also of a thing which is present, which is within the reach. They cannot perceive a non-existent or a non-present item. And it is completely beyond their power to know, comprehend or identify

the realities of those actions and deeds; nor can they observe the immaterial ideas like belief or disbelief, and success or failure. In short, no man can witness a thing which is hidden from the five senses, nor can he observe the esoteric ideas and characteristics that are locked into another person's heart. But it is these hidden realities which will be taken account of, and looked into, on the Day of Resurrection, as Allãh says: . . . *but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned* (2:225). Obviously, these things cannot be seen even by those who are present, let alone those who are absent. It can be done only by a man whose affairs are managed directly by Allãh, and whom Allãh makes to "see" the hidden realities. This fact may be inferred from the words of Allãh: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth* (*i.e.,* of the reality) *and they know* (43:86). Surely, 'Isã (a.s.) is included in this exception, because, Allãh has testified that he is one of those who shall bear witness (as is seen from the above-mentioned two verses). Thus, he is one of those who had "seen" the realities and known the hidden factors of the deeds of their *ummah.*

In short, the witnessing mentioned in the verse under discussion does not mean that this *ummah* follows a religion which combines physical perfection with spiritual sublimity. Certainly, this explanation has nothing to do with the meaning of "witness" nor does it fit the apparent meaning of the above-quoted verses.

Actually, they have been called "witnesses" of the people, because they see and observe in this world the realities of the people's actions – felicity and infelicity, rejection and acceptance, submission and arrogance. And they shall give evidence for or against those people on the Day of Judgment, the day when Allãh will make every thing to testify for or against a man, not excepting his own limbs and organs; the day when the Messenger will say: "*O my Lord! surely my people treated this Qur'ãn as a forsaken thing* (25:30).

Also, it is known that the whole *ummah* could not attain to this position; it is a special status given to only the pure friends of Allãh. Even those who are only slightly below them in the ranks of

felicity, and other just and pious believers are not included in this verse – let alone the rubble of the nation, or the Nimrods and Pharaohs of the *ummah. You* will see in the Commentary of the verse 4:49 (*And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good ones; and excellent are these as companions,*), that the least that can be said about the martyrs – the witnesses of the deeds – is that they are under the guardian-ship of Allāh, enjoying His favours, and proceeding on the straight path. Also, it has been described in short in the explanation of the verse: *The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours* . . . (1:7).

When Allāh told this *ummah* that it was made witness for the people, the meaning was that the "witnesses" would be from among this *ummah.* In this respect, it is not different from those verses which tell the Children of Israel that they were made to excel over the worlds. Such verses show that there were among the Children of Israel such personalities who were given that distinction; not that every individual of them was superior to the worlds. A distinction enjoyed by a group is attributed to the whole nation, because the group is a part of the nation. Likewise, this *ummah* has been said to be "witnesses over the people", because there are, in this *ummah,* people who shall be witnesses of the people, and the Messenger shall be witness of them.

Objection: Allāh says in the Qur'ān: *And* (as for) *those who believe in Allāh and His messengers, these it is that are the truthful and the witnesses near their Lord* (57:19). It shows that all the believers, in general, are "the witnesses".

Reply: The phrase "near their Lord" proves that Allāh will include them among the witnesses on the Day of Resurrection, a rank which they had not got in this life. It is like the verse which says: *And* (as for) *those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring* . . . (52:21). Apart from that, this verse is general and shows that all the believers from all the nations will be witnesses near Allāh;

it does not speak about this *ummah* especially; therefore, it is of no use to the objector.

Objection: If the *ummah* has been made a "medium" in this meaning, it does not necessarily follow that the *ummah,* or a certain group among the *ummah,* should be witnesses of the people's deeds, nor that the Messenger of Allãh should be witness of those witnesses. Therefore, the problem which had arisen in the previous explanation, remains unanswered even by your exegesis.

Reply: The verse says that those people were made witnesses because they were made a medium nation. It means that this "mediumship" is something which brings the "evidence" and "witnesses" in its wake. And Allãh says: O *you who believe! bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, and do good that you may succeed. And strive hard in* (the way of) *Allãh,* (such) *a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion; the faith of your father, Ibrãhīm; he named you Muslims before and in this, so that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you may be witnesses for the people; therefore, establish prayer and pay zakãt and hold fast to Allãh; He is your Guardian; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper!* (22:77 - 78). Note that the distinction that the Messenger should be a witness for them and they should be witnesses for the people, is based on two things: First, that they were chosen by Allãh; and, second, that Allãh had not laid upon them any hardship in religion. Then the religion is defined as *the faith of your father, Ibrãhīm,* who had *named you Muslims before.* He had used this name for you when he prayed to Allãh on your behalf, in these words: *and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting* (Muslims) *to Thee.* Allãh granted his prayer and made you Muslims, you have surrendered to His order and command; you neither disobey Him nor behave arrogantly before Him; that is why you feel no hardship in the religion, no rule looks difficult for you to follow. You have, therefore, been chosen by Him, and guided on the straight path, submitting to your Lord in all affairs. We have made you like this, in order that the Messenger

may be a witness for you and you may be witnesses of the people. Accordingly, you shall be a medium between the Messenger and the people; you shall be connected to the Messenger on one side and to the people on the other. In this way, the wish of Ibrãhīm has been fulfilled about you and the Messenger, as he had prayed: *Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them* (2:129). You are that Muslim *ummah;* the Messenger has transmitted the knowledge of the Book and wisdom to your hearts; and you have been purified by him. Purification has cleansed your hearts from impurities and freed it for My worship and obedience (and as mentioned earlier, it is what Islam means). Therefore, you are the Muslims, sincere in your worship. Of course, the Messenger has precedence over you, because it is he who has guided and trained you. He has precedence over the whole *ummah,* and you are the medium group – joined to the Messenger on one side, and to the people on the other.

There are many associations at the beginning and the end of the verse which point to this meaning; one may understand them on meditation; and we shall further explain it in a proper place, Allãh willing.

However, the foregoing explanation shows that :

First: The fact that they have been made a medium *ummah* has a direct bearing on the two objectives. In other words, the facts that "you may be witnesses for the people", and that "the Messenger may be a witness for you", both are the direct result of their being "a medium nation".

Second: They have been called a medium *ummah* because they are placed between the Messenger and the people – not because they are a medium between two extremes, or between the "people of spirit" and the "people of body".

Third: The verse in its connotation has connection with the verses of the prayer of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) ; and this witnessing is a privilege of the said Muslim *ummah.*

One thing more: It appears from the Qur'ãn that witnessing about the deeds is not exclusively reserved for the human witnesses. Everything which has any connection with a deed –

angels, time and place, religion and Book, limbs and organs, senses and hearts, for example – will testify about it.

It may be inferred from the above that the same place and limbs etc. which we have in this life will be present on the Day of Judgment. Also, it appears that all the above-mentioned things have a sort of a life and perception with which they can perceive the particulars of deeds – those particulars are imprinted on them. It is not necessary that every life should be like our own; there is no reason why life should be of only one type. It cannot be said that because time or space does not have a life like ours, therefore, it has no life.

This topic has been mentioned here just to complete the picture. Details about each point will be given in more suitable places.

QUR'ÃN: *And We had not made the qiblah which you had but that We might know him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels:* The words: "We might know", may be explained in two ways:

First: It may mean, 'My Messenger might know'. Great people generally use this style to speak on behalf of themselves and their subordinates. For example, a ruler says: 'We killed him', or, 'We imprisoned him', although it is his employees, not him-self who kill or imprison.

Second: It may refer to that knowledge of Allãh which accompanies the creation or existence of a thing, and not to that knowledge which Allãh has of everything before that thing comes into being. "Turning back upon one's heels" is an allegorical expression, which denotes evasion or dissension. When a man, who is standing, turns from one direction to another, he turns on his heels. It is like the words of Allãh: *And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day . . .* (8:16).

Obviously, this verse aims to remove any possible misgivings which the believers would have had because of the change of *qiblah:* Why *qiblah* was changed? Why the previous *qiblah* was abrogated? What will happen to the prayers which they had prayed facing Baytu 'l-Maqdis?

Also, it is clear that "the *qiblah* which you had" refers to Baytu 'l-Maqdis, and not to the Ka'bah (as someone has said). If his explanation is accepted, it would imply that both Baytu '1-Maqdis and Ka'bah were prescribed as *qiblah* twice, not once. But there is nothing to support this suggestion.

However, it was but natural that the believers should feel some uneasiness because of this change.

First of all, as Allãh had already decided that He would ultimately make the Ka'bah as the *qiblah* of the Muslims, then why did He make Baytu'l-Maqdis as their *qiblah* for so many years in the beginning?

The verse says that all these rules and legislations are made for the benefit of the people themselves. The laws of religion aim at training the people and perfecting them; separating the believers from others; distinguishing the obedient from the disobedient, the submissive from the arrogants. And it was for the same reason that the previous *qiblah* was prescribed for you. It was done in order that "We might know him who follows the Messenger", that is, We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger "from him who turns back upon his heels". In usual way, the sentence should have said, "who follows thee", but the Qur'ãn has used the noun "the Messenger" instead of pronoun, it is to remind us that his status of Messengership has a direct bearing on this separation between obedient and disobedient ones.

"We had not made the *qiblah* which you had": That is, We had not made Baytu 'l-Maqdis as *qiblah* for you but for the reasons described.

Their second worry could be about the prayers which they had prayed facing Baytu '1-Maqdis. What would be its legal status, as it was prayed towards a building that was no longer valid?

Allãh says that Baytu '1-Maqdis was a valid *qiblah* as long as it was not abrogated. When Allãh abrogates a rule, it looses its validity from the time of its abrogation, not from the original legislation; and it is a result of Allãh's affection and mercy to the believers.

The above misgiving and its reply is inferred from the words: "and Allãh was not going to make your faith to be

fruitless; most surely Allãh is Affectionate, Merciful to the people." *"ar-Ra'fah"* (اَلرَّأفَـةْ) and *"ar-rnḥmah"* (اَلرَّحْمَـةْ) both basically denote mercy and compassion; but the former usually has the connotation of pity for an afflicted one, while the latter is general.

Q U R ' Ã N : *Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt be pleased with:* The verse shows that the Messenger of Allãh, before the revelation of the verse of *qiblah* – that is, this very verse – used to turn his face to heaven, as he waited – or hoped – that Allãh would send some commandment regarding *qiblah.* He did so because he wished that Allãh would honour him with *a qiblah* especially prescribed for him. It does not mean that he was not pleased with Baytu'l-Maqdis as his *qiblah* – for be it from the Messenger to do so! Allãh says: "We shall surely turn thee to *a qiblah* which thou shalt be pleased with." To be pleased with a thing does not necessarily mean to be displeased with its alternative.

The traditions, describing the occasion of revelation of this verse, say that the Jews reviled the Muslims and boasted against them, all because the Muslims prayed towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis – the Jews' *qiblah.* It made the Messenger of Allãh sad; so he came out in the dark of the night looking towards heaven waiting for a revelation from Allãh, hoping that it would cheer him up. Then this verse was revealed.

Now, suppose he would have received revelation to continue praying towards the previous *qiblah,* that is, Baytu 'l-Maqdis, it would have been his proof against the Jews that, he followed the *qiblah by* the order of Allãh and not in imitation of the Jews. The fact is that there never was, nor there ever is, anything to be ashamed of, if the Prophet and the Muslims prayed facing Baytu 'l-Maqdis, because the servant has no choice but to accept and obey the order of the Master. But the verse promulgated a new *qiblah.* It removed the cause of the Jews' revile and boast, in addition to defining the new *qiblah.* In this way, it was doubly welcomed – it was a proof against the Jews as well as a source of pleasure for the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.).

QUR'ÃN: *turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your face towards it. "ash-Shaṭr"* (اَلشَّطْرُ) translated here as "towards", literally means "part of". "Part of the Sacred Mosque" refers to the Ka'bah. Allãh used this expression, instead of saying, towards the Ka'bah, or, towards the Sacred House, to keep the new rule parallel to the previous one. They used to pray to a part of the Remote Mosque, that is, its well-known Rock; so it was changed to a part of the Sacred Mosque, that is, the Ka'bah. It is quite apart from the fact that the addition of the word, "part of" to "the Mosque" and its qualification with the adjective "Sacred" gives many details of this legislation which would have been lost if this phrase were changed to "the Ka'bah" or "the Sacred House".

Allãh begins this verse by giving the order personally to His Messenger (*turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque*), and ends it by including all the Muslims in it (*and wherever you are, turn your face towards it*). It supports the traditions that the *qiblah* was changed when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was praying and the Muslims were praying behind him. There-fore, he was personally told to turn towards the Ka'bah during that prayer; then the verse went on describing a general order which covered him and all the Muslims, for every time and in every place.

QUR'ÃN: *and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord:* Their Book contains the prophecies showing the truth of the prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), or that this True Prophet would pray facing to-wards the Sacred Mosque. In any case, the verse shows that the Jews' Book had some verses which confirmed – explicitly or implicitly – the truth of this legislation; *and Allãh is not at all heedless of what they do;* He knows how they hide the truth and conceal the knowledge which they had been given.

QUR'ÃN: *And even if you bring to those who have been given the Book every sign they would not follow your qiblah:* The verse rebukes them for their obstinacy and stubbornness. Their refusal

is not because truth is hidden from them. No, they know very well that it is the truth – they have no doubt about it. Yet they create mischief and invent objection after objection, because they hate the religion and reject the truth. No proof would satisfy them; no sign would make them change their attitude. Even if you bring to them every sign they would not follow your *qiblah,* because they are obstinate and refuse to accept the truth; *nor can you be a follower of their qiblah,* because you have a clear proof from your Lord. This Qur'ãnic sentence may also be interpreted as a prohibition given in the form of a proposition. *Neither are they the followers of each other's qiblah.* The Jews face towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis wherever they may be; and the Christians face towards the East wherever they may be. Neither the former would follow the *qiblah,* of the latter, nor the latter would accept the *qiblah* of the former – because all of them follow their own desires.

QUR'ÃN: and if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you shall most surely be among the unjust: The admonition (in singular pronoun) is addressed to the Prophet, but it is really meant for his ummah. It also indicates that the Jews, in their recalcitrance, follow their desire and have become unjust.

QUR'ÃN: *Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons:* The pronoun "him" refers to the Messenger of Allãh, not to "the Book"; the simile, "as they recognize their sons", fits recognition of a man, not of a book. Nobody says: He recognizes this book as he recognizes his son. Moreover, the subject of the speech is the Messenger of Allãh and the revelation he received regarding the *qiblah,* it has nothing to do with the Book which was given to the People of the Book. The verse says: The People of the Book recognize the Messenger of Allãh by the prophecies which their Book contains, *as they recognize their sons, and a party of them most surely conceal the truth while they know* (*it*).

The previous verses were addressed to the Prophet (in second

person singular pronouns) ; then in this verse he has been mentioned in third person, and the talk is addressed to the believers; then the next verse again reverts to the previous style and is addressed to the Prophet. The style was changed here to show that the truth of the Prophet was clear and well-known to the People of the Book. This change reminds one of a speaker who is talking before a group, one of whom surpasses all in virtues and excellence. The speaker, therefore, addresses him especially (in recognition of his excellence), although the talk is meant for the whole group. Then for some reason, he wants to describe the virtues and excellence of that person; now he turns towards the audience and treats him as absent, mentioning him by pronouns of third person. When that topic is finished, he again assumes the previous style of addressing him directly.

QUR'ÃN: *The truth is from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters:* It emphasizes the preceding statement and strongly interdicts doubting. The talk in singular pronouns is addressed to the Prophet but is actually intended for the *ummah.*

QUR'ÃN: *And every one has a direction to which he would turn; therefore, hasten to* (do) *good work: 'al-Wijhah"* (اَلوجْهَـةُ) on paradigm of, as well as synonymous to, *al-qiblah* (اَلقِبْلَـةُ), has the same meaning 'that to which one faces'. The verse sums up the foregoing statements and draws their attention to another more important reality. Every nation has its own *qiblah,* pre-scribed for them according to their own needs and atmosphere. Being *qiblah is* not an inherent and inseparable characteristic of any place or direction; it is not a natural or personal feature of a thing which could not be changed. It is therefore not good for you to waste your time and energy in disputation and argumentation about it. You should rather hasten to do good work and try to excel others in virtuous deeds; Allãh is surely going to gather you on a day about which there is no doubt; and *wherever you are, Allãh will bring you all together; surely Allãh has power over all things.*

This verse is applicable to the subject of *qiblah,* as it comes

between the verses dealing with that subject. Also, it may be applied to the creative affairs as it points to the Divine Measure and Decree and to the related legislation. We shall explain this topic, Allãh willing, in another place.

QUR'ÃN: *And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque:* According to some exegetes it means: And from any place you come forth and at any place you come down, turn your face to the Sacred Mosque. Others say that it means: And from whatever town you come out.

The phrase, "from whatsoever place you come forth", literally means as follows: 'from whatsoever place thou halt come forth'. Possibly it may refer to Mecca from which the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had to come out, as Allãh says: . . . *the town of thine which has driven thee out* . . . (47:13).

However, the, verse says that the law to face the Ka'bah is a firm order which you have to observe in Mecca as well as in other towns and places. Then Allãh emphasizes it in these words: *and surely it is the very truth from your Lord, and Allãh is not at all heedless of what you do.*

QUR'ÃN: *And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are turn your faces towards it:* The first sentence is repeated here word by word, to show that this law is to be followed in every condition. For example, one says: Fear Allãh when you stand up; fear Allãh when you sit down; fear Allãh when you speak; fear Allãh when you are silent. The speaker wants to emphasize that you should fear Allãh in all conditions and in every situation. This point would be lost if the above sentence were reconstructed in the following way: Fear Allãh when you stand up, when you sit down, when you speak, and when you are silent. The meaning is as follows: Face towards the Sacred Mosque of Mecca whence you had to come out, and wherever you happen to be in the world, turn your faces towards it.

QUR'ÃN: *so that people shall have no argument against you,*

except such of them as are unjust; so do not fear them, and fear Me; and so that I may complete My favour on you and that you may walk on the right course: These sentences describe the following three benefits of this commandment, and at the same time put the utmost emphasis on obeying this law:

First: The Jews knew from their books that the promised Prophet would face towards the Ka'bah, turning away from Baytu 'l-Maqdis, as Allãh has pointed to this fact in a foregoing verse, *and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord* (2:144). If the *qiblah* were not changed, the Jews could have used it as a proof against the Muslims that the Prophet was not the one whose advent was foretold in _ the previous books. But now the promulgation of this order has not left them any room for disputation – except those of them who are unjust. This exception gives the following meaning: Of course, those of them who are unjust – because they follow their desire – will never be satisfied; they will continue arguing against it; "so do not fear them", because they are unjust and they follow their desires – and Allãh does not guide aright the unjust people – "and fear Me".

Second: Obedience of this rule will lead the Muslims to the completion of Divine favour on them, by perfecting their religion. We shall explain the meaning of the "completion of favour", when we write the verse: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed* My *favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion* (5:4).

Third: There is the hope that through this rule the Muslims will be guided to the straight path. We have explained the meaning of guidance under the verse: *Guide us to the straight path* (1:5).

An exegete has written: "The verse of *qiblah* contains the words, 'and so that I may complete My favour on you and that you may walk on the right course'. Similar words have been used in the 'Chapter of Victory', while mentioning the victory of Mecca: *Surely We have given to you a clear victory, so that Allãh may forgive you your* (*i.e.,* your *ummah* their) *past faults and those to follow and complete His favour to you and keep you on a straight path* (48:1-2). This almost identical expression shows

that the verse of *qiblah* too alludes to the victory of Mecca."

According to that exegete, "the Ka'bah in the beginning of Islam was occupied by the idols, which were put there by the polytheists – the power in those days was in the hands of the pagans. Islam was weak, it had no authority or power. There-fore, Allãh told the Prophet to face towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis, the *qiblah* of the Jews, who were nearer than the polytheists, to Islam. Then the Prophet emigrated to Medina, and Islam began to gain strength. The time was coming nearer when Mecca would be conquered and the House of Allãh cleansed of the idols' pollution. Allãh therefore ordered the Prophet to change the direction of *qiblah.* It was a great bounty favour which Allãh has reserved for the Muslims. And Allãh gave a promise, included in this verse of *qiblah,* that He would complete His favour on them and guide them to the right course. It was implied in these words that the Ka'bah would soon be cleansed of the idols and images; the Muslims would be exclusively connected to the Ka'bah as it would remain exclusively under their care. This verse actually gave the good tidings of the conquest of Mecca. Thereafter, when Mecca was conquered, Allãh reminded them of that promise by using almost similar words in its description: *". . . and complete His favours to you and keep you on a straight path."*

COMMENT: This explanation, although apparently well-founded, is in fact not based on deep reflection; because the words of the Qur'ãn do not support it. How do we know that the verse of *qiblah* contains a promise to complete the favour? The answer is: Because of li (لِـ a preposition used here for the final cause; so that, in order that) in *li-utimma* (لأُتِمَّ = *so that I may complete. . .*). And the verse in Chapter 48 (Victory), which, according to him, was revealed in fulfilment of that promise, also begins with the same proposition: so *that Allãh may forgive you your* (*i.e.,* your *ummah* their) *past faults and those to follow and complete His favour to you and keep you on a straight path* (48:2). Clearly, both verses contain the same promise to complete the favour in future; neither gives the good news of its fulfilment yet. Moreover, the verse of *qiblah* gives this promise to all the Muslims while

that of the Victory uses singular pronouns and is addressed to the Prophet personally. Clearly they have been revealed in different contexts.

If there is any verse showing the fulfilment of the promise given in both these verses, then it can only be the verse: *This day I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion* (5:3). We shall explain the meaning of *an-ni'mah* (اَلنِّعْمَةُ = favour, bounty, blessing) in the explanation of this verse, and there we shall describe what was the favour and bounty that was completed on that day, and by which Allãh has put the Muslims under His obligation for ever.

There are two other verses which, like the above-mentioned two, contain the promise of completion of favour; *but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you so that you may be grateful* (5:6)*; even thus does He complete His favour upon you, that haply you may submit* (16:81). We shall write under these verses somethings related to this topic.

QUR'ÃN: *Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know:* The verse begins with the word *kamã* (كَمَا= like, as, even as), which is obviously a compound of *ka* (كَ = like, as) and *mã* (مَا) which changes the verb into *maṣdar.* The connotation, therefore, is as follows: 'We have be-stowed Our favours on you by appointing the Ka'bah as your *qiblah.* It is the House that Ibrãhīm built, and he prayed to Us for its good and blessings. We have done this in the same way as We have favoured you by sending to you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and purifies you. We did so in answer to the pleading of Ibrãhīm, when he and his son, Ismã'īl, prayed to Us: *Our Lord! and raise up in them a Messenger from among themselves, who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them.'* This verse, in short, says that it was Allãh's favour on this *ummah* that he sent the Prophet among them, as it was a favour to appoint the Ka'bah as their *qiblah.*

Who are the people referred to by the second person pronouns in "among you a Messenger from among you"? The application may be restricted or extended, depending on the level of explanation whether it is interpreted esoterically, literally or legislatively. Esoterically, it is addressed especially to the earlier mentioned: *Submissive group* (2:128), that is, those who were given authority over religion and followers of religion; literally all the Muslims from the progeny of Ismã'īl (i.e., the Arabs of Mudar tribe) are included; legislatively, it covers all the Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

QUR'ÃN : *recites to you Our communications: "al-Ãyãt"* (اَلآيَاتُ = verses, signs – translated here as communications) obviously refers to the verses of the Qur'ãn, because it is the words (not the meanings) that are recited; *'at-tazkiyah"* (اَلتَّزْكِيَةُ = to purify) is to remove dirt, filth and blemish. The Prophet cleansed them thoroughly – from wrong beliefs like polytheism and rejection of true faith, from vile and base character like pride and avarice, and from evil and immoral actions and things like murder, fornication and intoxicants.

QUR'ÃN: *and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know:* It encompasses all primary and secondary aspects of religious knowledge.

These verses have variously changed the pronouns used for Allãh, using third and first persons, singular and plural; and for others, using first, second and third persons. The reason of every such change may be understood by a little meditation.

TRADITIONS

al-Qummi narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *The fools among the people will say . . . :* "The *qiblah* was changed to the Ka'bah after the Prophet prayed towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis for thirteen years in Mecca; and (also)

after his emigration to Medina he prayed towards Baytu ‘l-Maqdis for seven months.” (He said:) “Then Allãh turned him towards Mecca. And it was because the Jews used to revile the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), saying that he was their follower (as) he prayed to their *qiblah.* The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) became very sad because of it; and he came out in the middle of the night looking to the horizons of the heaven, waiting for an order in this regard from Allãh. When it was day and the time of the noon prayer arrived, (the Prophet, s.a.w.a.) was in the mosque of Banu Salim. And he had (already) prayed two *rak‘ahs* of *ẓuhr,* when Jibrīl came down; and he held the Prophet’s upper arms and turned him towards the Ka‘bah. And he brought down to him (the revelation): *Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt like; turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque.* Thus, the Prophet had prayed two *rak‘ahs* towards Baytu ‘l-Maqdis, and (prayed the remaining) two *rak‘ahs* towards the Ka‘bah. Then the Jews and the fools said: *ʿWhat has turned them from their qiblah which they had?’ ”* (*Majma‘u ’l-bayãn*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of similar meaning narrated by the Sunni and Shi‘ah narrators, which are recorded in the books of traditions. The reports differ about the time when the *qiblah* was changed. Most of them say that it happened in the month of *Rajab* in the second year of *hijrah* – the seventeenth month after the emigration; and this timing looks more correct. Allãh willing, we shall describe some other related topics in a separate discourse.

There are traditions from Sunni narrators, which explain the witnessing of this *ummah* concerning the people and the witnessing of the Prophet for them, in these terms: “The nations will deny, on the Day of Judgment, that the prophets had conveyed any message to them. Then Allãh will ask the prophets to bring their proof that they had really conveyed the message – and Allãh knows it better. So, the *ummah* of Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) will be brought in and they will testify (for the prophets).

Then the (other) nations will say: 'How do you know?' They will say: 'We knew it from the information which Allãh revealed in His Book on the tongue of His truthful Prophet.' Then Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) will be brought there and he will be asked about the condition of his *ummah. So* he will testify for their purity, justice and probity. And this is the meaning of the words of Allãh: *How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a witness for these?* (4:41)

The author says: This theme is supported by other traditions narrated by aṣ-Ṣuyũṭī in *ad-Durru 'l-manthũr* and others. But how is it that the Prophet would testify about his *ummah* that they were pure and just? It can be accepted only if it is taken to mean that he will testify for a selected group, not for the whole *ummah.* Otherwise, such traditions have to be rejected, as is self-evident from the Qur'ãn and the *sunnah.* How can the Prophet sanction or approve all those oppressions, cruelties, tyrannies and massacres perpetrated by this *ummah,* and whose like was never seen in any of the previous nations? How can he testify that all those Pharaohs and *ṭãghũts* of this *ummah* were pure, just and upright? What is this tradition, if not a calumny against this up-right religion? A joke with the realities of this illustrious faith? Moreover, it is based on the wrong idea that a hearsay testimony is acceptable!

The correct meaning of the verse may be seen in a tradition narrated from al-Bãqir (a.s.) that he said: "Only the Imãms and the Messengers will be witnesses for the people. And as for the (general) *ummah,* it is unthinkable that Allãh would call them as witnesses – and there are among them those whose testimony is not accepted for a bundle of vegetable." (*al-Manãqib*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the verse, *that you may be witnesses. . .:* "(It is) then (wrong) if you think that Allãh in this verse means all the monotheists, the people of *qiblah* (*i.e.,* the Muslims). Do you think that a person whose evidence is not acceptable in this world about *a aṣ-ṣã'* (الصَّاع = a weight about 3 kilogram) of date, Allãh will call him as a witness on the Day of Judgment

The author says: We have described it under that verse with the help of the Qur'ãn itself.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) narrates from his father, from the Prophet, that he said: "It is among the (bounties) which Allãh gave to my *ummah* and (by which) He made them excel all other nations, that He gave them three attributes which (previously) were not given but to a prophet . . . And when He sent a prophet, made him a witness for his nation; and surely Allãh, Blessed and High is He, has made my *ummah* a witness for the creatures, as He says: *so that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you may be witnesses for the people* (22:78). (*Qurbu 'l-asnãd*)

The author says: This *ḥadīth is* not in conflict with the above explanation, because the word *ummah* refers to that *submissive ummah* in which the prayer of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) was accepted.

Amiru '1-mu'minin (a.s.) says, *inter alia,* in *a ḥadīth* describing the Day of Judgment: "They will gather in a place where every one will be required to speak; (but) no one shall speak: *except he whom the Beneficent Allãh permits and who speaks the right thing* (78:38). Then the Messenger shall be asked to stand (and speak); and that is (the meaning of) His word to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) : *How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a witness for these?* (4:41). And he is the witness of the witnesses, and the witnesses are the Messengers." (al-'Ayyãshī)

Abu Basir, narrating from the fifth or the sixth Imãm, says: "I said to him: 'Did (Allãh) order him (i.e., the Prophet, s.a.w. a.) to pray towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis?' He said: 'Yes. Don't you see

that Allãh, Blessed and High is He!, says: *And We had not made the qiblah which you had but that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels . . .' "* (*at-Tahdhīb*)

The author says: This *ḥadīth* shows that the words: *which you had,* are related to: *the qiblah,* and that the whole phrase refers to Baytu 'l-Maqdis; and it was the *qiblah* which the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had. As we have mentioned earlier, this explanation is in conformity with the context. Also, it supports what has been narrated in a *ḥadīth* from al-'Askarī (a.s.):

"The Meccans were attached to the Ka'bah. Therefore Allãh wished to distinguish the followers of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), from his opponents, by following the *qiblah* which he disliked. And because the people of Medina were inclined towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis, He ordered them to go against it and to turn towards the Ka'bah, in order that He may show who follows Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) (even) in that which is not to his liking; such a man, then, believes in his truth and agrees with him . . . "

It also shows the incorrectness of the interpretation, to which we had made a passing reference in the Commentary, and which runs as follows: The phrase, *which you had, is* the second object of the verb, *We had not made.* Accordingly, the verse means: And We did not make the *qiblah,* that is, the Ka'bah, which you had before Baytu 'l-Maqdis. In support of this interpretation, they quote the words, *but that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels.* The absurdity of this interpretation and of this argument is self-evident.

az-Zubayri, narrating from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) says: "I asked him: 'Will you not tell me about the faith, whether it is word with deed or (only) word without deed?' He said: 'The faith is deed, all of it; and (utterance of) the word is one of those deeds; (it is) obligatory from Allãh, described in His Book; its light is clear, its proof well-established; the Book bears witness for it and calls to it. And when Allãh turned his Prophet towards the Ka'bah,

away from Baytu ‘l-Maqdis, the Muslims said to the Prophet : “What do you see (about) our prayers which we used to pray towards Baytu ‘l-Maqdis? What shall be our position about these? And what shall be the position of those of us who have passed away and they were praying towards Baytu ‘1-Maqdis?” Then Allãh revealed (the verse) : *and Allãh was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allãh is Affectionate, Merciful to the people.* Thus Allãh named the prayer as “faith”. Whoever therefore fears Allãh, guarding his limbs (from sins), fulfilling (obligation of) each of these limbs which Allãh has laid down for it, he shall meet Allãh with perfect faith, (and he shall be) from the people of the Garden. And whoever acted falsely about any of these (limbs), or transgressed what Allãh had ordered about it, he shall meet Allãh (as one) having an in-complete faith.’ “ (al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: It has been narrated also by al-Kulayni. Although it says that the verse, *and Allãh was not going to make your faith fruitless . . .,* was revealed after the *qiblah* was changed, yet it does not go against the explanation given in the Commentary.

“The Prophet prayed towards Baytu ‘l-Maqdis for thirteen years in Mecca, and nineteen months in Medina.* Then the Jews reviled him, saying: ‘You are a follower of our *qiblah.’* He was very much saddened because of it. Then one night he came out turning his face towards the horizons of the heaven. When it was morning, he prayed the dawn (prayer). Then when he had prayed two *rak‘ahs* of *ẓuhr,* Jibrīl came and told him (the message of Allãh): *Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt like. . .;* then he took hold of the Prophet and turned him towards the Ka‘bah, and those who were (praying) behind him turned their faces (likewise), until the men stood in place of the women, and the women in place of the men. Thus, the early part of his prayer

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* The Prophet emigrated to Medina in the month of *Rabī‘u1-awwal.* The nineteenth month after *hijrah* was *Ramaḍãn* of the second year. (*tr.*)

was towards Baytu ʿl-Maqdis, and the latter part towards the Kaʻbah. Then the news reached another mosque in Medina, and its people had already prayed two *rakʻahs* of *ʻaṣr* (to Baytu ʻl-Maqdis), and they turned towards the (new) *qiblah. So* the early part of their prayer was to Baytu ʿl-Maqdis and the latter part towards the Kaʻbah; so that mosque was named the Mosque of the Two Qiblahs." (*al-Faqīh*)

The author says: al-Qummi has narrated a similar *ḥadīth,* with one variation that the Prophet was in the mosque of Banũ. Sãlim.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allãh, *turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque:* "Face towards the *qiblah,* and do not turn away from the *qiblah;* otherwise your prayer will be void. For, Allãh says to His Prophet concerning the obligatory prayer, *turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your face towards it."* (al-ʻAyyãshī)

The author says: There are numerous *al-mustafīḍah** traditions which say that this verse was revealed about the obligatory prayer.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the verse: *Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons:* "This verse was revealed about the Jews and the Christians. Allãh, Blessed and High is He! says: *Those whom We have given the Book recognize him,* that is, recognize the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), as they recognize their sons. For, surely Allãh, Mighty and Great is He!, had revealed to them, in the Torah and the Injīl and Zabũr, the attributes of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), and the attributes of his companions, as well as (the story of) his emigration. And this is (the meaning of) the words of Allãh: *Muhammad is the Messenger of Allãh; and those with him are severe against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them*

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* *al-Mustafīḍah* (اَلْمُسْتَفِيضَةُ) = A tradition narrated by a great many narrators, but to a degree less than that required for *mutawãtir.* (*tr.*)

bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allãh and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Torah and their description in the Injīl . . . (48:29). And this was the description of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and of his companions in the Torah. Thereafter, when Allãh raised him up, the People of the Book recognized him. (But they rejected him) as Allãh, Great is His Majesty!, says: *but when there came to them that which they did recognize, they disbelieved in him* (2:89). (al-Qummi)

The author says: A similar *ḥadīth* has been narrated in *al-Kãfī* from ‘Ali (a.s.).

Many Shiite traditions say that the words of Allãh, *wherever you are, Allãh will bring you all together,* has been revealed about the companions of al-Qã’im (a.s.). Some of those traditions say that it is applied to them according to the principle of the “flow of the Qur’ãn”.

A tradition, narrated by the Sunni narrators says that ‘Ali (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *so that I may complete My favour on you:* Completion of favour is the death in the state of Islam (i.e., to die as a Muslim).”

Another Sunni *ḥadīth* says that the completion of favour is entering into the Garden.

AN ACADEMIC AND HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ON WAYS OF FINDING THE DIRECTION OF *QIBLAH*

The Muslims have to face towards the *qiblah* in prayer – and it is an act of worship which each of them has to perform several times a day – and at the time of slaughtering an animal as well as at some other times. It compelled the Muslims to find out the direction of the *qiblah* wherever they might be.

In the beginning it was based on guess and rough estimates. Then the overwhelming need prompted the Muslim geographers and mathematicians to devise more accurate methods to find its direction. They based their reckoning on the longitude and

latitude of a place – they calculated the degree of inclination between its location and that of Mecca with the help of trigonometry and astronomy. They fixed the direction of *qiblah* in every town with the help of the well-known Indian Circle which fixed the meridian of a place and showed the degree of its inclination from the *qiblah.*

Then they started using the compass. Its hands pointed to the North and the South; and if the degree of inclination to Mecca was known beforehand, it was easy to fix the direction of the *qiblah.* It gradually replaced the Indian Circle, being a lot quicker and easier to use.

But both these endeavours of theirs – may Allãh reward them for these – were not free from defect and miscalculation.

First: The Indian Circle: The latter geographers found out that the early scholars were not very accurate in their calculation of the longitude – and this had led to confusion in calculation of the degree of inclination, and consequently in the fixing of the *qiblah's* direction. The early scholars were more accurate in finding the latitude of a place, than its longitude. They used to fix the latitude of a place by measuring the altitude of the North Pole there. But fixing a longitude depended on measuring the distance between two places, and it was done by noting the time when a certain celestial event, like a solar or lunar eclipse, occurred in one place, and then calculating as to how much time had elapsed before it appeared in the other place. Obviously, neither the old instruments were dependable enough, nor the means of communications fast enough, to give this calculation the desired accuracy.

With advancement of scientific apparatus and development of new means of communication, the need was felt to find a more accurate way of fixing the *qiblah.* The well-known scholar, Shaykh (Ḥaydar Quli) Sardãr Kãbulī – Allãh's mercy be on him!

looked into this matter, and calculated the inclination of various places with the help of the modern sciences. He wrote on this subject his book *Tuḥfatu 'l-ajillah fī ma'rifati 'l-qiblah.* It is a fine work, in which he explains scientifically, how to find out the direction of *qiblah* for a place; also he has given charts fixing

the *qiblah* of various towns.

Allãh helped him in his endeavour - may He reward him for it - in such a fine way that his calculations showed a clear miracle of the Prophet.

When the early Muslim scholars calculated the position of Medina, they found that it was situated at 25°n lat. 75° 20′ long. The trouble was that *al-miḥrãb* (اَلمِحْرَابُ = niche) of the Mosque of the Prophet (based on the original direction) was not exactly to the direction which the newly calculated position was indicating. The religious scholars were always arguing on this subject, and they invented some reasons to justify that "deviation", although none was based on reality. But Sardãr Kãbuli - may Allãh have mercy on him! - showed clearly that Medina is situated on 24°57′ lat. 39°59′ long.; and that the inclination towards Mecca is 0°45′. And the niche of the Prophet's Mosque has exactly the same inclination. By this calculation, one more miracle of the Prophet came to light; it was the direction to which he turned his face while he was praying, and about which he later said that Jibrīl took hold of his hand and turned him towards the Ka'bah. Truth was what Allãh and His Messenger said.

After him, came the great mathematician, 'Abdu 'r-Razzãq al-Baghã'irī - Allãh's mercy be on him - and he calculated the direction of the *qiblah* of most of the towns of the world, and published it in his book; his charts fix the *qiblah* of more than 1,500 towns. In this way, the favour of Allãh was completed about the direction of the *qiblah.*

Second: The Compass: It has been established that the Earth's magnetic Poles are not identical with its geographical Poles. First of all, the magnetic Poles have been changing from time to time. Second, the magnetic North Pole is at a distance of about one thousand miles from the geographical North Pole. Obviously, the compass does not show the exact direction of the *qiblah;* in some places the deviation may reach a degree that cannot be allowed.

Now, the leading mathematician, Ḥusayn 'Ali Razm Ãrã, undertook these days (i.e., the 1332nd year of the solar hijri calendar) to solve this problem. He calculated the difference

between the magnetic and geographical Poles at various places, and determined the degrees of inclination of the *qiblah* from the magnetic Pole in respect of about one thousand towns. Then he invented his compass which fixes the *qiblah* of those places very accurately.

This compass is now in general use in the Muslim world. May Allãh reward him for his endeavours.

A SOCIOLOGICAL ESSAY ON THE MEANING OF *QIBLAH* AND ITS BENEFITS

Let us look at the social structure of humanity. Ponder on society *per se,* and you will admit that it was the human nature which brought it into being and developed it with its many-sided aspects. It did so because of the inspiration it received from Allãh – the divinely-gifted instinct which made a man realize that he depends on collective efforts of other men for his survival and development. That is why human beings rely on society and keep their activities within the bounds of the social laws.

Then he acquired knowledge – mental images – related to his surrounding matter, and about his own needs and activities. What creates a relation – positive or negative – between a man and his activities is the knowledge of their various properties; like the knowledge that something is good or bad, this should be done, that should be avoided. In fact, all the fundamental concepts of sociology come under this category. It covers leader-ship and subordination, ownership and jurisdiction, collective and individual affairs, and in short, all the common rules and values as well as the national or tribal traditions and customs. Even the last mentioned rites which change from nation to nation, from region to region and from era to era, have been produced by the human nature which worked according to the divinely-bestowed instinct.

All these exoteric aspects of society are symbols of esoteric ideas and ideals; human nature sees in them fulfilment of its inner craving, and thus moves towards it in appropriate way – by taking it, discarding it, doing it, leaving it or perfecting it.

Now, Allãh is free from matter and its concomitants; He can never be perceived by any physical sense. How can people turn towards Him, especially if they want their inner devotion manifested in their actions – because actions are confined within material limits. It can only be done by representing the esoteric ideas with manifest actions. Various feelings and emotions are represented with various appropriate physical postures: Man prostrates to show his self-abasement; and bows down to glorify the Creator. Circumambulation around the Ka'bah represents self-sacrifice. Standing in prayer portrays the Creator's greatness, and *wuḍũ'* and ritual bath are intended to make one spiritually clean, to prepare oneself for Divine Presence.

Undoubtedly, complete attention towards God during the prayer is the soul of the worship. Without total undiverted attention worship has no life, no vitality. And the attention depends on such representations for its existence, continuation and perfection.

The worshippers of idols, celestial bodies or other material things (like trees, animals and/or human beings) stand face to face with their deities and idols, turning towards them with their bodies maintaining close proximity with them.* Islam came to verify the previous religions brought by the prophets; it is the most comprehensive and complete Divine Religion. It has appointed the Ka'bah as the *qiblah* – the direction to which people should turn during prayer (and no one is excused from prayer in any condition) wherever they may be in the world. They are further obliged (or encouraged) to turn towards it in certain conditions, and forbidden to face it or keep it behind

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* But that method, invented by human mind, was rejected by Divine religions brought by the prophets of God, because instead of fixing the attention to God, it actually diverted the attention towards those idols etc., making them into partners of God in worship. Yet, the original aim – a physical manifestation of undiverted attention towards God – was good and in conformity with demands of the human nature, provided it could be achieved without any risk of falling into polytheism. (*tr.*)

their backs in some other conditions. Thus, a Muslim is obliged to keep his attention to the House of Allãh. He is not to forget his Lord in private or in public, in his working hours or in sleep, while standing up or sitting down in prayer, or in other actions – not even in his meanest condition.*

The above discourse looked at the benefits which an individual derives from the *qiblah.* If we ponder on this rule from sociological point of view, then its effects are even more import-ant and far-reaching. It has united all the Muslims – of diverse places and different times – fixing their attention to one point. The *qiblah,* therefore, portrays that they are one in their belief, connected to each other in their social structure, and brothers in Islam. If such a fine spirit permeates the material and ideological lives of the individuals and groups, the society shall reach its highest point of perfection; and the most comprehensive and all-encompassing unity shall manifest itself in the Muslim society. Allãh has especially bestowed this favour on His Muslim servants. By this favour He has protected their religious unity – even now when they have fallen apart in so many groups, have been divided into so many sects and are following so many diverse ideologies.

We are thankful to Allãh for His favours.

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* It is unlawful to face towards the *qiblah,* or to keep the *qiblah* on backside, while urinating or relieving the bowels. Therefore, a Muslim has to remember the direction of *qiblah* even at that time. (tr.)

* * * * *

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ـ ١٥٢

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me (152).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

Allãh first mentioned His favour on the Muslims that He sent to them a Prophet from among them – a favour that cannot be measured in any way. Then he pointed to another great favour in that He guided them to the straight path and led them to the highest perfection. Then came the third favour of giving them a *qiblah* of their own – through that rule, their religion began its journey to perfection, their worship was unified and their religious and social virtues were enhanced. Reminding them of these three-fold favours, He calls them to remember Him and to be thankful to Him. They should remember Him with their devotion and obedience, so that He remembers them with His favour. He will increase for them His bounty and grace, if they are thankful to Him, and if they are not ungrateful for His favours. He had already said to them: *and remember your Lord when you forget and say: 'May be my Lord will guide me to a nearer course to the right than this"* (18:24) ; *If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more; and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe* (14:7). These two verses were revealed before the verse of the *qiblah* in this chapter.

"adh-Dhikr" (اَلذِّكْرُ = remembrance) is sometimes used as opposite of "*al-ghaflah*" (اَلغَفْلَة = inattention and heedlessness). Allãh says: *and do not follow him whose heart We have made inattentive to Our remembrance* (18:28). Inattention is "not knowing that one knows – although the original knowledge is present in memory". "Remembrance", as its opposite, means "knowing that one knows".

The word "remembrance" at other times is used as opposite to "*an-nisyãn*" (اَلنِّسْيَانُ = forgetfulness). Forgetfulness is "cessation of knowledge from mind"; and as its opposite, remembrance means "presence of knowledge in mind". It is to this meaning that the words of Allãh refer in the verse: *and remember your Lord when you forget . . .* (18:24). This remembrance, like its opposite "forgetfulness", is a concept which has its own special effects and exclusive characteristics. Sometimes when those effects and characteristics are found, we say that one remembers, although there is no actual remembrance; or that one has forgotten, although there is no actual forgetfulness. For example, if you do not come to the aid of your friend – when you know that he needs your help – then people say that: "You have forgotten him", although in fact you remember him very well.

The word "remembrance" is also used in the same way. Apparently, the use of this word for "verbal remembrance" (e.g., reciting or repeating the names of Allãh) comes in this category, because you cannot express something in words unless you remember it in mind. Allãh says: *Say; "I will recite to you an account* (a remembrance) *of him"* (18:83). There are many other examples like it. But if verbal remembrance is counted as a real meaning of the word 'remembrance' then it will be one of its (lower) degrees.

However, remembrance is of many degrees. Allãh says: *now surely by Allãh's remembrance are the hearts set at rest* (13:28); *And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in the morning and the evening, and be not of the heedless ones* (7:205) ; *then remember Allãh as you remember your fathers, rather a more intense remembrance* (2:200). Now, it is the thought or feeling which becomes

intense, not the words. Also, we have quoted the above verse: *and remember your Lord when you forget and say: "May be my Lord will guide me to a nearer course to the right than this"* (18:24). The last sentence, beginning with *Say: "May be . . .",* tells the servant to hope for a rank higher than his present one. Its connotation will be as follows: If you slip down to a lower rank, that is, if you forget what you knew before, then remember your Lord and then you may hope for a higher rank that is nearer to the right course than the present one. It shows that the remembrance of the heart, *per se, is* of many degrees. It also proves the validity of the saying, "Remembrance is the presence of an idea in the mind"; because even "presence" has various degrees and ranks.

Remember Me: In this sentence, the object "Me" refers to Allãh. As we explained above, remembrance is the knowledge of knowledge; and knowledge is defined as "attainment of the form and idea of a thing in the mind of the Knower". Knowledge confines the thing so known and encompasses it within the knower's mind. Obviously, Allãh cannot be known, or remembered (i.e., known to be known) in any way like this. He is beyond the description of describers. He Himself says: *Hollowed be Allãh, from what they describe, except the servants of Allãh, freed* (from sins) (37:159–160); *they do not comprehend Him in knowledge* (20:110). (We shall write later on, Allãh willing, somethings related to these two verses.) In view of this established fact, if we were to say that the words, "Remember Me", have been used here in their real, and not metaphorical sense, then we will have to say that man has, or can have, a know-ledge whose definition would be quite different from the one known to us.

TRADITIONS

Numerous traditions, on the virtue of remembrance of Allãh, have been narrated by the Shi'ah and Sunni narrators. For example, it has been narrated through various chains of narrators that: "Remembrance of Allãh is good in all conditions."

It has been narrated that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) came up to his companions, and said: "Feast you in the meadows

of the Garden." They said: "O Messenger of Allãh! And what are the meadows of the Garden?" He said: "The gatherings of remembrance; go there in the mornings and in the evenings and remember (Allãh). And whoever likes to know (what is) his position near Allãh, he should see what is the position of Allãh near him (i.e., in his heart) ; because surely Allãh gives a servant the same position which the servant gives to Allãh, *vis-à-vis,* his own self. And know that your best deeds (near your King) and the purest and the highest of them in ranks, and the best of all that the sun shines on, is the remembrance of Allãh, the High, because Allãh, the High, has said concerning His Own Self: 'I am the companion of him who remembers Me'; and He, the High One, has said: *'Therefore remember Me; I will remember you* with My bounty; you remember Me with obedience and worship, I will remember you with bounties, and beneficence, and comfort, and (My) pleasure.' " (*'Uddatu' d-dã'ī*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said : "Surely Allãh, the Blessed, the High, says: 'Whoever is too preoccupied with My remembrance to be able to ask Me (for his needs), I give him the best of what I give to him who asks Me.' " (*al-Maḥãsin; ad-Da'awãt,* ar-Rãwandi)

al-Ḥusayn al-Bazzãz said: "Abu Abdillãh (a.s.) told me: 'Should I not tell you the most difficult (thing) which Allãh has made obligatory for His creatures?' I said: 'Yes, certainly.' He said: 'To do justice to the people (even) against yourself, and your beneficence to your brother, and remembrance of Allãh in every place. Why, (by remembrance) I do not mean (recitation of): "Glory be to Allãh, and praise be to Allãh, and there is no god except Allãh, and Allãh is Great" – although this is from that (i.e., it is one aspect of remembrance) ; but remembrance of Allãh in every place (means that you should remember Him) when you rush to His obedience or to His disobedience." (*Ma 'ãni 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: This theme has been narrated through numerous chains from the Prophet and his *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (peace be on them all); and there is, in some of them, the following addition: "And it is the words of Allãh: *Surely those who fear*

(Allãh), *when a visitation from the Satan afflicts them they become mindful* (they remember), *then lo! they see."* (7:201)

The Prophet said: "Allãh says: 'When I know that the predominant trait of My servant is to be engrossed in Me, I transfer his desire to My invocation and My secret conversation. When My servant becomes like this (i.e., when he attains this position), then if he wants to (i.e., if he is about to) forget, I come between him and his forgetfulness (i.e., I protect him from it). They are truly My friends; they are truly the heroes; it is they that when I want to destroy the people of the earth in chastisement, I remove it (the chastisement) from them because of those heroes.' " (*'Uddatu 'd-dã'ī*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Allãh, the High, has said: 'O son of Ãdam! Remember Me in your mind, I will remember you in My Self; O Son of Ãdam! Remember Me in seclusion, I will remember you in seclusion; remember Me in a gathering, I will remember you in a gathering better than your gathering.' " And he said: "No servant remembers Allãh in an assembly of the people but Allãh remembers him in the assembly of the angels". (*al-Maḥasin*)

The author says: Both groups, that is, the Shī'ah and the Sunnis, have narrated this theme with numerous *asnãd.*

aṣ-Ṣuyũṭī writes in *ad-Durru 'l-manthũr:* "aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqi (in his *Shu'abu 'l-imãn*) have narrated from Ibn Mas'ũd that he said: 'The Messenger of Allãh said: "Whoever is given four (things) is (also) given (other) four (things). And its explanation is (found) in the Book of Allãh. Whoever is given remembrance, Allãh remembers him, because Allãh says, *'Remember Me, I will remember you';* and whoever is given *ad-du'ã'* (اَلدُّعَاءُ = invocation) is given response (i.e., its acceptance), because Allãh says; *'Call on Me, I will answer you';* and whoever is given thankfulness, is given increase, because Allãh says, *'If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more';* and whoever is given to ask forgiveness, is given pardon, because Allãh says, '*Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving.*' " ' "

It is written in the same book: "Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr, Ibnu '1-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Shu'abu '1-īmān*) narrate from Khālid ibn Abi 'Imrān that he said that the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Whoever obeys Allāh, he indeed has remembered Allāh, even if his prayer and his fast and his recitation of the Qur'ān are small in quantity. And whoever disobeys Allāh, he indeed has forgotten Allāh, even if his prayer and his fast and his recitation of the Qur'ān are abundant.' "

The author says: This tradition indicates that man commits sin only when he forgets Allāh and becomes inattentive to Him. Had he remembered what was the reality behind his sin and what effect it would produce, he would not have gone near it. If someone disobeys Allāh – and does not care even if he is reminded of Him – and gives no importance to his Lord and Creator, then he is a transgressor (who) does not know the dignity and the sublime majesty of his Lord, nor does he understand how Allāh encompasses every thing. This theme is also found in another tradition, which has been narrated in *ad-Durru '1-manthūr* from Abū Hind ad-Dārī who said that the Prophet said: "Allāh says: 'Remember Me by obeying Me, I will remember you with My forgiveness. And whoever remembers Me – and he is obedient – then it is My duty to remember him with My forgiveness. And whoever remembers Me – and he is disobedient – then it is a right on Me to remember him with hate . . .' " The last sentence of this *ḥadīth* has used the word, remembrance (at the time of disobedience), in its opposite meaning; the verse under discussion and other traditions used the word 'forgetfulness' to convey that same idea.

We shall give some more details of this subject in some other place.

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ ــ ١٥٣ . وَلاَ تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ
أَحْيَاءٌ وَلٰكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ــ ١٥٤ . وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ
وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ــ ١٥٥ .
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ــ ١٥٦ .
أُولٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ــ ١٥٧ .

O you who believe! seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allãh is with the patient ones (153). *And do not speak of those who are slain in Allãh's way as dead; nay,* (they are) *alive, but you do not perceive* (154). *And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient ones* (155), *who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: "Surely we are Allãh's and to Him we shall surely return"* (156). *Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course* (157).

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GENERAL COMMENT

A single theme joins the five verses like a pearl-string; the sentences form a sequence and the topic is developed harmoniously; the beginning leads to the end, and the points

to the beginning. It shows that they were revealed together, not separately. The context indicates that they must have been revealed shortly before the law of *al-jihãd* (اَلجِهَادُ = war in the way of Allãh) was promulgated and the Muslims were ordered to fight in the cause of religion.

The verses prepare the believers for some trials which they will have to undergo, some misfortunes which will befall them. Not the usual type of trial and hardship, but some extraordinary misfortunes which will afflict the whole community and will continue, recurring every now and then. Man, like any other creature in this world, always faces some hardships and troubles which disturb and disrupt the pattern of his personal life. Death, sickness, fear, hunger, grief, poverty and deprivation are but a few examples of such personal misfortunes. It is the course which Allãh has laid down for His servants. This world is a place of struggle and competition; the life is a chain of never ending changes and transformations. *And you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allãh; and you shall not find any change in the course of Allãh* (35:43).

Although personal afflictions and misfortunes are hard to bear for the man so affected, yet they are not as crushing, bewildering and frightening as those which affect the whole community. When an individual is afflicted by a misfortune, he seeks help of others, complementing his own wisdom, determination and steadiness with those of his relatives, friends and compatriots. But when a misfortune or hardship afflicts the whole community, it stuns them all; it numbs their minds, and clouds their vision; it looks as if the whole society has lost its collective wisdom. It disrupts not only the individual, but even the collective life. Fear terrorizes, panic overwhelms, and minds boggle down; courage deserts and dread reigns supreme. A collective misfortune is, in short, much more harder to bear and much more bitter in taste. And it is these that the verse point to.

But not every collective affliction, like epidemic or femine. What the verses describe is in all-encompassing affliction which shall be brought about as a consequence of the believers' faith

itself. They have accepted the belief of monotheism; they have answered the call of the truth. The whole world and especially their own kith and kin are united against them. The enemies are trying, with all the forces at their command, to extinguish the light of Allãh, to erase the word of justice, to nullify the call of truth. The conflict has reached a stage where both parties realize that fighting is the only way out. Both parties have exhausted all other resources they had. The unbelievers first had tried to achieve their goal by arguments and mischief mongering, by whispering campaigns and unsettling rumours. But all was in vain. All their endeavours failed to give them any satisfaction – they did not harm the Muslims in the way they wanted. Now, from their point of view, nothing was left but to wage war against the Muslims and to annihilate them. Only then, the path of truth could be blocked and the bright light of Islam extinguished.

As from the believers' point of view, only the fighting could now help there in their endeavour to propagate the creed of monotheism, to spread the true religion and just rule, to cut at the root of falsehood. The past experience has proved that truth gains strength only when falsehood is removed – and now it cannot be removed except by force.

In short, the verses indicate that the great trial is near at hand – it mentions martyrdom in the way of Allãh, and praises it laudably, saying that it is not a death, it is life – and what a life indeed! Accordingly death in the way of Allãh is a distinction which is desirable – not a thing to dislike or fear.

The verses encourage the believers to fight for Islam. They are told that there is coming to them a trial, a hardship. Only if they bear it patiently, they shall reach the high ranks of spiritual perfection, receiving the blessings and mercy of Allãh, and being guided aright by Divine Guidance. Also, it tells them how they may get help in bearing those burdens – they should seek assistance through patience and prayer. Patience will protect them from fear and anguish, and will save their plans from disruption. As for prayer, it will turn their attention to their Lord, and will help them in putting all their affairs in the hands of the Almighty Allãh, because all power belongs to Him.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *O you who believe! seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allãh is with the patient ones:* We have explained briefly about patience and prayer, under the verse: *And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones* (2:45). Patience is one of the most important characteristics, which the Qur'ãn praises very highly. It repeatedly tells the believers to be patient – there are about seventy verses on this theme. It praises it in such laud-able ways as: . . *and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely it is of the acts which require determination* (31:17) ; *And none are made to receive it but those who are patient, and none are made to receive it but those who have a mighty good fortune* (41: 35) *; only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure* (39:10).

Likewise, prayer is one of the greatest acts of worship and devotion which the Qur'ãn always exhorts the believers to do. It has been praised in these words: *surely prayer keeps* (one) *away from indecency and evil* (29:45). Wherever Allãh exhorts the people to some good deeds, prayer is always placed at the head of the list.

Then Allãh praises patience that Allãh is with those who have got this virtue: In this respect this verse differs from the verse *2:45* which had focused attention on prayer; *and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones.* But this verse singles out the patience, because here the talk is about facing the difficulties and fighting against the enemies; and in this context patience acquires a greater importance. Surely Allãh is with the patient ones. It is a special proximity unlike the company mentioned in the verse: *and He is with you wherever you are* (13 :4). This latter verse says that Allãh controls your affairs and His knowledge encompasses you; while the verse under discussion means that Allãh helps and aids the patient ones. Patience, therefore, is the key to get relief from distress.

QUR'ÃN: *And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's*

way as dead; nay, (they are) *alive, but you do not perceive:* Some exegetes have said that when the verse says that the martyrs are alive, it actually means that their good names will continue for ever and their heroism will always be remembered with gratitude. Their argument is as follows:

"The verse is addressed to the Muslims, who already believe in Allãh, His Messenger and the Day of Judgment; they are also sure of the life hereafter. They have accepted the call of truth, and have already heard a lot of verses which speak of the Resurrection. They know that a man's life does not end with death. How could they speak of the martyrs as dead? Moreover, this verse affirms only about the martyrs that they are alive; and describes it as their especial excellence *vis-à-vis* other believers and the unbelievers. But we know that life after death is not confined to one group, it is a general phenomenon, which covers the whole mankind. Therefore, the life mentioned here must be something special, which is reserved for those who are slain in the way of Allãh – and that is their eternal name and ever-lasting fame."

But this interpretation is unacceptable, because of the following reasons:

First: The life which they have mentioned is not real life; it is an imaginary thing, which has no relation with reality. Such unreal and imaginary things do not deserve to be included in Divine Speech. Allãh calls to reality, to truth; and says: *and what is there after the truth but error?* (10:32). Of course, Ibrãhīm (a.s.) had prayed to Allãh: *And make for me a truthful tongue among the posterity* (26:84). But what he meant by "a truthful tongue" was continuation of his true mission after him; he did not mean only that his good name be remembered and his praise be sung by coming generations.

Of course, such imaginary exegesis, such false interpretation is more in line with materialists' thinking. They believe that soul is a material thing, life is a development of matter; once a man dies the life comes to an end, there is nothing to continue after death; as such, there is no life hereafter. But applying that idea to sociology, they encountered a great difficulty:

The fact is that man by nature believes in continuation of life after death, his instinct tells him that there is happiness and unhappiness in the other world where he goes after death; and if he wants to enjoy happiness there, he will have to sacrifice many comforts of this life. This is specially true about great affairs and ideals which cannot be established except when their supporters and adherents are willing to die for them, to sacrifice their lives for the cause. They have to die so that others may live.

Now, the dilemma of the atheists and materialists was this: If death is the end of life, if man, after his death, is lost for ever, then why should he sacrifice his life so that others may live? Why should he deprive himself of the comforts and enjoyments which he can easily get through injustice and tyranny? Just to let others live in peace? What has he got to gain by his sacrifice? Nothing. No sensible man gives something if he is not getting something in return. Human nature rejects the concept of giving without receiving, of leaving something without getting something in exchange. It rejects the idea of dying to enable others to live, the notion of denying oneself the enjoyment of this short life so that others may enjoy it.

When the materialists realized the trouble they were in, they tried to make up this shortcoming by inventing these imaginary gains which had no existence except in their own minds. They said: A man, emancipated from fetters of superstitions and myths, must sacrifice his life for his country and for other noble goals; this sacrifice will make him immortal because his good name and widespread fame will remain alive for ever. Likewise, he should deny himself some enjoyments of life so that others may benefit from those things. In this way, society and civilization will remain on right track and the social justice will reign supreme. And that man, because of his sacrifice, will get a noble and sublime life. Would that I knew who will enjoy that noble life when the man himself is dead, when his physical body has perished, and with it have gone all traces of life including perceptions and feelings? Who will then feel and enjoy that "noble life"? Isn't it just a delirious raving?

Second: The last phrase of the verse, " but you do not perceive," does not agree with that explanation. If that was the meaning of "life", Allãh should have said: nay, they are alive because their good name will remain for ever, and people will always sing their praises generation after generation. Obviously, such description would have proved much more satisfying and encouraging, and would have cheered them up to a greater degree than the phrase, "but you do not perceive".

Third: A similar verse – which in a way also explains it – describes the promised life in such a way as not to allow that interpretation: *And reckon not those who are killed in Allãh's way as dead; nay, they are alive* (and) *are provided sustenance from their Lord; Rejoicing in what Allãh has given them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of those who,* (being left) *behind them have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. They rejoice on account of favour from Allãh and* (*His*) *grace, and that Allãh will not waste the reward of the believers* (3:169-171). Clearly, it is a description of a real, not imaginary, life.

Fourth: It is not difficult to accept that some Muslims, in the middle of the Prophet's era, were unaware of the life after death. What was very clearly mentioned in the Qur'ãn was the Resurrection on the Day of Judgment. But so far as the life of *al-barzakh* (اَلبَرْزَخُ = the period between death and the Day of Judgment) is concerned, it has been described in the Qur'ãn, but not so clearly as not to leave any room for ambiguity. That is why not all the Muslims are agreed on this subject – even today some of them do not accept it. (These are those who believe that soul is not immaterial; that man perishes on death; and Allãh will raise him again for judging him on the Day of Judgment.) This verse, therefore, could have been revealed to affirm that the martyrs were alive in *al-barzakh.* May be, there were some believers who were not aware of it, even if others knew it.

In short, the verse speaks of a real, not imaginary, life. Allãh, in several places, has counted the life of an unbeliever after his death as a destruction and perdition. For example: . . . *and* (they)

made their people to alight into the abode of perdition (14:28). So, it is the life of bliss that is true life, and it is only the believers who will live that life, as Allãh says: *and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life – did they but know* (29:64). They did not know it because their senses could perceive only the material aspects of this world's life. As they did not perceive what was beyond their limited perception, they could not differentiate between extinction and life after death. They thought that there was nothing after death but extinction. That delusion, that conjecture was common to believers and unbelievers alike. That is why Allãh said: "nay, (they are) alive, but you do not perceive," that is, by your senses. The same is the import of the last phrase in the verse: *that most surely is the life – did they but know* (29:64), that is, with certainty, as He says in the verse: *Nay! if you had known with a knowledge of certainty, you should most certainly have seen the hell* (102:5–6).

The meaning of the verse, then, is as follows – and Allãh knows better! And do not say about those who are slain in the way of Allãh that they are dead. You should not think that they have become extinct, have perished. Of course, you generally think that death is extinction; in your language death is used as opposite of life; and this delusion is supported by your senses. But it is not correct. The martyrs are not dead, in that they are not extinct; they are alive although you do not perceive that life by your senses, by your perceptions.

This talk was addressed to the believers, although majority of them – if not all – knew that man's life continues after his death. It was done to draw their attention to a fact known to them. The aim was to cheer them up by reminding them of this reality, in order that they should not grieve, should not be perturbed, should not loose their hearts, when death faces them or their dear ones in the way of Allãh. The only thing that the relatives would be afflicted with, in such cases, is separation from their martyr for a few days, as long as they themselves are alive in this world. And this temporary separation is not a big problem – especially if compared to the pleasure of Allãh, and to the bounties bestowed on the martyr, like the pleasant life and everlasting grace. And the

pleasure of Allãh is the greatest bounty and bliss. In this respect, the verse is not unlike the previously explained one where Allãh tells His Prophet: *The truth is from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters* (2:147). We know that the Prophet was the first and foremost of those who were sure of the Divine signs and communications. Yet he was told not to be of the doubters. This mode is generally used to show that the subject is so clear, so well-known and so well established that there is no room for any conflicting thought to come into mind.

THE LIFE OF *AL-BARZAKH*

This verse clearly proves that man remains alive in *al-barzakh* (اَلبَرْزَخُ = the period between one's death and the Day of Resurrection). The same is the import of the other verse on this subject: *And reckon not those who are killed in Allãh's way as dead; nay, they are alive* (and) *are provided sustenance from their Lord* (3:169). Many other verses prove this reality and we shall mention some of them at the end of this essay.

A very strange interpretation has been given to this verse by some people. They say that it was revealed about the martyrs of Badr, and therefore it is reserved exclusively for those martyrs; it cannot be applied to others who are slain in the way of Allãh.

A scholar has made an interesting comment on this explanation. Writing about the preceding verse, "seek assistance through patience and prayer," he prays to Allãh to give him patience and forbearance to suffer such interpretations!

Would that I knew what do they mean by that explanation. On one hand, they say that man perishes after death or murder; when his body disintegrates, he becomes extinct. If so, then how could the martyrs of Badr remain alive after being slain? Was it as a miracle? Was it because Allãh had given them a distinction and excellence, which was denied to all the prophets, messengers and friends of Allãh, not expecting even the Holy Prophet of Islam? If there is no life after death, then keeping them alive after their martyrdom is not a miracle – it is an impossibility.

And a miracle does not cover an impossible thing. If it is asserted that such a self-evident preposition was negated for those martyrs, then no confidence can be put in any self-evident truth – let alone other principles.

Or, do they mean that people's perceptions were mistaken about the condition of those martyrs? The martyrs were alive, were getting sustenance from their Lord, were eating, drinking and enjoying all the comforts of life – far away from the range of people's perceptions. And what the people had seen and perceived with their senses – that the martyrs were killed, their bodies mutilated, their senses gone, and their physique disintegrated – was just a delusion, and nothing of this sort had happened in reality. If this is what they mean, if people's senses could be so deluded – perceiving correctly in one case and wrongly in another, without any differentiating cause – then no trust can be put in any of the senses at all. Then, may be, we will perceive a non-existent as existing and an existing thing as non-existent. How can a sensible person speak like that? It is nothing but sophistry.

However, that explanation somewhat follows the line adopted by a large group of the scholars of traditions. The latter believe that the things mentioned in the Qur'ãn and traditions, which are beyond our perception – like angels and souls of believers and other such things – are material and physical. They are ethereal bodies which may enter and penetrate dense and solid bodies, appearing thus in the form of man, for example, doing all that humans do; they possess powers and properties like ours, except that they are not governed by physical laws: they do not suffer any change or alteration, nor any composition or disintegration; they are not subject to natural life and death. When Allãh wants them to appear, they manifest themselves to our senses; and when He does not want so, or wants them not to appear, they do not appear. It depends entirely on a special will of Allãh; there is nothing in their senses, or in their "bodies", to tip the scale on this side or that.

Such an idea is based on rejection of the system of cause-and-effect in the world. If such assertions were true, then all the

intellectual realities, all the academic principles, will be null and void – not to speak of the fundamentals of religion. Even those "sublime ethereal bodies" (which are supposedly beyond the reach of cause-and-effect) will be negated.

The above description, however, proves that the verse speaks about the life of *al-barzakh;* it is also called the world of the grave, the period between one's death and the Day of Resurrection; it is the world where the dead person is rewarded or punished until the Day of Resurrection.

Some other verses speaking about *al-barzakh* are as follows:

1. There are the three verses already quoted: *And reckon not those who are killed in Allãh's way as dead; nay, they are alive* (and) *are provided sustenance from their Lord; Rejoicing in what Allãh has given them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of those who,* (being left) *behind them, have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. They rejoice on account of favour from Allãh and* (*His*) *grace, and that Allãh will not waste the reward of the believers* (3:169 – 171). We have already shown how these verses, being similar to the one under discussion, prove the life of *al-barzakh.* Those who think that these verses were revealed exclusively for the martyrs of Badr, should ponder on the wordings of these three, because they indicate that not only the martyrs but also other believers enjoy the life after death, and rejoice by favour and grace of Allãh bestowed on them.

2. *Until when death overtakes one of them, he says: "Send me back, my Lord, send me back: Haply I may do good in that which I have left." By no means! it is a* (mere) *word that he speaks; and before them is al-barzakh until the day they are reaised* (23:99 – 100). It very clearly shows that there is an intermediate life between this world's and the one which they will live after the Resurrection. Further explanation will be given when we shall write about this verse, Allãh willing.

3. *And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say: "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or* (*why*) *do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted a great revolt. On the day when they shall see the*

angels; (clearly it refers to the time when they will see the angels for the first time, that is, the time of death – as is described in many other verses;) *there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say: "It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited; And We shall proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust. The dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in a better abiding place and a better resting place. And on the day when the heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds;* (now it speaks about the Day of Resurrection;) *and the angels shall be sent down a sending. The kingdom on that day shall rightly belong to the Beneficent God, and a hard day shall it be for the unbelievers* (25:21–26). It very clearly proves the life of *al-barzakh.* Further details will be given in its proper place, Allãh willing.

4. *They shall say: "Our Lord! twice didst Thou give us death, and twice hast Thou given us life, so we do confess our faults; is there then a way to get out?"* (40:11). They will say it on the Day of Resurrection. It means that by that time there would be two deaths and two lives. It can be explained only if we accept the life and death of *al-barzakh.* Otherwise, there shall be only one death between this life and that of the Day of Resurrection. We have explained it to some extent under the verse: *How do you deny Allãh and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause you to die and again bring you to life; then you shall be brought back to Him* (2:28).

5. *. . . and the most evil punishment overtook Pharaoh's people: The Fire, they are brought before it* (every) *morning and evening; and on the day when the hour shall come to pass: Make Pharaoh's people enter the severest chastisement* (40:46). It is known that the Day of Resurrection shall have no morning or evening. Clearly, *the day when the hour shall come to pass,* that is, the Day of Resurrection is other than the day of *al-barzakh* which has the mornings and evenings.

There are many other verses which indicate, or from which we may infer, this reality. For example: *By Allãh, most certainly We sent* (messengers) *to nations before, but the Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian today,*

and they shall have a painful punishment (16 :63).

THE IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL

The verse under discussion, as well as those quoted above, points to another more comprehensive reality and that is the immateriality of the soul. The soul is something other than matter and body; it is beyond the jurisdiction of the rules governing matter and body, or those affecting various material compounds and mixtures. Yet, it has a special relationship with the body – keeping it alive, managing its multifarious functions and activities and enabling it to perceive and feel. Ponder on the earlier quoted verses and you will see this reality. The verses imply that man, *per se, is* not the body; he does not die when the body dies, he does not perish when the body perishes. The body disintegrates, its parts are scattered, but the "man" continues. Even after the death of his body, he continues to live, either in eternal bliss and everlasting felicity and grace, or in never ending misery and painful chastisement. That bliss or misery is based on his traits, trends, characteristics and actions, which he had acquired and done in this world's life – not in his bodily accomplishments or social achievements.

These themes are understood from the above-mentioned verses. Obviously, these traits are totally different from those of the body, and are diametrically opposed to worldly and material characteristics. Thus, the human soul is different from his body.

Also, the verse 39:42 points to this fact: *Allãh takes completely the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep; then He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of death and sends the other back till an appointed term. "at-Tawaffiyy"* (اَلتَّوَفِّيّ) and *"al-iṣṭīfã'* (اَلإصْطِفَاءُ) both have the same meaning – to take and realize one's right fully and completely. The words used here in reference to the soul – "takes", "withholds" and "sends back" – clearly prove that the soul is something different from the body.

Another verse: *And they say: "What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new creation?"*

Nay! they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say: "The angel of death who is given charge of you shall take you completely, then to your Lord you shall be brought back" (32:10 – 11). In this verse, Allãh mentions one of the misgivings of those who do not believe in the Resurrection; and then tells His Messenger how to clear their doubt. They said: When we die, our body disintegrates, our limbs and organs are destroyed, nothing remains of our original form, and all our parts are scattered here and there in the earth. No one can then perceive us nor can anyone feel us. How is it possible for us, after such a total destruction, to be created a second time? This doubt is based on a feeling of improbability. Allãh shows the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) how to remove that misgiving: *Say: "The angel of death. . . be brought back."* There is an angel who has been given charge of you; he shall take you completely; he will not let you be lost, as you shall be under his protection, his control; what is lost in the earth is your body, not your soul or person (the reality which is referred to by the word "you"), because the angel of death shall take "you" completely.

One more verse: Allãh says, mentioning the creation of man: *Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit . . .* (32:9). Read it in conjunction with the verse: *And they ask you about the soul. Say: "The soul is from the command of my Lord"* (17:85). The soul, therefore, is from the command of Allãh, and that command has been explained and defined in these words: *His command, when He intends anything is only that He says to it: "Be", and it is. Therefore, glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of everything.. .* (36:82 – 83). The soul is from the kingdom and it is the word, "Be". In another place, the command is further explained in these words: *And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye* (54:50). The phrase, *as the twinkling of an eye,* shows that the command, that is, the word "Be", is an instantaneous, not a gradual, being. It comes into being at once, and is not bound with the chain of time and space.

It is thus evident that the command including the soul – is different from body, is something immaterial. We know

that the material things come into being gradually and are fettered with time and space. Obviously, the human soul is not a material thing and is different from the body, although it has a special relationship with the body.

There are some verses which show the nature of that relationship. Allãh says: *From it* (the earth) *We created you . . .* (20:55) ; *He created man from dry clay like earthen vessels . . .* (55 :14) ; *. . . and He began the creation of man from dust, then He made his progeny from an extract of water held in light estimation* (32:7 – 8); *And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting place, then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made* (in) *the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation; so blessed be Allãh, the best of creators* (23:12 – 14).

The verses show that man, in the beginning was but a material body, changing into various forms; then Allãh made that body into another creation – a creation that has got perception and feeling; now he perceives and wills, thinks and acts according to his thoughts and ideas; he manages and manipulates the things around him as he likes. These activities and authority are beyond the power of body and matter. Obviously, neither of these activities emanate from body and matter nor does their doer.

We may say that the soul has the same relation to the body – from which it emanates – as a fruit has to its tree, or a lamp flame has to its oil. But these similes are a bit far-fetched. How-ever, these illustrations serve to show the nature of the relation between the soul and the body – how it is attached to the body in the beginning and how that connection is severed on death.

In short, the soul, in the beginning, is the body itself, then it grows into another creation, and lastly it becomes completely independent and separate from the body on death. These facts are understood from the above-mentioned Qur'ãnic verses; there are many other verses which allude to and imply this reality, and one may find them on reading the Qur'ãn with open eyes. And Allãh is the Guide.

QUR'ÃN: *And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits:* Allãh told them to seek assistance through patience and prayer and forbade them to say about those who are slain in His way that they are dead because those martyrs were in fact alive. Now, He explains why He has informed them of these realities. It is because the believers were soon to be tried and tested by fighting in the way of Allãh. It was by *al-jihãd* that they would reach the pinnacle of their virtues; their noble lives would not be worth living except with *al-jihãd.* The upright religion could not gain strength but with fighting. And while engaged in fighting, their efforts would not be crowned with success unless they were helped by those two helpers, that is, patience and prayer, and were further strengthened by a third factor, that is, the belief that their martyr is neither dead nor lost, and that their endeavours with their wealth and souls is neither forfeited nor fruitless. If they kill their enemy, they will remain alive while their enemy is destroyed; in this way they would be safe from the rule of injustice and false-hood which the enemy wanted to impose on them. And if they are killed in this endeavour, again they will remain alive for ever and equally safe from that unjust and wrong rule. In either case, they shall enjoy one of the two most excellent things.

Generally, the afflictions consist of fear, hunger and loss of properties and lives. As for the loss of fruits, apparently it means loss of children. When fighting occurs, its most telling result is not the loss of fruits but that of progeny, as the men and especially the youths are killed.

Some exegetes have said that the word "fruits" refers to the dates, and the "property" to other possessions, for example, camels, goats and sheep.

QUR'ÃN: *and give good news to the patient ones who, when a misfortunate befalls them, say: "Surely we are Allãh's and to Him we shall surely return". Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course:* The patient ones are again mentioned in these verses so that Allãh may give them good news to begin with,

and then may teach them the way of good patience, and thirdly, may explain to them why patience is essential – it is because Allãh owns the man – and fourthly, may declare what is its overall recompense, that is, blessing, mercy and being guided aright.

Allãh first told His Prophet to give them good news; but did not disclose what was that good news about. This was to show the greatness of the subject matter – it is from Allãh, therefore, it must be about something specially good, great and beautiful. Moreover, it is something which Allãh Himself has guaranteed.

Thereafter, He said that the patient ones are those who say these words when misfortune befalls them. *"al-Muṣībah"* (اَلمُصِيْبَةُ = translated here as misfortune) is any happening that occurs to a man; but it is always used for a distressing happening. "Who . . . say: 'Surely we are Allãh's . . .' ": The word "say" as used here does not mean mere utterance of the sentence with-out keeping its meaning in mind. Even understanding its meaning is not sufficient, unless one penetrates to the depth of its reality. And that is that man is owned by Allãh – in real ownership – and that he is surely to return to Allãh, his Master. If this feeling takes deep root in his heart, the man will observe the highest degree of patience; sorrow, fear and anguish will be totally eradicated, and the rust of heedlessness will be removed from the heart. How?

Man and all his faculties, actions and other concomitants of existence, are there because of Allãh. He is his Creator and Originator. Man exists because of Allãh, and is dependent on Him in all his affairs and conditions. He does not have any existence or continuity independent of Allãh. The Master has the right to manage His slave's affairs in any way He likes; the slave has no authority whatsoever in his own affairs, because he has no independence at all. Allãh owns him; He is the real Owner of man's existence, faculties and actions.

Then Allãh allowed man to ascribe his "self" to himself as a property is ascribed to its owner. That is why it is said that "man has existence". In the same way, He permitted him to ascribe his faculties and actions to himself. Accordingly, it is

said that "man has faculties like hearing and sight", or "he does some actions like: walking, speaking, eating and hearing". Without the Divine permission neither man nor anything else could "own" any such ascription or attribution, because nothing exists without the Divine permission, or independent of Allãh's will.

Allãh has also informed us that ultimately all things will revert to their original status – the state before Allãh allowed them to be attributed to one or the other creature – and then no ownership will remain there except that of Allãh, as He says: *To whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (of all) (40:16). It shows that man – together with all that "belongs" to him or is with him – is to return to Allãh.

In short, there is a "real" ownership; it is reserved for Allãh, nobody – be he a man or something else – shares it with Him. And there is an "apparent" ownership, for example, man "owns" his own "self" as well as his children and properties etc. But the real ownership is of Allãh, and man owns them in form and appearance only – and that also because Allãh has allowed such attribution. Thus, when man rememebers the reality of Divine ownership, and then looks at his own "self", he knows that he is wholly and totally owned by Allãh. Then, he realizes that his "apparent" ownership – of his "self" as well as of his children and properties, etc. – will soon cease to exist, will become null and void; it will return to his Lord. Then, he will understand that ultimately he owns nothing, either in reality or in appearance. In this back-ground, there is no reason why he should grieve if he is afflicted with some misfortune. One may be affected only by something which one owns – feeling happiness when it is found or sorrow if it is lost. But when he believes that he owns nothing, he shall not be affected by finding it or losing it. How can he be afflicted by any loss when he believes that Allãh is the real Owner of every-thing, and He may manage His property in any way He likes?

THE ETHICS

The ethics entail betterment of morals and psychic traits – both in theory and practice. Man acquires the good morals and

removes the evil traits by repeatedly doing good – and relevant – deeds, and their continuous observance. Repeated and continuous performance of an action etches its particular knowledge on the psyche. Gradually, a picture is engraved on the mind which becomes impossible – or extremely difficult – to erase. Habits become second nature. For example, if a man wants to remove the trait of cowardice and acquire that of bravery, he should repeatedly plunge himself into difficulties and dangers. When-ever he would rush into a perilous and hazardous situation and finds himself coming out unscathed, he would acquire the taste of boldness and courage; and would understand the ignominy of flight, of taking to one's heels. Every such bold step would leave its mark on his psyche and ultimately bravery and courage would become an integral part of his character. Man has no power to acquire such traits by his own will; yet it may be counted as within his power inasmuch as its preliminary steps – those repeatedly performed deeds – emanate from his will and power.

There are two universally recognized systems to acquire high moral standards and noble manners.

First System: Many people base their moral science on good worldly foundations, that is, the knowledge, ideas and ideals which are thought praiseworthy and laudable in the society. They acquire a good trait because it is commendable in the eyes of the people. Chastity, contentedness with what is in one's hand and not looking at what others have – all these virtues create respect and honour in the people's eyes, and one's standing is enhanced in public. Avarice results in poverty and privation. Greed destroys one's prestige. Knowledge attracts people and bestows respect and dignity in the eyes of elite; it opens the eyes of the knowledgeable person, and protects him from unpleasant things. Ignorance, on the other hand, is blindness. Knowledge protects you while riches need your protection. Bravery makes you stead-fast and saves you from fickleness; this in its turn makes people sing your praise – no matter whether you win or lose. Cowardness and rashness both cause opposite effect. Justice gives peace of mind, and keep man alive even after his death inasmuch as his good name continues and his

love pulsates in people's hearts generation after generation.

This is the well-known basis on which the moral science is founded. Ancients like Greek philosophers followed this very system.

The Qur'ãn does not endorse this system, because it depends on the like and the dislike of the public. It looks at what is good in the eyes of the people and what is bad – and accepts the former and rejects the latter. Even in a few verses where the Qur'ãn appears to use this method, it really refers to the next world's reward or punishment. Ponder, for example, on the following verses:-

. . . and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, so that people shall have no argument against you . . . (2:150). Here Allãh exhorts the Muslims to remain steadfast and firm, and for its reason, He says: "so that people shall have no argument against you".

. . . and do not quarrel, for then you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart, and be patient . . . (8:46). Allãh tells the believers to be patient, as impatience and quarrelling among themselves would weaken their hearts, dilute their power and embolden their enemy.

And whoever is patient and forgiving, that most surely is an act of great resolution (42:43). Here Allãh invites the believers to patience and forgiveness and explains its reason in terms of determination and resolution.

Second System: The second system is to keep in sight the other worldly goals. Allãh has used it in many verses of the Qur'ãn:

> *Surely Allãh has bought of the believers their persons and their properties for this, that they shall have the garden. . .* (9:111)
>
> *. . . only the patient ones will be paid back their reward in full without measure.* (39:10)
>
> *. . . surely it is the unjust that shall have a painful punishment.* (14:22)
>
> *Allãh is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and* (as to) *those who*

disbelieve, their guardians are the rebels, they take them out of the light into the darkness. . . (2:257)

There are many verses, on different subjects, which imply the same theme.

We may add here another set of the verses. For example, *No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence; surely that is easy to Allãh* (57:22). This verse exhorts man not to feel any sorrow (or joy) on whatever misfortune (or good thing) comes to him; what has come to him, could not be averted, and what-ever has been lost could not be obtained, because all happenings occur by a firm Divine Decree which is unavoidable. Sorrow and joy both seem, in this background, meaningless – a believer should not indulge in these vain practices because he believes in Allãh and knows that all affairs are in His hands. Allãh says: *No affliction comes about but by Allãh's permission; and whoever believes in Allãh, He guides aright his heart* (64:11). Such verses, like the earlier quoted ones, create high morals by pointing to the sublime goals of the next world. These other worldly goals are real, not imaginary, perfections. These verses reform the human character by fixing man's attention to the real already existing causes like the Divine measure and decree, adoptation of the Divine characteristics and remembrance of the good names of Allãh and His sublime attributes.

Question: Belief in causality of such things as the Divine measure and decree negates the rules governing this life in which we have been given freedom of will and power. This, in its turn, nullifies the noble morals and disturbs the system of this physical world. If man may rely, in acquiring such good traits as patience and steadfastness, and in refraining from sorrow and joy, on the fact that all things to happen are already firmly decreed and written in the "preserved tablet", then the same argument may be used if one does not endeavour to earn one's livelihood, to acquire good characteristics, or to refrain from bad habits. He will sit idle not caring to do any work, and not striving to defend the truth and right. His only reply to all exhortations will be that whatever was

happening was already written and decreed. In this way he will neglect acquiring noble characteristics and discarding evil traits. It will be a negation of every perfection.

Reply: What we have written on the subject of "Decree", is sufficient to clear this misunderstanding. We have explained there that man's actions are integral parts of the causes of the events and effects. Effects cannot happen without their causes. It would be a manifest error to say: Satiation of hunger is either decreed to happen or decreed not to happen; and in either case, it is useless to eat. We know that satiation of hunger cannot occur unless one takes one's food – and eating is an action with-in one's power, and is a part of the causes of satiation. It is foolishness to expect an effect to appear when one has neglected or negated all or part of its causes.

It is wrong for a man to neglect and negate the principles of "free will and power", which is the king-pin of this worldly life, and to which are attributed its felicity and infelicity. It is a part of the causes of the events which happen to a man through his actions (or through the conditions and traits resulting from his actions). He cannot say that his will and power are not a part of the causes of events happening to him, or that they have no effect on those happenings. In the same way, it is wrong to claim that his power is the complete, or the only, cause of the events and that nothing else has any influence on those events. One should not forget that there are countless things happening in the world which have influence on one's circumstances, conditions and the related events, and that the Divine Will is the foremost among them. If one were to forget this reality, one would be entrapped in many evil traits, like: conceit, pride, miserliness, joy, sorrow and grief, etc.

The ignorant man says: "I did this; I left that." Thus, he falls victim of conceit, shows arrogance to others or does not spend his money on necessary things. He is heedless to the fact that there are thousands and thousands of other causes – apart from his imperfect "power" – absence of any one of which would nullify the effects of his "power". He says: "Had I done this, I would have avoided this loss; had I done so, I would have gained that."

He does not realize that prevention of loss or death depends on thousands and thousands of causes, and even if one of them is absent, the dreaded loss or death is bound to occur, man's own power notwithstanding. Moreover, man's power itself depends on numerous causes which are beyond his power. In short, man's power is not by his power.

The above explanation is a Qur'ãnic reality, and, as mentioned earlier, it is derived from the Divine teachings. When you know this fact and ponder on the relevant verses, you will see that the Qur'ãn attributes only some of the good characteristics to the firm decree and the preserved tablet, while it does not attribute other traits to the above-mentioned Divine Decree. There are some actions, conditions and traits which, if attributed to the Divine Decree and Measure, would nullify the principle of free will; and accordingly the Qur'ãn never attributes them to the Divine Decree; rather, it refutes it with full force. For example :

> *And when they commit an indecency they say: "We found our fathers doing this, and Allãh has enjoined it on us." Say: "Surely, Allãh does not enjoin indecency; do you say against Allãh what you do not know?"* (7:28)

On the other hand there are some actions, etc. which, if not attributed to the Divine Decree, would imply that man had complete freedom, that his will and power were the sufficient cause of his actions, etc. and were independent of every outside cause. The Qur'ãn, therefore, pointedly ascribes them to the Divine Decree, and thus guides the man to the straight path – a path which does not confuse the walker. In this way, the Qur'ãn removes from him the base characteristics which would have resulted from that wrong ideas. For example, it attributes the happenings to the Divine Decree, in order that man should not ignorantly feel joy for what he gets or sorrow for what he loses. Allãh says: *and give them of the wealth of Allãh which He has given you* (24:33) ; note that Allãh exhorts man to be generous, by reminding him that his wealth has come to him from Allãh. Also, He says: . . . *and spend* (benevolently) *out of what We have given them* (2:3) *;* the verse calls him to spend by attributing the

wealth to the sustenance given by Allãh. Again, He says: *Then may be you kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement. Surely, We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* (as to) *which of them is best in deed* (18:6-7). In these verses Allãh tells His Prophet not to grieve because of the unbelievers' disbelief, reminding him that their disbelief does not mean that they have overpowered Allãh; the fact is that what-ever is on the earth has been made and put there by Allãh for the purpose of test and trial.

This system of ethics is the one used by the prophets, and a lot of its examples may be found in the Holy Qur'ãn and other Divine Books.

There is a third system, which is found exclusively in the Qur'ãn; it is neither seen in the Divine Books which have been transmitted to us, nor in the teachings of the previous prophets (peace of Allãh be on them!); nor is it seen in the knowledge which has come to us from divine scholars. In this system, man is trained in character and knowledge, and the knowledge is used in a way that does not leave room for base and low traits. In other words, this system removes the vile characteristics, not by repulsing them, but by eliminating all motives other than Allãh.

Let us explain it in this way: What is the motive of a work done for other than Allãh? It may be honour and might of the 'other than Allãh', which the doer of that work longs for. Or his power which he is afraid of. But Allãh says: *Surely might is wholly Allãh's* (10:65) ; *that the power is wholly Allãh's* (2:165). And when one is imbued with this true knowledge, there will remain no question of doing any deed for letting others see, or hear about it; nor will there be any reason why he should fear, or look forward to, or rely on anyone other than Allãh. Once these two realities are firmly known to a man, his psyche will be cleansed from evils of theory and practice. It will rather be adorned by the positive traits, that is, good character and Divine characteristics; for example, fear of and reliance on Allãh, strength, self-respect, self-sufficiency and other such virtues.

The Qur'ãn has repeatedly said that the kingdom belongs

to Allãh, that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth is His, that to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, as we have explained several times. Evidently, this kingdom does not leave any independence to anything, nor does it allow the creatures any freedom from want – except through Allãh. Look at anything ; you will see that Allãh is the Owner of its person and of all its concomitants. When a man believes in that owner-ship and this belief becomes firmly-rooted in his heart, he does not admit that anything has got any independence at all – in its person, characteristics or activities. Such a man cannot look except at the face of Allãh, nor can he bow down before, hope for, or have fear of, anything other than Allãh. He will not enjoy or be pleased with any other thing, nor will he rely on, or surrender to, anyone but Allãh. In short, he will not desire or wish for anything except Allãh – the Eternal One Who will remain when everything will perish; he will surely turn away from all the false-hood, that is, from everything other than Allãh; he will not attach any importance to his own existence nor will he care for himself in face of the Absolute Truth, that is, the eternal existence of his Creator – Great is His Glory.

The same is the import of the following verses:

Allãh is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names (20:8) ;

That is Allãh, your Lord, there is no god but He; the Creator of all things (6:102) ;

. . . Who made good everything that He has created (32:7)*;*

And the faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God (20:111) ;

. . . all are obedient to Him (2:116) ;

And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship (any) *but Him* (17:23);

. . . is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things? (41:53) ;

. . . now surely He encompasses all things (41:54) ;

And that to your Lord is the end goal (53:42).

And the same is the import of the verses under discussion, that is, “and give good news to the patient ones, who when a misfortune

befalls them, say: 'Surely we are Allãh's and to Him we shall return.' Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course."

These and similar other verses contain a unique Divine Knowledge, and produce some real and especial results. Their system is not like any other which a moralist might employ, nor even like that used by previous prophets in their teachings. According to the moralists, virtue and evil are based on the public's likes and dislikes; and the prophets based their teachings on the general religious beliefs concerning the rules of the *sharī'ah* and their recompense. But this third system is based on pure and perfect monotheism and it has been used exclusively by Islam – the best of blessings be on its Prophet and his progeny !

A western orientalist has expressed a really strange and astonishing idea in his History where he discusses the Islamic civilization. A gist of his observation is as follows:

"A scholar should concern himself only with various aspects of civilization which were developed by Islam among its followers, and the excellence and superiority which were its legacy to the Muslims in the form of a developed society and high culture. As for the religious precepts which Islam teaches, they are merely the moral teachings which are common to all religions and which were popularized by all the prophets."

COMMENT: The explanation given by us shows how unfounded his opinion is and how confused his views are. The result emerges from its premises; the effects of training emanate from the knowledge acquired by the trainee. As mentioned earlier, there are three types of the teachers of ethics: one invites to a reality of a low grade, another to an average perfection and the third to the pristine reality and highest perfection. Can it be said that the results of all three will be the same? In other words, the scholars of ethics call the people to the sociological truth; the prophets call mankind to the actual truth and real perfection by which it may get the eternal bliss in the life hereafter; but the Islam invites the people to the Absolute Reality, that is, Allãh Himself, and teaches them ethical values by reminding them that

Allãh is One, and there is no partner in His divinity; this belief produces in man the purest servitude. Now you see how dissimilar are the systems employed by the three groups, and how different are the results.

This Islamic system created an admirable social structure, and produced a multitude of good servants, divine scholars and Allãh's friends – men and women alike. And this single factor is sufficient to ensure the distinguished position of Islam.

Moreover, this stystem sometimes differ from the other two in its result also. It is based on the love a servant has for his Lord; it teaches him to give preference to his Lord's wishes over his own. We know that love and enthralment sometimes lure the lover to do things which are not approved by social wisdom (which is the basis of the social ethics), nor are they commended by common sense on which is founded the general religious commandments. Reason has its own rules and love its own. We shall further explain it in some other place, Allãh willing.

QUR'ÃN: *Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course.* It appears from meditation on these words that blessings is to a certain extent different from mercy – look how "blessings" has been used in plural and "mercy" in singular. Allãh says: *He it is Who sends His blessings on you, and* (*so* do) *His angels, that He may bring you forth out of utter darkness into the light; and He is Merciful to the believers* (33:43). The context shows that the sentence, "and He is Merciful to the believers", gives the reason of the preceding phrases, "He it is Who sends His blessings on you." The meaning therefore, is as follows: Allãh sends His blessings on you; and it is as it should be, because He is Merciful to the believers, and you are believers; therefore, He sends His blessings on you, to show His mercy to you.

The position of blessing *vis-à-vis* mercy is like that of a premise in relation to its result, or of a glance in comparison to seeing, or of throwing into fire *vis-à-vis* burning. It is in conformity with the explanation, given by some writers of *as-salah* (اَلصَّلٰوةُ = the blessing), that it really means turning towards, inclination.

Blessing from Allãh means that He turns towards the servant with mercy; when attributed to angels it connotes their turning towards a man and becoming a medium to convey Allãh's mercy to him; and when ascribed to man, it means turning to the Lord calling Him with humility. However, it does not mean that blessing itself is not mercy or an example of mercy. Pondering on the usage of "mercy" in the Qur'ãn, we find that it is the comprehensive gift of Allãh, the All-encompassing Divine Bounty. Allãh says: *and* My *mercy encompasses all things* (7:156) ; also, He says: *And your Lord is the self-sufficient one, the Lord of mercy; if He pleases, He may take you off, and make whom He pleases successors after you, even as He raised you up from the seed of another people* (6:133). He may take you off because He is Self-sufficient, He does not need you; and He may make others succeed you, as He had raised you up, because He is Merciful. Even then both aspects are attributed to His mercy, and at the same time they may be attributed to His Self-sufficiency. Every creation – be it from matter or without matter – is a mercy, and also a gift and bounty emanating from His Self-sufficiency.

Allãh says: *and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:20). And one of His bounties is *as-salãh* (the blessing) ; this too is a mercy, but of a especial type. Probably this is the reason why in the verse under discussion, "blessings" has been used in plural and "mercy" in singular.

QUR'ÃN: *and they are the followers of the right course.* It looks like the result of the preceding clause, "Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord". That is why Allãh did not say, 'on whom are blessing and mercy from their Lord and guidance'; instead He described it in a separate sentence. Also, He did not say, 'and they are *al-mahdiyyũn* (اَلمَهْدِيّـُونَ = the rightly guided ones)'; instead their acceptance of guidance has been denoted with the word *al-muhtadũn* (اَلمُهْتَـدُونَ = followers of the right course), because "following" describes the next stage, coming after and resulting from "guidance". Evidently, the mercy of Allãh consisted of guiding them to Himself; the blessings were like the preliminaries of that guidance, and their following that right course

was the result of that guidance. Thus, the blessings, the mercy and the following of the right course, all are different from one another, although looking from another angle all three were but Divine Mercy.

Allãh gives good news to these believers of His bestowal of honours to them. To clearly understand the whole sequence, look at the following example: You see in the way a friend of yours who wants to come to your house to be your guest, and is making enquiries as to how to reach your home. You meet him with smiling face, take him to the proper path, walking with him, not leaving him alone lest he loses the way; this continues until you bring him to your house; while on the way, you tend to his needs and look after his meals and transport, and protect him from every hardship and trouble. All these things taken together are called "hospitality" accorded to him; and every care taken of him is a particular care and hospitality; for example, showing him the way is separate from hospitality and care – and even then it is a hospitality. Each of the above acts is a care, and each is a guidance and each is a particular hospitality – and all together come under one word, "hospitality". Applying this example to this verse, the one comprehensive hospitality is like the mercy, and every attention paid to the friend is like the blessings and his being your guest in your house is like the "following the right course".

Many syntactical devices of this sentence point to the prestige and rank of those believers: First, it is a nominal clause; second, it begins with a demonstrative pronoun used for distant objects; third, that pronoun has been reinforced with a separate personal pronoun; and fourth, the predicate begins with the definite article.

TRADITIONS

About al-Barzakh and the Soul's Life after Death:

Suwayd ibn Ghaflah narrates from the Commander of the faithfuls ('Ali, a.s.) that he said: "Surely, when the son of Ãdam comes to (his) last day of this world and the first of the next,

his property, his children and his actions are portrayed before him. So he turns to his property and says: 'By God! I was covetous of you (and) avaricious; so what have you (now) got for me?' (The property) says: 'Take your shroud from me'. Then he turns to his children and says: 'By God! Surely I was your loving (father), and I was your protector; now what have you got for me?' They say: 'We shall convey you to your pit (i.e., grave) and bury you in it.' Then he turns to his deeds and says: 'By God! I was indifferent to you, and you were distasteful to me; (now) what is with you (for me)?' So it says: 'I am your companion in your grave as well as on the Day of your gathering – until I am presented with you before your Lord.' Then (after his death), if he is a friend of Allãh, there comes to him (a visitor), the most sweet-scented of all people, of the most beautiful appearance and (wearing) the most adorned apparel, and says to him: 'Rejoice with refreshment from Allãh, and flowers and the garden of bounties; you arrived a good arrival' (i.e., welcome to you). Thereupon, he says: 'Who are you?' (The visitor) says: 'I am your good deed. Proceed from the world to the garden.' And he recognizes the one who washes his body, and earnestly appeals to his carrier (the bier-bearer) to hasten him (to the grave). Then when he enters his grave, two angels come to him – and they are the examiners of the grave – with elegantly-dressed hairs, writing on the earth with their teeth; their voices are like roaring thunder and their eyes like streaking lightening. They ask him: 'Who is your Lord? And who is your prophet? And what is your religion?' And he says: 'Allãh is my Lord; and Muhammad is my prophet; and Islam is my religion.' So they say: 'May Allãh confirm you in what you like and are pleased with!' And this is (the meaning of) the word of Allãh: *Allãh confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter* . . . (14:27). Then they make his grave spacious for him as far as his eye can see, and open for him a gate to the garden, and say to him: 'Sleep happily the sleep of a fine-looking youth.' And it is the word of Allãh: *The dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in a better abiding place and a better resting place.* (25:24)

"And if he is an enemy of his Lord, then comes to him a

(visitor), the ugliest of the creatures of Allãh in attires and the foulest-smelling. And he tells him: 'Welcome to the entertainment of boiling water and roasting in Hell.' And he (the dead person) recognizes the one who washes his body, and earnestly appeals to his carrier (the bier-bearer) to hold him back. And when he is buried in his grave, the examiners of the grave come to him and remove his shroud from him. Then they ask him: 'Who is your Lord? And what is your religion? And who is your prophet? And he says: 'I do not know.' So they say to him: 'You did not know, nor were you on the right path.' Then they hit him with an iron-rod, a hitting which frightens every creature of Allãh – except the *jinn* and the men. Thereafter they open for him a door to the Hell and tell him: 'Sleep in the worst condition.' So he is squeezed in a narrow space like a shaft in an arrow-head, until his brain comes out from between his nails and flesh; and Allãh sets on him the serpents of the earth and its scorpions and insects which go on biting him until Allãh will raise him from his grave – and he will long for the advent of the Hour, because of the trouble in which he finds himself." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummi)

Abu Bakr al-Ḥaḍrami narrates from Abu Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "No one shall be questioned in the grave except he who shall be of pure belief or of total disbelief." I told him: "And (what about) the rest of the men?" He said: "They will be kept in oblivion." (*Muntakhab Basã'iri 'd-darajãt*)

Ibn Ẓubyãn says: "I was with Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.), and he said: 'What do the people say about the souls of the believers after they die?' I said: 'They say (that the souls are placed) in the craws of green birds.' He said: 'Glory be to Allãh! The believer is far more honourable near Allãh than this! When it happens (i.e., when the believer dies) there come to him the Messenger of Allãh and Ali and Fãṭimah and Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (peace be on them), and with them (come) the angels of the Mighty and Glorious Allãh (who are near to him). So, if Allãh lets his tongue speak the witness of His Oneness and the prophethood of the Prophet and the *al-walayah* (اَلوِلاَيَة = love, obedience) of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and 'Ali and Fãṭimah and Ḥasan and

Ḥusayn (peace be on them) and with them the near angels become his witnesses for it. And if his tongue is tied, Allãh confers on His Prophet the knowledge of what is in his (i.e., that believer's) heart of that (belief) ; so he (i.e., the Prophet) becomes his witness; and then bear testimony of Ali, Fãṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn – because of the testimony of the Prophet – on their group be the best peace from Allãh! and (so do) those angels who are present with them. When Allãh takes him to Himself, He sends that soul to the garden, in a shape similar to his (worldly) shape. They eat (there) and drink. When a new-corner comes to them, he recognizes them by that shape which they had in the world." (*al-Amãlī,* ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭũsī)

Ḥammãd ibn 'Uthmãn narrates from Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he described the souls of the believers and said: "They meet each other." I said: "They meet each other?" He said: "Yes! They ask each other and recognize each other, so that if you see one you will say, '(He is) so-and-so'." (*al-Maḥãsin*)

Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) said: "Verily, the believer visits his family and he sees what he likes; and what he dislikes is hidden from him. And verily the unbeliever visits his family and he sees what he dislikes; and what he likes is hidden from him." And he said: "There are some of them who visit (their families) every Friday; and there are others who visit according to their deeds." (*al-Kãfī*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Verily, the souls are, with the characteristic features of (their) bodies, in a tree of the garden; they know each other and enquire about each other. When a (new) soul comes to (those) souls, they say: 'Let it be, because it is coming from a great terrifying (experience).' Thereafter, they ask him: 'What has happened to so-and-so? What has so-and-so done?' If the soul tells them, 'I have left him alive', they hope for his (future arrival); and if it tells them, 'He had died', they say: 'He fell down (to Hell) ; he perished.' " (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions on the subject of *al-barzakh.* We have quoted above some comprehensive ones. There is a huge lot of nearly *mutawãtir*

traditions describing the above-mentioned meanings. These traditions prove that the life of *al-barzakh is* an immaterial one.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION ON IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL

Is the soul immaterial? The word "soul" in this discussion means that thing which every man refers to when he says "I". Its "immateriality" refers to the fact that it is not a material thing, it is neither divisible nor governed by time or space.

No doubt, I conceive in myself a concept which I refer to as "I"; and it is equally certain that every man has similar conception about himself. It is a conception which we are never oblivious of – as long As we are alive and conscious. It is not a limb of ours; nor is it a part of our body which we perceive by one of our senses or even through reason. In short, it is not like our external limbs which we feel with our senses of sight or touch, etc., nor is it like our internal organs which we know by senses or experiment. Sometimes we become oblivious of one or another of those limbs or organs – or even of the whole body. But we are never oblivious of the "I". It proves that the " I " is other than the body and its parts.

One thing more. Body and its limbs and parts as well as the faculties and characteristics found in it, are all material. One of the characteristics of matter is gradual change, dissolution and divisibility. If soul were body or a part thereof, it would have been material and subject to change and division – but it is not so. If a man looks at this vision of his "self " and then compares it with that which he used to look at since the beginning of his gnosis of the "self ", he will find that it is the same vision, the same notion, without the least change or plurality. It is unlike his body or its parts and characteristics which all undergo continuous change, in substance and form as well as in their conditions and positions. Also, he will realize that it is a notion, simple, indivisible and non-compound, unlike the body or its parts and characteristics. And matter and every material thing is a compound and divisible. Obviously, the soul is not body, nor is it a part of the body; it is

neither a development of the body nor one of its characteristics. Coming to matter again, it makes no difference whether we perceived it with a sense of ours or by reasoning, or did not perceive it at all – it is matter and material in any case. And matter is subject to change and divisibility. But we have seen that the vision which we call "soul" is not subject to any of the above characteristics of matter. Therefore, soul is neither matter nor material.

Also, this vision of "I" is a notion, simple and one; there is no plurality of parts therein, nor is there any extraneous item mixed with it; it is an absolute one. Every man finds it in him-self that he is he and not someone else. Therefore, this vision is a concept subsistent by itself, and distinct; it is beyond the definition of matter and is not subject to its characteristics and properties. It is *a al-jawhar* (اَلجَوْهَرُ = lit. "jewel"; technically, a thing that exists in reality and which is the bearer of the accidents), separate from matter; it has a connection with the body which makes it identifiable with the body – and it is the connection of management.

The above discourse proves our claims in this respect.

All the materialists and a group of Muslim theologians as well as the Zãhiristic traditionalists do not accept the immateriality of the soul. But what they have written in support of their view stretches the credulity too far.

Let us have a look at the arguments of the materialists.

They say: 1. The science has nowadays advanced to a previously-undreamt-of extent in its in-depth and minute researches of natural phenomena. It has found and pin-pointed a natural and material cause for every characteristic of the body. It has not found any psychological effect which could not be explained according to the material laws. This being the case, why should we believe in the existence of an immaterial soul?

2. The nervous system continuously conveys the perceptions to its centre (i.e., brain) with extreme rapidity. The vision thus perceived is a unified series, having a single position. The pictures formed in mind are substituted with such rapidity that one frame is not distinguishable from another; that is, mind does not realize

that the preceding frame has gone and been replaced by another. It is this composite "one", this illusory "unit", which we see and call our soul, and which we refer to as "I". It is true that it is other than all our limbs and organs; but it does not necessarily mean that it is other than body and its characteristics. The fact is that it is a composite series which appears to be one, because of continuous and rapid substitutions – and we are never oblivious of it, because such an oblivion would result in nullity of the nervous system – in other words, death.

Also, it is true that my vision of my "I" is constant. But it is not because there is a thing which is constant and unchanged. In fact, it is only an illusion resulting from a series of constantly and rapidly changing visions. Suppose there is a water-tank with an inlet and an outlet of the same diameter; water comes in from one side and goes out from the other, with exactly the same speed – and the tank seems always full. Our sense perceives the water as one, constant and unchanged unit, but in reality it is neither the same water nor is it constant and unchanged. Even if there is a reflection in the water, of a man, tree or some other object, it will look as unchanged, steady and constant, but actually it is not so – it is not one, it is gradually changing with the gradual change of the water. The same is the case of the apparent oneness, constancy and unchangeability which we see in our soul, self or "I".

3. The soul, for whose immateriality arguments have been offered, based on the inner vision, is in fact a composite of natural faculties and characteristics. It is the sum-total of nervous perceptions, which in their turn emanate from mutual action and reaction between external matter and nervous system. It is a composite unity, not the real one.

COMMENT: 1. It is true that the science, based on senses and experiments, with all its minute, delicate and in-depth researches, has not come across a "soul". Also, it is correct that it has not found any phenomenon which irresistibly led one to the soul as its cause. But these two premises do not prove that there is not an immaterial soul – after all, we have written earlier the proofs of

its existence. The natural sciences, which discuss the laws of nature and the properties of matter, are by definition limited to the researches concerning matter only, which is its subject. The apparatus and chemicals, etc. which sciences use to conduct and complete their tests and experiments, may throw light on matter and material affairs only. But by the same token these, sciences and their apparatus, etc. cannot pass any judgment – for or against – on metaphysical and immaterial concept and beings. Utmost that a natural science can say is that it did not find a soul. But "not finding" is not "non-existence". The natural sciences, by their definition, are not expected to find within their subject (i.e., within matter and its properties and characteristics) something beyond the limit of matter and physical nature.

In fact, their above-mentioned assertion emanates from a gross misunderstanding. They think that those who believed in the existence of soul, did so because they look at some biological functions of their limbs which they could not explain within the framework of their incomplete knowledge, and so they said that there was something immaterial, that is, the soul, that was the source of those functions. But now the science has developed by leaps and bounds and has pin-pointed the natural causes of all such functions. Therefore, there is no need now to believe in the putative soul. (It is the same trend of thought which they have followed while denying the existence of the Creator.)

Obviously, it is a wrong assumption. Those who believe in the existence of soul, do not do so because of that supposed difficulty; they do not ascribe some bodily function (of known causes) to the body, and some others (of unknown causes) to the soul. Rather, they ascribe all bodily functions to the body – directly – and to the soul – indirectly, through the body. They ascribe to the soul only one function which cannot be ascribed to the body in any way – man's gnosis of self and his vision of his person or "I".

2. They have said that the reality seen by man as one is, in fact, a series of nervous perceptions coming to the central nervous system one after another with extreme rapidity but their oneness

is only composite. But this assertion is quite irrelevant, and it has nothing to do with the vision of the self. We have argued on the strength of the vision of the self; they are talking about arrival of the sensual visions from the peripheral sense-organs to the central nervous system, and its results. Well, let us suppose, as they say, that actually there are many things, that is, perceptions which have no real oneness; and those perceptions are all material, there is nothing behind them except their own reality; and that the vision which is 'one soul' is in fact the sum-total of these numerous perceptions. If so, then where did this "one" come from – the one which is our only vision, whose "other" has never been perceived by us? Where did this perceived oneness come from?

The talk about "composite oneness" is more like a jest than a serious proposition. A "composite one" is in reality a collection of numerous things without any oneness at all. Its oneness is imaginary, as we may say one house or one line, which is not one in fact. What they say amounts to this: The perceptions and sensations which are pluralistic and manifold in themselves are one perceptions in itself.

It means that these perceptions are numerous in reality, having no oneness at all, and at the same time they are actually only one perception; there is nothing beyond these sensual perceptions to perceive them as one perception – unlike a sense or imagination which consecutively and collectively receives manifold sensory or imaginary perceptions, and perceives them as one. They claim that those manifold perceptions are in themselves one perception – there is no other faculty beyond them which treats this collective vision as a composite one. Also, it is not possible to say that that perceiving is done by a part of brain which perceives the pluralistic picture as "one" – because it will not remove our objection: The perception of that part of brain is itself a part of those consecutively and rapidly-perceived picture, and our objection covers that perception too. That part of brain does not possess a separate perception-power which would deal with these perceptions – as an external sense deals with the external matters and acquires through them sensory pictures. (Ponder on this point.)

Exactly the same arguments (as we have offered above against "oneness" of the sensual perceptions) apply with equal force against firmness and indivisibility of this vision which is always changing and divisible by its very nature.

Apart from that, the premises – that these manifold, consequently (and with extreme rapidity) perceived pictures are perceived by mental vision as one – is wrong in itself. What is brain or its faculties? What is perception and the perceived picture? All these things are material – and matter and material are in their quiddity manifold, changeable and divisible. But the gnosis of "self" is not subject to these material defects. Is it not strange that even then they claim that there is nothing beyond matter and material?

3. They have said that the senses or the perceiving faculties become confused and consequently perceive manifold, divisible and changing things as one indivisible and unchanging thing. But this assertion is manifestly wrong. Error or confusion is a relative – and not an absolute – effect which occurs when one thing is compared with another. For example, we perceive the celestial bodies as small bright dots. Of course, this perception is wrong as we know from academic proofs and our other perceptions. But this error is found out when we compare our sensory perception with the reality of these perceived luminous bodies. As far as that sensory perception itself is concerned, it is a reality – we are actually perceiving small bright dots. And to that extent there is no question of any error or confusion.

The subject under discussion is not different from the above-given example. When our senses and faculties look at numerous divisible and changing things and perceive them as one indivisible and unchanging thing, their confusion and error is found out only when that picture is compared with the real thing existing outside. But so far as the perceived picture found in that faculty or sense is concerned, it is undoubtedly one, unchanging and in-divisible – and such a thing cannot be material because it lacks the properties of matter and material.

In short, the above discourse shows that the argument offered by materialists on the basis of senses and experiment,

only proves that they could not find the soul. The fallacy is that they have proved 'not finding' and think that it proves 'non-existence'. Also, the picture painted by them to illustrate the vision of self or soul – the vision that is a single, simple and unchangeable reality – is irrelevant and wrong; that picture is in accord neither with established principles of materialism nor with the actual fact.

Now, we should have a look at the definition of soul or psyche as given by the psychologists. According to them, it is the unified condition resulting from the actions and reactions of various psychological activities – like perception, will, pleasure, love, etc. – which give rise to that unified condition. We have no-thing to say about this definition, because scholars of every branch of knowledge have right to postulate a subject for their scholarly pursuit and deliberation. And so have the psychologists.

Our concern is about the existence (or inexistence) of the soul in reality, quite independent of the assumptions of the thinkers. And it is a question within the domain of philosophy, not psychology.

There are some scholars of theology who believe that the soul is not immortal. They say: It has been established by the disciplines related to human life, like anatomy and physiology, that man's spiritual and biological characteristics emanate from live cells; those cells are the foundations of human and animal lives. Spirit or soul, therefore, is a characteristics and especial effect of those countless cells – each of which contains a life of its own. What the man calls his soul – and to which he refers as "I" – is a composite entity made up of countless souls. We know that these life conditions and spiritual characteristics cease to exist when the life-giving germs and cells die. In this back-ground, there is no question of a single immaterial soul or spirit which is supposed to continue even after the body dies. True that the principles of materialism, established after scientific researches, are yet unable to unravel the mysteries of life. There-fore, we may say that the physical causes are unable to create the soul, and accordingly, it may have been brought

into being by a metaphysical being. The attempt to prove the immateriality of the soul by purely rationalistic argument is unacceptable in the world of modern knowledge, which does not rely on anything other than the senses and experiments.

The author says: On meditation you will see that all the objections written against the materialists' arguments apply with equal force to this argument too. The following two objections are over and above that:

First: If the scientific research is uptil now unable to unravel the mysteries of soul and realities of life, it does not necessarily mean that it cannot do so even in future; nor that these spiritual characteristics are in fact not based on material causes – although we may not know it. Therefore, the theologians' argument is nothing but a fallacy by which they have equalized inexistence of knowledge with knowledge of inexistence.

Second: They seem to ascribe some worldly affairs – that is, the physical phenomena – to matter, and some others – that is, spiritual affairs – to a metaphysical cause, that is, the Creator. But it implies that there are two creators in the world. It is a proposition which is neither acceptable to the materialists nor the theists. And all the arguments of monotheism rebut such assumption.

There are some other objections against immateriality of soul, described in books of philosophy and theology; all of them show that the writers concerned have not pondered on the proof given by us, nor have they understood its main theme. That is why we have refrained from quoting and commenting on them here. Anyone desirous to know them should look into the books concerned. And Allãh is the Guide.

A DISCOURSE ON ETHICS

Ethics is the science which looks into human traits, related to man's vegetable, animal and human characteristics, and differentiates the good traits from the bad ones, in order that man may complete his practical happiness by acquiring the good traits; and thus emanate from him such actions as attract to him general praise from the human society.

Ethics shows that human morality finally belongs to three comprehensive faculties of man. These faculties lead the psyche to acquire practical knowledge, from which emanate all actions of the human species. These are the desire, anger and rational faculty. Human actions are divided into three categories: Either they are intended to gain some benefit, for example: eating, drinking and wearing clothes, etc. They issue forth from the faculty of desire; or they are aimed at protecting, or repulsing harmful effects from, one's person, honour or property, etc. These actions emanate from the faculty of anger. Or they are related to mental conception and proposition, for example, arranging syllogism, preparation of argument, etc. Such mental activities are caused by rational faculty. Man's personality is composed of these three faculties, and they, by joining together, emerge as a composite unit and become the source of all human activities and actions. In this way, man attains his felicity and happiness, which is the final cause of this composition.

It is therefore necessary for man not to let any of these three faculties deviate from the middle path to either the right or the left, not to allow any of these to exceed the limit or to be deficient – as it would disturb the ratio of that particular ingredient, which would result in changing the entire nature of the composite unit, that is, man himself. This would negate the reason for which the man was created, that is, the felicity of the whole species.

The middle course for any of the faculties is to use it as it should be – both in quantity and quality. The middle course for the faculty of desire is called continence, and its two sides of excess and deficiency are greed and undue quiescence, respectively. The middle course for the faculty of anger is bravery, and the two sides are rashness and cowardice. The middle course of the faculty of rationality is called wisdom, and the two sides are deception and dull-mindedness.

When the three good characteristics – continence, bravery and wisdom – combine in a man, a fourth characteristic is born, just as a new quality emerges when different ingredients of a medicine or mixture are blended together. And that quality is called justice. Justice gives each faculty its due right and puts it in its proper place.

Its two undesirable sides are inflicting injustice and surrendering to it.

These four – continence, bravery, wisdom and justice – are the roots of all virtuous characteristics, of good morality. Each of them has numerous branches which issue forth from it and belong to it. They have the same relationship with the above-mentioned roots as a species has with its genus. Examples of these branches are generosity and magnanimity, contentedness and gratitude, patience and gallantry, courage and modesty, sense of honour and sincerity, nobility and humility, and so on. These are the branches of virtuous characteristics, which are given in detail in the books of the Ethics. The following is a 'family-tree' showing its roots and branches, (see p. 231).

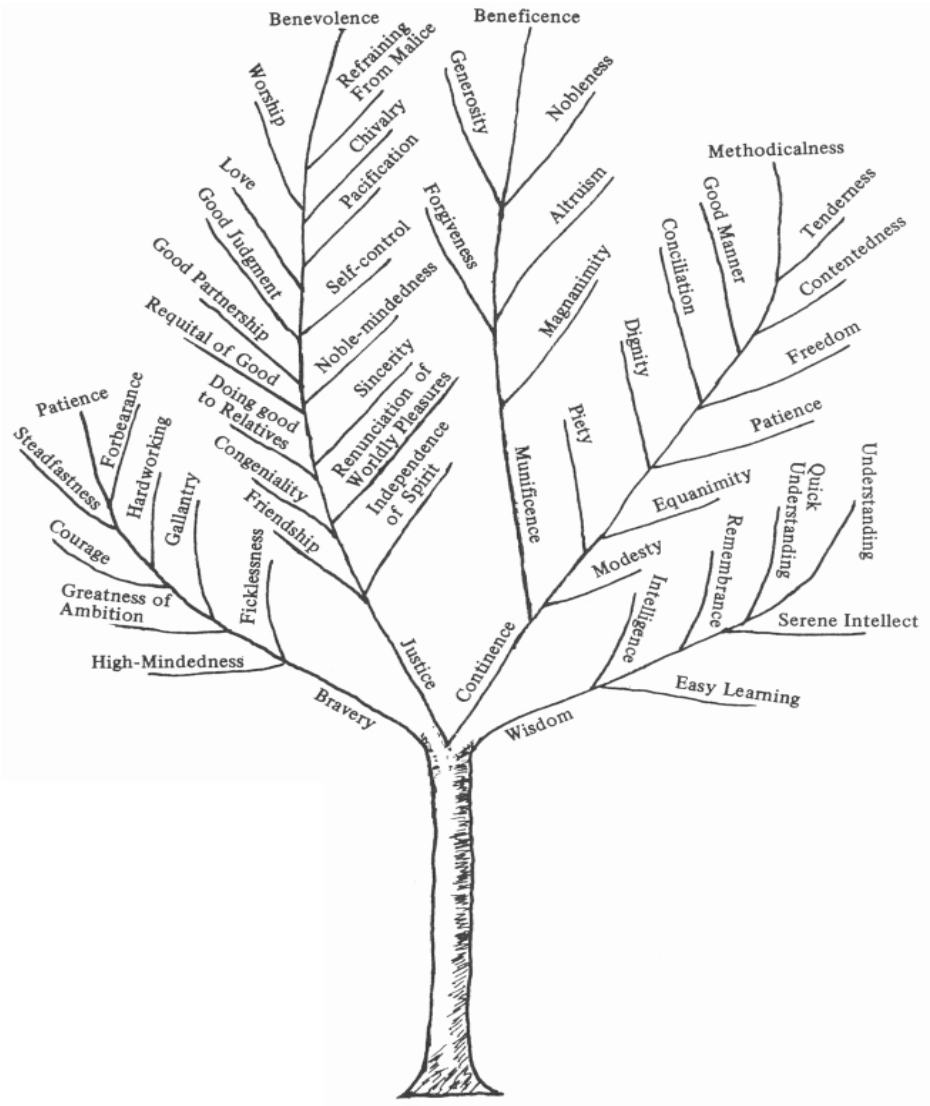
And the Ethics defines each of them and distinguishes the middle course from its two sides of excess and deficiency; then it explains why a virtue is virtue, then shows how it can be acquired, until it becomes a firm trait, that is, by firm belief that it is good and virtuous trait and by repeatedly practising it until it becomes a firmly-rooted characteristic of the soul.

For example: We say to a coward: Cowardice is born when the psyche is gripped by fear; and fear emanates from something which may happen or may not happen – in future; and such a thing, whose existence and inexistence both are equally possible, cannot be tipped to either side without a cause; a man of reason should not indulge in such fantasies; therefore, a man should not allow himself to be gripped by fear.

When a man teaches himself this theoretical aspect, and then repeatedly enters into dangerous situations and resolutely proceeds towards alarming perils, he soon gets rid of the bad trait of fear. The same is the case with all the virtues and evils.

The above description is based on the first system, as was explained in the commentary. That system tries to reform the character and to create a balance, a moderation, in moral traits, in order that the man may be praised and his virtues lauded by the society.

Somewhat similar is the approach of the second system



NOTE: since the author has described the branches of virtuous characteristics in the text in tree form, and in the explanatory figure (of the original work) he has also chosen the tree form representation, we therefore have duplicated the explanatory figure in the same manner (*pub.*)

brought by the prophets and the divine legislators. The only difference is in the aims and objects of the two systems. While the first system aims at acquiring a perfect trait because it is approved by the society and attracts praise from the people, the second one aims at achieving by it the genuine happiness for the man, that is, perfection of belief in Allãh and His signs, and the felicity of the next world, which is the real happiness and perfection. Yet, both systems are similar in that, the ultimate goal of both is the perfection of man in his character and morals.

As for the third system (which was explained earlier), it differs from the above two, in that it aims at seeking the pleasure of Allãh, not at achieving human perfection. Consequently, its goals sometimes differ from that of the earlier two systems. It is quite possible that what appears as the middle way from this point of view, may not look so from the other two angles. When the faith of a servant proceeds on this path of perfection, when it goes on from strength to strength, his soul is attracted towards meditation about his Lord; he keeps the beautiful Divine Names before his vision, and constantly looks at His lovely attributes which are free from every defect and deficiency; his soul is relentlessly attracted to Allãh going higher and higher in his meditation, until there comes a stage where he worships Allãh as though he (man) were looking at Allãh, and Allãh were looking towards him. At this stage he feels the Divine Presence in his attraction, meditation and love. The love increases from strength to strength, because man by nature loves beauty. Allãh has said: *and those who believe are stronger in* (their) *love for Allãh* (2 :165). Such a man begins following the Messenger of Allãh in all his doings, in every situation, because love of a thing results in the love of its signs, and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) is the wonderful sign of Allãh. (In fact, the whole universe is a sign and token of Allãh.) This love becomes stronger and stronger until a time comes when the servant cuts himself from every thing, in devotion of Allãh; he loves nothing except his Lord, he bows before none other than Allãh. Whenever such a man looks at a thing which has some beauty and attraction, he finds in it a sample – although imperfect – of the Divine Beauty. He knows that it is but a reflection

of the inexhaustible perfection, the unending beauty and incomprehensible splendour of Allãh. Allãh's is the beauty, grace, perfection and magnificence; every beauty and perfection found in other things, in reality belongs to Him, because every thing is a sign of Allãh – it is its only reality, it is nothing more than that; it has no other disposition; it is but a reflection showing the image of the original. This man is, and remains, overwhelmed by love; and he does not look at anything but only because it is a sign of his Lord. In short, all strings connecting his heart to other things are snipped off, leaving it attached only to the love of Allãh. Whatever he loves, it is only for the sake of Allãh and in the cause of Allãh.

At this stage, the mode of his perceptions and actions undergoes a drastic change. When he looks at a thing, he sees Allãh before it and with it, every thing loses its independence and identity in his eyes. What he sees and perceives is different from what other people see and perceive; the people look at things from be-hind a curtain, while he sees them in their true form. This shows the difference in perception, and similar is the case of actions. As he does not love anything except Allãh, he does not want any-thing except for Allãh, seeking His Sublime Majesty. He neither seeks nor intends, neither hopes no fears, neither chooses nor abandons, becomes neither despaired nor depressed, is neither pleased nor displeased – except for Allãh and in the cause of Allãh. Thus, his aims and goals differ totally from those of other people; his motive is diametrically opposed to that of his fellow beings. Previously, he acquired a virtue because it was a human perfection, and discarded an evil because it was a defect. But now his only interest is in seeking the Sublime Majesty of Allãh; he does not care about any perfection or defect, nor is he attracted to any worldly praise or cherished remembrance; he rises above this world as well as the next; he takes into consideration neither the Paradise nor the Hell – he discards every thing and rises above them. Now, his destination is his Lord; his provision, his humility of servitude; and his guide, his love. As a poet has said:

Love narrated to me the traditions of amour,
Through its chain of narrators, from neighbourhood

of a distinguished personality,
And narrated to me the breath of fresh breeze,
From the branching trees, from the valley of euphorbia
from the heights of Najd,
From the tear, from my sour eye, from passion,
From sorrow, from my wounded heart, from ecstasy of love,
That my ardor and love have sworn together,
To my destruction till I am laid down in my grave.

This discourse, although short and concise, explains our theme (if you study it carefully). It shows that in this third system of the Ethics the question of human perfection or defect becomes irrelevant; and the aim is changed from human perfection to the Sublime Majesty of Allãh. As a result, the outlook is changed from those of the other two systems; and it may happen sometimes that what is counted as a virtue in other systems becomes evil in this one, and vice versa.

Now, we should turn our attention to one remaining topic. There is another theory of Ethics which differs from the above-mentioned three systems; and probably it may be counted as a separate system. **They say:** Ethics and morality changes in its roots and shoots with the changes occurring in the society, because virtue and vice change with the changing society, they are not based on any permanent, unalterable, firm foundation. Allegedly it emanates from the theory of evolution of matter.

They say: Human society has come into being because of various needs and requirements of life, which man wants to fulfil through the agency of society. He tries to keep the society alive which, he thinks, preserves his own existence. The nature is governed by the law of evolution and gradual perfection. Consequently, society too undergoes constant changes and proceeds to a more perfect and more developed goal. If an action conforms with the aim of society – that is, perfection – it is called virtue; otherwise, it is vice. Therefore, virtue and vice cannot remain unchanged, they are not static or permanent. There is nothing like absolute virtue or absolute vice; they are relative ideas,

which change with the changing societies, according to regions and times. As the virtue and vice – being relative factors – under-go changes, so do the ethical and moral values. In other words, Ethics is not absolute; its views on good and bad characteristics are liable to change with circumstances.

From the above, we may infer that Ethics follows the nation-al or social aspirations – the aspirations which are a means of achieving the social perfection (which is the goal of the society) ; and virtue and vice are governed by it. Whatever promotes development, whatever helps the society in reaching its goal and achieving its aspiration, is good and virtue; and whatever hinders from that goal, whatever keeps the society backward, is evil and vice. Accordingly, lie, false allegation, indecency, hard-heartedness, robbery and shamelessness may become good and virtuous, if they promote the aspiration of the society. And truth, chastity and mercy may become bad and evil – if they hinder it from achieving its goal.

This is a gist of this strange theory which has been adopted by the materialist communists. This theory is not a new one, contrary to their claims. In ancient Greece, the Cynics reportedly had the same idea. Likewise, Mazdakites (the followers of Mazdak, who lived in Iran during the reign of Kisra and was the first to call to communism) were practising it; and even today some primitive tribes in Africa and elsewhere follow this tenet.

However, it is a false theory, and the proof offered in its support is wrong both in its foundation and structure. Before exposing its falsehood, a few points should be made clear:

1. Every being – that which has external existence – has an inseparable personality of its own. Consequently, one being cannot be another being. For example, existence of Zayd has a personality and a sort of unity which prevents it from becoming the personality of ‘Amr. Zayd is one person and ‘Amr is another; they are two persons, two human beings, not one. It is a premise whose truth cannot be doubted. (There is a totally different proposition which says: “The physical universe is a being having one individual reality.” This proposition should not be confused with the above-mentioned premise.)

2. It follows that the external existence is one and the same with personality. But mental ideas are different from external beings and their existence is not their personality. Reason admits that an idea – whatever it may be – may be applied to more than one individual, for example, the idea of man, or that of a tall man, or that of the man standing before us.

The logicians divide idea into general and particular. Also, they divide the particular into two categories of relative and real. But these divisions are done when an idea is seen *vis-à-vis* another idea, when it is put at the side of the other; or when it is seen in relation to external existence.

This property of the ideas – their applicability to more than one individual – is also sometimes called "generality"; its opposite being "individuality" or "unity".

3. An external physical being is governed by the law of change and general movement. Therefore, it has an expanse and that expanse is divisible into boundaries and pieces, each piece being different from other preceding or following ones. Yet, it is connected with them in its existence. Otherwise, without that connection, it could not be said to be changing or evolving. (If a thing is removed completely and is replaced by an entirely new thing, it cannot be said that the first evolved and changed into the second. If one thing is to change into another, there must be a common factor joining them together.)

4. It follows that that movement is a single thing having its own identity and personality. It looks numerous when it is seen in relation to the boundaries of a thing (as mentioned above). That relation distinguishes one piece from the others. But as for the movement itself, it is a single uninterrupted flow. This characteristic of the movement – this constant flow – is also called a "generality" in contrast to the relations it has with each boundary; we say "general movement", meaning a movement free of its relations with the boundaries and pieces.

This "generality" is a thing existing in reality, unlike the "generality of the ideas" mentioned in (2) above, which is mental attribute of idea – an imaginary attribute of an imaginary being.

5. Undoubtedly, man is a physical being; humanity has many

members, as well as its own laws and characteristics. What is created by nature is one individual, singly and separately. It does not create the collection of people which we call human society. Of course, the nature was aware that man needs somethings to perfect his existence which he could not obtain on his own. There-fore, the nature equipped him with organs, faculties and powers which would be useful in his endeavours to make up his deficiencies within the framework of society. Obviously, the single man is the goal of creation, primarily and principally, while society is a secondary goal, just a by-product.

6. The human nature demands a society and proceeds towards it, (if we can use the words of demand, causality and movement – in their real sense – about the society!). What is the real relation between man and this society? An individual man is a single and personal being (in the sense we have described above). At the same time, he is constantly on move, changing, evolving, proceeding to his perfection. That is why every piece of his changing being is different from other pieces. Yet his is a nature, flowing, "general", preserved in all the stages of the changes; in short, his nature is a single personality. This nature found in this individual man is preserved by the means of procreation, by branching out of one individual into other individuals. It is this factor which is called "nature of the species". It is preserved through the individuals, even if they are changed, even if they undergo creation and destruction (in the same way as was explained about the individual's nature). Individual's nature exists and proceeds towards personal perfection. Likewise, nature of species exists and proceeds towards the perfection of the species.

There is no doubt that this endeavour for perfection of species exists in the natural system. That is what we mean when we say, for example, that the human species proceeds towards perfection; or that today's man is a more perfect being than the primitive man. The same demand for perfection of species is in the minds of those scientists who speak about the evolution of species. Had there not been a nature of species, existing in reality, preserved in the individuals .(or in species), such talks would not have had any

value – it would have been just a metaphorical speech.

As with the individuals, so with the society. There is an individual, or let us say particular, society, which is found amongst the people of a nation, of a time or of a region. Also, there is a general society found in the human species, continuing with its continuation, evolving with its evolution (if it be correct that society, like a social man, is an externally existing condition of an externally existing nature!).

7. Society moves and evolves with the movements and changes of man. This society is a single entity from the initial stage of the movement to wherever it proceeds to, with a general existence. This "one" (which changes because of its relation with each and every boundary) becomes divided into numerous pieces. And every "piece" is a part of the society, that is, a "man". The parts or members of the society rely in their being on the persons of mankind. In the same way the general civilization – in the sense described above – depends on the general human nature. The law governing a unit is a unit of the law; and the law governing a "general" is the general rule. ("General rule" does not mean an abstract rule, because we are not talking about "general ideas".) Undoubtedly an individual man, being a single entity, is governed by a rule, which continues with his continuation. Yet that rule undergoes partial changes, following the changes occurring in the man himself. For example, there is the rule that the physical man takes food, acts by his will, has feelings and imagination, thinks and perceives. These rules exist and continue as long as the man himself exists. Of course, minor changes may occur in those general rules consequent to the changes occurring in the man.

The same principle applies to the humanity in general, the general mankind, which exists with the existence of its individuals.

8. As establishment of society is a law of human nature and one of its characteristics, so the general society is a characteristic of the general human species. (By general society we mean the society, *per se,* the society established by human

nature and which is continuing uninterruptedly from the day man came into being to this time.) This general society exists and continues with the humanity. And the laws of society which it has brought into being will remain intact as long as the general society exists. Of course, some minor changes may occur in it but the main principles will remain unchanged, like the mankind itself, which continues although its individual members go on changing.

Now it is clear that there are some ethical principles which are unchangeable and are valid for ever – like general virtue and vice – as the general society is firm, constant and unalterable from the beginning. Society cannot turn into non-society (i.e., individuality) – although a particular civilization may give way to another particular civilization. Likewise, general virtue (and vice) cannot turn into non-virtue (or non-vice) – although a particular virtue may evolve into some other particular virtue.

9. An individual man needs – for his existence and continuation – some perfections and benefits which he must achieve and acquire for his own self. That is why nature has equipped him with organs and faculties to help him in this compulsory quest, for example, alimentary canal for food intake and digestion, and sexual organs for reproduction and continuation of the species. It is obligatory for man to use these systems for the purpose they have been created for. He should not completely ignore them by leaving them unused, because it would be against the dictate of nature. Likewise, he should not over-indulge in these activities, he should not eat or cohabit more than necessary; for example, he should not go on eating until he becomes sick, or dies, or becomes unable to use his other faculties. He must keep to the middle course in achieving all his requirements, perfections and benefits. This middle course is called continence; and its two undesirable sides are greed and undue quiescence.

Likewise, we see that every individual, in his existence and continuation, is faced with many such things which are harmful to him and which he is obliged to resist, and repulse from him-self. And this "obligation" is proved by the fact that nature has equipped him with the organs and powers to defend himself with. Therefore, it is obligatory for him to defend himself and resist the harmful things – keeping himself on the middle course. He should not neglect and

crush these powers nor should he overuse them. This middle course is called bravery, and the other two sides are rashness and cowardice.

The same is the case with wisdom and its two sides, deception and dull-mindedness; as well as with justice and its two sides, injustice and surrender to injustice.

These are, thus, the four faculties and virtues which are demanded by the nature of an individual man – the nature which is equipped with its necessary tools: continence, bravery, wisdom and justice. And all of them are good and virtues. Good is that which is in conformity with the ultimate goal of a thing and promotes its perfection and felicity; and, as explained above, all the four are in conformity with the felicity of the individual. And their eight opposites are bad and evil.

When an individual, by his nature and in himself, has this attribute, then he would be having it also within the framework of the society. Society, being a product of nature, cannot negate nature's rules; otherwise, it would be a contradiction in terms. After all, what is society if not the co-operation of the individuals to facilitate the perfection of their natures and achievement of their aspirations.

10. Human species in framework of the "general" society has the same characteristics as an individual has in his particular society, as mentioned above. Human species in its civilization tries to achieve its perfection by repulsing what is harmful and acquiring what is beneficial to it; by learning as much as is good for it and practising justice – that is, giving everyone his due right, without indulging into injustice and without surrendering to injustice. And all these four characteristics are virtues. The civilization, *per se,* decrees that they are absolute virtues and their opposites are absolute vices.

The above discourse clearly shows that in the constant and perpetual human society, there are absolute virtues and absolute vices – society cannot "be" without them. It also shows that the four fundamental ethical values are absolutely good and virtuous and their opposites absolutely bad and evils; as has been decreed by the social nature of humanity. And the case of their branches is not different from that of the roots.

They too are absolute and unchanging – although there may occur some differences sometimes in their applications, as we shall mention afterwards.

Now it is clear that what they have said concerning relativity in morality is not correct : –

They said: "Absolute virtue and vice do not exist. What exists is the relative virtue and relative vice; and it is a changing thing which varies with regions, times and societies."

Reply: It is a fallacy, because they have confused the "generality of idea" with "generality (i.e., continuation) of existence". It is true that absolute good and vice – in the meaning of general ideas – do not have external (i.e., real) existence. But here we are not concerned with them. What we are concerned with are absolute virtue and vice – in the meaning of lasting social factors which continue as long as the society exists, by decree of nature. The aim of the society is the happiness of the species. And it is impossible to think that all happenings and possible events and actions would always be good for the society. Surely some would conform with its needs and some would not. Accordingly there would always be good and evil in the society. How can we suppose existence of a society – of any type – in which the members do not believe that every one should be given his due right, or that it is necessary to gain benefit to its proper limit, or that they must protect and defend the cause of the society as and when needed, or that the knowledge – by which man differentiates what is beneficial from what is harmful – is a good attribute? These four beliefs are the above-mentioned justice, continence, bravery and wisdom. As was said, every society, of any description whatsoever, decrees that these four characteristics are good and virtuous. Moreover, how can we think of a society that does not ordain that one must refrain from indecencies? And that feeling is modesty, a branch of continence. Or a society that does not exhort one to be enraged when rights are usurped or the sanctity of sacred things violated? And it is the earnest sense of honour

which is a branch of bravery. Or that one should be happy with his due social rights? And it is contentedness. Or that one should preserve one's social status without snubbing other people, without putting them out of countenance by one's arrogance? And it is modesty and humility. We may go on enumerating in the same way each and every branch of the ethics and morality.

They say: "The views often differ from society to society on what virtue is. One thing is considered as virtue in one society, while another society treats it as vice."

Reply: Of course, there are some minor examples of this phenomenon. But it is not because one society believed in acquiring good traits while the other dismissed it as unnecessary. Whatever the difference, it only occurs because one society believes that trait to be good, while the other thinks it is evil. So the difference is not about the principle, it is only in its application.

For example: The societies ruled by autocratic rulers used to believe that the sovereign had total authority over his subjects, and absolute power to do whatever he wished and order whatever he liked. But that belief was not based on any negative attitude towards justice. It actually emanated from their belief that that absolute power was the due right of the ruler; they thought that what the ruler was doing was not injustice, he was only exercising his due authority and taking his just right.

Likewise, some societies thought that it was a shame if their kings studied to acquire knowledge, as is reported about French kings of the medieval ages. But it was not because they looked down at the virtue of knowledge; it was only because they thought that acquiring knowledge of politics and studying the ways of managing various government departments would conflict with the king's rightful royal activities and engagements.

In the same way, some societies do not acknowledge any excellence in chastity of women (i.e., not establishing sexual relation with any man other than their husbands), and their modesty. Nor do they believe that their men should feel enraged if their women indulged in licentiousness. The same is the case with some other virtues like contentedness and humbleness etc.

But it is only because those societies do not think that these things fall under continence, modesty, self-respect, contentedness and humbleness. It is not that they do not accept these main virtues as virtues. After all, they praise a judge or a ruler if he practices continence in his rule and judgment. They appreciate it if one is ashamed of breaking a law; they laud a man who, overcome by national zeal, defends the nation's independence, the cause of civilization, or the sanctity of other sacred values. They praise a man who remains content with what the law has allotted to him; and applaud the loyalty and obedience shown by the public to their leaders and rulers.

They say: "Whether a characteristic is good depends on its conformity with the goals of social aspirations." Then they come to the conclusion that the said characteristic's excellence depends on its conformity with the society's goals. But it is a clear fallacy. Society is an institution which comes into being when its members enforce, and act upon, all the laws decreed by nature. This society is bound to take them to their happiness and felicity (provided there is no disturbance in its arrangement and flow) ; and the society is bound to have some rules and regulations like virtue and vice, good and evil. On the other hand "society's aspiration" is just a set of some imaginary ideas, invented for creating a society on prescribed lines by imposing it on its members. In other words, society and society's aspirations are two completely different things: Society is an established fact, society's aspiration is only a potential which is yet to come into being; the former is an actual fact while the latter is only a plan yet to be implemented. How could one be equated with the other? The virtue and vice are brought into being by the general society on the demands of the human nature; how could such an actual fact be brought under the domain of some aspirations – the aspirations which are nothing but some imaginary notions?

Question: The general civilization, brought into being by nature, has no authority of its own; whatever authority there is, it belongs to its goals and aspirations – especially if it is a theory

conforming to the happiness of the society's individuals.

Reply: The preceding discussion about virtue and vice and good and evil, shall be repeated in this case again – until the talk stops at a permanent, perpetual and unchanging decree of nature.

Apart from that, there is another difficulty. Let us suppose that virtue and vice as well as all the rules of civilization depend on the goals and aspirations of the society. And it is those aspirations on which the arguments of these people are based. But it is possible – nay a fact – that there may be different conflicting goals and aspirations within one society, or between different societies. Which aspiration would then prevail? Which one the people should give preference to? Which would be acceptable to the general society? The fact is that in this situation there will only be one criterion, and that is the power and domination; in other words, might is right. How can it be believed that the human nature led the human beings to a social structure whose parts are in conflict with one another? Can the society be governed by a rule which would negate the society itself? Is it not an ignominious contradiction in the rule of nature and the demands of its existence?

A FEW TRADITIONS ON SOME RELATED TOPICS

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "A man came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'I am keen (and) enthusiastic for *jihãd.*' (The Messenger of Allãh) said: 'Then do *jihad* in the way of Allãh, because if you are killed, you shall remain alive near Allãh and sustained, if you die (before that), then your reward is indeed with Allãh . . .'

The author says: The Prophet's words, "and if you die . . .", point to the word of Allãh: *and whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allãh and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his reward is indeed with Allãh. . .* (4:100). It also shows that proceeding to *jihad is* emigration to Allãh and His Messenger.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the prophet Ismã'īl, whom Allãh has named "Truthful in promise": "He was named 'Truthful in promise' because he had promised a man (to wait for him) in a place. So he remained waiting for that man for one year. There-fore, Allãh named him 'True of promise'. Then that man came to him after that (long) time and Ismã'īl said to him, 'I have been waiting for you . . .' " (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: It is a thing which average wisdom would probably say was a deviation from middle course, while Allãh has counted it as an excellent virtue of the said prophet, increasing thereby his prestige and raising his status, as He has said: *And mention Ismã'īl in the Book, surely he was truthful in* (his) *promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet. And he enjoined on his family prayer and alms-giving, and was one in whom his Lord was well pleased* (19:54-5). The fact is that the criterion by which this action was judged is different from the one used by common wisdom. The average wisdom, the common sense, looks at the things according to its own views, and Allãh looks after His friends by His Own help and support; and the word of Allãh is the High. Many similar events have been narrated about the Prophet, the Imãms and other friends of Allãh.

Question: How can rules of the *sharī'ah* go against the dictates of reason, in situations where reason may have a say?

Reply: True that reason may judge the virtue or vice of an action wherever it is possible for it to do so. But that thing or action should first come within its jurisdiction before it can pronounce its judgment on it. And we have explained earlier that such actions (as described in the above tradition) are governed by the third system, and that system takes such actions out of the jurisdiction of human intellect and reason – reason does not have any say against or about them. It is the way of the Divine Knowledge. Apparently the prophet Ismã'īl (a.s.) had given that man unconditional promise by saying, 'I shall wait for you here until you come back to me.' Therefore, he stuck to that unconditional wording, to save himself from breaking

the promise, and to fulfil what Allãh had put in his mind and made his tongue utter. Of the same import is an event related about the Prophet that he was near the Sacred Mosque when one of his companions told him that he would come back to him, and the Prophet promised to wait for him until he would return. That man went away and did not return, and the Prophet remained there three days waiting for him in the same place which he had promised. That man passed by that place after three days and found the Prophet sitting there waiting for him and he himself had forgotten the promise.

as-Sayyid ar-Raḍi has narrated from the Leader of the faithfuls (‘Ali - a.s.) that he heard someone saying: “*Surely we are Allãh’s and to Him shall we surely return.*” Thereupon, he (‘Ali - a.s.) said: “O man! Verily our word, *Surely we are Allãh’s, is* acknowledgment by us that we belong to Him, and, *to Him shall we surely return, is* acknowledgment by us that we are to die.” (*al-Khaṣã’iṣ*)

The author says: Its meaning is clear in the light of the earlier given explanation. The tradition has been narrated in detail in *al-Kãfī*.

Isḥãq ibn ‘Ammãr and ‘Abdullãh ibn Sinãn have narrated from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that he said: “The Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) has said: ‘Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has said: “I have given the world as loan to My servants. Then whoever gives Me a loan from it, I give him ten times to seven-hundred times in lieu of one. And whoever does not give Me a loan and I take something from him by force, then I give him three things that if I gave one of them to My angels they would be pleased of Me.” ’ ” Then Abu ‘Abdillãh said: “(It is) the words of Allãh: *Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: ‘Surely we are Allãh’s and to Him we shall surely return.’ Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course.*” Then Abu ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) said: “It is for the man from whom Allãh takes something forcibly.” (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: This tradition is narrated by other chains, all having nearly the same theme.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "*aṣ-Ṣalãh* (اَلصَّلٰوةُ) from Allãh is mercy, and from the angels is purification, and from the people is prayer." (*Maʿãniʾl-akhbãr*)

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning.

At first glance, there appears to be a conflict between this and the preceding tradition. This tradition explains *aṣ-ṣalãh* as mercy, while the preceding one counts *aṣ-ṣalãh* as other than mercy; and this view is further strengthened by the wording of the verse itself which mentions *aṣ-ṣalãh* and mercy separately, "blessings and mercy from Allãh". But in fact there is no contradiction as we have explained in detail in the Commentary.

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إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ ٱللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ ٱلْبَيْتَ أَوِ ٱعْتَمَرَ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْراً فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ
عَلِيمٌ ــ ١٥٨ .

Surely the Ṣafã and the Marwah are among the signs of Allãh; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs ‘umrah *thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both; and whoever on his own accord does good, then surely Allãh is Grateful, All-knowing* (158).

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GENERAL COMMENT

The Ṣafã and the Marwah are two places in Mecca between which a pilgrim has to perform *as-sa‘y* (اَلسَّعْيُ = the ceremony of walking quickly seven times between the Ṣafã and the Marwah, during the *ḥajj* and the *‘umrah;* literally to move quickly, to run). These are two hills, the distance between them reportedly being 760½ arm. *aṣ-Ṣafã* (الصَّفَا = hard smooth rock) ; *al-Marwah* (اَلمَرْوَةُ = hard stone). *ash-Sha‘ã’ir* (اَلشَّعَائِرُ) is the plural of *ash-sha‘īrah* (اَلشَّعِيرَةُ = sign) ; from it is derived the word *al-mash‘ar* (المَشْعَرُ = the *ḥajj* station, east of Mecca) ; also they say, *ash‘ara ’l-hady* (أَشْعَرَ الهَدْيَ = he marked or branded the sacrifical animal). *Al-Ḥajj* (الحَجُّ) literally means repeated intention; in Islamic terminology it refers to the special rites collectively known as Pilgrimage of Mecca. *al-I‘timãr* (اَلإِعْتِمَارُ) means to visit; it is derived from *al- ‘imarah* (العِمَارَةُ = building)

because buildings thrive by visits; in Islamic language it refers to the so-called "lesser pilgrimage" to the Ka'bah, which unlike the *ḥajj,* need not be performed at a particular time and whose performance involves fewer ceremonies. *al-Junãḥ* (اَلجُنَاحُ) is deviation from truth and justice; it is used for sin and misdemeanour; thus, negation of sin or blame implies permission. *at-Taṭawwuf* (اَلتَّطَوُّفُ) is derived from *aṭ-ṭawf* (اَلطَّوْفُ) , that is, to make the rounds; it denotes a round trip, that is, a journey or walk that ends at its starting point; it need not necessarily be a circumambulation around something (although circumambulation is more obvious application of the word) ; it is the former meaning in which it has been used in this verse – it refers to *as-sa'y,* that is, walking between the Ṣafã and the Marwah seven times consecutively.

at-Taṭawwu' (اَلتَّطَوُّعُ) is derived from *aṭ-ṭaw'* (اَلطَّوْعُ = to do a walk willingly and gladly). Some people differentiate between *at-taṭawwu'* and *al-iṭã'ah* (اَلإِطَاعَةُ) and say that the former, unlike the latter, is exclusively used for voluntarily done good deeds. If correct, this assertion might be based on the view that the obligatory deeds – because of their obligatoriness – are probably not done willingly, unlike the voluntary and recommended actions which are done willingly by one's own accord. But it is a far-fetched interpretation. In fact, *aṭ-ṭaw'* (اَلطَّوْعُ) is opposite of *al-kurh* (اَلكُرْهُ = dislike), and is not irreconcilable with obligatory deeds. Allãh says: . . . *so He said to it* (*i.e.,* the heaven) *and to the earth: "Come both, willingly or unwillingly"* (41:11) . The characteristic meaning of the paradigm *at-tafa''ul* (اَلتَّفَعُّلُ) is to take to oneself, for example, *tamayyaza* (تَمَيَّزَ = he took on distin-guishing), *ta'allama* (تَعَلَّمَ = he took on learning) ; in the same way *taṭawwa'a* (تَطَوَّعَ) means, he took on doing good willingly. In short, *at-taṭawwu' is* not reserved, from the linguistic point of view, for voluntary, non-obligatory good deed – unless credit is given to the usage of the common people.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Surely the Ṣafã and the Marwah are among the signs of Allãh . . . to go round them both:* The two hills are marked by the signs of Allãh; they lead accordingly to Him and remind one of Him. They have been especially counted "among the signs of Allãh" to the exclusion of other things; it shows that the word, "the signs" has not been used here in the sense in which every created thing is a sign of the Creator. They are the Divine Signs because Allãh has made them so, by appointing them as the places of His worship; thus they remind one of Allãh, the Creator. They are the signs for which Allãh has prescribed especial rites of worship.

Then comes the next sentence: "so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs *'umrah* thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both. The word "so" in the beginning shows that it is an offshoot of the preceding sentence. Its import is to show that walking quickly between these two hills is a part of the Islamic *sharī'ah* – it does not imply that the said walking is voluntary or non-obligatory. If Allãh had wanted to declare its voluntariness, it would have been more appropriate to praise and extol *as-sa'y,* rather than saying that there was no blame in it. The gist of the meaning is that – because the Ṣafã and the Marwah were among the places of the worship of Allãh – it would do you no harm to worship Him therein. And it is the language of legislation. If Allãh had wanted to show only its desirability, He would have said that, because the two hills were among the signs of Allãh, He likes you to go round them.

Frequently, when the Qur'ãn wants to ordain an obligatory law, it uses such expressions which by themselves do not show obligatoriness. For example, Allãh says regarding *jihãd; that is better for you* (61:11); regarding fast: *and that you fast is better for you* (2:184), and regarding shortening of prayer: *And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten the prayer* (4:101).

QUR'ÃN: *and whoever on his own accord does good, then surely Allãh is Grateful, All-knowing:* The conjunctive "and" may be joining this sentence to any of the three phrases in the preceding one:-

1. It may connect it with "so whoever makes a pilgrimage . . . ". In that case it would show a more general reason for the legislation of the walking between the two hills, after giving the particular reason, that is, "Surely the Ṣafã and the Marwah are among the signs of Allãh." According to this interpretation, "doing good on one's own accord" would mean "obedience" in general term, and not a voluntary deed.

2. It may be starting a new sentence, joining it to the words in the beginning of the verse. In that case, "doing good on one's own accord" would refer to the "going round the two hills". Thus it would show only the desirability of *as-sa'y* (walking quickly seven times between Ṣafã and the Marwah).

3. Alternatively, the phrase "doing good on one's own according" may be referring to the *ḥajj* and the *'umrah,* and the phrase would show the desirability of these two rites of worship.

ash-Shãkir (اَلشَّاكِرُ = Grateful) and *al-'Alīm* (اَلعَلِيْمُ = All-knowing) are two of the beautiful names of Allãh. *ash-Shukr* (اَلشُّكْرُ = gratefulness, thankfulness). When a beneficiary returns the benevolence of the benefactor by announcing it in words and/ or deeds, it is called gratefulness.

Someone gives you a property, and in return you praise him mentioning his benevolence, or use that property in a way he likes – and thus you show your gratefulness to him.

Now, Allãh is the Beneficent; His beneficence is eternal and all beneficence begins from Him; none can oblige Him in any way so that He would be grateful to that person. Yet, He, in His benevolence, looks at His creatures' good deeds as though the creatures have been beneficent to Him by doing those deeds (although, in reality the case is diametrically different; the creatures' good deeds are actually His benefaction to them). And thus he repays those good deeds with gratefulness and benevolence, which in fact is a double benevolence. Allãh says: *Is the reward*

of goodness aught but goodness? (55:60)*; Surely this is a reward for you, and your striving shall be recompensed* (76:22). Thus, the name "Grateful" is used for Allãh in its real, not allegorical sense.

TRADITIONS

One of our companions has narrated this tradition from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.). He says: "I asked him about walking between the Ṣafã and the Marwah whether it was obligatory or voluntary. He said: 'Obligatory.' I said: 'Does not Allãh say: *so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs* 'umrah *thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both?'* He said: 'It was in the *'umrah* of *Qaḍã'*;* that is, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had stipulated with them (i.e., the pagans of Mecca) that they would remove the idols (for the period of *'umrah*) *;* and one of his companions was engaged otherwise until the idols were returned (to their places): (The Imãm) said : 'Then Allãh revealed: *Surely the Ṣafã and the Marwah are among the signs of Allãh; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs* 'umrah *thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both, i.e.,* even when there were idols on them.' " (al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: A nearly similar tradition is found in *al-Kãfī.*

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) says describing the *ḥajj* of the Prophet : "After circumambulating around the House and praying its two *rak'ahs,* (the Prophet) recited: *Surely the Ṣafã and the Marwah are among the signs of Allãh.* (Then he said:) 'So I shall begin with that which Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has begun with (i.e., from the Ṣafã).' And verily the Muslims used to think that walking between the Said and the Marwah was something invented by the polytheists; so Allãh revealed: *Surely the Safã and the Marwah are among the signs of Allãh; so whoever makes a pilgrimage or performs* 'umrah *thereof, there is no blame on him to go round*

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1. In the 7th year of *hijrah.* (*tr.*)

them both." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: Obviously, there is no contradiction between the two traditions regarding the reason of the revelation of the verse. The words of the Prophet, "I shall begin with that which Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has begun with", show the basis of legislation. We have narrated, in the story of Hãjar and her running seven times between the Ṣafã and the Marwah, that the ritual of *as-sa'y* started from that.

'Ãmir ash-Sha'bī said: "There was an idol, called *Asãf,* on the Ṣafã, and another, called *Nã'ilah,* on the Marwah. The people of (the days of) ignorance, after circumambulating the House, used to walk between the two (hills) and touch and wipe the two idols. When the Messenger of Allãh (peace be on him) arrived at Mecca, they (i.e., the Muslims) said: 'O Messenger of Allãh! (As for) the Ṣafã and the Marwah, surely the walking around them was done because of the two idols, and walking around them is not among the signs (of Allãh).' Then Allãh revealed: *Surely the Safã and the Marwah. . .* Thus, He (especially) mentioned the Ṣafã because of the idol that was on it, and affirmed the Marwah because of the idol that rose from it." (*ad-Durru '1-manthũr*)

The author says: Both sects have narrated numerous traditions having the above-mentioned themes. Their implication is that the verse was revealed in the year when the Muslims performed the *ḥajj,* while the Chapter of the Cow is the first one revealed at Medina. It may therefore be inferred that the verses are unconnected with the preceding verses (of the *qiblah*) which were revealed, as described earlier, in the second year of *hijrah;* nor are they related to the verses in the beginning of the chapter which were revealed in the first year of *hijrah.* It shows that the verses were revealed in various contexts, not in one.

* * * * *

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ
لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ ـــ ١٥٩. إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُوا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ـ ١٦٠ .
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ـــ ١٦١ . خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا
هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ ـــ ١٦٢ .

Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear for men in the Book, these it is whom Allãh does curse, and those who curse do curse them (too) (159), *Except those who repent and amend and make manifest* (the truth), *these it is to whom I turn* (mercifully), *and I am the Oft-returning* (to mercy), *the Merciful* (160). *Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on whom is the curse of Allãh and the angels and men all* (161); *Abiding in it; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite* (162).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed:* Obviously "the guidance" means

that knowledge and *sharī'ah* which the Divine Religion contains, and which lead the followers to the eternal bliss; and "the clear proofs" means the verses, signs and the arguments which are the clear evidence, proofs and attestations for the truth – the truth that is guidance. "The clear proofs", as used in the Divine Speech, is a special description for the revealed verses. Therefore, concealing the clear proofs may mean hiding the verses themselves from the people; or concealing their true meaning through misinterpretation and misapplication – as the leaders of the Jews did with the verses prophesying the advent of the Prophet. What the people did not know, they concealed; and what they knew, they misinterpreted and diverted it from the Prophet.

QUR'ÃN: *after We made it clear for men:* It shows that they concealed the truth after Allãh made it clear for all the mankind, not only for the Jews. It is not feasible, in the prevalent world system, to explain a thing to each and every person individually – not only in revelation but in every general announcement. As a general rule, only a few persons are informed of the matter directly, and it is through them that the rest of the people get the information; he who is present conveys the message to the absent persons; the learned one explains it to the ignorant. The knowledgeable man is counted as one of the links to convey the message, like the tongue and speech. When a learned man, bound by the pledge taken from him, explains the message to others, he makes the truth clear to the people. If he hides his knowledge, he keeps the truth concealed from the people, after it was made clear to them. And, as Allãh has said, it is the only thing which has made people differ in matters of religion, and has diverted them from the path of guidance to that of misguidance. Otherwise, religion conforms with nature; human nature agrees with it and discerning mind surrenders to it when it is properly explained. Allãh says: *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion in natural devotion* (to the truth) ; *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men; there is no alteration* (by anyone else) *in the creation of Allãh; that is the right* (established) *religion, but most people do not know* (30:30). So, the religion is natural;

nature can never resist it, if it appears before it with some clarity, either because of the purity of the recipient's heart, as is the case of the prophets, or because it is explained properly – the latter method invariable always depends on the former.

That is why the above-quoted verse combines the two premises: the naturalness of religion and lack of its knowledge. It says: *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men;* and then says: *but most people do not know.*

Again Allãh says: *Mankind was but one people, so Allãh sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves.. .* (2:213). It shows that difference about the contents of the book emanates from the revolt of the scholars who already have its knowledge. Religious differences and deviations from the right path are caused by the revolt of the religious scholars as they conceal the revealed truth, misinterpret it and alter it; and because of their injustice. That is how "injustice" will be defined on the Day of Resurrection. Allãh says: *Then a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allãh is on the unjust, who hinder* (people) *from Allãh's way and seek to make it crooked .. .* (7:44 - 5) . There are many verses of the same theme.

Clearly, the verse under discussion (*Surely those who conceal the clear proofs . . .*) *is* based on the above-quoted verse: *Mankind was but one people, so Allãh sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves. . .* (2:213).

And it points to the recompense of that revolt in the next sentence, "these it is whom Allãh does curse . . ."

QUR'ÃN: *these it is whom Allãh does curse, and those who curse do curse them* (too). It describes the punishment of those who revolt against truth and hide the Book and the guidance which Allãh has

sent down. The punishment is the curse by Allãh and the curse by those who curse. The word "curse" has been repeated because the curse of Allãh is different from the curse of those who curse. The curse by Allãh is removal from mercy and bliss, and that by those who curse is praying to Allãh to remove the cursed one from that mercy and bliss.

There is no restriction at all on the curse of Allãh or the curse of those who curse, nor is there any limitation on "those who curse". This generality shows that every curse by anyone who curses is actually directed to those revolters and concealers of the Divine Proof and Guidance. And reason supports this view: The aim of the curse is to remove the cursed one from happiness and bliss; and there is no real happiness and bliss except the religious one. As this real religious bliss is fully explained by Allãh and accepted by nature, no one can be deprived of it except the one who rejects and denies it. This deprivation is confined to him who knows it and then knowingly rejects it. It does not affect him who did not know the said religious bliss and to whom it was not clarified. Allãh has taken pledge from learned people to spread their knowledge and to publish whatever Divine proofs and guidance they had received. If they conceal it and hold it back, then in effect they have rejected it. Therefore, "these it is whom Allãh does curse, and those who curse do curse them (too)". This explanation is further supported by the following verse: "Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on whom is the curse of Allãh and the angels and men all." Apparently, the particle *inna* (إنَّ = surely) coming at the beginning of the verse gives the reason, or intensifies the theme, of the verse under discussion, by repeating its meaning in other words, "Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers . . ."

QUR'ÃN : *Except those who repent . . . the Merciful:* It is the exception from the preceding verse. It qualifies their repentance with amending and making manifest the truth. They must make their previous behaviour known; they must announce their repentance.

In other words, they must announce to the people what they were concealing of the truth, and also make it known that previously they had concealed it. Otherwise, it will be as though they have not repented yet – because they are still hiding the fact of their previous concealment of the truth.

QUR'ÃN: *Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on whom is the curse of Allãh and the angels and men all.* It alludes to their persistence in disbelief and their obstinate and stubborn refusal to accept the truth. (If a man does not accept the true religion, not because of obstinacy and arrogance, but because it was not made clear to him, then in reality he is not a disbeliever, he is *al-mustaḍ'af* (المُسْتَضْعَفُ = weak; according to Islamic terminology, a man who does not have true faith, but is not inimical to it] ; his judgment is in the hand of Allãh.) This theme is supported by the fact that most of the verses describing the disbelief qualify it with "belying". Look especially at the verses of the descent of Ãdam, containing the first law legislated for the mankind: *We said: "Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in and belie Our signs, they are the inmates of fire, in it they shall abide."* (2:39-40)

Likewise, in this verse the words, "Those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers," refer to those who obstinately belie the signs and guidance of Allãh – those who conceal what Allãh has revealed. And Allãh describes their recompense in these words: "these it is on whom is the curse of Allãh and the angels and men all". It is a Divine Decree that every curse by anyone from among the angels or men, without any exception, shall be attached to them only. In this respect they are like the Satan, when Allãh told him: *And surely on you is curse until the Day of Judgment* (15:35). Thus, Allãh made him the target of every curse from whatever source it may emanate. Likewise, these learned persons who conceal their knowledge are partners of Satan in this general and unrestricted curse. See how hard is the tone of

this verse, and how formidable its theme! We shall write something related to it, Allāh willing, under the verse: *That Allāh may separate the impure from the pure, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into the hell; these it is that are the losers.* (8:37).

QUR'ĀN: *Abiding in it* (*i.e.,* in the curse), *their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite.* The word "curse", has been changed here to "chastisement"; it shows that the curse shall be converted into their chastisement on that Day.

In these verses, the references to Allāh have been changed several times from the first person to the third and vice versa. The verse begins with the first person pronouns: "We revealed", "We made it clear"; then the style changes, mentioning Allāh by name, "Allāh does curse". The change was affected because the theme demands show of intense displeasure, and the greater the name of the displeased person, the more severe the effect of the displeasure – and none is greater than Allāh. Therefore, the action of the curse was attributed to Him by name, to give it the most vehement force. Then the reference was again changed to the first person pronouns, "I turn (mercifully) ; and I am the Oft-returning (to mercy) . . ." It was done to show the highest mercy and benevolence of Allāh – every adjective is discarded, all attributes are set aside and "I Myself return to them mercifully". You will appreciate the difference if you read this sentence thus: These it is to whom Allāh turns mercifully; or thus: These it is to whom their Lord turns mercifully. Obviously, these sentences do not show that high degree of mercy that reflects from this sentence, "these it is to whom I turn (mercifully)". The next verse again discards the pronoun for the Divine Name, "these it is on whom is the curse of Allāh"; and the reason is the same as was explained for the change in the first verse.

TRADITIONS

One of our companions has narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.). He says: "I said to him: 'Tell me about the word of Allāh, the

Mighty, the High: *Surely those who conceal. . .*'. He said: 'We are meant by it – and to Allãh is the resort for help. When (*Imãmah*) comes to one of us (i.e., the Imãms), he has no authority (or, choice) but to make it clear for the men who will be (Imãm) after him.' " (al- 'Ayyãshī)

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said about this verse: "(Allãh) means us by it, and to Allãh is the resort for help."

Muhammad ibn Muslim said: "(The Imãm) said: 'These are the People of the Book.' "

The author says: All these traditions are based on the principle of the flow of the Qur'ãn and its application. Otherwise, the verse is general.

Some traditions quote 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "Its interpretation is the learned people when they are depraved."

The Prophet said about this verse: "Whoever is asked about knowledge which he has got, and he conceals it, he shall be reined on the Day of Resurrection with a bridle of fire; and it is (the import of) His words, *these it is whom Allãh does curse and those who curse do curse them* (too)." (*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: These two traditions confirm what we have written in the Commentary.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allãh, *and those who curse do curse them* (too) : "We are those (who curse) ; and they say that it means the vermins of the earth." (al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: The explanation given by the Imãm reminds one of the import of the verse: . . . *and the witnesses shall say: "These are they who lied against their Lord." Now surely the curse of Allãh is on the unjust* (11:18). The Imãms are the witnesses, allowed by Allãh to speak on the Day of Judgment, who speak the right thing. The Imãm also mentioned some people's explanation that *those who curse* refers to the vermins of the earth. This interpretation is attributed to the exegetes like Mujãhid, 'Ikrimah and others; and some traditions ascribe it to the Prophet.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: about the verse, *Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance,* (that it means the proofs and guidance) "regarding 'Ali." (*ibid.*)

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وَإِلٰهُكُمْ إِلٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ ــ ١٦٣ .
إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ
الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ
مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ
الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْقِلُونَ ــ ١٦٤ . وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ أَنْدَاداً يُحِبُّونَهُمْ
كَحُبِّ اللهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ
يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيعاً وَأَنَّ اللهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ــ ١٦٥ .
إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتُّبِعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ
بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ــ ١٦٦ . وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ
مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّأُوا مِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا
هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ــ ١٦٧ .

And your God is one God! there is no god but ***He; He is the Beneficent,*** *the Merciful* (163). *Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allãh sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all* (kinds of)

animals, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand (164). *And there are some among men who take for them-selves equals to God besides Allãh, whom they love as the love for Allãh, and those who believe are stronger in* (their) *love for Allãh, and O that those who are unjust could see, when they see the chastisement, that the power is wholly Allãh's and that Allãh is severe in chastisement* (165). *When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed* (them), *and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder* (166). *And those who followed shall say: "O were there for us a return, then we would renounce them as they have renounced us." Thus will Allãh show them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire* (167).

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COMMENTARY

These verses are connected together in one context, with a single theme. They remind the audience about the belief of monotheism offering proofs to support it, and describe polytheism and its ultimate result.

QUR'ÃN: *And your God is one God:* We have explained the meaning of *al-ilãh* (الاٰلـهُ = god) in the Commentary of the first verse of the first chapter, the Opening. Oneness is a self-evident idea, which needs no explanation. A thing is called one in view of one of its attributes, for example, one man, one scholar or one poet. These words show that the related attribute is indivisible, and not subject to plurality. For example, the manhood of one man, Zayd, is not shared between him and someone else. It is in contrast with manhood of two men – Zayd and 'Amr, for example – which is shared by the two, and is therefore numerous. Thus Zayd, in context of his attribute of manhood, is one and indivisible

and not subject to plurality. But when he is looked at in this very context combined with his other attributes – like his knowledge, power, life, etc. – then he is not one; he is a multiple in reality.

Allãh is One, in view of His attribute, like His divinity, which is not shared by anyone else. He is one in His divinity as well as in His knowledge, power and life. He has knowledge, unlike other knowledges, and power and life unlike others' powers and lives. Also, He is one because His attributes are not multiple, they are not separate from one another except in their verbal meanings; His knowledge, His power and His life, all is one thing, all is His very person; none of them is separate from the other. Allãh knows by His power, and has power by His life, and is alive by His know-ledge. He is not like other things where attributes are multiple and numerous not only in meanings but in reality also.

Sometimes a thing possesses the characteristic of oneness in its personality, that is, by its very nature and essence, it cannot accept multiplication or division in its self; it cannot be divided into various parts or into its person and name etc. This oneness is called oneness of person, and it is referred to with the word *al-aḥad* (اَلأَحَدُ = one) ; this word is never used except as a first construct of a genitive construction or in a negative, prohibitive or similar sentences, in the meaning of no one, any one, etc. For example, we say: No one came to me. This sentence negates the personality itself, irrespective of its oneness or plurality, because this oneness is related to its nature and essence, and not to its attribute. This connotation will be lost if we were to say, one man did not come to me. This sentence does not imply that two or more men did not come; it is because "oneness" in this sentence is an attribute of the corner, not of his person.

The reader should keep in mind this short explanation until we write about it in detail. Allãh willing, under the verse: *Say: "He, Allãh, is One."* (112:1)

The words, "And your God is one God," imply that divinity, godhead, is exclusively reserved for Allãh, and that His oneness in divinity is such as becomes His sublime status.

The word *al-wãḥid* (اَلوَاحِدُ = the one), as understood by the audience of the Qur'ãn, gives the idea of oneness, of a general type

That meaning may be applied to various kinds of oneness. But only a few of those connotations may be applied for Allãh. The word "one", may show oneness of number, of species, or of genes, etc. And the people were bound to take it in the meaning best suited to their beliefs and ideas. That is why the Qur'ãn did not say: And Allãh is one God. Because this sentence does not establish monotheism; even the polytheists say that He is one God, in the same way as each of their deities is one god.

Nor would have the sentence, And your God is one, established monotheism. Because it could be imagined that He is one in the species – of divinity. People say, when they enumerate the species of animals: Horse is one; mule is one – although horse and mule are manifold in number.

That is why the Qur'ãn said: "And your God is one God." "One God" (in contrast to two or more gods) is made predicate of "Your God". In this form the sentence clearly establishes the belief of monotheism, by restricting the godhead to one of the gods in which they believed.

QUR'ÃN: *there is no god but He:* It further emphasizes the clear declaration of the preceding sentence about monotheism and negates every possible misinterpretation or superstition. The negative particle "*lã*" (لَا = no) is used here to negate the genes; *ilãh* (إِلٰهَ = god) denotes here real and actual God. The sentence has an implied predicate "existent", and the meaning will be as follows: There is no real and actual god existing "but He". The pronoun "He", used in place of the proper name, Allãh, is in nominative, not subjunctive case. Therefore, the word "but" is not used here as particle of exception; rather it is an adjective in the sense of "other than". The complete sentence, thus, means: There is no real god, other than Allãh, existing.

The sentence therefore aims at repudiation of gods, other than Allãh – the deities which had no real existence outside the imagination of their worshippers. It does not aim at refuting other deities and proving the existence of Allãh, as many scholars have thought. Our explanation is supported by the fact that the sentence needs only a negative mode, and not a negative followed

by affirmative. Only repudiation of other imaginary deities is enough to confirm the Oneness of Allãh in His godhead. Moreover, the Qur'ãn treats the existence of Allãh as a self-evident truth which needs no proof or argument. The Qur'ãn only cares to affirm and prove His attributes; for example, it only proves that Allãh is One; that He is the Creator, the Knower, the Powerful and so on.

Question: You say that the sentence has an implied predicate existent (or some other word of the same meaning). If so, then it would only negate the actual existence of other deities – but not the "possibility" of their existence.

Reply: 1. It is meaningless to suppose that there could be a "possible" or transient being (having equal relation with existence and non-existence), which would be the ultimate cause of all the existing things and their affairs.

2. We could change the predicate to "true" or "actual"; then the meaning would be: There is no god in reality other than He.

QUR'ÃN: *the Beneficent, the Merciful:* We have explained its meaning in the exegesis of the first verse of the first Chapter, the Opening. With these two names, the meaning of Allãh's Lordship becomes complete. From Him emanates every general bounty – pursuant to His Beneficence – and every special favour, in the way of guidance and the next world's bliss – pursuant to His Mercy.

QUR'ÃN: *Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth . . . :* As mentioned in the beginning, the verse aims at proving what the preceding verse has established: "And your God is one God: there is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful." The verse under discussion may be analyzed as follows: There is a god for each of these phenomena; there is only one God for all of them; and that one God is your God too; He is the Beneficent who bestows general bounties; and the Merciful, who leads to the ultimate happiness – the blessings of the next world.

These are the established facts; and in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and all the phenomena mentioned in this verse, there are signs to prove these facts for a people who understand.

The verse offers arguments to prove that there is a god, and He is one – the God of this magnificent universe is One, and He Himself is the God of man. It is not the import of this verse to prove the existence of the God of man, or His oneness. Otherwise, all the phenomena mentioned in it would have all together constituted only one sign – by showing that the management of all is inter-related and forms a single system. If so, then the preceding verse should have been restyled in this way: And your God is one, there is no god but He.

The proofs in short run are as follows:

First Proof: These heavens, the canopy high above us with all these awe-inspiring luminous stars, constellations and galaxies shining therein; this earth, our shelter and refuge, with all its wonderful natural systems; all these regular changes and alternations occurring in this world – the alternation of the day and the night, the running ships and boats, the pouring rains, the changing winds, the suspended clouds – all these things need by their very nature, a Creator. There is, therefore, a Creator God for all of them.

Second Proof: Look at these heavenly bodies, varying in mass from the minutest to the largest. There is one so small that the scientists have found its volume to be equal to: 0.000000000 0000000000000033 cubic cm.; while there are others so huge as to be equal to millions of our earth – which in itself has a diameter of about 9,000 miles. They have found the distance between some celestial bodies to be 3,000,000 light years. A light year is approximately 365 x 24 x 60 x 60 x 300,000 kilometres.[1]

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1. A light year is equal to 5,880,000 million miles. With tremendous advance in astronomy, it is now more usual to reckon distances in the parsec, which is equal to 3.258 light years, or 19,150,000 million miles. (*tr.*)

Ponder on these figures which boggle the mind and stupefy the brain. Then decide, as you wish to decide, about this unique and wonderful system. Keep in mind that each of these untold billions of the suns and planets act on, and react to,. the others, no matter where and how distant they are from each other. This goes on by the law of gravity, which permeates the whole universe, and through light and heat. In this way, the established system continues without any impediment. And it is an all-pervasive never stopping system, run according to an established law. Even the theory of relativity (which says that the directions of movements in the physical world are subject to deviations) affirms that that deviation itself is governed by another inviolable law.

This movement, this general rotation, appears in every part of the universe in a uniform way; look for example at the movement of the sun with its planets and satellites. Now look nearer at hand at our own earth, with its own moon and various systems (the day and the night, the winds, the clouds and the rains). Reduce your circle of vision once more, to ponder on earthly matters and creatures – minerals, vegetables, animals and various other things. Find out about countless species one after another; then go on reducing the circle until you come to the elements, then to the atoms; then the particles of the atoms; finally you shall come to what is today the last stage of the scientific discovery, that is, the electron and the proton. Even there you will find a miniature solar system at work; a nucleus around which these smallest particles revolve, exactly like the movement of the planets around their suns, and the endless journey of the suns (with their families) towards an unknown destination.

Stop at any stage in this scientific journey and you will find an amazing system – a system whose wonders will never cease and whose marvels will never stop. There is no exception in its flow, not even one; nor is there any question of chance in its intricately-woven design, not even a rare one. Man cannot reach its shore, nor does he fully comprehend all the signs on this path.

Proceed from the smallest to the largest heavenly body. You will find it a single universe with one and unified system and inter-related arrangement. Look through the most powerful

far-reaching telescope and use the most advanced observatory, you will find the same law governing all celestial bodies.

Now, reverse your journey, until you reach again to the smallest unit. Break it down to its parts, reaching to molecule. You will find in it a miniature universe, with the same design and the same inter-related arrangement – although the two vastly differ in their natures and identities.

In short, the universe is one, and its arrangement and management inter-related; all its parts – no matter how diverse and multiple they may be – are managed under a single system; *and the faces are humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God* (20:111). Therefore, the God of the universe, is one; He alone created and He alone manages it.

Third Proof: Man is an earthly creature. He lives on the earth and after his death returns to it. His existence and life needs nothing more than the above-mentioned system that governs the whole universe – a unified and inter-related system. The heavenly bodies with the light and heat they generate, the earth with its alternated days and nights, the winds, the clouds and the rains, the beneficial goods it produces and which are transported from region to region – these are the things man requires for his physical needs, for his existence and continuation of life. *And Allãh en-compasses them on every side* (85:20). It proves that the God who created the universe and manages its affairs is the same God who also created man and manages his affairs. God of the universe is the God of man.

Again, it is God who bestows on every thing what it needs for happiness of this world and for bliss of the next (if he is qualified for the bliss of the next life) – because the next world is the ultimate destination of this abode. How can anyone man-age the end of any affair other than he who manages the affair itself? This is the proof given by the two names, *The Beneficent, the Merciful.*

And in this way is perfected the rational argument offered by this verse for the preceding one. This view is strengthened by the fact that this verse begins with the particle *inna* (إنَّ = surely) which is also used for offering arguments. And Allãh knows better.

In short, the words, "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth", point to the heavens with all their luminary bodies, and the earth with all the wonderful creations and astounding products it contains; the forms which give each species its name, the matter which constitutes its body; their transformation from one form to the other, their recurring additions and subtractions, their joining together and breaking apart. As Allãh says: *Do they not see that We come into the land curtailing it of its sides?* (13:41); *Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, so We have opened them: and We have made of water every thing living. . .* ? (21:30)

QUR'ÃN: *and the alternation of the night and the day:* It refers to the changes in durations of the nights and the days which are caused by a combination of two factors: First is the daily rotation of the earth on its axis. This always keeps a little more than half of the earth's sphere facing towards the sun, which sends light and heat to the earth's surface – and that is called the day. The opposite side of the sphere is dark, throwing a conical shade in the space – and it is the night. The day and the night are continuously rotating on the face of the earth.

The second factor is the revolution of the earth on its orbit around the sun. The earth's axis does not form a right angle with the orbit ; it has a tilt (of 23½° [*tr.*]) ; and because of that tilt the earth's north-south position *vis-à-vis* the sun changes at different times of the year; when the northern hemisphere is inclined to the sun, it is summer in the north and winter in the south; when the southern hemisphere is inclined to the sun, the north experiences winter and the south, summer. Also, it is because of this tilt that the equator and the North and the South Poles always have days and nights of equal length: The two Poles have only one day and one night in a year – each night and each day being six months long. When it is day on the North Pole, the South Pole has its night, and vice versa. As for the equator, it has about 365 days and 365 nights in a solar year – all of equal length. As for the other regions, the days and the nights differ – in number as well as in length, depending on their distance from the equator and

the two Poles. Full description of this phenomenon may be found in the sciences concerned.

It is because of this difference that the sun's life-giving light and heat reach various regions of the earth with varying intensity. This in its turn creates diversity in various factors governing the earth and its environment. And man profits from that diversity in numerous ways.

QUR'ÃN: *And the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men: al-Fulk* (الْفُلْكُ) is boat, ship; it is used for singular and plural both. *al-Fulk* and *al-fulkah* (الْفُلْكَةُ) have the same meaning; as *at-tamr* and *at-tamrah* (اَلتَّمْرُ، التَّمْرَةُ = date) are synonymous. "that which profits men", refers to various types of cargoes and food items which are transported by ship from coast to coast, from region to region.

The verse counts the ships (which are made by man) side by side with those things and natural phenomena which are beyond human power, like the heavens, the earth and the alternation of the day and the night. It shows that ultimately the ships too, like those natural phenomena, are the handiwork of Allãh. On deep consideration, when we ascribe a work to a man, it has no more significance than ascribing it to a natural cause. Of course, man has a free will and power. But he is not a sufficient or total cause; nor does that freedom make him independent of Allãh. He is as much in need of Allãh's will and permission as any other natural cause. A natural cause acts on, and reacts with, a matter and through a process of combination and break up gives it a form – let us say, turns it into a rock. A man cuts, breaks up and joins some matters giving them a form – let us say, turn them into a boat. Is there any difference between the two makers? Both ultimately draw their strength and ability from Divine creation and invention; nothing is independent of Allãh either in its person or in its activities.

Boat too, like all physical creations, depends on Allãh in its existence, as well as in management of its affairs. Allãh has pointed to this fact in the verse, where Ibrãhīm (a.s.) is quoted as telling his people about the idols which they worshipped as

god: *And Allãh has created you and what you make* (37:96). Admittedly, an idol is but a thing made by man, and Ibrãhīm (a.s.) ascribes its making to Allãh. The same applies to the boats and ships. Also, Allãh says: *And His are the ships reared aloft in the sea like mountains* (55:24). According to this verse, the ships belong to Allãh. Again, He says: *and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command* . . . (14:32). This verse declares that also the ships' affairs is in Allãh's hands.

CAN MAN-MADE THINGS BE ATTRIBUTED TO ALLAH

How heedless are those who think that the things made and manufactured by man are exclusively his creation and can-not be attributed to Allãh at all – just because they are made by man's will and choice !

First, in this group are the materialists who do not believe in a Creator. They say: The theists believed in a Creator because they found in the nature many things and happenings whose material cause they did not know. As they knew that nothing could happen without a cause, they had to admit that there was a cause for such things and happenings, which was not known to them yet. In this way they came to believe that there was, for those things of unknown cause, a cause whose reality was hidden from them and which was beyond the natural world – and that cause was God. According to the materialists, the belief in the existence of a Creator was a hypothesis which emanated from the ignorance of the primitive man: that man was surrounded by so many phenomena of unknown causes; for example, atmospheric changes and many happenings on the earth. Likewise, there were many psychological factors (whose natural causes are unknown to the science even today). And this resulted in the belief in a supernatural Creator.

They say: Now the sciences have succeeded in unravelling many mysteries of natural phenomena, and in identifying their

natural causes. Thus, one of the two pillars of the above-mentioned hypothesis has been pulled down – that is, the need of some natural phenomena for a super-natural cause. Now remains the other pillar – that is, the need of some psychological factors for an immaterial cause. The recent advances in the field of the organic chemistry, give us hope that man will soon understand the mysteries of the soul; then he will be able to manufacture the life-giving cells and germs. This will enable him to create any living being and bring about any psychological effect. Then the second pillar of this hypothesis will go down – and there will remain no basis for believing in a super-natural Creator. Man will create whatever he wishes of spiritual and psychological effects, as he is making today whatever he likes of the physical and material things – although just yesterday he was insisting that there was a hypothetical super-natural cause for these things. Now we know why he held that belief – it was just because he did not know the real cause of these phenomena.

COMMENTS: First: If these fat-heads were to wake up from their conceit, they would see that the theists from the very beginning of their belief in a Creator (and there never was a beginning for it) affirmed that creative cause for the whole universe – those things having known physical causes as well as those having unknown causes. According to them this whole lot, in its entirety, needs a cause, separate from the universe. Clearly what the materialists reject is not what the theists believe in.

The theists – and the history and the research has not been able to pin-point a starting point for the belief in the Creator, in the history of humanity – have believed in the existence of one or more creators for the whole universe, although the Qur'ãn has shown that the religion of monotheism appeared before poly-theism; and the orientalist, Max Muller, the pioneer in the studies of Sanskrit, also has thrown light upon it. Obviously, the theists, even the primitive man among them, used to see and recognize physical causes of many physical phenomena. Yet, they affirmed that there was a God for the whole universe (not excluding those phenomena of known causes). Evidently, when they believed in the existence

of the Creator, basing their argument on the all-pervasive system of cause-and-effect, it was not to solve the problem of some phenomena of which they could not find a cause. After all, they did not say that some parts of the universe needed a Creator, while others (having some known causes) did not need that. What they believed was this: The universe is made up of a series of natural causes and effects. This whole universe, taken as a composite unit, needs and requires a Cause, above all other causes; all actions and reactions, all causes and effects, interacting amongst its countless components, rely and depend on that Cause of the causes. The belief in that Supreme Cause does not negate the general law of causality which permeates all components of the universe. In the same way, the existence of material causes for the material effects does not make this whole chain of the causes and effects independent of the Supreme Cause, who is out of this universe and separate from it. (When we say 'out of this universe', we do not mean that the Supreme Cause is placed on the summit of the pyramid of the causes and effects. We mean that the Supreme Cause encompasses the whole universe with all its causes and effects, from every possible side.)

The materialists have fallen in an amusing contradiction. They believe that there is a general all-pervasive compulsion in all happenings in the world – including human actions. According to them, every action, every happening, is a compulsory, inescapable effect of various causes. And at the same time they say that if a man created another man, it would not finally end at the Cause of the universe – if there is such a cause.

This fine and deep theme is always present in the subconscious mind of common people (even if a simple man is unable to express it in so many words). That is why they say that the whole universe – together with all its causes and effects – is the creation of a Creator God.

Second: When the theist philosophers furnish the rational proofs to prove the existence of the Creator, they do so after establishing that there is an all-pervasive system of causality in the world. Then they proceed to prove that all these "possible", transient causes must end at an essential, self-existent cause.

This method has been used by them for thousands of years, from the earliest age of philosophy to this day. There was never any doubt in their minds that the effects – including the natural transient causes – need an essential Cause. In other words, when they attribute the effects to an essential cause, it is not done because they do not know some thing's natural cause.

Third: The Qur'ãn proves the oneness of the Creator. It does so by showing that all components of the universe are governed by the general law of causality; it accepts the attribution of each happening to its particular cause, and confirms what normal wisdom says about it. It ascribes natural phenomena to their natural causes, and attributes to man the actions done by his own free will. There is no need to quote here numerous verses based on this theme. And then it ascribes all these things and happenings – without any exception – to Allãh. For example, *Allãh is the Creator of every thing* (39:62) ; *That is Allãh, your Lord, the Creator of every thing; there is no god but He* (40:62); *His is the creation and command* (7:54); *His is what is in the heaven and what is in the earth and what is between them two and what is beneath the ground* (20:6). Whatever may be called a "thing", it is created by Allãh, and may be attributed to Him in a way befitting His Majesty. There are other verses which attribute an action to its doer and at the same time ascribe it to Allãh. For example, *And Allãh has created you and what you make* (37:96). The verse attributes the actions of men to them and then attributes their creation and that of their actions to Allãh. Also, it says: *and you did not smite when you smote* (the enemy), *but it was Allãh Who smote* (8:17). This verse admits that the act of throwing arrow was done by the Messenger of Allãh, and then negates it, ascribing it to Allãh Himself. There are other verses of the same connotation.

There are some other verses which combine the two attributions in a general way. For example, . . . *and Who created every thing, then ordained for it a measure* (25:2)*; Surely We have created every thing according to a measure . . . And every thing small and great is written down* (54:49 – 53) ; *Allãh indeed has made a measure for every thing* (65:3) ; *And there is not a*

thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure (15:21). Making or appointing a measure for every thing means that Allãh has confined it within the limits of the material causes and the boundaries of time and space.

In short, it can never be doubted that the Qur'ãn proves the existence of the One and Only God basing its arguments on the system of causality found in all the components of the universe; and then it attributes the whole universe to Allãh, Who created and made all of it. It is not that we ascribe some things to Allãh and some others to their material causes – as the materialists allege.

Why could not the materialists understand this clear fact? They were misled by the Church in the medieval ages, whose pseudo-philosophers tackled this and similar problems in the manner quoted by the materialists; writers of other religions too rely on similar arguments. The fact is that their discourses were distorted, and their arguments lacked precision. They wanted to explain their true claim (which, their reason told them in general terms, was correct). They tried to go into details of that general idea. But their weak understanding and unripe reasoning led them away from the right method; consequently, they generalized their claim and misdirected their argument. It were they who attributed every thing or effect of unknown cause directly to Allãh, and said that voluntary actions did not need any outside cause, and that consequently man's voluntary actions did not belong to Allãh; man was independent of Allãh in such actions. We have written on this topic in detail under the verse: *but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26); here something more has been added to complete the discourse.

Another group is that of some Muslim traditionalists and theologians (and some others) whose vision does not penetrate to the inner core of a subject. They did not understand how could the voluntary actions of man be attributed to Allãh in a manner that would conform with His Sublime Majesty. Consequently, they thought that man-made things could not be said to have been made by Allãh, and especially those things which were made

exclusively for sins, for example, liquor, and instruments of music and gambling etc. Allãh says: . . . *intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork* . . . (5:90). And evidently what Allãh counts as handiwork of Satan should not be ascribed to Allãh Himself.

COMMENT : The discourse written earlier is enough to show the invalidity of this erroneous surmise – both from the Qur'ãn and traditions and the rational point of view. The fact is that man's voluntary actions may be attributed to Allãh in a befitting manner, and likewise man-made things, being the result of those actions, may be attributed to Allãh.

Moreover, "the stones", mentioned in the verse 5:90 above, refers to the idols and images which are set for worship, and the verse 37:96 (*And Allãh has created you and what you make*) says that those idols too are creation of Allãh. Obviously, an idol may be looked at from different perspectives. From one point of view it may be ascribed to Allãh, for example, looking at the nature of its existence, disregarding the fact of its being used for sin of polytheism. What is an idol? It is just a stone or metal with a particular shape; and as such there is no reason why it should not be attributed to the Creator of all things. Of course, from another angle it is a thing that is worshipped besides Allãh; and from this perspective it cannot be attributed to Allãh; it should rather be ascribed to the Satan or man. The same principle may be applied for other man-made things.

It clearly shows that man-made things may be attributed to Allãh just like any other natural phenomenon, without any difference. Of course, it all depends on the degree of existence the said things enjoy. (Think on it.)

QUR'ÃN: *and the water that Allãh sends down from the cloud, then gives you life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all* (kinds of) *animals:* What is rain? There are various elements mixed in the water of rivers and other water sources. Then it turns into steam, going up and carrying heat. The steam

continues to ascend until it reaches extremely cold strata of the atmosphere. Then the steam changes into water coming down as rain. Some times the steam is frozen into snow or hail. In what-ever form, it comes down to us, which drinks it in and becomes alive again. Also, the earth stores a major part of the rain, etc., above or below its surface, and that water comes out and flows as streams and rivers, etc., on the face of earth. Water is the source of life for every living thing. The rain coming down from the clouds is a phenomenon of life, which takes place according to a well regulated and intricately laid down system – without any break down or exception. The genesis of vegetables and animals – of all types – depends on water.

The rain – being inter-woven with so many phenomena of the universe, horizontally and vertically – becomes an inseparable part of the universe. It needs a Creator to create it, a cause to bring it into existence. In other words, there is a God for it. And man's genesis and life depend on the rain and water. Therefore, the same God who has created water and the intricate system of rain, is the God who has created man. The God of rain is the God of man.

QUR'ÃN: *and the changing of the wind:* It refers to the changes in directions of the wind, because of various natural factors, the most important of them being the sun's rays. The sun raises the temperature of the air, making it lighter and less dense. This lighter air is unable to carry the load of the surrounding air which is cooler and heavier. Therefore, the heavier air glides down, forcibly displacing the lighter one. The lighter air travels in a direction opposite to that of the heavier one. And the resulting current is called wind. The wind helps in pollination of trees, shrubs and flowers, removes atmospheric pollutions, carries rain clouds from one place to another, besides rendering many other services. Blowing of wind is a most important factor in the genesis and life of vegetable, animal and man.

Wind, by itself, proves that there is a Creator God; by its inter-woven relation with other terrestrial and extra terrestrial phenomena, proves that there is only one Creator for the whole

universe; and by being a very important factor for the genesis and life of man, proves that the God of man and the God of the universe is one and the same.

QUR'ÃN: *and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth: as-Saḥãb* (اَلسَّحَابُ) is condensed watery vapour floating in air at some distance; it is the source of rain. As long as the steam remains on or near the earth, it is called *aḍ-ḍabãb* (اَلضَّبَابُ = fog; mist) ; when it leaves the earth and floats in the air at a distance, it is called *as-saḥãb, al-ghaym* (اَلغَيْمُ) and *alghamãm* (اَلغَمَامُ), etc., all having the same meaning: cloud. *at-Taskhīr* (اَلتَّسْخِيْرُ = to subjugate a thing, to make it subservient in its activities). The cloud is made subservient, in its flow and rain, to the winds and atmospheric temperature and other relevant factors, by the permission of Allãh.

The cloud is a sign of Allãh in the same way as other things mentioned with it.

The alternation of the day and the night, the rain coming down from the clouds, the blowing of wind and the subservient clouds are the main natural phenomena, which together make up the system of creation in the terrestrial world, like the vegetable, the animal and the man. This verse may therefore be taken to be a detail of the general statement contained in the verse: . . . *and He blessed therein and made therein its foods, in four periods: alike for the seekers* (41:10).

QUR'ÃN: *there are signs for a people who understand. al-'Aql* (اَلعَقْلُ) is *maṣdar* of *'aqala, ya'qilu* (عَقَلَ، يَعْقِلُ = he understood, he understands). It denotes perfect comprehension and understanding. *al-'Aql is* that by which man differentiates between good and bad, distinguishes fact from fiction, and discerns truth and falsehood. It is the self same man who perceives; it is not one of his faculties and characteristics which are like branches of the soul, for example, the memory, and the eye-sight, etc.

QUR'ÃN: *And there are some among men who take for themselves equals* (*i.e.,* objects of worship) *besides Allãh:an-Nidd* (اَلنِّدُّ)

is on the paradigm of *al-mithl* (اَلمِثْلُ) and has the same meaning: equal, alike, etc. In some other verses Allãh has used a slightly different phrase; for example, *therefore do not set up equals to Allãh* (2:22) *; and they set up equals with Allãh* (14:30). The style has been changed here to "besides Allãh" because it is preceded by the exclusive statement: "And your God is one God! there is no god but He; . . ." Thus anyone taking any object of worship besides Allãh would violate that exclusiveness without any justification; he would take as god something which, he is well aware, is not god; he would do so just in pursuit of his base desire, and in complete disregard to the decree of his reason. That is why Allãh has used the word "equals" as common noun, to show their degradation: "And there are some among men who take for themselves equals besides Allãh."

QUR'ÃN: *Whom they love as the love for Allãh, and those who believe are stronger in* (their) *love for Allãh:* The word used is *yuḥibbũnahum* (يُحِبُّونَهُمْ = they love them); the objective pronoun used here is reserved for rational beings. It means that the word "equals" does not refer to idols only, it includes also the angels and those men who were worshipped besides Allãh. Rather, it covers all those who were obeyed by people without any authority from Allãh. This interpretation gets support from the verse following it: *When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed* (them) (2:166). Also, Allãh says: . . . *and* (that) *some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allãh* (3:64)*; They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allãh* (9:31).

The verse shows that love may be attributed to Allãh in reality, contrary to the claims of those who say that love, being a branch of the faculty of desire, is related in reality to the body and the matters concerning the body only; and cannot be attributed as such to Allãh. According to them, love of God means obedience to Him, doing what He commands us to do and refraining from what He forbids; thus love may be attributed to Allãh only in a metaphorical sense, as Allãh says: *Say: "If you love Allãh, then follow me, Allãh will love you and forgive you your sins"* (3:31).

But the verse under discussion goes against their claim. The phrase "stronger in (their) love for Allãh", shows that love of Allãh may vary in intensity; it is stronger in the believers than in those who take others as equals to Allãh. On the other hand, if love is taken to mean obedience, the meaning would be: "and those who believe are more obedient to Allãh". Obviously, there could be no question here of any comparative degree of obedience, because the obedience of others is no obedience at all in the eyes of Allãh. Therefore, "love" here has been used in its real, not metaphorical, sense.

It is supported also by the verse which says: *Say: "If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk and property which you have acquired, and the trade slackness of which you fear and dwellings which you like, are dearer to you than Allãh and His Messenger and striving in His way . . . "* (9:24). The word translated here as 'dearer' is *aḥabb*(اَحَبُّ = more loved). Evidently the love ascribed to Allãh, and that ascribed to His Messenger, and the love attributed to the fathers, the sons, and the property, etc., is all of the same quiddity, all of it has the same reality. Otherwise, the phrase 'dearer to you' could not be used. The comparative degree signifies that both sides – the preferred one and the preferred against – share in the basic quality, although they differ in its degree, one being stronger, the other weaker.

The verse condemns those who take others as equals to Allãh, saying: "whom they love as the love for Allãh" ; then it praises the believers, saying that they, "are stronger in (their) love for Allãh." This comparison between the two groups apparently shows that the former has been condemned because they have divided their love between Allãh and those whom they have taken as equals to Allãh. There was possibility of a misunderstanding that if they had loved Allãh more, they would not have been blamed. But the next sentences leave no room for such erroneous surmises. "O that those who are unjust could see when they see the chastisement that the power is wholly Allãh's . . . When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them), and they see the chastisement and their ties are

cut asunder . . . Thus will Allãh show them their deeds to be intense regret to them . . ." These verses make it clear that they have been condemned not because of the love, *per se,* but because of its concomitant, that is, following. They followed false deities thinking that those deities had power which would help the followers to fulfil their desires or to ward off some undesirable situation. Thus, they discarded the truth either wholly or in some aspects – and the one who follows Allãh in some aspects only, is not a follower at all. Thus, there is no room for the above-mentioned misunderstanding. It is now clear that man should not take any partner for Allãh in this love, otherwise, it will be polytheism. However, when the love for Allãh becomes stronger, the lover does not follow anyone other than Allãh; he exclusively obeys the commands of Allãh. That is why the believers have been praised that they "are stronger in (their) love for Allãh".

Now we know that the love has been praised and condemned because of its concomitant, that is, following and obedience. If a man loves someone other than Allãh in obedience to the commands of Allãh, when that someone calls to the obedience of Allãh only, then such a love cannot be censured at all. As Allãh says: *Say: "If your fathers and your sons . . . are dearer to you than Allãh and His Messenger . . ."* (9:24). This verse assigns to the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) a love as it assigns it to Allãh Himself; it is so because love of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) is one with the love of Allãh. Why? Because the effect of this love, that is, following of the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) is exactly the obedience of Allãh. Allãh Himself calls to the obedience of His Messenger, as He says: *And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allãh's permission* (4:64) *; Say: "If you love Allãh, then follow me, Allãh will love you"* (3:31). In the same category comes the love of any one whose obedience leads to the obedience of Allãh, for example, a religious scholar who guides people by his knowledge, a sign that points to Allãh, the Qur'ãn which brings the reciter nearer to Allãh, and things like that. All these are loved because of the love of Allãh, and by following them one obeys Allãh and comes nearer to Him.

In short, whoever loves any one besides Allãh, thinking that he

has a power, and follows him in order to fulfil some of his needs, or obeys him in a matter which Allãh has not allowed, then he has indeed taken other objects of worship besides Allãh, and surely Allãh will show them their deeds to be intense regret to them. On the other hand, the believers are those who love nothing except Allãh, do not seek power except from Allãh, and do not follow except that which is from the commands and prohibitions of Allãh. They are those who are sincere to Allãh in religion.

Also, it is clear that the love of those whose love is Allãh's love, and whose obedience Allãh's obedience (like the Prophet and his progeny; the divine scholars, the Book of Allãh and the traditions of His Prophet; in short, every thing that leads one to Allãh's remembrance in a sincere way) is diametrically opposed to polytheism. Indeed, one proceeds nearer to Allãh by loving and following the above-mentioned personalities and things. To honour and respect them is a part of piety, and love and fear of Allãh. As Allãh says: *and whoever respects the signs of Allãh, this surely is* (the outcome) *of the piety of hearts* (22:32). *ash-Sha'ã'ir* (الشَّعَآئِرُ) means the signs that lead or point to some-thing; the phrase, 'the signs of Allãh' is general, not restricted to any particular thing like the Ṣafã and the Marwah, etc. It means that one must respect every sign of Allãh, every divinely approved symbol which reminds one of Allãh; because it is an outcome of piety, a reflection of the love and fear of Allãh. And this principle applies to all the signs which lead one to piety.

Of course, it is clear as day that one should not think that those signs and symbols are in any way independent of Allãh, or that they control for themselves or for others any harm or profit, or that they have any independent authority over their own or others' life, death or resurrection. Evidently, if one had such a belief, then these things would not remain signs of Allãh, they would become equals of Allãh – and it would be *ash-shirk* (الشِّرْكُ = ascribing partners to Allãh) ; may He protect you from such polytheism.

QUR'ÃN: *O that those who are unjust could see, when they see the chastisement, that the power is wholly Allãh's and that*

Allãh is severe in chastisement: Apparently, "when they see the chastisement" is the object of the verb, "could see"; and "that the power is wholly Allãh's and that Allãh is severe in chastisement" are the explanatory phrases describing "the chastisement" (in the phrase "when they see the chastisement"). *Wa-law* (وَلَوْ = would that; O that; if only; I wish) is an optative particle, used to express wish. The verse therefore means: Would that those who are unjust could see in this world the day when they would see the chastisement; then they would see that the power belongs wholly to Allãh, and that they had committed the greatest blunder when they ascribed some of that power to their false deities, and that Allãh is severe in chastisement and in punishing those who are guilty of this unforgiveable sin. As the next verses show, the chastisement would contain of their seeing their blunder in taking other objects of worship besides Allãh, and in their wrong assumption that those objects had any power, and then seeing the punishment of their polytheism and misdeed. The next two verses support this interpretation: "When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them)." The followers will not get any hoped-for benefit from their leaders; "and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder". Nothing shall have any power or effect besides Allãh. "And those who followed shall say: 'O were there for us a return:' " they shall ardently wish to return to this world. "then we would renounce" these objects of worship whom we took as equals to Allãh, and whom we followed, in this world, "as they have renounced us" in the next world. "Thus will Allãh show" those who were unjust and took others as equals to Allãh, "their deeds" (i.e., their love and obedience to those leaders whom they took as equals to Allãh) "to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire".

QUR'ÃN: *and they shall not come forth from the fire:* It is a proof against those who say that the chastisement of the fire shall one day come to an end.

TRADITIONS

Shurayḥ ibn Hãni said: "A Bedouin went on the day of the Camel to the Leader of the faithful (‘Ali, a.s.) and said: ‘O Leader of the faithful! Do you say that Allãh is one?’ " (Shurayḥ) said: "Then the people bore down on him and said: ‘O Arab! Don’t you see how preoccupied the Leader of the faithful is?’ But the Leader of the faithful said: ‘Let him be. Because what (this) Bedouin wants (i.e., gnosis of Allãh) is the very thing which we want from these people (i.e., the enemies): Then he (Ali, a.s.) said: ‘O Arab! The sentence, "Allãh is one", may be interpreted in four ways, two of them are not permissible for Allãh and two are allowed. The two meanings which are not permissible for Allãh are: (1) The saying of a sayer "one", when he uses it as a number: It is not permissible, because that which has no second (i.e., is unique) does not come within the domain of number. Do you not see that (Allãh) has declared him an unbeliever who said that God was the third of the three? (2) And the saying of a sayer that "He is one of the people", in the same sense as a species is one of (its) genes. This (also) is not allowed because it likens Allãh (to other things), and our Lord is too great for, and far above of, this (likening). And as for the two meanings which are applicable to Him, they are: (1) The saying of a sayer, "He is one, there is nothing like unto Him"; such (indeed) is our Lord. (2) And the saying of a sayer that, He, the Mighty, the Great, is unique in significance, that is, He is not divisible – neither in existence, nor in thought or imagination; such (indeed) is our Lord.’ " (*al-Khiṣãl; at-Tawḥīd; Ma‘ãni ‘l-akhbãr*)

The author says: The two meanings confirmed by him (‘Ali, a.s.) conform with what we have written in the explanation of the verse: *And your God is one God. . .*

The lectures narrated from ‘Ali (a.s.), ar-Riḍã (a.s.) and other Imãms of the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (*a.s.*) repeatedly say that ‘He is one not by number’. It refers to His pristine person which does not accept counting.

There is in a prayer of *aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah as-Sajjãdiyyah,* the sentence, "Thine is the oneness of number". It is interpreted as to refer to "ownership", that is, 'Thou art the owner of the oneness of number'; it does not meant that 'Thou art one in number', because reason as well as the Qur'ãn and the traditions firmly prove that His existence is Unique and pure, it is not duplicable nor can it be repeated – according to His person and reality.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said in a tradition, *inter alia,* about the words of Allãh, *And there are some among men who take for them-selves equals besides Allãh . . .:* "O Jãbir! They are, by Allãh!, the leaders of the unjust ones and their followers" (*al-Kãfī; al-Ikhtiṣãṣ;* al-'Ayyãshī). In the last-named book the wording is: "O Jãbir! By Allãh! They are the leaders of the injustice and their followers."

The author says: Its meaning is clear in the light of the explanation given above. Why did the Imãm refer to them as "the leaders of injustice"? It is because Allãh has said: *O that those who are unjust could see. . .* Thus, the followers who took for themselves equals besides Allãh were "unjust"; therefore, their leaders must be "the leaders of the unjust ones" and "the leaders of injustice".

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *Thus will Allãh show them their deeds to be intense regret to them:* "He is a man who leaves (untouched) his wealth and because of avarice does not spend it in the obedience of Allãh; then he dies and leaves it to someone who uses it in the obedience of Allãh, or in His dis-obedience. If he (the heir) used it in the obedience of Allãh, (the legator) shall see it in the "balance" of another man, and he shall look at it in intense regret, as the wealth had (originally) belonged to him. And if he (the heir) used it in disobedience of Allãh, then it was he (the legator) who strengthened him with that wealth so that he used it in the disobedience of Allãh." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated by al-'Ayyãshī, aṣ-Ṣadũq, al-Mufid and at-Tabrasi, from al-Bãqir and

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.). It has used the word, equals, in a wider sense; and as we have explained earlier, this expanded meaning is with-out any doubt, quite in place.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON LOVE

Love is one of our emotional feelings; we apply it for the love of food, love of women, love of wealth, love of honour and love of knowledge. We have no doubt that we have these five loves. Also, there is no doubt that when we use the word, love, in the above contexts, we intend the same meaning everywhere; and not only the word, but the meaning also is the same in all the five phrases. At the same time, we know that these contexts are different. The question is: Is this a difference of categories, or of some other type?

Let us look at the love of food. We love an edible thing, like a fruit, because it is related to the activity of our faculty of nutrition. If there were no such faculty, if there were not that nourishment which perfects our body, we would not have loved that fruit, and there would have been no such love. Therefore, the love exists, in reality, between the faculty of nutrition and its activity, on one side, and the satisfaction which that faculty gets from that activity, on the other side. When we say, "satisfaction", we do not mean the satisfying taste which one feels when eating – because the sense of taste is a functionary of the faculty of nutrition, and not the faculty itself. We actually mean that particular pleasure which the faculty gets from its activity.

Likewise, if we look at the love of women, we find that that love is related in reality and primarily to cohabitation, and only secondarily to the women, as its concomitant – in the same way as the love of food was related to a particular food just secondarily and only as a concomitant. Cohabitation is the effect of a faculty given to animals, in the same way as eating food is the effect of a faculty given to them. Evidently, these two loves belong to the same root, that is, a subsistent relationship between these two faculties and their activities – in other words their active perfection.

At this stage, it might possibly be thought that love was an attachment exclusively reserved for the above two faculties, that it was not found in other contexts. But experiment (through various effects) removes this misunderstanding. This attachment, known as love, has an effect on the lover. The lover moves towards the object of his/its love, and yearns for the loved action if he/it is separated from it, and does not like to leave it, after he/it has found it. This particular effect of love is found in all our powers of conception and their actions. All our powers and faculties like eye-sight, hearing, memory and imagination – in short all our internal and external senses – have this very effect, this very attribute, no matter whether they are acting or reacting. Each of these faculties loves its activity and is attracted to it. And it is only because its activity is its perfection, makes up its deficiency, and fulfils its natural need. In this way, we know the significance of the love of wealth, love of power and love of knowledge. Man seeks his perfection through his wealth, honour and knowledge.

It may be inferred from it that love is a special emotional attachment, a particular conscious attraction between man and his perfection. Detailed researches have shown that it is found in animals too. And it is because the lover acts upon, and reacts to, his loved activity; then that love extends to the things related to that activity, as the love of eating was extended to that of fruit. This principle would apply also to other things besides animals, provided they could consciously seek or bestow perfection.

From another point of view, as love is a subsistent relationship between the lover and the loved, there exists a positive connection between them. Now, if an effect (which has the relation of love with its cause) is a conscious being and has got sense and feeling, it would find that love within its soul – if it has a soul and independent existence.

The above discourse leads us to the following conclusions:–

First: Love is a subsistent relationship, a special attraction between perfecting cause (or things like that) and perfection-seeking effect (or things like that). That is why we love our actions, because through them we seek perfection. And as its extension, we love the things related to our activities; for example, food

which we take, mate with whom we cohabit, wealth which we use, honour from which we gain benefit, a benefactor who bestows something on us, a teacher who teaches us, a leader who guides us, a helper who helps us, a student who learns from us, a servant who serves us, a follower who obeys and follows us. All these are various manifestations of love, some of them are physical, some imaginary and some others intellectual.

Second: Love has different degrees of strength and weakness, because it is a subsistent attraction, an existing attachment – and there are such degrees even in existence itself. Obviously, the attachment between a sufficient cause and its effect cannot be like the one existing between an insufficient cause and its effect. Also, the perfection (because of which the attachment of love comes into being) is itself of various categories, some of it essential, some others inessential, some of it material (like nourishment), others immaterial (like knowledge). It shows the invalidity of the theory which says that love is exclusively reserved for material things. (Some of them said that love was basically related to food only, and other loves issued forth from it; some others gave that central place to the love of sexual intercourse; according to them all other loves branched out from it.)

Third: Allãh deserves to be loved – from whatever angle you look at it. Allãh is Self-subsistent, exists by Himself; His perfection is limitless while all other perfections are but limited. A limited thing attaches itself to the limitless one in existence. This attachment, this love, is a part of existence, a part of personality; it can never diminish or go away. Moreover, Allãh has created us, and bestows on us countless and limitless favours; that is why we love Him, as every bestower of bounties is loved for his favours.

Fourth: As mentioned in the beginning, love is subsistent and existing relationship. Such relations are not separate from the very existence of their subjects. It follows that every thing loves its own person. Also, it was mentioned that by its extension, we love the things related to the loved – therefore, every thing loves the effects of its own existence. It is clear from the above that Allãh loves His creation because of His love of His Own Self;

and He loves His creation because they are recipients of His favours; and He loves His creation because they accept His guidance.

Fifth: We said earlier that sense, consciousness and knowledge are concomitants of love. But it is necessary in practice only, Otherwise, the subsistent attachment – which is the reality of love – does not depend, *per se,* on these factors. It appears from this that even the natural powers and faculties – which have no sense or feeling – love their own actions and effects.

Sixth: It follows that love is a reality which permeates all the existing things.

ANOTHER PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON PERPETUITY OF PUNISHMENT

The question arises: Will the chastisement of the Hell come to its end at some time, or will it continue endlessly? Both theories have their adherents and both groups support their views with intellectual reasoning and apparent meanings of the Qur'ãn and traditions.

As for the Qur'ãn, it unambiguously declares that many groups shall abide for ever – endlessly and perpetually – in the Hell. As Allãh says: *and they shall not come forth from the fire* (2:167).

And nearly *mutawãtir* traditions narrated from the Imãms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (*a.s.*) clearly say the same thing. Of course, there are some traditions emanating from other sources which support the view that the chastisement will end. But these traditions must be rejected outright because they are against the clear declarations of the Qur'ãn.

Now, we come to intellectual reasons. As we said under the verse: *And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another . . .* (2:48)*,* it is not possible to explain the details concerning the Resurrection and the Judgment with the help of intellectual deductions, because our reason lacks the premises necessary to lead to a conclusion. The only way is to believe in what the Truthful Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has brought to us

through Divine Revelation – because his truth has been proved without any doubt.

As for the spiritual bliss and chastisement, they happen to the immaterial soul as it acquires good or bad characteristics and traits and is thus wrapped in beautiful or ugly conditions. We have mentioned there* that these conditions and characteristics appear to the psyche in their respective good or ugly shapes, and the psyche enjoys the beautiful and good shapes, if it is itself good; and is tormented by what is bad and ugly, whether it is itself good or bad.

If these resulting shapes are not deeply imprinted on the psyche, and are not agreeable to its person, they are bound to disappear sooner or later, because their appearance is a matter of constraint; and we know that constraint does not continue for ever. Suppose there is a true believer who has committed some sins. This man is good and happy in his person, but his psyche has been polluted by, and wrapped in, ugly unhappy shapes. Obviously this ugly shape, not being deeply imprinted will certainly get removed.

But if these ugly shapes have been deeply imprinted on the psyche, then it reshapes the psyche in its own mould. The soul acquires a new shape and becomes almost a new species. Suppose there is a "niggard man"; now niggardliness gives a new form to his humanity, in the same way as "rationality" gives a new form to "animality ", and "rational animal" (i.e., man) becomes a new species under the genes, "animal". Likewise "niggard man" becomes a new species under the genes "man". This species has an eternal existence of its own. The man, before the characteristics of niggardliness were firmly ingrained in his psyche, did practise niggardliness under constraint and felt unhappy. But now he does it, by permission of Allãh, naturally without any constraint. And as it is done by this new species without constraint, it is eternal, endless and perpetual – contrary to the former condition when it was done under constraint and could therefore be got rid of. This man gets punished because of the concomitants of his

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* See *al-Mīzãn* (Eng. transl.) , vol.1, pp.261-2. (*tr.*)

characteristics and traits. We may compare his case with that of a man suffering from chronic melancholia or hallucination. His mind perceives frightening nightmares and he is always tortured by it – although it is he himself who produces these fantasies without any extraneous constraint or compulsion. The pictures appearing in his mind are not agreeable to his sick psyche, and he is tortured by it, although it is he himself who has created them. Yet, as we know, he suffers because of it. What is punishment? It is that from which man runs away (if not inflicted by it yet) and longs to extricate himself (if already suffering from it). And this definition applies to the ugly shapes and frightening conditions which an "unhappy" man suffers in his next abode. It proves that the chastisement of the next world is perpetual and never-ending – for a man whose unhappiness has become an integral part of his personality.

Many objections have been raised against perpetuity of chastisement, all of them clearly without a leg to stand upon:

First Objection: Allãh's mercy is limitless, all-encompassing. How can He, in His mercy, create someone whose destination would be a perpetual chastisement which no one could bear?

Second Objection: Punishment is punishment when it is not agreeable to the nature of the convicted person. In other words when it is a compulsion, a constraint. And perpetual constraint is unthinkable. Therefore, it is wrong to say that there would be perpetual punishment.

Third Objection: The man had committed sins which were not perpetual; they came to their end after a short or long duration. How can he be requited with a perpetual never-ending punishment?

Fourth Objection: Even the evil-doers serve the system of creation no less than the good-doers. If they were not there, the virtue of good people could not come about. This being the case, why should they be thrown into perpetual punishment?

Fifth Objection: It is a revenge to punish someone who disobeys the commandments of Allãh. As a rule revenge is taken because the unjust and disobedient person makes the wronged party

suffer some loss; and that party, if powerful enough, avenges itself to make up that loss. But this rule cannot apply to Allãh, because He is Self-sufficient and nobody can inflict any harm or loss upon Him. In this background, how can He punish anyone – and especially with a perpetual punishment?

There are other similar objections against the perpetuity of punishment. If you ponder on what we have written earlier explaining the meaning of the perpetuity of punishment, you will realize that these objections are completely wide of mark :

General Reply: Perpetual punishment is the effect of the form of infelicity and unhappiness when it becomes an inseparable characteristic of the "unhappy" man. It happens after the man acquires full capability for it – through relevant conditions of the psyche – and exercises his free choice by choosing evil, instead of good. That capability creates in the psyche the shape commensurate with it. We do not ask why a man does human actions, once the matter has acquired the human form – because the human form itself is sufficient cause of human activities. Likewise, we cannot ask why the effects of the inseparable unhappiness and infelicity (including perpetual punishment) are appearing, after the psyche has acquired the form of inseparable unhappiness and infelicity. Because it is its inseparable characteristic and effect. This general reply sufficiently refutes all the objections. Now let us look at each objection separately:-

Reply to the First Objection: When we say "mercy of Allãh" we do not refer to any softness of heart, mildness of temper or other such psychological effects, because such mercy presupposes material existence, and Allãh is far above such insinuations. Divine Mercy means bestowing on the recipient all things which he is fully qualified for. A fully qualified person longs for the things he is qualified for; and his qualification itself becomes a constant demand for it as if it had a tongue of its own. And Allãh gives him what he thus demands and asks for. His Mercy is of two kinds: general and particular. The general mercy gives whatever a person is qualified for in the framework of existence. The particular mercy bestows whatever a person is qualified for in the highway that leads towards monotheism and bliss of Allãh's Nearness. When

Allãh gives the form of inseparable "unhappiness" to a person who is fully qualified for it, it is not against the general mercy; it is rather a part of that mercy. And perpetual punishment is a compulsory result of that form. As for the particular mercy, it does not cover the person who is not proceeding on the highway of guidance. Now let us look at the claim that perpetual punishment is against the Divine Mercy. If by "mercy" they refer to the general mercy, then surely it is not against it – it is rather a part of the general mercy. And if they mean the particular mercy, then the claim is untenable, because this case is out of the jurisdiction of the particular mercy.

Moreover, this objection, if sustainable, could also be laid against intermittent punishment. Nay, it would invalidate punishments of this world too.

Reply to the Second Objection: First we should decide why a thing is disagreeable to the nature. A thing or condition may be disagreeable to a man because there is no common factor between the man and that thing or condition. This indeed is a constraint, and it happens because of compulsion by an extraneous agent; and goes away as soon as that constraint is removed.

There is, on the other hand, an action or condition which emanates from the very nature of the man, when that nature is thoroughly polluted, when it is moulded in ugly mould and acquires a shape other than the original one. Man, in that existence, demands terrifying punishment; his transformed psyche, by its very nature, longs for chastisement – although at the same time he does not like it. We have earlier given the example of the man suffering from melancholia: Doubtlessly, the terrifying pictures emanating from his mind are "agreeable" to his psyche, because they are the products of that distorted psyche itself, and such effects are surely agreeable to the related psyche or nature. But at the same time they are indeed torture and punishment, because the definition of "punishment" applies thereto. In short, the eternal punishment is disagreeable from the viewpoint of sensitivity, and at the same time it is agreeable because it emanates from the psyche itself.

Reply to the Third Objection: The punishment is not the result of the sin and disobedience which were limited and came to

an end. It is the effect of the perpetual ugly shape to which the man's psyche was moulded as a result of those limited and counted sins. There is no question here of a limited cause bringing about an unlimited effect – which, of course, is impossible. As an example, look at the man himself; there were a lot of limited causes which ultimately moulded the matter into human form; now he acts and reacts as a human being, because of that human form. And that humanity continues for ever, even after his death. We cannot ask about this man, as to how did a set of limited causes bring into being those unlimited and unending effects – because their efficient cause exists with them for ever. Likewise, it cannot be asked how can a set of limited sins bring about perpetual limitless chastisement.

Reply to the Fourth Objection: Service and worship, like mercy, is of two kinds: general and particular. General service is to submit to the Source of existence, that is, God, in the affairs and conditions of existence. Particular service is to submit to God and obey Him, in the path that leads to monotheism. Each type of service and obedience has a reward of its own, a mercy most suitable to it. Obviously, the general service in the system of creation is rewarded by general mercy – and as explained earlier, eternal bliss and eternal chastisement both are parts of that mercy. And the particular service is rewarded by the particular mercy, that is, bounties of the Paradise.

Moreover, if this objection is recognized as valid, then it would also negate the limited chastisement of the Hell and even punishments of this world too.

Reply to the Fifth Objection: As you have seen, the perpetual chastisement is ascribed to the shape of unhappiness acquired by man; and to Allãh in the sense in which every existing thing is attributed to Him. That punishment is not attributed to Him in the meaning of revenge and satisfaction of the feeling of rage and anger, because such thing is impossible for Allãh.

Of course, one of the names used for Allãh is "the Avenger". But it is used in the sense that Allãh requites severely His servant when he (the servant) transgresses the limits of servitude and crosses the boundary of obedience going into that of revolt and

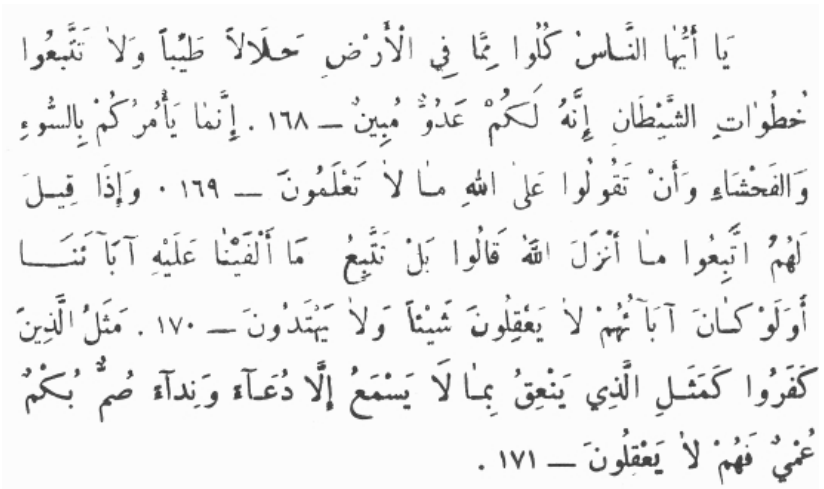
disobedience. "Revenge" in this meaning is not impossible for Allãh; and the perpetual punishment may be called "revenge" in this sense, without any difficulty.

Moreover, this objection, if tenable, may be laid against terminable punishment also; and even against the worldly punishments.

A QUR'ÃNIC NOTE ON THE ABOVE SUBJECT

It should be noted here that this method of argument, which we have used against the above-mentioned objections, has been used also in the Qur'ãn and traditions. Allãh says: *Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away. And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer;* (as for) *these, their striving shall be thanked. All do we aid – these as well as those – out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:18-20). As you see, the verses count both chastisement and good recompense as parts of the bounty and mercy of Allãh; and it is made clear that whatever happens, it is related to the will, desire and striving of the servant himself. It is this very method that we have used in explaining the main topic and replying to the objections. There are many other verses of this connotation; and we shall write on them in their proper places, Allãh willing.

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يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالاً طَيِّباً وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ــ ١٦٨ . إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ
وَالفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ــ ١٦٩ . وَإِذَا قِيلَ
لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا
أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لاَ يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يَهْتَدُونَ ــ ١٧٠ . مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لاَ يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ
عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لاَ يَعْقِلُونَ ــ ١٧١ .

O men! eat the lawful (and) *good things out of what is in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the Satan, surely he is your open enemy* (168). *He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you may speak against Allãh what you do not know* (169). *And when it is said to them: "Follow what Allãh has revealed," they say: "Nay! we follow what we found our fathers upon." What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way* (170). *And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and cry; deaf, dumb* (and) *blind, so they do not understand* (171).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *O men! eat the lawful* (and) *good things out of what is in the earth . . . what you do not know: al-Ḥalãl* (اَلحَلاَلُ = lawful) is opposite of *al-ḥarãm* (اَلحَرَامُ = forbidden) ; *al-hill* (اَلحِلُّ) is used as opposite of *al-ḥurmah* (اَلحُرْمَةُ = prohibition), *al-ḥaram* (اَلحَرَمُ = sanctuary) ; while *al-ḥall* (اَلحَلُّ = to untie) is opposite of *al-'aqd* (العَقْدُ = to tie). All these usages of *al-ḥill* allude to freedom of a thing in its action and effect. *aṭ-Ṭayyib* (الطَّيِّبُ = good) is opposite of *al-khabīth* (الخَبِيْثُ = bad, evil), and basically means "agreeable"; a good speech is that which is agreeable to the hearing; a good perfume is agreeable to the sense of smelling; a good place or house is agreeable to the people residing therein. *al-Khuṭuwãt* (الخُطُوَاتُ) is plural of *al-khuṭwah* (الخُطْوَةُ = step, pace, stride). Some reciters have read it as *al-khaṭawãt* (الخَطَوَاتُ) which is plural of *al-khaṭwah* (الخَطْوَةُ = one step). The phrase, "the footsteps of the Satan" refers to things leading to the Satanic aim, as footsteps lead to the walker's aim and destination. The Satan's aim is to mislead with polytheism; therefore, his footsteps are the things which lead to polytheism, and take the walker away from Allãh.

al-Amr (الأَمْرُ = to enjoin); the enjoiner imposes his own will on the enjoined, so that the latter does what the former wants. The Satan enjoins and orders by devilish insinuations and temptations encouraging man to do what the Satan wants. *as-Sũ'* (اَلسُّوءُ = evil) refers to the thing or action which is repugnant and repulsive to society. When it exceeds that limit, it becomes *al-faḥshã'* (الفَحْشَآءُ = indecency) ; it is *a maṣdar* like *as-sarrã'* (السَّرَّآءُ = prosperity; happiness) and *aḍ-Ḍarrã'* (الضَّرَّآءُ = adversity; distress).

Allãh has addressed these verses to all the men in general, because the order promulgated therein concerns all. As for the polytheists, they followed some self-imposed taboo, and falsely ascribed its promulgation to Allãh. It is reported, for example, that the tribes of Thaqīf, Khuzã'ah, Banu 'Ãmir ibn Ṣa'ṣa'ah and Banu Madlaj had forbidden themselves certain things of tilth and cattle, as well as some categories of camels, forging a lie against

Allãh. Similar baseless taboos are found in other countries and societies too.

Coming to the believers, there was a possibility that even after accepting Islam, some myths and superstitions might continue in their society, because of hereditary influence and national tradition. As a matter of fact, every new spiritual or temporal system concentrates in the beginning on eradicating and destroying the roots of the old system. After it is done, and if by that time it is left with some vitality and vigour – by good training and learning – then it starts mopping up operation by obliterating and erasing the remnants of that old system. Otherwise, the residue of that system is mixed with the new one, and the resulting mixture becomes a hybrid – neither this nor that.

Allãh ordered the people to eat from what is in the earth. To eat is to swallow after chewing. Sometimes the word "eating" is allegorically used for general usufruct of a property, for unrestricted right of its disposal, because eating is the basic activity of man, the main pillar of his life. For example, Allãh says: .. . *do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means, except that it be trading by your mutual consent* . . . (4:29). The verse under discussion may easily be interpreted in this wider sense, because it is general, not restricted. It would therefore mean: Eat, make use of, and enjoy the usufruct of the bounties of Allãh that are in the earth, and which the earth has prepared and kept in store for you by permission of Allãh; and it should be in a lawful and proper way. But you should see that there is no snag or hindrance in eating or using it, either from your own nature or from the nature of the earth. For example, there are some things which by their nature cannot be eaten; there are others which man by his nature does not want to eat; and lastly there are things which are eatable and useable, but your own nature rejects them and does not want to touch them at all, for example, a food that was obtained by unlawful means.

Thus, the words of Allãh, "eat the lawful (and) good things out of what is in the earth", promulgate general permission of eating all the lawful and good things of the earth, without any condition, without any restriction. But the next sentence,

"and do not follow the footsteps of the Satan", shows that there are some things (related to this lawful and good eating) which are called "the footsteps of the Satan". They are of two categories: either refraining from some food as a result of following the Satan, or eating it for the same reason. Thereafter, Allãh mentions a general principle applicable to all that is done for following the Satan, that it is evil and indecency, as well as speaking against Allãh what one does not know. Desisting from a food is not allowed except when Allãh is pleased with such abstaining; likewise one should not audaciously use any thing without the permission of Allãh. Eating out of what is in the earth is not lawful and good unless Allãh permits and allows it. And He has allowed it in this and similar verses. Also, one should ascertain that a particular thing is not forbidden or prohibited by Allãh, as He says after a few verses: *He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine* . . . (2:173).

The meaning of the verse then would be as follows, and Allãh knows better: Eat out of what is in the earth, from the bounties of Allãh which He has created for you, as He has made
them lawful and good for you; and do not leave some of them abstaining from them, because that would be evil and indecency, and you would be guilty of speaking against Allãh what you do not know; it would be tantamount to making your own law against the law of Allãh; and you would thus be following the footsteps of the Satan.

The verse thus shows that:

First: Man has been given a general permission for unrestricted use of all that is in the earth – except the things excluded from this general rule by other proofs. Allãh may forbid a thing as easily as He permits it.

Second: One who abstains, without any reasonable proof, from that which Allãh has made lawful, in fact promulgates his own law – which he is forbidden to do.

Third: Following the footsteps of the Satan means worshipping Allãh in a way Allãh has not allowed, by a method He has not approved. Allãh has not forbidden any walking except that in

which man puts his foot in the footsteps of the Satan, making his walk conform with that of the Satan; thus he would be following the Satan's footsteps.

It may be inferred from above that, although the reason given of this prohibition (*He only enjoins you evil and indecency . . .*) demands that man should neither proceed to do any thing without knowledge, nor refrain from any thing without knowledge; but this is not what this verse is meant for; because it is not following the footsteps of the Satan, though it is following the Satan.

QUR'ÃN : *He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you may speak against Allãh what you do not know:* Evil and indecency are attributes of action, *vis-à-vis,* speech. It shows that what the Satan enjoins is confined to the action that is evil and indecency, and the word that is spoken without knowledge.

QUR'ÃN: *And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allãh has revealed," they say: "Nay! we follow what we found our fathers upon": al-Ilfã'* (اَلإِلْفَآءُ = to find). The verse supports what we have inferred from the preceding verse, regarding the footsteps of the Satan.

QUR'ÃN: *What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way:* It is rebuttal of their saying; it shows that they speak without knowledge and without ascertaining the truth; and it is a thing which reason rejects. They say, "We follow what we found our fathers upon." It is an unconditional declaration – they intend to follow their fathers in all conditions, without looking at their qualifications and credentials. They are determined to follow their fathers even if they had no sense, even if they had gone astray. They claimed that whatever their fathers did was correct. But such claim, such declaration, is just a talk without knowing; it leads one to say what no sensible person would ever say – if his attention was drawn to its absurdity. There would be no blame on them if they followed their fathers only in those things which they (the fathers) had knowledge of, and concerning which they followed the right way; if they followed them in such things

knowing well that their fathers had their knowledge and had been on right way, it would not be counted as following without knowledge.

It shows that the phrase, "What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way," is not intended as an exaggeration, although one may think that negation of all sense and knowledge from their fathers – who certainly knew many things concerning their life and livelihood – was intended as an exaggeration. But it is not so. Actually, the verse exposes the absurdity of their unconditional declaration by pointing out a situation in which no one would allow the following.

QUR'ÃN: *And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and cry: al-Mathal* (اَلمَثَلُ = proverb; parable, adage); also it is used for attribute and comparison, as Allãh says: *See how they coin comparisons for thee. So they have gone astray, therefore they shall not be able to find a way* (25:9). *an-Na'īq* (اَلنَّـعِيقُ = admonishing cry of a shepherd to his sheep); *an-nidã'* (اَلنِّدَآءُ = to call) is *maṣdar* of *nãdã, yunãdī, munãdãtan* (نَـادى ، يُنَادِي، مُنَادَاةً = he called, he calls, to call) ; it is more particular than *ad-du'ã'* (اَلدُّعآءُ = to call), because *an-nidã'* is reserved for calling in a loud voice, while *ad-du'ã'* is general. The meaning of the verse is as follows, and Allãh knows better: And O Prophet! your parable, when you call the unbelievers to the truth, is like a man who calls out to the animals while the animals do not understand what he says, except that they hear a call and cry, and stop in their tracks as soon as they hear it without understanding any thing spoken. The unbelievers are, therefore, deaf, they do not hear any talk which would benefit them; dumb, not speaking any sensible word; blind, not seeing any worthwhile thing. Thus they do not understand any thing, because their windows of understanding are closed shut.

It appears that there is a sort of reversal in this parable. Although it begins as a parable of those who disbelieve, it changes to describe the shepherd, the caller to guidance; it is in fact the likeness of the Prophet not of those who were being

called by him to the right path. But as the three adjectives deducted from it (*deaf, dumb* [and] *blind, so they do not understand,*) were attributes of the disbelievers – not of him who was calling them to the truth – it was highly appropriate to ascribe the parable to the disbelievers, and not to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). Thus, there appears to be a reversal in the parable.

TRADITIONS

ʻAbdu ʾr-Raḥmãn says: "I asked Abu ʻAbdillãh about a man who vowed to slaughter his child. He said: 'That is from the footsteps of the Satan.' " (*at-Tahdhīb*)

Manṣũr ibn Ḥãzim said: "Abu Abdillãh (a.s.) said to me: 'Have not you heard about Ṭãriq? Verily, Ṭãriq was a cattle-dealer in Medina. He came to Abu Jaʻfar and said: " O Abu Jaʻfar! I have taken an oath by divorce (of my wives), emancipation (of my slaves) and vow." Thereupon, (Abu Jaʻfar, a.s.) said to Him: " O Ṭãriq! verily this is from the footsteps of the Satan." ' "

Abu Jaʻfar (a.s.) said: "Every oath taken in the name of other than Allãh, is from the footsteps of the Satan." (al-ʻAyyãshī)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "When a man takes oath for not doing a thing – while what he has sworn against, its doing is better than its leaving – then he should do that which is better; and there is no penalty on him; surely it (i.e., such oath) is only from the footsteps of the Satan." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: The traditions, as you see, interpret the footsteps of the Satan as the deeds supposed to bring one nearer to Allãh, while in fact they are not so, because the *sharīʻah* does not recognize them – as we have explained above. Of course, as for the divorce, etc. (mentioned in the second tradition), there is an additional reason for the invalidity of such oaths; and that is making it conditional on some contingency in future; and it is against the principle of immediate and unconditional effecting of such transactions. (It is a topic of jurisprudence.) Oath in the name of other than Allãh refers to an oath which has no validity in the *sharīʻah,* and to swearing by what Allãh has not sworn by

and to which He has given no excellence.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out. . .:* "That is, their likeness when you call them to the faith is like the caller who calls out to the cattle which understands nothing other than hearing a voice."

A MORAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE ON BLIND IMITATION

Opinions and beliefs are of two kinds, which we shall call theoretical and practical knowledges. The theoretical knowledge is the one not directly related to action, for example, theorems of geometry, propositions of physics and issues of metaphysics. Practical knowledge, on the other hand, is directly related to action, for example, the moral teachings concerned with what to do and what not to do. The only way to acquire the theoretical knowledge is through rational proofs or the senses. The only way to get the practical knowledge is to follow that which leads to man's felicity, and to refrain from that which leads to infelicity or hinders the felicity. Apart from that, it is merely a superstition to believe in what is not known to be the truth and fact (in theoretical knowledge) and what is not known to be good or evil (in practical knowledge).

Man, when left to his pristine nature, does not accept superstitious ideas based on blindness and ignorance. His opinions are based on the demands of nature which wants him to find out the causes of the things, and exhorts him to strive for real perfection.

But sometimes his sentiments and feelings aroused by imagination – and especially the fear and the hope – make him to believe in myths and superstitions. What happens is this: Imagination creates some images in his mind which produce fear or hope. That feeling of fear or hope then preserves that image and does not let the psyche forget it. Let us say, a man finds himself in a valley; he is alone and the moonless night is pitch-dark; he cannot see his own hands. He has no light to illuminate his surroundings,

no companion to share his thoughts with. Then his imagination takes hold of him. Every formless figure appears to him as a fearful ugly ghost intent on putting him to death. Then he sees the ghouls moving, coming and going ascending to the skies and descending to the earth. The imagination keeps producing these figures and he remains awake, frightened out of his wits. Later on, he describes that horrifying experience to someone, graphically describing the devilish antics of those ghosts and ghouls, and the hearer stands aghast, his eye askance. In this way the 'belief' in these things spreads – while in fact it is just an imaginary "thing" having no reality at all.

Sometimes this superstition reawakens the instinct of self-defence in man, and he devises some rites to ward off the harmful effects of this imaginary "being"; and exhorts others to do like-wise, so that they too would be safe. Thus, a superstitious rite takes root in the society and grows.

Man, from the earliest days of his existence, has remained in the tight grip of myths and superstitions; and the situation is not different even today. And it is not confined to the eastern nations – as many people think. It is prevalent among westerners in equal, if not greater, degree.

The elite group, that is, the scholars, have been trying, since time immemorial, to eradicate the rites and ceremonials arising from deep-rooted superstitions which have kept the common people enthralled. They try to awaken the public to the reality – but to no avail. It is because man has never been able to free himself from following the others in theoretical views and real knowledge on one side, and sentiments and feelings on the other. We can see that the treatment has not been successful, and the situation goes from bad to worse.

The most astonishing is the myth prevalent today among the scientists and sociologists. They say that the foundation of modern science is laid on the senses and experiment; it rejects every thing that is not perceivable through the senses and which cannot be experimented upon. Also, according to them, the civilization is based on the urge of perfection; it seeks perfection in every possible direction, as much as it can.

But strangely enough, this view itself is a myth which they are following. The natural sciences look only at the factors and faculties of the nature. In other words, these material sciences search only for the hitherto unknown peculiarities of the matter. So far as the things beyond matter are concerned, these material sciences have no way to reject or refute them – as they are beyond their scope, outside their jurisdiction. As such it is a clear superstition and myth to reject metaphysical and immaterial things – just because the material sciences (which admittedly cannot see beyond matter) have not been able to see those things which are admittedly beyond the reach of matter.

Likewise, it is another myth to base the civilization on the above-mentioned urge of perfection of the society. This perfection of society, this felicity of civilization, often demands sacrifices from its members. It becomes necessary for some people to offer their individual happiness on the altar of the society; they lose their all, including the lives, in defence of their country or their cause; an individual is thus deprived of his happiness and his life in order that the society may be saved. Obviously, no man will voluntarily accept these personal privations unless he believes in this pursuit of society's perfection, and unless he looks at that sacrifice itself as a personal perfection. But that sacrifice is not a perfection for himself – it is a nullity, a deprivation. Of course, it may be a perfection – if we accept it as such – for the society, *per se,* not for himself. But man had invented society as an instrument for his own benefit; he had not bargained that the role would be reversed and he would be used as a tool for the society's benefit.

It is to overcome this basic difficulty that the societies have invented some myths. They say to their members that man by sacrificing himself in the way of the society earns eternity because his good name is always remembered with reverence and affection – and man should strive for that eternal life. But evidently it is nothing but a story, a myth. Where is this supposed life once the man is dead? There is nothing for him except death and oblivion. But the society says, it is life – merely a name without any substance !

Also, they say: It is necessary for man to obey the laws even

if they are tough and irksome to him. He should patiently bear the loss of some of his happiness, some of the things he earnestly desires, in order that the society may prosper, the civilization may attain its perfection. In this way, that partial deprivation will lead to his own perfection – through the perfection of the society. He is thus made to believe that the perfection of the society is his own perfection. But it is merely a myth.

The perfection of the society may be the man's perfection, when both perfections go hand in hand, when both are one and the same. Otherwise, not. Why should a man look at society's perfection as his own perfection, and to good remembrance as his lasting glory; and especially so if he can easily attain to his aims and goals – even if through injustice and oppression – and when his strength and power surpasses that of his competitors? The same question may be asked in respect of a powerful nation, *vis-à-vis,* the others. And it is not just a theoretical question. We see every day how the powerful nations go on exploiting the weaker ones. These super powers tread on the prone bodies of the weaker peoples, crush their dignity and self-respect, expropriate their natural resources, and put the whole populace under their yoke. (Once it was called imperialism and colonialism, now it is neo-colonialism. Result in both cases is the same:) weaker people are subjugated and enslaved. (They say they are there to help these people in their difficulties – and in this process they rob them of their freedom and dignity.) They cure a disease by putting the patient to death.

What is the guidance given by the Qur'ãn in this respect? In theoretical field, it tells man to follow the commandments of Allãh and not to speak without knowledge. In practical affairs, it directs him to seek only what is pleasing to Allãh: if it tallies with his own desires, then he shall get happiness of both worlds; if it does not agree with it, if he has to sacrifice his own wish for the pleasure of Allãh, then he shall get great reward from Allãh; and what is with Allãh is better and everlasting.

Also, the materialist say: Belief in religion is a blind following which the science does not allow. Such belief is a remnant of the superstitions of the second of the four periods through

which mankind has passed. There was first the period of mythology, followed by that of religion. Then came the era of philosophy which was replaced by that of science. Presently, we are living in this era, and it follows the knowledge and rejects myths and superstitions.

COMMENT: This in itself is a myth. These people talk without knowledge.

They have said: "Belief in religion is a blind following." The fact is otherwise. Religion is a composite entity; it consists of the gnosis of the beginning and final destination of man, the laws regulating the rites of worship and social dealings (which are based on revelations brought by the prophets whose truth was definitely proved by rational proofs), and some information given by the same truthful prophets. Evidently, when one follows the religion he follows the knowledge, because the truth of the prophet concerned was fully established by proofs.

We have written something on the topic of "following", under the verse: *Surely Allãh commands you that you should sacrifice a cow* (2:67).

There is another amusing aspect of this objection. This disparaging condemnation comes from those who have got nothing in their hands except blind imitation and who uncritically follow their desire, without ascertaining its value. This aping encompasses their whole being, right from their principles of life to the social customs – be it food or drink, dress or residence, marriage or other social relations. Of course, they have given a new name to this imitation: They say, they have adopted the ways of the developed nations. Thus the blind following remains firmly-rooted in society, but the name is discarded; the bottle is the same, the label has been changed. The result: "Do as the Romans do" becomes a scientific adage, a sign of social advancement; and: *do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray* . . . (38:26) is treated as a blind religious following, a superstitious view !!

They have divided the progress of human species into four stages. But what we definitely know concerning the history of

philosophy and religions refutes this division. It is wrong to say that philosophy came after religion. Ibrãhīm (a.s.) brought his religion long after the rise of philosophy in India, Egypt and Chaldea; and the religion of ‘Isã (a.s.) came after the Greek philosophy. Likewise, the religion of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), that is, Islam, was promulgated after the philosophy of Greece and Alexandria. In short, philosophy reached its zenith long before the rise of religion. We have also mentioned earlier that the religion of monotheism was the first and earliest of all religions and systems.

The Qur’ãn divides the path of human progress in a different way. There were two periods only: First, the period of simplicity when all were of one nation, and then the period when materialism and revolt took its hold. We shall describe it in detail under the verse: *Mankind was but one nation; so Allãh sent the prophets* . . . (2:213).

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يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا
لِلّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ــ ١٧٢ . إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ
وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ
فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ــ ١٧٣ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا
أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً أُولٰئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ
فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللّٰهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ــ ١٧٤ . أُولٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدٰى وَالْعَذَابَ
بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ــ ١٧٥ . ذٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللّٰهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ــ ١٧٦ .

O you who believe! eat of the good things that We have provided you with, and give thanks to Allãh if Him it is that you worship (172). *He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and that over which any other* (name) *than* (that of) *Allãh has been invoked; but whoever is forced* (to it), *not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (173). *Surely those who cancel what Allãh has revealed of the Book and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies, and Allãh will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement* (174). *These are they who*

have bought error for the guidance, and chastisement for forgiveness; Oh! how (bold) *they are to endure fire* (175). *This is because Allãh has revealed the Book with the truth; and surely those who differ in* (matter of) *the Book are in a great opposition* (176).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN : *O you who believe! eat of the good things that We have provided you with:* The preceding verses were addressed to the "men" in general; now a selected group among them (i.e., the believers) is especially spoken to. Thus, this talk issues forth from the preceding one. It seems as though Allãh is turning away from an intractable and self-opinioned group that was impervious to reason, and looks towards those who would listen to, and accept the call of, the Speaker, because they believe in Him. The difference in the two speeches springs from the change of the audience. The believers were expected to accept what was said to them. Therefore, they were told to "eat from the good things that We have provided you with". The expression is more loving than the previous impersonal phrase addressed to the general public: "eat the lawful (and) good things out of what is in the earth". The loving expression of the verse under discussion paves the way for the direction that they should be thankful to Allãh alone, because they are monotheists, they do not worship anyone other than Allãh. It was for this very reason that Allãh said, "that We have provided you with", and did not say, 'what you have been provided with', or "what is in the earth". The Qur'ãnic expression (in active voice) shows that Allãh is known to them and near them, is affectionate and compassionate to them.

The Arabic phrase translated as "the good things that We have provided you with", would be literally translated as 'the good things of what We have provided you with' – in genitive case. Apparently the adjective (*the good things*) is the first construct, related to the second construct (*what We have provided you with*);

and means in effect, 'eat from Our sustenance that is all good'. This meaning is appropriate in this context which is meant to show Allãh's kindness and compassion for the believers. The phrase is not meant to restrict the second construct with the first one. In other words, it does not mean, 'eat from the good provisions, not from the bad ones': because such meaning would be quite irrelevant in this setting in which Allãh wishes to remove prohibition, telling them not to abstain from any provision given by Allãh – as, such behaviour would be a self-imposed unauthorized legislation, would be a talk without knowledge.

QUR'ÃN: *and give thanks to Allãh if Him it is that you worship:* Apparently it should have been 'give thanks to Us', but the Qur'ãn says, "give thanks to Allãh". This expression is more appropriate for the theme of monotheism which the verse leads to. And for the same reason the next phrase, "if Him it is that you worship", was preferred to a shorter, 'if you worship Him'. The present expression restricts and confines the worship to Allãh alone.

QUR'ÃN: *He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other* (name) *than* (that of) *Allãh has been invoked:* Invoking any name other than Allãh's, means slaughtering for any thing other than Allãh, for example, sacrificing for idols.

QUR'ÃN: *But whoever is forced* (to it), *not revolting, nor exceeding the limit:* That is, when he is not unjust, nor does he exceed the limit; is driven to it because of emergency. The meaning is therefore as follows: Whoever is forced to eat some of these forbidden things, because of some emergency, while he does not like at all to go against the law of Allãh, nor does he exceed the limit, there shall be no blame on him. But if he was trapped into that emergency because of his own revolting behaviour or because he had exceeded the limit and was then driven to that necessity, then he is not allowed to eat from these things. The sentence, "surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful," shows that the above permission is just a concession given by Allãh to the believers;

otherwise, the basis of prohibition is present even in this case.

QUR'ÃN : *Surely those who conceal what Allãh has revealed of the Book:* It is an allusion to the People of the Book. There were many good and lawful things – in the rites of worship and other matters – which their elders and leaders had arbitrarily forbidden them – while they had got the Book and that Book contained no sanction against those good things. These people did not conceal what they did but only because they wanted to protect their high position and prestige in the community, and because they did not like to stem the flow of gifts, riches and properties which their power supposedly entitled them to.

This verse unambiguously proves that a man's deeds are embodied and assume the form of a body; and it is the deeds that finally emerge as their own results. In this verse, Allãh first says that their action of taking a small price for the Divine Revelation is one and the same with their eating the fire into their bellies. Then the description of their concealing and price taking is changed to that of buying error for the guidance; then this gives way to bartering chastisement for forgiveness. Then it ends on the words, "Oh! how (bold) they are to endure fire". Thus, their misdeed itself is transformed into the fire, although what they had done was to conceal the revelation and to continue on that behaviour.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *but whoever is forced* (to it), *not revolting, nor exceeding the limit: ʿal-Bãghī* (اَلبَاغِيْ = revolting) is one who desires hunting[1], and *al-ʿãdī* (اَلعَادِيْ = exceeding the limit) is thief. They are not allowed to eat dead (animal) even if they are faced with emergency. It is forbidden to them. This (concession) does not cover them as it

1. Another meaning of *al-bãghī* is "desirous"; the explanation in the tradition is based on this meaning. (*tr.*)

does (other) Muslims. And they are not allowed to shorten the prayer (in such journeys)." (*al-Kãfī*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: *"al-Bãghī* is unjust and *al-'ãdī* is usurper." (al-'Ayyãshī)

Ḥammãd narrates from the same Imãm that he said: *"al-Bãghī* is one who revolts against the Imãm, and *al-'ãdī* is thief."

Abu Ja'far and Abu 'Abdillãh (a.s.) have said: "Not revolting against the Imãm of the Muslims, nor transgressing the path of the righteous ones with disobedience." (*Majma'ul-bayãn*)

The author says: All these are various applications of these words; and they support the meaning we have given earlier.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allãh, *Oh! how* (bold) *they are to endure fire:"* (It means,) how bold they are to commit the deeds which, they know, will take them to the fire." (*al-Kãfī*)

'Ali ibn Ibrãhīm narrates from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) about this sentence: "How daring they are to (risk) the fire." (*Majma'u1-bayãn*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "How active they are in the deeds of the people of the fire."

The author says: These traditions are in fact similar in their meanings: The first tradition explains boldness for fire with boldness in perpetrating the causes of the fire; the second one gives its meaning as daring to enter the fire; the third one interprets it as boldness to commit sins that would lead to the fire – and it is almost the same with the meaning of the first tradition.

* * * * *

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلٰكِنَّ
الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى
الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَوٰةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَوٰةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا
عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
صَدَقُوا وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ــ ١٧٧ .

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is the one who believes in Allãh and the last day and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) *the captives, and keeps up prayer and pays the* zakãt, *and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict – these are they who are true and these are they who are the pious* (177).

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COMMENTARY

It is said that when the *qiblah* was changed from Baytu ‘1-Maqdis to the Ka‘bah, there ensued a long drawn out controversy

and conflict in the public. It was then that this verse was revealed.

QUR'ÃN: *It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West: al-Birr* (اَلبِرُّ = righteousness); *al-barr* (اَلبَرُّ = righteous), it is a perpetual adjective. *Qibal* (قِبَلَ = towards, in the direction of), *al-qiblah* (اَلقِبْلَـةُ = a certain direction) is derived from it. *Dhul-qurbã*(ذو القُرْبى = relative); *al-yatãmã* (اَليَتَامى) is plural of *al- yatīm* (اَليَتِيْمُ = orphan; he who has lost his father) ; *al-masãkīn* (اَلمَسَاكِيْنُ) is plural of *al-miskīn* (اَلمِسْكِيْنُ = miserably poor, one who suffers a worse condition than *al-faqīr* (اَلفَـقِيْرُ = poor). *Ibnu s-sabil* (اِبْنُ السَّبِيْلِ = one stranded in journey) ; *ar-riqãb* (اَلرِّقَـابُ) is plural of *ar-raqabah* (اَلرَّقَـبَةُ = neck; it refers to slave). *al-Ba'sã'* (اَلبَأسَـآءُ) is *a maṣdar* like *al-bu's* (اَلبُؤْسُ), both having the same meaning: hardship, poverty. *aḍ-Ḍarrã'* (الضَّرَّآءُ) too is *a maṣdar* like *aḍ-ḍarr* (الضَّرُّ) and both mean affliction with injury or loss, for example, when a man is afflicted with a disease, injury, or loss of property or child. *al-Ba's* (اَلبأسُ = intensity of war).

QUR'ÃN: *but righteousness is the one who believes in Allãh:* Instead of defining righteousness, the verse turns to describing the righteous ones; thus it introduces the people in the light of their attributes. In this way, it points to the fact that abstract ideals and abstruse ideas have no value in Islam unless they appear in concrete shape in the character of a man. It is a well-known style of the Qur'ãn that it explains and defines a condition and a rank by introducing the people having that rank and condition; it is never satisfied with mere theoretical explanations of good and bad, virtue and vice.

The words, "the one who believes in Allãh and the last day . . .," define the righteous ones, and explain their real state. The verse introduces them with all three aspects of belief, deeds and morals, in three stages. the first stage begins with the words, "the one who believes in Allãh;" the second is the sentence, "these are they who are true;" and the third is, "and these are they who are the pious."

Allãh begins the first stage, saying: "the one who believes

in Allãh and the last day and the angels and the Book and the prophets". It is a comprehensive description of all the true gnosis which Allãh wants His servants to believe in. The belief referred to in this verse is the perfect belief which can never fail to produce its effect. When a believer attains to this stage of faith, his heart is never assailed by any doubt or confusion; he does not take a dim view of whatever befalls him, nor is he offended if afflicted with a misfortune. Likewise, his morals and actions are safe from adverse influences. This interpretation is further supported by the phrase, "these are they who are true". Truth, in this verse, is general and unconditional; it is not restricted to any condition of man's heart or any activity of his limbs. It means, they are real believers, true in their belief; as Allãh says: *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total submission* (4:65). Thus, their condition fits the fourth stage of the belief, described under the verse: *When his Lord said to him, Submit* (yourself), *he said:* "*I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds"* (2:131).

After description of belief, Allãh mentions some of their deeds: "and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keeps up prayer and pays the *zakãt"*. Here their prayer is mentioned, and it concerns the Divine Worship. Allãh says: . . . *surely prayer keeps* (one) *away from indecency and evil* . . . (29:45); also, He says: . . . *and keep up prayer for My remembrance* (20:14). It is followed by mention of *zakãt;* and it is a financial obligation promulgated for economic good of the society. And before it all, the verse refers to their giving away wealth to various groups; this habit of theirs spreads the good and enlarges the circle of non-obligatory munificence, in order that the need of the poor may be fulfilled and their condition improved.

Lastly, the verse cites some of their excellent moral characteristics: "and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time

of conflict". *al-'Ahd* (العَهْدُ = to promise; to commit oneself to something). The verse mentions "their promise" unconditionally. Yet, it does not cover the belief and the resulting obligation of following the laws of the *sharī'ah* (as some people have said). Why? Because on going further we find the proviso, "when they make a promise" ; and clearly acceptance of true faith and submission to its concomitants is an unconditional obligation; and is obligatory on all the people at all the times. It does not depend on one's commitment. However, the "promise", by its generality, covers every commitment made by man. For example, when he says: I'll surely do it; or, I'll never do it. It includes every deal made in business transactions, every word spoken in social and family circles.

Patience is steadfastness in face of hardship, be it a series of benumbing misfortunes or a fight against formidable adversaries.

These two excellent virtues – fulfilment of promise and patience – do not cover all the necessary virtues; but when they are found somewhere, the other virtues invariably always follow suit. One of these two virtues (patience in hardships) has a passive quality, while the other (fulfilling the promise) has an active role. By mentioning them, Allãh in effect says that when they say something they surely proceed to do it, and do not withdraw from it even if they have to face difficulties.

The second stage of introduction is contained in the phrase, "these are they who are true". Truth is a comprehensive virtue, encompassing all attributes of knowledge and action. Truth is an inseparable concomitant of all basic virtues – continence, bravery, wisdom and justice – and of their branches., Man's life is made up of his belief, words and actions. When he is true, all the three aspects conform with each other. He does not do except what he says, and does not say except that which he believes.

Man by instinct accepts the right and truth; and even if he pretends otherwise, he submits to it in his heart. When he believes in the right truthfully, his word conforms with his belief, and his action with his word. It is then that he reaches the perfection in all three aspects of belief, morality and deeds. His faith becomes pure, his character virtuous and his deeds good.

Allãh says: O *You who believe! fear Allãh and be with the true ones* (9:119). The restrictive style, "these are they who are true", puts emphasis on the description of the righteous. It means – and Allãh knows better – that if you want to find the true ones, then these are the righteous.

The third and final stage of their introduction is the phrase, "and these are they who are the pious": This restrictive style looks at the level of perfection. Piety cannot be complete and perfect, unless righteousness and truth have attained their completion and perfection.

The attributes ascribed here to the righteous are the same which Allãh has described in other places. Allãh says: *Surely the righteous shall drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor. A fountain from which the servants of Allãh shall drink; they shall make it to flow a* (goodly) *flowing forth. They fulfil* vows *and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide. And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We only feed you for Allãh's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks; surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day. Therefore Allãh will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with radiance and happiness; and reward them, because they were patient, with garden and silk* (76:5–12). These verses, about some righteous personalities, describe their attributes of belief in Allãh and the last day, their spending for the sake of Allãh, their fulfilling the vows and their patience. Again, Allãh says: *Nay! Most surely the record of the righteous shall be in the* 'Illiyyīn. *And what will make you know what the* 'Illiyyīn *is? It is a written book; see it those who are near* (to Allãh). *Most surely the righteous shall be in bliss, on thrones, they shall gaze. You will recognize in their faces the radiance of bliss. They are made to quaff of a pure drink that is sealed. The sealing of it is* (with) *musk; and for that let the aspirers aspire. And the admixture of it is a water of Tasnīm, a fountain from which drink they who are drawn nearer* (to Allãh) (83:18 -28).

If you meditate on these verses in conjunction with those quoted above, you will see the reality of their attributes and their

final destination. These verses praise the righteous that they are servants of Allãh, and are drawn near to Him. Now, Allãh describes His servants in these words: *Surely as regards* My *servants, thou hast no authority over them* (15:42) ; and He says about those drawn near to Him: *And the foremost are the foremost; these are they who are drawn near* (to Allãh), *in the gardens of bliss* (56:10-12).

It is now clear that the righteous are the foremost in this world in reaching nearer to Allãh, as they are foremost in the next world in attaining to the bounties of the garden.

If you continue looking at the condition of the righteous in the light of these verses you will unearth many hidden nuggets of spiritual reality.

The above discourse shows that the righteous are in the highest, that is, the fourth, stage of belief, as we have explained earlier. Allãh says: *Those who believe and do not mix their faith with iniquity, those are they who have the security and they are those who go aright* (6:82).

QUR'ÃN : *and the patient in distress:* The word "patient" in the Arabic text is in accusative case while the other attributes are in indicative. This change has been effected to point out its excellence, to show its importance.

Also, it has been said that when a speech becomes a bit lengthy, several adjectives following each other, then the Arabs break the monotony by interposing negatives between the positives, or by exchanging accusative and indicative cases.

TRADITIONS

The Prophet said: "Whosoever acted in accordance with this verse, he surely perfected (his) faith."

The author says: Its reason is clear from the explanation written above. az-Zajjãj and al-Farrã' are reported to have said: "This verse is reserved for the sinless prophets, because nobody, except the prophets, can perform these things as they should be."

But this comment shows that they had not pondered on it properly. They seem confused regarding spiritual ranks. The verses of the Chapter of the Man (76:5–12) quoted above, were revealed about the family members of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) ; Allãh in those verses has named them "the righteous", although they were not prophets.

Of course, the rank of the righteous is very high, and their position is of very great importance. Allãh praises the men of understanding saying that they: *remember Allãh standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth:* Then He quotes their prayer, which shows that their highest aspiration was that their Lord should join them to the righteous: *and make us die with the righteous* (3:190-3).

al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī narrates from Abũ ʻÃmir ash-Shaʻbī that he said: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allãh! What is the completion of righteousness?' He said: 'That you should do in private what you do in public.' " (*ad-Durru 'l-manthũr*)

Abu Jaʻfar and Abu ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) said: "The near of kin are the relatives of the Prophet." (*Majma 'u 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: It is an application of this verse, keeping in view the verses of *near relatives* (42:23).

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: *"al-Faqīr* (poor) is he who does not ask from the people; and *al-miskīn is* of more straitened circumstances than the "poor"; and *al-bã's* (اَلبـآئِسُ) is the most wretched of all." (*al-kãfī*)

Abũ Jaʻfar (a.s.) said: "The wayfarer is the one stranded in the way." (*Majma 'u 'l-bayãn*)

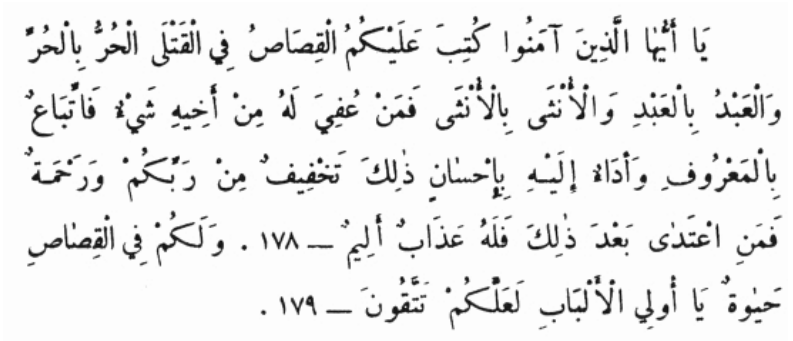
aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) was asked about an al-mukãtib (اَلمُكـَاتِبُ)[1] who, after making a partial payment was unable to pay (the balance

1. In Islam a slave was allowed to enter into an agreement with his master. This agreement, called *al-mukãtabah,* entitled him to gain his freedom on payment of stipulated amount. Such a slave was called *al-mukãtib.* (*tr.*)

of the stipulated money of) his al-mukãtabah (المُكَاتَبَةُ) . He (a.s.) said: "It will be paid on his behalf from the money of *aṣ-ṣadaqah* (الصَدَقَةُ = charity money; also *zakãt*), because Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *and for* (the emancipation of) *the captives."* (*at-Tahdhīb*)

The same Imãm said about the words of Allãh, *and the patient in distress and affliction:* "In hunger, and thirst and fear." And he (a.s.) said about the word, *and in time of conflict:* "In the fighting." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلَى الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ
وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنْثَى بِالْأُنْثَى فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتِّبَاعٌ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَٰلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ
فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ــ ١٧٨ . وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ
حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ــ ١٧٩ .

O you who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain; the free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female; but if any remission is made to any one by his (aggrieved) *brother, then* (the demand for the bloodwit) *should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner; this is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy; so whoever exceeds the limit after this, he shall have a painful chastisement* (178). *And there is life for you in the retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves* (against evil) (179).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain; the free for the free . . .:* The verse is ad-dressed to the believers. It means that the law promulgated

herein applies to the Muslims only. As regards the non-Muslims – whether under protection of an Islamic State or not – the verse is silent about them.

Some people think that this verse has abrogated the verse 5:45 (*life is for life*)*;* because it does not allow killing of a free person for a slave, or of a man for a woman. But actually there is no room for this supposition. The position of this verse *vis-à-vis* the verse 5:45 is like that of an explanation *vis-à-vis* its text.

al-Qiṣãṣ (القِصَاص = retaliation) is the *maṣdar* of *qãṣṣa yuqãṣṣu* (قَآصَّ يُقَاصُّ = he followed, he follows) ; an Arab says: *qaṣṣa atharahu* (قَصَّ أثَـرَهُ = he followed someone's tracks). Another derivative is *al-qṣṣãṣ* (القَصَّاصُ = story-teller) – it is as though he follows the tracks of the past generations. Retaliation is called *al-qiṣãṣ* because it follows the footsteps of the offender, giving him a punishment similar to that which he had inflicted upon his victim.

QUR'ÃN: *but if any remission is made to any one by his* (aggrieved) *brother:* Its literal translation is: then whoever is remitted any thing by his brother. "whoever" refers to the murderer; the heir/s of the murdered person may waive his/their right of retaliation. Therefore, "any thing" refers to that right; it is used here as a common noun, in order that the rule may cover all possibilities, whether there was a full remission or partial. Let us say, for example, that there are many heirs and only some of them waive their right; then there shall be no retaliation; instead the blood-money will be imposed. The heir of the murdered person who has the right of retaliation) has extraordinarily been described here as the "brother" of the murderer; this expression has been used to awaken the feeling of love and kindness in the heart of the aggrieved party, and gives a hint to him that remission and forgiveness is highly preferable in the eyes of Allãh.

QUR'ÃN: *then* (the demand for the bloodwit) *should be made according to the usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner:* Its literal translation is: then following according to usage, and payment to him in a good manner. Both phrase

are subjects with their predicates implied. Thus literally it would mean: then it is obligatory on the aggrieved "brother" to follow that remission with demand for the blood-money according to usage; and it is obligatory on the murderer to pay it to the aggrieved brother, that is, heir of the slain, in a good manner without any annoying delay.

QUR'ÃN: *this is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy:* The permission to commute the retaliation into blood-money is an alleviation from your Lord, and therefore, once effected, it cannot be changed. The heir of the slain person cannot revert to retaliation after granting remission. If he transgresses the limit and retaliates after remission, then he shall have a painful chastisement.

QUR'ÃN: *And there is life for you in the retaliation, O men of understanding, that you guard yourselves* (against evil) : This verse points to the philosophy of this legislation. It aims at removing a possible misunderstanding that – because Allãh has allowed remission and blood-money, and also because remission expands the circle of mercy and affection – remission is more in conformity with public weal and social good. The verse shows that, although remission is an alleviation based on mercy, common good and society's peace depend on the retaliation. The only guarantee of life is the law of retaliation, and not remission, blood-money, or any other thing. Man has to accept this fact, if he has understanding. "that you may guard yourselves" that is, from murder. It gives the basic of the law of retaliation.

The scholars have said that the verse, "and there is life for you in the retaliation," is one of the most eloquent in its clarity, and the most refined in rhetorics, in addition to its having many other fine literary points, like brevity – it has so few words and such a small number of total letters – fluency of style and clarity of composition. It combines the force of argument with beauty of meaning, the fineness of proof with clarity of result.

Before this verse was revealed, the Arabs were fond of some adages and maxims (on the subject of murder and retaliation), of whose rhetorics and fluency they were very proud. For example:

'To kill some is to keep alive all', and 'To increase killing is to decrease killing'. And the most remarkable in their eyes was the sentence: 'Killing stamps out killing.' But when this verse was revealed all were forgotten. Some of its distinguishing points are as follows: The verse has fewer letters, and is easy to pronounce. "the retaliation" with definite article is a proper noun, while "life" is common noun – it shows that the resulting good is greater and more widespread than the retaliation. It explains the result in clear words and describes the real philosophy of the law, that is, the life. It unambiguously shows by what means the desired result can be obtained: Obviously, it is the retaliation that leads to life, and not the killing. (After all, many killings are done unjustly, and they do not lead to life, they are negation of life.) The word, "retaliation," covers also other punishments besides killing, that is, the reprisal in the matter of injury, etc. – and such retributions too lead to the society's life. The word conveys another extra meaning, as it shows that the retribution has resulted from unjust killing. (Compare it with their maxim, "Killing stamps out killing", which does not give any idea that "killing" refers to any punishment.) Then there is an exhortation in this sentence, as it points to a life reserved for the people, which they are oblivious of; it behoove them to take hold of it as it really belongs to them; it is as if someone tells you: There is a property belonging to you with so-and-so, or in such and such a place. Lastly, the opening word of the verse, that is, "for you" makes it clear to the men of understanding that the law-giver only desires to protect their interest, and no benefit is ever to accrue to him.

These are a few of the fine points found in this verse. The scholars have mentioned some more points, which may be seen in the books of rhetorics. The fact is, the more deeply you look at this verse, the more dazzled you shall be by its brilliance and radiance; and the word of Allãh is the highest.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about the word of Allãh, *the free for the free:* "A free man shall not be killed for the slave; but he shall be

beaten a severe beating and be fined the blood-money of the slave. And if a man kills a woman, and the heirs of the slain (woman) want to kill him, they shall pay half of his blood-money to the man's heirs." (al-'Ayyãshī)

al-Ḥalabī narrates from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.). He says: "I asked him about the word of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *but he who forgoes it, it shall be an expiation for him* (5:45) *;* he (the Imãm) said: 'His sins shall be expiated, as much as he forgives.' And I asked him about the word of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *but if any remission is made to anyone by his* (aggrieved) *brother, then* (the demand for the bloodwit) *should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner.* He said: 'He who has got the right (i.e. the aggrieved party) should not put his brother (i.e. the murderer) in difficulty, when he has made settlement with him concerning the blood-money; and he who has got the duty (of paying the blood-money) should not delay in its payment when he has ability to do so; and he should pay it to him in a good manner.' And I asked him about the word of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *so whoever exceeds the limit, he shall have a painful chastisement.* He said: 'It refers to a man who accepts blood-money or forgives, or makes compromise, then exceeds the limit (and kills the murderer) ; so he shall be killed as Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has said.' " (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: There are many traditions of the same meanings.

AN ACADEMIC ESSAY ON RETALIATION

Before the advent of Islam, and until this verse was revealed, the Arabs believed in requiting a murder with killing. But the retaliation had no defined limit. It all depended on the strength or weakness of the aggrieved party. Sometimes they killed a man for a man, and a woman for a woman – thus keeping a balance between the crime and its punishment. At other times they killed ten persons for one, a free man for a slave, a chief for and ordinary man. Many times a tribe destroyed

another just in retaliation of one man.

The Jews believed in retribution, as we see in chs. 21 and 22 of Genesis, and ch. 35 of Numbers. The Qur'ãn quotes it in these words: *And We prescribed to them in it that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear and tooth for tooth, and* (that there is) *reprisal in wounds* (5:45).

The Christians reportedly recognize only remission and payment of blood-money in the matter of murder.

All societies and nations, with all their differences, believed in, and practised, retaliation by killing, in one way or the other; although they did not have any fixed code for it even upto the recent centuries.

Islam opted for a middle course between confirmation of retaliation and its negation. It prescribed retaliation but did not make it obligatory – it allowed remission and payment of blood-money. Then it laid the foundation of justice by prescribing equality between the murderer and the murdered, telling us that: *the free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female.*

Objections have been laid against the law of retaliation in general, and the capital punishment, that is, retaliation by killing, in particular. The brunt of the argument is that nowadays the advanced nations do not recognize – or do not enforce – the law of capital punishment. Their objections may be summarized as follows:

1. Human nature disapproves the idea of a life for a life, when a man looks at this matter from the point of view of mercy and service to humanity.

2. The killing (i.e. the crime) had caused loss of one person; now the second killing (i.e. its punishment) would be a further loss, a loss upon loss.

3. Capital punishment is based on hard-heartedness and desire of revenge. These are not good traits; they should be eradicated from society through general training. Even a murderer should be punished through corrective measures; and it can easily be done through prison and hard labour, not capital punishment.

4. A criminal becomes criminal only because of psychological sickness. He should be put into mental hospital for treatment.

5. Civil laws and penal codes follow the trends of society. As the society changes, so do the laws and codes. There is no reason why the law of capital punishment should continue to plague the civilization – even the advanced nations – for ever and ever. Society should make use of its manpower to the maximum possible extent. A criminal may be given a punishment, which would be as effective as killing – without putting him to death. He may be imprisoned for life, or for a long period. It would satisfy both demands – that of the society and that of the heirs of the slain.

These are the main objections against the law of retaliation with killing. The Qur'ãn has replied to all this criticism with one sentence : . . . *whoever slays a soul, unless it be for man-slaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men* (5:32), as the following explanation shows:

The laws, observed by members of a society, are laid down by men and based on a subjective approach – with a view to serve the interest of the society. But the general and basic cause (which brings them into being) is the human nature which has real existence, and which demands that its deficiencies be made up and its needs fulfilled. This nature, this real being, has nothing to do with the number of the men, nor is it related to the composite unit, that is, the society. Because society is a handiwork of human nature, while we are talking about the man himself, about his nature itself. This nature, this real being, makes no distinction between a single man and a thousand; all are human beings; and as far as the existence is concerned, one man and the whole humanity have got equal weight, equal value.

This really existing nature has equipped itself with powers and instruments to ward off harmful and destructive influences from itself, because it loves existence, and repels all things which could deprive it of life. It defends its existence, by all possible means. It does not stop at any thing, and is ready and willing to kill and destroy the attacker who endangers its existence. Nature tells man to kill whosoever wants to kill him (if he cannot be

repelled by any other means). And no one denies justifiability of such killing.

Look at these advanced and "civilized" nations. They have no hesitation in waging war in defense of their freedom, independence and national interest. What will they do if someone wanted to kill all their nationals? They think that supremacy of law is sacrosanct. They defend the rule of law, they try to preserve order in the society, by all possible means – even if it entailed killing some offenders. They protect their national interest – even by war, if nothing else works. They justify war for this reason in high-sounding phrases – the war which shakes the world to pieces and destroys the tilth and the generations. There is a never-ending race for armaments: A country sacrifices its progress to arm itself with some sophisticated military hardware; and then its adversaries try to acquire even more advanced arms. Ask them, "Why this mad race?" They will say, it is essential for their defense, for the safety of their society and civilization.

Now, society and civilization is only a handiwork of the nature. How is it that the nature allows massacres, mass destructions and wholesale killings just to save a handiwork of its, and does not allow it for its own protection and safety? How is it that it allows to kill someone who intends to kill but has not killed yet, but forbids killing the man who intended to kill and killed?

The nature has decreed that every action should have a reaction; *so he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it; and he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.* Now what type of nature is this which breaks its own law, violates its own decree, when it comes to giving death penalty to someone who has killed an innocent person?

Moreover, Islam does not accord any value, any weight to man, unless he is on the religion of monotheism. One man believing in the one and the only God is equal in the eyes of Islam to the whole human race. Therefore, whoever slays a believer, it is as though he slew all men – because he committed a sacrilege against the dignity of that believer. Likewise, whoever slays any person, it is as though he slew all men – looking at the reality of his existence. But so far as the civilized nations are concerned,

religion has no value in their eyes. If they had accorded as much value (if not more) to religion as they give to civilization, they would have defended the religion to the same extent at least.

Furthermore, Islam has brought the *sharī'ah* which is meant for the whole world – not for a particular country or a selected group only. Let us say that what the advanced nations have legislated is good for their society. But they have opted for this course after they have made sure that the general training of their people has been effective; that their governments are faithfully discharging their duties; that according to crime statistics, these well-trained nations are now totally averse to murder and violence; that as a result of this aversion, no one indulges in crimes of violence – except in extremely rare cases. And because it hap-pens so rarely, these nations have decided to punish murder in some ways other than death. Islam does not say that such training should not be given, or that if given it would not be effective. When that stage is reached, capital punishment may give way to remission – with the law of retaliation keeping its basic position unaltered. The relevant sentence in this verse points to this fact: *but if any remission is made to any one by his* (aggrieved) *brother, then* (the demand for the bloodwit) *should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner.* Clearly, the language used is that of moral training; and when a nation advances to a level where all take pride in forgiveness and remission, then they would not deviate from the path of remission to that of revenge.

But what about other nations? We know their moral status is not so high. We see the condition of these societies, and the extent of the moral decay of their people. In these places, the criminals are not afraid of prison or hard labour; they are immune to sermons and exhortations; they do not understand such abstract ideas as human rights, nor do they give any importance to them. And the facilities which they are provided with in prisons are far much better and much more comfortable than the wretched life they are accustomed to at home. The result? They do not care about social disgrace or penal sentence; they are afraid of neither prison nor

hard labour; beatings and floggings are just occupational hazards to them. That is why crime rates are going higher and higher in almost every country.

Suppose there is there an ideal society we have mentioned earlier; still the overwhelming majority of nations come into this second less ideal category. Therefore, the general and basic law could only be the retaliation with possibility of remission. After that, if the ethical standard of a nation improved and if it advanced gracefully on the path of moral perfection (and Islam spares no effort for moral upliftment of its people), it would automatically opt for remission. If on the other hand, it continued its downward slide, and remained ungrateful to Allãh's favours, then the law of retaliation would prevail – with possibility of remission even then.

Now, let us have a look at their objections:

The talk about mercy and kindness to human beings is all very good. But not every kindness is good, nor is every mercy a virtue. Showing mercy to a hardened criminal who has no regard for others' life and honour, is a loathsome offence against good law-abiding people. Indiscriminate application of mercy would disrupt the social system, destroy the humanity and nullify the virtues.

The same applies to their criticism concerning hard-heartedness and revenge. Avenging an oppressed from the oppressor – in pursuit of justice and truth – is not objectionable in any way; nor is the love of justice a thing to disparage. Moreover, death penalty has not been legislated for revenge only; it serves also to train general public in good character and to shut the door of mischief in the society.

The assertion that the crime of murder is a psychological disease which should be treated in mental hospitals, has provided an excuse – and what a good excuse it is! – to the criminals. It has contributed a lot in the growth of murder, indecency and other crimes of violence in the society. Why should a criminal refrain from making murder his hobby, when he knows that his urge of violence is but a psychological disease, and that it is an acceptable plea which would oblige the government to treat him with kindness and benevolence, arranging for his medication in hospitals?

Now, we come to the view that society should utilize all

available manpower, and as such should use the criminals in compulsory labour and other such work, by imprisoning them and cutting their access to the society. If these people really believe in what they say, if there is any truth in this sermon, then why do they forget it in those cases in which their legal system provides for capital punishment? We should not forget that there is in every civilized country provision for capital punishment for specified crimes. They give death penalty in those cases because they think those crimes to be extremely heinous and atrocious. But we have already explained that, in the eyes of nature, life of one man is as precious as that of the whole human race put together.

* * * * *

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْراً الْوَصِيَّةُ
لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقّاً عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ــ ١٨٠ . فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ
بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ اللهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ـ ١٨١ .
فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوصٍ جَنَفاً أَوْ إِثْماً فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ
اللهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ــ ١٨٢ .

Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth, for parents and near relatives, according to usage, a duty (incumbent) *upon those who guard* (against evil) (180). *Whoever then alters it after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it; surely Allãh is Hearing, Knowing* (181) . *But he who fears an inclination* (to a wrong course) *or an act of disobedience on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no blame on him. Surely Allãh is Forgiving,. Merciful* (182) .

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth:* The language is that of an obligatory rule, because *al-kitãbah* (اَلكِتَـابَةُ = to write; translated here as "prescribed") is used in the Qur'ãn always for definitely

obligatory laws. It is further strengthened by the word "a duty" coming at the end of the verse, because duty too is used, like writing and prescription, for compulsory orders. But the word "a duty" is qualified by "upon those who guard (against evil)"; this somewhat weakens the sense of obligatoriness; it would have been more appropriate, in case of obligatoriness, to say, 'a duty upon the believers'. In any case, it is said that the verse was later abrogated by the verse of inheritance. If so, then it would only be its "obligatoriness" which was abrogated, not its being liked, recommended. Perhaps, the phrase qualifying "a duty" was used for this very purpose.

al-Khayr (اَلخَيْرُ) is wealth; it probably denotes considerable wealth, not an insignificant amount. *al-Ma'rũf* (اَلمَعْرُوْفُ = known; common usage of good deed and favour).

QUR'ÃN: *Whoever then alters it after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it:* The pronoun in "the sin of it" refers to the alteration; all the rest refer to the bequest according to usage; bequest is *a maṣdar* and is used both as masculine and feminine. (That is why the pronouns used in the verse are of masculine gender.) "upon those who alter it": Allãh did not say 'upon them', because the wording used clearly indicates the nature of sin, that is, alteration of a will; also it paves the way for the next verse.

QUR'ÃN: *But he who fears an inclination* (to a wrong course) *or an act of disobedience on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no blame on him: al-Janaf* (اَلجَنَفُ = inclination; deviation) ; it is said that it indicates outward inclination of the feet, and *al-ḥanaf* (اَلحَنَفُ) shows their inward inclination. In any case, it is used here to denote an inclination towards sin and disobedience, as it is followed by "or an act of disobedience". The verse branches out from the preceding one. Its meaning is as follows (and Allãh knows better) : The sin of alteration is only upon those who alter the bequest (which was made according to usage). Of course, if someone fears that the bequest of the testator is, or shall be, an act of disobedience or

inclined towards a wrong course, and then effects an agreement between the parties, free from error and sin, then there is no blame on him; because he has not changed a bequest made according to usage; rather he has altered only the wrong and sin found in it.

TRADITIONS

Muḥammad ibn Muslim says that he asked aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) whether a bequest was allowed in favour of an heir. The Imãm said: "Yes". Then he recited this verse, "Bequest is prescribed . . . if he leave behind wealth, for parents and near relatives . . ." (al-'Ayyãshī). This tradition is also narrated, with a slight change in wording, in *al-Kãfī* and *at-Tahdhīb.*

as- Sadiq (a.s.) narrates through his father from 'Ali (a.s.) that he said: "He who did not bequesth at the time of his death for those of his near relatives who were not his heirs, surely ended his deeds with disobedience." (al-'Ayyãshī)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said about this verse: "(It is) a right which Allãh has given in the properties of men to the Master of this affair (i.e. to the Imãm)." The narrator says: "I said: 'Is there a prescribed limit for it?' He said: 'Yes'. I said: 'How much?' He said: 'Its lower limit is one-sixth; and the higher, one-third.' " (al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: This theme has been narrated also by aṣ-Ṣadũq in his *al-Faqīh* from the same Imãm. It is a fine inference from this verse read in conjunction with the verse: *The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves, and his wives are their mothers; and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allãh to inheritance, one with respect to another, than* (other) *believers, and* (than) *those who have fled* (their homes), *except that you do some good to your* awliyã'; *this is written in the Book* (33:6). This verse abrogated the system prevalent in early days of Islam by which *a "muhajir* brother" inherited from his *"ansar* brother" ; and initiated inheritance between the relatives; then it made an exception (from this rule of inheritance by relationship), and that was

about doing *some good to your* awliyã'[1]. Now Allãh has made the Prophet *al-waliyy* and his pure progeny *al-awliyã'* of the believers. And this exception of doing good to the *awliyã'* brings it within the jurisdiction of the verse under discussion: *Bequest . . . for parents and near relative.* And the Imãms are also the "near relatives" (of the Prophet). Understand it.

The Fifth or the Sixth Imãm said about the verse, *Bequest is prescribed for you . . .:* "It is abrogated. The verses of inheritance abrogated it." (al- 'Ayyãshī)

The author says: This tradition may be reconciled with the preceding ones if we say that it was only its obligatoriness which was abrogated; thus the order will continue as *al-mustaḥabb* (المُسْتَحَبّ = liked, recommended) even after that.

Abũ Ja'far (a.s.) said about the verse, *But he who fears an inclination* (to a wrong course) *or an act of disobedience . . . :* "*al-Janaf* is inclination to the side of error without knowing that it is allowed (or not)." (*Majma'ul-bayãn*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "When a man has made his will, then it is not allowed to the executor to alter the bequest made; he should enforce it as (the testator) has bequeathed; except when (the testator) has made his will against the command of Allãh, and done injustice (to an heir). Then it is allowed to the executor to bring the will to the truth (i.e. the right course). Let us say, there is a man who has got some heirs; and he bequeaths all (his) property to some of the heirs, depriving the others. In such cases, it is allowed to the executor to bring the will to the right (course). And this is (the meaning of) the word of Allãh, *an inclination* (to a wrong course) *or an act of disobedience.* And *al-Janaf* is inclination to some of his heirs, leaving the others aside; and

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1. *al-Awliyã'* (اَلأَوْلِيَاءُ) is plural of *al-waliyy* (الوَلِيُّ), which has several meanings, important among them being: friend, guardian, relative, a person close to Allãh, and master. In the explanation given in the text, it has been taken to mean master and guardian. (tr.)

al-ithm (الإِثْمُ = sin**;** act of disobedience) is that he directs to build fire-temples, and to take intoxicant. Then the executor is allowed not to do any such thing." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: The explanation of *al-janaf* given in this tradition, makes clear the meaning of the word of Allãh: *and effects an agreement between the parties.* The words refer to effecting reconciliation and settlement between the heirs, when there is conflict and quarrel among them because the testator was inclined to wrong course, and favoured one heir at the cost of the others.

Muhammad ibn Sũqah said: "I asked Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: *Whoever then alters it after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it.* He said: 'It has been abrogated by the next verse; *But he who fears an inclination* (to a wrong course) *or an act of disobedience on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no blame on him.'* He said: 'It means that if the executor fears that the testator is inclined to a wrong course concerning his children in the bequest he has entrusted the executor with, in a way Allãh is not pleased with, (and which is) against the truth, then there is no blame on him, (i.e. on the executor of the will) if he changes it to the truth, and to the way of right that Allãh is pleased with.' " (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: This tradition explains one verse with the help of another. Therefore, the word, "abrogated", is not used here in its terminological meaning. And we have earlier mentioned that the word, "abrogation", is sometimes used in the speech of *Ahlu 'I-bayt,* in a meaning different from the language of the Principles of Jurisprudence.

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APPENDIX 'A'

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES

THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh	Rasūlu'llāh, Nabiyyu'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabī' I, in the Year of the Elephant. (25. 8. 570 AD)	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH (25. 5. 632 AD)	Natural	Holy Medina, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27.1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar)	15th Ramaḍān, 3 AH (1. 3. 625 AD)	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH (6. 3. 670 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Aṣghar)	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH (8. 1. 626 AH)	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (10. 10. 680 AD)	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā	Holy Karbalā" (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH (16. 12. 676 AD)	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH (28. 1. 733 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH (20. 4. 702 AD)	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH (14. 12. 765 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abd aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH (28. 10. 746 AD)	25th Rajab, 183 AH (1. 9. 799 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 148 AH – (29.12.765 AD)	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH (24. 8. 818 AD)	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs - Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH (8. 4. 811 AD)	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH (25. 11. 835 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third).	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH (27. 9. 827 AD)	3rd Rajab, 254 AH (28. 6. 868 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā), Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH (3. 12. 846 AD)	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH (1. 1. 874 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā, Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghā'ib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH (29. 7. 869 AD)	Still alive, but in occultation.	– –	– – – –

APPENDIX "B"

In this book the references of the Qur'ãnic verses have been given by writing serial number of the relevant chapter, followed by a colon (:) that is followed by the number/s of the verse/s. The names of the chapters have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The names of the chapters with their serial numbers are given here for the guidance of the readers.

To find, for instance, the verse 5:67 in the Qur'ãn, the reader should open the fifth chapter, that its, *al-Mã'idah* (اَلمَآئِدة = The Table) and then find the 67th verse.

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
1.	فاتِحَةُ الكِتاب	*Fatihatu 'l-kitãb*	The Opening of The Book
2.	البَقَرة	*al –Baqarah*	The Cow
3.	آل عِمران	*Ãl 'Imrãn*	The House of Imran
4.	النِّساء	*an-Nisã'*	Women
5.	المَائِدة	*Al-Mã'idah*	The Table
6.	الأنعام	*Al –An'ãm*	Cattle
7.	الأعراف	*al-A'rãf*	The Battlements
8.	الأنفال	*al-Anfãl*	The Spoils
9.	التَّوْبَة	*At-Tawbah*	Repentance
10.	يُونُس	*Yunus*	Jonah

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
11.	هُود	*Hũd*	Hood
12.	يُوسُف	*Yũsuf*	Joseph
13.	الرَّعد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder
14.	اِبراهيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham
15.	الحِجْر	*Al–Ḥijr*	El-Hijr
16.	النَّحل	*An-Naḥl*	The Bee
17.	الاِسْرآء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey
18.	الكَهْف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave
19.	مَريَم	*Maryam*	Mary
20.	طه	*Ṭã Hã*	Ta Ha
21.	الأنْبيآء	*al-Anbiyã'*	Prophets
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage
23.	المؤمِنون	*al-Mu'minũn*	The Believers
24.	النّور	*an-Nũr*	Light
25.	الفُرقان	*al-Furqãn*	Discrimination (Salvation)
26.	الشُّـعَراء	*ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets
27.	النَّـمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ant
28.	القَصَص	*al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Stories
29.	العَنْـكَبُوت	*al-'Ankabũt*	The Spider
30.	الرُّوم	*Ar-Rũm*	The Greeks
31.	لُقْمان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman
32.	السَّـجْدة	*as-Sajdah*	Prostration
33.	الأحزاب	*al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates
34.	سـبَأ	*Saba'*	Sheba
35.	فاطِر (المَلائِكة)	*Fãṭir (or, al-Malã'ikah)*	The Originator (or The Angels)
36.	يـس	*Yã Sīn*	Ya Sin
37.	الصّـافّات	*aṣ-Ṣãffãt*	The Rangers
38.	ص	*Ṣãd*	Sad

S.No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
39.	الزُّمَر	*az-Zumar*	The Companies
40.	المُؤْمِن	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished
42.	الشُّورى	*ash-Shũrã*	Counsel
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments
44.	الدُّخان	*ad-Dukhãn*	Smoke
45.	الجاثِية	*al-Jãthiyah*	Hobbling
46.	الأحقاف	*al-Aḥqãf*	The Sand-Dunes
47.	مُحَمَّد(ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory
49.	الحُجُرات	*al Ḥujurãt*	Apartments
50.	ق	*Qãf*	Qaf
51.	الذّارِيات	*adh-Dhãriyãt*	The Scatterers
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭũr*	The Mount
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon
55.	الرَّحمن	*ar-Raḥmãn*	The All-merciful
56.	الواقِعَة	*al-Wãqi'ah*	The Terror
57.	الحَديد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron
58.	المُجادَلة	*Al-Mujãdalah*	The Disputer
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering
60.	المُمتَحَنة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman
61.	الصَّف	*aṣ-Ṣaff*	The Ranks
62.	الجُمُعة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation
63.	المُنافِقُون	*al-Munãfiqũn*	The Hypocrites
64.	التَّغابُن	*at-Taghãbun*	Mutual Fraud
65.	الطَّلاق	*aṭ-Ṭalãq*	Divorce
66,	التَّحْريم	*at-taḥrīm*	The Forbidding
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
68.	القَلَم	*al-Qalam*	The Pen
69.	الحَاقَة	*al-Ḥãqqah*	The Indubitable
70.	المَعارج	*al-Ma'ãrij*	The Stairways
71.	نُوح	*Nũḥ*	Noah
72.	الجِنّ	*Al-Jinn*	The Jinn
73.	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped
74.	المُدَّثِّر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded
75.	القِيامَة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection
76.	الدَّهر (الإنسان)	*ad-Dahr* (or, *al -Insãn)*	The Time (or, Man)
77.	المُرسَلات	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones
78.	النَّبأ	*an-Naba'*	The Tiding
79.	النّازعات	*an-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers
80.	عَبَس	*'Abas*	He Frowned
81.	التَّكْوير	*at-Takwīr*	The Darkening
82.	الإنفِطار	*al-Infiṭãr*	The Splitting
83.	المُطَفِّفين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters
84.	الإنشِقاق	al-Inshiqãq	The Rending
85.	البُروج	*al-Burũj*	The Constellations
86.	الطّارق	*aṭ-Ṭãriq*	The Night-star
87.	الأعلى	*Al-A'lã*	The Most High
88.	الغاشِيَة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper
89.	الفَجْر	*Al-Fajr*	The Dawn
90.	البَلَد	*Al-Balad*	The Land
91.	الشَّمْس	*ash-Shams*	The Sun
92.	اللَّيل	*Al-Layl*	The Night
93.	الضُّحى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon
94.	الإنشِراح	*al-Inshirãh*	The Expanding

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
95.	التـّين	*At-Tīn*	The Fig
96.	العَلَـق	*al-ʻlaq*	The Blood-clot
97.	القـَدر	*al -Qadr*	Power
98.	البَيِّنَة	*al -Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign
99.	الزِّلزال	*Az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake
100.	العـَاديات	*al-ʻÃdiyãt*	The Chargers
101.	القارعَة	*al-Qãriʻah*	The Clatterer
102.	التَكاثُر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry
103.	العَصْر	*Al-ʻAṣr*	Afternoon
104.	الهُمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter
109.	الفيل	*Al-Fīl*	The Elephant
106.	قُـرَيْش	*Quraysh*	Quraish
107.	الماعُون	*al-Mãʻũn*	Charity
108.	الكـَوْثر	*al-Kawthar*	Abũndance
109.	الكافِرون	*al-Kãfirũn*	The Unbelievers
110.	النـَّصر	*An-Naṣr*	Help
111.	تَبَّت	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab)*	Perish (or,The Flame)
112.	الإخـْلاص (التـَّوحيد)	*al Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd)*	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)
113.	الفـَلَق	*al-Falaq*	Daybreak
114.	النـَّاس	*an-Nãs*	Men

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Al-Mīzān

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Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 3

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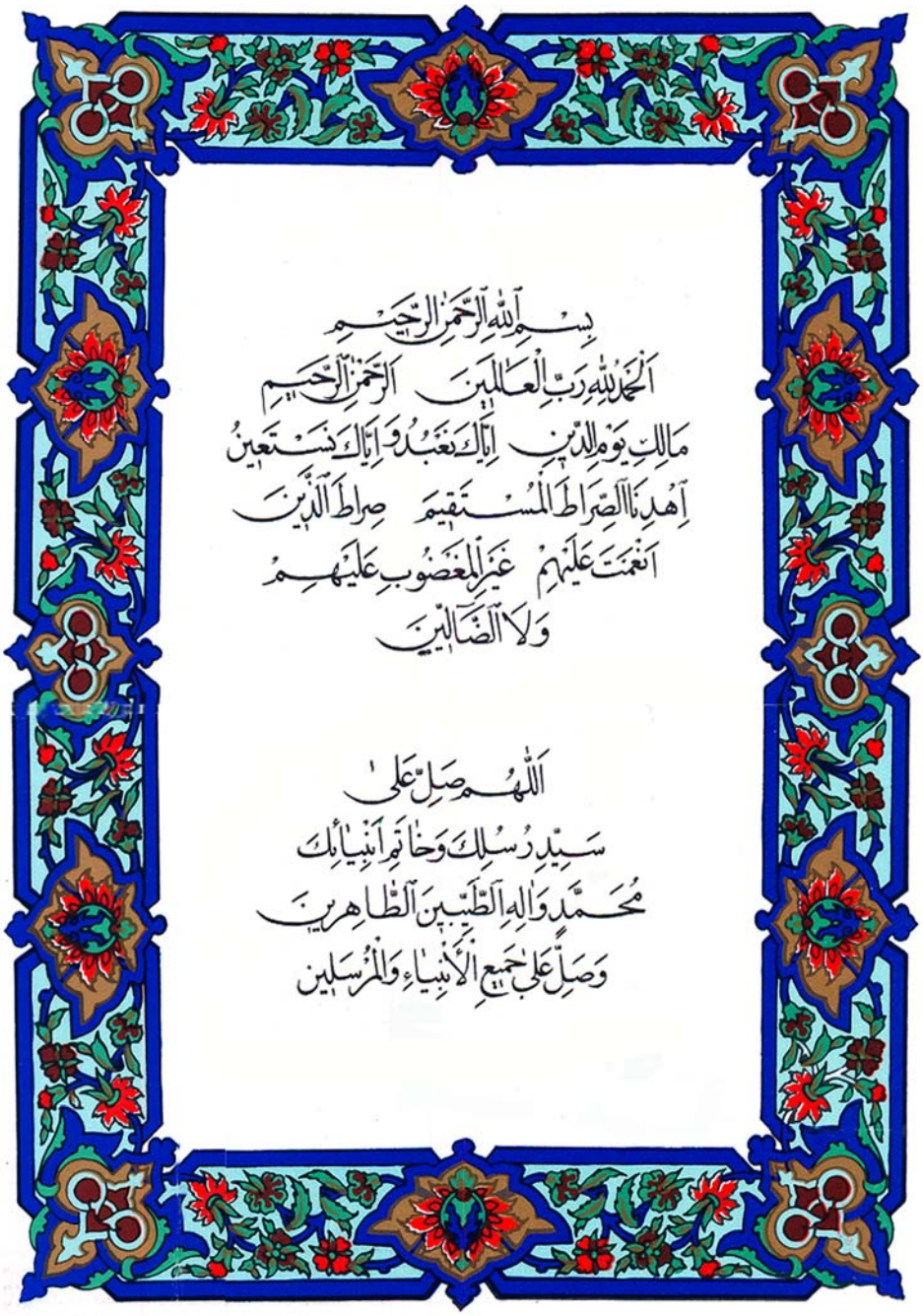
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour:
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	ك	**k**
ب	**b**	ل	**l**
ت	**t**	م	**m**
ث	**th**	ن	**n**
ج	**j**	ه	**h**
ح	**ḥ**	و	**w**
خ	**kh**	ي	**y**
د	**d**	ة	**ah, at**
ذ	**dh**		(construct state)
ر	**r**	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	**z**		
س	**s**		
ش	**sh**		**Long Vowels**
ص	**ṣ**	آ	**ã**
ض	**ḍ**	و	ũ
ط	**ṭ**	ي	**ī**
ظ	**ẓ**		
ع	**‘ or ʿ**		**Short Vowels**
غ	**gh**	ـَ	**a**
ف	**f**	ـُ	**u**
ق	**q**	ـِ	**i**

تصدير

١- العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/ ١٩٠٤ - ١٤٠٢/ ١٩٨١) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، وبعد مداولات واستشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لانّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط الّتي لا بدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، وكفاءته الأدبيّة في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هوالزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤- قدّمنا نشر ترجمة الجزء الثاني من (الميزان) لأنّه كان قد تهيّأ للنشر، والجزء الأوّل لم يتهيّأ بعد - لأسباب لا نريد أن نشرح أمرها هنا - فلم نر من الصّالح إرجاء نشره. وقد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و(الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، وقد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة. ولكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكل جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

ومن الله سبحانه نسأل، واليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، وأن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا ويسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه وخطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى ونعم النّصير.

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران — ايران

١٤٠٢/٤/٦
١٩٨٢/٢/١

F O R E W O R D

1. al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) — may Allāh have mercy upon him was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān* which will be published, by the help of Allāh, in the near future.

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have proceeded to publish the translation of the second

volume of the Arabic *al-Mīzān* earlier as it was ready for printing, whereas the first volume is not ready yet for the reasons which we do not wish to state here. So we saw no reason in delaying its printing. We have included two appendixes: one for the authors cited in all the volumes of *al-Mīzān,* and the other for the books cited therein. These two appendixes have been attached to the first volume of the English translation. Apart from this, the reader will find two appendixes in all the volumes of the translation of *al*-Mīzān.

* * * *

We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

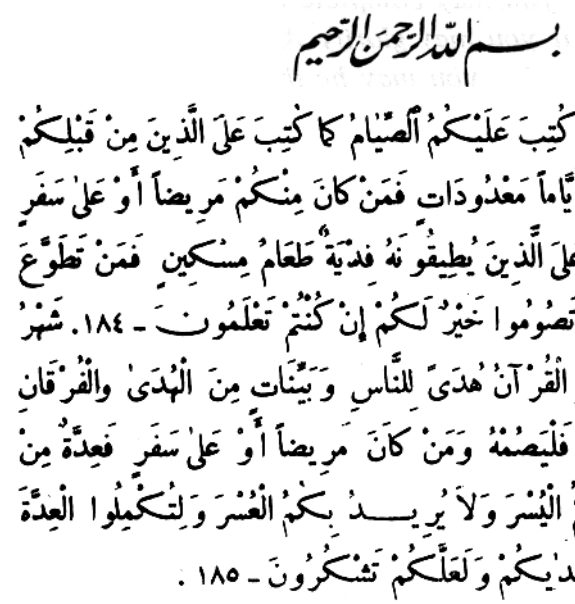
WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
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Tehran-IRAN.

al-Mīzān

Volume Three

ch.2, vrs. 183-223


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يا أيها الذين آمنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم
لعلكم تتقون ـ ١٨٣. أياماً معدودات فمن كان منكم مريضاً أو على سفر
فعدة من أيام أخر وعلى الذين يطيقونه فدية طعام مسكين فمن تطوع
خيراً فهو خير له وأن تصوموا خير لكم إن كنتم تعلمون ـ ١٨٤. شهر
رمضان الذي أنزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبينات من الهدى والفرقان
فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه ومن كان مريضاً أو على سفر فعدة من
أيام أخر يريد الله بكم اليسر ولا يريد بكم العسر ولتكملوا العدة
ولتكبروا الله على ما هديكم ولعلكم تشكرون ـ ١٨٥ .

''O' you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil) (183), *for a counted number of days; but whoso among you be sick or on a journey than* (he shall fast) *that number of other days; and those who are with difficulty able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man, and whoso on his own accord performs good, it is better for him, and that you fast is better for you if you know* (184); *The month of Ramadan, in which was sent down the Qur'an, a guidance for the people, and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination* (between right and wrong); *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein; and whosoever is sick or on a journey* (he shall fast) *the same number of other days*; *Allāh desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you; and so that you may complete the* (prescribed) *number, and that you may glorify Allāh for his guiding you, and so that you may be thankful to Him*. (185)

GENERAL COMMENT

The sequence of the three verses shows that they were revealed together; *for a counted number of days* (in the beginning of the second verse) is an adverbial phrase which qualifies the word, *fasting,* in the first verse; and *the month of Ramaḍān* in the beginning of the 3rd verse is a predicate, whose subject is a deleted but understood pronoun denoting the words *counted number of days* (which appear in the 2nd verse). Thus it would mean, *the counted number of days is the month of Ramaḍān.* Alternatively, it may be a subject of a deleted but implied predicate, and would mean *the month of Ramaḍān is that in which fasting is prescribed for you.* As a third possibility, it may be an alternative of the *fasting* mentioned in the first verse. Whatever be the grammatical position, it is the explanation and description of the counted number of days in which fasting has been prescribed. Therefore, all three verses are a well arranged statement with a single aim, i.e., promulgation of the ordinance of fast in the month of Ramaḍān.

Obviously, the first sentences have been revealed to prepare minds for the final ones. The first two verses are like a preparatory statement, with which a speaker tries to keep the audience calm and quiet, and this ensures that they do not become restless on hearing the tough commandment which he is to announce shortly. All the sentences in these two verses gently lead the hearer's mind to the ordinance of the fast of Ramaḍān. They mention such things as remove gloom and anxiety, cheer the soul and imperceptibly assuage the mood of unruliness and disobedience. They point to various concessions and indulgences which have been incorporated in the commandment. And all this is in addition to the goods of this world and the next which may be earned by following the law. It is for this reason that the sentence *0 you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you is* followed by the phrase *as it was prescribed for those before you* — hinting that you should not think it as a heavy burden nor should you feel gloomy, for it is not a new command for which you have been singled out; it was ordained for previous peoples also.

It further encourages them by pointing out: by following this command

you may get what you aim at by your faith — and that is piety (*taqwā*, التّقوى) which is the best thing for those who believe in Allāh and the Day of Judgement — and you are believers. This is the import of the phrase *so that you may guard yourselves* (*tattaqūn* ,تتقون , from the same root as *taqwā*).

Moreover, this worthy action, which inspires the hope of piety in you (as it did in your predecessors) does not involve *all your time, nor even most of it. It is only for a counted number of days.* The word days (*ayyāman* , ايّاما) is a common noun, and it shows insignificance. Its adjective, ‘‘counted’’, hints that the number is very easy (as we see in the words of Allāh in the Qur’ān, 12:20, *And they sold him for a small price, some counted pieces of silver*).

Allāh, now points to further concessions: Look how We have been lenient on the man who has a genuine difficulty in keeping the fast, as well as on the person who is hard pressed to do so. Such a man should redeem it by a substitute which is neither difficult nor heavy, and that is feeding a poor person. *But whoso among you be sick or on a journey, then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days; and those who are with difficulty able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man.* You must appreciate that this act brings much good to you; and that Allāh has made it as easy for you as possible. It is in your interest that you should perform it willingly and eagerly without reluctance, sluggishness or annoyance; because if one performs a good deed on his own accord, it is better for him than if he does it under coercion. This point is made clear in the words: *And whoso on his own accord performs good, it is better for him, and that you fast is better for you if you know.*

In this way, the first two verses prepare minds for the third verse, *So whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein ….*

In the light of this explanation, it is clear that the sentence in the first verse, *Fasting has been prescribed for you,* is the report of the fact of prescription; it is not the initial promulgation [like the verses, *0 Ye who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain ...*(2:178) and *Bequest is prescribed for you, when death approaches one of you if he leaves behind wealth, for parents and near relatives …* (2:180)] There is a difference between retaliation in the matter of the slain and bequeathing to parents and near relatives on the one hand, and the fast on the other. Retaliation for the slain is a

matter which is dear to the hearts of the heirs of the slain; and it conforms with the natural rage which is inflamed in them when they see the murderer alive and safe without any worry for the crime he had committed. Likewise, tender love for one's relatives is in itself enough to encourage one to make one's will in favour of one's parents and relatives, and especially so at the time of death and permanent separation. These two commandments, i.e., retaliation and bequest are in conformity with natural feelings, and, as such, they do not require preparatory statements or preambles before their promulgation. But the case of the fast is different. Here the man is denied his choicest desires and most coveted acquirements, i.e., food, drink and sex. It is a heavy burden which should, by nature, be disliked by him. When such an order is directed to the general public it needs some preparatory and introductory statement so that they may accept this hardship willingly and eagerly. There fore, the prescription in the verses of retaliation for the slain and bequest for parents and relatives is the original promulgation (without need of any preamble); but the words: *Fasting has been prescribed for you* is just a report of the commandment and has been used as the preamble of the actual command which comes later: *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein ... .*

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *O ye who believe.* This mode of address reminds them of a virtue (faith, belief) which encourages them to accept what ever order is given to them by their Lord, even if it is against their desires and habits.

The verse of retaliation also begins with this very phrase because the Christians, unlike other people, did not believe in retaliation. Therefore, it was necessary to point out that retaliation is allowed to the faithful, even if others do not believe in it.

Qur'ān: *Fasting has been written* (i.e. prescribed) *for you, as it was written* (i.e. prescribed) *for those before you*:

''Kitābah'' (الكتابة) means to write. Metaphorically it is used for prescription, enjoinment and irrevocable decision, as Allāh says, *Allāh has written down*: *I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostles* (58:21); *and We write down what they have sent before and their*

footprints (36:12); *and We wrote on them in it, a soul for a soul* (5:45).

''Siyām'' and *''ṣawm''* (الصّيام and الصّوم) are infinite verbs meaning to abstain from an action, like abstaining from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, talking, walking, etc. Also it is said that it means abstaining from desirable and coveted things. Later in religion, it was mostly used for abstaining from some specified things from dawn-break upto sunset with intention (*niyyah,* النّيّة)

Those before you means the nations that came before the advent of Islam: the followers of the previous prophets, like the followers of Mūsā and ʻĪsā etc. It is the meaning understood from this phrase wherever it occurs in the Qur'ān.

The comparison *as it was prescribed for those before you* is not general; it does not cover all the peoples, nor all the details of the Islamic fast. In other words, it does not mean that the fast was prescribed for the followers of all previous prophets, nor that the fast ordained for them was like the Islamic fast in all the details, like period, rules and other particulars. The comparison is only in the principles of fasting and abstaining from some things without any regard to the particulars.

Those before you indicates followers of the previous religions without specifying who they were. The words *as it was written* (prescribed), show that they were followers of revealed religions; and that the fast was ordained for them. but the present Old and New Testaments do not say that fasting was compulsory and obligatory; rather they extol and praise it. Still, the Jews and the Christians do fast on various days in the year, in various ways, like abstaining from meat, or milk, or food and drink. There are stories in the Qur'ān of the fasts of Zakariyyā and Maryam in which they abstained from talking.

Fasting was also observed in traditional (unrevealed) religions, as is reported from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. The Hindus observe fasts even now. Apparently, it is human nature itself that leads one to believe that the fast is an act of worship which brings one nearer to the Creator.

Sometimes it is said that *those before you* means the Jews and the Christians; or that it refers to only the previous prophets (and not their followers). The basis of these assertions are some traditions which are not free from weakness.

Qur'ān: *So that you may guard yourselves* (against evil) (or, so

that you may become pious).

Idol-worshippers fasted to please their deities, or, on committing a sin, to extinguish their deities' anger, or to get their prayers granted. This turns the fast into a trade or barter; the man performs what is needed by the deity and the deity in its turn grants the prayers of the man; the worshipper pleases the deity so that the deity may do what will please the worshipper.

But Allāh is All-holiness. No want, need, emotion or grievance can be attributed to Him even in imagination. In short, He is free from every shortcoming. So, all the good effects of the worship (whatever the act of worship and whatever the good results) return to the worshipper himself, not to the Lord. The same is the case of sins. Allāh has said: *If you do good, you do good for your own souls, and if you do evil it is for them* (only) (17:7). It is this principle which the Qur'ān teaches by always connecting the effects of good and evil actions with man: man, who is all needs and wants, as Allāh says *0 man! You are the ones who stand in need of Allāh, and Allāh is He who is the Self-sufficient* (35:15); and refers to the fact specifically in connection with fasting in the words, so *that you may become pious* (may guard your selves against evil).

There is no doubt that one may achieve piety through fasting. Everyone naturally feels that for union with the sublime world of holiness and for rising to the height of perfection and spirituality man should first of all restrain himself from gratifying material desires. He should keep away from satisfying the body's lust and inclinations, and purge his soul from the love of worldly affairs. In short, he should guard himself against all such things which may carry him away from his Lord. This is piety (*taqwā* , التّقوى) which is achieved through abstinence from lust and desires.

Even more beneficial and more effective for the common man is the abstinence from common lawful desires like food, drink and sex. This trains him to keep away from unlawful things; and creates in him the will to guard himself against sin and evil, and to come nearer to Allāh. Obviously, when he accepts the words of Allāh by abstaining from lawful desires, and heeds to and obeys His commandment, he will be more needful and obedient to His words in connection with sins and unlawful things.

Qur'ān: *Counted number of days* (*ayyāman ma'dūdātin,* ایّامامعدودات): ''*ayyāman*'' has the vowel of (*fatḥah*, ـً , الفتحه) because an adverb of time, in (*fī*, فی) is understood before it. It is connected with the word fast (*ṣiyām*, الصّیام). It has already been explained that bringing the word ''days'' as a common noun and attaching to it the adjective, ''counted'', implies that the order given is not very difficult or bothersome. This in turn encourages the man to obedience. Also it has been maintained that the words *the month of Ramaḍān* …. are the explanation of ''days''. So, the meaning of *counted number of days is the month of Ramaḍān.*

Some commentators have said that the words, *counted number of days,* mean three days in every month and the fast of the day of 'Āshūrā' (10th day of Muharram). Some others have said that it is the 13th, 14th and 15th days of every month plus the fast of 'Āshūrā' According to them, the Messenger of Allāh and the Muslims used to fast on these days, then Allāh revealed the verses *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān* ... and this verse abrogated the previous system and made the fast of Ramaḍān obligatory. These commentators rely on many traditions of the Sunnīs — traditions which contradict each other.

There are many things which prove the falsity of these assertions:

First: Fasting is a common act of worship involving the whole *ummah*. Had there been a system, at any time, of fasting for three days in a month, it would have been recorded in history, and there would not have been any difference about its ordination and then abrogation. But it is not so.

Moreover, saying that the fast of the day of 'Āshūrā' was obligatory (or even desirable), like the fast of the three days of every month, is the innovation of the Umayyids (May Allāh curse them). They wiped out the progeny of the Messenger of Allāh and his family-members on the day of 'Āshūrā'; they killed their men-folk, imprisoned their women and children and looted their belongings in the battle of Karbalā'; and then they regarded it as a blessed auspicious day. They took that day as an *'īd* (festival), started its fast to obtain its supposed blessings, and then invented for it many virtues and excellences. They forged many traditions showing that it was an Islamic festival. They went even further and said that it was a common festival which had been observed even by the pagans of Arabia, as well as by the Jews and the Christians since the advent of Mūsā and 'Īsā.

But all these assertions are baseless. This day has no national importance like the Nowrūz of the Persians, nor did there occur any victory or important event on that day to make it an Islamic festival (like the Day of the first revelation or the Birrthday of the Prophet) nor has it any religious aspect which could make it a purely religious festival like ‘Īdu ’1-fiṭr and ‘Īdu ’1-aḍḥā. So how could it be given importance without any reason?

Second: The context makes it impossible to say that the 3rd verse, i.e. *the month of Ramaḍān ... ,* was revealed alone, to abrogate the first two verses. As mentioned earlier, it is the predicate of a deleted but understood subject, or the subject of a deleted but implied predicate. Thus it is a clarification of the words, *counted number of days,* and all three verses are one inter-related speech with a single aim, i.e. the promulgation of the obligatory fast of the month of Ramaḍān.

Those commentators claim that the phrase, *month of Ramaḍān,* is the subject and words, *in which was sent down the Qur’ān,* are its predicate. If we accept this claim then this third verse would become an independent sentence, capable of being revealed alone. But then it could not abrogate the previous two verses, because there would be no contradiction between this verse and the previous ones; and no verse can abrogate another when there is no contradiction between them.

Even weaker than this is another view, which appears in some writings. It says that the second verse, *for a counted number of days,* abrogated the first verse, *Fasting has been prescribed for you…*They claim that fasting was prescribed for the Christians, but they went on changing its number after ‘Isā (a.s.) until finally it was settled as fifty days. Allāh then ordained it for the Muslims by the first verse, and people fasted accordingly in the beginning of Islam, until the second verse *counted number of days* was revealed and the new system was introduced abrogating the first order. This view is clearly weaker and more false than the previous ones and all the objections mentioned therein apply here also. Clearly the second verse is complementary to and a continuation of the first verse. The traditions upon which these people have based their views are obviously against the clear meaning and context of the Qur’ān.

Qur’ān: *But whoso among you be sick or on a journey then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days*: *‘‘f... ’’* (ف , then, but, so, and, etc.)

here is for derivation. It means that the sentence is an off-shoot of *Fasting has been prescribed on you* and *for a counted number of days.* The fast is written down and obligatory and the number is a part of that obligation. The basic obligation (fast) cannot be neglected and the same is the case of the prescribed number. Even if for any reason like sickness or journey the obligation of fasting during the counted number of days (i.e. month of Ramaḍān) is waived, the obligation of fasting an equal number of days after that month will still be enforced, in order to make up for the lost days of Ramaḍān. It is this principle which has been mentioned in the 3rd verse *and so that you may complete the* (prescribed) *number.* Here we find another significance of the phrase, *counted number of days;* it implies that the order given is not very difficult, and also it shows that the number is an integral part of the said obligation.

''Sickness'' is the opposite of ''health''. *Safar* (journey, السّفر) is derived from a root-word which means to uncover. It is as though the traveller is uncovered by going out of his house which is his refuge and shelter.

Allāh used the words, *on a journey,* and did not say *a traveler* ; it shows that for the purpose of this rule one must be on a journey presently. Past travel or a travel which is yet to start (i.e. to commence later) would not make one entitled to this concession.

Most of the Sunnī scholars say that this sentence shows only that a sick person or a traveler is allowed, but not compelled, leave the fast. According to them, a sick person or a traveler has the choice of fasting or not fasting. But, as has been explained earlier, the meaning of *then that number of other days* is that he is (not only allowed but is) 'compelled' not to fast during the originally prescribed days; he must fast that number of ''other days''. This is narrated from the Imams of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt.* Also, it is the ruling of a group of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) like 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, Abū Hurayrah and 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr. The Sunnī scholars say that this sentence means: *but whoso among you be sick or on a journey* (and did not fast) *then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days;* thus they suppose that there is a deleted but implied verb in this sentence. But this supposition is incorrect because:

First: such a supposition is against the apparent meaning. A deletion can be accepted only when the context demands it; and the context of this sentence does not need any such thing.

Second: even if we accept this implied verb, it will not mean that a sick person or a traveler has only an option to break his fast. In these verses Allāh is promulgating a law and in this context the hypothetical, implied words, *and did not fast* will mean that during sickness or journey, breaking one's fast is not a sin, rather it is lawful. The word 'lawful' is a general one, meaning all or any of its three kinds: obligatory, recommended and allowed. There is no reason to suppose that in this context it would mean only ''allowed'' (to the exclusion of the other two meanings). Rather there is a reason against such a supposition, because the Wise Law-Giver when promulgating a law cannot leave one of its important and obligatory aspects.

Qur'ān: *and those who are with difficulty able to do so on them is a redemption, by feeding a poor man*: 'spending one's active strength in a work' (*iṭāqah,* الاطاقة **)** is the meaning explained by some scholars. It necessarily means that the work would be done with difficulty and by overstraining oneself. *Fidyah* (الفدية) means a substitute. Here it is a material substitute, i.e., food for a poor man. The word implies a food which satiates a hungry poor man; and it should be the normal food of the man.

The rule of the substitute also is obligatory, like the rule of repaying a fast afterward for the sick or the traveller. It is shown by the words, 'on those' (*'ala'l-ladhīna,* على الذين), which is obviously for obligation and not merely for option or choice.

Some people have said that this sentence gave the people an option and then it was abrogated. According to them, Allāh had given all those who were able to fast an option to keep the fast or to redeem it by feeding every day a poor man, because in the beginning people were not accustomed to fast. Then it was abrogated by the sentence, *So whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein.* Some of those writers said that this verse abrogated the option so far as able persons were concerned. But the rule regarding those who were unable to fast (like extremely old persons, pregnant women and women who are suckling a baby) remained unabrogated and they could give the substitute.

By God, such an explanation is nothing but playing with the Qur'ān and cutting and chopping up the verses into shreds and fragments. If you study these 3 verses, you will see that it is all a well-connected speech, delivered with one aim, all in one context only. its sentences are connected with each other, having a sweetness and flow of their own. But if you cut it into pieces and accept these people's interpretation then everything will fall out of context and some phrases will contradict others; the latter sentences will clash with the former ones. According to their explanation, first it says 'Fasting is prescribed for you', then it says that 'those who are able to fast have an option to fast or to redeem it by a substitute'; then it goes on to say that 'fasting is obligatory for all of you when you witness the month'; then it abrogates the rule of redemption for able persons and keeps it unchanged for unable ones (while the fact remains that even before the supposed abrogation that verse was not concerned at all with those who were unable. They want us to believe that the single word meaning 'those who are with difficulty able to do so (*yuṭīqūnahu,* يطيقونه) referred, before the abrogation, to those who were able to fast; and now after abrogation the same word means 'those who are unable to fast'! In short, according to these commentators, *those who are with difficulty able to do so* in the middle of the verse would abrogate *fasting is prescribed for you* which is in the beginning of the verse, because both would be contradictory to each other; but the question would arise why that abrogation was made conditional on ability without any apparent reason. Then again the sentence, So *whosoever of you witnesses the month he shall fast therein,* at the end of the verse, would abrogate *those who are with difficulty able* which is in the middle. Still the question would arise as to how it abrogated that rule for only those who were able to fast and not for those who were unable to do so, when the verse is unconditional and comprehensive and covers able and unable persons alike. Interestingly enough, the supposedly abrogated verse in itself did not cover those who were unable. This is its most obviously absurdity.

Add to it their assertion that the words, *the month of Ramaḍān ...,* abrogated the words, *counted number of days,* which in their turn abrogated the words, *Fast has been prescribed for you;* and then ponder with this background upon the meaning of the verses and you

will be astonished! Nothing of the verses would remain intact; all would have been abrogated!!

Qur'ān: *and whosoever on his own accord performs good it is better for him.*

'To do work willingly and gladly' (*taṭawwu',* التّطوع) is of the form *tafa'ul* (التّفعّل **)** from *ṭawu'* (الطّوع) which is the opposite of 'to dislike' (*kurh,* الكره)**.** The meaning of acceptance is implied in the form *tafa'ul* (التّفعّل)**;** therefore, the meaning of *taṭawwu'* (التّطوّع) is 'the present doing of work willingly and gladly without reluctance or annoyance, whether that work is obligatory or not'. The use of this word especially for non-obligatory good work was established among the Muslims long after the revelation of the Qur'ān, and this later usage is based on the view that it is only non-obligatory good work which is done willingly without compulsion, while there is a shade of compulsion in obligatory work: because there is no choice, it has to be done. Anyhow, the word *taṭawwu'* (التّطوع) in its root or form, was not used only for non-obligatory good work.

The preposition for derivation is here represented by *''f ...''* (ف ; and, so, etc.), and the sentence is an off-shoot of the previous sentences. Thus its meaning is: Fasting is prescribed for you, keeping in view your good and betterment, with the additional advantage that it brings you in line with previous peoples, and it has been made easy for you; therefore you should perform it willingly, to do it thus rather than doing it reluctantly.

It appears from the above that the words of Allāh: *whoso performs good willingly* have metaphorically put the 'cause' in the place of 'effect'. It says that to perform good willingly is better for him, instead of saying that to fast willingly is better. It is like the verse, *Indeed We know, it certainly grieves thee that which they say, but verily it is not thee that they belie, but it the signs of Allāh which the wrong-doers deny* (6:33)*,* which means ''so endure it and do not be grieved because they do not deny ,thee...''

Sometimes it is said that the sentence, *whoso willingly performs good it is better for him,* is connected with the preceding sentence, i.e. *those who are with difficulty able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man.* According to this interpretation it means that whoso performs non-obligatory good work by giving redemption twice — feeds

one poor man twice or two poor man once - it is better for him.

But there are three defects in this interpretation:

First: As mentioned earlier, there is no evidence to show that the word meaning 'to do a work willingly'(*taṭawwu',* التّطوّع) is reserved for non-obligatory good work.

Second: In this interpretation ''*f* …'' (ف) would be without any real significance. It has been mentioned above that the sentence is an off-shoot of the previous sentence. But what is the connection between the rule of redemption and giving non-obligatory food on one's own accord?

Third: This interpretation confuses *adding something on one's own accord* with *performing good willingly.* But obviously these are two separate things.

Qur'ān: *and that you fast is better for you if you know*: This sentence is complementary to the preceding one; and the meaning is: Perform willingly the fast which is prescribed for you because willingly doing a good deed is in itself another good work, and the fast is good for you, therefore, to fast willingly is good twice.

Sometimes it is said that the sentence, *and that you fast is better for you,* is addressed to those who are excused from fasting and not to the other believers who are obliged to fast and for whom the fast is compulsory. They say that its apparent meaning is that fasting is better for you, but there would be no objection if you do not fast. Obviously this meaning can fit the non-obligatory fast only, and not the obligatory one. The implication is that those who have the option not to fast (like a sick person or a traveller) are exhorted to fast and it is recommended to them to keep the fast rather than to break it.

There are five objections to this interpretation:

First: There is no evidence to support this view.

Second: The two sentences differ in syntax. The pronoun in *whoso among you be sick ...* is in the 3rd person, and those in *and that you fast ...* are in the 2nd person.

Third: The first sentence does not give any option to the sick man or the traveller. On the contrary, the words, *then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days,* obviously specify fasting on other days, as explained earlier.

Fourth: Even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that the first

sentence gives an option to the sick person and the traveller, that option is not between fasting and not fasting; it is between fasting in Ramaḍān and fasting on other days. And as both options are of a fast in different periods, merely the words, *that you fast is better for you,* cannot prove (in the absence of a clear context) any preference for fasting in Ramaḍān over fasting on other days.

Fifth: Allāh in this sentence is not promulgating any law, so that it may be argued that the description of the preference of fasting shows that in this particular case it is not obligatory. Rather, according to the context of this verse, its aim is to emphasise that the law given by Allāh cannot be devoid of benefit, good and advantage for you. Other examples of this style may be seen in many verses, like, *therefore turn to your Creator and kill your selves; that is better for you* (2:54); *then hasten to the remembrance of Allāh and leave off trading; that is better for you, if you know* (62:9); *you shall believe in Allāh and His Apostles, and struggle hard in Allāh's way with your properties and your lives; that is better for you if you know.* (61:11). And there are many such verses which show that this style of speech in the Qur'ān does not give an option to the believer, it only shows that a given order is for their own advantage and benefit.

Qur'ān: *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān, a guidance ...*: The month of Ramaḍān is the ninth month of the lunar Arabic calendar, between the months of Sha'bān and Shawwāl. No other month has been mentioned by name in the Qur'ān. The word meaning 'to come down' is *nuzūl* (النّزول). Its transitive forms meaning 'to bring down' are *inzāl* (الانزال) and *tanzīl* (التنزيل);the difference between them is that *inzāl* (الانزال) implies bringing down all at once, while *tanzīl* (التّنزيل) implies bringing down gradually.

The Qur'ān (القرآن) is the name of the book sent down to His Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), because it is recited and read. [It is derived from the root form *qara'a* (قرأ) meaning to read or recite.] Allāh has said: *Surely We made it an Arabic Qur'ān that you may understand* (43:3). This name is used for the whole book as well as for its parts.

The verse proves that the Qur'ān was sent down in the month of Ramaḍān. But Allāh has also said, *And the Qur'ān which We revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees, and*

We sent it down sending it (in portions) (17:106). And this verse clearly shows that it was revealed gradually during the entire period of the Call, which was about twenty-three years. Also accepted history proves it. This has apparently given room to the objection that there was a complete conflict between these two verses.

Some people have replied that the Qur'ān was sent down all at once to the lowest heaven in the month of Ramaḍān, then was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in portions, gradually, over about twenty-three years — the total period of the Call. This reply is based on some traditions, some of which will be quoted during the discussion of traditions.

Others have objected to this reply. They say that the words *a guidance for mankind, and clear evidence of guidance and distinction* which come immediately after these words do not support this interpretation; it is difficult to understand how the Qur'ān guided the people and was a source of discrimination between truth and falsehood during the time when it was in the heaven for years and years. This objection has been answered in this way: The Qur'ān is a guidance and a discrimination; it means that it had the potential and ability to guide those who needed its guidance and to discriminate between the truth and falsehood if there was any confusion. It could remain. with that hidden potential for a while until the time came for that potential to become a fact. There are countless examples in civil laws and state constitutions where many articles remain on paper until the occasion arises for their enforcement and they are then acted upon.

But we must admit that there is a great difference between constitutions and civil laws on one hand, and addresses and lectures on the other. Lectures or talks cannot be delivered a single moment before their time and occasion, and there are in the Qur'ān numerous verses of this type. For example: *Allāh surely heard the plea of her who pleads with you about her husband and complains to Allāh, and Allāh knows the contentions of both of you …* (58:1); *And when they see merchandise or sport, they break up for it and leave you standing ...* (62:11); *Of the believers are men who are true to the covenant which they made with Allāh: so of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the least* (33:23). Moreover, the Qur'ān contains verses which have been

abrogated and other that abrogated them, and there is no sense in combining both of them in revelation sent all together.

Another interpretation is that the declaration that the Qur'ān was sent down in the month of Ramaḍān means that its first verses were revealed at that time.

It is difficult to accept this interpretation either. It is well known that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was sent with the Qur'ān, and the beginning of his Call was on the 27th Rajab, and there is between this date and Ramaḍān a gap of more than thirty days. How could the prophethood remain without the revelation of the Qur'ān for such a long period? Look at the 96th chapter which was the first chapter revealed (*Read in the name of your Lord ...*) Its context shows that it was revealed at the beginning of the Call. Likewise, the contents of the 74th chapter show that this also was revealed at the beginning.

Anyhow, the words, *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān,* obviously do not mean that only the first verses were revealed at that time; and there is no such indication in the context. Therefore, such explanation would be without any proof or evidence. Also there are some more verses which have similar meaning. For example: *By the Book that makes manifest* (the truth), *Surely We sent it down on a blessed night; Surely We are ever-warning* (44:2-3) ; and *Surely We sent it down on the Night of Destiny* (97:1). Neither the apparent meanings of these verses nor their contexts support the view that *sending down of the Qur'ān* means the beginning of its revelation or the revealing its first verses.

Deep consideration of the verses of the Book shows something quite different from all the above interpretations. The verses which say that the Qur'ān was sent down in the month of Ramaḍān, have used the verbal form of *inzāl* (الانزال) which indicates sending down all at once. (Qur'ān 2:185; 44:23; 97:1). This ''all at once'' can mean either of two things:

1) To consider the complete book as one collection and look at it as a collective noun, as Allāh says in 10:24 *Like the water which we sent down from the sky.* Now, the rain comes down gradually, but it is looked upon as one whole collection and that is why the verbal form *inzāl* (الانزال), and not *tanzīl* (التنزيل), has been used. The same is the meaning of the verse (this is) *a book We have sent down to you*

abounding in good, so that they may ponder over its verses ... (38:29) in which the whole book has been taken as one collection and the verbal form *inzā*l (الانزال) has been used.

2) To accept that the reality of the Book is something different from the words written on paper, etc. Its common meaning gives the picture of a thing which can be divided and sectionalized and which can be a subject of expansion and graduality, but the reality of the Book is a single, non-gradual thing which was sent down all at once, and not in pieces.

This second meaning is apparent in many verses of the Qur'ān. See for example the verses, (This is) *a book whose verses were confirmed, then they were divided* (made clear) *from One Wise All-aware.* (11:1) ''Strengthened'' or ''confirmed'' (*uḥkimat,* احكمت) is the opposite of ''divided'', ''made clear'' (*fuṣṣilat,* فصّلت). The literal meaning of *tafṣīl* (التّفصيل) is to divide intoparts and sections; that is why it implies explanation and clarification. Therefore, confirmed (*uḥkimat,* احكمت) would mean that in that state it was indivisible and indistinguishable in its parts, because it was a single unit without any part of section. The sequence of the words in this verse shows that this division which we find in the Qur'ān came to it later; before that, it was some thing confirmed, undivided and one.

More clear are the verses, *And certainly, We have brought them a Book which We have 'sectionalized'* (i.e. explained) *with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for the people who believe. Do they wait for aught but its final interpretation? On the day when its final interpretation comes about, those who neglected it before will say: Indeed the Apostles of our Lord had brought the truth ...* (7:52-53). Also the verses, *And this Qur'ān is not such as could be forged by those besides Allāh, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a 'sectionalization'* (explained) *of the Book, there is no doubt in it, for the Lord of the worlds ... Nay, they rejected that of which they have not comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to them ...* (10:37-38). These verses, and especially the last one, clearly show that the division into parts is a thing which came later unto the Book. Therefore, the reality of the Book is one thing and the division which it was subjected to is another. The unbelievers rejected the division (explanation) of the Book because they neglected (forgot) something to

which that explanation led and which has been referred to here as the ‘‘final interpretation’’, and which will appear before them on the Day of Judgement and, at that time, they will inevitably know it, but then their regret will not benefit them, *and it is too late to repent.* These verses also imply that the real Book is the final interpretation of the Book.

Even far more clear are the verses, *By the Book which makes manifest* (the truth), *surely We made it an Arabic Qur'ān that you may understand, and surely it is in the Source of the Book with Us truly elevated, full of Wisdom*. (43:2-4)

It is apparent that there is a Book which makes manifest the truth, which was later made into an Arabic Qur'ān (Recited thing); and it was clothed in recited words and Arabic language so that people might understand; but in reality it is in the Source of the Book with Allāh, elevated, so that minds do not reach it, full of wisdom without any division. This verse contains the definition of the Manifest Book and that it is the foundation of the Qur'ān revealed later in plain Arabic.

In the same way Allāh says in 56:75—80 *But nay! I swear by the falling of stars - and most surely it is a great oath if you only know — Most surely it is an honoured Qur'ān in a Hidden Book, none touches it save the purified ones; A sending down* (revelation) *from the Lord of the worlds.* These verses clearly show that the Qur'ān has its own place, in the Hidden Book, where none touches it save the purified servants of Allāh, and it was only later that it was sent down. But before being sent down it was in a Book which is hidden from others. It is that Hidden Book which was referred to as the Source of the Book in 43:2-4. The verse 85:21-22 calls that Source the Guarded Tablet: *Nay! It is a Glorious Qur'ān in a Guarded Tablet.* This tablet is called Guarded because it is preserved and protected from changes; but we know that in the Qur'ān which was sent down gradually there are verses abrogating other verses; gradual completion itself is a sort of change. So this Qur'ān cannot be called the Guarded Tablet. In short, the Manifest Book is the foundation of this Qur'ān and this Qur'ān is like a clothing to that Reality.

Now we know that the relation of this Qur'ān, when it was gradually revealed, to the Manifest Book — which we call the Reality of the Book — is that of a dress to its wearer, and of a metaphor to its

real meaning, and of a proverb to its actual aim. It is because of this relationship that the word Qur'ān is sometimes used for the Real Book itself, as in the divine words, *Nay! It is a Glorious Qur'ān in a Guarded Tablet,* and in other similar verses. Therefore, we may correctly interpret the 'sending down of the Qur'ān', in the three verses, where it is said that it was revealed in the month of Ramaḍān (2:185), on a blessed night (44:3), on the Night of Destiny (97:1), as the revelation of the Source of the Book, i.e., the Manifest Book to the heart of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) all at once. And the sectionalized Qur'ān was revealed to his heart gradually during the entire period of his prophetic Call.

This can be better appreciated when we study some other verses. Allāh says, *and do not make haste with the Qur'ān before its revelation is made complete to you…* (20:114) Also He says: *Do not move your tongue with it to make haste with it; surely on Us is the collecting of it and the reciting of it. Therefore, when We have recited it, then follow its recitation; again on Us is the explaining of it.* (75:16-19) These verses prove without any shadow of doubt that the Messenger of Allāh had prior knowledge of what was being revealed to him. That is why he was asked not to make haste in reciting before its revelation was completed. (This matter will be further explained, God willing, in its proper place)

In short, after pondering on the verses of the Qur'ān one can not but accept that:

This Qur'ān which was gradually revealed to the Prophet is based on a sublime Reality which the minds of common people cannot comprehend and the hands of defiled imaginations (defiled with lust, greed and materialism) cannot touch. That sublime Reality was revealed to the Prophet all at once in the month of Ramaḍān. And in this way Allāh taught him the real goal and meaning of the Book. (This subject will be explained under the verse 3:7.)

This is what a deep consideration of the verses of the Qur'ān leads one to believe. Of course, the traditionalists, and most of the theologians as well as the materialists (who do not accept the reality of metaphysics, the things beyond the matter) have no way but to interpret these and the like verses (e.g. the verses which say that the Qur'ān is a guidance, mercy, light, spirit, setting-place of the stars, manifest book, in a guarded

tablet, sent down from Allāh, in purified pages etc. etc.) as metaphorical and figurative expressions. Thus they have turned the Qur'ān into poetic prose!!

A writer has discussed the meaning of the revelation of the Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān. What follows is the gist of his writing; our comment will follow thereafter: ''There is no doubt that the beginning of the Call of the Prophet coincided with the revelation of the first revealed verses of the Qur'ān, and with his being asked by Allāh to announce the truth and warn the people. Also, there is no doubt that this happened in the night, as Allāh says, *Surely We sent it down on a blessed night* (44:3). Again, there is no doubt that it was in a night of the month of Ramaḍān as Allāh says, *the month of Ramaḍān, in which was sent down the Qur'ān.* (2:185)

''The whole Qur'ān was not revealed on that night ; but as the chapter of *The Opening* was revealed in it, and this chapter covers all the features and knowledge of the Qur'ān, it was as though the whole Qur'ān was revealed therein. (Moreover, the name ''Qur'ān'' is used for parts of the Book as well as for the complete book. Further, it is used in Qur'ānic terminology for all divine books like the Torah, the Injīl, the Zabūr etc.)

''The first revelation was *Read in the name of Thy Lord ...* (96:1), which was sent down on the 25th night of Ramaḍān. It was revealed when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was proceeding to the house of Khadījah in the middle of the valley, looking at Jibrīl, who revealed to him the divine words, *Read in the name of Thy Lord Who created ...* When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) received the revelation, it came into his mind to ask Jibrīl how to remember the name of his Lord. So, Jibrīl appeared before him and taught him the chapter of the Opening, *In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful, All praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds ...* Then he taught him the method of prayer and disappeared. Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) regained consciousness, and did not find any trace of what he had witnessed except a fatigue which had overcome him because Jibrīl had pressed him hard at the time of revelation. Now, the Prophet continued on his way but he did not realize that he was sent by Allāh as His Messenger to mankind, commissioned to guide them unto the right path. When he entered the house, he slept the whole night because of weariness. In the morning, the angel returned and brought the revelation of God, *0 thou shrouded*

(in thy mantle!) *Arise, and warn ...* (74:1-2)''

Then he goes on to say:

''This is the meaning of revealing the Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān, and the coincidence of his Call with the Night of Destiny. As for the assertion of some Shī'ite books that the start of the Call was on the 27th day of Rajab, these traditions (which are only found in some Shī'ite books which were not written before the beginning of the 4th century of Hijrah) are against the Qur'ān, as you know.''

Then he says:

''And there are other traditions which support these (Shī'ite) traditions and say that the meaning of the revelation of the Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān is that it was sent down, before the beginning of the Call of the Prophet, from the Guarded Tablet to the Inhabited House, and there Jibrīl dictated it to the angels so that it might be sent down to the Prophet after the beginning of his Call. But these mythological ideas which have been interpolated into the traditions are rejected, first, because they are against the Qur'ān, and second, because *the guarded tablet* mentioned in the Qur'ān means the physical world, and *the inhabited house* means the earth because mankind lives therein.''

This was the gist of his writing; and, by my life, I do not know which sentence in this balderdash can be amended to con form with fact and reality. The damage is too extensive to be repaired.

First: It is a strange fabrication which he has uttered about the beginning of the prophethood and the revelation of the Qur'ān for the first time. Where did he find that *Read in the name of Thy Lord ...* was revealed to the Prophet when he was on his way; and that the chapter of *the Opening* was revealed to him then and there; and at the same time he was taught the prayer, and that thereafter he entered his house and slept weary and tired, and then in the morning the chapter of *al-Muddaththir* (the Shrouded) was revealed asking him to announce his prophethood and warn the people? All of this is just his imagination which has no basis at all; neither any clear verse nor any tradition of any standing supports it. It is just a mythological story which conforms with neither the Qur'ān nor the traditions, as you will see.

Second: He claims that it is accepted that the beginning of the prophethood and the revelation of the Qur'ān as well as the command to announce his prophethood, all happened at one and the same time. Then

he explains it by saying that the prophethood started with the revelation of the Qur'ān; and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was a prophet without being an apostle (Messenger of Allāh) for one night, then in the morning he was given Messengership when the 74th chapter (The Shrouded) was revealed. But the writer cannot show any evidence to support himself either from the Qur'ān or from the traditions; and what he claims to be ''accepted'' is not accepted at all.

As for the traditions, what he has criticised the Shī'ite collections for (that they were written long after the incident) equally discredits all other collections of traditions and no trust can be had in any of them, because not a single book of the traditions, whether of the Sunnīs or the Shī'ahs, was written before the expiry of the second century of Hijrah or even later. This much about the traditions. The position of history — which, by the way, does not give the above details — is worse than the traditions. And the criticism of interpolation which he has levelled against the traditions must be directed against history also.

So far as the Qur'ān is concerned, it does not support any of his assertions. On the other hand, it plainly contradicted what he has said and refutes what he has fabricated. The 96th chapter (*Read in the name of Thy Lord ...*) *is* the first one revealed, as has been described by the traditions and is proved by the meaning of the first five verses; and nobody has said that this chapter was revealed piecemeal, (at least there is a likelihood that the whole chapter was revealed all together). Now, this chapter clearly shows that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to pray in the presence of the Meccans, some of whom forbade him to do so and talked about him their gatherings. (We do not know the method of the prayer which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) performed in the beginning of his Call to be nearer to Allāh, except that this chapter mentions prostration.) Look at these verses of this chapter: *Did you see him who forbids a Servant* (of Allāh) *when he prays? Have you considered if he* (the Servant) *were on the Guidance or enjoined guarding* (against evil)? *Have you considered if he* (the unbeliever) *gives the lie* (to the truth) *and turns* (his) *back? Did he not know that Allāh does see? Nay! If he desist not, We will certainly smite his forehead; a lying sinful forehead. Then let him summon his council; We too will summon the tormentors of Hell. Nay! Obey him not, and prostrate and draw nigh* (to Allāh) (95:9—19). These verses show that there was someone who used to

forbid a worshipper to pray, and used to mention this matter in his council and did not desist from his deed; and obviously the one who used to pray was the Prophet himself (s.a.w.a.), especially as Allāh directly addresses him in the last verse, *Obey him not, and prostrate and draw nigh* (to Allāh). This chapter, therefore, proves that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to pray even before the revelation of the first chapter of the Qur'ān, and was a Guidance, and enjoined piety and guarding against evil. In other words, his work at that time consisted of prophethood and was not just a warning. In short, even before the Qur'ān was revealed, and the chapter of *the Opening* sent down to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), and even before he was told to start his Call, he was a prophet and used to pray.

So far as the chapter of *the Opening* is concerned, it was revealed some time after the beginning of the Call. Had there been any truth in the assertion of the above writer that it was revealed just after the 94th chapter because ''it came into the Prophet's mind to ask Jibrīl how to remember Allāh'', it would have begun with the word say (*qul,* قل): *Say, in the name of Allāh ...* or *Say, all praise belongs to Allāh ... ;* and would have ended at the words, *Master of the Day of Judgement,* because the last three verses have no relation with that supposed question, and it is not the style of the Qur'ān to indulge in unnecessary talk. Of course, a verse in the 15th chapter (al-Hijr) says "*And certainly We have given you seven oft-repeated* (verses) *and the great Qur'ān."* (15-87) This chapter is of Meccan period as its subject matter shows. *Seven oft-repeated verses* means the chapter of *the Opening,* and it has been mentioned here side by side with the Qur'ān, which shows its greatness and excellence. Yet it was not counted as the *Qur'ān,* but only as *seven of its oft-repeated verses,* and only one of its parts. For further proof see 39:23 where the Qur'ān has been given the adjective, ''oft-repeated'': *Allāh has revealed the best discourse, a Book conforming in its various parts, oft-repeated ...* Thus, the Qur'ān is ''oft-repeated'' and the chapter of *the Opening is* only *seven of its verses.*

The 15th chapter mentions the 1st chapter (the Opening). It proves that the 1st chapter was revealed before the 15th. And the 15th chapter contains the verses; *Therefore, declare openly what you are bidden and turn aside from the polytheists. Surely, We will suffice you against the scoffers.* (15:94—95) These verses show that the Messenger of Allāh had

refrained from openly warning for a time and then was told to start it again by the words, *declare openly.*

Now let us look at the 74th chapter (the Shrouded) and its 2nd verse, *Arise, and warn. If* this chapter was revealed all together, then this verse has the same implication as the verse *declare openly what you are bidden* (15:94) because this chapter contains the following verses: *Leave Me and him whom I created alone and gaven him vast riches ... Then he turned back and was big with pride and, then he said, this is naught but an enchantment narrated ....* (74:11-25) This subject matter is similar to 15:94which says *and turn aside from the polytheists.* And if it was revealed piecemeal, then the context says that at least the verses in its beginning were revealed in the early days of the Call, after the Prophet had refrained from an open warning for some time.

Thirdly: He asserts that those traditions are forged and mythological which say that the Qur'ān was sent down on the Night of Destiny from the Preserved Tablet to the Inhabited House all together before the beginning of the prophethoot and then its verses were revealed in segments to the Messenger of Allāh. He says that they are against the Book of Allāh and their meaning is not correct. He claims that the Preserved Tablet means the Natural World and the Inhabited House means the Earth. Well, all the above claims are incorrect and a complete lie:

First, because no clear verse of the Qur'ān goes against these traditions as has been explained earlier.

Second, because nowhere in these traditions has it been said that the Qur'ān was sent down to the Inhabited House *before the beginning of the prophethood.* This clause has been added by the said writer without any basis.

Third: His assertion that the Preserved Tablet means the natural world (i.e. the universe) is a very ugly interpretation; nay, rather it is a laughing-stock. Can he explain what is the basis of naming this universe — in the word of Allāh — as 'the Preserved Tablet'? Is this because this universe is free from change and alteration? But it is a world of movement, always in a state of fluidity, always changing its quality. Or is it because this universe is safe from physical deterioration? But the facts belie such a claim. Or is it because undeserving persons cannot have any knowledge of it (as Allāh says in 56:77-79*, Most surely it is an*

honoured Qur'ān, in a book that is protected; *none shall touch it save the purified ones*)? But the knowledge of the universe is not restricted to any one group.

In short, that writer did not produce any interpretation, concerning the revelation of Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān, which could be in accord with the words of the verse. His interpretation boils down to this: The words, *in it was sent down the Qur'ān,* mean ''it is as though in it was sent down the Qur'ān.'' And the words, *Surely We revealed it in the Night of Destiny*. mean ''It is as though We revealed it in the Night of Destiny.'' Any such interpretation cannot be tolerated by language, usage and context.

Further, that writer says that the whole Qur'ān was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh in the Night of Destiny because he was given in that night the chapter of the *Opening* which contains all the important knowledge of the Qur'ān. Well why cannot others say that the revelation of the Qur'ān all at one time means that all its knowledge was sent down to the heart of the Messenger of Allāh in that night? There is nothing to contradict this interpretation.

There are many other fabrications and lies in that writing but this is not the place to go into a detailed refutation of it.

Qur'ān: *a guidance for the people and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination* (between right and wrong): ''People'' generally refers to the lowest category of mankind whose intelligence is not high. This word is generally used in the Qur'ān with this very implication. For example, *but most people do not know* (30:30); *And these examples, We set them forth for the people and none understand them but the learned.* (29:43) This word generally refers to the people who just follow what others say; they cannot understand abstract ideas even with the help of evidence and proof; they cannot discriminate between right and wrong through any argument; they need someone to explain ideals and a guide to lead them to the right path. And the Qur'ān is a guidance for these people; and what an ideal guidance it is!! Then comes the special group which is perfect both in knowledge and deeds, ready to receive the light of divine guidance, and may be relied upon to discriminate between right and wrong. For such people, the Qur'ān is the clear evidence and proof of guidance and discrimination. It leads them to the guidance and chooses right for them and shows them how to

discriminate between good and evil, right and wrong. Allāh says: *Whereby Allāh guides him, who follows His pleasure, into the ways of peace and takes them out from darkness towards the light by His will and guides them unto the path that is straight.* (5:16)

From the above discourse one may understand why Allāh has used here two words ‘‘guidance’’ and ‘‘clear evidence of guidance’’. The relation between the two is that of general and particular. The Qur’ān is guidance for one group and clear evidence of guidance for another.

Qur’ān: *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein.*

Shahādah (witnessing, الشّهادة) means ‘presence’ by which one acquires knowledge. Witnessing the month means arrival of the month and the knowledge of its arrival.

Some people say that witnessing of the month means sighting of the new moon, and not on journey. But there is no evidence to support. this interpretation. Of course, sometimes the context implies such a meaning; but there is no such context in this verse.

Qur’ān: *and whosoever is sick or on a journey* (he shall fast) *the same number of other days*: This sentence has been repeated here. But this repetition is not for emphasis. It was explained earlier that the first two verses did not promulgate any law; rather they paved the way for such promulgation and prepared the minds to accept and follow the law which was to be shortly announced. It is in this third verse in which that law has been promulgated. As the aim of the first sentences is different from this one, there is, in fact, no repetition.

Qur’ān: *Allāh desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you; and so that you may complete the* (prescribed) *number*: It is the explanation of the above mentioned exception. A sick person or a traveller has to break his fast because *Allāh desires ease for you,* and he shall fast the same number in other days *so that you may complete the prescribed number.*

So that ‘‘*L*…’’ (ل ; so that) in ‘so that you may complete the number’’ (*litukmilu ’l-‘iddah* ,. لتكملوا العدّة)gives the meaning of cause, and it is governed by the verb ‘‘desires’’. Therefore, its meaning will be: We ordered you to break the fast (under certain conditions) and repay it in other days to lighten your burden and to complete the prescribed number.

Qur'ān: *and that you glorify Allāh for his guiding you, and so that you may be thankful to Him*: Apparently, these two sentences, the first of which begins with 'so that' (*L* ... ,ل) for a 'cause', give the reason of the fast, and not of the exception and exemption. The words *the month of Ramaḍān* are followed by the description of the revelation of the Qur'ān in this month. And it indicates that there is a connection between the promulgation of the fast of the month of Ramadān and the revelation of the Qur'ān in it as a guidance for the people and a clear evidence of guidance and discrimination between right and wrong. Therefore, the ''so that'' (L... ,ل) points out that keeping the fast is meant to glorify Allāh because He revealed the Qur'ān for them and announced His Lordship and the people's servitude. Also it is a thanks to Him since He guided them unto the truth and gave them a Book which discriminates for them between right and wrong.

There is a difference between thanking Allāh by fasting and glorifying Him through it. A fast can be said to be a thanks to Allāh only when it contains the real spirit of the fast. What is the real spirit of the fast? To be sincere towards Allāh by purifying oneself from material involvement and abstaining from the greatest desires of the heart.

But glorifying Him does not depend on that real spirit. The form of the fast and mere abstaining from those things which break the fast (whether it is done with sincere intention or not) shows the glory of Allāh and His greatness, as the man is following His command with such self-denial.

Keeping in view this difference, Allāh has differentiated between glorifying and thanking: Thanking has been prescribed with ''لعلّ''(*la'alla*) which literally means 'perhaps' and is used to indicate hope, while glorifying has begun with ''so that'' (L, ل) which indicates cause. And thus we find *and that you glorify Allāh...and so that you may be thankful to Him.* It is the same style which is used at the end of the first of these verses so that you may guard yourselves...

TRADITIONS

al-Ḥadīth al-Qudsī: Allāh said, ''The fast is for Me and I shall give its reward.'' (or, '' I shall be its reward'')

Explanation: This *ḥadīth* has been narrated by both groups (i.e. Sunnī and Shī'ah) with slight variations. Why has the fast been declared to be for Allāh? Because it is the only act of worship which consists of a negative aspect only, for example, not eating, not drinking, etc., while all other acts of worship, like prayer and pilgrimage etc., consist of positive actions or are made up of positive and negative aspects. The positive actions cannot be absolutely pure in showing the worshipper's spirit of servitude or the Lordship of Almighty Allāh. It cannot be free of materialistic imperfections and limitations, and sometimes it may be done to please someone other than Allāh (as in the case of hypocrisy and showiness). But the fast is an act of worship in which one has just to abstain from lust and desire and restrain oneself from worldly matters. This negative aspect is a thing which nobody can know except Allāh. It is a dealing entirely between the servant and his Lord, and therefore this worship is purely for Allāh; others can have no share in it.

''I shall give its reward'' can also be translated ''I shall be its reward''. If the former, then it means that Allāh Himself will give its reward directly and will not make anyone a link between Himself and His servant. The servant worshipped Him in a way that nobody knew but Allāh, so he will be given its reward in a way that nobody will know it but Allāh.

It is like the *ḥadīth* about alms: ''Verily alms, Allāh takes it Himself without making anyone a link in it. Allāh said, *Do they not know that Allāh ... takes the alms*. (9:105)

If the second translation is correct, then it indicates that the reward of the one who fasts is nearer to Allāh.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The Messenger of Allāh, in the early days of his prophethood, used to fast continuously so that people would think that he would not leave a single day's fast, and then to leave the fast continuously so that they would say he would not fast again. Then he changed this regime and began fasting on alternate days, and this was the fast of Dāwūd. Then he changed it and started fasting three bright days (i.e., 13th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month when the moonlight is the brightest.) Then again he divided the three days — one day each in every ten days, the first and last Thursdays and the Wednesday in the middle. And he continued with this regime till he left this world.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

And there is *a ḥadīth* from ‘Anbasah al-‘Ābid that when the Messenger of Allāh died it was his custom to fast in Sha‘bān and Ramaḍān and three days in every month.

The author says: There are numerous traditions about it from *Ahlu ’l-bayt* ; and this is the *sunnah* fast which the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to keep in addition to the fast of Ramaḍān.

There is a *ḥadīth* in *Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī under the words of Allāh, *O ye who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you,* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that ‘‘It is for the believers only’’.

Jamīl asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh *O ye who believe! Fighting has been prescribed for you,* and *O ye who believe! Fasting has been prescribed on you.* The Imām replied: ‘‘All such verses cover (even) those who have gone astray as well as the hypocrites, and (in short) everyone who accepted the declared Call (i.e. Islam).’’

Ḥafṣ said: ‘‘I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) say: ‘Verily the month of Ramadān, Allāh did not prescribe its fast for any of the people before us.’ I asked: ‘Then (what is the meaning of) the word of Allāh: *0 ye who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you?’* (The Imām) said: ‘Verily Allāh prescribed the month of Ramaḍān for the prophets, not for their peoples. Thus Allāh honoured this *ummah* and prescribed its fast for the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) as well as for this *ummah.*’’ [*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l faqīh*]

The author says: This *ḥadīth is* weak because there is Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad in its chain of narrators. The same thing is narrated from al-‘Ālim i.e. al-Kāẓim (a.s.), and probably both traditions are one and the same. In any case, this is a solitary tradition (*khabaru ’l-wāḥid*, الخبر الواحد — a tradition which is not narrated by a great enough number of narrators as to create a certainty of its truth). The obvious meaning of the verses does not support the view that ‘‘as it was prescribed for those before you’’ refers to the prophets only. Had it been the case (and we know that this sentence has been revealed to encourage the believers to fast, to prepare them for it and to exhort them), then it would have served the purpose better if the word, ‘prophets’, had been clearly mentioned, as it would have been more effective. And Allāh knows better.

There is a tradition from a man who asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) whether the Qur’ān and furqān are two things or one. (The Imām) said: ‘‘Qur’ān is the complete Book and Furqān is the obligatory law.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

A ḥadīth from the same Imām (a.s.) says: ''Furqān is every clear verse of the Book.'' [*Jawāmi 'u 'l- jāmi '*]

The same Imām (a.s.) said: ''Furqān is every clear law in the Qur'ān and the Book is the complete Qur'ān which vouches for the previous prohets.'' [*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī and al-Qummī]

The author says: This interpretation is supported by the literal meaning of the word.

It has been said in some traditions that Ramaḍān is one of the names of Allāh ; therefore, one should not say 'Ramaḍān came' or 'Ramaḍān went away'; but should say 'the month of Ramaḍān …' But it is a solitary tradition and is unusual. This saying has been reported also from Qatādah from among the commentators of the Qur'ān. But the traditions which count the names of Allāh do not mention Ramaḍān as one of His names. And the use of the word Ramaḍān without the word ''month'' as well as its dual form ''Ramaḍānān''(two Ramaḍāns) is very common in the traditions narrated from the Prophet and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) This usage is very common; and it cannot be said that a particular narrator might have omitted the word 'month' by mistake.

aṣ-Ṣabāḥ ibn Nubātah said: ''I told Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that Ibn Abī Ya'fūr told me to ask you some questions. The Imām said: 'And what are those?' I said: 'He asks you, if the month of Ramaḍān enters and one is in his house, is he allowed to go on a journey?' The Imām said: 'Verily Allāh says *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein.* Therefore, anyone who is in his house when the month of Ramaḍān enters is not allowed to travel except for *ḥajj* or *'umrah* or in search of such goods which are in danger of being lost.' '' [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: It is a fine inference of a non-obligatory law based on the generality of the words.

'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) said: ''And as regards the fast of a journey and sickness, the Sunnīs (*'āmmah,* العامّة) have conflicting views: a group says, he shall fast; others say, he shall not fast ; still others opine, he will fast if he so wishes, and shall leave it if so desires. But we say, he shall leave the fast in both conditions. And if he fasted while on journey or during illness then on him is its repayment, i.e. he must fast the same number on other days, because Allāh says, *But whoso among you be sick or on a journey, then* (he shall fast) *the sane number of other days.''* [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: al-'Ayyāshī also has narrated this tradition.

And there is in the same *Tafsīr* (under the word of Allāh, *so whosoever of you witnesses the month ...*) a tradition of al-Bāqir (a.s.) in which the Imām said: How clear is this verse for him who understands — He who is present in Ramaḍān shall fast, and he who is on a journey during it shall break the fast.

The author says: There are numerous traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that it is incumbent on the sick and the traveller to break the fast; and the same is their *madhhab.* Also, you have seen that the verse of the Qur'ān clearly proves the same.

Abū Baṣīr said: ' 'I asked him (the Imām — a.s.) about the words of Allāh and those who are hardly able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man. The Imām said: 'The aged man who is not able (to fast) and the sick.' '' [al-'Ayyāshī]

Imām al-Baqīr (a.s.) is reported to have said about that verse: ''The aged man, and the one who has a sickness in which he is always thirsty.'' [*ibid.*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) is reported to have said in explanation of that verse: ''The woman who is afraid for her child and the aged man.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions from the Imāms to this effect. And the ''sick'' mentioned in the tradition of Abū Basīr (mentioned above) means that sick person whose illness continues the whole year till the next Ramaḍān comes ; such a sick person will not be required to fast the same number of other days.

Sa'īd said that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Verily, there is *takbīr* (*Allāhu akbar*) on the day of 'Idu 'l-fiṭr. I said: 'There is no *takbīr* except in 'Idu 'l-Aḍḥā.' The Imām said: 'There is *takbīr* on that day ; but it is *sunnah* in prayers of sunset, nightfall, dawn, noon and afternoon and in the two *rak'ats of 'īd.*' '' [al-'Ayyāshī]

Sa'īd an-Naqqāsh said: ''Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) told me, 'There is *takbīr* on the eve of 'Īdu 'l-fiṭr but it is *sunnah*. I asked him; 'And when it is?'He said: 'In the prayer of sunset, nightfall on the eve of 'Idu 'l -fiṭr and in the prayers of dawn and 'īd. Then it is discontinued.' I asked him: 'How should I say it?' He said: 'You say

الله اكبر لا اله الّا الله و الله اكبر الله اكبر على ما هدانا

(*Allāhu akbar Allāhu akbar lāillāha illa'llāhu wa'llāhu a kbar Allāhu akbaru 'alā mā hadānā*) — and it is the meaning of the words of Allāh, *so that you shall complete the number* (i.e. prayer) *and that you glorify Allāh for His*

guiding you. And the glorifying (*takbīr,* التكبير) is that you say: الله اكبر لا اله الا الله و الله اكبر و لله الحمد (*Allāhu akbar, lā illāha illa'llāh u wa'llāhu akbar wa lillāhi 'l-ḥamd*).*'* And he said: 'In a tradition the last *takbir is* four times.''' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: The first tradition includes prayers of noon and afternoon in glorifying (*takbīr,* التّكبير) and the last oneomits them. This difference may be an indication of the difference in the degrees of *sunnah.* And the word of the Imām, ''i.e. prayer'', perhaps indicate that the words of Allāh, *so that you shall complete the number,* meand 'complete the number of the days of fast with the prayer of 'īd and glorify Allāh with prayers for His guiding you'. This meaning is not against the meaning which we described earlier because it is an inference of a non-obligatory rule from a sentence containing an obligatory law. It is like the tradition quoted earlier in which the Imām inferred from the verse, *so whosoever of you witnesses the month he shall fast therein* the undesirability of travel when one is in his abode on the first night.

The tradition has two different methods of *takbīr.* This difference supports the opinion of some writers that glorifying in ''that you glorify Allāh'' includes praising also, and that is why it is followed in this verse by the preposition on (*'alā*, على) which is the preposition generally used after praise (*al-ḥamd,* , الحمد)

Ibn Abī 'Umayr said that he asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.): ''May I be your ransom! Is it correct what we are told, that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) fasted for twenty-nine days much more than he fasted for thirty days? He (the Imām) said: 'Allāh did nto create a single letter of this talk. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) did not fast but thirty days, because Allāh says: *You shall complete the number.* Was the Messenger of Allāh shortening it?' '' [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: This question is for repudiation. The tradition shows what we have already mentioned that completing herer means completing the month of Ramaḍān.

One of our companions narrates about the words of Allāh, *so that you glorify Allāh for His guiding you,* that glorifying means 'extolling'and guidance means 'friendship of the Imāms' (*wilāyah* , الولاية). [*al Maḥāsin*]

The author says: The interpretation of guidance as friendship of

the Imām is like explaining an idea by giving a clear example. Also, it may be treated as its inner meaning. It is as has been mentioned in some traditions that in the verse: *Allāh desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you,* 'ease' means friendship (of the Imāms) and 'hardship' means their enmity and friendship with enemies of Allāh.

Ḥafṣ ibn al-Ghiyāth asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān,* when (the fact is that) the Qur'ān was sent down twenty years from its beginning to its end. Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ''The Qur'ān came all together in the month of Ramaḍān down to the 'Inhabited House'; then it came down (in segments) in a period of twenty years.'' Then the Imām said: ''The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: 'The book of Ibrāhīm came down in the first night of the month of Ramaḍān, and the Torah was sent down on the sixth of the month of Ramaḍān, and the Zabūr was sent down on the eighteenth of the month of Ramaḍān and the Qur'ān was sent down on the twenty-third of the month of Ramaḍān.' '' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: The tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) narrated by the Imām (a.s.) has been narrated by as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru 'l-man thūr,* with several chains from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) through Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa'.

Ya'qūb said ; '' I heard a man asking Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the Night of Destiny, whether it occurred (once only) or it comes every year. Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said: 'If the Night of Destiny were taken away the Qur'ān would be taken away.' '' [*al-Kāfī* and *Man lā yaḥḍurruhu 'l faqīh*]

Ibn 'Abbās said: ''The month of Ramaḍān and the Blessed Night and the Night of Destiny ; because verily the Night of Destiny is the Blessed Night and it is in Ramaḍān. The Qur'ān came down all together from reminder (*dhikr ,* الذكر) to the Inhabited House and it is the falling place of the stars in the lowest heaven where the Qur'ān came down. Later it descended on Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) piecemeal, about order, prohibition, and in battles.' '' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: This matter has also been narrated by others, like Sa'īd ibn Jubayr. And it appears from this talk of Ibn 'Abbās that he inferred it from the Qur'ānic verses ; for example the words of Allāh: *and the wise reminder* (3:58), *And* (I swear by) *the Book written in an*

outstretched fine parchment and the inhabited house and the elevated canopy (52:2—5); *But nay! I swear by the falling of stars, and most certainly it is a great oath if you only know, most surely it is an honoured Qur'ān in a Book that is hidden ; none shall touch it save the purified ones* (56:75—79) ; *and We adorned the lowest heaven with lamps* (stars) *and* (made it) *to guard* (41:12) And all His words are clear except what He said about the place of falling, that it is the lowest heaven and is the place of the Qur'ān. The meaning of this assertion is obscure and the verses of the 56th chapter do not clearly show it. Of course ; it is narrated from *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that the Inhabited House is in heaven, and we shall explain it, God willing, in its proper place.

What should clearly be understood is that traditions are like the Qur'ān, because there are, in traditions also, some clear ones and others ambiguous. One very commonly finds in their talks which are based on hints and symbols, and especially so in the explanation of such facts as the Tablet, the Pen, the Curtain, the Heaven, the Inhabited House, the Swollen Sea etc. Therefore, it is obligatory for a research scholar to strive his utmost to find out if there is any hint or context to determine the true meaning of a given text.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ - ١٨٦ .

And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then verily I am near, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me, so that they may walk in the right way. (2:186)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And when My servants ask. you concerning Me, then verily I am near, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me.* This is the best expression of the subject matter in the most elegant and beautiful style. The whole verse is based on the first person singular pronoun which shows the great importance which the speaker, i.e. Allāh attaches to this subject ; then come the words *My servants* and not ''people'' or such other words ; and this enhances its importance even more ; the reply (*then verily I am near*) starts dramatically just after the question without any preamble like: ''then say that I am near''; and the reply has been emphasized with ''verily'' (*inna* انّ) ; and the nearness of the speaker is described with the adjective *near* and not with any verb like ''I come near him'', thus it shows that He is already near and will always remain near ; then it mentions answering the prayer with the verb the *muḍāri'* (المضارع = aorist tense) which combines both the present and the future tenses; and indicates that He answers at present and will continue to answer the prayers of the supplicant ; then the answer (I answer the prayer of the supplicant) is conditioned with *when he calls on Me,* but in reality it is not a condition separate from the main [n]ause, both are one and the same thing, and it serves to emphasize that the prayer of the supplicant is answered without any condition or stipulation (as we see also in the verse: *call on Me, I will answer you* 40:60). These seven points show how much importance has been attached to the answering of prayers. In addition, this verse — short as it is — repeats the first person singular pronoun seven times ; it is the only verse with this characteristic in the whole of Qur'ān.

''Du'ā'' and *''da'wah''* (call, الدعآء and الدّعوة) mean to turn the attention of the called one to the caller. Asking (*su 'āl,* السّوال) means to gain a benefit or advantage from the one whose attention is drawn towards the asker and before whom his (asker's) need is put. Therefore, asking (*su'āl,* السّوال) is the final aim of calling (*du'ā',* الدعآء)**.** This meaning covers all types of asking, for example, asking for the removal of ignorance, asking with the meaning of reckoning, asking in the sense of seeking beneficence.

Literally, ''bondage'' (*'ubūdiyyah,* العبودية), as explained earlier, is the status of being owned. It is not used for any other owned thing except human beings. Therefore, ''servant'' (*'abd,* العبد) is used only for a human being or another intelligent being (like an angel).

The ownership of Allāh is as different from the ownership of others as is the truth from pretence or the reality from metaphor. Allāh owns His servants ; His ownership is total and comprehensive. They have no authority, independent from Allāh, over their own selves or over matters or things which are subordinate to them ; for example, their attributes and actions and all things which are related to them, like wives, children, property, honour etc. Everything which they own and is related to them in any way — as we say, his self, his body, his ears, his eyes, his actions, his impression (and these are a sort of natural and real possessions), or as we say, his spouse, his wealth, his honour, his right — (and these are a sort of supposed or assumed possession) — is in his possession only because Allāh allowed the establishment of that relation of ownership between man and his possession, whatever it may be. It is Allāh, glorified be His name, who gave their selves and their persons to them — and if He did not wish so, it could not be attributed to them and they would have remained without any self or person — in other words, non-existent. It is He who gave them hearing and sight and hearts ; and it is He who created everything, then fixed for it a measure.

Therefore, Allāh intervenes between a thing and its self, between it and between all its associates like child, spouse, friend, property, honour and rights. It means that He is the nearest of all to His creatures. In other words, He is the Near One in the true sense of this word. He has said: *And We are nearer to him than you, but you see* (Us) *not* (56:85); *and We are nearer to him than his life vein* (50:16) ; *and know that Allāh intervenes between man and his heart* (8:24). 'Heart'

here means the rational soul or spirit.

In short, Allāh's ownership of His creatures is real ownership, and as they are His servants He is near to them in its true sense, which means nearest of all things. This ownership gives Him authority to make use of them as He wishes, without any hindrance or obstruction. Also it gives Him authority to answer any prayer which is put before Him by any of His creatures, and to fulfil his need by accepting his supplication, because the ownership is all encompassing, and His Power and pervasiveness cover all possible situations. It is not as though He has authority in one eventuality and not in the other, as the Jews say that when God created things and decreed their destinies, His work was finished and now His hands are folded up, He can not take any new decision ; there is no abrogation (of previous laws), no change and no answering of prayer because every affair is already finished. Nor is it, as a group of this *ummah* said, that Allāh has no power about the actions of His creatures. They are called Qadariyyah and were named the Magians of this *ummah* by the Messenger of Allāh. Sunnīs and Shī'ahs both have reported that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Qadariyyah are the Magians of this *ummah''*.

The truth is that real ownership in its totality is by Allāh only and nobody owns any thing but when He makes him its owner and allows him to possess it. Therefore, whatever Allāh wills and gives in possession and allows its coming into being, comes into being. And whatever He does not will, and does not give in possession and does not allow, does not come into being, even if one strives his utmost to bring it into being. Allāh has said: *0 people! You are they who are needy unto Allāh, and Allāh is He who is the Self-sufficient, the Most Praised One*. (35:15)

It is, thus, clear that this verse not only mentions a fact, i.e., answering prayer, but gives its reasons also: Because the supplicants are servants of Allāh, He is near to them ; and because He is near to them, He answers their prayers without any reservation. And the unconditional answering of prayer means that there is no condition imposed on prayer also ; whatever prayer is addressed to Him, He shall answer it. Of course, it seems that His promise 'I answer the prayer of the supplicant' depends on the condition, *when he calls Me.* But this condition is not something different from the main clause ; and such a mode of expression indicates

that the main clause is free from metaphor and analogy ; that its meaning is what appears from the words. For example, when we say, ‘‘Listen to the sincere advisor when he sincerely advises you’’, or ‘‘Respect the scholar if he be a scholar’’, it means that we want him to be sure that the advisor is really sincere or the scholar is really a scholar so that listening to him or respecting him becomes necessary. In the same way, the condition *when he calls on me* shows that the promise of answering the prayer shall apply when the supplicant is a supplicant in reality ; when he wants that thing according to his natural and deep ingrained knowledge and when his heart is really in what his tongue is asking for. The reality of prayer and supplication is what the heart decries and the tongue of nature asks for, not this tongue of flesh which moves as it is moved without caring whether the word spoken is a truth or a lie, a reality or a metaphor, a serious talk or a joke. It is because of this that Allāh has even mentioned such prayers in which the tongue is not used at all. He said: *And He gave you of all that you asked Him ; and if you count Allāh's bounties, you will not be able to compute them* ; *Verily, man is very unjust very ungrateful* (14:34). Mankind prays to Him and beseeches Him for bounties which they cannot count, but this asking is not done by the tongue of the mouth, it is done by the tongue of their neediness, the tongue of nature and existence. Also He said: *All those in the heavens and the earth do beseech Him* ; *every day He is in a* (new) *splendor* (55:29). This verse more clearly proves what we have just said.

Therefore, the natural prayer addressed to Allāh shall always be answered. If a prayer is not answered then it lacks both or one of the two things mentioned in the verse: *the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me.* It may happen in following ways:

First: There may be no prayer at all, it may only be a misunderstanding of the supplicant. For example, a man prays for an impossible thing (but he does not know that it is impossible), or for a thing which, if he knew the fact, would not have wanted at all. Let us say that someone was sick and died but his friend is unaware of his death and prays for his recovery, while now the prayer should be for bringing him back to life. If he had been really sure that a dead body could be resurrected and had asked for its resurrection (as the prophets did) his life would have been returned to him ; but he does not have such firm conviction and therefore the prayer is not answered. Or, let us

say, he asks for a thing which, had he known it really, he would not have wanted. Therefore, it is not granted.

Second: There is indeed a prayer, but it is not addressed exclusively to Allāh. For example, a man beseeches Allāh for his needs, but his heart is looking towards its apparent causes or to some imaginary beings whom he thinks have power to fulfil his needs. In this case, his prayer is not addressed exclusively to Allāh. In other words, he did not beseech Allāh at all; because Allāh, Who answers the prayers, is the One who has no partner in His affairs. He is not the one who works in partnership with apparent causes and imaginary beings.

So these are the two groups of supplicants whose hearts were not sincere in their prayers even if their tongues were.

This is the gist of the subject of prayer according to the verse of the Qur'ān. The meaning of all verses on this subject may be understood from this explanation. See, for example, the following verses:

> *Say, my Lord would not care for you, were it not for your prayer; but you have indeed rejected* (the truth), *so soon you shall be in the grip* (25:77).
>
> *Say, think you that if the chastisement of Allāh comes to you or the Hour comes to you, will you call upon other than Allāh, if you are truthful[Nay! Him you will call upon, so He clears away that for which you pray, if He pleases, and you will forget what you set up* (with Him) (6:40-41).
>
> *Say, who is it that delivers you from the* (dread of the) *darkness of the land and the sea* (when) *you pray to him* (openly) *humiliating yourselves and secretly: ''If He delivers us from this, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones''. Say, Allāh delivers you from them and from every distress, yet again you associate* (others) *with Him* (6:63-64).

These verses prove that man has been created with a natural prayer and inborn request, which is silently addressed to his Lord. But when he spends his life in ease and prosperity, his soul becomes blinded by apparent causes and he treats them as partners to his Lord ; thus he becomes confused and thinks that he does not ask his Lord for anything and does not beseech Him, while the fact is that he does not beseech anyone other than Allāh, because this prayer (to Allāh) is ingrained into his nature, and there is no change in the creation of Allāh. Later comes

the hardship and the apparent causes become divorced from the expected effects, and those whom he treated as partners of Allāh or intercessors before Him disappear completely ; then he realizes that there is no one to fulfil his needs and to answer his prayers except Allāh. Thus, he returns to his natural monotheism and forgets every other cause and turns his face towards the Beneficent Lord ; and the Lord clears away his hardship and fulfils his wants and places him under the shade of opulence. But as soon as he regains his prosperity and happiness he goes back to the previous polytheism and forgetfulness.

And your Lord said: Call upon Me, I will answer you. Verily, those who are arrogant to My *worship shall soon enter Hell, disgraced* (40:60).

This verse invites mankind to beseech Allāh, and promises the answering, and goes even further by naming the prayer as worship in the clause, *arrogant to My worship* which means ‘‘to my prayer’’. Rather, it equates the worship with prayer: it threatens with Hell those who do not pray, and such a threat can only be justified when one neglects worship completely, not on neglecting only one kind of it. Therefore, the prayer is not just an important type of worship ; it is the foundation of worship itself.

From the above, one may appreciate the meaning of other verses on this subject:

Therefore, call upon Allāh, being sincere to Him in religion, though averse be the disbelievers (40:14).

And call on Him fearing and hoping ; surely, the mercy of Allāh is near to those who do good (7:56).

... surely they used to ... call unto Us with love and reverence, and were humble before Us (21:90).

Call upon your Lord humbly and secretly ; surely He loves nots those who exceed the limit (7:55).

When called he (Zakariyyā) *unto his Lord in low voice. He said*: *My Lord! Surely my bones are weakened and my head flares with hoariness, and, my Lord! Never have I been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee* (19:3-4).

And He answers those who believe and do good deeds, and increases unto them of His grace (42:26).

There are other relevant verses, and all of these contain the pillars of prayer and explain the manner of the supplication. And the most important of all is to keep the prayer exclusively for Allāh ; it will come true when the feeling of the heart conforms with the words spoken by the tongue ; when one abandons reliance on all apparent reasons other than Allāh and depends exclusively upon Allāh. Also among them are: fear of Allāh ; hope in His answering ;His love and reverence ; humility and humbleness ;as well as perseverance in prayer ; remembrance of Allāh ; good deeds; true faith ; presence of heart at that time ; and similar things.

Qur'ān: *So they should answer My call and believe in Me.*

This sentence branches out from the previous one. Allāh is near to His servants ; nothings comes between Him and their prayer ; He cares for them and for the things they ask for ; that is why He invites them to call upon Him and He is of such high attributes. Therefore, they should accept this invitation of their Lord and should advance towards Him, and have faith in Him about this attribute, having firm belief that He is near and He answers their call ; so that they may be guided rightly in praying unto Him.

TRADITIONS

The Sunnīs and Shī'ahs both have narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that ''Prayer is the armament of the believer.''

It is narrated in *al-Ḥadīth al-qudsī*: ''O Mūsā! Ask from Me all that you need, even fodder for your goat and salt for your dough.'' [*'Uddatu'd-dā'ī*]

The Prophet said: ''Calling (upon Allāh) is better than reciting the Qur'ān, because Allāh (Powerful and Great is He!) said, 'Say, My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer.''' [*Makārimu 'l-akhlāq*]

The same *ḥadīth* has been narrated from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.).

Muḥammad ibn 'Ajlān narrates from Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn from his cousin, aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) from his forefathers from the Prophet that he said: ''Allāh informed one of his prophets in a revelation: 'By My Power and Dignity! Verily I shall

change into despair the hope of everyone who hoped from other than Me, and I shall dress him with the clothing of disgrace before people, and I shall remove him from My relief and bounty. Does my servant put his hope in other than Me in hardships, while hardships are in My hand ; And does he expect anything from other than Me, while I am the Self-sufficient, the Munificent? In My hand are the keys of the doors, while they are closed ; and My door is open for the one who calls on Me . ..' '' [*'Uddatu 'd-dā'ī*

The Prophet said: ''Allāh said ; 'No creature seeks refuge in another creature, leaving Me, but that I cut off all the means in the heavens and the earth for him. Then if he asks from Me, I do not give him ; and if he calls on Me, I do not answer him. And no creature seeks refuge in Me, leaving My creatures, but that I make the heaven and the earth responsible for his sustenance ; then if he calls on Me, I answer him and, if he seeks pardon from Me, I forgive!''' [*ibid.*]

The author says: The aim of the above two traditions is to emphasize that the invocation must be purely for Allāh. It was not meant to negate the positive causes which Allāh has created as instrumental links between the things and their needs. But these instruments are not independent causes. The Independent Cause is only Allāh. And man does have an inner feeling of this fact: he feels by his nature that there is a Perfect Cause who fulfils his needs and who can never fail in bringing about the desired effect. On the other hand, he knows that all the apparent causes which are expected to produce an effect, some times fail to do so. Thus he knows that the First Cause, who is the Source and Origin of everything and upon whom every need relies and depends for its fulfilment, is other than these apparent causes. Once he realises it, he will never entirely rely on these causes, forgetting the Real Cause. Man may appreciate this fact after just a little thinking.

Now, if he prays for something and that need is fulfilled, it will prove that he asked his Lord for it, and that the prayer, which emanated from his inner feeling and knowledge, reached through the apparent causes to His Lord and was granted by Him. On the contrary, if he prays to some apparent causes for it, then it does not originate from natural inner feeling and knowledge ; it is just an imaginary need, based not on inner feeling but on some imaginary reasons. It is one of the situations where appearance goes against reality, because he thinks that he is praying,

while his inner self knows nothing about that prayer.

Another example: Many is the time that a man likes a thing and makes all efforts to get it ; but when he gets it, he finds that it is harmful to another thing which is far more important and far more dear than that thing. Then he leaves that which he had strived for and keeps that which is more important. Likewise, sometimes he dislikes a thing, but once it comes to him he finds it far more beneficial and far better than the alternative which he previously preferred. A child is sick ; when he is given a bitter medicine, he refuses to take it and starts crying. But at the same time he wants to regain his health. Now the position is this: his natural inner feeling prays for health and, therefore, for the medicine ; but his words and deeds reject the same medicine. Likewise, man, in his life, has a discipline based on natural understanding and inner feeling ; and he also has a system based on his imagination only. The natural discipline makes no mistake, it never leads astray ; while the imaginary discipline often goes wrong. It is clear from the example of the sick child that sometimes man asks for some thing urged by his imagination but in reality that very prayer is the prayer for its opposite.

This discourse will help the readers in understanding the meaning of the traditions, and it is also the implication of the words of ‘Alī (a.s.) which come later, ‘‘Verily, the granting (of Prayer) is according to the measure of the intention ...’’

The Prophet said: ‘‘Call upon Allāh and you can be confident for the answering.’’ [*‘Uddatu ’d-dā ‘ī*]

‘‘I am near the opinion (i.e. expectation) of My servant about Me ; so, he should not have any opinion about Me (i.e. should not expect from Me) except good.’’ [*al-Ḥadīth al-qudsī*]

The author says: It is because if one prays and at the same time is pessimistic or doubtful about its outcome, then it shows that the prayer is just a formality, the supplicant has no real intention of asking for it (see the previous explanation). And the traditions forbid asking for a thing which one is sure will not come about.

The Prophet said: ‘‘Resort to Allāh in your needs ; and seek refuge in Him in your misfortunes ; and humiliate yourselves before Him and beseech Him, because, verily, supplication is the essence of worship. And no believer calls upon Allāh but He answers him: either it is speeded up to him in this world, or is kept in reserve for him for the next one, or

his sins are forgiven in proportion to his supplication, provided he does not pray for a sinful thing.'' [*'Uddatu'd-dā'ī*]

'Alī (a.s.) wrote in his will for his son, al-Ḥusayn (a.s.): ''Then He placed the keys of His treasures in your hands in the sense that He allowed you to ask Him. Therefore, whenever you wish, you may get the doors of His bounties opened with prayer, and get the heavy rains of His Mercy to fall upon you. Delay in acceptance of the prayer should not disappoint you, because the granting (of prayer) is according to the measure of (your) intention. And sometimes, the answering of your prayer is delayed so that it brings a greater reward to the asker and a better granting to the expectant. Sometimes you ask for a thing and it is not given to you, but a better thing is given to you, immediately or later ; or a thing is diverted from you for some greater good for you, because often you ask for a thing which would have destroyed your religion had it been given to you. Therefore, your prayer should be for things whose beauty should last for you and whose evil should remain away from you. As for wealth, it will not last for you, nor will you last for it.'' [*Nahju 'l-balāghah*]

The author says: ''The granting (of prayer) is according to the measure of (your) intention.'' 'Alī (a.s.) means that the answer is given according to the call. The supplicant is granted whatever he asks for from Allāh with the firm conviction of his conscience and with his heart, and not what is asked for in words. As explained earlier, the words sometimes do not completely conform with the real requirement demanded by the nature. This sentence, therefore, shows in the most lucid and comprehensive way, the relationship between prayer and its answer. 'Alī (a.s.) has, in this writing, explained many cases in which it appears that the prayer was not granted, e.g. where there is delay in answering the call, or a material bounty is asked for but it is changed to some thing which is far better for him either in this world or in the next, or it is diverted to some thing more beneficial for the asker. The supplicant had, for example, asked for a pleasant bounty ; and if he were given it without delay it would not have been really appreciated and valued, and, therefore, its granting was delayed. In short, when he asked for a ''pleasant'' bounty, he implicitly asked for a delay in granting of the prayer. Likewise, a believer who seriously pays attention to his religion, prays for some thing which would be harmful to his religion,

although he does not know it and thinks that it would bring him happiness. But his happiness is in his religion and in the next world. Therefore, his prayer is in fact for the next world, not for this one, and, accordingly, it is granted for the next world, not for this one.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘A servant does not extend his hand towards Allāh, but that Allāh is ashamed to return it empty. He puts in it from His bounty and mercy whatever He wishes. So, when one of you calls (upon Allāh), he should not return his hand until he wipes it on his head and face.’’ [*‘Uddatu ’d-dā ‘ī*] In another *ḥadīth* it is ‘‘on his face and chest’’.

The author says: There are in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* eight similar traditions narrated by a number of the companions, like Salmān, Jābir, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Anas ibn Mālik and Ibn Abī Mughīth from the Prophet ; and all of them mention raising of the hands in the prayer. Therefore, it is meaningless to reject raising of hands in the prayer as someone has done saying that ‘‘it is suggestive of the belief that Allāh has a body, because the raising of the hands towards the sky is an indication that He is there - Holy and Sanctified is He from it.’’

But this statement is wrong. All acts of worship performed by the body are in reality the heartfelt sense of gratitude and inner attention which is reduced to the level of symbolic appearance ; and the spiritual realities are demonstrated in the moulds of the body, as one may see in the *ṣalāt,* the fast, the *ḥajj,* etc., and their parts. and conditions. Had it not been so, there would not have been any justification for worship by the body. And invocation is such a form of worship. It is the attention of the heart and the inner supplication demonstrated by the symbol of the begging of a wretched pauper coming near a powerful and wealthy person, raising and extending his hands towards him and asking his needs from him, humiliating himself before him and imploring him to grant him his requirements. ash-Shaykh has reported in *al Majālis wa ’l-akhbār,* with his *sanad* (chain of narrators) from Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) and Zayd from their father, Imām ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn from his father al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) from the Prophet that ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to raise his hands when he prayed and beseeched (Allāh) as a pauper begs for food.’’ The same *ḥadīth* is written in *‘Uddatu ’d-dā‘ī* without *sanad.*

‘Alī (a.s.) heard a man saying ‘‘O Allāh! I seek refuge in Thee from

temptation.'' 'Alī(a.s.) said: '' I see, you are seeking refuge against your wealth and children. Allāh says: *Verily your wealth and your children are temptations* (8:28). *You* should rather say: O Allāh! I seek refuge in Thee from misleading temptations.'' [*Biḥāru 'l-anwār*]

The author says: It is another way of determining the meaning of a word. And there are many such examples in traditions. The fact is that the true meaning of every word is that for which it has been used by Allāh in His talk. And some examples of this are the traditions which explain the meaning of 'part', 'many'etc.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Verily, Allāh does not answer the memorised prayer by a forgetful heart.'' [*'Uddatu 'd-dā'ī*]

'Alī (a.s.) said: ''Allāh does not accept the prayer of an inattentive heart.'' [*ibid*.]

The author says: There are other traditions with this meaning ; and the reason is that there is in reality no prayer and supplication with forgetfulness and inattention.

There is in the Torah: Allāh says to His servant, ''Verily, when you pray against one of my servants because he was unjust to you, then at the same time there may be another of my servants praying against you too because you were unjust to him. Now, if you so wish, I shall grant your prayer and also his prayer against you ; and if you so wish, I shall postpone the cases of both of you for the Day of Resurrection.'' [ar-Rāwandī, *ad-Da'wāt*]

The author says: If someone prays for something then it means that he is pleased with it and this pleasure naturally extends to all those things which are similar to it in all respects. He prays for punishment of his oppressor ; he prays against him because of his oppression and injustice. It means that he is pleased with the punishment of the unjust. Now, if he himself oppressed another person then the same prayer against his oppressor shall become a prayer against himself. If he is pleased that he himself should be punished (and he shall never be pleased with it), then he will be given the same punishment which he wanted for his oppressor. And if he is not pleased with it, then there is in reality no prayer at all. Allāh said : *And man prays for evil as he aught to pray for good, and man is ever hasty* (17:11).

The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to Abū Dharr: ''O Abū Dharr! Should I not teach you some words by which Allāh will benefit you? I (Abū

Dharr) said: 'Surely! O Messenger of Allāh.' He said: 'Guard (the commands of) Allāh, (and) Allāh will guard you. Keep (the rememberance of) Allāh, (and) you will find Him before you. Make the acquaintance of Allāh in opulence, He will know you in hardship. And when you ask, ask from Allāh ; and when you seek help, seek help from Allāh, because whatever is to happen upto the Day of Resurrection has already been written, and if all the creatures together strived to benefit you with what Allāh did not write for you, they would not be able to do so.' '' [*'Uddatu'd-dā'ī*]

The author says: His words, ''Make the acquaintance of Allāh in opulence, He will know you in hardship'', mean ''Call upon Allāh in opulence and do not forget Him, so that He will answer your call in hardship and will not forget you.'' Anybody who forgets his Lord in opulence is as if he believes that the apparent causes are the total and real cause of his opulence. Then comes the hardship and he starts calling on his Lord. His action indicates that he believes in the Lordship of Allāh only when he is afflicted with hardship. But Allāh is not so. He is the Lord in every condition and every situation. Therefore, if he calls on a lord whose lordship is limited to the time of hardship only, he does not call on the True Lord.

This meaning has been explained in some traditions in a different language. aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''One who goes on calling (on his Lord) in advance, his call will be answered when there comes down an affliction (on him), and it will be said,'(it is) a known voice', and it will not be screened out of the heavens. And the one who does not call (on his Lord) in advance, his call is not answered when an affliction comes, and the angels say, 'It is a voice which we do not know…' ''[*Makārimu'l-akhlāq*]

And it is understood from the word of Allāh, *They forget Allāh, so He forgets them* (9:68). There is another tradition that *du'ā'* (prayer) is not rejected if one cuts oneself (from all apparent causes and turns exclusively towards Allāh). There is no contradiction between this tradition and those mentioned before, because affliction and hardship is something different from exclusively turning towards Allāh.

His words: *and when you ask, ask from Allāh, and when you seek help, seek help from Allāh.* It teaches one to adhere only to Allāh in reality while asking and seeking help ; because so far as these nominal causes, which we find in this world are concerned, their relation with their effects is confined within the limit set for it by Allāh. They are not

independent in producing the effect as it appears to un-informed eyes ; they are only a means to produce that effect ; the incumbent on the man to turn towards Allāh in all his needs, without relying on nominal causes and means, although Allāh has decreed not to produce an effect if its cause is missing. In short, the above sentence tells one not to rely on nominal causes and not to forget that it is Allāh who has made it a cause of that effect. It does not mean that one should neglect the causes and means and ask for one's needs without striving for its cause ; it would be rather asking for the impossible. One should realise that even the heart where the prayer originates, the tongue which utters the words of the prayer and the hands, etc., which are used in praying are but some of the causes and means. So, how can one escape from the apparent causes?

Let us look at the example of man himself. Whatever he does, is done with his limbs and organs: he gives with his hands, sees with his eyes and hears with his ears. Now, if one asked his Lord to fulfil his needs neglecting its causes and means, it would be as if he asked someone to give him something without using his hand, or to look at him without using his eyes or to listen to his pleas without using his ears.

On the other hand, if one relies on the nominal causes without remembering Allāh, it would be as though one thinks that it is the man's hand which gives, his eyes which see and his ears which hear, and forgets that the real doer of these actions is man himself. Such a person is stupid and a simpleton.

The above explanation does not mean that the Power of Allāh is limited, or that His Authority is conditional. No, His Power and Authority are All-encompassing and without limit. In the same way the limitations are meant to apply to the deeds not to doers. Obviously, it is man who has the power to give, see and hear, though he gives with his hand, sees with his eyes and hears with his ears. Likewise, Allāh is All-powerful, but the specification depends on intermediate causes. Zayd is a creation of Allāh, and he was born through the union of his parents in a certain place on a certain day when certain conditions were fulfilled and certain obstacles removed. Now, if even one of these causes be missing and one of these conditions be not fulfilled, there would be no Zayd. Thus the existence of Zayd depends on the fulfilment of all these causes and means ; but what depends is the creature, i.e., Zayd, not the Creator. (Think on this point.)

His words: *Whatever is to happen upto the Day of Resurrection has already been written.* It is based on the sentence, *And when you ask, ask from Allāh,* and gives its reason. It means that all events are written and decreed by Allāh ; no cause has any real influence on them ; therefore, you should not ask from anyone other than Allāh, and should not seek any one's help other than that of Allāh. As for Allāh, His authority is everlasting ; His Power is Eternal ; His Will is effective ; and every day He is in a new Splendour. It is for this reason that this sentence is followed by the words: *and if all the creatures together strived to benefit you with what Allāh did not write for you, they would not be able to do so.*

Among the traditions of *du'ā' is* the near *mutawātir ḥadīth:* ''Verily, *du'ā'* (prayer) is a part of destiny.''

The author says: This is the reply to the objection of the Jews and others on *du'ā'*. They say: The need asked for is either already measured and decreed (to happen) or not. If it is already decreed, then it would happen in any case and the prayer would be superfluous. If it is not decreed, then it can never happen and the prayer would be meaningless. In either case, the prayer will have no effect at all.

The reply: Even when an event is already decreed, it does not mean that it is independent of its causes, and one of the means of its coming into existence is *du'ā'*. If one beseeches Allāh for his need, one of the conditions of its existence is fulfilled ; and the effect follows the cause. This is the meaning of the tradition, ''Verily, *du'ā'* (prayer) is a part of destiny.''

And there are other traditions with the same meaning. There is *a ḥadīth* from the Prophet: ''Nothing turns away the decree (fate) except prayer (*du'ā'*).'' [*Biḥāru 'l-anwār*]. And there is another one from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.): ''Prayer (*du'ā'*) turns away the decree even after it is confirmed.'' [*ibid.*] Another one from Abu'l-Ḥasan Mūsā al-Kāẓim (as.): ''On you is *du'ā',* because *du'ā'* and asking from Allāh turns the calamity away even when it is measured and decreed and nothing remains except its enforcement ; then if Allāh is called upon and asked, He removes that calamity entirely.'' [*ibid*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Verily, the prayer (*du'ā'*) turns away the confirmed decree even after its confirmation. Therefore, pray often (and repeatedly), because it is the key to every mercy and the fulfilment of

every need. And what is with Allāh is not obtained except through prayer ; because verily, no door is knocked repeatedly but it is hoped that it will be opened to the knocker.'' [*ibid*.]

The author says: This *ḥadīth* exhorts one to pray often and repeatedly ; and this is one of the important elements of prayer, as repeated remembrance of a need creates purity of intention.

Ismā'īl ibn Hammām narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.): ''One secret prayer of a servant is equal to seventy open prayers.''

The author says: This teaches one to keep one's prayer (*du'ā'*) secret and confidential because it helps in keeping the prayer pure.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The prayer is kept screened (i.e. is not granted) until he (the beseecher) prays for the blessings of Allāh upon Muḥammad and his progeny.'' [*Makārimu 'l-akhlāq*]

Also, aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Whoever advances (the names of) forty believers (in his prayers) then prays (for himself), his call will be answered.'' [*ibid*.]

One of the companions of aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said to him: ''There are two verses in the Book of Allāh (the application) for which I am seeking without finding it.'' The Imām asked: ''And what are those?'' The companion says: ''I said, '(there is the verse): *Call upon Me, I shall answer* ... but we call upon Him and do not get any answer.' The Imām said: 'Well, do you think Allāh has broken His promise?' I said: 'No!' He said: 'Then what?' I said: 'I do not know.' He said: 'But I will tell you. Whoever obeys Allāh in His commandments, and then calls upon Him in the proper way, He will answer him.' I said: 'And what is the proper way of prayer (*du'ā'*)?' He said: 'You shall begin with the praise of Allāh and shall glorify Him and remember His bounties upon you and thank Him ; then you shall pray for His blessings upon Muḥammad and his progeny ; then you shall remember your sins and confess them ; then you shall seek (His) pardon for them. So this is the proper way of prayer (*du'ā'*).' Then the Imām asked: 'And what is the second verse?' I said: *'and whatever thing you spend, He returns it* (34:39), and I find that I spend but He does not return it.' He said: 'Well, do you think Allāh has broken His promise?' I said: 'No!' He said: 'Then what?' I said: 'I do not know.' He said: 'If any of you earn his wealth lawfully and spend it in its proper place, he will not spend a single dirham but that Allāh shall return it to him!' '' [*ibid*.]

The author says: The reason of the manners of prayer (*du'ā'*) mentioned in these traditions is clear, because these things bring the servant (of Allāh) nearer to the reality of prayer and request.

Ibn 'Umar reported that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Verily, when Allāh wishes to answer (the call of) a servant, He allows him to call (upon Him).'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

Also, Ibn 'Umar narrates from him (the Holy Prophet):''Whenever the door of prayer (*du'ā'*) is opened for anyone among you, the doors of Mercy are opened for him.'' Another tradition says: ''When the (door of) prayer is opened for anyone among you, the doors of the Garden (Paradise) are opened for him.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* also: ''Whoever is given *du'ā',* is given (its) answer.'' Its meaning is clear.

Also there is a tradition from Ma'ādh ibn Jabal from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.): ''Had you known Allāh, as He should be known, verily the mountains would have been moved by your prayer.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: If a man does not know the dignity of the Creator and the power of His Lordship, and if he relies upon the causes, then he believes that these causes have real influence upon the result, and that events cannot happen without their normal and apparent causes. Sometimes he does not believe that these causes have any real effect upon the outcome, still he thinks that they are essential in order to bring a thing into existence. For example, we see that movement and walking brings one nearer to one's destination. And even when we do not believe that movement has any real effect on the nearness, we go on believing that movement is a means, though it is Allāh who is the real cause, of that nearness, and in this way we go on believing that the middle causes are essential, at least as a means, if not as the real cause. Thus, we think that if there is no movement, we cannot come near our destination. In short, we believe that the effect cannot be separate from its causes, even if these causes are just apparent means and not the real cause.

But such a belief is below the dignity of Allāh ; it does not conform with divine authority which is total and perfect. It is this belief which creates the idea that effects cannot come into being without their normal causes, e.g. a body cannot be without a weight and gravity ; movement is necessary for bringing two things nearer ; eating and drinking is essential

for satisfying the hunger and thirst, etc. etc. We have already mentioned in the discussion of miracles that the system of cause and effect is an inescapable fact ; but it does not mean that the 'cause' is confined to the normal causes only. Reason as well as the Qur'ān and the traditions prove that while everything depends upon a cause, that cause is not confined within the limits of normal ones. The Creator may create causes for it, quite different from the normal ones. So, while it is true that the effect depends upon a cause, it is not true that it depends upon a particular cause.

Of course, the things which are, according to reason, impossible, cannot come into being.

In short, when you properly know Allāh, you will believe that the prayer for what is not impossible by reason, even if normally it does not happen, will be answered. A major portion of the miracles of the prophets was basically the answer to their calls.

There is in the *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī under the words of Allāh: *So they should answer My call and believe in Me,* a *ḥadīth* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.): ''They should know that I have power to give them whatever they ask from Me.''

And there is another *ḥadīth* in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* from the same Imām that he said: *''and believe in Me* means that they should have firm belief that I have power to give them what they ask for ; so *that they may walk in the right way* means so that they may reach the Truth."

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ
لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ
فَالْآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ
الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا
تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ - ١٨٧ .

It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast to go in unto your wives; they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them; *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you. Wherefore, now be in contact with them and seek what Allāh has written for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct unto you from the black thread* (of night) *at dawn-break, then complete the fast until night. And associate not with them while you are confined in the mosque. These are the limits* (prescribed by) *Allāh; therefore, draw not yourselves near them. Thus does Allāh make clear His signs for the people, so that they may guard themselves* (against evil). (2:187)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast to go in unto your wives.*

Iḥlāl (الاحلال) means to allow ; its root is *ḥall* (to open, الحلّ) which is opposite of *'aqd* (to tie, العقد)

Rafath (الرّفث) literally means to say clearly such words which are generally unmentionable, which are normally only hinted at; such words are usually uttered during sexual intercourse. Now, this ''uttering unmentionable words'' has been used as metaphor of the sexual intercourse; and this is the nobility of the exalted Qur'ān. And all words

used for this meaning in the Qur'ān are of the same type; none were made for copulation, all are used as a metaphor, like *mubāshirah* (to be in contact with each other, المباشرة), *dukhūl* (to enter, الدّخول), *mass* or *lams* (to touch, المسّ or اللمس),*ityān* (to come to, الاتيان),*qurb* (to be near, القرب), etc. The same is the case of the words, *waṭ'* (to press down, الوطء) and *jimā'* (to come together, الجماع) which are used in Islamic books other than the Qur'ān, although some of these words have been so much used for this meaning that now they are no longer metaphoric. The words, *farj* (an opening, الفرج) and *ghā'it* (the depth, الغائط), which are now commonly used for ''vulva'' and ''excrement'' respectively, are the other examples of this type.

It is said that the preposition *ilā* (to, الى) coming here after *rafath* (الرّفث) gives the meaning of entering into.

Qur'ān: *they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them.*

Libās (اللباس) means what a man uses to cover his body. The two sentences are used figuratively, because each spouse restrains the other from unchastity, and protects society from debauchery. Thus each one is like an apparel for the other with which he/she covers his/her shame and protects his/her privacy.

It is a very fine metaphor, and its literary value has been increased by putting it after the sentence, *It is made lawful to you ... to go in unto your wives. A* man hides his private parts from others with his dress, but there is no hiding from the dress itself. Likewise, each spouse protects the other one from having sexual relations with others; but there is no restriction on them against such relations with each other.

Qur'ān: *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you.*

Ikhtiyān (الاختيان) and *khiyānah* (الخيانة) are synonymous ; and it is said that they convey the meaning of defect, decrease. *You were acting unfaithfully* conveys the meaning of continuity ; and it shows that this unfaithfulness commonly continued among the Muslims after the command of the fast had been promulgated; and they were sinning against Allāh secretly by being unfaithful to their own souls. Had not this unfaithfulness been a sin, there would have been no need to mention *turning to them mercifully* and *forgiving;* and although these two words do not say openly that a sin had already been committed, still their most

obvious meaning shows a preceding sin, especially when both are mentioned together.

Accordingly, the verse proves that before its revelation, sexual intercourse in the nights of the fast was forbidden; and that it was this verse which made it lawful and abrogated its prohibition, as has been stated by a group of the commentators of the Qur'ān. As a further proof, look at the words, *It is made lawful to you. You were acting unfaithfully, so He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you* and *Wherefore, now be in contact with them.* Had there been no previous prohibition, such words would have been out of context; instead there would have come the words like ''there is no blame on you that you be in contact with them''.

Some people say: ''This verse does not abrogate any rule, because the verse of fasting mentioned earlier did not prohibit intercourse or food or drink in the night. Apparently, according to some Sunnī traditions, when the fast was prescribed and the words were revealed, *Fast has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you* refers to the fast per se, and not meant total conformity in all the details of fast. It is said that the Christians used to eat, drink and go to their women during the early period of the night, then abstained from it. So the Muslims adopted the same system. But it proved difficult. Many youths could not restrain themselves from secret sexual intercourse, but they thought that they were committing a sin and acting unfaithfully to themselves. Likewise, aged persons found it a heavy burden to abstain from eating and drinking once they began their sleep. Sometimes someone could not keep his eyes open before eating and drinking and then thought that food and drink was unlawful for him. It was to remove this misunderstanding that this verse was revealed; it made it clear that sexual intercourse, food and drink was not unlawful for them during the night of Ramaḍān. This verse also made it clear that the comparison in *"as it was prescribed for those before you"* Refers to the fast per se, and not to its details. The words *It is made lawful to you* do not necessarily mean that this was unlawful before that; it simply declares legality of this action. See, for example, the words: *The game of the sea is made lawful to you* (5:96); as it is known that the game of the sea was not unlawful to the pilgrims before the revelation of this verse. Likewise, the words *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves*

means that they were doing wrong according to their own view only. That is why Allāh said ‘‘unfaithfully to yourselves’’. Had He said ‘‘unfaithfully to Allāh’’, it would have conveyed the meaning of prohibition, as, for example, in the verse: *Be you not unfaithful to Allāh and the Apostle* (8:27). Also the word *ikhtiyān* (الاختيان) may be taken to mean ‘‘curtail’’ or ‘‘decrease’’ and the sentence may be translated as ‘‘Allāh knew that you were curtailing your desires’’. The words *He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and has forgiven you* do not clearly convey the idea that sexual intercourse was a sin before that.

But this argument is not conclusive, because it goes against the clear meaning of the verse. We have already said that the words like *It is made lawful to you; you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, He has turned towards you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you* do not say openly that a sin had already been committed; still, this is their most obvious implication. Add to it the words *now be in contact with them* which would be inappropriate if there were no previous prohibition, as I have explained earlier.

The argument, that ‘‘this verse does not abrogate any rule because the verse of fasting did not prohibit sexual intercourse in the night’’, is not valid because that verse did not prohibit it clearly for the day time also. It is known that the Messenger of Allāh had explained the rules of fasting before this verse was revealed. Perhaps the prohibition of sexual relations during the night was one of those rules; and the verse abrogated it. So this verse cancels not another verse, but a tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Someone may object: The words *they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them* have been used as the reason for this permission. Now, the husband and wife were like apparel to each other when, supposedly, copulation at night was forbidden and they remained like the apparel when that prohibition was supposedly lifted. So where, in these words, is the reason for the supposed abrogation if they are equally true in both conditions — before abrogation and after abrogation? We know that the reason given for a rule of the *sharī‘ah is* mostly its benefit, and not necessarily its real causes. And as a benefit, it need not be fully comprehensive. Still, in a supposedly abrogating verse at least it should not be common to both conditions.

But deep consideration of the verse does not sustain this objection. It

is not acceptable that this sentence is the reason of this permission. The permission in this verse is limited to *the night of the fast,* while the simile of apparel is as much true during the day as in the night. So, it cannot be the reason of that permission.

The fact is that the three clauses in this verse coming one after the other, and all taken together, give us the reason for this abrogation. They are *on the night of the fast, they are an apparel for you ... ,*and *you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves.*

As the spouses are like apparel to each other they should be allowed to establish sexual relations together without any restriction. Then came the commandment of the fast, without demanded self-denial and abstention from desires, like food, drink and sexual relations. But the servants of Allāh found it difficult to abstain for a full month from copulation, and this unfaithfulness was common and continued. Therefore, Allāh in His mercy eased the conditions and lightened their burden by allowing it during the night.

In this way, the general implication of the sentence of *apparel* is made subordinate to the *fast;* and thus is limited to the night time only (when there is no fast).

In short, the sentence of apparel is not a reason for this permission; rather it is the reason or benefit of copulation per se. The main aim of the whole verse is to explain why copulation was allowed in the night of fast. And the sentence beginning with *they are an apparel* and ending on *forgiven you* taken together show this reason, not any single sentence alone. And this reason is not found in the rule which was followed before this permission.

Qur'ān: *Wherefore, now be in contact with them and seek what Allāh has written for you.* This is an order preceded by prohibition; thus it means permission. The verse begins with the words, *It is made lawful to you.* The meaning, therefore, is,' from now on you are allowed to establish sexual relations with them''. *Ibtighā'* (الابتغاء) means 'to seek', 'to desire'. *Seek what Allāh has written for you* means seeking the children which Allāh has written to give to the mankind. Allāh created in human being the desire to copulate and made it the means of that gift (of children) and to some extent put them under the pressure of that desire. When a couple engages in that action, they are in reality seeking what Allāh has written for them, even if at that

time their only aim is to satisfy their sexual desire or lust. It is like taking food and drink. Allāh had written that their lives, growth and health depend on food and drink, and that remains the goal of nature even when they, at that particular time, do not look further than satisfying their hunger and thirst or to pamper their gustatory pleasure. This is the compulsion put on them by Allāh in all such matters.

It has been said: *What Allāh has written for you* means ''what Allāh has allowed to you''; and the implication is that they should take advantage of this permission. Allāh likes His servants to take advantage of His permission as He likes them to obey His compulsory commandments.

But his view is not acceptable, because we have not seen a single instance in the Qur'ān where ''writing'' is used for 'permission'.

Qur'ān: *and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct unto you from the black thread* (of night) *at dawn-break.* There are two dawns: the first is called the 'false' dawn because it vanishes in a short time. It is also called the 'tail of the wolf ' because it looks as if a tail is raised. This false dawn is a beam of light like a vertical column; it appears at the end of the night on the eastern horizon when the sun reaches an angle of 18 degrees below the horizon. Then it gives way to a horizontal line of light which looks as if a white thread has been stretched on the horizon. This is the second dawn. It is called 'true' dawn because it truthfully announces the arrival of day-time and is connected with sunrise.

Obviously, the *white thread* in this verse means the ''true dawn''; and ''at'' (*min,* من) in ''at dawn-break'' (*mina 'l-fajri,* من الفجر) is explanatory so as to clarify this phrase. This sentence is metaphorical and it likens the streak of light, stretched across the horizon, to a white thread and the darkness of night adjoining that light to a black thread.

This shows that the limit of the given permission is exactly the beginning of the true dawn; because soon after, when the sun comes nearer to the horizon, both threads disappear. There remains neither the white thread nor the black.

Qur'ān: *Then complete the fast until night* : As the start of the fast was from the dawn-break, there was no need to say, 'keep the fast during day-time'. Instead its other limit is now mentioned in these words.

Complete the fast shows that the fast of one day is one unit, a single act of worship which is not made up of a various parts. There is a difference between completion (*tamām,* التّمام) and perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال). Completion (*tamām,* التّمام)**,** the word used in this verse, means that a. single thing (which is not made of such parts which may have separate functions) finally comes into being. Perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال) means that a single thing (which has various parts and every part has a separate function) finally comes into being. Allāh says: *This day I perfected* (*akmaltu,* اكملت) *for you your religion and completed* (*atmamtu* , اتممت) *My favour on you* (5:4). The religion is a collection of various things like prayer, fast, *ḥajj* etc. and all these have a separate effect; therefore, the religion was ‘‘perfected’’. But the favour of Allāh is one thing without any parts (as I will explain under that verse); therefore, it was *‘‘*completed*’’.*

Qur’ān: *And associate not with them while you are confined in the mosques: ‘ukūf* (العكوف) and *i‘tikāf* (الاعتكاف)both mean ‘‘to keep close to’’. When used with the name of a place, they mean to remain continuously in that place.

I‘tikāf (الاعتكاف) is an act of worship. When in *i‘tikāf* (الاعتكاف), one must remain inside a mosque, not going out without a genuine reason (e.g. to relieve oneself); and fasting is an essential part of this act of worship.

As the Muslims were given permission to have sexual relations with their wives in the night of fast, there was a possibility that they might think that that permission extended to the nights of *i‘tikāf* also, when they were inside a mosque. This sentence removed the chance of any such misunderstanding.

Qur’ān: *These are the limits* (prescribed by) *Allāh; therefore, draw not near them.*

Ḥadd (limit, الحدّ) literally means ‘‘to keep from’’, ‘‘torestrict’’. All its uses carry this meaning; for example, *ḥaddu ’s-sayf* (edge of sword , حدّ السّيف), *ḥaddu ’d-dār* (boundary of the house, حدّ الدار), *ḥaddu ’l fujūr* (punishment of immorality, حدّ الفجور) etc. Therefore the phrase, *ḥudūdu ’llāh* (حدود الله) mentioned in the verse, means, the ‘‘restrictive ordinances of Allāh’’ and the command not to go near them figuratively means not to commit that sin. In short, it says: you should not commit the sins mentioned here, i.e., eating, drinking and copulating during the

prohibited hours; you should not trespass beyond the limits ordained for you; you should not neglect the fast or the guarding of yourselves against evil in the period of that special worship.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘Food and copulation were unlawful in the month of Ramaḍān at night after sleeping.’’ (That is, if one prayed the prayer of *al-‘ishā’* and slept without breaking one’s fast, then, he was not allowed to eat or drink even if he awoke later in the night. And sexual intercourse was unlawful in the month of Ramaḍān both in the day and in the night.) There was a companion of the Messenger of Allāh, Khawwāt ibn Jubayr al-Ansārī. He was brother of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr, who in the battle of Uḥud, was deputed by the Messenger of Allāh at the mouth of the mountain-pass with fifty archers; most of them left him, but he remained at this station with only twelve soldiers and was martyred there. His brother Khawwāt ibn Jubayr, was an aged and weak person, and was fasting with the Messenger of Allāh in the battle of the Khandaq (Trench). In the evening he came to his house and asked: ‘‘Do you have any food?’’ They said: ‘‘Do not go to sleep; we shall prepare some food for you.’’ There was some delay in cooking and he was overcome with sleep before breaking his fast. When he woke up he said to his family: ‘‘Now eating is forbidden to me tonight.’’ Next day, he presented himself at the Khandaq and fainted. The Messenger of Allāh looked at him and felt pity for him. Also, there were some youths who had secretly indulged in sexual relations at night in the month of Ramaḍān. Therefore Allāh sent down (the verse); *It is made lawful to you on the night of fast to go in unto your wives* ... Thus Allāh allowed sexual relations during the nights of the month of Ramaḍān, and eating after going to sleep upto the dawn-break, as He said, *until the white thread becomes distinct from the black thread* (of night) *at dawn-break.* The Imām said: ‘‘It means the whiteness of the day from the darkness of the night.’’ [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

The author says: The sentences (given in bracket), starting with ‘‘That is’’ and ending upto ‘‘both in the day and in the night’’, are explanatory notes of the narrator of this tradition.

This episode is narrated in other traditions also, by al-Kulaynī,al-

'Ayyāshī and others. All these traditions say that the words, *eat and drink ...* were revealed because of the event of Khawwāt ibn Jubayr al-Anṣārī; and the words *It is made lawful to you* …were revealed because of the secret doings of some Muslim youths.

There is another tradition in *ad-Durru'l-manthūr* from various commentators and traditionalists from Barā' ibn 'Āzib who said: ''It was the custom among the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that if someone fasted and the time of *ifṭār* (breaking thefast) came but he went to sleep before breaking his fast, he did not eat that night and fasted the next day without eating anything, till the next evening came. Once Qays ibn Ṣarmah al-Anṣārī fasted, and that day he had been working in the field. The time came for breaking the fast and he came to his wife and asked: 'Do you have any food?' He could not keep awake and went to sleep. When his wife returned and found him sleeping she said: 'Woe unto you! Did you go to sleep?' In the noon of the next day, he fainted. This was reported to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Then this verse was sent down: *It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast ... at dawn-break.* And the Muslims were extremely happy at it.''

The author says: This story is narrated by other chains also. In some of them the name is given as Abū Qubays ibn Ṣarmah; in others, Ṣarmah ibn Mālik al-Anṣārī. There is some variation in the story also.

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās as follows:- ''The Muslims were forbidden (sexual relations with) women and food in the month of Ramaḍān once they had prayed the prayer of *al-'ishā',* till the next evening. But some of them ate food and had sexual intercourse with women after the *al-'ishā'* in one Ramaḍān; one of them was 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Then they complained about it to the Messenger of Allāh. Therefore Allāh sent down the verse, *It is made lawful to you ... be in contact with them.* [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions from Sunnī chains about this matter; most of them mention the name of 'Umar. All say with one voice that the rule about sexual intercourse in the night of Ramaḍān was the same as that about food and drink: All of these were allowed before the sleep, forbidden after it. But the obvious meaning of the first tradition is that the sexual intercourse was completely forbidden in the month of Ramaḍān, during the night as well as in the day-time; and the food and drink were allowed before sleeping, forbidden after that. And

the context of the verse supports this tradition. Had the sexual relation been like food and drink (allowed before sleeping and forbidden after) it would have been necessary to mention here the farthest limit of the permission, as was done about food and drink (*eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct...*) But it only says: *It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast to go in unto your wives,* without putting any limit to it. It shows that previously they were forbidden to indulge in this act the whole ‘‘night of the fast’’.

Some traditions say (and the one quoted last is one of them) that the Muslims were acting unfaithfully not only in the matter of sexual relations, but also in food and drink. But the sequence of the sentences of the verse does not support it. The sentence, *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully ... is* put in the middle of the permission for sexual relations and the words *eat and drink* appear after this topic has ended. Therefore the ‘‘acting unfaithfully’’ cannot be connected with eating and drinking.

Verily, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘‘The dawn is of two kinds. The one which looks like the tail of the wolf does not allow anything, nor prohibits anything. But the long one which covers the horizon allows the prayer (of dawn) and prohibits food.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*]

The author says: The traditions of this meaning are nearly *mutawātir* from Sunnī and Shī‘ah sources; as are the ones about *i‘tikāf* and prohibition of sexual intercourse in that period.

وَلا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقاً مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ١٨٨ .

And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means ; neither seek to gain access thereby to the authorities, so that you may swallow up a portion of the property of men wrongfully while you know (2:188)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means.*

Akl (to eat, to swallow up, الاكل) metaphorically means 'to take hold of, or to make use of '. The reason of this metaphorical use is that eating is the most common and the earliest natural desire; as soon as his life begins, man feels the need of food and then gradually proceeds to other needs like clothing, habitation and marriage, etc. Acquiring food is his first natural action and wilful doing. That is why if one uses or takes a thing it is said one has eaten it, and especially so in the case of wealth and property. And this figure of speech is common to all languages.

Māl (wealth, property, المال) literally means the possession which is desired. It seems that its root is *mayl* (inclination, desire, bent, الميل), because it is one of those things to which the heart is inclined, which it desires. *Baynakum* (among yourselves, بينكم) *bayn* (بين) means the gap between two or more things.

Wrong (*bāṭil,* الباطل) is opposite of truth (*ḥaqq* , الحقّ): *ḥaqq* (الحقّ) means a thing which is confirmed.

The proviso *among yourselves* added after the command *do not swallow up your property* shows that wealth is for all the people; but Allāh has distributed it among them — a just distribution — by promulgating laws based on justice and equity, which cut at the roots of corruption and immorality. If anybody trespasses the limits put by these laws, it will be invalid and wrong. This verse, in a way, explains the verse: *He it is who created for you all that is in the earth* (2:29).

Your property (*amwālakum,* اموالكم): History and ancient tradition show that ever since man put his foot on this globe, society has recognised the right to property and upheld it in one way or other. By using this possessive pronoun, Allāh confirms this right. This principle has been mentioned in the Qur'ān in more than a hundred places, in various words like dominion (*mulk,* الملک), property (*māl,* المال), the preposition for (*l* ... , ل) used for possession, and *istikhlāf* (to make man Allāh's deputy on earth, الاستخلاف); but there is no need to quote the references here. Likewise all the verses which regulate selling, trade and other commercial dealings implicitly recognise this right. For example: *and Allāh has allowed trading* (2:275)*, do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means, except that it be trading by your mutual consent* (4:29), *and the trade dullness of which you fear* (9:25) and other such references. And *mutawātir* traditions support it.

Qur'ān: *neither seek to gain access thereby to the authorities, so that you may swallow up a portion of the property of man wrongfully while you know.*

Idlā' (translated here as ''to gain access'', الادلآء) literally means to send the bucket (*dalū',* الدّلوء) down into the well for drawing water. Its metaphorical use in this verse implies offering money, etc., to the authorities to induce them to give judgement in favour of the bribe-giver. It is a very nice allegory. The desired judgement is the water in the depth of the well; the bribe is the bucket which is sent down to bring the desired result.

A portion (*farīqan,* فريقا): It is a part separated from the whole.

This sentence is in conjunction with the word *swallow up* ; therefore, grammatically it is a prohibitory verb, and hence the sign of quiescence.

Another possibility: The ''and'' (w ..., و) (the conjunction word not appearing in the above translation) may be taken to mean ''with'' (ma', مع), and further it may be presumed that after it, the word that (*inna,* انّ) is implied. In this case the whole verse will be one sentence and will mean: ''…..by wrongful means with seeking to gain access. . .'' Thus, the verse prohibits the mutual understanding between the bribe-giver and bribe-taker so that they wrongfully swallow up the property of the people by sharing it between themselves — the bribe-taker taking the portion which

has been offered to him, and the giver usurping the other portion — while they know that it is wrong and unjust.

TRADITIONS

In a tradition, aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) says about this verse: ‘‘The Arabs used to gamble with their wives and property. So, Allāh prohibited them to do so.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

Abū Basīr says: ‘‘I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) the meaning of the words of Allāh in His book: *and do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means; neither seek to gain access thereby to the authorities.* He (the Imām) said: ‘O Abū Basīr! Verily Allāh knew that there would be in this *ummah* judges who would do injustice. Verily, He did not mean (here) judges of a just authority, but He meant those of an unjust authority. O Abū Muḥammad! (i.e. Abū Baṣīr) If you had a right against someone and you summoned him to the judges of a just authority, but he did not agree to it and compelled you to put your case before the judges of an unjust authority, so that they might decide in his favour, then that man would be among those who had resorted to- the judgement of the *ṭāghūt* (Satan). And it is the word of Allāh: *Have you not observed those who think that they believe in what has been sent down unto you and what was sent down before you? They intend to resort to the judgement of ṭāghūt* (Satan), *though they were commanded to deny* (reject) *him ...* (4:60)*’ ’’* [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.): ‘‘The meaning of ‘wrongful means’ is the false oath with which property is usurped.’’ [*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*]

The author says: All the above traditions give some examples, but the verse is general.

ON SOCIAL SCIENCE

All organic things, vegetable, animal and human beings make use of other things to sustain their lives. They actively take advantage of those surrounding things which may help in their continued existence.

We have never heard of a thing which exists but is not active, or an action which is done without the doer expecting its benefit to return to him. Remark the vegetable kingdom which does whatever it does with the single aim of benefiting from it in its existence, growth, and reproduction. Similarly, all animals and human beings do whatever they do with the aim of getting benefit one way or another, even if that benefit be only in the imagination and thought.

Plants have been taught by the Creator, and animals and men know by their instinct that they cannot use any material for the fulfilment of their natural needs and the protection of their existence unless that material has a very special relation to them; in other words, unless it belongs to them. They know that one deed cannot be done by two doers. Accordingly, man and animal etc. prohibit others from interfering in their affairs and do not allow anything to utilize what they want to utilize for themselves. This is the foundation of this special relation - namely, possession which is recognised by one and all. Hence the words ‘my’, ‘your’, etc. etc.

For a further proof, look at any animal fighting to remove others from its territory, its prey, or its mate. Again, see children quarrelling for, and defending, whatever food, or toy, they have got. Even a suckling infant does not allow another infant to suck at the same breast. This is the lesson taught by nature. When man, being a social animal, established society, that natural instinct was bound to become more pronounced; and eventually became a well-organised and well balanced system that took the shape of social ethics and moral values; gradually the basic concept of that special relation branched off into various kinds with different names: the monetary relation was named ‘property’, the nonmonetary, ‘right’, and so on.

Human beings may have different views on the legality of various means of acquiring property, like inheritance, trade, confiscation by the ruling authority, etc., or on the suitability of the owner, whether he is adult or minor, sane or idiot, a single person or a group, and so on. But there is no escape from recognising the basic principle of ownership. That is why even those who apparently reject the idea of ownership, have only transferred it from the individual to the society or the state.

Even then, they have not been able to abolish private ownership totally; and they will never be able to do so, because it is the verdict of

nature, and if nature is rejected, man will perish.

We shall discuss, God willing, in their proper places the details of this basic principle, according to the means of its acquirement, such as trade, profit, inheritance, war-booty, collection, etc. and according to the status of the owner, i.e. adult or minor, etc.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ
تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ـ ١٨٩ .

They ask you concerning the new moons. Say, they are(indications of) *times fixed for men and* (for) *the pilgrimage. And it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses from their backs; but righteousness is the one who guards himself* (against evil); *and enter the houses by their doors and fear Allāh, so that you may be successful* (2:189).

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *They ask you ... the pilgrimage. Ahillah* (الأهلة) is plural of *hilāl* (crescent, الهلال). The moon is called *hilāl* (الهلال) at the beginning of the lunar month when it comes away from the direct rays of the sun; it is named crescent (*hilāl,* الهلال) on the first and second nights according to one group, while some others say that it is named so for the first three nights; still others say that this name continues until a faint circle of light shows the outline of the moon. A fourth group says that is a ''crescent'' until its light brightens the night; this occurs on the seventh night, after which it is simply called moon (*qamar,* القمر) and on the fourteenth night it becomes full noon (*badr,* البدر).Its general name in Arabic is *zibriqān* (الزّبرقان).

The Arabs say *istahalla 'ṣ-ṣabiyy* (استهل الصّبىّ) when the newly born child cries soon after birth. Also they say *ahalla'l-qawmu bi 'l-ḥajj* (اهل القوم بالحجّ) when the pilgrims call out loudly *labbayk Allāhumma labbayk.* Thus the root *H-L-L* (هلل) gives the idea of raising one's voice, and the new moon is called *hilāl* (الهلال) because people hail it and raise their voice to point it out.

Mawāqit (المواقيت) is plural of *mīqāt* (الميقات) which means the

time appointed for a work. It also means the place appointed for it, as we say: The *mīqāt* of the Syrians or the Yemenes, which means the place where they wear the robes of *iḥrām* for pilgrimage. In this verse it has the first meaning, i.e. the appointed time.

They ask you concerning the new moons. It does not say what the question was. Some say that they wanted to know the reality of the moon and why it appeared in different shapes from night to night. Others think that they wished to know the reason for the reappearance of the new moon after its disappearing at the end of the month.

But the word used is *ahillah* (new moons, الأهلّة) in the plural, and it proves that the question was not about the reality of the moon or its various phases; because in that case it would have been appropriate to say ‘‘they ask you concerning the moon’’ not ‘‘the new moons’’. And if the question was about the reason of the new moon, the proper words would be ‘‘they ask you concerning the new moon’’. In both cases the use of the plural would be inappropriate. This plural ‘‘new moons’’ proves that the question was: What is the reason or benefit of the appearance of the moon as crescent after crescent and of its marking the lunar months? This question was shortened into ‘‘new moons’’ because it is the new moon which starts a new month; and then its benefit was explained.

This question may be inferred from the reply: *say they are* (indications of) *times fixed for men and* (for) *pilgrimage.* The times fixed for various actions and activities are the ‘months’, and not the various shapes of the moon but about the lunar months which are marked by the new moons. And Allāh explained that these months were the times fixed for the benefit of man in affairs of their material and spiritual lives. Man, by his nature, is obliged to measure all his activities by time. It was, therefore, necessary to divide time (which is the yard-stick of his actions) into various short and long portions. The mercy of Allāh which looks after the affairs of His creatures, and guides them towards the betterment of their lives, effected this division by creating night, day, month, season and year etc. The most obvious and the clearest division is the grouping of the days in the lunar months. Everyone may benefit from it, be he a scholar or an ignorant person, a bedouin or a city-dweller; everyone can observe the beginning of the new moon if his eye-sight is correct; and everyone may easily keep its

count. These benefits are conspicuously absent in the solar calendar: mane did not wake to this idea, and could not come to grips with its complicated reckoning, until many centuries after human society came into being. Moreover, not every one can always know the dates of the solar calendar.

Therefore, the lunar months are the times fixed and prescribed for men for their use in their material and spiritual affairs, and especially so for the *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) because it is performed in the known months.

The *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) has espc :daily been mentioned here as an introduction to the topic which is dealt with in the following sentences.

Qur'ān: *And it is not righteousness ... by their doors.*

It is known from the reports that in the days before Islam it was the custom of some Arabs that after wearing the robes of *iḥrām* for pilgrimage, if they had to enter their houses for any reason, they did not use the doors, but cut a hole in the wall for that purpose. Islam disapproved that practice and told them to enter the houses from their doors. The verse has been revealed in a way that the above-mentioned report may be believed to be true.

Had there been no such reliable report, these words could be interpreted metaphorically as a prohibition of performing religious rites in any way other than the prescribed one. For example, pilgrimage should not be done but in its prescribed months, fast should not be kept in any month other than Ramaḍān, and so on. In that case, the sentence would have been complementary to the previous one. The meaning would have been: These months are the times prescribed for the religious deeds fixed for them, and it is not permitted to transfer those dees to other months, like doing *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) outside the prescribed months or .fasting in a month other than Ramaḍān.

But the first interpretation is supported by the traditions. The words, *it is not righteousness* to *enter the houses from their backs,* proves that this practice was never approved of by the religion; otherwise it would not have been said to be against righteousness. It was just a bad custom of the pre-Islamic times; and Allāh said that it was not righteousness. Rather, righteousness was the fear of Allāh and guarding oneself against evil.

but righteousness is the one who guards himself (against evil): Apparently, the sentence should have been ''but righteousness is guarding oneself (against evil)'', but Allāh used the expression *the one who guards*

himself to show that the real virtue is in practicing ‘‘piety’’, and not in its abstract idea. It is like the verse: *It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east and the west but righteousness is the one who believes in Allāh ...* (2:177)

and enter the houses by their doors: It is not a compulsory order; it is a guidance that entering into houses from their doors is the proper method, as it is the usual and recognised way. People build houses and put doors in them for this very purpose, and there is no reason why a hole should be drilled for entering into, or going out of, the house. This sentence admonishes them not to follow a foolish custom which goes against common sense. In short, the sentence does not say that it is obligatory on every one to enter into a house through the door. It just tells them that it is the proper way. Of course, if one enters into a house by a way other than the door, thinking that this custom is a part of religion, then it will be an ‘‘unlawful innovation’’.

Qur’ān: *and fear Allāh, so that you may be successful.* It was mentioned in the beginning of this *sūrah* (chapter) that *taqwā* (piety) is virtue which gathers in its fold all ranks of the faith and all stages of perfection. Obviously, not every stage and rank leads one to spiritual success and happiness, as do the last stages which remove all shades of polytheism and misdirection. It is these last stages which guide one to success and bring the good tidings of happiness. That is why Allāh said, *so that you may be successful,* using the word ‘may’.

Also, it is possible to interpret the words, ‘‘fear Allāh’’, here as following this particular order, and discarding the practice of going into houses from their backs.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The people asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) concerning the new moons. Then this verse was revealed, *They ask you concerning the new moons. Say, ‘they are* (indications of) *times fixed for men’;* they know from them the time their loans are due, the waiting period (number of months a women must wait after divorce or the death of her husband before the next marriage) of their women and the time of their pilgrimage.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*] Some others from different

chains are from Abu '1-'Āliyah, Qatādah and others.

There is another tradition that someone asked the Prophet about the various phases of the moon; so this verse was sent down. But we have already commented on this report that it is against the apparent meaning of the verse, and, therefore, is not worthy of consideration.

There is a tradition reported by Wakī', al-Bukhārī and Ibn Jarīr from al-Barā'. In the days of ''ignorance'', when they wore the *iḥrām,* they used to go into the house from its back. There fore, Allāh sent down the verse *And it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses from their backs; but righteousness is the one who guards himself* (against evil); *and enter the houses by their doors.* [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

There is another tradition reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Ḥākim (and he has said that it is ''correct'') from Jābir. He said: ''The Quraysh were called *ḥums* (enthusiastic, strenuous, الحمس), and they used to enter by the doors in the condition of *iḥrām.* The *anṣār* (helpers) and other Arabs did not enter from the door in *iḥrām.* Once the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was in a garden, and came out from its door, and Quṭbah ibn 'Āmir al-Anṣārī came out with him. The people said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Verily Quṭbah ibn 'Āmir is a sinner, he came out with you from the door.' The Prophet asked him: 'Why did you do so?' He replied: 'I saw you doing it, so I did as you did.' The Prophet said: 'I am an *aḥmas* (i.e. Qurayshite).' He said: 'But my religion is your religion.' Then Allāh sent down: *it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses from their backs.* [*ibid.*]

The author says: Other traditions of nearly the same meaning have been narrated from other chains. *Ḥums* (الحمس) *is* the plural of *aḥmas* (الاحمس) from *ḥimāsah* (الحماسة) which means ''hardiness''. The tribe of Quraysh was called *ḥums* (الحمس) because of their zeal in the matter of their religion, or because of their bravery and strength.

Apparently, this tradition shows that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had allowed the continuation of that custom by non-Qurayshites before this incident; and that is why he admonished him in these words: ''Why did you do so?'' If we accept this view then this verse was revealed to abrogate a rule which was enforced not by a verse but by the order of the Prophet. But you already know that the verse does not support this view. It says, *it is not righteousness*

that you should enter ... It is unimaginable that Allāh or His Apostle on divine command enforced a rule and then Allāh at the time of its abrogation condemned and criticised it as being against righteousness.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about the word of Allāh, *and enter the houses by their doors*: ‘‘Allāh means that every affair, whatever it may be, should be approached in its (proper) way’’. [*al-Maḥāsin*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘The Imāms (*al-awṣiyā’*) are the doors of Allāh, from which Allāh is approached; and had they not been there, Allāh would not have been known; and it is through them that Allāh has established His proof over His creatures.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: This tradition gives an example of the general meaning of this verse, which has been explained in the previous one. There is no doubt that the verse is general in its meaning, even if it was sent down on a particular occasion. The Imām said: ‘‘had they not been there, Allāh would not have been known”. This refers to the true explanation of religion and the complete Call (Mission of the Prophet) which are with them. This sentence has a deeper meaning also; maybe we shall explain it later on. There are numerous traditions of the same meaning as given in these two.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ ـ ١٩٠. وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ
وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ
فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ـ ١٩١ . فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ـ ١٩٢ . وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ
انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ـ ١٩٣ . الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ
وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى
عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ـ ١٩٤. وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ـ ١٩٥ .

And fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you and do not exceed the limits. Verily, Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit. (190) *And kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from whence they drove you out; and mischief* (disbelief) *is more grievous than slaughter; and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you therein*; *but if they do fight you than slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers.* (191) *But if they desist, then verily Allāh is forgiving, Merciful.* (192) *And fight with them until there is no* (more) *mischief* (disbelief), *and religion be only for Allāh*; *but if they desist then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.* (193) *The sacred month for the sacred month and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things; whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you,. and fear Allāh and know that Allāh is with those who guard* (against evil). (194) *And spend in the way of Allāh and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands*;

and do good; *verily Allāh loves those who do good*. (195)

GENERAL COMMENT

The context of the verses shows that they were revealed together. The whole talk has only one aim; permission, for the first time, of fighting with the polytheists of Mecca. These verses refer to driving them out from whence they drove the believers out, to disbelief and to reprisal; they prohibit fighting with them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight the believers in it. All these matters were connected with the polytheists of Mecca. Also, the sentence: *fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you,* deserves more attention. It is not a condition, i.e., it does not mean, ''fight with them if they fight with you''. Nor is it a restrictive clause (as some people think) meaning, ''fight with the men, and not with their women and children who are not in a position to fight with you'', because nobody ''fights'' with those who are unable to fight back. Had it been the aim of the sentence, it would have been proper to say ''do not kill them''. Therefore, the words *those who fight with you* only refer to a fact — fight those who are presently engaged in fighting against you. And it points to the polytheists of Mecca.

The verses have the same significance as the following verses: *Permission* (to fight) *is given to those upon whom war is made, for they have been oppressed, and most surely Allāh is able to help them; those who have been expelled from their homes with-out a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is Allāh* (22:39—40). These verses also contain the initial (but unconditional) permission to fight with the fighting polytheists.

These five verses together promulgate a single law covering all its limits and details. *And fight in the way of Allāh* is the basic law; *and do not exceed the limit* puts disciplinary restriction on it; *And kill them. wherever you find them* defines the limits of pressure; *and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you therein* puts a restriction according to the place; *and fight with them until there is no more mischief* (dis-belief) shows its duration; *The sacred month for the sacred month, and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things* explains that this legislation is based on the principle of retaliation in fighting and

killing, it is paying them in their own coin; *And spend in the way of Allāh* makes the believers responsible for the financial preparations for war: they must spend for their own preparation and for that of others. Therefore, it seems that all the five verses were sent down together about one subject. It is wrong to say (as some have done) that some of these verses abrogate the others; or that they were revealed separately on different occasions. In fact, the aim of all these verses is one: permission to fight against the polytheists of Mecca who were fighting the believers.

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you*: *qitāl* (القتال) means attempting to kill someone who is attempting to kill you. This fight was *in the way of Allāh* because its aim was to establish the religion and to raise the belief of monotheism. It was an act of worship done to gain the favour of Allāh, and not to usurp the property of people or to damage their dignity. War in Islam is basically defensive; it protects the right of humanity sanctioned by nature, as will be explained later. Defence is by nature a limited venture; that is why Allāh said soon after this permission, *and do not exceed the limit.*

Qur'ān: *and do not exceed the limit. Verily, Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit: i'tidā'* (الاعتداء) means going beyond the boundary. The Arabs say *'adā* (عدا) and *i'tadā* (اعتدى) when someone goes beyond the boundary. This prohibitory order is general and covers all the situations where one may be said to exceed the limit, like fighting someone before calling him to follow the path of truth, or starting a war, or killing women and children, or not desisting from war when ordered: Its other examples are explained in the traditions of the Prophet.

Qur'ān: *And kill them wherever ... than slaughter*: *thiqāfah* (ثقافة) means ''to find''. This sentence is similar to the verse: *then slay the polytheists wherever you find them* (9:6).*Fitnah* (الفتنة) is the means of testing a thing. It is also used for the test itself as well as its related things like difficulty and hardship. It is also used for punishment, and the crimes and sins which bring that punishment in their wake, like polytheism, disbelief and going astray. The Qur'ān has used this word in various places in all these meanings.

In this verse the word means ascribing a partner to Allāh and disbelieving in His Messenger and persecuting and oppressing the Messenger of Allāh and the believers as was done by the polytheists of Mecca before and after the Hijrah.

The verse says: Put the utmost pressure on the polytheists by killing them wherever they be found until they are compelled to go out of their town and emigrate from their land, as they did to you. And whatever they did to you was more grievous, because it was simply a mischief and an act of infidelity; and mischief and infidelity are more grievous than killing. Killing only terminates the life of this world while infidelity terminates this life as well as the next one and destroys both worlds.

Qur'ān: *and do not fight with them ... recompense of the disbelievers.* It prohibits fighting with them at the Sacred Mosque (*Masjidu 'l-Ḥarām*), to protect its sanctity, as long as they respect that sanctity. *Therein* refers to the Sacred Mosque.

Qur'ān: *Then if they desist, then verily Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.*

Intihā' (الانتهاء) means to desist from, to abstain from. *If they desist* means ''if they desist from fighting near the Sacred Mosque'', because the sentence is mentioned immediately after that topic. It does not mean desisting from fighting altogether by accepting Islām and obeying its commands. However this topic comes soon after it and then Allāh will refer to it in these words, *but if they desist then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.*

Thus the two sentences refer to two completely different matters, and there is no repetition.

Then verily Allāh is forgiving, Merciful. This sentence puts the cause in the place of the effect. The full meaning is: ''But if they desist from fighting at the Sacred Mosque, then you must desist from it, because Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.''

Qur'ān: *And fight with them until there is no more mischief* (disbelief) *and the religion be only for Allāh.* This defines the time-limit of the fighting. *Fitnah* (الفتنة) (translated here as 'disbelief ' and 'mischief ') means here 'ascribing a partner to Allāh and worshipping idols', as was the custom of the polytheists of Mecca, who compelled others to do likewise. This meaning is inferred from the next sentence,

and religion be only for Allāh.

This verse is similar to the verse: *And fight with them until there is no mischief* (disbelief), *and the religion be only for Allāh; but if they desist, then verily Allāh sees what they do. And if they turn back, then know that Allāh is your Master; The Most Excel-lent Master and the Most Excellent Helper* (8:39-40).

This verse shows that it is obligatory to call them to the right path before the war. If they accept the call, there will be no fighting; but if they reject it then there is no Master except Allāh, and He is the most excellent Master and the most excellent Helper ;He helps his believing servants. It is known that fighting is prescribed so that the religion be only for Allāh. Such a fighting cannot be started until the adversaries are first invited to come onto the right path, i.e. the religion based upon monotheism.

Some people wrote that this verse was abrogated by the verse: *Fight those who do not believe in Allāh, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, from among those who were given the Book, until they pay the jizyah* (tributory tax) *with their hand while they are in a state of subjection* (9:29).

But there is no question of either verse abrogating the other, because they deal with different subjects. The verse under discussion is, as explained earlier, about the Meccan polytheists and does not cover the People of the Book who are referred to inverse 9:29. *And the religion be only for Allāh* means that idol-worship be abolished and the oneness of Allāh be accepted. The people of the Book do believe in One Creator. We know their belief is in reality disbelief as Allāh says that they: *do not believe in Allāh, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth.* But Islam is content with their mere profession of monotheism. Fighting with them was ordained not to make them believe in monotheism, but simply so that they might pay tribute to the Muslims, thus raising the true creed above their creed and making Islam victorious over all religions.

Qur'ān: *but if they desist then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.* If they desist from disbelief in what you believe in, then cease fighting with them, because there is no hostility except

against the oppressors. In this verse also, the cause has been mentioned in place of the effect. Instead of saying ‘‘then cease fighting with them’’ it points out the cause that *there should be no hostility except against the oppressors*. It is like the verse: *But if they repent and establish the prayer and pay the zakāt, then they are your brethren in faith* (9:11).

Qur’ān: *The sacred month for the sacred month and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things. ḥurumāt* (sacred things, الحرمات) refers to the sanctity of the sacred month, the sanctity of the ‘‘boundary’’ (*ḥaram*) of Mecca, and the sanctity of the Sacred Mosque. If the Meccan polytheists disregard the sanctity of the sacred month by fighting in it — and they did violate its sanctity when they prevented the Prophet and his companions from pilgrimage (*‘umrah*) in the years of Ḥudaybiyah (6 A.H.), and attacked them with arrows and stones — then the believers are allowed to fight them in that month and it would not be deemed disrespectful towards it. The believers are fighting in the way of Allāh and are obeying His Command to raise up His word. Likewise, if the infidels violate the sanctity of the boundary of Mecca or the Sacred Mosque by fighting in it or in that area then the believers may hit back at them in that place and that area.

The sacred month for the sacred month describes a particular example, followed by a general observation, *and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things.* This in its turn is followed by even more general principle*, whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you.*

The meaning, thus, will be: Allāh has sanctioned reprisal in the sacred month because He has sanctioned it for all sacred things. And He has sanctioned reprisal for all sacred things because He has made it lawful for His servants to inflict aggression equal to the aggression inflicted upon them.

Then He exhorts them to remain steadfastly cautious when inflicting aggression in reprisal, lest they trespass the limit. After all, punishing an oppressor seems sweet, and all animal instincts are roused when one is engaged in taking revenge. There are more chances of deviation from justice, by the use of excessive force, and by disregard of the limits put by the religion. But the fact has already been mentioned that *Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit.* And the believers are most in need of the

love of Allāh, His patronage and His help. Therefore, they are told to *fear Allāh and know that Allāh is with those who guard* (against evil).

The question arises: Why Allāh sanctioned acting aggressively when He does not love those who act aggressively (or, as translated above, exceed the limit)? Of course, acting aggressively is to be condemned, but only when it is not in response to an aggression. But if it is hi reprisal of an aggression, then it is not ‘‘exceeding the limit’’ or ‘‘acting aggressively’’. It is defending one-self from degradation, and liberating oneself from the fetters of slavery, oppression and injustive. It is like showing pride before a proud man, or the open utterance of evil in speech by the one who has been wronged.

Qur’ān: *And spend in the way of Allāh and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands.* It is the command to spend wealth for waging war in the way of Allāh. The clause, *in the way of Allāh* attached to ‘‘spending’’ has the same significance as when attached to ‘‘fighting’’ in 2:190. ‘‘With your hands’’ (*biaydīkum,* بايديكم); with (*b ...,* ب) here is extra, added for emphasis. The meaning is ‘‘and cast not your hands in perdition’’. The hand is a symbol of power, ability and strength; and the verse says: do not nullify or waste your strength by not spending money in preparation for war. Another interpretation: ‘‘with’’ (*b...* ب) signifies the cause or means; and the object of the verb is yourselves (*anfusakum,* انفسكم) which is deleted but understood. Accordingly, the meaning will be as translated above: *and cast not your selves into perdition with your own hands.*

Tahlukah (التّهلكة) and *hilāk* (الهلاک) are synonymous; both mean to perish, to fall in perdition. When man becomes in such a condition that he does not know where he is, this word is used. *Tahlukah* (التّهلكة) is with the paradigm of *taf‘ulah* (تفعله). There is no other infinitive verb in Arabic with this paradigm.

The order is, anyhow, general; and it prohibits any commission or omission which may cause perdition, whether it is on the side of excess or deficiency. For example, miserliness and avarice when preparing for war would weaken the fighters and make the army of Islām the target of the enemy; and many would be killed. On the other hand, extravagance in expenditure would bring poverty and misery to such a spender, degrade him in society and make life unbearable. Both these actions are prohibited by this verse.

Allāh finished this talk on ‘‘doing good’’, and said: *and do good; verily Allāh loves the doers of good.* Doing good does not mean desisting from fighting, or clemency in killing the enemies of the religion etc. It means doing a wok in its proper way: Fight when fighting is required; restrain yourselves when restraint is preferred; be strict where strictness is demanded by reason, and forgive where forgiveness will not embolden the enemy. In short, repulsing the oppressor by the most reasonable means is to do good for humanity, because this repulsion guarantees humanity its due right, and defends the religion which would improve man’s condition in both worlds.

Further, desisting from exceeding the limits while obtaining the due right is another good action. And love of Allāh is the final good of the religion; and it is essential for every follower of religion to be worthy of the love of Allāh by obeying His command and following His Apostle. Allāh says in the Qur’ān: *Say ‘‘if you love Allāh then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins’’* (3:30).

These five verses — and they are about fighting — began with the prohibition of exceeding the limit and that: *Verily Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit,* and ended with the command to do good and that: *Verily Allāh loves those who do good.* Its delicacy and subtlety need no explanation.

THE WAR, AS ORDAINED BY THE QUR’ĀN

The Qur’ān ordered the Muslims to desist from fighting and patiently bear all persecutions in the way of Allāh. See, for example, the following verses:-

> *Say*: *‘‘O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship, nor do you worship Him whom I worship; nor am I going to worship that which you worship; nor are you going to worship Him whom I worship. Unto you be your religion, and unto me my religion.’’* (Ch. 109)
>
> *And bear patiently what they say.* (73:10)
>
> *Have you not seen those to whom it was said: Withhold your hands and establish prayer and pay the poor-rate* (*zakat*)*, but when fighting was prescribed for them …* (4:77)

This last verse refers to the following:-

Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after you had believed, out of envy on their part, (even) *after the truth has become manifest unto them. But pardon and forgive* (them) so *that Allāh should bring about His command. Verily, Allāh is Powerful over all things. And establish prayer and give the poor-rate ...* (2:109—110)

Then came the verses of fighting. Among them are the verses sanctioning fighting with the polytheists of Mecca and their allies:-

Permission (to fight) *is given to those upon whom war is made, for they have been oppressed, and surely Allāh is able to help them*; *those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say*: *Our Lord is Allāh* (22:39-40). This verse might have been revealed to allow the Muslims to defend themselves at Badr etc.

And fight with them until there is no mischief (disbelief), *and the religion be only for Allāh; but if they desist, then verily Allāh sees what they do. And if they turn back, then know that Allāh is your Master; the Most Excellent Master and the Most Excellent Helper* (8:39—40).

And fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limit. Verily, Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit (2:190).

And among them are the verses permitting fighting with the people of the Book:-

Fight those who do not believe in Allāh, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, from among those who were given the Book, until they pay the jizyah (tributory tax) *with their hand while they are in a state of subjection* (9:29).

Also among them are the verses for fighting against the polytheists in general, and here, this word covers all unbelievers except the people of the Book:-

Then slay the polytheists wherever you find them (9:6).

And fight the polytheists all together as they fight you altogether (9:36).

And finally there are the verses allowing the fight against the unbelievers in general:-

Fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let

them find in you hardiness (9:123).

In short, the Qur'ān says that Islam — the religion of monotheism — is based on the foundation of true nature, and is responsible for the well-being of humanity in this life. Allāh says: *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion — the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men*; *there is no alteration* (by anyone else) *in the creation of Allāh*; *that is the established* (or the custodian) *religion, but most people do not know* (30:30).Therefore, establishing and maintaining this religion is the most important right for humanity which has been laid down. Allāh says: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed unto you and that which we enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, then establish the religion and be not divided therein* (42:13). And to defend this prescribed natural right is another natural right. Allāh says: *And had there not been Allāh's repelling some people by others, certainly would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allāh's name is much remembered. And surely Allāh will help him who helps Him* (i.e. His cause), *most verily Allāh is Strong, Mighty* (22:40). It is, thus, made clear that the religion of monotheism can stand on its feet and remain alive only if there is proper arrangement for its defence against enemies, as Allāh says: *And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth certainly would be in a state of disorder* (2:251). Also, He says in the chapter of al-Anfāl in the middle of the topic of fighting: *That He may establish the truth of what was true and bring to naught what was false, though the guilty ones disliked* (8:8). After some verses, He says: *O you who believe! Answer* (the call of) *Allāh and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life* (8:24). Here the war and fighting, to which the believers are called, has been termed as something giving them life. It means that fighting — whether waged for the defence of the Muslims, or that of the Islamic territory or even that which is initiated — is in reality in defence of the right of humanity in this life. Polytheism is the death of humanity and a corruption of nature, and it is the defence of its right that resurrects it and gives it a new lease of life.

An intelligent observer will realize at this juncture that Islam should have had a parallel defensive system to cleanse the earth from polytheism

of every shade and to purify the faith of all those who believe in one Creator. After all, the fighting mentioned in the above verses has only two aims: Removing noticeable polytheism, that is idol-worship, and raising the word of truth above the creeds of the people of the Book by compelling them to pay *jizyah.* But it does not remove less noticeable polytheism; even the people of the Book are not true believers in One God. The same verse (9:29), which allows them to pay *jizyah,* declares that they do not believe in Allāh or His Apostle and do not follow the religion of truth. Therefore, they are in reality polytheists even though they profess to believe in one God; their polytheism is hidden behind their declared monotheism. And if the Muslims were to defend the natural right of humanity, they should bring them into the fold of Islam — the true religion.

The Qur'ān does not give such an order in clear words, but it promises them the final victory over their enemies; and the promised victory is of such a nature that it cannot be achieved with out waging this kind of war, a war to establish pure monotheistic belief. Allāh says: *He it is Who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth so that He may make it triumph over all the religions, though the polytheists may be averse* (61:9). And clearer than this is the verse, *And certainly, We did write in the Zabūr after the Reminder that the earth, shall inherit it my righteous servants* (21:105). Even far more clear is the verse, *Allāh has promised unto those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly make them Successors in the earth as He made Successors those before them, and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall worship* Me, *not associating aught with Me* (24:55). The words, *they shall worship Me* means sincere worship with the real faith, as may be inferred by the following clause, *not associating aught with Me.* We should remember that, in the eyes of Allāh, even some professed faith is in reality polytheism, as He says, *And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating others* (with Him) (12:106). So, it is the promise of Allāh that He will cleanse the earth from every type of polytheism, and reserve it for the true believers, and then none shall be worshipped but Allāh.

Perhaps someone may say: *That promise is of divine help; Allāh shall fulfil it through a divine reformer without using manifest means like war,*

etc. But this objection cannot be upheld in view of the words, *He will certainly make them Successors.* Successors clearly means that someone is removed from his place and another one is put therein. This implies war.

Also there is the following verse:-

O you who believe! Whoever of you turns away from his religion, then soon Allāh will bring a people that He will love them and they will love Him, humble before the believers and mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard (shall fight) *in the way of Allāh and will not fear censure of any censurer* (5:57). This verse implies a call to the Truth and a religious movement which will happen by divine command; and it supports the view that this promise shall be fulfilled after the call of fighting in the way of Allāh.

From the above, we may know the reply to a very common criticism of Islam. The Christian missionaries call it the religion of the sword and blood; some say that it is the religion of force and compulsion. All this, because Islam has sanctioned *jihād* (war in the way of Allāh). They say that it is totally against the character of the religious movements of the previous prophets. The previous religions relied not on the sword but on persuasion and guidance.

The above is the gist of that criticism. But the Qur'ān has explained that Islam is based on the judgement of true human nature. Humanity can only achieve its perfection if it accepts that judgement. And that nature has decreed that all individual and collective affairs should be governed by the laws which are based on the belief in one Allāh. To defend this basic principle is a prescribed right of humanity. It can only be defended by spreading it among people and protecting it from disorder and destruction. And this right must be safeguarded by all possible means. Even then, moderation is the key-word in all this venture. It begins with the Call and patiently enduring the persecution by enemies. Then comes the defence of the lives of the Muslims and Islamic territory. Lastly comes the war started by order of the divine representative to defend the above mentioned human right and protect the Creed of the Oneness of God. Whatever the type of fighting, it must be preceded by calling them to come to the right path, and that Call should be based on reason and understanding, as the Prophet used to do. Allāh says: *Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation*; *and have disputation*

(discussion) *with them in the manner which is the best* (16:125). This verse is unconditional. Also, Allāh says: *That he who would perish might perish after a clear proof, and he who would live might live after a clear proof* (8:42).

There is no need to feel alarmed if *jihād* has in it an element of compulsion. When explanations, discussions and exhortations fail to bring a group of people onto the right path, and humanity is in disorder and turmoil because of that group's disregard for the basic right mentioned above, then there is no way but to compel them to come onto the right path of truth. This is the strategy adopted by all societies and states throughout the world. The outlaws who flout the laws of the state are first called to accept the authority of the state and obey its laws. Then, if they do not listen, they are compelled by all possible means to do so, even if it leads to killing and fighting.

A point to ponder: The compulsion will remain for one generation only. Coming generations will be so taught and trained that they will gladly accept the Religion of nature and the creed of the Oneness of God. It is not objectionable if one generation is compelled to see reason, if by that action all coming generations will gladly follow the right path till the end of the world.

The claim, that all the previous prophets adopted verbal persuasion as their only instrument of guidance, shows an ignorance of the facts. Most of the prophets had neither the opportunity nor the power to wage war. Read, for example, the lives of Nūḥ, Hūd and Ṣāliḥ (peace be on them all); they were under pressure from their enemies on all sides. The same was the case with ʻĪsā (a.s.) when he was among his people, trying to spread his call. His call did not spread until it was too late; it spread when the period of its validity was coming to its end, near the advent of Islam.

On the other hand, the Old Testament contains the lives of many prophets who waged war in the way of Allāh. The Qur'ān also mentions some of them. Allāh says: *And how many a prophet fought with whom were myriads of Godly men; so they did not lose heart at what befell them in the way of Allāh nor did they weaken nor did they abase themselves. And Allāh loves the steadfast ones. And their saying was nothing but that they prayed, ''Our Lord! forgive us our sins, and our excesses in our affairs and make our feet firm and help us against the unbeliever people* (3:146-147). And He says, *inter alia,* describing what

happened when Mūsā called the Israilites to fight against the Palestinians: *And* (remember) *when Mūsā said unto his people: ... ''O my people! Enter you the holy land which Allāh has assigned for you; and turn not on your backs, for then you will return* (as) *losers'' ... They said, ''O Mūsā! Verily we shall never enter it at all, while they remain therein. Go you and your Lord and fight you two, surely, we shall stay here sitting* (5:22-27). There is another story about the fighting of Saul and Goliath which begins with the words: *Have you not seen the chiefs of the children of Isrā'īl, after Mūsā, when they spoke to a prophet unto them* (saying), *''raise up for us a king, so that we may fight in the way of Allāh ...* (2:246—251).

Then there is the story of the prophet Sulaymān and the queen of Sheba, in which Sulaymān writes to her: *That exalt not yourselves against me and come unto me in submission.* After receiving her ambassador, he threatened him, *return unto them; for we will certainly come to them with hosts which they shall have no power to resist, and we will certainly expell them out therefrom with abasement while they shall be in a state of ignominy* (27:20-44). See how Sulaymān (a.s.) called them unto right path; and when the result was not as he had expected, he threatened them to initiate a war.

FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

There is no doubt that every society — human beings as well as some animals — is based on the natural urge to save itself from extinction. Nature gave each species a right to make use of every thing which may help in keeping it alive. Man takes advantage of inorganic substances, plants, animals and even other human beings in every possible manner, even if it clashes with the rights of those animals or prevents organic and inorganic substances from reaching the point of their perfection. Likewise, animals make use of plants and other animals and their instinct tells them that they have a right to do so.

In the same way, nature gave them a right to defend the above right, because the right of use would not be complete without the right of defence. After all, it is an over-crowded place where every thing is in continuous struggle for its survival. Every species which is endowed with sense and movement feels that it has a natural right to protect its

rights, and is sure this defence is as lawful as the basic right itself. For proof, see how the animals defend themselves, when in conflict with others, with their armaments: horns, teeth, claws, hooves, stings, beaks, etc. Those who are not gifted with such weapons protect themselves by fleeing or hiding or pretending to be dead. Others, like monkeys and foxes save themselves by cunning and deception.

Man has been given the power of thinking, by which he can employ other things for this defence. His nature issues commands and pronounces judgements. And one of those judgements is that man has a basic right of use and also a right to defend that basic right. It is this second right which prompts him to fight and quarrel on all occasions when he feels that his right is in danger.

The basic right of taking advantage of other things is bridled by the realization that it is not only he who wants to make use of others but others also want to exercise the same right over all others. These conflicting demands counterbalance each other and man is forced to come to terms with society and to realize that he also has to serve others as he wants others to serve him. This exchange of services has to be done on the scale fixed by the society.

It is clear from the above that the conflict and struggle to defend his rights is not based on the right to use other things, because this right of use was moderated and balanced by man himself as soon as he entered society; he had to agree that he would take advantage of others only according to the service which he himself was prepared to offer to others. As a result of this mutual understanding there was no place for fighting. Fighting is based on the second right, that is the right to defend his interests. Man believes that he has a right in some thing: when he sees that that presumed right is endangered, he stands up to defend and protect it.

Thus all wars are in reality defensive. Even kings and emperors assume that they have a certain right, let us say the right to rule; they believe that they deserve to reign.

Others feel that the solution to increasing population or the economic difficulties of their country depends on the annexation of additional territories; and they believe that they have a right to do this. However absurd these pretexts may seem to others, the man who advances them really believes in them. Once he, in his mind, gives that right to himself,

he is ready to defend it, even if it means attacking others, shedding blood, creating disorder in the country and destroying land and people.

Thus the defence of the human rights is a right laid down in nature which a man is entitled to exercise. But the preceding paragraphs have made it clear that it is only a secondary right. The primary and basic right is the one of taking advantage of others.

If we have to decide whether a certain defensive action was proper, we should, first of all, see how important or proper the defended right was. We must be satisfied that the damage to society by our defensive action would not cancel or maybe even exceed the benefit of the defended right.

The Qur'ān has established that the most important human right is the belief in the oneness of God and the laws based on the divine revelation. Also, society unanimously believes that the most important was the right to live under such laws which protect the well-being of individuals.

As these two rights are the most important ones, their defence takes precedence over all other considerations.

TRADITIONS

Ibn ʻAbbās said about the verse, *And fight in the way of Allāh ...*: ''This verse was revealed about the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah. And it was like this: The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his companions came out in the year when they wanted to perform *ʻumrah*. They were one thousand and four hundred persons. They proceeded till they reached Ḥudaybiyah. There the polytheists prevented them from reaching the Sacred House. Therefore, they slaughtered their sacrificial animals at Ḥudaybiyah. The poly theists made an agreement with them that they were to go back that year; they would return for *ʻumrah* next year when they would be allowed to enter and remain in Mecca for three days to perform *ṭawāf* and whatever religious rites they wished.

''The (Messenger of Allāh) thereon returned to Medina. Next year the Prophet and his companions made preparations for the *ʻumrah* which had become *qaḍā* the previous year. At the same time, they were afraid that the Qurayshites would not honour the agreement and would again prevent them from reaching the Sacred House and would fight. The Messenger of Allāh did not like the idea of fighting with them in the

Sacred month within the sacred boundary of Mecca. Then Allāh sent down this verse.'' [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: Similar traditions have been written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* with various chains from Ibn 'Abbās and others.

Another tradition from ar-Rabī' ibn Anas and 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam said: This is the first verse revealed about fighting. When it was revealed, the Messenger of Allāh used to fight with those who fought with him and desisted from fighting those who refrained from fighting, until was revealed the verses, *Kill the polytheists wherever you find them.* Thus the above verse was abrogated. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: It is their own opinion. You know that the verse: *Kill the polytheists wherever you find them* does not abrogate the verse *And fight in the way of Allāh ...* Rather it generalizes an order which was specific.

About the verse, *and kill them wherever you find them ...*: This verse was revealed because one of the companions killed an infidel in the sacred month. The believers condemned him for it. Then Allāh made it clear that mischief in religion, i.e. polytheism, is more grievous than killing polytheists in the sacred month, even though it was not allowed. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: You know that the singleness of the context and inter-relationship of all the five verses obviously proves that they were revealed all together, not piecemeal.

There is a tradition from various chains, from Qatādah. He said: *''And fight with them until there is no more mischief,* i.e. polytheism, *and the religion be only for Allāh.''* He said: ''till it is said, 'there is none to be worshipped except Allāh.' It is this cause which the Messenger of Allāh fought for, and called the people to. And we are told that the Prophet used to say, 'Verily Allāh ordered me to fight the people till they say, ''there is none to be worshipped except Allāh'', then, if they desisted (from polytheism), there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.'' He said: ''And verily the oppressor, who refuses to say 'there is none to be worshipped except Allāh' shall be fought with till he says 'there is none to be worshipped except Allāh'.''[*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: The sentence ''And verily the oppressor …'' is the

saying of Qatādah; he has inferred it from the saying of the Prophet and it is a fine inference.

A similar interpretation has been reported from ‘Ikrimah.

al-Bukhārī, Abu sh-Shaykh and Ibn Mardawayh have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that two persons came to him during the *fitnah* (mischief) of Ibn az-Zubayr and told him: ‘‘Verily, people have done (what they have done) and you are the son of ‘Umar and a companion of the Prophet; then why do you not come out?’’ He (Ibn ‘Umar) said: ‘‘It prevents me (from coming out) that Allāh has forbidden (shedding) the blood of my (Muslim) brother.’’ They said: ‘‘Has not Allāh said, *fight with them until there is no* (more) mischief'?’’ He said: ‘‘We fought until there was no more mischief and the religion became only of Allāh; but you want to fight until there he mischief and the religion be for other than Allāh.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l -manthūr*]

The author says: He was mistaken in the meaning of *fitnah* (الفتنة) and also the two questioners were mistaken. The meaning of *fitnah* (الفتنة) has already been explained. Theevent of Ibn az-Zubayr was not ‘‘polytheism or disbelief ’’, it was an example of disorder on earth, or fighting with one another without any just cause; and believers were not allowed to remain silent about it.

There is in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān,* under the verse, *and fight with them until there is no* (more) *mischief*: ‘‘That is polytheism’’, and the author of *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* said: ‘‘And it is narrated from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.).’’

There is a *ḥadīth* in the *Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī about the words of Allāh: *The sacred month for the sacred month;* al-‘Ulā’ ibn al-Fuḍayl said: ‘ ‘I asked him (the Imām) whether it was allowed to the Muslims to start fighting with the polytheists in the sacred month. He said: ‘If the polytheists start the fight with them by (practically) making it lawful (to fight in the month), then the Muslims will see how they can overcome the polytheists (and do it). And it is the word of Allāh, *The sacred month for the sacred month* and reprisal (is lawful) in all sacred things.’ ’’

Aḥmad and Ibn Jarīr, and an-Naḥḥās in his *Nāsikh,* have narrated from Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh did not fight in the sacred month until he was fought with, and if ever he was in a fight and the sacred month began, he would desist (from

fighting) until it came to an end.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

Mu'āwīyah ibn 'Ammār said: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about a man who killed another man, outside the sacred territory and then entered the sacred territory. The Imām (a.s.) said: 'He will not be killed (therein), but he will not be given anything to eat or drink, and will not be sold anything until he comes out of the sacred territory; then he will be given the punishment of his crime'.'' The narrator said that he then asked the Imām (a.s.): ''Then what do you say about a man who killed someone in the sacred territory or stole therein. He (the Imām) said: 'He will be punished inside the sacred territory because he himself did not maintain respect of it. And Allāh has said, *whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him.'* (The Imām said) 'This is the law about the sacred territory; and Allāh said, *there should be no hostility except against the aggressors'.''* [*al-Kāfī*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *and cast not yourselves into perdition*: ''If a man spent in the way of Allāh all that he had, he would not have done good and God would not lead him to success. Does Allāh not say: *and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands; and do good; Verily Allāh loves those who do good,* i.e., who are economical.'' [*ibid.*]

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated from Thābit ibn Anas that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Obedience to the ruler is obligatory; and one who has left the obedience to the ruler has not obeyed Allāh and has entered into His prohibition, as He says: *and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands'.''*

It is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l -manthūr* with numerous chains, from Aslam Abī 'Imrān that he said: ''We were (fighting) at Constantinople; 'Aqbah ibn 'Āmir commanded the Egyptians, and Fuḍālah ibn 'Ubayd led the Syrians. There came out a big row of the Romans, and we stood in row against them. Then a man from our side attacked the Roman row until he entered in its midst. The people (Muslims) cried out, 'Glory be to Allāh! He is casting himself in perdition with his own hands!' Then Abū Ayyūb, the companion of the Messenger of Allāh, stood up and said: 'O people! You are interpreting this verse in this way, while (the fact is that) it was sent down about us, the group of the Helpers. Verily, when Allāh made His religion powerful, and its helpers increased in number, some of

us told others, keeping it secret from the Messenger of Allāh, ‘‘Verily, our properties are ruined, and (now) Allāh had made Islam powerful and its helpers have increased. Therefore, (it would be better) if we stayed in our properties and mended what had been damaged therein.’’ Then Allāh revealed to his prophet, refuting what we had said, *And spend in the way of Allāh and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands.* So, perdition meant our staying in our properties and repairing them by leaving fighting (in the way of Allāh)’.’’

The author says: The difference of the traditions in interpreting the meaning of this verse supports what we have said that this verse is general and covers both extremes (extravagance and miserliness) in spending, and that it is not confined to spending only, but covers other aspects also where ‘‘casting oneself into perdition’’ can be applied.

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا
رُؤُسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحِلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضاً أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ
فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ
فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَٰثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا
رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ـ ١٩٦ . الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ
فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ
خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ـ ١٩٧
لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلاً مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ
فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ـ ١٩٨ . ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا
اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ـ ١٩٩ . فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ
آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْراً فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَمَا لَهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ـ ٢٠٠ . وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي
الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ـ ٢٠١ . أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ
سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ـ ٢٠٢ . وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي
يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ـ ٢٠٣ .

And complete the ḥajj (pilgrimage) *and ʻumrah for Allāh, but if you be prevented, then* (send) *whatever offering* (sacrificial animal) *is easy to obtain, and do not Shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination; but whoever among you is sick or has an affliction in his head,*

then (he should effect) *a redemption by fasting, or alms, or sacrifice. But when you are secure* (from the hindrance) *then whoever enjoys by the 'umrah for the ḥajj,* (he should offer) *whatever offering* (sacrificial animal) *is easy to obtain; but he who cannot find* (any offering) *should fast for three days during the ḥajj* (pilgrimage) *and for seven days when you return; these* (make) *ten* (days) *perfect; this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque; and fear Allāh and know that Allāh is severe in requiting* (evil). (196). *Ḥajj is the months well-known; so whoever determines* (to perform) *the ḥajj therein, then there shall be no sexual intercourse, nor bad language, nor quarrelling during the ḥajj; and whatever good you do, Allāh knows it; and make provision, for surely the best provision is piety* (guarding oneself against evil)*; and fear Me, O people of understanding!* (197) *There is no blame on you if you seek bounty from your Lord; then when you march from 'Arafāt, remember Allāh near the Holy Monument, and remember Him as He has guided you, although before this you were surely of those who had gone astray.* (198) *Then march on from whence the people march on, and ask for the forgiveness of Allāh; verily, Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (199) *So, when you have performed your rites, then remember Allāh as you remember your fathers, rather a more Intense remembrance. For, of men there is he who says, ''Our Lord! give us in this world'', and for him there shall be no portion in the Hereafter.* (200) *And among them there is he who says, ''Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the chastisement of the Fire''* (201) *They shall have* (their) *portion of what they have earned; and Allāh is quick in reckoning.* (202) *And remember Allāh during the counted number of days; then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there) *there is no sin on him;* (this is) *for him who guards* (himself); *and fear Allāh, and know that you* (all) *shall be gathered together unto Him.* (203)

COMMENTARY

These verses were revealed during the last pilgrimage (*ḥajjatu 'l-widā'* حجّة الوداع) performed by the Messenger of Allāh. They promulgated the pilgrimage of enjoyment (*ḥajju 't-tamattu',* حجّ التّمتع)

Qur'ān: *And complete the hall and 'umrah for Allāh:* Completeness (*tamām,* التّمام) of a thing is the final part, when added to the other parts it makes that thing whole, the thing becomes itself; and then the expected effects follow. When a thing is started and some of its parts are assembled and then the final part is added, it is called *itmām* (completion, to complete, الاتمام). Perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال) is a condition, virtue or characteristic which creates such an effect in a complete thing which would not be found in it without that perfection. When a human foetus receives all its limbs and organs, it is its completion. When he is called knowledgeable, courageous or chaste it is his perfection.

Sometimes, completion (*tamām,* التّمام) is used metaphorically in place of perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال) to show the extreme importance of that virtue or characteristic; the speaker implies that that virtue or is not something extra or external, it is an integral part without which the thing would remain incomplete.

In this verse, the completion of *ḥajj* and *'umrah* has been used in the first (literal) sense; and it is proved by the following sentence, *but if you be prevented.* Obviously, this means prevented 'from carrying on the *ḥajj* and *'umrah* to their last rite'; in other words, 'from completing them'. It cannot mean 'prevented from perfecting them'.

Ḥajj is a well-known Islamic act of worship, started by the Prophet Ibrāhīm (a.s.). It continued among the Arabs, and Allāh promulgated it for this *ummah* as a law which would continue upto the Day of Resurrection.

This action begins with *iḥrām* and the stay in 'Arafāt and then in the Sacred Monument. The pilgrims sacrifice an animal each at Mina, throw stones on the three Stone-pillars, circumambulate around the Ka'bah, pray, and march between the Ṣafā and the Marwah. There are some other obligations as well.

Ḥajj is of three kinds: *ḥajju 'l-ifrād, ḥajju 'l-qirān* and *ḥajju 't-tamattu'*. This last one was ordained in the last days of the

Messenger of Allāh.

'Umrah is another act of worship. In *'umrah,* the pilgrims visit the House of Allāh after putting on *iḥrām* from one of the appointed places. Then they go round the Ka'bah, pray, and march between the Safa and the Marwah and finally cut off some nails or hair.

Ḥajj and *'umrah* are acts of worship and cannot be complete except when they are done for the sake of Allāh, as is seen in the sentence: *And complete the ḥajj and 'umrah for Allāh.*

Qur'ān: *but if you be prevented ... offering reaches its destination: iḥṣār* (الأحصار) means to prevent, to obstruct. The verse refers to being prevented from completing the *ḥajj* or *'umrah,* after *iḥrām,* because of an ailment or enemy. *Istīsār* (الأستيسار) of a thing means its becoming easy, not difficult; this paradigm implies that that thing acquires easiness for itself . *Hady* (الهدى) means the animal presented by one man to another or to a place, to seek someone's pleasure with it. It is derived from *hadyah* (gift, present, الهدية); or from *hudā* (to lead to destination,). It is used in both masculine and feminine forms, *hady* (الهدى) and *hadyah* (الهدية) like *tamr* (التمر) and *tamrah* (date, التمرة). Here it means the animals brought or led by the pilgrims for sacrifice during the *ḥajj.*

Qur'ān: *but whoever among you be sick ... or sacrifices:* This sentence is an offshoot of the preceding one, *do not shave your heads* ... It implies that the sickness refers to only that one in which the man would suffer if his head were not shaved.

or has an affliction in his head: The conjunctive ''or'' shows that the affliction here means a suffering other than sickness, like vermin. It figuratively means to be afflicted with vermin, e.g., lice. These two things (sickness and lice) make it lawful to shave the head; but a redemption should be effected by any of the three ways: fast, alms or sacrifice.

It is narrated in a tradition that the fast is for three days; the alms are to feed six poor persons, and the sacrifice is one goat.

Qur'ān: *But when you are secure* (from the hindrance), *then whoever enjoys by the 'umrah for the ḥajj*: It is an offshoot of the sentence: *if you be prevented.* The meaning is: When you are safe from all hindrances like sickness, an enemy or other such things, *then whoever enjoys by 'umrah for the ḥajj* — i.e. enjoys because of *'umrah.*

How does one enjoy because of ‘umrah? It is because *‘umrah* is completed and the restrictions of *iḥrām* are lifted until the time comes to wear *iḥrām* again for *ḥajj*. Therefore, by (*bi,* ب) in by *‘umrah* (*bi ’l-‘umrah,* بالعمرة) is causative. How does *‘umrah* cause enjoyment? It is because when *‘umrah* is completed, the restrictions of *iḥrām* like women, perfume, etc. are lifted, and one may enjoy them till the time comes for the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj*.

Qur’ān: (he should offer) *whatever offering is easy to obtain*: Obviously, the sacrifice of the animal is an independent rite. It is not a substitute to make up for not wearing *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* from an appointed place; as it puts un-called for strain on the mind to infer such a meaning from this verse.

Someone might say: (he should offer) *whatever offering is easy to obtain is* based on: *then whoever enjoys by the ‘umrah,* just as an effect is based on. its condition. In other words, the offering of the sacrifice is prescribed because of the enjoyment. Moreoever, the word *enjoyment* mentioned in the conditional clause hints that the sacrifice is a recompense of that enjoyment which was allowed to lighten the burden and hardship of pilgrims, and the sacrifice compensates for it.

The author says: The above argument is refuted by the phrase, *by the ‘umrah,* i.e. because the enjoyment is allowed after the *‘umrah* comes to its end. The argument of lightening the burden could be advanced only if the enjoyments were allowed during the *‘umrah*. But how can the words *lightening the burden* be used in this case when the *‘umrah* is already completed and the restrictions of *iḥrām* terminated; and when the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* is yet to start?

And if there is any hint, it is only that the sacrificing of the animal has been prescribed because of the ordination of enjoyment by the *‘umrah for the ḥajj*. There is no hint whatsoever in it that the sacrifice is to compensate for not doing *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* from the appointed place (*mīqāt,* الميقات) outside Mecca.

Apparently the verse, *then whoever enjoys by the ‘umrah for the ḥajj,* (he should offer) *whatever offering is easy to obtain,* mentions *ḥajju ’t-tamattu‘* (حجّ التّمتّع) as an already prescribed act of worship. It is not the original and initial ordination. It mentions enjoyment (*tamattu‘,* التّمتّع) as an established fact and then, on the basis of it, prescribes the sacrifice of the animal. It says, *whosoever performs ḥajju’t-tamattu‘, shall offer a sacrifice.* It does not say, ‘‘performs *ḥajju’t-tamattu‘* and offer a sacrifice’’.

The original and initial prescription of *tamattu'* comes in the verse which comes later, *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.*

Qur'ān: *but he who cannot find* (any offering) *should fast for three days during the ḥajj and for seven days when you return.*

Ḥajj is mentioned as the time of the fast because the time and place of both are the same. The time of *ḥajj* — from the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj to* the returning from it — is the very time of the three days' fast. There are traditions from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that the time of this fast is before the Day of Sacrifice (10th *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah*) or, if one could not fast at that time then, after the 13th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah,* or, as a last alternative, at the time of returning to one's home.

The time of the seven-day fast is after returning to one's home, as is clear from the words, *when you return.* It should be noted that Allāh did not say, ''at the time of returning''. Moreover, the change of pronoun from the (previously used) third person to the second person in *when you return* is a hint that the hearer is now present - at home.

Qur'ān: *these* (make) *ten* (days) *perfect*: Three and seven together make ten perfect days. The seven days make perfect the previous three days; they do not complete it. The difference between perfection and completion has been explained in the beginning of the verse; and it means that both groups of three and seven days have separate identities with separate rules. The fast of three days is a complete act in itself; it depends on the fast of seven days for its perfection, not completion.

Qur'ān: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque:* This order of *enjoying by the 'umrah for the ḥajj* is for the non-resident, i.e. the person who dwells not less than twelve miles away from the Sacred Mosque. His family (*ahluh,* اهله) here means his dependents, like his wife and children. The non-resident has been described as he *whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* It is a very fine way of expression as it not only promulgates the law but explains its reason also; and that reason is to lighten the burden. The pilgrims who come from far off places for the *ḥajj* have to undergo all kinds of troubles, hardships and difficulties during the journey; and when they reach Mecca, they are tired and worn out. They naturally need a place to rest and recuperate. Usually, one gets this rest with his family, but here is a pilgrim *whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* Therefore, Allāh ordained for him enjoyment (*tamattu',* التّمتّع); he

may enjoy himself after completing the *'umrah* upto the time of *ḥajj* and then may raise his voice in *talbiyah* (التّلبيه), i.e. he may wear the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* from the Sacred Mosque without going back to an appointed place for that purpose.

It has been explained earlier that it is this sentence that promulgates *ḥajju 't-tamattu';* it is a general ordinance, and is not limited to a particular time, or to a particular person, or to a particular situation. It is for all the non-resident pilgrims, for all times, and for all situations.

Qur'ān: *and fear Allāh and know that Allāh is severe in requiting*: This extreme severity in this humiliating way shows that there was a likelihood of the audience rejecting this order or hesitating to follow it. And this is what actually happened. Of all the laws of Islam, *ḥajj* had already been practised by the Arabs since the days of Ibrāhīm and all its rites were well-known to, and performed by, them. They were used to those rites, and when Islam came, it let it be, as it was, until the last days of the Prophet's life. Therefore, it was not an easy thing to make any change in its method; they were not expected to accept any change in it willingly. That is why they protested against the law of *enjoyment by 'umrah* and, as the traditions show, many of them did not welcome that order. So much so that the Prophet felt a pressing need to deliver a lecture telling them that the authority was from Allāh only, He ordains as He wishes, and that it was a general order, nobody was exempted from it - neither the Prophet nor the *ummah.* This explains why the verse ended on such a harsh note, ordering them to fear Allāh and threatening them with the chastisement of Allāh.

Qur'ān: *ḥajj is the months well-known; ... nor quarrelling during the ḥajj: ḥajj* at the beginning of the verse means ''the time of *ḥajj*''. ''Well-known'', i.e., to the Muslims; and the *sunnah* has explained it as *Shawwāl, Dhu 'l-qa'dah* and *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah.* So far as *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah* is concerned, it is only about a half of the month which is the time of *ḥajj;* but there is no objection to counting it as one of the ''months'' of *ḥajj.*

We say: ''The time of our reaching Mecca is Friday''. But we reach there at a certain hour and minute, not during the whole day.

The noun *ḥajj* has been repeated three times in this verse. Why was the pronoun not used, which could have shortened the sentence? The fact is that the sentence has been shortened by using the noun instead of the pronouns: *ḥajj is the months* ... means ''the time of *ḥajj''; whoever*

determines the ḥajj means the action itself ; *nor quarrelling during the hajj* refers to ‘‘the duration and place of *ḥajj*. If the noun had not been repeated, it would have been necessary to lengthen the sentence to make the meaning clear.

so whoever determines the ḥajj therein: *faraḍa fi hinna ’l-ḥajj* (فرض فيهنّ الحجّ) literally means ‘makes *ḥajj* obligatory therein’; and it implies, ‘‘makes *ḥajj* obligatory for himself by beginning its rites’’, because Allāh says, *And complete the ḥajj and ‘umrah for Allāh.* Therefore, once one starts the *ḥajj,* it is obligatory on one to complete it.

Rafath (الرّفث) as mentioned in an earlier verse, literally means to say clearly such words which are generally unmentionable: *fusūq* (الفسوق) means ‘‘disobedience’’ and *jidāl* (الجدال) is ‘‘disputation in the talk’’. But *sunnah* has explained that in this verse *rafath* (الرّفث) means sexual inter course; *fusūq* (الفسوق) is lie; and *jidāl* (الجدال) is swearing by the name of Allāh — ‘No, by God’,‘Yes, by God’.

Qur’ān: *and whatever you do, Allāh knows it*: It is a reminder that one’s actions are not hidden from Allāh; it calls one to piety and fear of Allāh, so that one’s acts of worship might not be devoid of the spirit of devotion; so that one might not go through the external rites of worship with one’s mind absent and one’s heart forgetful. This is, generally, the style of the Qur’ān in all subjects. You will find it explaining the fundamentals of the faith, narrating the stories of previous peoples, or promulgating laws; but whatever the subject, it is invariably followed by a lesson and an admonition so that knowledge is not without practice. Knowledge without practice has no value in Islam. That is why this exhortation to piety and fear of God was immediately followed by the words, *and fear Me, O people of understanding.* In the preceding sentence the name of Allāh was mentioned in the third person (*Allāh knows it*) but immediately it is changed to the first person (*fear* Me) — it is to show the utmost importance of piety, and to imply that the pious person has not reached nearer to Allāh and is now directly addressed by Him.

Qur’ān: *There is no blame on you if you seek bounty from your Lord:* It is like the words of Allāh: *O you who believe! when the call is made for prayer on Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allāh and leave off trading ... And when the prayer is ended then disperse in the land and seek of the grace of Allāh...* (62:9—10). The *trading* of the

first verse was changed to the *seeking of bounty of Allāh* in the next one, showing that both are the same. That is why the sunnah has interpreted the words, *seek the bounty of Allāh* in the verse under discussion as ''the trading''. This verse proves that trading during the pilgrimage is lawful.

Qur'ān: *then when you march from 'Arafāt, remember Allāh near to the Holy Monumen t: ifāḍah* (الافاضة) means going out from a place in a group. This verse, therefore, describes the stay at 'Arafāt as well as the stay at the Sacred Monument, i.e. *al-muzdalafah* (المزدلفة).

Qur'ān: *and remember Him as He has guided you ...* Remember Him intensely enough to be like His guidance to you, although before His guidance you were surely of those who had gone astray.

Qur'ān: *Then march on from whence the people march on:* The verse makes it compulsory to march on as ''the people'' were doing, and obliges the immediate audience to follow ''the people''. This supports the reports that the Qurayshites and their allies (together known as *ḥums,* الحمس) did not stay at 'Arafāt; instead they went direct to *al-muzdalafah* and stayed therein, claiming that they were the people of the sacred territory of Allāh and, therefore, they would not leave that boundary. Allāh, therefore, ordered them to march on (to *al-muzdalafah*) from whence the other people march on, i.e. from 'Arafāt. In other words, the Qurayshites also must stay at 'Arafāt and then march on from there with others.

That being the case, why did Allāh mention this order after the order to march from 'Arafāt, and begin it with then (*thumma,* ثمّ)? This sentence has been figuratively written as a sort of *istidrāk* (to catch up what had escaped, استدراک). The meaning thus, will be: ''The rules of *ḥajj* are as mentioned above, except that you are obliged to stay at, and march on from, 'Arafāt, not *al-muzdalafah.''*

Qur'ān: *So, when you have performed ... intense remembrance:* It is a call to remember Allāh with utmost intensity. The pilgrim should remember Him as he remembers his forefathers, or even more intensely. The grace of Allāh on him (i.e. the grace of guidance, as He mentioned it just above, *remember Him as He has guided you) is* far greater than the right of his forefathers upon him.

It has been said that the Arabs, in the days of ignorance, used to stay at Mina after the rites of *ḥajj* to boast vainly about their forefathers, in lectures and poetry. Allāh by this verse changed it to His own remembrance.

Aw (or, أو) in *aw ashadda dhikran* (or a more intense remembrance, أو اشدّ ذكرا) is used in the meaning of ‘‘rather’’. The *remembrance* should be ‘‘tense’’. Remembrance may be intense (in quality) or frequent (in quantity). See, for example, the following verses where the adjective of quantity *kathīran* (much, frequently, كثيرا) has been used: *remember Allāh, remembering frequently,* (33:35); *and the men who remember Allāh much* (33:35). Remembrance of Allāh, in reality, is not by words alone. It is a thing concerned with the heart and mind; words are merely a demonstration of that feeling. Therefore, it may be described as frequent (in quantity), if one remembers Allāh most of the time, as the Qur’ān says: *Those who remember Allāh standing and sitting and reclining on their sides ...* (3:191). And it may be described as intense (in quality) at some other times. As remembrance was ordered for a time (*when you have finished your rites*) when one is liable to divert one’s attention from Allāh and forget Him, it was appropriate to use the adjective ‘‘more intense’’ rather than ‘‘more frequent’’.

Qur’ān: *For, of men there is he who says ... what they have earned.* It is based on the sentence: *then remember Allāh as you remember your fathers, rather a more intense remembrance. Nās* (men, people, النّاس) is general; it describes all human beings, the unbelievers as well as the believer — the unbelievers who only remembers his forefathers. In other words, he only wants the vainglories of this world, only seeks material greatness, and has no concern with the Hereafter. And there is the believer who only seeks the pleasure of Allāh, and even when he wants something from this world, he wants only that which his Lord is pleased to bestow upon him.

In view of above explanations, it is clear that the word *says* in both places does not mean asking or saying in so many Words. It means ‘wanting’ by one’s state and inner feeling. Thus, the verses mean that some people do not ‘‘want’’ anything except this world, and they shall have no portion in the Here after; and there are others who do not seek anything except what Allāh is pleased to give them whether it be in this world or in the Hereafter; and they shall have their portion in the Hereafter.

Good (*ḥasanah,* الحسنة) *is* mentioned in the saying of the believers but not in that of the unbelievers. It is no secret that the one who wants this world, does not care whether it is good in the eyes of Allāh or not.

The whole world is sweet and good, in his thinking, if it satisfies his desire and if he can enjoy it. It is diametrically opposed to the thinking of the believer who wants the Hereafter. As the Hereafter will be either good or bad, he only wants and only asks for, the good, and not the bad.

The contrast between the sentences, *and for him there shall be no portion in the Hereafter* and *they shall have* (their) *portion of what they have earned,* shows that the deeds of the first groups (but not of the second) shall be void and forfeited. Allāh has said; *And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them like dust scattered in air,* (25:23); *And on the day when those who disbelieve shall be brought before the fire*: *You did away with your good things in your life of the world and you took your fill of pleasure in them ...* (46:20); *so their deeds become void and We will not assign to them any weight on the Day of Resurrection* (18:105).

Qur'ān: *and Allāh is quick in reckoning: sari'u 'l-ḥisāb* (quick of reckoning, سريع الحساب) is one of the names of Allāh. Its generality suggests that it covers this world as well as the Hereafter. Even now the reckoning is in progress; whenever a man does any good or bad deed, Allāh gives him its full recompense.

In short, the purpose of these two verses is to exhort people to remember Allāh. Men are of two types: Some want this world, and do not know or remember anything else; such persons have no portion in the Hereafter. And there are others who want what God is pleased to give them; they shall have their share in the Hereafter; and Allāh is quick in reckoning - He quickly reckons what His servant wants, and recompenses him according to his wish. Therefore, you should remember Allāh so that you may be among those who will get their portion in the Hereafter; do not join that group which does not remember Allāh and, therefore, will have no portion. Otherwise, you will be disappointed on that day.

Qur'ān: *And remember Allāh during the counted number of days:* The counted days are the days of brightness, i.e., the 11th, 12th and 13th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah.* The proof that these counted days are after the 10th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah is* that this order has been given when all the rites of *ḥajj* have already been mentioned. The proof that they are three days may be found in the next sentence, *then whoever hastens off in two days.* One may ''hasten off'' in two days only when the original number of days is three.

And the traditions also have interpreted it in the same way.

Qur'ān: *then whoever hastens ... him who guards* (himself): No (*lā,* لا) here is for negation of a genus. There is no sin on him (*lā ithma 'alayh* لا اثم عليه) mentioned in the two sentences means that the pilgrim is free from the genus of sin, i.e. from all sin. Had Allāh meant to say that there would be no sin on the pilgrim in hastening off or in tarrying therein, the sentences would have contained some words to show it; but they are unconditional. Therefore, the verse means that the pilgrim who performs the rites of *ḥajj* is forgiven all his sins, there remains no sin on him whether he hastens off in two days or tarries therein.

It appears from the above that the aim of this verse is not to show that the pilgrim has an option between hastening off and tarrying; its purpose is to declare that all the sins of the pilgrim are forgiven in either case.

The words: (this is) *for him who guards* (himself), are not related to the forgiveness of .sins; otherwise it would have been ''on him who guards (himself)'', not ''for him''. Apparently it is like a previous sentence, *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* As that sentence pointed to the group which shall be governed by the law of *enjoying by 'umrah,* likewise, the words, *for him who guards,* specify those who have the option of hastening off or tarrying therein. This option is for him who guards himself; if someone did not guard himself, then it is not for him. It follows that the guarding here is confined to guarding against those things which Allāh has forbidden during *ḥajj.* In other words, the meaning is this: This choice is given to him who guards himself from the things forbidden during the *iḥrām.* If he was not careful then he must stay a full three days at Mina and remember Allāh in those counted days. This meaning has been given in some of the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt.*

Qur'ān: *and fear Allāh ... gathered together unto Him:* The topic ends on the order to fear Allāh and on the reminder that all shall be resurrected and gathered unto Him. Piety and fear of Allāh cannot be complete, and sins not avoided, unless one remembers the Day of Recompense. Allāh says: *Those who go astray from the path of Allāh, for them shall surely be a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning* (38:26).

The choice *of* the word *tuḥsharūn* (you shall be gathered to gether, تحشرون) at the end of the topic of *ḥajj* (where people assemble and

gather together from all parts of the world) is highly suitable. Also, it gives a hint that when the pilgrim, at the time of his *ḥajj,* sees the gathering and marching together, he should remember the Day when Allāh will gather them together and will not leave any one of them behind.

TRADITIONS

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and ‘umrah for Allāh.* He said: ‘‘They are obligatory.’’ [*at-Tahdhīb* and al-‘Ayyāshī]

There is a tradition narrated by Zurārah, Ḥimrān and Muḥammad ibn Muslim from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillāh (peace be on them). They said: ‘‘We asked both Imāms about the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and ‘umrah for Allāh.* Both replied: ‘Verily, it is the completion of *ḥajj* that one should not indulge in sexual intercourse, nor in bad language nor in quarrelling’.’’ [al-‘Ayyāshī]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said in a tradition, *inter alia:* ‘‘(Allāh) means by their (*ḥajj’s* and *‘umrah’s*) completion, performing them and guarding oneself from the things which a pilgrim in condition of *iḥrām* should guard against.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: There is no conflict in these traditions and the meaning *of* completion (*itmām,* الاتمام) explained by us in the beginning, because their being obligatory and their performance is the same as completing them.

al-Ḥalabī narrates from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘Verily, when the Messenger of Allāh performed the last pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), he proceeded (from Medina) on the 26th of *Dhu ’l-qa‘dah,* until he reached (the Mosque of) Shajarah (which is the *mīqāt* (الميقات) i.e. appointed place of *iḥrām* for pilgrims from Medina) and prayed there. Then he led his camel till he reached the desert (i.e. open space) and he re-affirmed the intention (*niyyah,* النية) of the *iḥrām* there and said *labbayk Allāhumma labbayk* ...(*talbiyah,* التلبية) of *ḥajj,* and drove a hundred camels (*of* sacrifice); and (likewise) all the people put on the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj;* they did not have the intention of *‘umrah,* and knew nothing about *mut‘ah* (enjoyment of *‘umrah,* المتعة). When the Messenger of Allāh reached Mecca, he circumambulated the House and the people circumambulated

with him; then he prayed two *rak'ah* near the Stand of Ibrāhīm and kissed the (Black) Stone. Then he said : 'I begin with what Allāh has begun with'. So, he came to (the hill of) Ṣafā and began from there and went between Ṣafā and Marwah seven times. When he finished his perambulation at Marwah, he stood up before them to give a lecture. (In that lecture he ordered them to end their *iḥrām,* and treat it (the rites performed so far) as *'umrah ;* and that it was a system ordained by Allāh. So the people ended their *iḥrām.* The Messenger of Allāh told them that had he advanced from his affairs what he had delayed (i.e. had he known this system before) he also would have done as they were doing but he could not do so because he had led his sacrificial animals with him and Allāh had said: *and do not shave your heads till the offering reaches its destination.* Surāqah ibn Ja'tham al-Kinānī said: 'We have learned our religion as though we were born today. Do you think that this system which you have taught us is only for this year? Or for every year?' The Messenger of Allāh said: 'No. It is for eternity.' And another man stood up and said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! Shall we go out for *ḥajj* (on 8th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah*) and our heads shall be wet (by obligatory bath) because of going unto our women?' The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Verily, you shall never believe in it'.''

The Imām said: ''Then 'Alī (a.s.) proceeded from Yemen till he reached (Mecca near the time of) *ḥajj;* and found that Fāṭimah had ended her *iḥrām,* and felt the smell of perfume. So, he went to the Messenger of Allāh, to enquire about it. The Messenger of Allāh asked him: 'O 'Alī! On what did you raise your voice in *talbiyah* (التلبية) (i.e. what was the intention of your *ḥajj*)?' He said: '(My intention was) according to the intention of the Prophet.' So, the Messenger of Allāh told him: 'Then you do not end your *iḥrām'.* Then the Prophet gave him a share in his sacrificial animals, he gave him thirty seven and sacrificed himself sixty-three, slaughtering them by his own hand. He took a portion from each sacrifice, put all portions in one pot, and ordered it to be cooked. He ate from it and sipped a little of its soup and said: 'Now we have eaten from all of them. And *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* (*mut'ah,* المتعة) is better than *ḥajju 'l-qirān* in which the pilgrim leads his sacrificial animal, and better than *ḥajju 'l-ifrād.' ''* The narrator says: ''I asked the Imām whether the Messenger of Allāh began his *iḥrām* at night in the day-time.The Imām said: 'At day-time'. Then I

asked, at what time.The Imām said ‘At the prayer of noon (*ẓuhr*,الظهر)!’ [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: This matter has been reported in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* and other books also.

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘The *‘umrah* has entered into *ḥajj* upto the Day of Resurrection. Then whoever enjoys by *‘umrah* for the *ḥajj* (he should offer) whatever offering (sacrificial animal) is easy to obtain. Now, no one has any option but to perform *ḥajju ’t-tamattu ‘,* because Allāh sent it down in his book and it was started by the traditions of the Messenger of Allāh.’’[*at-Tahdhīb*]

There is from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *whatever offering is easy to obtain,* that it is ‘‘a goat’’. [*al-Kāfī*]

There is from the same Imām that he was asked what was the one doing *ḥajj al-tamattu‘* to do if he did not get a goat. He said: ‘‘He will fast before the day of *tarwiyah* (8th of *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah,* التّروية) and on the day of the *tarwiyah* and the day of *‘arafah* (9th of *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah,* العرفة)’’He was told: ‘‘(Suppose) he reached there on the very day of *tarwiyah.’’* He replied: ‘‘He shall fast three days after *tashrīq* (i.e. after 13th, التشريق).’’ He was asked: ‘‘What if his camel-driver did not stay there?’’The Imām said: ‘‘He shall fast on the day of *ḥaṣabah* (الحصبة) and the following two days’’. It was asked: ‘‘And what is *ḥaṣabah*?’’ He said: ‘‘The day of his (return) journey.’’ It was said: ‘‘Will he fast when he is on a journey?’’ He said: ‘‘Yes. Is he not on journey on the day of *‘arafah* (العرفة)? Verily, we the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* say so. Allāh says, *should fast for three days during the ḥajj.* Allāh means in *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah.’’* [*ibid.*]

ash-Shaykh has narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘Whatever is after the *mīqāt* upto Mecca, (its inhabitants) is the dweller of the Sacred Mosque and for him there is no *ḥajju ’t-tamattu* ‘ (*mut‘ah,* المتعة).’’

The author says: It means that the residence of the area from the appointed place of *iḥrām* up to Mecca come under the term ‘‘dwellers of the Sacred Mosque’’ and they cannot do *ḥajju ’t-tamattu‘*. And there are numerous traditions of the same meaning from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt.*

There is a tradition from al-Bāqir (a.s.) about the word of Allāh: *ḥajj is the months well-known,* that he said: *‘‘Ḥajj* is in the months well-known, *Shawwāl* and *Dhu ’l-qad‘dah* and *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah.* Nobody can perform *ḥajj* in other months.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

And there is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh:

so *whoever determines* (to perform) *ḥajj therein,* that *farḍ* (obligation, determination, الفرض) is (by) *talbiyah* (labbayk Allāhumma labbayk, التّلبية) and *ish'ār* (putting some recognised signs on the sacrificial animals,الاشعار) and *taqlid* (putting a string on its neck, التّقليد). Whichever of these the pilgrim does, he determines to perform the *ḥajj.''* [*ibid.*]

And ther eis in the same book from the same Imām under the word of Allāh, *There shall be no uttering unmentionable words...* that *rafath* (الرّفث) means sexual intercourse, *fusūq* (الفسوق) means a lie or abuse and *jidāl* (الجدال) is saying, 'No, by God'; 'Yes, by God'.

It is narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *There is no blame on you if you seek bounty from your Lord,* that the bounty (*faḍl,* الفضل) here means sustenance. When the pilgrim has ended his *iḥrām* and performed his rites then he may purchase and sell in that season. [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: It is said that according to their belief, trading during the season of *ḥajj* was a sin; so Allāh removed this misunderstanding with this verse.

''And it is said that it means that there is no blame on you if you seek forgiveness from your Lord. This meaning has been narrated by Jābir from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).'' [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: This tradition looks at ''bounty'' in its generality and interprets it with its best example.

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *Then march on from whence the people march on.* He said: ''Verily, the people of the *ḥaram* (the Quraysh) used to stay at the Sacred Mosque and other people used to stay at 'Arafāt, and (the Quraysh) did not march on from there until the people of 'Arafāt came in sight (coming from 'Arafāt). There was a man, with the patronymic, Abū Sayyār; he had a fast donkey and always went ahead of the people of 'Arafāt. When he came into sight they said, 'Here is Abū Sayyār' and then started marching on. So, Allāh ordered them (i.e. the people of *ḥaram*) that they must stay at 'Arafāt and march on from there.'' [al-'Āyyāshī]

The author says: There are other traditions with this meaning.

There is a tradition from the same Imām about the words of Allāh: *Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter.* He said: ''The pleasure of Allāh and the Garden in the Hereafter, and increase in sustenance and good disposition in this world.''

And also he said: ''The pleasure of Allāh, and increase in sustenance and good company; and in the Hereafter, the Garden.''

And ‘Alī (a.s.) said: ‘‘Good in this world is a virtuous wife and good in the Hereafter is the hour; and the chastisement of the Fire is a bad (ill-tempered) wife.’’ [*ibid.*]

The author says: These traditions give some examples; otherwise the verse is general. The pleasure of Allāh can be got even in this world, although its complete manifestation will be in the Hereafter. That is why it may be counted as a good in this world (1st tradition) as well as in the Hereafter (2nd tradition).

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *and remember Allāh during the counted number of days.* He said: ‘‘and they are the days of brightness (*tashrīq,* التشريق) (the. 11th, 12th and 13th of Lunar month). When the Arabs stayed at Mina after sacrificing the animals, they used to boast against one another. One would say: ‘My father used to do this and that.’ So Allāh said: *when you have performed your rites, then remember Allāh as you remember your fathers, rather a more intense remembrance.’’* He further said: ‘‘And the *takbīr is Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar, la ilāha illallāhu wa’llāhu akbar, wa lillahi ’l-ḥamd, Allāhu akbar ‘alā mā hadānā, Allāhu akbar ‘alā mā razaqanā min bahīmati ’l-an‘ām.’’* [*al-Kāfī*]

The same Imām said: ‘‘And the *takbīr* is in the days of brightness from the prayer of noon on the day of sacrifice till the prayer of dawn on the third day. And in (other) towns *takbīr* would be (recited) after ten prayers.’’ [*ibid.*]

About the word of Allāh, *then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there) *there is no sin on him,* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about it, and he said: ‘‘It does not mean that he has the option to do like this if he wishes. But it means that he returns (from *ḥajj*) and his sins are forgiven, there is no sin on him. ’’ [*Man lā yahḍuruhu ’l faqīh*]

And there is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘He returns and his sins are forgiven, there is no sin on him, (this is) for him who guards (himself).’’ [al-‘Ayyāshī]

And there is in *al-Faqīh* from the same Imām about the word of Allāh, (this is) *for him who guards* (Himself). He said: *‘*‘He shall guard himself against hunting till the people of Mina return (from it).’’

And al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘(This is) for him who guards himself against sexual intercourse and bad language and quarrelling and those

things which Allāh has forbidden in *iḥrām.*''

Also he said: ''for him who fears Allāh.''

And aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''for him who guards himself against big sins.''

The author says: The meaning of the sentence has already been explained. But it is possible to interpret *taqwā* (piety, fear of Allāh, التّقوى) in its general meaning, as has been done in the last two traditions.

TRADITIONS ON MUT'ATU 'L-ḤAJJ

al-Bukhārī and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he was asked about *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* (*mut'atu 'l-ḥ ajj,* متعة الحجّ). He said: ''The Emigrants (*muḥājirīn*) and the Helpers (*anṣār*) and the wives of the Prophet raised their voices in *talbiyah* (i.e. put on *iḥrām*) in the last pilgrimage, and we did likewise. When we reached Mecca, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Make (i.e. change) your intention of *ḥajj* into that of *'umrah,* except the one who has put string on his sacrificial animal.' So we circumambulated the House and (arched) between Ṣafā and Marwah; (then we ended our *iḥrām*) and went to the women and put on (sewn) clothes. And the prophet said: 'He who put string on the sacrificial animal shall not end his *iḥrām* until the sacrifice reaches (its destination).' Then he ordered us on the eve of *tarwiyah* (8th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah*) to raise our voice in *talbiyah* to wear the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj*. When we finished the rites (upto Mina), we came and circumambulated the House and (marched) between Ṣafā. and Marwah and our *ḥajj* was completed. And on us was a sacrifice, as Allāh said: *Whatever offering is easy to obtain, but he who cannot find should fast for three days during the ḥajj and for seven days when you return* to your towns; and a goat is enough. Thus the pilgrims combined the two rites, *ḥajj* and *'umrah,* in one year. For, verily Allāh sent it down in His Book, and His prophet promulgated it and made it lawful for all people except the people of Mecca. Allāh has said: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* And the months of *ḥajj,* which Allāh has mentioned, are *Shawwāl, Dhu 'l-qa'dah* and *Dhu 'l -ḥijjah.* Therefore, he who performs *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj* in these months, on him is a sacrifice or the (10 days') fast. And *rafath* (الرّفث) is sexual intercourse, and

fusūq (الفسوق) is sins and *jidāl* (الجدال) is quarrelling.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

al-Bukhārī and Muslim have narrated from Ibn 'Umar tha he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh, in the last pilgrimage, enjoye (by the *'umrah* for the *ḥajj,* and offered the sacrifice. He led the sacrificial animals with him from *Dhu 'l-ḥalīfah.* And the Messenger of Allāh began and raised his voice in *talbiyah* (i.e. put on *iḥrām*) of *'umrah.* Later on, he raised his voice in *talbiyah* (i.e. put on *iḥrām*) of *ḥajj.* And the people enjoyed with the Prophet by the *'umrah* for the *ḥajj*. Some people had taken their sacrificial animals with them, others had not done so. When the Prophet reached Mecca he told the people: 'Anyone of you who has led his sacrificial animal with him, (shall not end his *iḥrām* and) no such thing, which was forbidden for him, shall be allowed to him until he performs his *ḥajj*. And he who has not taken his sacrifice with him, he will go around the House, and (march) between Ṣafā and Marwah, and cut some hair or nails, and his *iḥrām* will come to end; then later he will raise his voice in *talbiyah* (i.e. will put on *iḥrām*) *of ḥajj;* and if he cannot find an offering, he will fast for three days during the *ḥajj* and for seven (days) when he returns to his family.' '' [*ibid.*]

al-Hākim has narrated (and said that it is ''correct'') through Mujāhid and 'Aṭā', from Jābir that he said: ''There are many people talking (without knowing the facts). We came out (from Medina) for *ḥajj.* When only a few days remained for our *iḥrām* to come to an end, we were ordered to (then and there) finish our *iḥrām.* We said, 'Well, shall one go to 'Arafāt (at the beginning of *ḥajj*) with one's penis dripping semen?' This talk reached the Messenger of Allāh, so he stood up to deliver a lecture, and said: 'O people! Do you (want to) teach me about Allāh? For, by Allāh, I am the most knowledgeable of you about Allāh, and the most God-fearing of you. And had I advanced my affair which I kept behind, I would not have taken any sacrifice with me and would have ended my *ihrām* as they had done. Then (at the time of *ḥajj*) he who did not have any sacrificial animal would fast for three days in the *ḥajj* and for seven (days) when he returns to his family; and he who had found animal would slaughter it. Thus, we slaughtered animals for seven days.''' Aṭā' said that Ibn 'Abbās said: ''Surely, the Messenger of Allāh distributed sheep and goats among his companions that day; and Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ received a he-goat and slaughtered it on his own behalf.''[*ibid.*]

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Bukhārī and Muslim have narrated from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn that he said: ‘‘The verse of *mut‘ah* came down in the Book of Allāh and we did it in the company of the Messenger of Allāh, then there did not come down any verse to abrogate the verse of the *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj,* nor did (the Messenger of Allāh) forbid it till he died. (And then) one man said by his own opinion what he wished.’’ [*ibid.*]

The author says: This tradition has been narrated (in another place) with different words but the same meaning.

There is a tradition from Muṭrif that he said: ‘‘ ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn sent for me in his illness in which he died, and said: ‘I was narrating to you some traditions so that Allāh may benefit you by them. Now, if I remain alive, keep them as my secret, and if I die, then narrate them on my authority, because then I will be safe. And know that the Prophet of Allāh combined the *ḥajj* and the *‘umrah ;* then nothing was sent down on this subject in the Book of Allāh, nor was it forbidden by the Prophet of Allāh. (But) one man said about it by his own opinion what he wished.’ ’’ [Muslim; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *as-Sunan,* an-Nasā’ī]

It is reported that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar was asked about *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj.* He said: ‘‘It is *ḥalāl* (lawful).’’ The questioner told him: ‘‘Surely, your father forbade it!’’ He said: ‘‘If my father forbade it and the Messenger of Allāh performed it then what do you think I should do? Should I follow the order of my father or the order of the Messenger of Allāh?’’ The man said: ‘‘Rather, the order of the Messenger of Allāh.’’ He said: ‘‘Surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.’’ [at-Tirmidhī, *Zādu ’l-ma‘ād*]

And there is from Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh that he heard Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays, (in the year when Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān performed his *ḥajj*) talking about enjoyment by *‘umrah* for *ḥajj.* Ḍaḥḥāk said: ‘‘Nobody shall do it except he who is ignorant of the command of Allāh.’’ Sa‘d replied: ‘‘What evil did you utter, O my nephew!’’ Ḍaḥḥāk said: ‘‘But surely ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb forbade it.’’ Sa‘d said: ‘‘Surely, the Messenger of Allāh did it and we did it in his company.’’ [at-Tirmidhī, *as-Sunan,* an-Nasā’ī; *as-Sunan al-kubrā*; *al-Muwaṭṭa’* and *al-Umm*]

al-Bukhārī, Muslim and al-Nasā’ī have narrated from Abū Mūsā that

he said: ‘ ‘I came to the Messenger of Allāh while he was in al-Baṭḥā’. He said: ‘Did you raise your voice in *talbiyah* (Did you put on *iḥrām*)?*’* I said: ‘I raised my voice as the Prophet did.’ He asked me: ‘Have you brought any sacrificial animal?’ I said: ‘No,’ The Prophet said: ‘Go around the House and (march) between Ṣafā and Marwah, then end your *iḥrām.’* So I went around the House and (marched) between Ṣafā and Marwah. Then (after ending the *iḥrām*) I went to a woman from my people, she combed my head and I washed my head. Thereafter, I used to give religious decisions during the rule of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Once I was standing in the season (of *ḥajj*) when a man came to me and said: ‘You do not know what the leader of the faithful (‘Umar) has invented concerning the rites (of *ḥajj*).’ So I said: ‘O people! Whoever we might have given him our decision, let him wait, because this leader of the faithful is coming to you concerning it.’ When he (‘Umar) arrived, I asked him: ‘What have you invented concerning the rites?’ He said: ‘If we take the Book of Allāh, then Allāh says: *And complet the ḥajj and ‘umrah for Allāh,* and if we take the tradition of our Prophet, then he did not end his *iḥrām* until he slaughtered the offering.’ ’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*]

Muslim has narrated from Abū Naḍrah that he said: ‘‘Ibn ‘Abbās used to order *mut‘ah* and Ibn az-Zubayr used to forbid it. This was reported to Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh; so he said: ‘On my hand the talk progressed. We did *mut‘ah* in the company of the Messenger of Allāh; then when ‘Umar stood up (became caliph) he said: ‘‘Surely, Allāh used to make lawful for the Messenger of Allāh whatever He wished from whatever He wished. And surely the Qur’ān came down gradually. Therefore, complete the *ḥajj* and *‘umrah* as Allāh has ordered you, and separate your *ḥajj* from your *‘umrah,* as it is more completing for your *ḥajj* and more completing for your *‘umrah’’.’ ’’* [*ibid.*]

And there is from Abū Mūsā that ‘Umar said: ‘‘It (i.e. *mut‘ah*) is the *sunnah* (custom) of the Messenger of Allāh. But I am afraid that they will sleep with them (i.e. the women) under the trees and then proceed with them as pilgrims.’’ [Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal]

There is a tradition from Sa‘īd ibn Musayyab (that he said)that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb forbade Mut‘ah in the months of *ḥajj* and said: ‘ ‘I performed it in the company of the Messenger of Allāh and I forbid it. And it is because one of you comes from a far away place

dishevelled, worn out, having the intention of *'umrah* in the months of *ḥajj*. And his dishevelment, and tiredness and *talbiyah* are only for his *'umrah*. Then he arrives and goes around the House, and ends his *iḥrām* and wears (sewn clothes) and uses perfume and sleeps with his wife if she is with him. Thereafter, when the day of *tarwiyah* comes he raises his voice in *talbiyah* of *ḥajj* and proceeds to Minā, saying *talbiyah* of *ḥajj* in which there is neither dishevelment, nor tiredness nor *talbiyah* except for one day only. And the *ḥajj* is better than *'umrah*. If we leave them on this system, they shall embrace them (i.e. the women) under the trees. Moreover, the people of the House (i.e. Meccans) have neither any cattle nor any crop, and their spring is only those who stay with them.'' [*Jam'u 'l jawāmi'*]

There is from Muslim from Abū Naḍrah from Jābir. (Abū Naḍrah) said: ''I said: 'Verily, Ibn az-Zubayr forbids *mut'ah* and Ibn 'Abbās orders it.' He (Jābir) said: 'On my hand the talk progressed. We did *mut'ah* in the company of the Messenger of Allāh and in the company of Abū Bakr. When 'Umar became ruler, he delivered a lecture before the people and said: ''Verily, the Messenger of Allāh is this Messenger, and the Qur'ān is this Qur'ān. And, surely, there were two *mut'ah's* in the days of the Messenger of Allāh, and I forbid them and shall inflict punishment for them; one of them is the *mut'ah* of women; and I will not get hold of a man who marries a woman for a period, but that I shall eliminate him with stones; and the second is the *mut'ah* of *ḥajj*.'' '' '' [*as-Sunan al-kubrā*]

There is a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās that he said that he heard 'Umar saying: ''By Allāh, verily I forbid you the *mut'ah,* and surely it is in the Book of Allāh and surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.'' He meant *'umrah* in the *ḥajj*. [*as-Sunan,* an-Nasā'ī]

Muslim has narrated from 'Abdullāh ibn Shaqīq that he said: '' 'Uthmān used to forbid the *mut'ah* and 'Alī used to order it. So, 'Uthmān said something to 'Alī and 'Alī said: 'Surely, you know that we performed *mut'ah* in the company of the Messenger of Allāh.' 'Uthmān said: 'But we were afraid'.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

Ibn Abī Shaybah and Muslim have narrated from Abū Dharr: *''Mut'ah* in the *ḥajj* was (prescribed) especially for the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).'' [*ibid*]

Muslim has narrated from Abū Dharr that: ''The two *mut'ah's* are

not suitable but for us especially.'' He meant the *mut'ah* of women and *mut'ah* of *ḥajj*. [*ibid.*]

The author says: The traditions of this meaning are very numerous, but we have quoted only what was relevant to the scope of our discussion, and that is to discuss the prohibition of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj* from the point of view of the *Tafsīr*. Sometimes, the argument about it is to see whether the man who prohibited it was right or not, or whether had any excuse for it or not. But such a discussion comes under *'ilmu 'l-kalām* (Theology); it is outside the limits of our book. And sometimes, the arguments are to see what reasoning has been advanced in the traditions concerning this subject, with special reference to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. Such a discussion is based on the meaning of the Qur'ān and the traditions. And it is relevant to the subject of this book of ours.

Therefore, we shall look, one by one, into the arguments put in these traditions:-

First Argument: It is claimed that the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and 'umrah for Allāh* show that *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* is not lawful, and that *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* was especially allowed for the Messenger of Allāh. This argument has been put in the tradition of Abū Naḍrah from Jābir that 'Umar said: ''Surely, Allāh used to make lawful for the Messenger of Allāh whatever He wished from wahtever He wished. And surely the Qur'ān came down gradually. Therefore, complete the *ḥajj* and *'umrah* as Allāh has ordered you.''

Reply: You very well know that the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and 'umrah for Allāh* ... do not say anything except that it is obligatory to complete the *ḥajj* and *'umrah* after one determines to perform them. For a further proof, see the next sentence, *but if you are prevented,* i.e. from completing them.

Complete the ḥajj and 'umrah cannot, by any stretch of imagination, mean that *'umrah* and *ḥajj* should not be combined. Likewise, there is not even an iota of proof that combining the *'umrah* and the *ḥajj* was an order given specially to the Prophet only, or to him and his companions on the last pilgrimage only.

By saying that it was an order especially for the Prophet and/ or his companions, one has to accept that it was a system/established by the Messenger of Allāh. See the tradition of an-Nasā'ī from Ibn 'Abbās that

he heard ‘Umar saying: ‘‘By Allāh, verily I forbid you the *mut‘ah,* and surely it is in the Book of Allāh and surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.’’

Second Argument: *Mut‘ātu ’l-ḥajj* was forbidden on the basis of the Book of Allāh and the tradition of the Prophet.

This argument is seen in the tradition of Abū Mūsā, where ‘Umar told him : ‘‘If we take the Book of Allāh, then Allāh says, *And complete the ḥajj* and *‘umrah for Allāh,* and if we take the tradition of our Prophet then (we find that) he did not end the *ihrām* until he slaughtered the offering.’’

Replies: So far as the Book of Allāh is concerned, it has just been shown that it goes against his claim.

His reference to the tradition of the Prophet is equally weak:

First, he contradicts himself in this claim. He has already said in other traditions (some of which have been quoted earlier) that ‘‘surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.’’

Second: The traditions loudly say that the Messenger of Allāh performed it; and that once he raised his voice in *talbiyah* of *‘umrah* and later on raised his voice in *talbiyah* of *ḥajj;* and that he admonished the people, saying, ‘‘Do you (want to) teach me about Allāh?’’

The claim of Ibn Taymiyyah at this juncture that the Messenger of Allāh had performed *ḥajju ’l-qirān* that year is a very astonishing thing. Even more amusing is his claim that *ḥajju ’l-qirān* was called *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj*!!

Third: What the traditions say is that the Prophet did not shave his head after performing the *‘umrah,* because his sacrificial animals had not yet reached their destination. But it does not mean that he had not ended his *iḥrām* of *‘umrah* or that he went to *ḥajj* with the same *iḥrām.* The verse clearly says that the pilgrim who leads his offerings with him, is not to shave his head until the offering reaches its destination. Also, it clearly says that the one whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque shall do *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj.* If a non-resident pilgrim brings his offering with him, he is obliged to perform *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* (because he is non-resident) and at the same time, not to shave his head (because the offering is yet to reach its destination.) Merely not shaving the head does not mean that one has not ended one’s *iḥrām* of *‘umrah.*

Fourth: Let us accept, for the sake of argument, that the Messenger

of Allāh himself did not perform *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj*. But it is universally accepted that he ordered all his companions and family members to perform their *ḥajj* according to the newly established system of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj*. Now which of the two could be called the system promulgated by the Prophet for his *ummah*? The one which was especially meant for his own self? Or the other which he ordered his *ummah* to follow and which was also supported by the Qur'ān?

Third Argument: It was claimed, that *mutatu'l '-ḥajj* creates a situation which is not suitable for the pilgrims. After *'umrah* and before *ḥajj,* he is allowed to wear beautiful clothes, use perfume and sleep with the women. And it is against the dignity of *ḥajj*. This claim is found in the traditions of Abū Mūsā in which 'Umar is reported as saying: ''But I am afraid that they will sleep with them (women) under the trees and then proceed with them as pilgrims.'' And as he said, according to another tradition: ''Surely I know that the Prophet and his companions did it. But I did not like them sleeping with them (i.e. with their women) under the trees and then proceeding to *ḥajj* with the water dropping from their heads'' (because of the obligatory bath).

Replies: It is preferring one's own opinion against a clear order of Allāh. Allāh and His Messenger had clearly promulgated the system of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj;* and Allāh and His Messenger knew very well that this system would lead to this supposedly undesireable effect. Still they thought it good for the Muslims. Then why should 'Umar be afraid of this effect?

It is interesting to note that the relevant verse of the Qur'ān gives the same reason for the promulgation of this system which he is using to show his displeasure and dislike. Allāh says: *then whoever enjoys by the 'umrah for ḥajj*. What is the meaning of enjoyment if not 'taking one's fill of the pleasure', 'sleeping one self with sexual activities, fine clothes, etc.' So, Allāh mentions it approvingly and 'Umar disliked it and was displeased with it!!

We are even more astonished when we see that the companions had offered the same criticism against Allāh and His Prophet (when the verse was revealed and the Prophet ordered them to adopt the system of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj*) which 'Umar used as the basis of his prohibition. See the tradition reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* through al-Hākim from Jābir in which he

says: ‘‘We said: ‘Well, shall one go to ‘Arafāt with one’s penis dripping semen?’ This talk reached the Messenger of Allāh, so he stood up to deliver a lecture’’ and replied to their objection and again ordered to perform *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* as he had ordered them the first time. Was that reply not enough to bury such displeasure for ever?

Fourth Argument: It is said that this system badly affects the market of Mecca. We see this argument in the tradition of al-Suyūtī from Sa‘īd ibn Musayyab, in which ‘Umar says: ‘‘The people of the House have neither any cattle nor any crop, and their spring is only those who stay with them.’’

Replies: This also is preferring one’s own opinion against a clear order of Allāh.

Moreover, Allāh has refuted such claims in a similar situation where He says: *O you who believe! Verily, the idolators are unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this very year; and if you fear poverty, then soon Allāh will enrich you through His grace, if He please; Surely Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise*. (9:28)

Fifth Argument: It is claimed that *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* is allowed when one is afraid, and when there is no fear there should be no *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj*. It is seen in the tradition of Muslim from ‘Abdullāh ibn Shaqīq that ‘Uthmān said to ‘Alī: ‘‘But we were afraid.’’ Also it is written in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* that Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have reported from Ibn az-Zubayr that he said in a lecture: ‘ ‘ O people! By Allāh, enjoying by *‘umrah* for *ḥajj* is not as you do. It is for the men who raises his voice in *talbiyah* of *ḥajj,* then he is prevented by an enemy or illness or fracture or any other reasons till the days of *ḥajj* are gone, then he reaches (Mecca); so he shall change it to *‘umrah,* and go on enjoying until the next year; then he shall perform *ḥajj* and offer sacrifice. This is the meaning of enjoyment by *‘umrah* to *ḥajj.’’*

Replies: The verse is general and unconditional; it covers those who are afraid as well as those who are not afraid. It has been explained earlier that the sentence which promulgates *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* is the verse: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* And it is

without any condition.

Moreover, the traditions clearly. say that the Prophet performed his last pilgrimage as *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* and he did the intention (*niyyah ,*النّيّة) of *iḥrām* twice — first for *'umrah* and later for *ḥajj*. And nobody can say that at that time there was any risk or danger for the Muslims.

Sixth Argument: It is claimed in the two traditions of Abū Dharr, reported in *ad Durru 'l-manthūr,* that *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj* was a system meant especially for the companions of the Prophet.

Replies: If it means what 'Uthmān and Ibn az-Zubayr claimed that they were at that time in danger and, therefore, it was allowed to them, then the reply given to the fifth argument applies here also.

But if it means that it was a special rule made for them only, then it is refuted by the words of Allāh: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* It does not say, ''this is for the companions of Muḥammad only''.

Moreover, if it was meant especially for the companions of the Prophet, then why did some of the companions, like 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Ibn az-Zubayr, Abū Mūsā, Mu'āwiyah, and, according to a report, Abū Bakr reject it?

Seventh Argument: Some people say that 'Umar prohibited it by his own authority as he was Master of the Affairs (*khalīfah*) (*waliyu 'l-amr,* ولىّ الامر) and Allāh has made it obligatory on the Muslims to obey the Masters of the Affairs, as He says: *Obey Allāh, and obey the Apostle and the Masters of the affair from among you*. (4:59)

Replies: The authority vested in the Masters of the Affairs does not cover this case. There are very many verses in the Qur'ān which show that.

It is compulsory to obey and follow what Allāh has revealed to His Prophet: *Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord ...* (7:3)

Whatever was ordained and promulgated by the Prophet was according to the command of Allāh, as may be understood from the verses: *....nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have*

prohibited ...(9:29), *... and whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you keep back ...* (59:7). The meaning of *gives you* is 'orders you', because it is used here as the opposite of ''forbids you''. It is obligatory to obey Allāh and His Apostle by doing what he orders and keeping back from what he forbids.

Likewise, the judgement and decision must be according to the revelation sent down by Allāh: *and whoso judges not by what Allāh has sent down, these then are the unjust*. (5:45) *and whoso judges not by what Allāh has sent down, these then are the transgressors*. (5:47); *and whoso judges not by what Allāh has sent down these then are infidels.* (5:44). *Again Allāh says: And it is not for a believer man or woman to have any choice in their affair when Allāh and His Apostle have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allāh and His Apostle, indeed he has strayed off a manifest straying* (33:36*); And thy Lord creates whatever He pleases, and chooses too; it is not theirs to choose ...* (28:68). Choosing means judging and legislating, or else it is general in meaning which includes judging and legislating too.

The Qur'ān has openly declared that it is a Book not to be abrogated and that its laws will remain as they are upto the Day of Resurrection. *And surely it is Mighty Book. Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the All-wise, the Most Praised One*. (41:41-42). The verse is general and the ''falsehood'' includes abrogation also, which is rejected by this verse.

In short, whatever has been ordained by Allāh and His Prophet, or whatever has been decided by Allāh and His Prophet must be obeyed and followed by the whole *ummah,* the rulers as well as the ruled.

It is obvious from above that the word of Allāh, *Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and the Masters of the Affair from among you,* gives ''the Master of Affairs'' authority in other than the *sharī'ah.* Because protecting and following the *sharī'ah* is obligatory on the rulers as well as the others; nay! it is more binding on the rulers. The authority of the Masters of Affair (*ulu 'l-amr,* اولو الامر) is confined to giving orders which they think to be in the interest of the *ummah* provided that the command of Allāh concerning that matter is protected and followed. It is only then that the *ummah is* expected to obey them.

A man has an option to eat on a certain day and abstain from food

next day, while he accepts that it is lawful to him to eat from his own money. He is free to sell or buy at any time, or not to do so, if he so wishes, while the basic matter — trade — is lawful. If someone quarrels with him about his property, he may appeal to the judge to protect his right; on the other hand, he may refrain from doing so; but the basic *sharī'ah* will remain in force that it is his right to bring the matter before the judge. It all depends on his own choice on what he thinks to be in his best interest. But the basic rules remain intact, that it is lawful for him to eat, sell and buy, or to put his case before the judge.

But he has no right to drink liquor, or take interest or usurp other's property, even if he thought that it was in his best interest. Why? Because it directly conflicts with the laws ordained by Allāh.

The above were the examples of personal affairs. In the same way the ruler has the authority to manage the affairs of the state according to the best interest of the *ummah,* but always protecting and preserving the laws of Allāh as He has ordained. For example, he may decide to defend a frontier of the Islamic state at a certain time, or to retreat from it if it is more advantageous. He may announce a public holiday on a certain day and things like that, as he, in his best judgement, thinks beneficial for the *ummah.* But he cannot change the *sharī'ah.*

In short, as an individual has a right to take a decision in his personal or family affairs, keeping within the limits imposed by the relevant laws, so also, a ruler appointed by the authority of the Messenger of Allāh has the authority to take a decision in the affairs of the state and the *ummah,* keeping within the relevant laws ordained by Allāh.

Had a ruler been given authority to manipulate the laws of the divine *sharī'ah,* if he thought that the manipulation was in the interest of *ummah,* no rule and no law could remain intact; the talk that the *sharī'ah* of Islam was to continue upto the Day of Resurrection would become meaningless.

What is the difference between the three statements appended below?

''The law of enjoying the good things of life is not suitable for the pilgrim who was expected to spend his time in devotion and worship. Therefore, this law must be abolished.''

''The laws legalizing slavery are not suitable for the modern world

which stands for general freedom. Therefore, these laws must be abolished.''

''The penal code of Islam cannot be tolerated by the advanced human society of modern times, nor is that code in conformity with current codes. Therefore, this code must be abolished.''

Why should the first statement be accepted and the others rejected?

Some traditions on this subject show that this basic principle was raised during that controversy. Isḥāq ibn Rā'wiyah (in his *al-Musnad*) and Aḥmad have narrated from Hasan: ''Verily, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb wanted to prohibit *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj*. Ubay ibn Ka'b stood up and said: 'You have no right to do so. Surely, the Book of Allāh came with it (i.e., it was promulgated by the Qur'ān) and we did *'umrah* (of *tamattu'*) with the Messenger of Allāh.' There upon, 'Umar came down.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهِدُ اللهَ عَلَى مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ
وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ـ ٢٠٤. وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ
وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَسَادَ ـ ٢٠٥ . وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ
فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ـ ٢٠٦ . وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللهِ وَاللهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ـ ٢٠٧ .

And among men is he whose talk in the life of this world pleases you, and takes Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries (204). *And when he becomes ruler, he strives on earth that he may cause mischief therein and destroy the crop and the progeny; and Allāh does not love mischief* (205). *And when it is said to him, fear Allāh, he is overcome by honour* (pride) *by sin; so enough for him is Hell*; *and certainly it is an evil abode* (206). *and Among men is he who sells his self* (soul) *to seek the pleasure of Allāh*; *and Allāh is Affectionate to the servants* (207).

COMMENTARY

This is another classification of men according to their character. As the preceding verses (200—202) classified them according to their want of this world or the Hereafter, these verses do so from the point of view of their hypocrisy or the sincerity of their faith. And this is the link between these and the preceding verses.

Qur'ān: *And among men ... most violent of adversaries*: *a'jabahu* (اعجبه) means gave him pleasure, delighted him. The words, *in the life of this world* are connected with *pleases you.* The meaning is: his talk pleases you in this life, because in this life one has to rely on appearances. The deeper traits and inner feelings are hidden behind a curtain which cannot be lifted at all, although sometimes some clues are found which help one to surmise what lies behind the curtain.

Then come the word: *and takes Allāh to witness as to what is in his*

heart. He talks in a way that pleases you: he seems eager to protect the way of the truth, appears keen to do good for the people, looks enthusiastic for the advancement of the cause of the religion and the *ummah.* And to show that his voice comes from the depth of his heart, he calls on Allāh to be his witness. But, in reality he is the most virulent enemy of the truth.

Aladd (الدّ) is the adjective in superlative degree, derived from *ladda ludūdan* (he became a very violent adversary, لدّ لدودا .) *khiṣām* (.الخصام) is plural of *khaṣm* (الخصم) by the paradigm of *ṣa'b:ṣi'āb* (صعب : صعاب) and *ka'b:ki'āb* (كعب : كعاب). Also it is said that it is an infinitive verb, and that *aladdu 'l-khiṣām* (الدّ الخصام) means ''most violent in enmity''.

Qur'ān: *And when he become ruler he strives on earth that he may cause mischief therein : tawallī* (التولىّ) means to get authority and power. Further support of this meaning comes from the next verse: *he is overcome by honour* (pride) *by sin.* It shows that he has got an honour (i.e., a cause of pride) earned with sin. (The sin is committed by his heart that does not conform with his tongue.)

Sa'y (السّعى) means to strive, to walk hurriedly. Thus the verse means: When this hypocrite, this most violent of adversaries, gets a chance to do something, and is given authority and rules over the people, he hastens hither and thither and strives to create mischief in the land.

Tawallī (التّولى) may also mean to turn back, to be out of sight. In that case the verse would mean: ''And when he turns back (from you), his actions in your absence belie his talk in your presence.'' The enthusiasm for the common welfare and the good of the *ummah* turns into striving in the land to create mischief and evil.

Qur'ān: *and destroy the crop and the progeny*: Apparently it is a description of the mischief. He creates mischief by destroying the crop and the progeny. The continued existence of the human species depends on food and procreation. These are the two most essential things which the human species cannot do without. Procreation is clear from the word 'progeny'. So far as food is concerned, man acquires it from the animal and the plant; animals again acquire it from plants. Thus, the basis of food is the plant which is obtained from crops. That is why the mischief and destruction has been explained in terms of crops and progeny. The verse means that he creates mischief and destruction in the earth by eliminating through the destruction of crop and progeny.

Qur'ān: *and Allāh does not love mischief*: *fasād* (الفساد) literally

means deterioration, corruption, decay, negation, immorality; here it has been translated as mischief.

Fasād (الفساد) in this sentence does not refer to the physical decay or destruction in this world. This universe is based on such a system that every destruction leads to a subsequent construction. A struggle for survival is continuously going on; every existence is followed by extinction, every life by death. Both are found in this natural cosmos side by side. This is the system created by Allāh; and how can He hate a thing which He Himself has created and decreed?

It follows that the ‘‘mischief’’ here refers to corruption in the *sharī‘ah* and legislation. Allāh ordained the laws of religion for the betterment of the actions of His servants; these laws will improve their character and traits; they will keep human society and human beings on the straight path, on the path of moderation. Thereupon, they will find happiness and prosperity in this life as well as in the lfie Hereafter. (This will be further explained under the verse 2:213)

Then this man appears on the scene whose words belie his inner feelings; he starts running hither and thither to create immorality and mischief on the earth. He pretends to improve society, but in reality he destroys. He alters the words of Allāh by giving them a wrong meaning; he changes the laws ordained by Allāh; he manipulates the teachings of the religion. All this leads to depravity of character and perennial controversy in religion and society. And, in this manner, the religion is negated, humanity is eliminated and the whole world is ruined.

To appreciate how true these verses are, look at the history of Islam and see how unauthorised people took the reins of the state in their hands, how they imposed themselves on the Muslim *ummah* and how they corruptly conducted the affairs of religion and state. They did what they did and the losers were the religion (which got nothing but evil results), the Muslims (who are always in decline and decadence) and the *ummah* (which is perennially plagued with internal strife and dispute.) The religion is now a ball in the hands of anyone who wants to play with; and human values a toy to be treasured and then discarded at the whim of the child.

The result of this striving of that hypocrite is decay and deterioration on the earth; first, he corrupted religion and then

destroyed humanity. That is why in some traditions *and destroy the crops and progeny* has been interpreted as the destruction of religion and humanity.

Qur'ān: *And when it is said to him, fear Allāh, he is overcome by honour* (pride) *by sin; so enough for is Hell, and certainly it is an ill abode.*

'Izzah (العزّة) means honour, *mihād* (المهاد) is the paved way, abode. Apparently, the words *by sin* qualify the word, *the honour,* and have no connection with *he is overcome.* The verse says that when he is told to fear Allāh, he is overcome by the apparent honour which he has earned through his sins and hypocrisy.

The real honour comes from Allāh as He says: *and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest* (3:26); *and to Allāh belongs the honour and to His Apostle and to the believer* (63:8); *Do they seek honour from them? Then, surely all honour belongs to Allāh* (4:139). Honour is a status which Allāh attributes to Himself and declares that it is only He who bestows it on His chosen creatures. Such a thing cannot be a source of sin or evil. It naturally follows that the honour mentioned in this verse is not real honour which is given by Allāh. It is only a masquerade which deceives none except the ignorant people who mistakenly accept it as honour.

The preposition ''by'' (*b ...,* ب) in ''by sin'' (*bi 'l-ithm ,* بالاثم) has no connection with the verb *he is overcome;* the word ''sin'' is neither the object of ''is overcome'', nor its cause. In other words, the verse does not say that his honour or pride drives him to sin and to rejection of the advice to fear Allāh, or incites him to answer back the said advisor in unbecoming language. Nor does it mean that sin drives him to pride. As mentioned above, the word *by sin* qualifies the word *honour* (or pride), and indicates the honour or pride gained by sin. Had the word *honour* been left unconditional, it would have meant that Allāh recognised it as real honour (which comes from Allāh). And in that case it could not be said to create, or be created by, sin or pride. That is why we say that it is conditional and means an apparent honour which is earned through sin and hypocrisy.

There is another verse where the word honour (*'izzah,* العزّة) has been used for the unbelievers. But there, also, the context shows that it

means only an appearance of honour, not real honour. Allāh says: *Nay, those who disbelieve are* (steeped) *in self-exaltation* (*'izzatin,* عزّة) *and opposition. How many did We destroy of the generations before them, then they cried but there was no longer any escape* (38:2—3). Here the word *'izzatin* (عزّة) (translated above as ''self-exaltation'') is a common noun, it does not have any definite article before it, and the next verse describes the destruction of people like them. These points clearly show that here also it is only an appearance of honour, a passing shadow which will not last long.

Qur'ān: *And among the man is he who sells his self* (soul) *to seek the pleasure of Allāh; and Allāh is Affectionate to the servants.:* This verse is in contrast to the preceding three ones. On one side there is a man priding himself in his sins, boasting and self-exalting, showing the doing of good to people, hiding his hypocrisy behind a mask of charming words; and religion and humanity cannot expect of him anything except ruin and destruction.

On the other side is a man who has sold his soul to Allāh, he wants nothing except what Allāh wishes; he desires nothing for his self; his honour and strength come only from Allāh, and he seeks nothing but the pleasure of Allāh. By his presence, religious and worldly affairs re-acquire their correct shape, the truth is revived, humanity enjoys a happy life and the good effects of Islam reach every one.

This also shows the connection of the end of the verse, *and Allāh is Affectionate to the servants,* with its beginning. Surely, the presence of such a man is a great mercy from Allāh to His servants. Had there not been such virtuous people to counteract the designs of those others (whose stock-in-trade is hypocrisy and mischief), the structure of religion would have fallen into ruins, and the foundation of righteousness and goodness would have been destroyed. But it is the method chosen by Allāh that He removes that wrong by this truth, and repairs the damage inflicted by His enemies with the good spread by His beloved and chosen servants. He has said: *And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth certainly would be in a state of disorder* (2:251); *And had there not been Allāh's repelling some people by others, certainly would have been pulled down cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allāh's name is much remembered* (22:40); *therefore if*

these disbelievers in it, We have already entrusted it with a people who are not disbelievers in it (6:89). The decadance brought upon the religion and the world by those who love nothing but their own selves cannot be removed except through the good overflowing from those who have sold their souls to Allāh, who love nothing except Allāh and who desire nothing except that the world and the people of the world may become virtuous.

This deal has been praised by Allāh in many verses, one of which is as follows:-

Surely Allāh has bought from the believers their selves and their properties, for this that their's be the Garden; they fight in Allāh's way, so they slay and are slain; (this is) *a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Injīl and the Qur'ān*; *and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allāh? Therefore, rejoice in the trade that you have transacted; and that is the great achievement* (9:111).

TRADITIONS

It is reported from as-Suddī about the verses, *And among the men is he whose talk ... an evil abode,* that they were revealed about Akhnas ibn Sharīq ath-Thaqafī, an ally of Banū Zuhrah. He came to the Prophet in Medina and said: ''I have come seeking Islam, and Allāh knows that surely I am truthful.'' The Prophet was pleased with that talk. The words of Allāh, *and takes Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart* refer to this aspect. Then he went out and passed by an agricultural field and some donkeys belonging to some Muslims. He burnt the filth and wounded and killed the donkeys. It was about that that the verse was revealed, *and when he turns away* (from you) *he runs hither and thither on earth so that he may cause mischief therein and destroy the tillage and the stock.* [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that the three verses were revealed about the hypocrites because he shows what is opposed to what he hides in his heart. The author of *al-Majma'* (said that the same was also narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (as.). [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: But this interpretation does not fit the apparent meaning of the verse.

It is written in some traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-*

bayt that these verses were revealed about their enemies.

It is narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *and destroy the crop and progeny,* that crop means religion, and progeny, humanity. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: This tradition has already been explained earlier. In another tradition *the crop* has been interpreted as 'progeny and crop'. It is easy to see how this also may fit the earlier explanation.

ash-Shaykh has narrated in his *al-Amālī* a tradition from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), about the verse: *And among men is he who sells ... Affectionate to the servants,* that he said: ''It was revealed about 'Alī (a.s.) when he slept (on the night of *hijrah*) on the bed of the Messenger of Allāh.''

The author says: There are innumerable traditions from both Shī'ah and Sunnī chains that this verse was revealed about 'Alī concerning his sacrifice on the night of *hijrah. Tafsīr al-burhān* gives five of those chains from ath-Tha'labī and others.

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Ṣuhayb that he said: ''When I intended to emigrate from Mecca to the Prophet in Medina, the Qurayshites told me, 'O Ṣuhayb! You came to us and you had no wealth. Now you want to emigrate with all this wealth of yours. By God, this can't be.' So I said to them, 'What do you think? Would you leave me if I gave you all my wealth?' They said: 'Yes!' Thereupon I gave them my wealth and they left me. I came out till I reached Medina. This incident was reported to the Prophet and he said: 'Ṣuhayb profited twice.' '' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: He has narrated it from some other chains also, some of which add: and then the verse was revealed: *And among men is he who sells his soul ...*

Some other traditions say that it was revealed about Ṣuhayb and Abū Dharr because they purchased themselves by giving away their properties. But the verse does not say, ''he who purchases …'', it says, *he who sells.* And the interpretation of the verses does not agree with the meaning of ''purchase''.

There is a tradition from 'Alī (a.s.) that this verse refers to a man who is killed because of enjoining to do good and forbidding to do bad. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: It is one example of the general meaning of the

verse. There is no difficulty in explaining the meaning of the verse in general terms, though it was sent down on a particular occasion for a particular person.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً وَلا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ـ ٢٠٨ ـ فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ـ ٢٠٩ ـ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلاَّ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ
الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الأَمْرُ وَإِلَى اللهِ تُرْجَعُ الأُمُورُ ـ ٢١٠ ـ

O you who believe! Enter you one and all into submission wholly and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; *surely he is to you an open enemy*. (208) *But if you slip after clear signs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.* (209) *Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels; and the matter is decreed away*; *and all matters are returned to Allāh*. (210)

COMMENTARY

These three verses, together with the four that follow them, guide us as how to preserve religious unity in human society: To enter into total submission, to limit oneself to the word spoken by Allāh and to that deed whose path is shown by Allāh. They declare that religious unity was never disintegrated, nor was the happiness of both worlds turned into misery with disaster visited upon the territory of a people, except when they left submission, manipulated the signs of Allāh by altering them and putting them into the wrong place. This had happened to the children of Israel and other people, and will surely happen to this *ummah* also. But in the end Allāh promises them His help, *Surely the help of Allāh is near.*

Qur'ān: *O you who believe! Enter you one and all into submission wholly*: *slim* (submission, السّلم), *islām* (الاسلام) and *taslīm* (التّسليم) all are the same. *Kāffatan* (كافّة) is for emphasis and means 'all', 'wholly'. As the verse is addressed to the believers, and they are ordered to enter into submission ''wholly'' the command covers the whole group as well as every individual. It is obligatory on each and every believer, as it is on the whole of Muslim society not to contravene this command and to

submit all matters to Allāh and His Apostle. Hence the phrase *one and all* in the translation.

Again, as the hearers are already believers the submission called for means total submission to Allāh after believing in Him. Hence the word *wholly* in the translation. It follows that the believers must submit all their affairs to Allāh, they should not decide themselves what was good for them and what was not, they should not prepare or select any path for themselves without the guidance of Allāh and His Apostle. They must remember that no people were destroyed except that they followed their own views and desires, and talked without true knowledge; and no people forfeited the right of life and happiness except that they became disunited.

It is clear from the above that following the footsteps of Satan does not mean following him in all the falsehood which he invites to, because a believer cannot follow Satan in all satanic schemes. Rather, it means to follow him in the matters of religion. Satan furnishes some paths of untruth with the signposts of truth; in this way, he puts into religion what is not from religion. Thus, a believer is deceived into following that path without realizing his error.

One way of becoming aware of such an interpolation is to find out whether Allāh and His Apostle have ever mentioned it in their teachings of the religion.

The context and words of the verses also show what has been explained above. ‘‘Footsteps’’ are found in a trodden path. The believer is proceeding on that path; therefore, it must be the path of true religion. But Satan has put his marks thereon. So, the *footsteps of Satan* should refer to Satanic ways within the highway of true faith. The believer is obliged to enter into submission. Therefore, wherever he proceeds without wholly submitting himself to Allāh and His Apostle, it must be in the footsteps of Satan If he goes on to that path, he is following Satan’s footsteps.

This verse is similar to some others. For example: *O men! Eat of what is in the earth lawful and good, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; surely he is to you an open enemy. He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you should say against Allāh what you do not know* (2:168—169); *O you who believe! Do not follow the footsteps of Satan; and whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, then surely he enjoins*

indecency and evil. (24:21); *Eat of what Allāh has given you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, then surely he enjoins indecency and evil.* (24:21); *Eat of what Allāh has given you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; surely he is your open enemy*. (6:142). The difference between the verse under discussion and those quoted above is that this verse addresses the group as a whole, as it contains the word *kāffatan* (all, wholly, كافّة); but those other verses are general. Accordingly, this verse implies the same meaning as the verses, *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided.* (3:103); *And surely this My path is straight one, so follow it; and do not follow the* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you from His path.* (6:153).

The verse implies that Islam guarantees that it contains all kind of laws and knowledge which are needed by the human beings for their welfare and good.

Qur'ān: *But i f you slip ... Mighty, Wise: zallah* (الزّلّة) means a slip, a falling. The verse says: If you did not enter one and all into submission, wholly and slipped - and the slip refers to following the footsteps of Satan — then know that Allāh is Mighty, Who is not prevailed upon in His orders, and Wise, Who decides in your affairs according to His Wisdom. Thus He shall decide about you according to His Wisdom and shall enforce it upon you and nobody will be able to hinder it.

Qur'ān: *Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels: ẓulal* (الظّلل) is plural of *ẓullah* (الظّلّة) which means ''anything used for shade'', like canopy, awring, tent.

Apparently, the word ''angels'' is in condjunction with the divine name ''Allāh''.

The preceding two verses were addressed to the believers (in the second person). This one dramatically changes it to third person and starts addressing the Apostle of Allāh; implying that those who slip up and follow the footsteps of Satan are not worthy of direct address from Allāh. It appears as though they are awaiting a decree by their following the footsteps of Satan and by their disunity and division. And that decree should be that Allāh and the angels come unto them in canopies of cloud, and the matter be decided while they are still unaware of it - or without having any pity on them and on their plight; and all matters are

returned to Allāh; there is no escape from His judgement and decree.

The context shows that *Do they await aught ...* is the description of the threat implied in the previous sentence, *then know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.*

It is self-evident truth, which is also proved by the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* that attributes of the body cannot be used for Allāh, nor can He be described with adjectives of transient things. No such word, phrase or sentence can be used for Him which implies transcience, need, deficiency or want. Allāh says: *Nothing whatsoever* (is there) *like the like of Him.* (42:11); *and Allāh is He Who is Self-sufficient* (35:15); *Allāh is the Creator of everything*. (39:62) There are numerous such verses; and all of them are confirmed and decisive ones to which the ambiguous verses should be referred. It is these confirmed verses which guide us towards the correct interpretation of the ambiguous ones. If any verse apparently attributes to Allāh an action or a characteristic of transient things, then it must be referred to the confirmed verses and interpreted in a way which is not below His dignity nor opposed to His beautiful names.

Now here is a verse which attributes the action of ''coming'' to Allāh. A few other verses also have used this word for Him. *And comes your Lord with the angels arrayed in ranks* (89:22); *then came upon them Allāh from whence they did not expect* (59:2); *so Allāh came upon their structure from the foundations* (16:26). In all such verses, it is necessary to interpret them with such meanings which are worthy of Divine sublimity. We may give them the meaning of, let us say, sending His chastisement upon them, surrounding them with His power or wrath. Accordingly, the meaning of *Allāh should come to them* in this verse shall be ''Allāh should surround them with His power for enforcing His decree on them''.

Further, whenever Allāh is pleased to show that the apparent means and the intermediate causes are not independent of the order of Allāh, He discards attributing the action to such causes and means; instead He attributes it to Himself or to His order. He says in one place: *Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death* (39:42); while in other places He attributes this action to the angel of death or the angels; *Say, the angel of death ... shall cause you to die* (32:11); *Until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers* (i.e. angels) *take him away* (6:61). To make it

more clear, look how He has declared about the angels that: *only according to His command do they act* (21:27).

Likewise, He says, *Surely your Lord will judge between them* (10:93), and *when the order of Allāh came, judgement was given with truth* (40:78).

And the same is the case with the verse under discussion (*Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels*) and the verse *Do they await aught but that the angels should come to them or that the order of your Lord should come* (16:33).

The above verse proves that the verse under discussion, *Allāh should come,* also means ‘‘the order of Allāh should come’’. Likewise, in every place where the action attributed to Allāh is below His power and dignity, we may safely say that the word ‘order’ or ‘command’ is implied, as the above verses have shown.

This explanation has been accepted by the majority of the commentators of the Qur’ān and it is correct. But there is even a deeper and finer meaning which can be understood if one ponders on the Qur’ān.

A characteristic which is accompanied by a deficiency, want or imperfection is not attributable to Allāh. But if that characteristic could be separated from that deficiency, want or imperfection, then there is no reason why it cannot be attributed to Allāh, provided it is suitable for His sublimity and perfection. The word ‘‘coming’’ creates in our mind a picture of a body gradually moving and shortening the distance between itself and another body till it reaches quite near to that. If we can remove the material characteristics from this meaning, there will remain the idea of ‘‘nearness’’, with the disappearance of any obstruction in between. In that case, it would be quite correct to use this word for Allāh literally, not metaphorically. Accordingly, *Allāh should come to them* would mean that there would remain no curtain between His creatures and His judgement about them.

Anyhow, this verse contains the threat which was implied in the preceding sentence, *then know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.* This threat may be about the chastisement awaiting them in the Hereafter, as it is in the similar verse: *Do they await aught but that the angels should come to them or that the order of your Lord should come* (16:33), which, as its context shows, is clearly about the events of the Hereafter.

Or, it may be about something expected to happen in this world, as may be seen in the verses of *sūrah* Yūnus: *so when their apostle came, the matter was decided with justice, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And they say, 'when this promise will come to pass, if you are truthful ...' Say, Do you see if His chastisement overtakes you by night or by day, what is there of it that the guilty hasten for?* (10:47-50). The same is the implication of the verses, 30:30-36, and the verse, *How many a town, which was unjust, We did destroy and We raised another people after it?* (21:11).

The chastisement of this world is because this world is a foretaste of the life Hereafter, where every aspect of this world would appear more perfectly and completely.

And it is possible that the promised punishment would be in both worlds together.

In any case, the words, *in the canopies of bright cloud* would be interpreted according to the place where the promised punishment would be meted out.

Qur'ān: *and the matter is decreed away; and all matters are returned to Allāh.*: The matter is decreed away by Allāh, but His name is not mentioned to show His Greatness. There are many examples of such deletion in the Qur'ān.

TRADITIONS

Many traditions have been written concerning verse 2:168 (*O men! Eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan ...*) which support the meaning given by us of *following the footsteps of Satan.*

Some traditions say that ''submission'' means the love and obedience of the Prophet and his progeny (*wilāyah,* الولاية). Such traditions give an example of a general meaning.

There is a . tradition from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels:* He said: ''Allāh says: 'Do they wait aught but that Allāh should come to them with the angels in the canopies of bright clouds'. Like this it was revealed.'' And he said, about the word of Allāh; *And comes your Lord with the angels arranged in ranks* (89:22),

that : ‘‘Surely, Allāh cannot be described with attributes of coming and going. Elevated is He from transferring from one place to another. Verily, it means, ‘And comes the command of your Lord with the angels arranged in ranks’.’’ [*at-Tawḥīd* and *Ma‘ānī al-akhbār*]

The author says: The words of the Imām at the beginning of the interpretation, ‘‘Allāh says’’, do not mean the actual word or recitation of the verse. The word ‘‘says’’ here stands for ‘‘means’’. The interpretation given in this tradition is the same which we have already explained, that ‘‘coming of Allāh’’ means coming of His command. The Angels do whatever they do, and come down whenever they come down, by the command of Allāh. He says about angels: *Nay! They are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His commandment do they act*. (21:27), and *He sends down the angels with the spirit by His commandment* (16:2).

The verse begins with an interrogation which here stands for denial and disapproval. It means that ‘‘they do not await’’ or ‘‘they should not await’’. But some people have said that this denial and disapproval is comprehensive and refutes not only their awaiting but even the thing awaited. In other words, it means that they do not await aught but an impossible thing — that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of cloud as one body comes to another body, and that the angels should come with Him and He should order them and forbid them. Obviously such a thing is impossible; and the aim of the verse would be to hint that these people cannot mend their ways by these exhortations and sermons.

But this meaning does not agree with the context of the verse. It has been explained that all these verses have one context. Therefore, this verse also is about the condition of the believers. And the believers cannot be condemned in the suggested manner. Apart from that if Allāh had meant to show that the thing awaited was impossible or beneath His sublimity, He would have followed it with some words to show that it was so. And we find that it is the custom of the Qur’ān everywhere on such occasions. For example: *And those who do not hope of our meeting say:‘‘Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or* (why) *do we not see our Lord?’’ Certainly they think too high of themselves and have revolted* (in) *a great revolt*. (25:21); *And they say: ‘‘The Beneficent* (God) *has taken to Himself a son!’’ Glory be to Him!*

(21:26).

Apart from that, what would be, in this case, the significance of the words, *in the canopies of bright cloud?* And what would the subsequent words mean?

OTHER TRADITIONS

This last verse has variously been interpreted in the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu'l-bayt* as referring to the Day of Resurrection (al-ʻAyyāshi from al-Bāqir — a.s.) or the Day of Return (the *raj'ah*[1], الرّجعة) (aṣ-Ṣadūq from aṣ-Sādiq — a.s.) or the Reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.) (al-ʻAyyāshī from al-Bāqir [a.s.] with two chains.)

And there are many such cases where a verse has been interpreted by them as referring to the Day of Resurrection in one tradition, and to the Day of Return in another, and to the Reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.) in yet another one. It is because all these meanings are inter-related, so much so that they can be said to be basically one. As the people have not gone deep into the subject of the Resurrection and have not looked into it in the light of the Qur'ān they have gone their separate ways about these traditions. Some have discarded them altogether, even though there are probably more than five hundred traditions on its various aspects; some have interpreted them according to their own views even though the wordings of the traditions are very clear and explicit. A third group quotes these traditions and refrains from giving any opinion - these people are the most reasonable of all.

The non-Shīʻah Muslims believe that Imām al-Mahdī will appear; they have narrated *mutawātir* traditions about it from the Prophet, but they reject the idea of the *raj'ah* and say that this belief is a peculiarity of the Shīʻahs. And in these days some people, claiming to be Shīʻah, also have rejected this belief, saying that it has been foisted into Shīʻism by the Jews and some nominal Muslims like ʻAbdullāh ibn Sabā' [2]and his

[1] *ar Raj'ah* (return) means that after the re-appearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a:s.) and before the Day of Judgement some confirmed friends of Allāh and some of His confirmed enemies shall be returned to this world again to live under the rule of the Representative of Allāh.

[2] ʻAbdullāh ibn Sabā' is a mythical personality, who did not exist

companions. One of them tried to refute this belief by intellectual argument, the gist of which is as follows:-

‘‘It is a special grace of Allāh that a living person is not given death until he reaches the perfection of the life and all his potentialities are converted into achievements. If after death he is again sent back to this world it would be retrogression, a backward step from accomplishment to potentiality, and it is impossible, except when a truthful informer tells us about it, i.e., Allāh or any of His Representatives, as He has informed us concerning the events of Mūsā, ‘Īsā, Ibrāhīm (peace be on them all) and others. But we have not been told by Him or them anything about *ar-raj‘ah*. And the evidence put by the believers in *ar-raj‘ah* is not complete.’’

After saying this he went on to claim about each and every tradition that it was weak — without knowing the difference between the correct ones and the defective ones. The poor man did not realize that this argument is not a rational one at all. Its first part refutes its second part. If some thing is impossible by nature it would remain inpossible without any exception. An ‘‘impossible’’ idea would not be turned into ‘‘possible’’ just because a truthful informer said so. Anybody who said about an impossibility that it became a possibility, would not be ‘‘truthful’’. And if he was supposed to be really truthful then that thing would not have been an impossibility in the first place. Would we say that he was truthful if he were to say that one is not a half of two, or that a truthful person was at the same time a liar?

This much about the consistency of his argument. Now, we come to his argument that (1) All people die when they reach the perfection of the life, and when their potentialities are converted into achievements; (2) What has attained achievement cannot be turned back to potentiality; (3) Therefore, a dead man cannot be returned to this life.

In this argument, the second premise is correct; the first is not. It is not ‘‘all’’ people, but only ‘‘some’’, who die after attaining perfection and converting their potentialities into achievements. A man, who completes his natural span of life and dies from old age, may be said to

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outside the imagination of some story-tellers. See *‘Abdullāh ibn Sabā’ wa asāṭīr ukhrā* (عبد الله ابن سبا) by as-Sayyid Murtadā al-‘Askarī of Tehran.

have reached the last stage of his perfection. But what about another man who prematurely dies of an epidemic or fatal sickness, or is killed? Can it be claimed that he had already reached the last stage of his potential perfection? The answer is 'No'. Therefore, it cannot be said that it is impossible for such persons to be returned to the life of this world. Now it is obvious that his argument is neither comprehensive nor correct. We can think of many cases where it might be possible for a dead person (even if he had died after attaining his perfection) to be sent back to this world; for example, a man in his first life had a potential for a perfection which was not available at that time; he died; then by the progress of society, that perfectness became possible. What is there to prevent his return to this world to achieve that perfection for which he had a potential in the first life? Because it will not be a step back-ward - from perfection to potentiality; it will be progress from potential to perfection.

There are other examples, but this is not the place to go into the details of this subject.

As regards his argument against individual traditions, it has two serious defects: (1) These traditions are *mutawātir,* in their meaning, from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* — so much so that non-Shī'ite Muslims have counted the belief of *ar-raj'ah,* from the very early days of Islam, as one of the special beliefs of the Shī'ah and their Imāms - and a *mutawātir* matter cannot be refuted even if the individual traditions be really defective, or weak, or arguable. (2). There are many verses revealed on this subject and many traditions which are complete in their meaning and reliable in their chains. We shall mention them when we come to the relevant verses like: *And on the day when We will gather from every people a party from among those who rejected Our signs, then they shall be formed into groups* (27:83). There are other verses to prove this belief.

Apart from these specific verses, there are others which imply this meaning. For example, the words of Allāh which come shortly after the verse under discussion: *Or do you think that you will enter the Garden while yet has not come upon the like of which came upon those who have passed before you* (2:214). And one of the things which came upon previous nations was that some of their dead were resurrected, and lived again in this world, as the Qur'ān narrates concerning the stories of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Isā, 'Uzayr, Armia and others. And the Messenger of Allāh has said: ''By Him in Whose hand is my soul! Most certainly you

shall follow the traditions of those who were before you, as in a pair of shoes the one tallies with the other, and as one flea looks like another, until you will not miss their path, nor will they miss yours; (and this means) the traditions of the Israelites.''

Moreover, these matters are among the reports of the great events of the latter days, foretold by the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt;* these prophecies were preserved by reporters and narrators in books which were written and copied centuries before the events; and every day we see some of its parts fulfilled in exactly the same way without any addition or subtraction. This compels us to believe that the remaining part of those prophecies (including *ar-raj'ah*) must be true.

Now we come back to the topic in hand. We were discussing why a single verse is sometimes explained as referring to the Day of Resurrection and sometimes as describing *ar-raj'ah* or the re-appearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.). It appears from the characteristics and details of the Day of Resurrection, mentioned in the Qur'ān, that it will be a day when no intermediate cause will hinder one from the signs of Allāh; there will remain no veil on the face of truth. All illusions will vanish and the signs of Allāh will appear in their perfect manifestation.

That day could exist side by side with this world, but it is obvious from the Qur'ān and *sunnah* that human beings, i.e., this species of homo sapiens who are descended from Adam and his wife, will become extinct in this world and only then will this great day dawn upon them.

The life of this world and the life of the Resurrection can exist side by side for different groups and species. The life of the period between death and the Day of Resurrection (*barzakh,* البرزخ) exists for our dead side by side with our life on this earth; neither does our life interfere with theirs, nor theirs with ours. Allāh says: *By Allāh! Most certainly We sent* (apostles) *to nations before you, but Satan made their deeds fair seeming to them; so he is their guardian today and for them is a painful punishment* (16:63).

This, therefore, is the reality of the Day of Resurrection, ''the Day on which men shall stand before the Lord of the worlds'' ''the Day when they shall come forth; nothing concerning them remains hidden from Allāh''. That is why sometimes even death is called Resurrection, because the veil of intermediate causes is lifted from the imagination of the dead person. 'Alī (a.s.) has said: ''Whoever dies his resurrection

begins.'' This subject will be explained, God willing in its appropriate place.

The traditions which prove *ar-raj'ah* in spite of their large number, are one in their essence. They show that the world is proceeding towards a day when the signs of Allāh will appear in their perfect manifestation; man will not disobey Allāh, but shall worship Him with a sincere and pure heart, untainted by the desires of this world; and he will not be deceived by Satan. At that time some dead persons — some friends of Allāh and some of His enemies — shall be returned to the world again, and the truth will be separated from the falsehood.

It appears from above that the Day of Return shall be one of the stages of the Day of Resurrection. But it will be a lesser manifestation, because there shall remain, at that time, the possibility, to a certain extent, of evil and mischief, which will be impossible on the Day of Resurrection.

And that is the reason why in some traditions the same verses have been said to be related concerning the re-appearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.). It is because at his re-appearance also the truth will be manifested perfectly, though it will be less than on the Day of ''Return''.

There are traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that ''The days of Allāh are three: the Day of re-appearance, and the Day of Return, and the Day of Resurrection.'' Some of them say that ''The days of Allāh are three: the Day of Death, and the Day of Return, and the Day of Resurrection.''

The three days are one in their nature but different in degrees. It is because of this oneness of essence that a single verse is at different times interpreted by all three days.

The above discussion clearly shows that the Day of Return is not only possible, but a reality; and those who reject it have no reason to refute it.

سَلْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللهِ مِن
بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ـ ٢١١ . زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ـ ٢١٢ .

Ask the children of Israel how many a clear sign We gave them; and whoever changes the favour of Allāh after it has come to him, then surely Allāh is severe in requiting (evil) (211). *The life of this world is made to seem fair to those who disbelieve; and they mock those who believe; but those who guard* (against evil) *shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection; and Allāh provides with sustenance whom He pleases without measure* (212).

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *Ask the children of Israel ... severs in requiting* (evil): It reconfirms and emphasizes the threat contained in (2:209), that Allāh shall seize the sinners, in the manner of the One who is Mighty and Powerful. It says: These Israelites are within your sight and hearing. They were the people to whom Allāh gave the Book and the rule and prophethood and territory; and provided them with good things and made them excel other nations. Ask them how many a clear sign We gave them; and then see from when they started and where they went. They changed the words of Allāh from their places; they followed some selfinvented things in opposition to Allāh, His Book and His signs. And all this was done in revolt after they were given the knowledge. Then Allāh punished them with. the most severe punishment: They went astray, became disunited, disagreed among themselves; they unlawfully ate the property of their brethren; their power was gone, their happiness vanished; and humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them in this world, and the chastisement of the Hereafter is more humiliating and then they shall not get any help.

This is the tradition of Allāh: whoever changes the favour of Allāh

and uses it wrongfully, Allāh surely chastises him and of course Allāh is severe in chastisement.

The sentence, *whoever changes the favour of Allāh ... then surely Allāh is severe in requiting* gives the general principle and describes the unchangeable habit of Allāh, so that the hearers may know the firm decree of Allāh in such cases.

Qur'ān: *The life ... make those who believe:* It explains the reason why the Israelites and the people like them went astray. The main reason is that the life of this world seems alluring to them. When materialism allures someone, it encourages him to fulfill the lust and desire of his heart and to satisfy his sensuous appetite; it makes him forget all truth and reality. The only aim of such a man remains to get whatever he can from this world status, dignity, wealth, beauty, and so forth. He makes use of everything to reach this goal — and 'everything' includes religion. Thus, he misuses religion to gain privilege and distinction. Religion becomes a means of honouring the leaders and the bosses and bestowing on them the prestige befitting their status and place in the world; it encourages the common man to seek nearness to those leaders, not to Allāh; it allows them to find ways to seek the favours of these nobles and leaders. This we see in the Muslim *ummah* today, just as it was seen in the Israelites before.

Those who disbelieve *kufr* (translated here as disbelief, الكفر) is apparently used in the Qur'ān in its literal meaning, i.e. to hide. In this general meaning it is comprehensive; it includes ''disbelief '' as well as ''hiding the truth''. The life of this world is made to seem fair not to the disbelievers only but to them also who hide any religious truth or change any religious favours. Accordingly, such a man also is hider of truth (*kāfir,* الكافر) who has been allured by the beauty of this life, and he also should prepare himself for the severe punishment.

Qur'ān: *but those who guard* (against evil) *shall be above them ... without measure*.: ''Those who believe'' of the preceding sentence has been changed in this sentence to *those who guard themselves* (against evil). It is to emphasize that mere belief (*īmān,* الايمان) without *taqwā* (guarding oneself against evil; piety, fear of Allāh, التّقوى) is of no use.

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ - ٢١٣ .

Mankind was but one people; *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves; whereupon Allāh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed. And Allāh guides whom He pleases to the straight path.*(213)

GENERAL COMMENT

This verse explains why religion was promulgated and mankind obliged to follow it, and why differences occurred in it.

Mankind, having been created with a natural urge to remain together and cooperate with each other, were in the beginning one single group. Then occurred differences about the acquisition of the necessities of life. These differences could only be settled by creating laws to give each one his right and to make him respect the rights of others. Allāh has ordained the law and sent it down as religion, accompanied by good tidings of reward for those who obey and a warning of punishment for the offenders. This religion was made perfect by the institution of worship. All this was accomplished by sending the prophets and the apostles.

After that, people differed again — this time about the knowledge of religion, or about matters concerning the beginning and end of mankind. Thus, religious unity was disrupted and various groups appeared on the scene, and their differences contaminated the other

aspects of life.

These second differences only occurred because of the revolt of the very people who were given the book, after the fundamentals and characteristics of religion had been fully explained to them and the proof of Allāh had been completed for them.

It is clear that there were two differences: First, the difference about worldly gains, which was but natural; second, the difference about matters of religion which was based, not on nature, but on the revolt of mischief-makers. Then Allāh guided the believers to the truth about which they differed; and this guidance was done by His Will; and Allāh guides whomsoever He pleases to the straight path.

The divine religion is the only means of happiness and felicity for the human species, and it keeps life in order. It creates a balance between various human instincts and urges, and keeps them on the middle path, preventing them from going towards either extreme. Thus, there appears the best system and the highest discipline in the human life both of this world and of the Hereafter, the material as well as the spiritual.

This is an outline of the social and religious history of human beings, as given in this verse. The details may be seen in various verses throughout the Qur'ān.

HOW MANKIND CAME INTO BEING

It appears from various verses, found in various places in the Qur'ān, that mankind did not developed from any other species - neither from any animal nor from any plant. It is a species which was created by Allāh directly from the earth. There was a time when the sky existed and earth existed with the things of the earth; but there was no man. Then Allāh created a couple, male and female, of this species, and all present human beings are descended from that couple. Allāh says: *O men! Surely We created you of a male and a female, and made you into tribes and families, so that you may recognise each other* ... (49:13); and He says: *He it is who created you from a single being and of the same* (kind) *did He make his mate*. (7:189); again He says: *as the likeness of Adam*; *He created him from dust* ... (3:59)

The theory of scientists that one species changed into another, and that homo sapiens developed from some kind of ape or, going further back, originated from some water animal, is just a hypothesis. A hypothesis is not a definite fact; it is just a supposition made as a basis for reasoning, or as a starting point for academic investigation. There is no harm in treating it as a reality or as a possibility, because its only function is to provide a basis for scientific research, and to find out whether it can explain the causes and effects of a given matter. It has no more value than that. We discuss this subject fully under the verse (3:59), *Surely the likeness of 'Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him 'Be' and he became.*

HIS COMPOSITION FROM SOUL AND BODY

When Allāh created this species, He created it composed of two parts; a material substance, the body, and a non-material one, the soul or spirit. Man's body and soul remain together during his life in this world; then the body dies, the living soul departs, and thus man returns to his Creator. Allāh says: *And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him sperm, in a firm resting place, then We made the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made* (in) *the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We did grow it into another creation, so Blessed by Allāh, the Best of the creators. Then after that you will most surely die; then surely on the Day of Resurrection you shall be raised*. (23:12-16). (See at what stage Allāh says *did grow it into another creation.* The same meaning is found in the verse, *So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down making obedience to him* (38:72). Then we come to the words of Allāh, where He describes the creation of man goes on to say: *And they said: What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we* (even) *then be* (returned) *into a new creation? Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say*: *The angel of death, who is given charge of you, shall cause you to die then to your Lord you shall be brought back* (32:10-11).

In this verse, Allāh first mentions the 'argument' of the unbelievers that there was no possibility of being raised to life again because all the limbs and organs of the body disintegrated and turned

to dust after death. Then comes the reply that the angel of death causes them to die and fully takes hold of them; they are something different from the mere body; the bodies are lost in the earth but ‘‘they’’, i.e. their souls, are neither lost, disintegrated nor dead.

We shall explain in a proper place the teaching of the Qur’ān about the soul of man.

HIS PERCEPTION AND CONNECTION WITH OTHER THINGS

Allāh made man and gave him perception, and created in him hearing, sight and the heart (wisdom). He has been given the quality of mind which is known as intelligence and thinking power. By those faculties, he looks at the present, finds out about the past and surmises about the future; he has a sort of comprehensive knowledge of the things around him. Allāh says: (Allāh) *taught man what he know not* (96:5); *And Allāh brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers, you did not know anything, and He gave you hearing and sight and the hearts* (wisdom) *so that you may give thanks* (16:78); *And He taught Adam all the names ...* (2:31).

Allāh has given him such faculties so that he can establish a relation and connection with all things and can derive benefit from all of them; he can establish that connection either directly or through instruments and machines, the aim all the time being to use them to his own advantage. Look at the innumerable discoveries and inventions, and you will know how Allāh has made everything subservient to man. For example, He says: *He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth* (2:29); *And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself* (45:13).

HIS PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

The two faculties — intelligence and the ability to exploit other things — produced a third wonderful faculty: to find out new avenues of knowledge and perception, so as to use them in his exploitation of other things to his advantage.

Suppose you were looking at this species of homo sapiens for the first time. You would be overwhelmingly astonished to see how each member of this species used an unlimited amount of knowledge and ideas to make his life comfortable. That knowledge and those ideas were acquired, analysed, compared and developed either through the five senses, which provided knowledge of the external world, or through the five faculties of the mind, or through the power of thought, using and re-using the knowledge acquired by those senses.

Then if you were to look at that knowledge and perception, you would find that they could easily be divided into two groups. First, that knowledge which had no direct bearing on man's own actions. For example, the perceiving of the earth, the sky, men, horses, etc. or that four was an even number, or that water was a liquid. Such percepts are acquired by man's reaction to the world outside his own being. To acquire those percepts, man does not have to have any intention or action on his own part; they are just information of the outside world for which he is not obliged to do anything.

The second group is opposite to the first one. You will hear him saying: This is good; that is bad; this should be done; that must be avoided; justice is good; injustice is evil. Then, also, you might find him thinking about the ideas of ruling and subjection; of mastership and slavery. Such thoughts and percepts have a direct bearing on his actions and activities. All his intentional actions depend on those percepts and knowledge. And, unlike the first group, these percepts do not originate outside his being; they are formed in his mind either involuntarily, by his instinct, or voluntarily, through his own thinking, or feeling. For example, he has a system for digestion and nourishment and another for reproduction. These systems are governed by some inner motivating forces which make him desire what helps in these functions and dislike what hinders him in pursuit of those pleasures. This inner reaction creates in him such emotions and feelings as love, hate, inclination and desire.

These emotions and feelings compel him to think about what is good and what bad, what desirable and what undesirable, what compulsory and what permissible, etc.

Then taking such ideas as a base, he decides his course of action and uses the things around him accordingly.

It is clear from the above that those ideas, morals or ethics (whatever

you call them) have no value unless and until they are acted upon. As mere ideas they are worthless. Therefore, we may call them practical knowledge.

As mentioned above, Allāh inspired man with these morals to prepare him for action and make him ready to exploit the hidden forces of the world: ‘‘in order that Allāh might bring about a matter which was to be done.’’ Allāh says: *Our Lord is He who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal.) (20:50); *Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who created, then made complete, and Who made* (things) *according to a measure, then guided* (them to their goal.) (87:1—3) The guidance, mentioned in these verses, is the general guidance bestowed on every creature, sentient as well as insentient, to lead it to the perfection of its being, and to encourage it to act for its own protection and maintenance.

Allāh says, especially about the man: *And* (I swear by) *the soul as it is made perfect, and He inspired unto it* (about) *its vices and its piety.* (91:7—8) It shows that man knows about vice and virtue through a divine inspiration which is implanted in his nature. These two percepts — ‘should do’ and ‘should not do’ — have no existence outside his mind; and perhaps that is why Allāh used the pronoun ‘‘Its’’ (i.e. soul’s) about vices and piety.

Also, Allāh says: *And this life of the world is nothing but a vain sport and play; and surely the abode of the Hereafter is certainly the life, if they but know* (29:64). Sport or play is in the attitude of the mind only. If the same action were done as a responsibility or as a job, it would loose its charm. Likewise, the aspect of this life — prestige, riches, progress, backwardness, mastership, servitude — are only in the mind of man. These aspects do not exist outside the mind. For example, we say, ‘a man who is president’ or ‘a cloth which is possessed’. Now, ‘a man’ and ‘a cloth’ are the things which exist outside the mind of the speaker; but that man’s ‘presidency’ and that cloth’s being ‘possessed’ are not so. These aspects are in the mind only.

HIS EXPLOITATION OF OTHER THINGS

To make a long story short, one of these ideas is the belief that men must take all necessary steps to preserve his own life; and because of this

belief he makes use of all the materials available to him. He exploits matter to fulfil his needs — the knife to cut, the needle to sew, pots to keep water, ladders to climb and innumerable such tools and machines for their benefit.

Likewise, he uses plants and vegetables for food, clothing, housing, etc. And subjugates animals to support his own existence; and takes advantage of their meat, blood, hide; hair, wool, tusks, horns, excrement, milk, bones and other such things. He benefits not only from the parts of their bodies, but also from their actions, as he rides a horse or uses the oxen for pulling carts and ploughs.

Man's exploitation does not end here. He goes further and exploits his own kind, subjugating other human beings, or taking advantage of them in other manners, as much as he can.

MAN IS SOCIAL BY NATURE

But man found, to his chagrin, that other men in their turn wanted to subjugate him in the same way as he was thinking about them. The result was a mutual understanding that they would take advantage of him as much as he benefited from them. This ''give-and-take'' prompted men to live in society and to cooperate with each other in their affairs. It necessitated the safeguarding of the rights of every member of that society to keep a balance between their rights and their duties. This is called social justice.

Society and social justice were founded on the unavoidable compulsion of the above-mentioned situation. Had it not been for that compulsion, man would not have agreed to it at all. This is the reality behind the claim that man is social by nature and that he follows the dictates of social justice! The fact is that this sociability and social justice came into being under the compulsion of the mutual tendency to exploit each other.

That is why whenever a man acquires power over his fellows, the dictates of social justice are forgotten ; and the mighty one ignores the rights of weaker ones. It is as much true in the case of individuals as in that of nations and states; and this has been going on from the early history of mankind until the present, which is called the age of civilisation and freedom!

This has been hinted in the verses: *Surely he* (i.e. man) *is unjust, ignorant* (33:72); *Surely man is created avaricious* (70:19); *Surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful* (14:34); *Nay! Verily man is wont to rebel as he sees himself free from want* (96:6-7).

Had social justice been the primary urge of his nature, most of society would have been overwhelmingly just and equitable. But what we see is always opposite to that. Always the demonstration of 'might is right' comes in front of our eyes; powerful ones coerce weaker ones into subjugation; victors humiliate the vanquished, and exploit them for their own advantage.

DIFFERENCE AMONG HUMAN BEINGS

So, there is the natural instinct to take advantage of others. Then there are the necessary differences among individuals in bodily physique, in habitat, habits, character and things like that, which in their turn create a difference in strength; some become stronger, others weaker. At this stage, the stronger men start ignoring the dictates of social justice and they no longer pay attention to the common weal of the society. The mighty one exploits the weaker one and gives him little in exchange; the victor takes advantage of the vanquished without giving him any benefit in return. The weak person makes it up by deception and trickery, always waiting for a chance to get the upper hand. And as soon as he gets a chance he avenges himself with a most severe reprisal.

Thus the difference leads to chaos, disorder and disturbance. Humanity comes near to extinction, and happiness and felicity depart from society.

It is this aspect to which the verse under discussion as well as some other verses refer: *And men were naught but a single people then they differed* (10:19); *and they shall continue to differ except those on whom your Lord has mercy* (11:118-119).

This disunity and difference was bound to occur in society. As has already been mentioned, men were different in the build of their bodies and the bent of the r minds. Of course, they were all human beings, and to a certain extent their activities and thinking were similar. But at the same time, their feelings, character and condition were different from each other. That resulted in a difference in their ambitions, sins and goals

of life, which in its turn motivated them to different types of actions, and finally led to the disruption of the social system.

That disruption and disturbance made it necessary to legislate such comprehensive and fundamental laws as could remove that disturbance, difference and disagreement by, giving each one his due right. Also, it was essential to make people obey those laws.

Nowadays, societies use one of two methods to enforce the law:-

1) Compelling the people to obey laws (which are legislated to make all people share in the means of livelihood and to give everyone what could take him to the perfection of his life) and discarding religious tenets like belief in God and higher moral values. Faith in God is completely eradicated, and morality is made to follow the trends of society. Whatever is liked by a sizeable section of the community is accepted as virtue. One day chastity is held in high regard, the next day it is ridiculed and debauchery becomes the norm of the time. One day, truth is respected, the next day falsity is glorified. One day trustworthiness, the next day embezzlement and so on.

2) Making people obey laws by character-building and by training them to respect the laws — but after removing religion and religious teachings from the training programs.

The first method uses the sheer force of the rulers, the second, combines force with moral teaching. Apart from the rot that sets into society as a result, both methods are based on ignorance and negate the reality of human existence. Man is created by Allāh; his existence depends on his Master; he came from Allāh and to Him he will return. On his departure from this world, his life will continue in the next world forever and ever without disruption. But the quality of the next life will depend upon this life — how he behaved here, how he maintained his relation with his Creator and which characteristics he developed and which qualities he acquired. If a man builds his life here on the foundation of the rejection of the divinity, he will surely destroy his ‘‘self’’ and ruin his next life.

Let us take the example of a caravan. The company of travellers start for a far away place with sufficient provision for the journey. They camp in a caravanserai for a while, no sooner are they lodged for the night then they start quarrelling among themselves. They do not stop at any misdeed; they fight with each other, murder and defame one another,

plunder belongings and commit many other atrocities. Then, appalled by the carnage, they sit together to find a way to save their lives and property. Someone says: ‘‘Let us jointly use, and benefit from, all these provisions, and allow every individual a right to enjoy them according to his service to the group. We have nowhere to go from this place. Anyone opposing this scheme will be severely punished.’’ Another person says: ‘‘Let us make a law to remove this difference; each of us shall concentrate on building his character; we must behave with kindness towards our companions, we should not deviate from the path of love, gallantry and nobility. Therefore, we should jointly enjoy the provisions which we have. After all, the provisions are for our own use in this very place.’’

There is no need to point out that both advisers are mistaken. They forget that the whole caravan is still on its way; and that the traveller, in all conditions and at all times, should remember his final destination and manage the affairs of his journey with only one goal in view: ‘‘What is the best way of his reaching home?’’ If he forgets this fundamental truth, there will be nothing left for him but becoming lost in the wilderness, and disaster and death.

A sensible adviser would have advised them with these words: ‘‘Use these provisions according to what you need of tonight; save the rest for other stopping places on the way; because your final destination is still very far and you must think to save some of the provisions for use after reaching home.’’

RELIGION REMOVES THE DIFFERENCE

This is why Allāh created laws, basing them on the belief of the oneness of Allāh, on true faith, on fine character and good deeds. In other words, these laws were made to teach people the reality of life, from the beginning upto its final destination; to make them realise that this life should be spent keeping the next life in view, and that this short life is but a preparation for the next one which will last forever and ever.

It is clear that it is only divine law which is based on knowledge. No other law was ever built on that foundation. Allāh says: *Judgement is not but Allāh’s; He has commanded that you worship not but Him; this is the right religion, but most people do not know.* (12:40) And He says in

the verse under discussion: *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed.* Here the sending of the prophets to bring good tiding and to warn has been joined with sending down the book which contains the laws and rules, so as to remove their differences.

Another verse says: *And they say*: *''There is nothing but our life in this world*; *we die and live and destroys us not but time ''*; *and they have no knowledge of that, they only conjecture.* (45:24) This insistence of theirs was not only to refute belief *in* the hereafter; its real motive was to wriggle out from the responsibilities which result from that belief. Reason says that, if you believe in the life hereafter, you must make this life subservient to that one; you must worship the Creator and obey the laws ordained by Him which will guide you in all the spheres of life: worship, social dealings, and the penal law. In short, belief in the hereafter makes it obligatory to follow the dictates of religion, to always keep the improvement of the next life in view. That was the reason why the unbelievers rejected that belief and based their social norms on the assumption that there was nothing beyond life in this world.

Again Allāh says: *they do not follow anything but conjecture, and surely conjecture does not avail against the truth at all. Therefore, turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our reminder and does not desire anything but the life of this world. That is the* (last) *reach of their knowledge ...* (53:28—30) In this verse Allāh makes it clear that they base their lives on conjecture and ignorance, while Allāh invites them to the Abode of Peace and His religion is based on truth and knowledges, and which the Prophet calls them towards what gives them life. Allāh says: *O you who believe! Answer* (the call of) *Allāh and the Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life ...* (8:24). Life which is mentioned in this verse has been explained in the following verses:-

> *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like unto him whose similitude is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth*? (6:122)
>
> *Is then he who knows that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth, like unto him who is blind? Only those*

possessed of understanding shall bear in mind. (13:19)

Say, this is my way. I invite (*you*) *unto Allāh; with clear sight* (are) *I and and he who follows me; and glory be to Allāh, and I am not of polytheists.* (12:108)

Say, are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only those possessed of understanding shall bear in mind. (39:9)

... an Apostle from among themselves who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them ... (2:129)

There are many verses like these in the Qur'ān extolling the virtues of understanding, calling people to acquire knowledge and follow the path of wisdom. It attaches so much importance to knowledge that it has named the pre-Islamic days ''the period of Ignorance''.

With this background, you will realise how unjust is the claim that religion is based on blind faith and ignorance, and is opposed to knowledge and learning.

This allegation was laid by some scientists. They spent their time in the natural and social sciences and they did not find in these physical sciences anything which could prove anything metaphysical. And they thought that the ''non-existence of a proof'' is a ''proof of non-existence''. It is obvious that they were mistaken in that conjecture. Going further, they looked at some myths which some entrenched interests had imposed on the masses in their countries, claiming that it was religion, and which in fact was nothing but polytheism — and Allāh and His Apostle repudiate the polytheists. Then they heard the preaching of priests exhorting the public to accept, without any questioning, the dogma and tenets of that mythical religion.

All these factors led them to declare that religion was against knowledge. But the true religion is too great to encourage ignorance or blind faith, or to exhort to act without understanding. The true religion never uttered a word without proper guidance or without an illuminating book. *And who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allāh or gives the lie to the truth when it has come to him*? (29:68)

DIFFERENCE IN RELIGION ITSELF

Allāh informs us in this verse that differences and disunity in the affairs of

society and worldly life were removed for the first time by religion. If there are any laws which are apparently non-religious, they too are based on that first religious teaching.

Then Allāh informs us that later on there occurred differences in the religion itself. These differences were created by the followers of the religion, who were given the clear book and who possessed knowledge of it. It happened because of their revolt, injustice and rebellion. Allāh says: *He has prescribed for you the religion which He enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and Īsā, to establish the religion and be not divided there in ... And they did not become divided until after the knowledge had come to them, out of rivalry among themselves; and had not a word gone forth from your Lord till an appointed time, certainly the affair would have been decided between them ...* (42:13-14).

Also He says: *And mankind was not but a single people, then they differed and had not a word already gone forth from your Lord, the matter would certainly have been decided between them in respect of that Concerning which they disagree.* (10:19)

The word which had gone forth was the promise given to Adam: *and for you there is in earth an abode and a provision for a* (fixed) *time.* (7:24)

This difference among the followers of religion was based on rebellion and revolt, not on any dictate of nature. The divine religion is based on nature and normally people cannot go astray in *a* natural thing. Nor can the demand of nature change. Allāh says: *Then set your face upright for religion, in natural devotion* (to the truth) - *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no change in the creation of Allāh; that is the right* (established) *religion ...* (30:30)

This in short is the foundation upon which this verse is based.

MAN AFTER THIS WORLD

Then Allāh informs us that man shall soon depart from this world and his intermediate station will be a place called *barzakh* (barrier, البرزخ), and the final destination is a place called the Hereafter.

His life, after this life, is an individualistic one; there will be no social

cooperation, mutual help or partnership. Man shall leave this physical world behind, returning to his Lord and Creator. There shall be no room there for that knowledge which we named earlier 'practical knowledge'. There will be no exploitation or taking advantage of others; no civilisation, social ''give-and-take'', nor any other of the paraphernalia connected with the life of this world. His only companion will be his deeds which he did in this world; he will see the good or bad results of his actions. Reality will become clear to him, and he will clearly know the Great News about which they had differed.

Allāh says:

And We will inherit of him what he says and he shall come to Us alone (19:80)

And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you; and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were (Allāh's) *associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you* (6:94)

There shall every soul become acquainted with what it sent before and they shall be brought back to Allāh, their true Master and what they did fabricate shall escape from them. (10:30)

What is the matter with you that you do not help each other? Nay! On this day they are submissive. (37:25—26)

On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heavens (as well); *and they shall come forth before Allāh, the One, the Subduer*. (14:48)

And that there is not for man (aught) *except what he strives for; and that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be recompensed for the fullest recompense*. (53:39-41)

These and many such verses clearly show that man's system of life shall change after death. There shall be no cooperation and no striving. There he shall see the result of his striving and the fruits of his actions. All his striving shall appear before him in its true colour and he shall be recompensed for it with the fullest measure.

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *Mankind was but one people* :*nās* (النّاس) translated here as 'mankind', literally means 'men'. *Ummah* (الامّة) translated here as 'people', means 'a group of men'. Sometimes it is used for only one man, as in the verses: *Surely Ibrahim was a* (*ummatan,* امّة) *people,* (devoutly) *obedient to Allāh* (16:120); sometimes for a long period, as in the verse: *and remembered after an* (*ummatin,* امّة) *a long time* (12:45) and in the verse: *And if We hold back from them the punishment until* (*ummatin ma'dūdatin,* امّة معدودة) *stated period of time* (11:8). A fourthusage is for religion, as in the verse: *And surely this* (*ummatukum ummatan wāḥidah,* امّتكم امّة واحدة) *your religion is one religion and I am your Lord, therefore, fear* Me (23:52) and, *Surely this your religion is one 'religion' and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me.* (21:92) In both these verses, according to some commentators, the word *ummah* (الامّة) has been used for 'religion'.

The word *ummah* (الامّة) is derived from *amma* (he had an aim, امّ); thus it is used for a company of people — not every company, but that which has a single aim, a single goal and a single ambition, and that unity of aim unites all the members, and makes them one people. That is why it is correct to use it for one man as well as for many; the other usages mentioned above are based on that basic meaning.

Anyhow, the sentence obviously refers to the beginning of humanity, when they were united, and lived a simple life and had simple thoughts. There were no differences or any tug-of-war in matters of life or livelihood, nor was there any disagreement about religion or religious matters.

That at that time there was no difference about matters of life is evident from the next sentence, *so Allāh sent the prophets ... so that it* (the book) *might judge between the people in that in which they had differed*, as it shows that the prophets were sent and the book was revealed to remove differences, because earlier they were one people. Thus the difference in matters of life occurred after the unity. And the proof that at that time there was no difference about matters of religion is seen in the following sentences, *And none differed about it but the very people who were given it ... revolting among themselves,* as it shows that the disagreement about religion was started by those who were given the book, which obviously

means that it started after the book was revealed.

Experience also supports this. Mankind is continuously climbing the heights of knowledge and thought and ever progressing along the path of learning and culture, year after year, and generation after generation. Thus civilisation goes forward day by day, new ways are found to fulfil even the slightest needs, natural and physical obstacles are removed and ever newer instruments are invented to make life more and more comfortable.

On the other hand, if we retrace our steps, going back towards the early days of humanity, every step will take us to people less and less acquainted with the secrets of life and the mysteries of nature, till we reach early man who knew almost nothing of the possibilities of life except those facts that were self-evident, and who used only a little imagination to gather his means of livelihood by the simplest methods. His food consisted of plants and meat which he obtained by hunting; he lived in caves, and defended himself with sticks and stones.

It is clear that a people who lived such a primitive life would not become entangled in any considerable disagreement; nor could there occur among them any lasting differences. They were in a way like a flock of sheep, everyone following the others, all remaining together for the purposes of food and abode.

This was in the very beginning. But, as we have described earlier, man had the natural urge to take advantage of others. And although the need to cooperate with each other in gathering the necessities of life compelled people to remain together, it did not prevent them from quarrelling with, and getting better of, each other. And every day man acquired new skills, and every new experience added to his store of knowledge. Whenever he used a newly-acquired expertise, it opened new avenues of progress and dexterity for him. Also, because of the dictates of nature, some individuals were stronger while others were weaker. Those who were stronger in body or mind tried to reduce others to virtual subjugation, taking more from them than they gave them in return. That was the beginning of the differences, which was only natural as it was based on the natural urge to take advantage of others, although it had been the same urge which had led to the creation of society.

It may seem strange that the same natural urge compelled men to remain together, on one hand, and led them to quarrel and find

differences, on the other. But there is nothing objectionable in the conflict between two natural demands, provided there is a third faculty above them to judge and decide, and to create a balance between them. For example, there is hunger which urges man to fill his stomach with whatever he can, even when the digestive system cannot tolerate it. There is a conflict between hunger and the power of digestion, but always there is the mind and reason to judge and decide between these two demands. It gives to each power only that which does not hinder the activities of the other.

The conflict between the two natural urges of marshalling others to one's service and cooperating with others as a single society is of the same category, because, Allāh decreed to remove that conflict by sending the prophets and revealing to them the book to decide and judge in the matters of their differences and contentions.

This is the correct interpretation of this verse. Unfortunately, some commentators have interpreted it in various other ways, but none of those interpretations conform to the meaning of the verse.

One of them has said: The verse says that all men were on the right path, because the differences began only when the book was sent down to them, and the followers of the book differed, revolting among themselves.

This man did not realize that the verse describes two conflicts, not one; and we have already explained this. Also he did not pause to think that if all men were already on the right path and there was no difference, then what was the justification of sending the prophets and revealing the book and thus giving them an opportunity to differ among themselves by revolt, and thus creating chaos in the world, sowing the seed of unbelief and sin, debauchery and immorality?

Another one has said: Mankind was one group in the meaning that all had gone astray. Otherwise, Allāh would not have said, *so Allāh sent the prophets ...*

This man did not ponder upon the verse with a clear mind. This going astray, to which he referred in this interpretation, has been indicated by Allāh in His words, *whereupon Allāh guided ... those who believed to the truth about which they differed.* It means that this difference and going astray had started because of the bad motives of the followers of the book and the scholars of religion after the book was

revealed and its signs were clarified for people. If people had already gone astray, if they had already been treading the path of disbelief, hypocrisy, sin and immorality, before the coming of the prophets and the book, how could it be attributed to the followers of the book and the scholars of religion?

A third interpretation: Mankind (*nās,* النّاس) in this verse refers to the Israelites only. Allāh says somewhere else about them: *but they did not differ until after knowledge had come to them, revolting among themselves*. (45:17) As the same words have been used in the verse under discussion, it means that the people referred to are the same.

But it is proof which has no validity at all. If in one verse, a virtue or vice is attributed to a certain nation, it does not mean that that characteristic is confined to that nation or is its special characteristic.

Even more worthless is the fourth interpretation: Mankind means Adam; and the verse says that Adam (a.s.) was one group on the right path; then his descendants differed among themselves, so Allāh sent the prophets ...

But the context of the whole verse disagrees with such a meaning. It is not possible to accept even a part of this interpretation, let along the whole.

A fifth interpreter said: ‘‘Was’’ (*kāna,* كان) in this sentence should not be taken as a past tense; rather it stands for ‘‘is’’ and shows a continuously existing reality, as in the words of Allāh: *and Allāh is* (*kāna,* كان) *Mighty, Wise* (48:19). In short, it means that mankind is by nature one group, because people are dictated by nature to remain together, and as cooperation and sociability is their natural urge, they have to live together in a society. But this togetherness breeds difference and conflicts. Therefore, Allāh sent the prophets and revealed the book to judge about that difference.

There are three defects in this interpretation:-

First: It supposes that sociability and cooperation is the primary natural urge. But it has been explained that it is not so. The primary urge is to take advantage of others and use them for one’s own benefit. It is only when a man finds out that others have the same design about him that he comes to a compromise with them, and this ‘‘give-and-take’’ results in cooperation. So this cooperation is based on compromise, not on any natural urge. The Qur’ān also goes against

that supposition, as has been explained earlier.

Second: The mere fact that man is ‘‘social by nature’’, does not justify sending the prophets and revealing the book, unless it is mentioned that this ‘‘natural sociability’’ leads to conflict and disturbance. In other words, this interpretation makes it necessary to read this verse in this way: ‘‘Mankind is but one people (but that oneness breeds conflict) so Allāh sent the prophets :..’’. But the said interpreter does not accept that ‘conflict’ is implied in this sentence.

Third: This interpretation mentions only one conflict. But the verse clearly shows two conflicts — first, before the revelation of the book, when the differences were common to all people(*so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed*); and, second, after its revelation, which was confined to the religious scholars, and not common to all people (*And none differed about it* - i.e. about the book - *but the very people who were given it ... revolting among themselves*.) Thus there were two differences, one was after receiving the knowledge and based on revolt, the other was not so.

Qur’ān: *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners :*

Ba‘th (البعث) literally means to revive, to awaken, to bring back to life. Its past tense, *ba‘atha* (بعث) has been translated here as `sent down', only to make the meaning clear; otherwise, ‘sent down’ is the translation of *arsala* (ارسل), not of *ba‘atha* (بعث).

Why did Allāh use here the word *ba‘atha* (awakened, revived, بعث) here and not *arsala* (sent down, ارسل) ? The early period of mankind, which is being discussed in this sentence, was a period of quietness and inactivity. And it was more relevant to say that they were awakened and revived than that someone was sent to them.

Perhaps that is also the reason why those representatives of Allāh are here referred to as prophets (*nabiyyīn,* النبيّين) and not apostles (*mursalīn,* المرسلين). It has been described in the first volume that the purpose of raising the prophets and revealing the books was to explain the truth to people, and .to teach them the realities of their existence, making them aware of the fact that they have been created by their Lord, Allāh Who has no colleague or partner in His divinity or power; and that they are to return to Him and then shall be resurrected and brought back to life on a great day; that presently they have halted in a mid way station

which has no more reality than a sport or play. Having realised this basic fact, they must keep it before their eyes in all situation and all their actions, always bearing in mind where they have come from, where they are, and what is their destination. This waking up to the realities of life is more appropriately described by the word *nabiyyīn* (prophets, النبيّين) because *nabī* (النّبى) means ‘‘one who has the news (*nabā’,* النّبأ)’’.

Allāh sent the prophets: The authority and responsibility for sending the prophets is on Allāh alone. It is only He Who sends them. It proves their sinlessness in receiving the revelation and explaining it to the people. (This topic is described in detail at the end f this commentary).

The prophets were sent *as bearers of good tidings and as warners.* They brought the good news of the mercy of Allāh, and His pleasure and paradise for those who believe in Him and guard themselves against evil. And they gave the warning of the chastisement from Allāh, and His displeasure and Fire, to those who reject the truth and commit sins. The two aspects of prophethood — good tidings and warnings — are the most effective ways of keeping an average person on right path and making the prophetic mission a success, although some righteous servants of Allāh do good and desist from evil only for the sake of their Lord without thinking about any reward or punishment.

Qur’ān: *and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed: kitāb* (الكتاب) is on the paradigm of *fi‘āl* (فعال) and means ‘the written’. The word generally refers to anything written by pen. But as the covenants and decrees are confirmed through writing, it is not infrequently used for compulsory and obligatory commands, and for every confirmed fact or idea which is irrefutable. And it has been used in this meaning in numerous verses of the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān itself is called the book (*kitāb,* الكتاب) with this very meaning; otherwise, it is the talk of Allāh. It is said in the Qur’ān: (It is) *a ‘‘book’’ which We revealed to you, abounding in blessings ...* (38:29); *Surely, prayer is* (compulsory) *on the believers* (*kitāban mawaqūtā,* كتبا موقوتا) *a timedordinance.* (4:103).

The words, *in that in which they had differed* show that the meaning is, ‘‘Mankind was but one people, then they differed, so

Allāh sent the prophets ...''

The definite article ''the'' (*al*, ال) in 'the book' (*al-kitāb* ,الكتاب) indicates either the genus of book (and, accordingly refer to all divine books revealed to the prophets) or a known (andimplied) book. In later case, it would refer to the book of Nūḥ(a.s.), because Allāh says in the Qur'ān : *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and .that which We have revealed unto you and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā ...* (42:13). This verse describes the grace and favour of Allāh by saying that the *sharī'ah* (Law) sent down to the Muslims combines in itself what was given piecemeal to the previous prophets and over and above it contains many new features revealed to the prophet of Islam. It means that the Law was given only to those great prophets who are named here: N ū ḥ , Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Īsā and Muḥammad (peace be on them all).

Now, the verse under discussion (*He sent down with them the book ...*) clearly says that the *sharī'ah* was given in written form. Look at these two verses together and you will see that:-

First: Nūḥ (a.s.) was given a book containing the Law, and that book is surely referred to in this verse, *He sent down with them the book* either alone (if ''the'' is for a known and implied book) or with other divine books (if ''the'' denotes the genus of the book).

Second: The book of Nūḥ was the first divine book containing the *sharī'ah.* Had there been any other such book before him it would have contained a Law to judge between the people, and Allāh would have mentioned that *sharī'ah* in verse (42:13).

Third: The period referred to in the sentence, *Mankind was but one people* was the era before the mission of Nūḥ (a.s.) and his book decided and judged between the people in their differences.

Qur'ān: *And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves*:

It has been explained that it refers to the difference about the matters of religion among the followers of the religion. As the religion is based on the nature of man as created by Allāh (*Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion — the nature made by Allāh in which He had made men* — 30:30), Allāh attributed these differences to the revolt of the followers and the scholars of the religion.

The words *but the very people who were given it* indicate the origin of the religious differences about the meaning of the book. It does not say that every one who goes astray or follows a false religion is a rebel, although it is true that he has lost his way. Allāh would not accept the excuses of a rebel; but He might accept the entreaties of those who were confused and could not find the right path. Allāh says: *The way* (to blame) *is only against those who do injustice to the people and revolt in the earth unjustly ...* (42:42); *And others have confessed evil* (one); *may be Allāh will turn to them* (in mercy); *surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful ... And others are made to wait Allāh's command — whether He will chastise them or whether He will turn* (in mercy), *to them; And Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise* (9:102—106)*; Except the weakened ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor do they find a way; so these, it may be, Allāh will pardon them, and Allāh is the Clement, Oft forgiving* (4:98—99)

Moreover, nature may go hand in hand with forgetfulness or doubt, but it cannot with revolt and intentional transgression. That is why the verse uses the words of revolt especially for those who knew the book and for whom the signs were made clear. Allāh says: *And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in and reject My signs, they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide.* (2 39) There are numerous verses of this meaning in the Qur'ān; and in all of them the disbelief has been made conditional on the rejection of the signs of Allāh and then it is followed by the threat of punishment.

In short, this sentence shows that the second differences began because of the rebellion of the scholars of the book, after they were given knowledge of it.

Qur'ān: *whereupon Allāh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed. And Allāh guides whom He pleases to the straight path.*

the truth about which they differed explains the subjects of the differences and that it was the truth with which the book was sent down (''the book with the truth'').

At this juncture, Allāh guided the believers to the truth in both differences: differences in affairs of this life, and differences in the matters of religion. The guidance of the believers was *by His will,*

because they could not make it binding upon Allāh to guide them, for the simple reason that there is none to impose upon Him. It is only He Himself who takes upon Himself whatever He pleases. Therefore, the guidance was by His will; if He were not pleased, He would not have willed and would not have guided.

Accordingly, the sentence, *And Allāh guides whom He pleases to the straight path* gives the reason of ''by His will''. He guided them because it is His discretion to guide whom He pleases, nobody can impose upon Him to guide this or to guide that. And He surely willed to guide the believers to the straight path.

Looking at the verses as a whole, we come to know the following:-

First: The definition of religion: Religion is a way of life which contains the good of this world in a manner that ensures perfection of the next life - the life that is the real and eternal one near to Allāh.

It means that the *sharī'ah* must contain the necessary laws for this worldly life and one's livelihood.

Second: Originally religion was promulgated to remove natural differences; then it was perfected to remove both types of differences; then it was perfected to remove both types of difference — the natural ones and the un-natural ones emanating from the rebellion of religious scholars.

Third: Religion goes on perfecting itself until its laws cover all the possible needs and eventualities of life. When it reaches that stage of perfection it is finalised and no other religion comes after it. Conversely, if a religion is the final one, it must be comprehensive enough to cover all eventualities and fulfil all the needs of life. Allāh said: *Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allāh and the Last of the prophets…* (33:40); *and We revealed unto you the book, explaining clearly everything …* (16:89*); and most surely it is a mighty book; falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor f r o m behind it …* (41:41-42).

Fourth: Every succeeding *sharī'ah* was more perfect than the preceding one.

Fifth: Why were the prophets sent and the books revealed? In other words, what was the reason for the prophetic mission? Man, by his nature, develops towards differences in matters of life, as much as he progresses towards social cooperation. As it is nature itself which

leads to differences, it is not capable of removing them. How can it repel a thing when it is forcefully pulling it towards itself? Therefore, Allāh took it upon Himself to remove that conflict; and He sent the prophets with the laws to lead men to their perfection — real perfection which is a part of their creation. Allāh says: *Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal.) (20:50) It shows that Allāh completes the creation of everything and guides it to its perfection. The creation of man is completed when he is guided to his perfection in both lives. Also He says: *All do We aid — these as well as those — out of the bounty of your Lord; and the bounty of your Lord is not confined.* (17:20) It means that Allāh aids out of His bounty everyone who is in need of His aid in his life and existence; He gives him what he deserves. His bounty is neither confined nor limited, so far as Allāh is concerned. If there is any limitation, it is from man's side, not from his Creator's.

Obviously, man cannot perfect himself, because it is his own nature which is the case of this defect. As it is nature which leads to the conflict, and as that nature is unable to mend what it has damaged, the reform (if there is to be any) must come from somewhere outside nature — it must come from the Creator; and it came in the form of prophethood guided by divine revelation. The sending of the prophets for this reform and removal of conflict has been given the name of *ba'th* (awakening, revival, البعث); and never has this verb been attributed, in the Qur'ān, to anyone except Allāh, although the prophetic calls, like everything else, have some connection with their place and time.

Prophethood is a divine (say, if you will, unseen) condition which has the same relation to general human perception and activity as wakefulness has to sleep. The prophet receives the knowledge by which the conflicts and differences of human life can be removed. This perception received from the unseen is called, in the language of the Qur'ān 'revelation'; and the quality and condition of receiving that revelation is called 'prophethood'.

Therefore, the reason for initiating the prophetic mission rests on the following factors:-

(1) Human nature leads man to social cooperation;
(2) At the same time it creates friction and conflict;

(3) Nature itself cannot remove that conflict;
(4) Therefore, a force outside of nature, should intervene to remove that conflict;
(5) Allāh completes creation and in His mercy, has taken it upon Himself to guide everything to its perfection;
(6) As a result of that undertaking, He sent prophets and revealed to them the book to reform human society.

All these factors are proved by reason and experience.

Never has man desisted from exploiting others to his advantage; never has that exploitation, after action and reaction, failed to created a society; never has any society been free from conflict; never has that conflict been removed without social laws; and never has human wisdom been able to make such laws which could cut away all the roots of conflict.

Look at the present world. See the chaos in human society, the degradation of moral values, the never-ending chain of wars, the destruction of crops and cattle, the fightings which exterminate millions and millions of people, the autocracies, the subjugation of nations, the abasing of the human spirit, the usurping of lives and property; you will find all these and much more. And it is happening in this, the twentieth century, the century of civilisation, the age of progress, the era of culture and science. What could have been the situation in the old day — the age of ignorance and darkness?

That the teaching and training of religion, emanating from the prophets and revelation, have the ability to eradicate this conflict is proved by reason and experience.

Reason: Religion calls people to real knowledge, high ethics, and noble deeds. Humanity can reach the highest peak of perfection by following such teachings.

Experience: Islam has proved it during the short period when it had control over Muslim society, as will be explained, God willing, in a proper place.

Sixth: The religion, which has been sent as the last of all religions, proves that humanity has reached the final stage of its completion and perfection. That is why the Qur'ān has decreed that prophethood has come to its end with Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). His religion will never be abrogated, and his *sharī'ah* will remain in force till the end of the world.

It means that human perfection, individual as well as collective, shall always, remain within the limits of the laws ordained by Islam. There can never arise a situation for which Islam has no guidance.

It is a prophecy of the Qur'ān confirmed by the history of humanity in the last fourteen centuries. Mankind has, in this period, progressed tremendously, and reached unimaginable heights in the field of the material and. physical sciences. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about his ethics and morality. It has not progressed even one step since that time. Rather, it could be claimed that in this respect it has taken many steps backwards. Thus humanity has not progressed as a whole. It is a lop-sided development. Man has strengthened his body, neglecting his soul, which has become weaker.

It is clear from above that the laws of Islam have as much relevance in this era as they had fourteen centuries ago. And they will not loose their relevancy even in the future.

Some people say: The laws of religion were made for the reform of man and the good of society. If society changes, and climbs further towards the summit of perfection, religion and its law also must change, to stay in step with the changing society. It is no secret that the difference between this age and that when the Qur'ān came down and Islamic laws were promulgated is far greater than the difference between the times of Mūsā and 'Īsā (a.s.) and that of the Prophet of Islam. This vast difference demands the abrogation of the laws of Islam, so that other laws, more appropriate to a modern progressive society, can be ordained.

Reply: Religion does not aim only at the material and physical perfection of man. It looks at the human being as a whole, and seeks to make him perfect both physically and spiritually, so that he may attain both material and spiritual bliss. Its deal is the social man who is perfect from the above-mentioned point of view, not a social man who might be perfect in technology and politics but bankrupt in other aspects of humanity. These people looked at societies based on materialism. Matter is always in change, climbing up the ladder of perfection, and the same is true of materialistic societies. These people thought that a society based on religion would also always be subject to change and abrogation. But they over-looked the fundamental difference between the two societies. They forgot that Islam does not aim at a lop-sided development of man; instead, it seeks well-balanced development, where man becomes perfect

as a whole, both in body and soul. Before demanding the abrogation of Islam, they should produce an individual or a society which combines religious tenets and material progress. Then they should say what deficiency has been left therein which should be completed by a new *sharī'ah,* or what weakness is there which needs a new law. Unless and until they produce such a society to point to the supposed defects, they have no justification in claiming that Islam should be abrogated.

Seventh: The prophets (peace be on them all) were sinless and protected from error and sin.

SINLESSNESS OF THE PROPHETS

'Iṣmah (العصمة) which is generally translated as ''sinlessness'', literally means 'protection'. The 'protection' with which we are concerned here, is of three kinds:

(1) protection from error in receiving the revelation,
(2) protection from error in communicating and imparting that revelation to the people, and
(3) protection from sins. Sin here means any thing or action which goes against the obligatory command of Allāh, and thus becomes a disgrace for the man. In other words, any word or action which is against the dictates of the servitude, homage and devoutness of man towards his Lord.

'Iṣmah (العصمة) in religious terminology, means the presence, in the man concerned, of a quality which protects him from committing any thing unlawful, any error or sin.

So far as *'iṣmah* from extraneous things (i.e. other than receiving revelation and its communication, and sins) is concerned — for example, mistakes in perception by any of the five senses, or misjudging the benefit or harm of a medicine, food or other such thing, etc. — it is not relevant to this verse which we are now discussing.

Anyhow, the Qur'ān definitely proves that every prophet was *ma'ṣūm* (sinless, protected from mistakes, المعصوم) in all the above mentioned three aspects.

'Iṣmah from error in receiving the revelation and in its communication to the people: The following sentences, in the verse under discussion, prove these two aspects: *so Allāh sent the prophets,*

as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves; whereupon Allāh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed.

These words show that Allāh sent them to bring the good tidings and to warn; and sent the book with them (and this was the ''revelation''), so that they might guide the people to true belief and true deeds. This was the aim and object of Allāh in appointing the prophets. And He says: *errs not my Lord, nor does He forget.* (20:52) It proves that Allāh errs not in His action, and makes no mistakes in His affairs; when He wills a thing, He wills it in its proper way which creates the desired effect without fail; when He proceeds with a work, the result is produced without any mistake. It is as it should be, because in His hand is creation and command, and for Him is power and judgement. And He sends prophets by revealing to them the true knowledge of religion and teaching it to them — and without fail it must be so; of necessity the prophets must receive and understand the revelation correctly; and He sends them to communicate that revelation to their people, and without fail it must be so; without any error or mistake they must communicate it as Allāh has willed. Allāh says: *Surely Allāh attains His purpose; Allāh indeed has made a measure for everything* (65:3); *and Allāh is predominant over His affair.* (12:21)

Another verse which proves these two types of *'iṣmah* is as follows: *The Knower of the Unseen; so He does not reveal His secrets to any except to him whom He chooses for an apostle; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him, so that He may know that they have indeed delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them and He takes account of everything.* (72:26—28) It is clear that Allāh reserves His revelation for His messengers; so He reveals His secrets to them and supports them by guarding them from in front of them and behind them; and encompasses what is with them to protect the revelation from decay and alteration, whether that alteration comes from Satan or others; and it is done to make sure that they have indeed correctly delivered the messages of their Lord. Another verse reports the words of the angels of revelation: *and we do not come down but by the*

command of your Lord; His is whatever is before us and whatever is behind us and whatever is between these; and your Lord is not forgetful. (19:64) These verses prove that the revelation right from the start of its descent, to its reaching down to the prophets and up to its communication and delivery to the people is duly protected and guarded against change and alteration, from whatever source it might come.

These two verses prove the *'iṣmah* of the prophets in receiving and delivering the revelation only; but they may also be used, with the addition of one rational premises, to prove their *'iṣmah* from sins. For an average man, actions speaks as loudly as, if not louder than, words. If someone does a certain thing, his action proves that in his eyes that work is good and lawful; it is as if he was announcing its legality and virtue in so many words. If a prophet committed a sin, while he forbade it to his people, it would mean that he was preaching two contradictory things: his action allowed a thing, while his words forbade it. Thus he would be preaching two things contradictory to each other. And preaching contradictory things is against the preaching of truth, because one order would belie and invalidate the other. One who reports two contradictory items cannot be said to be reporting the truth. Therefore, *'iṣmah* of the prophet in delivering the message of Allāh totally depends upon his *'iṣmah* from the sins.

There are many other verses which prove *'iṣmah* of the prophets in all its aspects:-

(a) *These are they whom Allāh has guided; therefore, follow their guidance.* (6:90) All the prophets were decidedly guided by Allāh. And Allāh says: *and whomsoever Allāh lets go astray, there is no guide for him; and whom Allāh guides, there is none that can lead him astray; is not Allāh Mighty, the Lord of retribution?* (39:36—37) Also He says: *whomsoever Allāh guides, he is the rightly guided one.* (18:17) According to these verses those who are guided by Allāh can never be led astray by any misleading agency. In other words, they are free from all misguidance; and every sin is a misguidance, as is shown by the words of Allāh, *Did I not enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should worship Me; this is the right way. And certainly he led astray a great multitude from among you. What! could not then understand?* (36:60—62) In this verse, Allāh counts every sin as

going astray, a misguidance as a result of the agency of Satan ; at the same time regarding it as the worship of Satan. Looking at all the above verses we find that:-

Allāh guided all the prophets by His guidance.

Anyone guided by Allāh's guidance can never be misled, can never go astray.

Every sin is a misguidance ; every sin is straying from the right path.

It follows that the prophets of Allāh were sinless, free from every sin and protected from every mistake in receiving and delivering the revelation of Allāh.

(b) *And whoever obeys Allāh and the Apostle these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed the favours of the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous ones; and excellent are these as companions!* (4:69)

Also He says: *Keep us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not* (the path) *of those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor* (of those) *gone astray.* (1:5—7)

The prophets are described as of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favours; and those upon whom Allāh's favours have been bestowed are other than those who have gone astray. It means that the prophets never went astray. If they had committed a sin, they would have gone astray (as explained above). Also, if they had committed any error or mistake in receiving or communicating the revelation, they would have gone astray. There fore, the two verses together prove the *'iṣmah* of the prophets in all these aspects.

(c) *These are they on whom Allāh bestowed favours, of the prophets of the posterity of Adam, and of those whom We carried with Nūḥ, and of the posterity of Ibrāhīm and Israel, and of those whom We guided and chose. When the signs of the Beneficent* (God) *were recited to them, they fell down prostrating* (in obedience) *and weeping. But there followed after them an evil generation, who neglected prayer and followed sensual desires, so they shall soon meet (the result of their) sin.* (19:58—59)

This verse attributes two virtues to the prophets: first, the bestowing of favours (*upon whom Allāh bestowed favours*); second, guidance (*whom We guided and chose*). Then it goes on praising them for the highest degree of obedience, devoutness and humility before Allāh.

Afterwards, it condemns the unworthy following generation for their evil traits. Obviously, we see here two opposite groups: one, the praiseworthy ones deserving to be honoured by Allāh; the other, the condemned ones. This second group has been described as those who followed sensual desires and who will soon see the result of their sins. It clearly means that the first group, i.e. the prophets, did not follow their desires and will not be overtaken by sin. Such sincere servants of Allāh could not commit any sin, even before their appointment as prophets. Had they committed any sin even before their receiving prophethood, they would have surely come under the condemnation, *neglected prayer and followed sensual desires, so they shall soon meet* (the result of their) *sin.* But, as we explained, theirs is a group of diametrically opposite to the condemned ones.

This Qur'ānic proof is somewhat similar to the rational proof given for. the *'iṣmah* of the prophets, which is as follows:-

The sending of the prophets and the showing of miracles in their hands is the confirmation of their words. It means that they cannot tell a lie. Also, it is an endorsement that they have the ability to communicate the message of Allāh to their people. But a man who indulges in sins and such actions as would harm a project, cannot be said to be qualified to preach the usefulness of that project or to invite the people to participate in it. Therefore, when Allāh showed miracles in the hands of the prophets it not only authenticated their claim of prophethood, but also confirmed that they could not commit error in receiving and delivering the divine revelation, and that they faithfully obeyed all the commands of Allāh and desisted from all such things which were disliked by Allāh. In other words, they were sinless in all its aspects.

Question: All intelligent people take help, in all varieties of social needs and communications, from those who may discharge their duties to a certain extent, even if their delivery of the message or their performance in that social work is not quite perfect. What is wrong if Allāh sends prophets who are capable of doing His work to a certain extent, even if occasionally they indulged in sin?

Reply: Men overlook such defects in their agents for one of two reasons: either they do not mind a little short-coming and deficiency, or their aim is to get only that amount of service which the agent is qualified for.

But both these alternatives are unacceptable for a divine scheme. These alternatives show the deficiency and shortcoming of not only the agents but also of the principal. Allāh cannot be like us mortals.

An Objection: Allāh says, *why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may acquire* (proper) *understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them, so that they may be cautious?* (9:122)

Here Allāh has entrusted Muslim scholars with the task of warning their people. And those scholars are not sinless.

Reply: Muslim scholars (admittedly not sinless) have been allowed by this verse to communicate to their people what they have learned about religion. It does not say that Allāh confirms their words of warning, nor that their words are recognised by Allāh as a divine proof over people. It is this divine confirmation and recognition which is the basic characteristic of prophethood, not mere warning.

(d) *And We did not send any apostle but that he should be obeyed by Allāh's permission ...* (4:64) The aim of sending an apostle is that he be obeyed, and the verse confines the aim to only this one thing. People should obey the apostle in both his words and actions, because preaching is done in both ways. And both these aspects of obedience are covered by Allāh's permission. If an apostle erred in understanding the revelation or in its delivery, it would still be Allāh's will, according to this verse, that people should obey and follow him. But Allāh only permits truth. How can His permission be related to an error or mistake? Thus, it is clear that an apostle cannot err in receiving or delivering a revelation. Likewise, if an apostle were to commit a sin, in words or actions, an impossible situation would arise. Sin is disliked by Allāh, forbidden by Him. But the verse enjoins people to obey and follow their apostle. Thus that same sin would, at the same time, be for the people an act of obedience which they would be required to follow and copy. It would mean that Allāh had, at one and the same time, willed it and not willed it, ordered it and forbade it; liked it and disliked it! As explained earlier, it would be an impossible order. We do not mean an order to do an impossible work (which, some do say, can be given by Allāh!): we mean that giving such an order is in itself an impossibility, because it would be, at one and the same time, an order and a non-order, a will and non-will, a liking and non-liking, a praise and non-praise, a condemnation and non-condemnation!!

(e) *so that there may not remain any argument for people against Allāh, after the apostles ...* (4:165) It is clear that Allāh wills to intercept the excuse which people might think of for their sins and disobedience; and that the only way of dismissing such excuse is by sending the apostles to them. The coming of the apostles could cut their excuse short only if the apostles themselves desisted from all those things which Allāh does not like — be it in word or action. Otherwise, people could easily give their apostles' sins and mistakes as their excuse, and that argument would be valid against Allāh. Therefore, if Allāh had sent a non-*ma'sūm* apostle, He would have defeated His own purpose.

Question: It is accepted that the verses prove that the prophets do not commit any mistake or sin. But this does not prove that they had *'iṣmah. 'Iṣmah,* as defined by scholars, does not mean merely 'not committing any sin'**;** it is ''a faculty which protects a man from committing any sin or mistake''. Doing or not doing a work does not prove that the man concerned possesses the faculty, or characteristic, of that doing or not doing. The verses prove that they did not commit any sin; while to prove *'iṣmah* it should be proved that they could not commit any.

Answer: What is needed for proving the subject matter of this verse, is only the fact that the prophets did not commit any sin or mistake. And the questioner accepts that the verses prove it.

To prove that this fact was based on a characteristic or faculty of the prophets, look up the subject of 'miracle' in the first volume. There it was shown that the verse, *Surely my Lord is on the straight path* (11:56), and *Surely Allāh attains His purpose; Allāh indeed has made a measure for every thing* (65:3) prove that every happening depends on a cause which brings it into being. Now in the case of a prophet, we see that all his actions throughout his life are invariably correct, proper and in obedience to Allāh. This firm and unchanging characteristic shows that there must be a faculty in his soul which protects him from committing any sin or mistakes, and causes all his actions to be in accordance with the commands of Allāh. And that faculty is *'iṣmah.*

It is accepted that all actions of a prophet occur by his own will, as do our own actions. But his actions are always in obedience to

Allāh, while our actions are sometimes in obedience and sometimes in disobedience. An action is said to occur by our will when it is based on our knowledge and discretion. Our actions differ in obedience and disobedience because of a difference in the knowledge and will from which they emanate. If our knowledge and will demand to fulfil the dictates of servitude by obeying the divine command, obedience comes into being. If, on the other hand, our knowledge and will prefer the pursuit of pleasure and the satisfaction of lust, then disobedience and sin occur. In short, the difference in the quality of our actions, obedience or disobedience, is caused by the difference in our knowledge and will. Had our knowledge and will remained unchanged throughout our life, all our actions would have been of one type only - either a life-long obedience to Allāh, or, God forbid, an unbroken chain of sins. As the actions of a prophet are invariably, according to the dictates of piety and in obedience to Allāh, it follows that the knowledge and will from which his actions emanate are healthy ones, invariably good and virtuous. In other words, it is ingrained in his mind and soul that he must always serve and obey Allāh. It is this firmly-rooted knowledge which is called a faculty, characteristics or trait, like the faculty of chastity, of bravery, of justice, and so on. When we admit that a prophet always obeys Allāh and never commits any sin, we accept that he possesses a spiritual quality or faculty which always keeps him on right path and protects him from sin and mistakes. And that faculty is *'iṣmah.*

Also, we have shown that a prophet does not commit any error or mistake in receiving or delivering the divine revelation. It means that he possesses a spiritual quality which protects him from such mistakes.

If we say that a prophet does not have this spiritual faculty or characteristic (while it is known that he does not commit any sin or mistake) then it would mean that this unchanging habit (i.e. always following the divine command and desisting from mistake and sin) is not related to any spiritual or psychological trait of his own - in other words, it is caused directly by the will of Allāh, and that the prophet has no choice, option or will of his own in his actions; in short his actions are not caused by his knowledge and will. But it is already admitted that the actions of the prophet are based on his knowledge and will just like those

of other human beings.

'Iṣmah comes from Allāh; He creates in the prophet a cause from which all his actions emanate — the actions which are done by his own will and are always in obedience to Allāh; and that cause is the firmly-rooted knowledge — in other words, the characteristic, trait or faculty.

ABOUT PROPHETHOOD

Allāh uses two words for those who received His revelations so as to guide people to the right path. These words are *rasūl* (apostle, messenger, الرّسول) and *nabī* (prophet, النّبىّ), which divide, or almost divide, them into two groups, Allāh says**:** *... and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up ...* (39:69); *On the day when Allāh will assemble the apostles, then say: What answer were you given?* (5:109) *Rasūl* (الرّسول) means the one who brings the message (*risālah,* الرّسالة);*nabī* (النبى) is the one who brings the news (*naba',* النّبأ) *Rasūl* (الرسول) has the distinction of being an intercessor (or intermediary) between Allāh and His creatures. *Nabī* (النبى) has the distinction of having the knowledge of Allāh and from Allāh.

It is said that *rasūl* (الرّسول) is the one who is sent by Allāh and commissioned to convey the divine message to the people**;** and *nabi* (النّبىّ) is the one who is sent by Allāh, whether he is told to convey the message or not. According to this interpretation, the relationship between the Apostle and Prophet is such that all apostles are prophets but not all the prophets are apostles.

But the words of Allāh do not support this view. For example, Allāh says: *And remember Mūsā in the Book; surely he was one purified and was an apostle, a prophet.* (19:51) The aim of this verse is to praise Mūsā and show his greatness and in such a context the adjectives should progress from general to distinctive and not *vice versa.*

Also at another place, Allāh says: *And We did not send before you any apostle or prophet but ...* (22:52) This verse joins the apostles and the prophets together and then uses the verb ''to send'' (*irsāl*, الارسا ل)for both, making all of them apostle (*mursal,* المرسل)

But there are other verses which apparently show that everyone who

was sent by Allāh to people was a prophet. See, for example, … *and the book shall be laid down, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up* ... (39:69); ... *but he is the Apostle of Allāh and the Last of the prophets* ... (33:40); and also the verse under discussion, ... *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners* ... All these verses show that the prophets were sent with a divine message to people. Then what is the significance of the verse mentioned above, … *and was an apostle and a prophet?* Probably, the two words have been used here in their literal sense: Mūsā was a Messenger of Allāh and had the knowledge and information of the signs of Allāh and His secrets.

Likewise, the next-mentioned verse (*And We did not send before you any apostle or prophet but* ....) may be taken to mean that the prophet and the apostle both are sent to the people, but the prophet is sent to convey to them information of the unseen, as he knows the divine secrets, and the apostle is sent to bring them something more than a prophetic communication. This may be inferred from the verses, like: *And every people had an apostle; so when their apostle came, the matter was decided between them with justice* ... (10:47) and *nor we chastise until We raise an apostle.* (17:15) Accordingly, the prophet explains to people what is good for their lives in this world and in the hereafter, the roots of the religion and its branches, as the mercy of Allāh decides to guide the people to their bliss and felicity; and the apostle brings to people a special message to complete the proof over them, a message, rejection of which brings destruction and chastisement in its wake. Allāh says: … *that there may not remain any argument for people against Allāh after the apostles*. (4:165)

In short, the words of Allāh do not show any difference between the two except what appears from their literal meaning. And it leads us to the same conclusion which we have mentioned earlier, i.e., apostle has the distinction of being an intercessor (or intermediary) between Allāh and His creatures, and the prophet has the distinction of having the knowledge of Allāh and from Allāh.

We shall later quote the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* about the difference between an apostle and a prophet.

The Qur'ān very clearly says that there were numerous prophets, and that Allāh has not described all of them in His Book. For example, Allāh says: *And certainly We sent apostles before you*: *there are some*

of them that We have mentioned to you and there are others whom We have not mentioned to you ... (40:78)

There are twenty odd prophets mentioned by name in the Book of Allāh: ’Ādam, Nūḥ, Idrīs, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ, Ismā‘īl, Alyasa‘, Dhu ’l-kifl, Ilyās, Yūnus, Isḥāq, Ya‘qūb, Shu‘ayb, Mūsā, Hārūn, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, Ismā‘īl Ṣādiqu ’l-wa‘d[3], ‘Īsā, and Muḥammad, May Allāh bless them all.

Some other prophets have been mentioned, but not by name. Allāh says: *Did you not look at the chiefs of the children of Israel after Mūsā, when they said to a prophet of theirs; Raise up for us a king ...* (2:246); *Or like him who passed by a town, and it had fallen down ...* (2:259); *When We sent to them two, and they rejected both of them, so We strengthened* (them) *with a third* ….(36:14); *Then they found one from among Our servants whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had taught knolwedge from Ourselves*. (18:65); *the grandchildren* (2:136).

There are some about whom it is not clear whether they were prophets or not, like the boy (disciple) of Mūsā (*And when Mūsā said to his boy* — 18:60)*,* Dhu ’l-Qarnayn, ‘Imrān (father of Maryam) and ‘Uzayr. (The first one is mentioned in the Qur’ān by an adjective and the other by name).

The Qur’ān has not mentioned how many prophets there were all together. The traditions giving their number are not *mutawātir* and differ among themselves. The most well-known is the tradition of Abū Dharr that the prophet told him that there were one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets; three hundred and thirteen of them were apostles.

The chiefs of all the prophets are the ones endowed with fortitude (*ulu’l-‘azm* اولوالعزم); and they are Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Īsā and Muḥammad (blessings of Allāh be on him and them all!) Allāh says: *Therefore bear up patiently as did the apostles endowed with fortitude bear up with patience...* (46:35) It will be explained later on that *‘azm* (fortitude, determination, firm resolve, العزم) in this context means that they firmly upheld the first covenant they made with Allāh, and they

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[3] This is as it appears in the Arabic orginal, but it is in fact the same prophet as the Ismā‘īl appearing earlier in the list.

never forgot it. Allāh says: *And when We made a covenant with the prophets and with you, and with Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and ʻĪsā, son of Maryam, and We took from them a firm covenant*. (33:7). Also He says: *And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot and We did not find in him any determination.* (20:115).

Each of these five apostles brought a new law and a book. Allāh says: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed unto you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and ʻĪsā ...* (42:13); *Most surely this is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā*. (87:18—19); *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets ... were judging* (matters) *… And We sent after them in their footsteps ʻĪsā, son of Maryam, verifying what was before him of the Torah ... And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it; therefore, judge between them by what Allāh has revealed and do not follow their desires* (to turn away) *from the truth that has come to you; for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way, and if Allāh had pleased He would have made you* (all) *a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you ...* (5:44—48)

These verses clearly show that these five *ulu 'l-ʻazm* prophets had been given laws, and that Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ʻIsā and Muḥammad (peace be on them all) were given books. So far as the book of Nūḥ is concerned, we have already explained that the verse under discussion, read together with verse 42:13, proves that he was given a book. All these books contained a law and a *sharīʻah.*

The Qur'ān says that Dawud (a.s.) was given a book (*And We gave Dāwūd the Zabūr* (4:163)), and according to the traditions Ādam, Shīth and Idrīs also were given books. But we are not concerned here with those books, because they did not contain any law or *sharīʻah.*

Revelation is essential for prophethood. Revelation is a sort of talk of Allāh, and prophethood depends upon it. Allāh says: *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him ...* (4:163). A full discussion of revelation will be given, God willing, in the chapter of *ash-Shūra.*

TRADITIONS

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘The men before Nūḥ, were one people, on the creation of Allāh, neither rightly guided nor gone astray, then Allāh raised the prophets.’’ [*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*]

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said about this verse: *And it was before Nūḥ*. He was asked whether they were on the right path. He said: ‘‘Rather they were astray. When Ādam and his good children died, his successor, Shīth, was unable to expound the religion of Allāh which was followed by Ādam and his good children. It was so because Qābīl had threatened to kill him as he had killed his brother, Hābīl. Therefore, Shīth lived among them in fear, keeping his religion secret. Their straying increased day by day until nobody remained with them on the earth except those who had already passed away. And the successor (of Ādam) settled in an island to worship Allāh. Then Allāh decided to raise the apostles. And if these ignorant ones were asked they would say that He (Allāh) had finished the matter; but they are liars; verily it is thinga bout which Allāh decrees every year.’’ Then the Imam recited: *Therein every wise affair is made distinct*. (44:4). (Then he said:) ‘‘So Allāh decrees what should happen during the year, hardship or abundance or rain or other such things.’’ The narrator asked whether before the prophet they had gone astray or were on the right path. The Imām said: ‘‘They were not on guidance. They were on the creation of Allāh upon which they were created. There is no change in the creation of Allāh. And they were not to be guided until Allāh guided them. Do you not hear the words of Ibrāhīm, *Had not my Lord guided me, I would certainly have been of the erring people*. (6:77) i.e., forgetful of the covenant.’’ [al ‘Ayyāshī]

The author says: The words, *They were not on guidance*. *They were on creation of Allāh,* explain the words *they were astray* which have been used in the beginning of the tradition. It means that they were not guided in detail to the divine knowledge, but had its rudimentary knowledge. And such a guidance may be termed straying in the meaning of ignorance of details. The first tradition, quoted from *Majma‘u ’l-bayān,* mentions it in these words: ‘‘on the creation of Allāh, neither rightly guided nor gone astray.’’

The last words of this tradition, ‘‘forgetful of the covenant’’ also

explain the straying mentioned earlier. Guidance is the remembrance of the covenant in its reality (as is the case with the perfect believers), or the carrying on like those who remember the covenant, even if one oneself does not remember it in reality (as is the case of most of the believers); and giving the name of guidance to this second group is only because of the mercy of Allāh.

Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam narrates that an atheist came to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.), and asked him, ‘‘From whre did you prove the prophets and apostles?’’ The Imām said: ‘‘When we proved that there is a Creator and Maker who is elevated above us and above all the created things, and that that Creator is wise, and that it is not possible for His creatures to see Him or touch Him; and that He cannot live with them nor they with Him, and He cannot have discussion with them nor they argue with Him ; then it is proved that He must have in His creation some envoys to guide the people to their advantage and interest and to that on which depends their existence and the neglect of which brings their destruction. Thus it is proved that there should be some people to enjoin (good) and forbid (evil) on behalf of the (Creator who is) wise and Cognizant of His creation. It all proves that He has his interpreters, and they are the prophets, His chosen ones from among His creation, wise, well-trained in erudition, sent (to the people) with that (wisdom); not like the people in their conditions though they are like them in physique and the make-up of the body; supported by the Wise, the All-knowing with wisdom and proofs and arguments and evidence, like raising up the dead and healing the blind and the leper. So, the earth of Allāh cannot remain empty from a proof (of Allāh) with whom should be a sign to show that he is truthful in his words, and it is essential for him to be on justice.’’ [*at-Tawḥid*]

The author says: Evidently, this tradition contains three proofs about three subjects of prophethood:-

First: A reason to prove the necessity of prophethood in general. On deep consideration you will find it in conformity with what we have inferred from the verse under discussion.

Second: The proof that it is necessary that the prophet be supported with miracles. It conforms with what we said about miracles under the verse (2:23) *And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it ...*

Third: The proof that there should always be a representative of Allāh on this earth, be he a prophet or an Imām. And we shall explain this, God willing, in a suitable place.

There is a tradition narrated by ‘Utbah al-Laythī from Abū Dharr (May Allāh have mercy on him) that he said: ‘ ‘I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! How many prophets were there?’ The Prophet said: ‘One hundred and twenty-four thousand.’ I said: ‘How many of them were apostles?’ He said: ‘Three hundred and thirteen, a large crowd!’ I said: ‘Who was first of the prophets?’ He said: ‘Ādam.’ I said: ‘Was he an apostle from among the prophets?’ He said: ‘Yes. Allāh made him by His hand (power) and breathed into him of His spirit.’ Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘O Abū Dharr! Four of the prophets were Syrians: Ādam, Shīth, Ukhnūkh i.e. Idrīs (and he was the first to write with the pen) and Nūḥ; and four of them were Arabs: Hūd, Sāliḥ, Shu‘ayb and your prophet, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.); and the first prophet among the children of Israel was Mūsā, and the last of them was ‘Īsā and (between them were) six hundred prophets.’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! How many books were sent down by Allāh?’ He said: ‘One hundred and four books. Allāh sent down fifty books unto Shīth, and thirty books unto Idrīs, and twenty books unto Ibrāhīm, and He sent down the Torah, and the Injīl, and that Zabūr, and al-Furqān.’ ’’ [*al-Khiṣāl* and *Ma‘ānī al-akhbār*]

The author says: This tradition, and especially its first part describing the number of the prophets and the apostles, is famous, and it has been narrated by Shī‘ahs and Sunnīs in their books. And aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated a tradition of the same meaning in *al-Khiṣāl* and *al-Amālī,* from ar-Ridā (a.s.) through his forefathers from the Prophet; and (another tradition) from Zayd ibn ‘Alī through his father and grandfather from ‘Alī (a.s.); and similar traditions have been reported by Ibn Qawlawayh in *Kāmilu ’z-ziyārah* and by as-Sayyid in *al-Iqbāl* from as-Sajjād (a.s.) and in *al-Baṣā’ir* from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

There is a tradition from al-Bāqir (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *and he was an apostle, a prophet* (19:51), that he said: ‘‘The prophet is the one who sees in his dream and hears the voice but does not see the angel; and the apostle is the one who hears the voice, and does not see in dreams, and sees the angel.’’[*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: There are other traditions with this meaning.

Possibly, their meaning may be inferred from such verses as, *therefore, send Thou to Ḥarūn.* (26:13) This tradition does not say that the apostle means the one to whom the angel of revelation is sent. It simply says that prophethood and apostleship are two ranks, the speciality of the one is seeing in the dream, and of the other is seeing the angel of revelation. Sometimes, both ranks are combined in one person, then the two specialities are found together; and sometimes prophethood is found without apostleship. Therefore, apostleship is more particular than prophethood, in practice, but not in meaning. See for example, the tradition of Abū Dharr, mentioned above, in which he asks, ‘‘how many of the prophets were apostles?’’

Therefore, it is clear that every apostle is a prophet but not *vice versa.* This clear explanation provides the answer to the misunderstanding of some people who say that the Holy Prophet of Islam was not the last apostle, though he was the last prophet. Their ‘‘argument’’ is as follows:

Allāh says: *but he* (i.e. Muḥammad) *is the Apostle of Allāh and the last of the prophets.* (33:40) The verse says that he was the last of the prophets, but does not say that he was the last of the apostles.’’

Reply: Prophethood is, in fact, more general and comprehensive than apostleship. When a general item is negated its particular groups are automatically negated.

And so far as the traditions are concerned they have never said that apostleship can be found without prophethood. As you have seen they clearly say that all apostles were prophets, but not all prophets were apostles.

Abu ’l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: The *ulu ’l-‘azm* prophets were given this name because they were people of firm determination and (brought a new) law. It was like this: Every prophet coming after Nūḥ was on his *sharī‘ah* and his way, and followed his (Nūh’s) book upto the time of Ibrāhīm, the friend (of Allāh). And every prophet from the time of Ibrāhīm was on the *sharī‘ah* of Ibrāhīm and his way and followed his book upto the time of Mūsā. And every prophet from the time of Mūsā was on the *sharī‘ah* of Mūsā and his way and followed his book upto the time of ‘Īsā. And every prophet who was in the time of ‘Īsā and after him, was on the *sharī‘ah* of ‘Īsā and his way and followed his book upto the time of our prophet, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). So, these five are *ulu ’l-‘azm,* and they are the best of the prophets

and apostles (peace be on them all). And the *sharī'ah* of Muḥammad will not be abrogated till the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, anyone who makes a claim to prophethood after him or to bringing a book after the Qur'ān, his blood is allowed (i.e. it is allowed to kill him) to anyone who hears this (claim) from him.'' [*'Uyūnu 'l –akhbār*]

The author says: A tradition of similar meaning is reported from aṣ-Ṣadiq (a.s.) in *Qiṣaṣu'l-anbiyā'*.

About the verse: *Therefore, bear up patiently as did the apostles endowed with fortitude bear up with patience,* that the apostles referred to here are Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsā (peace be on them all). And the meaning of ''endowed with fortitude'' is that they were the first of all prophets in believing in Allāh, and they believed in every prophet who was before them or came after them; and they were determined to remain patient even when they were rejected (by their people) and tormented. [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

The author says: It has been narrated by Sunnī chains from Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah that the prophets endowed with patience were five: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Īsā and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). It is the same as narrated in the traditions of *Ahlu 'l-bayt.* There are other views attributed to some Sunnī scholars. One said that they were six: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Isḥāq, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf and Ayyūb. Another said that they were the prophets who were given the order to fight in the way of Allāh, and thus waged war. Some one said that they were four: Ibrāhīm, Nūḥ , Hūd, and the fourth was Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). But all these sayings are without any proof.

There is a tradition narrated by ath-Thumālī from al-Bāqir (a.s.), that he said: ''The prophets between Ādam and Nūḥ were concealed, and that is why they were not mentioned in the Qur'ān nor were they named therein as were named those prophets who declared themselves (before their people).'' [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: This meaning has been narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* by numerous chains.

Tafsīr of aṣ-Ṣāfī quotes from *Majma'u 'l-bayān* a tradition of 'Alī (a.s.) that Allāh raised a black prophet whose story He did not reveal to us.

In the first of *Nahju 'l-balāghah,* 'Alī (a.s.) says, mentioning Ādam (a.s.):-

''Then (Allāh) sent him down to the place of trial and procreation of

progeny. And from his progeny Allāh chose prophets and took their pledge for (His) revelation and for carrying (His) message as their trust. In the course of time, many people changed the covenant which Allāh had made with them; thus they ignored His right, and took partners along with Him. And Satan turned them away from knowing Him and cut them off from His worship. Then Allāh raised among them His apostles, and sent to them His prophets one after another, to exhort the people to fulfil the covenant of His creation; and to remind them of His bounties which were forgotten; and to argue with them by communicating (to them revelation), and to bring out for them the buried (treasures of) wisdom, and to show the signs of His omnipotence: namely, the roof (i.e. sky) which is raised over them, and the floor (i.e. earth) which is placed beneath them, and the means of livelihood that sustain them, and the deaths that make them die, and the ailments that turn them old, and the happenings that successively betake them. And Allāh never allowed His creation to remain without a prophet sent (by Him), or a book sent down (from Him), or a binding proof, or a laid-down highway — the apostles who were not discouraged by the smallness of their (followers') number or largeness of their rejectors. Among them was a predecessor who was told the name of his follower, or a follower introduced by his predecessor. In this way, ages passed by, and the times rolled on, and the fathers passed away while the sons took their place, till Allāh raised Muḥammad in fulfilment of His promise and to finalize His prophethood.''

The author says: ''In fulfilment of His promise'' refers to the promise made by Allāh to sending His Apostle, Muḥammad; and good tiding of him were brought by ʻĪsā and other prophets (peace be on them), as Allāh says: *And the word of your Lord has been accomplished truly and justly* ... (6:115)

There is a tradition narrated by ʻAbdullāh ibn al-Walīd from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ''Allāh said about Mūsā: *And We wrote for him in the tablets admonition from everything* ... (7:145) So, we know that He did not write for Musa everything (but only a portion 'from everything'). And He said quoting ʻĪsā: *so that I may make clear to you part of what you differ in* ... (43:63). And He said to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.):… *and* (will) *bring you as a witness against these*; *and We revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* ... (16:89)'' [al-ʻAyyāshī]

The author says: The same meaning has been narrated in *Baṣā'iru 'd-darajāt* from ʻAbdullāh ibn al-Walīd by two chains.

The words of the Imām, ''Allāh said about Mūsā…'' point out that the words of Allāh, *in the tablets ... from every thing* explain the immediately following words about the Torah, *and clear explanation of all things*. If Allāh had meant a comprehensive description of every thing, He would not have said, *from everything* which refers only to a portion, not to the whole. This ''from'' shows that the ''explanation of everything'' means only a partial, not a comprehensive, explanation of everything.

PROPHETHOOD: FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL POINT OF VIEW

Prophethood, *per se, is* primarily a theological, not a philosophical, subject. It is concerned with ordained laws which have no independent physical existence; while philosophy is concerned with those things which exist outside the imagination, which have existence independent of the mind of the beholder.

Even then, looking from a different angle, we may say that it is also a philosophical subject.

Religious teachings — its fundamental beliefs and moral and practical laws — have a strong relation with the human soul; they etch on the mind firm knowledge and qualities which, in their turn, create firmly ingrained characteristics and abilities. This knowledge and these characteristics give a distinct identity to the human soul and decide its path, either towards bliss and nearness to Allāh, or towards perdition and distance from Him. Man, if he has true and correct beliefs and acts righteously, acquires those perfections which bring him nearer to Allāh and His pleasure and take him to paradise. On the other hand, if he has wrong beliefs and does evil acts, his soul will acquire an ugly face; he will have no other goal except this transitory world and its trinkets, and, as a result, after departing from this world, he will enter hell and perdition.

This journey of human soul — to paradise or to hell — is not a thing confined into mind; it is a fact and a reality existing independent of Human imagination. Accordingly it becomes a philosophical subject; and we may philosophically prove the institution of prophethood as follows:-

The earlier-mentioned abilities and characteristics of the human soul take him on the road to perfection. Man is a species existing in reality, and he is the cause of many effects which also exist in reality. Experience shows that all existing things have been given the ability to reach their perfection. And Allāh is the absolute Benefactor and there is no limit for His beneficence, so far as He is concerned. Therefore, every soul must have been given what it needs to reach its perfection, and to turn its abilities into accomplishments — the accomplishments which are called bliss if they contain good attributes and virtuous characteristics, and perdition if they take the shape of bad habits and evil characteristics.

These characteristics are acquired by those of man's actions which are done of his own will and choice. That choice is based on his belief that a certain thing is good and another bad. He has been given the instincts of love and fear. He loves what he thinks beneficial for him and fears what, in his thinking, is harmful. Love and fear are the only two instincts from which the actions of comman man emanate. Therefore, the beneficence of Allāh also should make use of these two faculties of man. Allāh should call man to follow the right path and live a virtuous life; and that call should be accompanied by love and fear, good tidings and warnings. In this way, true believers will reach their perfection of bliss and felicity; and unbelievers and the unjust will reach the perfection of misery and unhappiness.

And the call needs a caller to communicate the divine message to human beings. And that caller is the prophet sent by Allāh.

Question: The faculty of reason and wisdom is enough to exhort man to follow the truth in belief and action and to lead him to excellence and piety. So, what is the need of sending the prophets?

Answer: It has been explained earlier that there is a pure and spiritual wisdom which perceives the real nature of things. Also, there is practical wisdom which says, 'this is good' and 'that is bad'. It is this practical wisdom which invites man to follow the truth in belief and action. This wisdom bases its judgement on human feelings and emotions; and in the beginning, the only emotions that exist in man are desire and fear. The faculty of pure spiritual wisdom and intellect, which can control these emotions, remains only a potentiality.

It has been explained at length that it is this desire and fear, this emotion and feeling which lead man to conflict and difference. If man

were left under the control of these emotions, his intellect and other potentialities would never turn into accomplishments. It does not take long for an individual or a nation, when they have been deprived of good training, to return to barbarism and savagery, even though they have the practical wisdom and are governed by natural instincts.

Therefore, there is always need of divine help in the form of prophethood to strengthen the intellect and pure spiritual wisdom.

SOCIOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT PROPHETHOOD

Question: It may be accepted that human wisdom cannot act independently in all situations concerning an individual or a nation. But nature always progresses towards its good, and also society, which is based on nature, follows it and moves towards the good of its individual members, and finally acquires an ideal form which ensures the happiness of all its members. This principle is called the effect of the environment. Conflicting faculties and powers, after action and reaction, ultimately create a noble society, befitting human life. History and experience show that all societies are always in search of their perfection; they aspire for the common weal and are progressing towards a felicity and happiness which are the final ambition of every man. Some societies, like Switzerland, have already attained that goal, while others are on the way, and may be nearer to, or farther from, it.

Answer: Nobody can deny that nature always strives to attain perfection and happiness; and that society, which is based on nature, is also like that. But it should be remembered that its desired perfection and bliss is not real perfection and bliss. What nature possesses at the moment are the instincts of love and fear, not intellect. But it is the intellect which is the foundation of real perfection and bliss. Even the evidence offered in the question shows this fact. The perfection and happiness found in some countries and desired by others is only material perfection and the happiness of the body. But man is not body only; he is made of both body and soul. The body's perfection is not man's perfection. The body dies while the spirit lives forever. Perfecting only one side and neglecting the other (and that also the one which is to last forever) is not perfection at all.

Historical and sociological evidence strengthens our view that

society, by trial and error, can only progress towards material perfection and physical happiness if any society wants to lead its members to the perfection of the total being, then it cannot do so without prophetic help and divine guidance.

Question: If it is true that the prophetic call has a connection with divine creative guidance which leads everything to its goal of perfection, then it must have a clear and existing influence on human societies. We see that not only man but everything is naturally guided to the matters of its advantage and benefit without fail. If the prophetic call had been a guidance like that, it would have been influential in all human societies and man would not have been able to ignore it, just as he is unable to ignore other natural calls. But we know that it is not so. So how can it be called a true reformation when it is not accepted by societies? So, the theory that the prophetic mission is necessary to remove the differences in society and life is just a theory which cannot be proved by facts.

Answer: First: (a.) The effects, of the religious call are there for every one to see and appreciate. Only an obstinate contender can deny it. Since its foundation and appearance, it has trained thousands and thousands leading them to bliss, and has condemned several times more to perdition and unhappiness — depending on their acceptance or rejection, submission or arrogance and belief or disbelief. Such an effective thing cannot be said to have had no effect.

(b) Some societies have from time to time been established based on religion, and they have shown what may be achieved by following this path.

(c) This world is still alive; the human species is not yet extinct. It is possible that one of these days human society will turn into a virtuous society founded on religion — a society which will guarantee the true happiness of man, and real excellence of character and morality. It will be a day when none shall be worshipped except Allāh, and justice and virtue shall be the norm of the day. Such a magnificent effect cannot be ignored or belittled.

Second: Sociology, psychology and moral science prove that our actions have a dual relationship with our characteristics: they come into being because of psychological factors, and they in their turn have an influence on psychological factors. The actions are the effects of soul and psyche; and they effect the psyche in its characteristics. It is this principle

which has given birth to two principles the principle that man is influenced in his character and morals by society; and the principle that he inherits many characteristics from his forefathers. In short, these actions increase their scope horizontally through the environment, and continue from generation to generation vertically through heredity.

Now, it is known that the divinely appointed prophetic mission has remained with human societies since the dawn of humanity, not only in historical, but even in pre-historical, days. Nobody can deny that such a mission, such a call, must have deeply effected the man's social characteristics and high morals. This religious call must have influenced man's psyche very deeply, even if he does not believe in that call.

We would be justified in asserting that all the good qualities of present-day nations and societies are the effects of prophethood and religion, which they have acquired through heredity or the environment. Religion, since its inception, has been accepted and followed by many great societies and groups. And do not forget that religion is the only institution which calls man to the true faith, to noble character, justice and common welfare. Whatever good traits are found today in nations (however little they may be) are the residue of the effects of religion and its results.

Societies can be managed in any of three ways - there is no fourth alternative. First is the system of tyranny. It turns human beings into the slaves of the tyrant (or tyrants) in all aspects of their lives. Second is the system based on civil laws. These laws control overt actions only; they do not touch other aspects of the human personality, like character and ethics. Third is religion which controls and rules over the whole being — beliefs, ethics, and actions — and calls to keep all of them on right path, with truth and virtue.

It is clear from the above that if there is any good in this world or any happiness and bliss for man, it must be attributed to religion and its effects, because no other system aspires to give any guidance on these matters.

Look, for further proof, at the nations that have built their societies on materialism and have neglected religion and morality. They soon lost the virtue, love, mercy and purity of heart and forgot all probity and ethical excellence. It all happened while they were following the dictates of nature. Had nature, *per se,* been enough, and had those characteristics

not been a legacy of religion inherited from the ancients, they would not have lost those noble virtues.

History says that the Christians, during and after the Wars of the Crusades, adopted important points of Islamic law and acted upon them. Now they have advanced, while the Muslims, who did not follow their own religion, have been left behind.

To make a long story short, heredity and environment have let the spirit of religion permeate human society, as they do with other things. Therefore, it is wrong to say that religion has had no impact on humanity.

Question: Well then, what is the role of nature in this scheme? It appears from the above that nature is of no use, and that happiness and bliss are in the hands of the prophethood. If that is so, then why should the prophethood claim that the *sharī'ah* is based on nature?

Answer: One has only to refer to what we have written on the relationship of the nature to man's felicity and bliss to realize that this objection is baseless. The happiness and perfection brought by prophethood is not something alien to the human species nor is it separate from man's nature. It is nature which finds its way towards that bliss, but it cannot find it alone without outside help; and that help (i.e. prophethood) also is not something separate from humanity and its perfection. In other words, prophethood is not like a stone put beside a man; otherwise, it would not have meant any credit to the prophet — that stone does not increase the weight of the man. The fact is that prophethood is the perfection of human nature; it is a special perception and a particular conception which is hidden in human nature; but only those few individuals can be led to find it whom the Grace of Allāh has specially chosen for it. An analogy may be given — though it is beneath the dignity of prophethood — to the pleasure of the sexual act which only mature persons can feel; minors can-not know it, even when that instinct which both adults and minors equally share is ingrained in human nature.

In short, neither is the reality of prophethood something extraneous from .the humanity of the man, who is the prophet, nor is the bliss which it brings to people who follow it anything separate from their humanity and nature. Otherwise, it could not be a perfection for the prophet or a bliss for his people.

Question: In that case, the objection is turned against prophethood. What the above explanation says is that nature by itself is enough, and

prophethood is not separate from nature. It appears that the human species is social by nature and has diversity in its unity; that some individuals excel others in all good aspects: their nature is true, their intelligence free from imaginary things and lust, their character purified from undesirable traits. Those highly distinguished persons are guided by their straight-forward character and discriminating wisdom to what contains the good of society and the happiness of man. Then they legislate laws which ensure the common weal and prosperity of this world and the hereafter.

Accordingly, the prophet is a virtuous man who is a social genius.

Answer: Not at all. It is an interpretation which does not fit with the reality of prophethood nor with its accompanying factors:-

First: It is a hypothesis invented by some sociologists who had no knowledge of religious matters and knew nothing about the Creator or the final destination of man. It was their theory that a prophet is a genius who has a straight forward character and healthy, wisdom. Such a genius ponders over the social condition of his time and thinks how his chaotic society may be reformed and how the members of society may find happiness and bliss.

According to this theory, that genius is 'the prophet'; the good healthy thought which flows from the fountain-head of his thinking power is 'the revelation'; the laws made by him for the reform of the society are `the religion'; his pure spirit which showers these thoughts on his thinking power, and does not deceive the human world by following lustful desires is 'the Trustworthy Spirit' i.e. Jibrīl; the real inspirer of that revelation is 'God'; the book containing his lofty and pure thoughts is 'the heavenly book'; the natural powers or factors which call towards good are 'the angels'; the soul which incites to evil or the powers and factors inviting to bad deeds are 'Satan'; and so on.

It is a totally invalid theory, and I have mentioned under the subject of 'miracles' that prophethood with this meaning would be better called a political toy rather than divine prophethood. Also it has already been explained that this thinking, which they have named genius, is a particular phase of practical wisdom, which distinguishes between good and bad according to its benefit or harm, and is commonly found in all human beings. Also, it has been described that it is that wisdom which is the cause of all the conflicts and differences among human beings; and as such it cannot remove that difference

itself. Surely, it needs another power to complete its work. And we have said just above that that power is a special type of perception which is found, by the Grace of Allāh, only in a few chosen persons who are called prophets.

Obviously, this special spiritual perception is totally different, in its reality, from the perception which comes through thinking. The results to which man reaches through thinking, logic and reasoning are completely unlike those which he perceives through the prophetic faculty. Not only the results, even the ways to obtain those results, are diametrically opposed to each other.

Psychologists are sure that man has an inner source of perception which occasionally manifests itself in some individuals. Then a door is opened before the eyes of this individual and he sees a world beyond this world and is given knowledge of astonishing facts and realities beyond the purview of reason and thinking. This fact is vouched for by all ancient psychologists as well as a group of modern European scholars.

In short the way of prophetic revelation is different from reasoning and thinking. And prophethood cannot be given the meaning invented by these people. The same is the case with the *sharī'ah,* religion, the heavenly Book, the angels, and Satan.

Second: What is recorded of the speech of the prophets who claimed they had received prophethood and revelation, like Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), 'Īsā, Mūsā, Ibrāhīm, Nūḥ and others (peace be on them all), and what is extant from their books (like the Qur'ān) clearly refutes the interpretations which these people have invented for prophethood, revelation, the sending of books, angels and the other realities of religion. The book of Allāh, the traditions of the Holy Prophet of Islam and the sayings of the earlier prophets (peace be on them all) clearly say that these realities and their effects are beyond the sphere of matter and nature, and they are not a part of natural phenomena and cannot be perceived by any of the human senses.

With this background, the interpretation which tries to bring these prophetic realities within the jurisdiction of the physical world and under natural laws is a futile attempt which does not conform to the context and nature of the above meanings and sayings.

It has been mentioned earlier that the factor which removes conflict

in the human society is this inner spiritual perception which is independent of that perception which comes through the agency of thinking.

Question: It would mean that this inner perception is something extraordinary and abnormal. It is not a common experience; only a few persons have ever claimed to have had it. How can such a rare experience lead the whole of society to reform and to the removal of conflict and difference? How can it guide them to their true happiness? You have already said that the factor which will lead the people to bliss and happiness must be related to and connected with, their nature; it should not be some thing extraneous like a stone at the side of a man.

Answer: There is no doubt whatsoever that prophethood is an extraordinary thing; and that it is an inner spiritual perception unknown to the five senses. But reason does not deny that extraordinary and abnormal things and things hidden from our senses do exist in the world. What it denies is the existence of something which is impossible. Reason has its ways to verify whether a thing claimed to be abnormal and hidden from the senses really exists. It can prove its existence through its causes (deduction) or through its effects or its accompanying factors (induction).

Prophethood may be proved by one of two methods. (1) Through its effects — the religion brought by the prophet ensures the happiness of man in this world and in the hereafter. (2) Through its accompanying factors — the claimant of prophethood claims an abnormal thing, that Allāh talks with him through revelation; therefore, if his claim is true he should be able to produce some other abnormal signs, which are called miracles.

Therefore we have these two ways to verify a claim of prophethood, the good quality of the religion brought by the prophet, and miracles.

Question: It may be agreed that the conflicts of society can be removed by this inner perception which is called prophetic revelation. It may also be agreed that the prophet can prove it through miracles, and then it will be obligatory on people to accept and follow the religion promulgated by him. But what is the guarantee that the prophet cannot commit any mistake in the promulgation of the *sharī'ah*? After all, he is a human being like everyone else, and every

one by nature commits mistakes. If an error occurred at this stage of promulgating the law and removing differences, the same process would have to be started again.

Answer: Previous explanations are enough to answer this question. The divine revelation does not come through human thinking, which might commit mistakes. It exists independently of human thought and imagination.

There is a law of creation, decreed by the Creator, that He, after creating a thing, guides it to its perfection. See the verse: *Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal). (20:50) The thing created does exist in reality; it is a fact. There is no mistake or falsehood in a fact. Mistake and falsehood may occur when the man starts the process of his thinking and tries to acquire knowledge. Then what conforms with the fact is called truth and what does not conform is false hood. Thus it is human thought which may be contaminated by lies and falsehood, and not the divine creation, which is a fact, a reality.

Now, the Creator made man and He guides him to his bliss and happiness, to his perfection, through a guidance which is called revelation. That revelation is a thing created by Him; it is a fact and a reality. And no falsehood can be attributed to a fact and a reality. A fact is a fact; a reality is a reality. As this guiding agency is a fact and creation of Allāh, not a result of human thinking, there can never be any mistake or error or falsehood in it. Nor can there be any such possibility in perceiving or communicating that revelation, because this also is done through the creative guidance of Allāh. Neither does the creative power make any mistake in putting that prophetic spirit and spiritual perception (i.e. revelation) in the person of the prophet nor does that agency of divine guidance, i.e. the spiritual conception, make any mistake in discriminating between what is good for the humanity and what is bad for it.

That is why Allāh does not bestow prophethood on anyone without creating in him the faculty of *'iṣmah,* the *'iṣmah* from mistake in receiving and communicating the revelation and *'iṣmah* in all matters connected with religion and promulgation of the *sharī'ah.* This *'iṣmah* is other than *'iṣmah* from sin.

Question: Why is this inner perception not subject to change,

deterioration and feebleness like human reason and thinking. Human thinking power is something other than matter. But, because it has a connection with matter (as it passes through the brain) it is subject to all types of changes. It can be strong or feeble; it may exist or cease to exist completely, as in the case of lunacy; also there are variations in its degree, as in the cases of idiots, the feeble-minded or the mentally-retarded, or in senile people.

Now, this inner perception also has a connection with the body of the prophet, and, as such it may also be subject to changes, deterioration and other defects. In that case all the previously mentioned difficulties would arise afresh.

Answer: We have already said that this guidance of human beings to their true happiness is done, not by human thinking, but by the hands of the Creator who brings that agency of guidance into being; that agency is a truly existing thing, and there is no question of any mistake in an existing thing or 'fact'.

It is not accepted that every perception, having any relation with body, is liable to change and deterioration. What is accepted is that perception based on reason and logic is liable to such change and deterioration; but it is known that this inner perception, i.e. prophetic revelation does not come under this heading. For example, man has a perception of his own person, and this knowledge cannot change, disappear or deteriorate, because it is a self-evident knowledge, not based on reasoning or logic.

Now, we may sum up this long discussion as follows:-

First: Mankind proceeds towards a social life and its differences.

Second: These differences, which cut at the root of the happiness of the species, is not, and cannot be, removed by the laws made by human wisdom which acts through reason and logic and are liable to mistake.

Third: The differences can only be removed by prophetic perception, which is created by Allāh in some chosen human beings.

Fourth: The basis of this inner perception, found in the prophets, is totally different from the basis of human thinking, common to all sane men and women.

Fifth: This inner perception never makes any mistake in perceiving the beliefs and laws which are communicated to it by Allāh for the betterment of the human species in its true happiness.

Sixth: These conclusions (and the last mentioned three are the most important: the essentiality of sending the prophets, the basic difference between the perception of revelation and perception based on reasons, and the *'iṣmah* of the prophet in receiving and communicating the revelation) are in conformity with the general scheme of things in this physical world. Every species in this world is progressing towards its perfection guided by the Creator who gave it the means to progress along the road to final perfection and bliss. Man is one of those species; and he has also been given the faculties by which he can acquire right beliefs and noble virtues., and can do good acts in a good and noble society. Therefore, it is necessary that the Creator should make arrangement to bring that potential bliss into real existence; that He should guide him with His creative guidance which is free from mistake or error.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
مَتَى نَصْرُ اللهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللهِ قَرِيبٌ - ٢١٤.

Or do you think that you would enter the Garden while yet the like of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you; distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the apostle and those who believed with him said: *When will the help of Allāh come*? *Now, surely the help of Allāh is nigh!* (2:214)

COMMENTARY

It has already been mentioned that these verses (from 2:208 to 2:214) are in one context and related to each other.

Qur'ān: *Or do you think that you would enter the Garden:* It concludes what was described in the previous verse: Religion is a guidance from Allāh to lead mankind to what contains their prosperity and happiness in this world and the hereafter; and it is a grace of Allāh bestowed upon them. Therefore, it is essential for them to submit themselves to this religion, without following in the footsteps of Satan. They should not create differences in it and should not turn the medicine itself into a disease; they should not change the bounty of Allāh into disbelief and ingratitude, by following their lust and desire, and seeking the trinkets of this world and its decorations. If they do so, they will incur the wrath of Allāh, as happened in the case of the Israelites when they perverted the bounty of Allāh given to them. They must remember that the trial is continuing and the test is in progress. They also will be tested as the previous people were put to test; and no one will get the bliss of religion and nearness to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds, except through fortitude and complete submission to His commands.

The first two verses were addressed directly to the believers, then the style was changed, treating them in the third person, finally in this verse they are again addressed in the second person, treating them as present. The fact is that the whole talk is with them and they are the real audience. But the style was changed in the middle verses for some good reasons

(for example, those verses contained the topics of chastisement and punishment.) When the purpose was served, once again a direct address was resumed.

The word *am* (or, أم) gives here the meaning of ‘‘but’’. It is made for ‘‘or’’, but the context of the verses gives it the following meaning: Do you intend to devote yourselves solely to what I have told you — to submit to Me, to believe in Me and to remain steadfast on the right path of religion, maintaining unity and cooperation — Or do you not; but think that you would enter the Garden ...

Qur’ān: *while yet the like of those who have passed away before you has not come to you. mathal* (المثل) and *mithl* (المثل) are used for that likeness which creates a picture of the thing for which it is used in the mind of the hearer.

Mathal (adage, المثل) is generally used for a saying or story which brings to mind the intended meaning in the shape of an illustrative metaphor, as Allāh says: *The similitude* [*mathal,* المثل] *of those who were placed under the Torah then they did not hold it, is as the similitude of the donkey bearing books ...* (62:5) Also, *mathal* (المثل) is used in the meaning of adjectives, as Allāh says: *See how they coin comparisons* [*amthāl*, الأمثال] *for you ...* (25:9) They were using for him (s.a.w.a.) adjectives like insane, bewitching, lying, etc.

In this verse, the word *mathal* (المثل) is used in the first meaning, because the similitude is explained in the words, *distress and affliction befell them ...*

Qur’ān: *distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently*:

When a short reference was made to ‘‘the like of those who have passed away before you’’, the audience became anxious to know what had befallen them. Then Allāh described it in detail in these words, *distress and affliction befell them ...*

Distress (*ba’sā’*, الباسآء) is that hardship which befalls a man outside his person, like to property, prestige, family or in the general law and order of the society. Affliction (*ḍarr’,* الضّرّاء) means that hardship which befalls him in his person, like a wound, murder, sickness, etc. *Zalzalah* (الزّلزلة) and *zilzāl* (الزّلزال) means an earthquake. Its root is *zalla* (زلّ) which means ‘slipped up’, ‘stumbled’. The root word is repeated in this verb to imply repeated stumbling and slipping up. Anyhow the word is

metaphorically used for being agitated and disturbed, and that is why we have translated it ‘‘were shaken violently’’.

Qur’ān: *so that the apostle and those who believe with him said. When will the help of Allāh come?*

Apparently it was the saying of the apostle and the believers together. There can be no objection as to why the apostle should utter such words. He might have exclaimed so to seek the help of Allāh which He had promised in these verses: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles, most surely they shall be the assisted ones.* (37:171—172) Also He said, *Allāh has written down: I will most certainly prevail, I and my apostles.* (58:21)

Allāh says: *Until when the apostles despaired and deemed they were indeed told a lie, Our help came to them ...* (12:110) We may see that the tone of this verse is far harsher than the verse under discussion.

Qur’ān: *Now, surely the help of Allāh is nigh* : Apparently this is Allāh’s answer to the call of the apostle and the believers.

It has already been mentioned that the verse proves that the test and trial of the people will continue in this nation also as it did for the previous ones. Also, it shows that if the same actions and attitudes appear again, the same consequences will follow. It is true in the religion also, as historians say that the history repeats itself.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ . قُلْ مَا أَنفَقْتُم مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢١٥.

They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: *Whatever of good you spend, it is for the parents, and the near of kin, and the orphans, and the poor, and the wayfarer*; *and whatever of good you do Allāh surely knows it*. (2:215)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *They ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *Whatever of good you spend* ... The scholars say that the style of this verse is one of philosophy. The questioners had asked about what they should spend. But that question was foolish, because one does not need divine revelation to know that what is spent is wealth in all its various shapes. Rather, they should have asked: Whom the wealth should be spent for. Therefore, Allāh mentioned, instead, the deserving beneficiaries, which the questioners should have asked in the first place.

It is good reasoning; but those scholars have left out one important point. Even though the verse did not reply to their question directly, it has touched on it, and has hinted at the reply in two places: *Whatever of good you spend* and *whatever of good you do*. The verse, therefore, shows that the thing to be spent is wealth, irrespective of its shape and quantity; and that spending it on worthy beneficiaries is a good deed and Allāh knows it very well; then it makes them aware that they should rather have asked the names of the beneficiaries, and guides them in this respect by giving the list: the parents, the near relatives, the orphans, the poor and the way-farer.

One finds in the commentaries of the Qur'ān some strange explanations of this verse:-

One of them says: ''what'' (*mā,* ما) in *what they should spend* was not used by the questioners to enquire about the quiddity and essence of the thing which should be spent, because it is from the terminology of logic, and is not worthy of any literary speech of eloquent style, let alone the Qur'ān which is the purest of the Arabic literature. Rather the

word ‘‘what’’ was used for ‘‘how’’; they wanted to know how they should spend their wealth and on whom. Accordingly, the verse answered that question. The reply, therefore, is according to the question, and the reasoning of the scholars of eloquence (given earlier) is out of place.

Someone else went a step further. He said: It is true that ‘‘what’’ is used to ask about the essence; even then , the questioners’ aim was to ask as to ‘‘how’’ they should spend. It was known that ‘‘what’’ is spent is wealth. As this was well-known, there was no risk of their being misunderstood; the hearer was bound to understand that they wanted to ask about ‘‘how’’. It is like the verse: *they said*: *‘‘Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, f o r surely to us all the cows are alike ... ’’* (2:70) They knew that the cow is an animal having such shape and such characteristics. Therefore, the words *what she is* could not be taken to mean that they wanted to know its quiddity — its genus and species. The only possible meaning, thus, was that they wanted to know the particulars of that cow so that they might distinguish it from the others. That is why they were given the reply, *He* (Mūsā) *said*: *‘‘He* (Allāh) *says, surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land ...’’* (2:71)

Both the commentators seem confused. It is true that *mā* (what, ما) is not used in language to ask about the quiddity of a thing, according to the terminology of logic — for a definition made up of the nearest genus and species. But it does not mean that it is made for the question about ‘‘how’’. It would be a linguistic mistake for the one who wants to ask, ‘‘for whom should I spend?’’ to say ‘‘what should I spend?’’

Mā (what, ما) is made so as to ask for the factors which might distinguish one thing from others. The reply may be given by a logical definition using the nearest genus and species, or by describing such other distinctive characteristics and qualities by which that thing may easily be recognised. The word ‘‘what’’ is, therefore, general and includes the logical term, but is not different from it. And certainly it is not made to ask ‘‘how’’. The question about the cow and its reply (2:70—71) was asked and given correctly according to the language. There was no deviation in either from the real meaning of ‘‘what’’ — the question was about distinguishing factors of a thing.

A third one said: As the quiddity and essence was well-known, there

was no alternative but to divert the word ‘‘what’’ to mean ‘‘how’’.

It is a manifest error. That the answer is well-known, is no justification for changing the meaning of a word to mean something quite different.

There is one more strange explanation: The questioners had asked both questions — what should they spend, and where. The Qur’ān mentioned only the first question and omitted the second, because the reply pointed to it. What nonsense!

Now, we come back to the verse. There is no doubt that there is here a diversion, in the main reply, from the asked question, to remind the people that the question worthy of asking was ‘‘where’’, not ‘‘what’’, they should spend, because it was no secret that spending is done from wealth and riches.

We find in the Qur’ān that it often diverts its speech from one meaning to another, to point out that the new topic is more worthy of attention. It is a style of beauty which is difficult to find in other books. See for example:

And the parable of those who disbelieve is the parable of one who shouts to that which hears not but a call and a cry ... (2:17)

(Here the parable has been diverted to a satire against the idols.)

The likeness of what they spend in the life of this world is as the likeness of a wind in which is intense cold, (that) *smote upon the tillage of a people who had done injustice to their souls, and destroyed it.* (3:117)

(The parable is diverted from the wealth spent to its ultimate forfeiture.)

The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grains; *and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases*; ... (2:261)

(The parable is diverted from those who spend in the way of Allāh to the manifold increase in its reward.)

The day on which neither property will avail nor sons, except him who comes to Allāh with a heart free (from evil). (26:88—89)

(Instead of praising the heart, free from evil, the believer is praised who has got that heart, to show the importance of the believer.)

Say: *I do not ask you aught of recompense for it, except that he*

who will, may take the way to his Lord. (25:57)

Glory be to Allāh (for freedom) *from what they describe, except the servants of Allāh, the purified ones.* (37:159—160) There are many such verses.

Qur'ān: *and whatever of good you do, Allāh surely knows it.*: The word spending has been changed here to ''doing good''; likewise, in the beginning of the verse ''wealth'' was changed to ''good'' (''whatever of good you spend'').

This change guides us to two principles:

First: It is very much recommended that one should spend one's wealth on the recognised beneficiaries — it does not matter whether the amount is small or large. But what matters is that the thing spent should be ''good'', desirable and likeable. Allāh says: *Never shall you attain to righteousness until you spend* (benevolently) *out of what you love* (3:91); *0 you who believe! Spend* (benevolently) *out of the good things that you have earned and what We have brought forth for you out of the earth; and do not aim at what is bad that you may spend of it* (in charity) *while you would not take it yourselves unless you connive at it ...* (2:267)

Second: The spending should not be in a bad manner. The spending should be without reminding the receiver reproachfully of it or injuring his feelings. Allāh says: *… then do not follow up what they have spent with obligation* (reproach) *or injury ...*(2:262); *And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *Whatever can be spared ...* (2:219)

TRADITIONS

There is a saying of Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''I did not see any people better than the companions of Muḥammad. They did not ask him except thirteen questions till he was taken away (from this world), all of those (questions) are in the Qur'ān. Among them are: 'They ask you about the intoxicants and games of chance'; 'They ask you about the sacred month'; 'They ask you about the orphans'; 'They ask you about the menses'; 'They ask you about the booty'; 'They ask you as to what they should spend'. They never asked but what was of (practical) to them.'' [*ad-Durru'l-manthūr*]

It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* that this verse was revealed about

‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ; he was a very old man of great wealth. He said: ‘ ‘ O Messenger of Allāh! What should I give in charity and to whom?’’ Then Allāh revealed this verse.

The author says: This tradition has also been narrated in *ad-Durru’l-manthūr* through Ibn al-Mundhir from Ibn Ḥayyān. But the scholars have said that this tradition is weak. Apart from the weakness in the chain of narrators, it is not in conformity with the verse, because the verse mentions only one question as to what should be spent, and not on whom.

Similarly, two other traditions reported in that book do not conform with the verse. The first is narrated through Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir from Ibn Jarīḥ that he said: ‘‘The believers asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) where they should put (i.e. spend) their wealth. So, the verse was revealed: *They ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *‘Whatever of good you spend ... ’* This, then, is voluntary (non-obligatory) expenditure; and *zakāt is* different from all of it.’’

The second one is narrated from as-Suddī that he said: The day when this verse was revealed, there was no *zakāt.* It is (about) the spending what one does on one’s family and the alms one gives away. Then (the law of) *zakāt* abrogated it.

The author says: It is clear that the relation between the verse of *zakāt* (*Take alms out of their wealth* — 9:103) and this verse is not of abrogation at all. Or does the word ‘‘abrogation’’ mean something else in their language?

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ٢١٦.
يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ
اللهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ
أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلاَ يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ
اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ
أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ـ ٢١٧ .
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ
رَحْمَةَ اللهِ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ـ ٢١٨ .

Fighting has been prescribed for you, and it is (an object of) *dislike to you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allāh knows, while you do not know.* (216) *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say*: *Fighting in it is a grave matter; and hindering* (men) *from Allāh's way and denying it, and* (hindering men from) *the Sacred Mosque and turning its people out of it are still graver with Allāh, and the mischief is graver than the killing; and they will go on fighting with you so that they may turn you back from your religion if they can; and whoever of you turns back from his religion, then dies while an unbeliever - these it is whose deeds are forfeited in this world and the hereafter; and they are the inmates of the fire; therein shall they abide*. (217) *Surely those who believed and those who fled* (their home) *and strove hard in the way of Allāh, these hope for the mercy of Allāh; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (218)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *Fighting has been prescribed for you, and it is* (an object of) *dislike to you*: It has repeatedly been explained that *kitābah*

(writing, الكتابة), which has been translated here as prescription, means an obligatory command, if used in the matter of legislation, and a firm decree, if used in the matter of creation. This verse, therefore, shows that fighting in the way of Allāh is compulsory for all believers (as the verse is addressed to them) except those who are exempted by other verses or traditions. For example: *There is no blame* (in staying behind) *on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who do not find what they should spend, so long as they are sincere to Allāh and His Apostle ... nor on those who when they came to you that you might carry them, you said: I cannot find that on which to carry you ...* (9:91—92)

The verb, *kutiba* (has been written, اكتب) is in the passive voice, because it is followed by the phrase, *and it is* (an object of) *dislike to you.* It was not proper to mention clearly the name of the writer (i.e. Allāh) of a writing which was to be an object of dislike to the believers. By not using the active voice, the verse protected the sanctity of the divine name and removed every chance of slight to it.

Kurh (dislike, ألكره) is the hardship felt by man in his self, naturally or otherwise. *Karh* (compulsion, ألكره) is the hardship forced upon him by extraneous agencies as when he is forced to do a work which he does not like to do. Allāh says: … *it is not lawful for you that you should take women as heritage against* (their) *will ...* (4:19); *... so He said to it and to the earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly ...* (4:11)

Why was the ordained fighting to be an object of dislike to the believers? Three explanations have been given for it:-

1) Fighting entails loss of limbs and lives, economic hard ship, monetary loss and the deterioration of law and order; goods necessary for life disappear from the market and become scarce; and many other things crop up in society which man dislikes by nature. Allāh has praised the believers in His book and said that a group of them were sincere in their faith and successful in their endeavours. But, at the same time, He has admonished another group of them because of their shaky belief and crooked thinking, as may be seen in the verses revealed about the battles of Badr, Uḥud and Khandaq etc. The people addressed by this verse were, therefore, of two types: One, steadfast in their faith, who could not dislike any command of Allāh; the other, those who might dislike them, and this second group was more numerous. Therefore, it was quite in order to describe such a mixed group as disliking an order, especially when

those disliking it were in the majority.

2) The believers were aware that the unbelievers were well-prepared for fighting and had more strength and material support than the Muslims. They, therefore, thought that fighting at that particular time would not be in the interests of the Muslims; hence, the order to fight should be delayed for some other suitable time. This postponement would give them time to increase their manpower, war-material and martial strength. Allāh told them in this verse that they were mistaken in this view, because Allāh in this affair has a purpose which shall surely be attained; He knows the hidden reality of everything while their knowledge is confined only to the apparent facts.

3) The believers were well-trained by the Qur'ān, and, accordingly, they felt clemency towards the creatures of Allāh, and mercy and pity had become second nature to them. They did not like fighting with the unbelievers, as it meant that a number of their adversaries would die in disbelief, and the believers were not pleased about that. They would have liked to deal with those adversaries with good humour, and live with them with nobleness and gentleness, inviting them to Islam with good exhortation, hoping that they would come to the right path. They thought that in this way, they would protect themselves from death, and the unbelievers from dying in disbelief and entering into eternal fire.

Allāh, in this verse, made it clear that this thought of theirs was not correct. Allāh, Who ordained the fighting knew very well that the call of truth would have no effect on those misguided souls who were spiritually a total failure. The true religion could not expect any good from them either in this world or in the next. They were in humanity like a totally degenerated limb which will certainly infect other organs if not removed from the body by a surgical operation.

These are the explanations given for the words of Allāh, *and it is* (an object of) *dislike to you.* But the first one is the most appropriate, especially if we look at the verses admonishing a group of believers (referred to in the explanation) and keep in view the passive voice of the verb, *has been written on you,* i.e.*,* has been prescribed for you.

Qur'ān: *and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you*: It has already been explained that the words like ''may be'' and ''perhaps'', when used in divine speech, mean ''it is hoped''. This hope is related not to the speaker (Allāh) but to the hearers. In other words,

when Allāh says: *may be it is so* it does not mean that He hopes it will be so (Elevated be He from such uncertainties!); rather it means that the hearers should hope or expect it in this way.

The repetition of ‘‘may be’’ in this sentence and the following one (*and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you*) means that the believers disliked fighting and loved peace; so Allāh told them that they were mistaken in both. If the sentence is framed without repeating the word ‘‘may be’’ (i.e. ‘and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you or love a thing while it is evil for you’) it will convey the idea that ‘‘your dislike and love have no significance, because such feelings are often misplaced.’’ Such a sentence is addressed to the one who .has erred in something, for example, if one dislikes meeting a certain person. But if he has erred in two things — e.g., he dislikes mixing with the people and loves seclusion — then the norms of elocution demand that he should be warned against both tendencies, e.g. ‘you are neither justified in your dislike, nor are you right in your love; it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing and it is evil for you; because you do not know the unseen, and, therefore, you cannot find your way towards the hidden realities of any thing.’ As the believers, in addition to their dislike of fighting, also loved peace and ease (as is implied in the previous verse: *or do you think that you would enter the Garden while yet the like of those who passed away before you has not come upon you*). Allāh pointed to both mistakes in two separate sentences: *it may be that you dislike ...* and *it may be that you lave ...*

Qur’ān: *and Allāh knows while you do not know*: This is the final step in making their mistake known to them. Allāh has gradually made them realise that they were in manifest error. To begin with, He told them that it was possible that they were mistaken in their dislike of the fighting (*it may be that you dislike ...*). Their minds accepted the implication of those two sentences; and thus they were freed from their compound ignorance, as now they felt doubtful about the correctness of their views. When that stage was reached, Allāh told them clearly that the order which you dislike, is ordained by Him who is not unaware of the hidden realities of the things, while your views are based on your psyche which knows only that much which it has been allowed by Allāh to know. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to leave all such decisions into His

hand.

The verse proves that knowledge, in its reality and totality, is Allāh's only; and others have no knowledge of their own at all. This reality is explained in many other verses: *Allāh, surely nothing is hidden from Him ...* (3:5), *and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases...* (2:255). And some explanation about fighting has been given in the verse 2:190, *And fight in the way of Allāh...*

Qur'ān: *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it:* The verse contains the prohibition of fighting in the sacred month. Then it goes on to say that disbelief and turning the people of the Sacred Mosque out of it are far graver sins and that the mischief is graver than the killing. These sentences show that there must have occurred some incident which prompted the believers to ask the question, and that there was some killing in that incident, but that killing was not intentional. (See the last verse: *Surely those who believed ... these hope for the mercy of Allāh*.)All these pointers confirm what has been described in the traditions that some believers had killed an unbeliever unknowingly in the sacred month in a battle, and that the unbelievers had ridiculed the Muslims for it. The incident was that of 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh and his companions.

Qur'ān: *Say, fighting, in it is a grave matter; and hindering* (men) *from Allāh's way and denying it and* (hindering men from) *the Sacred Mosque ...*: ''Allāh's way'' means worship and virtuous actions and especially the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). Apparently the pronoun ''it'' in ''denying it'' refers to ''Allāh's way''; thus it would mean denial in practice, not in faith. And ''the Sacred Mosque'' is in conjunction with ''Allāh's way'', and means 'hindering from Allāh's way and the Sacred Mosque'.

The verse clearly shows that fighting in the sacred month is forbidden.

It has been said that this verse was abrogated by the verse: *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them* (9:5) But this view is not correct, and some explanation about it have been given in the commentary of the verses of fighting.

Qur'ān: *and turning its people out of it are still graver with Allāh, and the mischief is graver than the killing:* What the idolators

had done — turning the Apostle of Allāh and the believers out of the Sacred Mosque (and they were truly the people of the Sacred Mosque) — is far graver than fighting. And the mischief done by them in rebuking the believers and calling them back to disbelief is graver than killing. Therefore, they have no right to reprove the believers for killing when they themselves had committed far graver sins. So far as the believers are concerned, they still hope for the mercy of Allāh, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

Qur'ān : *and they will go on fighting with you so that they may turn you back ...* : *ḥatta* (حتّى) means ''till''; but here it signifies cause or purpose. That is why it has been translated here as ''so that''.

Qur'ān: *and whoever of you turns back ... these it is whose dees are forfeited ... and they are inmates of fire*: It threatens apostates with the forfeiture of their deeds and an eternal abode in the Fire.

FORFEITURE OF DEEDS

Forfeiture (*ḥabṭ,* الحبط) means nullification of a deed and invalidity of its effects. Whenever this word is used in the Qur'ān, it is always related to deeds; for example, *Surely, if you associate* (others with Allāh), *your deed will certainly be forfeit and you will certainly be of the losers*. (39:65) *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allāh's way and oppose the Apostle, after that guidance has become clear to them, cannot harm Allāh in any way, and He shall make null their deeds. O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the, Apostle, and do not make your deeds of no effect.* (47:32—33) If we compare the last phrases of both verses, we shall see that the nullifying of the deeds is the same as the deeds being of no effect. This meaning is more clearly seen in the verse: *and what they wrought in it shall be forfeit, and vain* (null and void) *is what they do.* (11:16) And nearer to it is the word of Allāh, *And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust.* (25:23)

In short, *ḥabṭ* (.الحبط) of deeds means their coming to nothing and their being of no effect. It has been said that it is derived from *ḥabaṭa* (حبط) which is used when an animal over-eats and its stomach distends, often resulting in its death.

The effect of forfeiture (*ḥabṭ,* الحبط) as described by Allāh, is

nullification of the deed in both worlds, here as well as in the hereafter. Forfeiture has a connection with the deeds and it affects the life hereafter. The faith beautifies this world's life as well as it makes the life hereafter a pleasant one. Allāh says: *Whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We shall most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did*.(16:97) Also it is clear, without any shadow of doubt, that the endeavours of the unbeliever are lost and his deeds are of no effect in this world; and it is especially true in the case of the man who turns back towards infidelity, leaving the true faith. His heart cuts itself away from its anchor in this stormy life — the anchor being belief in the One and only God. He has nowhere to turn — where he can express his joyful thanks when blessed with a bounty, find solace when confronted with a misfortune, and to whom he can pray when in need of something. Allāh says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth*? (6:123) This verse shows that the believer has in this world a good life and a light in his actions which the disbeliever does not possess. Also Allāh says: … *then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the day of resurrection, blind.* (20:124) This verse also proves that the life of the unbeliever in this world is a straitened one, full of difficulties, and that a believer's life, in contrast, is a blessed, happy and pleasant one.

All this explanation, together with the cause of both groups' happiness and unhappiness respectively, is given in this short verse: *That is because Allāh is the Master of those who believe, and because the unbelievers have no master for them.* (47:11)

It appears from the above details that deeds (*a'māl,* الأعمال) here means all the actions done by a man so as to attain happiness in life. The meaning of ''deeds'' in this context is not confined to the apostate's acts of worship and other virtuous deeds done by him when he was a Muslim. Moreover, the forfeiture of deeds has been mentioned even in connection with those who do not perform any act of worship, for example, disbelievers and hypocrites. It clearly proves that it is not only acts of worship which are forfeited. See, for example, the verses: *O you who*

believe! If you help (the cause of) *Allāh He will help you and make firm your feet. And* (as for) *those who disbelieve, for them is destruction, and He has let their deeds go astray. That is because they disliked what Allāh revealed, so He rendered their deeds null* (47:7—9); *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among men who enjoin justice, announce to them a painful chastisement. Those are they whose deeds shall become null in this world, as well as the hereafter, and they shall have no helpers.* (3:21—22) There are many verses like these.

The gist of the verse under discussion, like other verses of forfeiture, is that disbelief and apostasy make the deeds ineffective, i.e., such deeds lose their power to make life blissful. On the other hand, true faith and belief give life to the deeds and they create felicity, bliss and happiness in life. If someone acquires true faith after disbelief, his deeds are given a new life and they become effective in making life blessed and happy (although they were forfeit and ineffective before). Likewise, if he apostatizes after having been a believer, all his deeds become dead, null and void; they cannot make life in this world or in the here after happy. Thereafter, if he leaves his apostasy and comes back to the fold of Islam, it is hoped that his deeds will be revived; but if he dies in the apostasy, the forfeiture will have been confirmed and misery and unhappiness will be written down for him.

This explanation is enough to show that the controversy about the forfeiture of the deeds of an apostate — whether it is effected at the time of apostasy or at his death — is baseless. That controversy is as follows:-

Some people say that those deeds of an apostate which were done before his apostasy remain preserved until his death, and that if he does not return to the true faith before his death, they will become forfeit on his death. Their argument is based on this very verse which is under discussion: *and whoever of you turns back from his religion, then dies while an unbeliever — these it is whose deeds are forfeited in this world and the hereafter ...* They also bring in their support the verse: *On the day when they shall see the angels ... And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so we shall render them as scattered floating dust.* (25:22—23) This verse describes the condition of unbelievers at the time of death ; and it implies that if the apostate had returned to the true belief, those deeds which he had done before apostasy would have remained valid.

Others say that apostasy nullifies deeds completely; and they do not

return to him even if he comes back to the true belief. Of course, the deeds done after his return to the true belief do belong to him. According to them, the verse contains the words, ‘‘then dies while an unbeliever’’ because it purports to show the condition of all his actions done during his life in this world.

But the explanation given by us shows that there is no ground here at all for any such controversy. The verse in fact conveys the meaning that all his actions and deeds become ineffective in the meaning that they cannot bring any bliss, felicity or happiness in his life.

There are two other questions here, somewhat related with the above one: The first is the theory of *iḥbāṭ* (الاحباط.). It is the theory that good and evil deeds cancel each other.

Some people said that actions cancel and invalidate each other. These people are further divided in two groups: One says that every subsequent evil deed cancels the preceeding good one, and vice versa. It means that at any given time a man has in his account either good only or evil only. The other group says that there is a system of counterbalancing good and evil deeds; the weight of the lighter side is deducted from the weightier side, the balance remaining on account. This theory, like the previous one, means that at the end there remains in the man’s account only good or only evil actions — if any balance is left after the said counter balancing.

Both these views are wrong, because:-

First: Allāh says in the Qur’ān; *And others have confessed their faults, they have mingled a good deed and an evil one, maybe Allāh will turn to them* (mercifully); *surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (9:102) This verse clearly says that there are some good deeds and some evil ones, and that they will remain written in the account of the doer in their original form until the mercy of Allāh decides about them. This cuts away the roots of the theory of cancellation with all its interpretations.

Second: Allāh uses the same system of reward and punishment that is used by reasonable men in this world — rewarding the good deed and punishing the evil one, each separate from the other. Of course, if one commits a sin that cuts away the relationship between Master and servant (e.g. disbelief or idolatory), then all his deeds become forfeit. There are numerous verses to prove it; and there is no need to quote them here.

The second related question is the theory of *takfīr* (التّكفير).*Takfīr* (التّكفير) is the belief that the actions do not cancel each other; every

action is preserved — a good action has its own effect and an evil one its own. But, as clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān, a good deed sometimes atones for, and removes, an evil one. Allāh says: *O you who believe! If you fear Allāh, He will grant you a distinction and remove from you your evil ...* (8:29); *then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there) *there is no sin on him* (2:203); *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins …* (4:31).

Not only this, but some good deeds change an evil action into a good one, as Allāh says: *Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allāh changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (25:70)

There is another matter which is like the basis of all these questions: When and where does the doer become entitled to recompense? Some have said: it is the time of the action. Others have said: the time of death. Still others have said: the hereafter. And a fourth group has said: it is the time of the action but only if the doer continues in the same condition upto his death.

Every group offers various verses of the Qur'ān in support of its view, and some add some rational argument too.

Let us say that reward and punishment, forfeiture and atonement are the effects of the deeds themselves (as we have explained in our commentary of verse 2:26). It follows that the human soul, as long as it is connected with the body, is subject to changes in its qualities. When man does something good, there appears in his soul a spiritual quality which entitles it to receive the reward; and when he commits a sin, the spiritual quality appearing in his soul entitles it to receive chastisement. As man in this world is subject to change from one condition to other, (because he continues to mingle good deeds with evil ones), his present spiritual quality may possibly be changed to its opposite as a result of his subsequent deeds. This goes on till death overtakes him. The soul departs from the body, actions stop, changes cease, potentialities come to an end, and qualities acquired upto that time are firmly established in his soul in a way that it no longer accepts any change or alteration (except through the mercy of Allāh or intercession by His chosen servants).

Or let us say, as we have said earlier, that Allāh uses the same system of recompense as is used by reasonable men in this world. It means that

obedience or disobedience to divine laws and their recompense follows the same method which is seen in social laws. Reasonable people praise and commend the law-abiding and obedient man as soon as he does something good, and condemn a disobedient man as soon as he does something wrong. But, at the same time, they know that the said commendation or condemnation may be changed in the future, because the man concerned may alter his ways. In short, the praise or condemnation is offered at once, but its continuation depends on the man's continuing in the same way in the future. But an ever-lasting praise or ever-lasting condemnation, not subject to any further change, will attach to him when there is no longer any possibility of change in his quality, i.e. by death or by the loss of potentiality.

These explanations are enough to show that all the above mentioned views on this subject have, in one way or the other, deviated from the truth, because they have based their discourse on wrong premises.

The truth is as follows:-

First: A man becomes entitled to reward or punishment as soon as he does whatever he does; but that reward or punishment is still subject to change or alteration. It is only on death that it is confirmed without any possibility of alteration, as we have described above.

Second: The same is the case with the forfeiture of deeds as a result of disbelief, etc. The deeds become forfeited as soon as the man disbelieves, etc. But the forfeiture is confirmed at death.

Third: Forfeiture applies not only to the deeds related to the hereafter, but to those connected with this world also.

Fourth: *Iḥbāṭ* (الاحباط) i.e., the theory of good and evil deeds cancelling each other is wrong. But *takfīr* (التّكفير) is correct — the belief that good actions sometimes expiate evil ones.

AN ESSAY ON THE RULES GOVERNING ACTIONS

A) About Their Reward and Punishment:

There are various rules about the actions of man and their recompense, which are enumerated here:-

1) There are some sins which cause the forfeiture of good deeds in this world and the hereafter. One is apostasy. Allāh says in the verse under discussion: *and whoever of you turns back from his religion then*

dies while an unbeliever, these it is whose deeds are forfeited in this world and the hereafter.

Other such sin is disbelief in the signs of Allāh and enmity towards them. Allāh says: *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among men who enjoin justice, announce to them a painful chastisement. Those are they whose works shall become null in this world as well as the hereafter ...* (3:20—21)

Likewise, there are some acts of obedience, like (submission to) Islam and repentance, that expiate the evil deeds of this world as well as the hereafter; Allāh says: *Say*: *O My servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not des pair of the mercy of Allāh*; *Surely Allāh forgives the faults* (sins) *altogether*; *surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord* (repent before Him) *and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment, then you shall not be helped. And follow the best that has been revealed to you from your Lord ...* (39:53—55). *Also,* he says:… *then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the day of resurrection, blind.* (20:123—124)

2) There are some sins which cause the forfeiture of some of good deeds. Such, for example, is opposition to the Prophet. Allāh says: *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allāh's way and oppose the Apostle after that guidance has become clear to them, cannot harm Allāh in any way, and He shall make null their deeds. O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle, and do not make your deeds of no effect* (null and void). (47:32—33)

A comparison between the two sentences implies that the order of ''obedience'' of the Apostle is the same as the prohibition of his opposition, and *ibṭāl* (nullification of the deed, الابطال) is its forfeiture.

Another such sin is raising one's voice above the voice of the Prophet. Allāh says: *O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another, lest your deeds become null while you do not perceive.* (49:2)

Likewise, there are some acts of obedience which expiate and atone some sins. Such are the obligatory prayers, *ḥajj* and the avoidance of

great sins. Allāh says:

About prayer: *And establish prayer in the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night*; *surely good deeds take away the evil deeds; this is reminder to the mindful.* (11:114)

About *ḥajj*: *then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there), *there is no sin on him.* (2:203)

About avoidance of great sins: *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins ...* (4:31)

Those who avoid the great sins and the indecencies except small sins (or just passing thoughts); *surely your Lord is liberal in forgiving.* (53:32)

3) There are some sins which transfer the good deeds from their doer to someone else. Murder is one of those sins. Allāh says: *Verily I intend that you bear my sin and* (also) *your sin ...* (5:29)

Other such sins, according to the traditions of the Prophet and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* are backbiting and calumny, and others.

There are, likewise, some acts of obedience which transfer the evil deeds from the doer to someone else, as will be explained later.

4) There are some sins which transfer to the doer evil deeds similar to those committed by another person. Allāh says: *That they may bear their own burdens entirely on the day of resurrection and also of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge.* (16:25)

And most certainly they shall carry their own burdens, and other burdens with their own burdens. (29:13)

In the same way, some acts of obedience transfer to the doer good deeds similar to those done by another person. Allāh says: *and We write down what they have sent before and their foot prints ...* (36:12)

5) Some sins cause double punishment. Allāh says: *In that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double* (punishment) *in this life and a double* (punishment) *after death ...* (17:75);*….the punishment shall be increased to her doubly* (33:30)

On the other hand, there are some good deeds which bring double reward or even more. Allāh says about spending in the way of Allāh: *The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is as parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grain; and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases.* (2:261). Also He

says; *These shall be granted their reward twice* (28:54); *He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you.* (57:28)

Moreover all good deeds get their rewards multiplied manifold, as Allāh says: *Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it*... (6:161)

6) Some good actions change the evil deeds into good ones. Allāh says: *Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allāh changes the evil deeds to good ones* ... (25:70)

7) There are some good deeds whose like is given to other than the doer (without the doer losing it or its reward). Allāh says: *And* (as for) *those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work* ... (52:21)

The same may happen about some evil deeds. For example, if one oppresses orphans it brings the same type of oppression on his own children after his death. Allāh says: *And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account* ... (4:9)

8) Some good deeds transfer the evil deeds of the doer (let us call him Zayd) to another person (Bakr), and the good deeds of Bakr to Zayd. Likewise, some evil deeds transfer the good deeds of the doer, Zayd, to Bakr, and the evil deeds of Bakr to Zayd.

This is a surprising factor in reward and recompense, and we shall explain it in detail under verse 8:37: *So that Allāh may separate the impure from the pure, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into hell* ...

There are many traditions explaining the situations where the above-mentioned changes and exchanges may occur, and we shall quote them in the commentaries of these verses, God willing.

If we ponder on the various verses quoted above, we shall see that the system of the recompense of actions (their effectiveness in bringing about happiness and unhappiness) is entirely different from the system of their physical effect. For example, eating is a work which by various actions and reactions affects the eater and satisfies his hunger, but that satiation is not carried on to someone else, nor is it

transferred from the eater to another person. Also, the object of the said eating is the food eaten; the eating changes the food stage by stage into various forms. But that eating cannot affect other food, nor can that food be changed or exchanged with other eaters, nor can the nature of the food be changed to something else. In the same way, if Zayd beats ‘Umar, the action is beating, not something else; the beater is Zayd, not someone else; and the beaten one is ‘Umar, not another person.

But when it comes to the effectiveness of the same actions in happiness or unhappiness, the system completely changes. Allāh says:... *and they did not do Us any harm but they did harm their own souls ...* (2:57); *... and the evil plan does not beset any save the authors of it*. (35:43); *See how they lied against their own souls ...* (6:24); *Then shall it be said to them*: *Where is that which you used to set up besides Allāh*? *They shall say*: *They are gone away from us, nay, we used not to call upon anything before. Thus does Allāh confound the unbelievers.* (40:73—74)

In short, in the world of ‘‘recompense’’, one action is sometimes changed to another, sometimes transferred to someone other than the doer, sometimes given an opposite effect. In other words, the system of recompense is quite different from physical causes and effects.

Question: In that case, there will be no place for reason in the world of actions and their effects, and the rule of wisdom will come to an end; nothing will remain in its real form.

Answer: It is not correct to say that reason and wisdom have no place in this scheme. Allāh and His angels, as He has described in His Book, do offer intellectual arguments against the sinners at the time of death and in Barzakh; and they will offer the same type of proofs against them on the day of resurrection and in Paradise and Hell. Allāh says: *And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those that are in the heavens and all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as Allāh please; then it shall be blown again, then Lo! they shall stand up awaiting. And the earth shall beam with the light of its Lord, and the Book shall be laid down, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up, and judgement shall be given between them with justice, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And every soul shall be paid back fully what it has done, and He knows best what they do.* (39:68-70).

The Qur'ān repeatedly says that Allāh shall decide on the day of resurrection between the people with justice in that which they differed in. For example, it narrates the argument which Satan will put forth on that day: *And Satan shall say after the affair is decided*: *Surely Allāh promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promises then failed to keep them to you*; *and I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you obeyed me; therefore do not blame me but blame yourselves*: *I cannot be your aider (now) nor can you be my aiders*; *surely I disbelieved in your associating me with Allāh before*; *surely it is the unjust that shall have the painful punishment.* (14:22)

All such verses clearly show that rational arguments and proofs are not, and shall not be, abolished in the world of recompense, although that place is entirely different from this physical world.

Question: But how, then, to reconcile the two claims: that the world of recompense has its own system of reward and punishment, totally different from this world, and that reason also rules in that world?

Answer: The fact is that Allāh has talked with people, in guiding them, in their own language, and has used the expressions of social wisdom while addressing them, and has based His speech on the principles and rules of mastership and servitude. He calls Himself Master, the men are His slaves, the prophets are His messengers to them, He continuously maintains contact with them through commands and prohibitions, prophetic missions and admonishments, good tidings and warnings, promises and threats, and all related matters like punishment and forgiveness, and so forth.

This is the style of the Qur'ān when it talks with mankind. But it has made it clear that the real affair is far above human thinking and imagination. People cannot understand it, nor can their limited intellects comprehend it. That is why it has been brought down to the level of their mental power and clothed in a language which they can understand. In this way, it has been made possible for them to know as much of the sublime truth as was necessary for their happiness and bliss. Allāh says: (I swear) *by the book that makes manifest* (the truth): *surely We made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand. And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom.* (43:2—4)

It is for this reason that the Qur'ān has based its description of the

rules of recompense, and all related matters, on the fundamentals of social laws which are known to reasonable men and which are based on social good and evil.

It is really wonderful how those sublime realities, which are so much higher than the level of the common human intellect, can still be explained in terms of that very intellect. For example, practical social wisdom does not reject the idea of giving a harder punishment to a wrong-doer by holding him responsible for all the social evil resulting from his misdeed. Thus, a murderer may be held responsible for the loss of all social benefits and rights resulting from the death of the slain person. And a person starting an evil custom may be punished for the like misdeeds of his followers. In the first example, it may be decreed that the wrongs done apparently by the slain person, were done by the murderer; and in the second example, it may be decided that the like of the misdeeds done by the followers were also done by the initiator of that misdeed, while the followers are not free from the blame in any way — thus the deeds of the followers are the deeds of the initiator as well, and both shall be punished for them.

Similarly, there are situations in which it may be decreed that the doer of an action was not its doer, or that a particular action is in reality some other action, or that the good deeds of someone else belong to this man, or that this man shall have the like of the good deeds done by the other.

The Qur'ān offers reasons for all such changes and exchanges in the world of recompense and explains them in terms of the social laws found in human society, bringing these sublime realities down to the level of the human mind, although the system of that world is totally different from this physical one, and although our social laws have a limited scope and are not valid beyond this life. It is only on the day of resurrection that those hidden realities will manifest themselves before the eyes of man. Allāh says: *And certainly We have brought them a book which We have explained with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for the people who believe. Do they wait for aught but its final interpretation? On the day when its final interpretation comes about, those who neglected it before will say: Indeed the apostle of our Lord had brought the truth* …(7:52—53) *Also,* He says: *And this Qur'ān is not such as could be forged by those besides Allāh, but is a verification of that which is*

before it and a clear explanation of the book ... Nay, they rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to them ... (10:37—39)

Question: These verses, describing such a strange system of recompense, are in conflict with other verses which say that everyone will be responsible for his own action. See for example the following verses:-

So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. (99:78)

... and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another ... (6:164)

...every man is responsible for what he has wrought.(52:21)

And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for. (53:39)

Surely Allāh does not do any injustice to men, but men do injustice to themselves. (10:44)

There are numerous such verses, and they are diametrically opposed to the earlier-mentioned verses about this system of recompense.

Answer: Not at all. The earlier mentioned verses have decreed that the misdeeds done by a man who was slain unjustly were actually done by the unjust murderer. Now if the murderer is punished for those misdeeds, he is punished not for the deeds of the other person, but for those done by himself. Similarly, they have decided that if a man follows another in a sinful act, that action was not done by the follower alone; it is the work of the follower as well as the leader. Thus, there are two sins here, one of the follower and another of the leader. And the leader will be punished, not for the sin of the follower, but for his own. In the same way, those verses have judged that if someone aids an oppressor in his oppression or follows a leader on the wrong path, then the said helper or follower is a partner in those misdeeds; and whatever wrong is done by that oppressor or leader, the said helper or follower is its doer to the same degree.

Thus, these people and others like them are literally and completely governed by the verses quoted in the question, such as ''no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another''. Such cases are not outside the sphere of such verses; they are not in conflict with them, nor are they as an exception from the rule.

The same fact is hinted at in the verse,...*and judgement shall be given between them with justice, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And every soul shall be paid back fully what it has done, and He knows best what they do.* (39:69—70) The sentence, *He knows best what they do* shows, or hints at, the fact that this paying back fully what every soul has done will be done according to the knowledge of Allāh, and according to His, not their, reckoning.

The sinners have no knowledge and no wisdom. Allāh has deprived them of reason in this world, as He narrates the confession of the people of the Fire: *And they shall say: Had we but listened or pondered* (or, understood), *we would not have been among the inmates of the burring fire.* (67:10). The same will be the case in the hereafter, as Allāh says: *And whoever is blind in this* (world), *he shall also be blind in the hereafter, and more erring from the way.* (17:72); also He says, *It is the fire kindled by Allāh, which rises above the hearts.* (104:6—7). This deprivation is confirmed in the verse:… *until when they have all come up with one another into it, the last of them shall say with regard to the foremost of them: Our Lord! these led us astray, therefore, give them a double chastisement of the fire. He will say*: *Every one shall have double but you do not know*. (7:38) This verse proves that both the leaders and the followers shall be given double punishment — the leaders, because they went astray and misled others into error; and the followers, because they went astray and kept the path of error open by walking in it. Then the verse says that they do not know.

Question: These verses, which say that the sinners are deprived of knowledge in this world as well as in the hereafter, contradict other verses which say that they do possess knowledge. For example, Allāh says: *A book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'ān for people who know.* (41:3) Add to it the verses which offer arguments against them: how can one argue with someone who has no knowledge and cannot understand reasoning. Moreover, these verses themselves contain a sort of argument against them in the hereafter. All these things compel us to believe that sinners will possess knowledge and reason in the hereafter.

Apart from this, there are some verses which specifically say that they will possess knowledge and certainty in the hereafter. For example: *Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have*

removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp (50:22); *And could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord! Our Lord! We saw and we heard, therefore send us back, so that we may do good*; *surely* (now) *we are certain.* (32:12)

Answer: When it is said that sinners have no knowledge in this world, it means that they do not act according to their knowledge. And when it is said that they shall have no knowledge in the hereafter, it means that they cannot escape from the effects of the foolish acts which they have done in this world, and that foolishness will continue to torment them in the hereafter. For example: *And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open* (17:13); *Until when he comes to Us, he says* (to Satan): 0 *would that between me and thee there were the distance of the east and the west* ... (43:38). There are many verses which support this interpretation, and we shall explain this matter fully in the commentary of the verse 2:242: *Then Allāh makes clear to you His signs so that you may under stand.*

Imām al-Ghazālī has explained the matter of the transfer of deeds in a different way in one of his books. The gist of his discourse is as follows:-

''The exchange and transfer of good and evil deeds because of injustice and sin is affected in this world as soon as that injustice and sin occurs; but it will be known (only) on the day of resurrection. Then the oppressor will find his good deeds in the accounts of the oppressed. But that transfer had already been effected in this life. Then Allāh will say on that day, *To whom belongs the kingdom this day*? *To Allāh, the One, the Subduer* (of all). (40:16) Thus Allāh will declare in the hereafter that the kingdom belongs to Him. But that kingdom will not come to Him on that day; it is His always and will remain His forever, although this reality will not manifest itself to His creatures before the day of resurrection. And what a man does not know is for him non-existant, even if in reality it exists; when he comes to know of it, it is as though it came into existence just then.

''Some people say that ''action'' is an immaterial, incorporeal thing. It is not a substance which could be transferred from one person to another in

this life. And it is equally impossible to transfer it in the hereafter; because after death the action ceases to exist, and a non-existent thing cannot be brought back to existence. Therefore, it is difficult to see how a good or evil deed can be transferred from one person to another, either in this life or in the hereafter.

''But this objection is not correct. When we say that a good deed is transferred, we mean that its reward is transferred. Just as the acts of obedience are done to obtain their reward, so the transfer of the reward, i.e. the effect, was metaphorically mentioned as the transfer of the cause, i.e. the good deed itself. That reward or effect is not something separate from the human soul; it is a quality ingrained in it. When the soul is brought back in the body, it will return with all its qualities, including the effects of good or evil deeds.

''When a man does a good deed, i.e. an act of obedience, a light appears in his heart. In the same way a sin or misdeed causes darkness to appear therein. The light of obedience connects the heart with the sublime world of divine light, knowledge and perception. On the contrary, misdeed and oppression remove the heart away from that world. The effects of good and evil actions are opposed to each other; each tries to weaken or eradicate the other. Allāh has said: *Surely good deeds take away the evil deeds*. (11:114) The Prophet has said: 'If you commit any evil deed, follow it up with a good deed, so that it may eradicate it.' Every ill or hurt removes the effects of some sins. That is why the Prophet has said: 'Verily, man is rewarded even for a thorn which pricks his foot.' Also he said: 'The punishments are atonements.'

''When an oppressor oppresses someone, his action creates in his own heart a darkness and hardness which cause the eradication of the effects of the light (that had appeared in his heart because of the previously-done good deeds). And his victim feels pain and hurt, and thereby his lust and base feelings are weakened and it causes the obliteration from his heart of the effects of the evil deeds done previously. Darkness gives way to light.

''In this way the light which was in the heart of the oppressor is transferred to the heart of the oppressed; and the darkness in the heart of the oppressed goes to the heart of the oppressor. This is the meaning of the transfer or exchange of the good and evil deeds.

''It can be said that it is not the real transfer. What it actually

means is that the light of the oppressor's heart is extinguished, and a new light is created in the heart of his victim. And the darkness of his victim's heart is removed and a new darkness is created in the heart of the oppressor. And it is not the real interchange.

''The above observation is correct, but the use of this word is still justified. We say: 'The shadow moved from here to there', or 'The light of the sun or of the lamp moved from the floor to the wall'. Such sentences are quite in order, as they are based on metaphor. And there is a double metaphor in our saying that good deeds are transferred from one man to another. First, the reward of the good deed is called a good deed, using the name of the cause for its effect; then the eradication of a feature at one place and the creation of its like at other place is called the exchange or transfer of the feature. Such figures of speech are common in every language and it could be proved by logical proofs. The evidence from the Qur'ān and traditions is in addition to that.''

This was the gist of the views expressed by Imām al-Ghazālī. As he himself has said, his explanation reduces this belief to a double metaphor, or a metaphor in metaphor. If we were to extend this interpretation, then all the rules mentioned in this essary would become metaphors. We have written earlier that Allāh has based the system of recompense on social practical wisdom. And there is no doubt that reason treats these laws as a reality, not as a metaphor. Therefore, the system of recompense should also be treated as a reality, not as a metaphor.

This is true so far as this world of practical wisdom is concerned. Of course, if one were to look at the spiritual world, then this whole material world would be seen to be just a metaphor. But here the discussion is not in that context.

Now, we return to the details about deeds:-

B) Actions preserved, written and embodied:

Deeds are preserved and written; and assume the form of a body. Allāh has said:

> *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good, and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that* (evil) *there were a long duration ...* (3:30)

And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open. (17:13)

... and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints, and We have fully recorded everything in a clear writing. (36:12)

Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your evil, so your sight today is sharp. (50:22)

This subject has already been discussed in the first volume.

C) Relation between actions and. ''natural'' phenomena:

There is a relation between actions and happenings outside. By ''actions'' we do not mean here physical movements; what we mean is good and evil deeds. Allāh says:

And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults). (42:30)

Surely Allāh does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition; *and when Allāh intends evil to a people, there is no averting it*. (13:11)

This is because Allāh was never to change a favour which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition ... (8:53)

These verses clearly show that there is a relation between our actions and the happenings around us, whether good or bad.

This matter is concisely put in two Qur'ānic verses:

And if the people of the town had believed and guarded (against evil), *We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth*; *but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned*. (7:96)

Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return. (30:41)

Obviously, natural phenomena are somehow related to human deeds. If humanity remains obedient to the commandments of Allāh and walks on His chosen path, happiness and goodness follow and the

doors of bliss are opened. On the other hand if he strays from the path of obedience and continues in his error, mischief and bad faith, chaos appears in the land and on the sea, nations are destroyed because of the injustice prevalent in them, the state of law and order deteriorates, conflict and war become the norm of the day; in short, happiness becomes a scarce commodity and unhappiness reigns in the land. Not only this; natural calamities and disasters appear, like flood, earthquakes, lightening, cyclones, etc. Allāh has mentioned the deluge of the dam of Ma'ārib, the flood of Nūḥ, the lightening of Thamūd and the gale of ʻĀd as some examples of phenomenon.

When a wicked nation is submerged in depravity, vice and evil, Allāh makes it taste the bad consequences of its misdeeds, and this leads to its decline, fall and destruction. Allāh says:

> *Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those who were before them*? *Mightier than these were they in strength and in fortifications in the land, but Allāh destroyed them for their sins; and there was not for them any defender against Allāh*. (40:21)
>
> *And when We wish to destroy a town, We send our Commandment to the people of it who lead easy lives*; *thus the word proves true against it, so We destroy it with utter destruction*. (17:16)
>
> *Then We sent Our apostles one after another; whenever there came to a people their apostles, they called him a liar; so We made some of them follow others and We made them stories*; *so away with a people who do not believe*. (23:44)

So this is the story of evil people. Diametrically opposed to it is the story of good and virtuous nations.

Individuals, like groups and nations, are taken over by the effects of their good and evil deeds, by calamities and misfortunes. In addition to this, an individual is sometimes blessed with the blessings given to his forefathers, and is also sometimes overtaken by the results of his ancestors' misdeeds and oppression. Allāh quotes Yaʻqūb (a.s.) as saying to Yūsuf (a.s.): *And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings and make His favour complete to you and to the children of Yaʻqūb as He made it complete before to your fathers, Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq* ... (12:6) The favours mentioned in this verse refer to

the kingdom, honour, etc. which Allāh gave to Yūsuf.

Thus We made the earth to swallow up him and his abode... (28:81)

….and We assigned to him a lofty tongue of truthfulness. (19:50)

Probably this ‘‘lofty tongue of truthfulness’’ means good and righteous offspring, as Allāh says in another place; *And He made it a word to continue in his posterity* ... (43:28)

And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man; *so your Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure* ... (18:82)

And let those fear who, should they leave behind weakly offspring, would fear on their account ... (4:9) It hints that the offspring may be overtaken by the effects of the injustice of their forefathers.

When Allāh bestows a bounty on a nation (or an individual), and that nation (or individual) is righteous, then that bounty is a blessing — and at the same time a trial to test its (or his) faith. Allāh says about Sulaymān (a.s.) that: *he said: This is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured.* (27:40) Again Allāh says: *If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe.* (14:7) These two verses prove that thank fullness to Allāh is in itself a good deed which brings about the blessings of Allāh.

If that blessed nation (or individual) is unrighteous and wicked then that blessing is a devise of Allāh to lead it step by step to its ruin, or a respite given to it to complete the proof of Allāh against it. Allāh says: *… and they devise plans and Allāh too arranges a plan; and Allāh is the best of planners*. (8:30). *We will lead them on by steps from whence they perceive not; and yet I respite them; surely My plan is firm*. (68:44-45); *And certainly we tried before them the people of Pharaoh*... (44:17)

And if misfortune comes to a nation (or individual), and trouble and travail plague them, and they are righteous people, then that affliction is a test and trial by which Allāh separates his good servants from the evil ones. They come out of that suffering more purified, like gold when it is

melted in the fire. Allāh says: *Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and not be tried? And certainly We tried those before them, so Allāh will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars. Or do they who work evil think that they will escape Us? Evil is it that they judge*! (29:2—4); *... and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allāh may know those who believe and take witness from among you ...* (3:140)

And if the people undergoing hardship are wicked, then that hardship is the chastisement of their misdeeds and a sign of the wrath of Allāh. Earlier-mentioned verses are enough to show this aspect.

So this is the story of actions which happen in the world and ultimately returns to their doer.

It is necessary to mention here that the following verse has no connection with the subject under discussion:-

> *And were it not that all people would have been of one way of life, We would certainly have assigned to those who disbelieve in the Beneficent God* (to make) *of silver the roofs of their houses and the stairs by which they ascend, and the doors of their houses and the couches on which they recline; and* (other) *embellishments of gold*; *and all this is naught but provision of this world's life, and the hereafter is with your Lord only for those who guard* (against evil). (43:33—35)

The purpose of this verse is to condemn this world and its paraphernalia, and to show that it has no value or importance in the eyes of Allāh, and that is why He bestows it even on the disbelievers. And had it not been misleading to the people, He would have reserved all the ease and comfort of this world for the disbelievers.

Question: Calamities, whether common to all or particular to a group or an individual, like floods, earthquakes, epidemics, wars, famines, and so on occur because of their well-known physical or natural causes. When the causes appear, the results follow; and makes no difference whether the nation or individual is good or wicked. Therefore, there is no reason to say that such phenomena occur because of good or evil deeds. Such a claim is just a theory invented by religion which is not supported by facts or experience.

Answer: We will discuss this philosophical question in detail in the commentary of the verse 7:96, *And if the people of the towns had*

believed and guarded (against evil), *We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth.*

But a short reply is appended below:-

This objection arises because the meaning of the discourse of the Qur'ān is not understood properly. When the people of the Qur'ān say that *good or bad actions bring out similar good or bad happenings in the world.,* they do not mean that there are no natural or physical causes for those happenings, or that those causes have lost their effectiveness in such incidents. Also, they do not say that those good or evil deeds are, together with natural causes, joint causes of those happenings. For example, when we say that there is a Creator for this world, we do not mean to negate the system of cause and effect which is found in the universe, nor do we say that these causes are partners with Allāh in the creation of the world. What we say is that there is a cause over and above all other apparent causes. Likewise, when we say that good or evil actions result in good or evil incidents in the world, .we do not deny the effectiveness of natural causes; we only mean that there is a higher and more powerful cause, i.e. the good or evil deeds of human beings which serves as the motive power of the natural causes. When a man writes, it is the pen which draws the letters on the paper; but the pen moves not on its own account but by the movement of the hand; and a man with open eyes will not stop even there — he will see the person who moves his hand. When he says that that person writes, he does not negate the effect and force of the hand or the pen; but he knows who the real writer is.

Experience and observation have shown that creation has given every species the means to avert damage or deterioration. Why should homo sapiens alone be an exception to this rule? Also every species is confronted by one or more opposing forces to sharpen its own defensive powers, and in this way it continues from strength to strength till it reaches its perfection. Why should man not be provided with this means of reaching the height of his perfection?

Allāh says: *And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know*. (44:38—39); *And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain*; *that is the opinion of those who disbelieve* ... (38:27) If a

maker makes anything without any purpose just in sport, there remains no further relation between him and the thing made; he does not care what happens to that thing. But if he makes it for a purpose, he looks after it; if any snag appears in its proper functioning, he mends and repairs it by adding or subtracting something or by dismantling and re-assembling it. The same is the case with the creation of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, including human beings. Allāh did not create all these in vain or in sport; He created them with a purpose and they have to return to Him, as He has said: *What! Did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?* (23:115); *And that to your Lord is the end goal.* (53:42).

With this background, it is exceedingly clear that God's Providence should be concerned with leading mankind to the goal of its perfection, first by calling them to come to the right path and guiding them to it; then through test and trial; and finally by destroying those about whom there is no hope at all that they may attain the goal of their creation. It is only in this way that the creative goal of individuals and the whole of the species can be achieved; and damaged, nay, damaging parts can be discarded and thrown into perdition, giving relief and respite to the other parts. Allāh says: *And your Lord is the Self-sufficient One, the Lord of mercy*; *if He pleases, He may take you off, and make whom He pleases successors of you, even as he raised you up from the seed of another people*. (6:133)

(Ponder upon the place and significance of the sentence, *And your Lord is the Self-sufficient One, the Lord of mercy.)*

To make a long story short, this divine system of trial and retribution is, as declared by Allāh, an insuperable, invincible and irresistible force which no one can control or subdue. Allāh says: *And whatever affliction befalls you it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults). *And you cannot escape in the earth, and you shall not have a guardian or a helper besides Allāh*. (42:30—31) Also He says: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles. Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones.* (37:171-173).

D) Actions with reference to happiness and misery:

Those actions causing happiness will always be victorious over those causing misery. Every good quality belongs to actions causing happiness: victory, steadfastness, stability, peace, hope, eternity, etc. Its opposite factors, destruction, nullity, shakiness, fear, decline and defeat, belong to actions causing misery.

There are numerous Qur'ānic verses declaring the above fact. See, for example, the following parable: *Have you not seen how Allāh sets forth a parable of a good word* (being) *like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and whose branches are in heaven, yielding its fruit on every moment by the permission of its Lord? And Allāh sets forth parables for men that they may reflect. And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface; it has no stability. Allāh confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter, and Allāh lets the unjust go astray, and Allāh does what He pleases*. (14:24—27) Also Allāh says: *That He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, even though the guilty ones disliked* (8:8); *... and the* (good) *end is for guarding* (against evil) (20:132); *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles. Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones* (37:171—173); *...and Allāh is predominant over His affair, but most people do not know*. (12:21) There are other similar verses.

The last words of the last-mentioned verse, *but most people do not know,* show that this predominance and victory is not as people think, because most of them are unaware of this victory. Had it been material victory which could be perceived by everyone, the majority would not have remained ignorant of it. This ignorance and unawareness results from two factors:-

First: The thinking power of man is limited; his eyes see only those things which are near to him; he talks about the present and is unaware of what the future has in store. His kingdom is of this day, and his predominance is of this moment. He measures the whole of existence according to the scale of his short span of life and its small possessions. But Allāh is the Master of time and space and the Ruler of this world as

well as the hereafter. He has power and authority over everything. When He judges, He separates the right from the wrong; when He decrees, it is done with truth. This world and the hereafter are but one in His sight; He is not afraid that anything will escape away from His authority. He, therefore, makes no haste in any affair. It is possible (rather, it is a fact) that He may decree a single day's disturbance to establish peace and order for a long time; or the tragedy of one individual as a means of happiness for the whole nation. Now the ignorant man thinks that Allāh was helpless and could not remove that disturbance or tragedy. (How evil is what he thinks!) But, the fact is that Allāh sees the whole chain of time even as He sees a single link of it; He judges about His whole creation as He judges about a single person. One affair does not make him oblivious of another affair; and the preservation of both does not tire Him; and He is the High, the Great. Allāh says: *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities* (fearlessly). *A brief enjoyment! Then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting place!* (3:195—196)

Second: A spiritual victory is not the same as a material one. A material victory and predominance means that the victor controls the actions of the vanauished, by depriving them of their freedom of choice, and by ompelling them to do what they do not like. It is enough to look at colonial and imperial powers: at how they gave themselves licence to kill and enslave the weaker people and how they ruled on them as it suited their whim and fancy. But experience shows that tyranny and compulsion cannot last long; and, that therefore, a colonial authority cannot rule over its colonies forever — it is but a passing show.

A spiritual victory, on the other hand, depends on capturing hearts and minds; it trains people who believe in the cause and are ready to sacrifice themselves to make the cause succeed. There is no grade above perfect faith, and no fortress stronger than belief. When one believes in a cause it is bound to manifest itself one day, even if, for the present, it remains hidden from the public eye. It is for this reason that the great powers and living societies put such a great emphasis on the dissemination of their views throughout the world. Sometimes, they spend more time and energy on such propaganda than on arms and ammunition. It is because they know that faith in a cause is more powerful than guns and tanks. If this is correct about these illusionary

causes of politics, it must be far more correct about the eternal truth to which Allāh invites the mankind.

Nothing stands in opposition to truth, per se, except falsehood. And what is there after truth except error and falsehood? It is known that falsehood cannot stand against truth. It is bound to fall, and truth is bound to vanquish error and falsehood.

Truth, in its effectiveness, as well as in its conveyance to the destination, is not inconsistent nor does it fail to bring about its result. If a believer overcomes an enemy of the truth, in this life, then he is the victor and also gets the good reward for it in the hereafter. If, on the other hand, he is defeated by the enemy of the truth, and the enemy compels him to adopt things which are disliked by Allāh, it is his duty to act accordingly and save his life — and Allāh will be pleased with that apparently irreligious behaviour. Allāh says:*...except* (when) *you guard yourselves against* (them) *for fear from them* (3:28). And if the enemy kills him, then it will be for him an everlasting pleasant life, not death. Allāh says: *And do not speak of those who are slain in Allāh's way as dead*; *nay,* (they are) *alive, but you do not perceive.*(2:154)

In this way, the believer is never vanquished; he is always victorious — either both apparently and in reality, or only in reality. Allāh refers to this aspect in the verse, *Say*: *Do you await for us but one of the two most excellent things* ... (9:52)

The truth, therefore, is always victorious in this world.

Nature, i.e. creation, is leading the human species towards truth and felicity — it is leading it creatively — and certainly it will reach its goal. The apparent victory of falsehood which we experience from time to time is not worthy of our attention: these are stepping stones for the truth to reach its height. Why should we worry? 'Time' has yet to come to its end, the world still exists, and the system of creation is still all powerful. There is enough time for truth to overpower falsehood. This much about the victory of truth in appearance. There is no need to explain in so many words about its victory in reality: we all know that the truth is always victorious.

Why did we say in the beginning that every good characteristic, such as permanence, stability and beauty, belongs to the true word and deed; and every evil characteristic, such as instability, infirmity, evil and

ugliness, belongs to the false word and deed? We have mentioned previously the following verses: *That is Allāh, your Lord, the Creator of every thing*; *there is no god but He*; *whence are you then turned away?* (40:62); *Who made good everything that He has created ...* (32:7); *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself*. (6:79) All these verses show that wrongs and evils are ''non-existence''; and as such they cannot be attributed to Allāh who is the Creator, Originator and Bestower of existence.

The case of the good is just the opposite. It is, therefore, attributed to Allāh. And it is because of this that good words and good deeds are the source of every beauty and elegance, and the origin of every virtue and felicity (like stability and permanence, blessing and benefit), in contrast to evil words and deeds. Allāh says: *He sends down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam*; *and from what they melt in the fire, for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus, arises a scum like it*; *thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing*; *and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth*; *thus does Allāh set forth parables*. (13:17)

E) Actions with reference to reason:

Good words and deeds conform with the dictates of reason, in contrast with the evil words and deeds. It has already been explained that Allāh has made his laws on the foundation of reason. By reason we mean that faculty by which man perceives right and wrong, and distinguishes between good and bad.

It is for this reason that Allāh commanded man to follow his reason, and forbade everything which deranges the reason or throws it into confusion, like drinking alcoholic liquids, gambling, uttering vain words, adultery, cheating, and so on. He also forbade lying, slandering, false accusation, embezzlement, murder, and, in short, all such things which throw reason out of gear and lead it to a wrong judgement. Human life is built on the basis of correct perception and proper thinking, in all its affairs – individual as well as social. If you analyse the personal and collective ills of humanity, you will find that they spring from actions which disturb and confuse the reason. This subject will be explained,

God willing, in another place.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘I was riding (on a camel) behind the Messenger of Allāh. He said: ‘O Ibn ‘Abbās! Be satisfied with what Allāh (*qaddara,* قدّر) has measured (decreed) for you even if it is against your wishes; because it is so written in the Book of Allāh.’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! And where is it, and I have read the Qur’ān?’ He said: ‘and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allāh knows, while you do not know.’ ’’ [*ad-Durru ʾl-manthūr*]

The author says: This tradition implies that *taqdīr* (measure, decree, التّقدير) is a general word, covering both legislation and creation, and that its meaning varies according to the context. But this tradition does not show that *‘asā* (may be, عسى) can be used to mean obligation. it has been explained that this word is used in the Qur’ān in its literal meaning, and that is ‘‘may-be’’, expectation. Therefore, the opinion expressed by a commentator that wherever the word *‘asā* (عسى) has been used in the Qur’ān, the ‘‘may-be’’ of Allāh implies compulsion is not worthy of consideration. Even more strange is the view of another that wherever ‘‘may-be’’ comes in the Qur’ān it indicates compulsion (obligation) except in two verses, one in the chapter of *at-Taḥrīm* (*Maybe if he divorces you …*), and the other in the chapter of *al-‘Isrā* (*It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you…*)

There is a tradition narrated by Ibn Jarīr from the chain of as-Suddī: The Messenger of Allāh sent a company consisting of seven of his companions, under the command of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh al-Asadī. The other members were: ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, Abū Ḥudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah ibn Rabī‘ah, Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān as-Sulamī (an ally of Banī Nawfal), Sahl ibn Bayḍā’, ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah and Wāqid ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Yarbū‘ī (an ally of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb).

The Prophet wrote a letter and gave it to ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh telling him not to read it until he camped at Malal. When ‘Abdullāh camped at the valley of Malal, he opened the letter. Written in it was: ‘‘Proceed till you camp in the valley of Nakhlah.’’ On reading it he told his companions: ‘‘Anyone who is ready to die let him proceed (with me) and

make his will, because I am making my will and proceeding as ordered by the Messenger of Allāh.'' So he went on, and only Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān remained behind because they had lost their camel. And 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh went forward, and lo! they unexpectedly met al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān, 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mughīrah ibn 'Uthmān and 'Amr al-Ḥaḍramī. They fought and arrested al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān and 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mughīrah; and al-Mughīrah fled away; and 'Amr al-Ḥaḍramī was killed by Wāqid ibn 'Abdullāh. And it was the first booty taken by the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). When they returned to Medina with the two captives and the booty, the polytheists said: ''Muḥammad thinks that he follows the commands of Allāh and he is the first to desecrate the sacred month.'' Then Allāh sent down the verse: *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say*: *Fighting in it is a grave matter***;** is not allowed. And what you did, 0 polytheists! is still graver than killing in the sacred month, because you disbelieved in Allāh, and hindered Muḥammad from Allāh's way; and the mischief, that is polytheism, is graver before Allāh than the killing. And this is the saying of Allāh, *and hindering* (men) *from Allāh's way and denying it ...*[*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: The traditions giving this and similar meanings are numerous from Sunnī chains. And this meaning is also narrated in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*; and some traditions say that the company consisted of eight persons, the ninth being their leader.

Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from the chain of Yazīd ibn Rawmān from 'Urwah, that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh sent 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh to Nakhlah, and told him: 'Stay there until you bring to us some news about (the activities and intentions of) the Quraysh.' And he did not order him to fight. And it was in the sacred month. And he (i.e. the Messenger of Allāh) wrote for him a letter before informing him about the journey, and told him: 'Go out with your companions; when you have travelled two days, open (this) your letter and look into it and proceed to do what I have ordered you in it. And do not force any of your companions to go with you (against his wishes)' When he travelled for two days, he opened the letter and found in it (the words): 'Proceed further until you camp at Nakhlah, and bring for us whatever information reaches you about the Quraysh.' When he

(‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh) read the order, he told his companions: ‘Hearing and obeying! Whoever among you desires martyrdom, should come with me, for I am proceeding on the order of the Messenger of Allāh. And whoever among you dislikes it let him go back, because the Messenger of Allāh has forbidden me to compel anyone of you (against his wishes).’ The whole group proceeded with him until they reached Najrān where Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān lost a camel which they rode alternately. They, therefore, remained behind to search for it; and the others went forward till they camped at Nakhlah. Then passed by them ‘Amr al-Ḥaḍramī, al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān, ‘Uthmān and al-Mughīrah ibn ‘Abdullāh; with them was the merchandise which they had brought from aṭ-Ṭā’if: condiments and oil. When they saw them, Wāqid ibn ‘Abdullāh rose high to show himself to them, and he had shaved his head. When they saw him with shaved head, ‘Amr said: ‘No harm will befall you from him.’ And the companions of the Messenger of Allāh consulted with one another about the polytheists; and it was the last day of *Jumāda ’l-ukhrā.* They thought: if we kill them it will be in the sacred month, and if we leave them, they will enter Mecca this night and they will be on guard. At last, they all decided to kill them. Wāqid ibn ‘Abdullāh at-Tamīmī shot an arrow at ‘Amr al-Ḥaḍramī and killed him. ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abdullāh and al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān were captured, and al-Mughīrah ran away and they could not catch him. And they took the caravan and came with it to the Messenger of Allāh. He told them: ‘By God! I had not ordered you to fight in the sacred month.’ And he kept the matter of the goods and the captives in suspense and did not accept anything from it. When the Messenger of Allāh said to them what he said, they felt ashamed and thought that they had fallen into perdition; and their brethren, the Muslims, upbraided them harshly. When the report of the incident reached the Quraysh, they said: ‘Muḥammad spilled unlawful blood, and took property, and arrested men and desecrated the sacred month.’’ Then Allāh sent down the verse: *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it ...* When it was revealed, the Messenger of Allāh retained the merchandise and freed the two captives on ransom. The Muslims asked: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Do you hope that it will be (counted as) a *jihād* (religious war) for us? Then Allāh revealed the

verse: *Surely those who believed and those who fled* (their home) *and strove hard in the way of Allāh these hope for the mercy of Allāh*; *and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* And they were eight people, and the ninth was their leader, ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*]

The author says: There are other traditions showing that this verse: *Surely those who believed ... Merciful,* was revealed about the group of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh.

This verse proves that if someone performs an act of obedience, with the intention of coming nearer to Allāh, but it turns out to be a mistake, not a good deed, then he is not counted as a sinner because he did it inadvertently. Also, the last sentence of the verse, mentioning the forgiveness of Allāh, shows that divine forgiveness covers even those situations where there was no sin or error. Therefore, the use of the word ‘‘forgiveness’’ or its derivatives does not necessarily mean that the recipient of the divine forgiveness had committed a sin.

The traditions imply that ‘‘They ask’’ refers to the Muslims, not the polytheists who ridiculed the Muslims. This view is supported by the tradition of Ibn ‘Abbās mentioned under the preceding verse: ‘‘I did not see any people better than the companions of Muḥammad. They did not ask him except thirteen questions till he was taken away (from this world), all of those questions are in the Qur’ān. Among them are: *They ask you about the intoxicants and games of chance*; *They ask you about the sacred month ...* Also, the context of the verse supports it, as the words: *and they will go on fighting with you ... ,* are addressed to the believers.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ
مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ـ ٢١٩ . فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَى قُلْ
إِصْلاَحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ـ ٢٢٠ .

They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance, Say: *In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit. And they ask you as to what they should spend*. *Say*: *Whatever can be spared*. *Thus does Allāh make clear to you the signs, that you may ponder*. (219) *About this world and the hereafter. And they ask you concerning the orphans*. *Say*: *To set right for them* (their affairs) *is good*; *and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren*; *and Allāh knows the mischief maker from the well-doer*; *and if Allāh had willed, He would certainly have made it hard for you; surely Allāh is Mighty, Wise*. (220)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance.* : According to the language, intoxicant (*khamr,* الخمر) is every liquid which is made to intoxicate. The root word, *khamr* (الخمر) means to ''to hide''. The liquor is called *khamr* (الخمر) because it hides reason and does not allow it to discriminate between right and wrong, between good and bad.

From the same root is derived *khimār* (الخمار) i.e., the veil which covers the head of a woman. *Khammartu 'l-'inā'*(خمّرت الاناء); means ''I covered the opening of the pot''. When yeast is added to dough, they say *ikhmarrati 'l-'ajīn* (اخمرّت العجين). And the yeast itself is called *khamīrah* (الخميرة), because when it is mixed with flour, it covers the flour when it rises and ferments.

The Arabs did not know any alcoholic beverages except those made

from grapes, dates and barley. Gradually, new kinds were invented and now its types and kinds are innumerable, with varying grades of intoxication. But all are intoxicant (*khamr,* الخمر). *Maysir* (الميسر), according to the language, is gambling. The gambler is called *yāsir* (الياسر).

The root word, *yusr* (اليسر) means ease. Gambling was called *maysir* (الميسر) because by it one might get wealth with ease without going to the trouble of earning and working.

The word *maysir* (الميسر) was mostly used for a particular method of gambling with arrows. It was also called *azlām* (الازلام) and *aqlām* (الاقلام). It was played by ten persons in the following manner:

A camel was purchased, slaughtered and divided into twentyfour parts. There were ten arrows: each had a separate name and its specified share. Their names (with their shares in brackets) are given hereunder:

Fadhdh (1); *taw'am* (2); *raqīb* (3); *hils* (4) *nāfis* (5); *musbil* (6); *mu'allā* (7). The remaining three arrows drawn with the names of the participants; anyone on whose name one of the first seven arrows was drawn took the number of the shares alloted to it; those on whose names the last-named three arrows were drawn got nothing and had to pay the price of the camel.

Qur'ān: *Say*: *In both of them ... sin is greater than profit*: Sin (*ithm,* الاثم) is near to evil (*dhanb,* الذّنب) in meaning. It means a condition in the thing or in reason which prevents the man from getting the good. In other words, *ithm* (الاثم) is that evil which brings unhappiness and failure even in other affairs, and disturbs the felicity of life even in other matters.

Clearly, alcoholic drinks and games of chance fit this description.

The health hazards of alcohol have been described in untold numbers of books written by ancient and modern physicians, in which they have listed the havoc created by it in the stomach, the intestines, the liver, the lungs, the nervous system, the veins and arteries, the heart and the organs of perception, i.e. the eyes, the tongue, etc. The data collected by them show the vast magnitude of the damage to the millions and millions of people who are attacked by a variety of diseases caused by this killing poison.

The social and moral disasters appearing in the wake of addiction to

drink are too well-known to need any description. Depravity of character, debauchery, shamelessness, the leakage of secrets, scandals, slanders, destruction and damage to others, crimes, murder — name any immorality, alcohol will lead to it. In short, it nullifies all ethical laws and moral values upon which are based the felicity and bliss of this life and, more particularly, the values of chastity and probity. Who can protect society from a drunkard who does not understand what he says and does not know what he does. Look at the crimes which have wrecked havoc throughout the world and have made human life a misery; search for their causes, and behind almost all of them you will see the hand of alcohol, directly or indirectly manipulating the minds of the criminals.

Nobody can deny the damage inflicted by alcohol upon the mind. Is there any need to describe how it negates the reason, puts the thinking process out of equilibrium and distorts the feelings and perceptions, not only during intoxication, but even afterwards. This damage to the whole system of perception and reason is the biggest sin and disaster of alcohol, from which sprout all other sins and disasters.

Islam, as described earlier, has based its laws on true reason, and has most emphatically forbidden all such actions which hinder the proper functioning of reason. Intoxicants, games of chance, adultery, falsehood and other such sins come in this category. The activities which are most damaging to the faculty of reason are drinking alcohol (among the deeds) and speaking lies (among the words).

These activities which nullify the rule of reason, and especially the politics which is based on alcohol and lies, endanger humanity, and destroy the foundation of happiness. Whenever such a policy bears a fruit, it proves far more bitter than the previous one. When a burden proves unbearable, they add on some more weight and hope that the practice will make the bearer perfect, and would give him more strength! Such endeavours result in failure; such activities end in loss. This one characteristic of Islam — that it has based its *sharī'ah* on reason and has prohibited all such things which damage it — is enough to place it at the top of all the systems invented by human beings throughout the world.

Human beings, because of their animal tendencies, eagerly run towards the satisfaction of their lust. Lustful activities easily contaminate the environment, in contrast to chastity and piety. It is easy to acquire a bad habit and very difficult to leave it. That is why Allāh legislated such

laws gradually, and led people to the ultimate goal step by step and sympathetically. One of those widely-spread evils was the drinking of alcohol. And a cursory glance at the four verses revealed about the subject will show how, by easy stages, they were weaned from this bad habit.

First, Allāh revealed, *Say*: *My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and rebellion without justice, and that you associate with Allāh that for which He has not sent down any authority, and that you say against Allāh what you do not know.* (7:33)

This verse was revealed in Mecca, and it has clearly forbidden the sin (*ḥarrama,* حرّم). Now we know that there is sin — great sin even — in alcohol, although at that time Allāh did not clarify what sin was. This ambiguity was, perhaps, a sort of compassion; it was as though the *sharī'ah* wanted to overlook that sin of theirs for the time being. The same is the reason for the indirect hint in another verse of the same Meccan period: *And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes — you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision* (16:67) It separated intoxication from ''goodly provision'' but stopped short of declaring it as a ''bad provision''.

Apparently people were not aware that intoxication was a great sin, until the verse was revealed: *O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know* (well) *what you say ...* (4:43)

This verse was revealed at Medina, and it promulgated the partial prohibition of liquor in the best of the times and the best of the places — at the time of prayer in the mosque.

Reason and the context of the verse shows that this verse could not have been revealed after the verses of the chapters of *al-Baqarah* and *al-Mā'idah* (which will be described shortly), because those verses promulgate total prohibition. There was no reason why a partial ban should be imposed after a total prohibition. Also, we know that this prohibition was promulgated gradually, and such a case demands proceeding from an easier step to a more difficult one, and not vice versa.

Then came the verse under discussion. It says that there is in intoxicants and games of chance *a great sin and* (some) *profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit.*

This verse, revealed after the above-mentioned verse 4:43, promulgates

total prohibition of intoxicants and games of chance. It clearly says that ''there is great sin'' in these two evils. And verse 7:33, mentioned in the beginning, revealed at Mecca, had clearly prohibited sin.

This explanation exposes the absurdity of a commentator who says that this verse was not clear about the prohibition of liquor. First, let us give you a gist of what he says:-

''This verse of the chapter of *al-Baqarah* was not clear about the prohibition of alcohol and gambling; the words of Allāh that there is great sin in them only show that these are sinful acts, and sin means harm. Even if we say that every harmful thing is prohibited, it does not include those things which are partially harmful and partially beneficial. That is why there was a difference of opinion about alcohol among the companions of the Prophet. Some of them left drinking after the revelation of this verse, while others continued to drink. Perhaps, the drinkers thought that they could easily enjoy its profit safeguarding themselves from its harms. When the ground was thus prepared, Allāh revealed the verse of the chapter of *al-Mā'idah* which totally and clearly prohibits these things: *O you believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiword*; *shun it therefore that you may be successful ... Will you then desist?* (5:93-94)''

Now let us look critically at the above argument:

First: A major part of this argument rests on the assumption that sin means harm. But it is wrong. Just because in this verse it is followed by the words, *and* (some) *profit for men,* it does not imply that its meaning is ''harm'' or ''loss'', i.e. the opposite of ''benefit''. How can the word ''sin'' (*ithm,* الاثم) be taken to mean ''harm'' in the verses listed below? :-

> *And whoever associates anything with Allāh, he devises indeed a great sin*. (4:48)
>
> *And whoever conceals it* (i.e. testimony), *his heart is surely sinful*. (2:283)
>
> *Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your own sin*. (5:29)
>
> *Every man of them shall have what he has earned of sin.* (24:11)
>
> *And whoever earns a sin, he earns it only against his own self*. (4:111)

There are many such verses.

Second: The verse did not say that .the order was given ‘‘because’’ of the harm inherent in alcohol. It just promulgated the law. There was no justification for the companions to follow their own opinion in this case.

Even if we admit, for the sake of argument, that the verse gives the reason for that order, that reason is not the harm, but the greatness of the harm as compared with the profit. The verse says in clear words, *and their sin is greater than their profit.* Such a clear declaration leaves no room at all for the exercise of one’s own opinion. Opinion has no place in the presence of a clear order of Allāh and the Apostle.

Third: Let us suppose, for the time being, that the verse did not clearly say that liquor and gambling were forbidden. But did it not say in clear words that they were great sins? Was not this verse revealed at Medina? Had not verse 7:33, revealed years ago at Mecca, clearly prohibited the sin? What excuse can be offered by those companions who followed their own opinion. in opposition to these verses of Mecca and Medina, which taken jointly clearly prohibit alcohol and games of chance?

Verse 7:33 prohibits all sins. And this verse under discussion uses the adjective ‘great’ (*kabīr,* الكبير) and ‘greater’ (*akbar,*. الاكبر) for the sins of alcohol and gambling. In view of this nobody can remain in any doubt that these two evils are the greatest of all sins; nor can there remain any doubt about their absolute prohibition. The Qur’ān has termed murder, the hiding of testimony, lying and slander etc. as ‘‘sin’’, but it has not used the adjective ‘‘great’’ for any sin except polytheism (….*and whoever associates anything with Allāh, he devises indeed a great sin.* — 4:48) and alcohol and games of chance.

In short, there is no doubt that this verse clearly prohibits these two sins.

Lastly the two verses of the chapter *al-Mā’idah* were revealed: *O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of Satan’s handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful. Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allāh and from prayer. Will you then desist?* (5:93—94)

The last sentence (*Will you then desist?*) shows that the Muslims had

not desisted from drinking alcohol even after the revelation of the verse of the chapter *al Baqarah* under discussion; and that there was a need for such a strong admonition.

This much about liquor. So far as gambling is concerned its social evils and the ruin caused by it in the structure of life are well-known, and need no description. But we shall further explain it in the fifth chapter.

Now we come back to the meaning of the words used in the verse. Sin (*ithm,* الأثم) has just now been explained. Greatness (*kibr,* الكبر) in volume is as numerousness (*kathrah,* الكثرة) in number. Their opposite are smallness (*ṣighar,* الصّغر) and paucity (*qillah,* القلّة) respectively.

These two adjectives are relative ones. When there are two things, one of them may be greater than the other, which then will be called smaller than the first. But the first one which was called ''greater'' may be smaller than a third one. If there was no comparison, there would be neither the greatness nor the smallness; nor would there by an numerousness or paucity.

Probably people first became aware of greatness when they looked at the size of material things around themselves. Later on they extended this concept to mental visions and ideas. Allāh says: *Surely it* (i.e. hell) *is one of the greatest* (misfortunes). (74:35); *a great* (i.e. grievous) *word it is that comes out of their mouths.* (18:5); *great* (i.e. hard) *to the unbelievers is that which you call them to.* (42:13)

'Iẓam (العظم) has the same meaning as *kibar* (الكبر): both denote greatness. Apparently *'iẓam* (العظم) is derived from *'aẓm* (bone, العظم); as the greatness of the body of an animal or man is related to the size of the skeleton - the bones inside — the word *'aẓm* (bone, العظم) was metaphorically used for greatness, and gradually ''greatness'' became its first meaning.

Naf' (profit, النفع) is opposite of *ḍarar* (harm, loss, الضرر) These words are used for the things which are desired or disliked because of other things; while good and bad are used for the things which are liked or disliked by themselves.

Profits for men: It refers to the monetary gains as well as the amusement and merry-making for which people indulge in these two sins.

Allāh used here the plural form (profits); but while comparing it with sin He used the singular form (their sin is greater than their profit). As the comparison was in size, and not in number, there was no reason to use the plural which describes the number, not the size.

Qur'ān: *And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*:*Whatever can be spared*.

'Afw (العفو) originally meant 'to go to a thing to get it.' Then, keeping in view various connections and relations, it came to be used for forgiveness, obliteration of footprints and moderation in spending. It is this last meaning which is intended in this verse, and that is why it has been translated as ''whatever can be spared''.

In this verse, the reply fits the question in the same way as was explained in the verse 2:215, *They ask you to what they should spend. Say*: *Whatever of good you spend, it is for the parents ...*

Qur'ān: *Thus does Allāh make clear to you the signs that you may ponder about this world and the hereafter. Fid-dunyā wa 'l-ākhirah* (فى الدّنيا و الاخرة) literally means ''in this world and the hereafter''. But it does not mean 'you may ponder while you are in this world and in the hereafter'. It refers to the subject upon which men are expected to ponder. That is why we have translated it ''may ponder about this world ...''

The verse exhorts the believers to ponder on the realities and affairs of both the worlds. This world is a place which Allāh has created for you to live in and for you to earn in it what might be beneficial to you in your permanent home, i.e. the hereafter. That is the place where you will return to your Lord and He will give you the recompense for what you did in this world.

This verse urges people to enquire about, and investigate, the realities of existence, the percepts of the beginning and the end and the mysteries of nature; and to think and ponder upon the social concepts, moral and ethical values, and the laws of life governing individuals and groups. In short, man is expected to think about all the knowledge right from his beginning upto his returning to his Lord, as well as all the affairs coming between these points which have any bearing on the. happiness and misery of mankind.

This verse also shows that although the Qur'ān demands complete obedience from man towards the command of Allāh and His Apostle, without any if and but, yet it likes people to ponder on those commands and their philosophy so that they may grasp their realities and, instead of blindly following the laws, may see the light of those brilliant teachings and follow that light to ultimate destination.

Thus Allāh does make clear probably means the explanation of the philosophy behind the given laws and commands, and the clarification of the fundamentals of the faith and belief.

Qur'ān: *And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say*: *''To set right for them* (their affairs) *is good.''* There is a hint, a clear indication even, in this verse that it was revealed to lighten some burden — it allows mingling with the orphans, and then goes on to say: *and if Allāh had willed, He would certainly have made it hard for you.* It shows that prior to this verse the rules concerning the guardianship of the orphans were hard and difficult, which had caused anxiety and alarm among the Muslims, and which led them to ask the question referred to in the verse.

There were some verses about the orphans, very severe in tone: *And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless* (things) *for* (their) *good* (ones), *and do not devour their property* (as an addition) *to your own property; this is surely a great crime*. (4:2);*As for those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter into burning fire.* (4:10) Apparently the verse under discussion was revealed after these verses; and the traditions, which will be quoted later, support this view.

The *iṣlāh* (to set right, اصلاح) is used here as a common noun. It denotes, according to the usage of the Arabic language, really good management, not just a show; and the sentence, *and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well-doer,* points to this.

Qur'ān: *and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren*: This sentence refers to the Islamic concept of the equality of all the believers. This concept nullifies all distinctions which are the basic cause of every mischief which appears in society. It abolishes various types of injustice and rebellion; putting oneself on a high pedestal, treating others as one's slaves, thinking of them as an inferior, and weak species. This abolition of differences creates equilibrium in various social weights; there appears a fine balance between a weak orphan and his powerful guardian, between a rich tycoon and a wretched beggar, and so on. Allāh says: *The believers are but brethren*. (49:10)

Now, the verse under discussion allows the guardian to mingle with

the orphan only when it is done like the mingling of two brothers who have equal obligation towards each other. If something is taken from an orphan's property, then something of equal value must be given to him and added to his property. In this context, this verse runs parallel to the verse mentioned earlier, *And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless* (things) *for* (their) *good* (ones), *and do not devour their property* (as an addition) *to your own property*; *this is surely a great crime*. (4:2) A comparison between the two verses shows that the verse under discussion has somewhat lessoned the burden of the guardians; and the sentence, *and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well-doer,* also hints at this relaxation of rigour. The meaning is: Now you may mingle with your wards, the orphans (and this is the relaxation of the previous rule); but the mingling should be as of two brother who have equal obligations towards each other. If this condition is fulfilled, then there should be no anxiety and fear on your part. If that mingling is with good intentions, and in order to set their affairs right for them, then it is good; and the reality cannot be hidden from Allāh, and He will not reproach you just because you mingled and mixed with the orphans, provided you did it for their good, like brethren, and Allāh knows the difference between a mischief-maker and a well-doer.

Qur'ān: *and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well doer*: Here the preposition, from (*min,* من) has been used after ''knows'' (*ya'lamu,* يعلم); probably it is a hint that ''knows'' in this verse has the significance of ''distinguishes''; and the sentence means, ''Allāh distinguishes the mischief-maker from the well-doer.''

'Anat (العنت) means difficulty and hardship.

TRADITIONS

'Alī ibn Yaqṭīn said: ''al-Mahdī asked Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Kāẓim (a.s.) about whether intoxicants were prohibited in the Book of Allāh, because the people know that it is not allowed but do not know that it is prohibited.

''The Imām said: 'But it is prohibited.' He asked: 'Where in the Book of Allāh is it forbidden? O Abu '1-Ḥasan!' He replied: 'The word of Allāh: *Say*: My *Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and*

rebellion without justice ...' (7:33) Then the Imām explained: 'And as for sin, it is intoxicants themselves, because Allāh said somewhere else, *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say*: *''In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profits, for men, and their sin is greater than their profits.''* So the sin according to the Book of Allāh is intoxicants and games of chance, and their sin is greater than their profit, as Allāh has said.'

''al-Mahdī said: 'O 'Alī ibn Yaqṭīn! This is the legal decree of the house of Hāshim.' I said: 'You spoke the truth, O leader of the faithful! Praise be to Allāh who did not take this knowledge out from you, O people of the house!' ''

'Alī ibn Yaqtīn says: ''By God, al-Mahdī could not restrain himself from saying to me, 'You spoke the truth, O Rāfidī!' '' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: The meaning of this tradition can be understood from the commentary.

There is a tradition narrated from Abū Basīr that one of the two Imāms (i.e. fifth or sixth — a.s.) said: ''Verily Allāh made a house for sin, then He made a door for the house, then He made a lock for the door, then He made a key for the lock; and (that) key of sin is intoxicants.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

There is another tradition from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.): ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Verily intoxicants are the head of every sin!' '' [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition narrated by Ismā'īl, in which he said: ''Abu Ja'far (a.s.) went into the Sacred Mosque; some Qurayshites saw him and said: 'He is the god of the people of Iraq.' Someone said: 'If you send one of you to him.' So a young man from among them came to him and asked: 'O Uncle! What is the greatest of the great (sins)?' He said: 'Drinking alcohol.' '' [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition narrated by Abu '1-Bilād, that one of the two Imāms (al-Bāqir or aṣ-Ṣādiq — a.s.) said: ''Allāh has not been disobeyed with anything more powerful than drinking alcohol. Verily one of them leaves the obligatory prayers, and jumps upon his mother and daughter and sister, and he does not know.'' [*ibid*.]

''An atheist asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.): 'Why did Allāh prohibit alcohol when there is nothing more delicious than it?' (The Imām said: 'He prohibited it because it is the mother of all wicked things and the head of every evil. There come a time to the drinker ,of it when he loses

his reason, then he does not know his Lord, and leaves no sin but that he commits it …' '' [*al-Iḥtijāj*]

The author says: The traditions explain one another and experience and observation support them.

A tradition from Jābir is reported that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: ''The Messenger of Allāh cursed ten persons concerning an alcoholic beverage — the one who plants it, the one who guards it, the one who squeezes its juice out, the one who drinks it, the one who serves it, the one who transports it, the one to whom it is trans ported, the one who sells it, the one who purchases it, and the one who eats its price.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

Another tradition says that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Cursed is he, cursed is he who sits at a table where alcohol is drunk.' '' [*ibid., al-Maḥāsin*]

The author says: The above two traditions are confirmed by the words of Allāh, *and do not help one another in sin and transgression*. (5:3)

aṣ-Ṣadūq reports through his chains, from Abū Amāmah that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'There are four persons at whom Allāh will not look (with mercy) on the day of resurrection — the one who is disobedient (to his parents), the one who helps a man and then reminds him of it, the one who denies the destiny (decreed by Allāh), and the one who habitually drinks alcohol'.'' [*al-Khiṣāl*]

Ibnu 'sh-Shaykh has reported in *al-Amālī*, through his chains, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that the Prophet said: ''My Lord, Great is His Glory! has sworn thus: No servant of mine will drink alcohol in this world but that I shall make him drink on the day of resurrection from the boiling water (of hell) as much as he had drunk alcohol; (it would make no difference) whether after that he is punished or forgiven.'' The Prophet said: ''Verily the one who drinks alcohol shall come on the day of resurrection, with blackened face, blue eyes, a slanting jaw-bone and running saliva, licking his tongue from his back-side.''

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: ''It is an obligation upon Allāh (i.e. Allāh has made it incumbent upon Himself) that He will make the drinker of alcohol drink what comes out from the vulva of fornicating women. From that vulva will come out pus and thick blood, its heat and stink will offend (even) the inmates of the fire.'' [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

The author says: These traditions may be supported by the word of Allāh, *Surely the tree of Zaqqūm is the food of the sinful, like molten brass*; *it shall boil in* (their) *bellies, like the boiling of hot water. Seize him, then drag him down into the midst of Hell; then pour over his head of the torment of the boiling water*: *'Taste* (it)*; you forsooth are the mighty, the honourable!* (44:43—49)

There are numerous traditions with the same meaning as described above.

There is a tradition narrated by al-Washshā' that he heard Abu'1-Ḥasan (a.s.) saying: *''Maysir* (المیسر) is gambling.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: Traditions giving this explanation are numerous; and there is no doubt whatsoever about the meaning.

It is reported, under the verse, *And they ask you as to what they should spend ... ,* that Ibn 'Abbās said: ''Verily, some people from the companions, when they were told to spend in the way of Allāh, came to the Prophet and said: 'We do not know what this ''spending'' is which we have been ordered in our properties. So, what should we spend from it?' Then Allāh revealed: *and they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *'Whatever can be spared'* And before that, one used to spend his wealth until he no longer had anything left to give in alms, and until there remained no property to eat from.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

It is narrated from Yaḥyā that he was told that Ma'ādh ibn-Jabal and Tha'labah came to the Messenger of Allāh and said: ''O Messenger of Allāh! Verily we have our servants and families; what, therefore, should we spend from our properties?'' Then Allāh revealed: *And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *'Whatever can be spared' ''* [*ibid.*]

It is reported that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the word '*afw* (العفو); which we have translated as ''whatever can be spared'' that *'afw* is the middle (course). [*ibid.,* al-'Ayyāshī]

And it is written that al-Bāqir (a.s.) and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said that it is modicum, a sufficiency. And the tradition of Abū Basīr interprets it as frugality, thrift. [al-'Ayyāshī]

It is reported from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the verse: *And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and* (keep) *between these the just mean* (25:67) that he said: ''This (stage) is after

this stage; it is the middle.'' [*ibid*]

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: '' *'afw* (العفو) is what is in excess of the maintenance of the year.'' [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: The tradition express the same meanings in different words; and the last one gives an example of *'afw* (العفو)

There are innumerable traditions showing the excellence of alms, its ways, place and quantity; some of which shall be quoted in the relevant places, God willing.

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the verse: *And they ask you concerning the orphans ...* that he said: ''When the verse: (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire,* everyone who had any orphan with him turned him out; and they asked the Messenger of Allāh about turning them out. Then Allāh revealed: *And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say: ' To set right for them* (their affairs) *is good; and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren; and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well-doer ... '* ''[*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

There is a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: When Allāh revealed: *And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner ...* (6:153) and *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly ... ,* every one who had an orphan with him went (to his home) and separated his (orphan's) food from his own food and his drink from his own drink; and he put some extra portion in the orphan's food, and kept it reserved for him till he ate it or it deteriorated and he threw it away. This system proved very hard for them, so they mentioned it to the Messenger of Allāh. Then Allāh revealed: *And they ask you concerning the orphans ... and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren...* Then they mixed their food with their own food and their drink with their own drink. [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, 'Aṭā' and Qatādah.

وَلاَ تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَّ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ وَلاَ تُنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُولَئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ـ ٢٢١ ٠

And do not marry the idolatresses until they believe; and certainly a believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress, even though she should allure you; *and do not give* (believing women) *in marriage to idolaters until they believe*; *and certainly a believing bondsman is better than an idolater, even though he should allure you*; *those invite to the fire, and Allāh invites to the garden and to forgiveness by His leave; and makes clear His signs for men, so that they may be mindful*. (221)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And do not marry the idolatresses until they believe*: ar-Rāghib has said in *al-Mufradāt*: The original meaning of *nikāḥ* (النّكاح) is *'aqd* (the marriage-tie, العقد). then it was metaphorically used for sexual intercourse. It is impossible that it could be the other way round, because all the words denoting sexual inter course are but metaphors; they thought it indecent to mention it, just as they disliked to declare the act itself. It is not possible, for one who does not intend to utter an obscenity, to use the name of an unmentionable act for a decent thing like marriage.

This observation of ar-Rāghib is very good; but for this reasoning to be valid, the word *'aqd* (العقد) should be taken to mean the marriage-tie, not the formulae of the proposal and acceptance of marriage. The *mushrikāt* (idolatresses, المشركات) is the *ismu 'l-fā'il* (active participle, i.e. the noun derived from an infinitive verb denoting its doer, اسم الفاعل) of the verb *ishrāk* (الاشراك) which means ''to ascribe a partner to Allāh''; it is also called polytheism. It is well-known that polytheism may be open or hidden, and these two qualities may be of various degrees and grades. The same is the case with belief and disbelief.

The most open kind of polytheism is to believe that there is more than one god and to take and worship idols and treat them as intercessors before God. Less open is the polytheism of the people of the book, as they deny the prophethood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), and, especially their belief that ‘Uzayr was the son of God, or ‘Īsā was the son of God, and so is their claim that they themselves are sons of God, and His beloved. All this is polytheism, but less manifest than that of the idolaters. More hidden than that is believing that apparent causes independently create their effects; and then relying on these causes.

The most hidden polytheism is the one from which only the chosen servants of Allāh, with pure hearts, can escape. And that is to be forgetful of Allāh and to divert attention to other than Him.

But there is an important point which must be cleared here. Attributing a verb, adjective or active participle (in its literal sense) to someone is one thing; but using that adjective or active participle as a nomenclature is an entirely different matter. If a believer neglected an obligatory act, it might be said that he denied it or disbelieved in it; but the nomenclature, unbeliever/disbeliever, cannot be used for him. Allāh says: *and for the sake of Allāh, pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men* (upon) *everyone who can afford the journey to it*; *and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allāh is Self-sufficient, independent of the worlds*. (3:97) Here the verb, ‘‘disbelieves’’, has been used for him who neglects the pilgrimage, still he is not called an ‘‘unbeliever’’, he is a sinner; and if the adjective ‘‘unbeliever’’ or ‘‘disbeliever’’ is used for him at all, it must be conditional, e.g. ‘‘disbeliever in pilgrimage’’.

The same is the case with all active participles and adjectives used in the Qur’ān, like righteous, thankful, purified; and like sinner, unjust, etc. These terms cannot be used as a nomenclature in every place where the verb, adjective or active participle is used.

Accordingly, we cannot use the nomenclature, polytheist, for all those who indulge in hidden or open polytheism. ‘‘Idolater’’ or ‘‘polytheist’’ is a Qur’ānic terminology and we should look at the Qur’ān to know who is called a polytheist. The Qur’ān does not use this term for the Jews or the Christians. Instead it invented for them a new term, ‘‘people of the book’’. And the term ‘‘disbeliever’’ (*kāfir,* الكافر) is general, covering all those who are outside the pale of Islam.

So far as the term, polytheist or idolater, is concerned, the Qur'ān uses it in a context where it is known that the disbelievers, other than the people of the book, are meant. See, for example, the following verse: *Those who disbelieved from among the people of the book and the polytheists could not have separated themselves* (from the faithful) *until there had come to them the clear evidence* (98:1); *... the idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year ...* (9:28); *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them* (9:5); *How can there be an agreement for the idolaters with Allāh and with His Apostle?* (9:7); *... and fight the polytheists all together as they fight you all together ...* (9:36) etc.

Now we come to the verse: And they said: Be Jews or Christians, you will be rightly guided. Say: Nay! (We follow) the religion of Ibrāhīm, the upright one, and he was not one of the polytheists. (2:135) The last sentence, ''he was not one of the polytheists'', is not an innuendo against the Jews and the Christians. To know its meaning, let us look at another verse: Ibrāhīm was not a Jew, nor a Christian; but he was an upright (man), a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists. (3:67). The word ''upright (man)'' is an adverse allusion to the Jews and the Christians; it exalts Ibrāhīm above the soulless ritualism of the Jews as well as the dogmatism of the Christians, the materialism of the one and the misguided spiritualism of the other. It says that Ibrāhīm was on the middle path, neither a Jew nor a Christian. And then it uses the word ''a Muslim'', and shows that he was purely a Muslim, not ascribing any partner, associate or colleague to Allāh; and then it adversely alludes to the polytheists by the words, ''he was not one of the polytheists.'' Likewise, in verse 2:135, the word ''the upright one'' indirectly hints against the Jews and the Christians who had gone astray; and the sentence, ''and he was not one of the polytheists'' alludes to the idol-worshippers.

In short, this verse does not refer to the Jews and the Christians as polytheists.

Now we come to some verses where the active participle, polytheist (*mushrik,* المشرک) has been used for other than idol-worshippers:-

> *And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating other* (with Him). (12:106)
>
> *... and woe to the polytheists who do not give zakāt, and they are*

unbelievers in the hereafter. (41:6—7)

His (Satan's) *power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate others with Him* (Allāh). (16:100)

These verses have used the active participle, ''polytheists'', for those who, for example, befriend Satan and are under his power. Obviously, almost all the believers (except an infinitesimal minority who are friends of Allāh, and are His truly righteous servants) would come under this definition. But we would not be justified in giving them the name, ''polytheists'' because the active participle and the nomenclature are two different things.

This lengthy explanation shows that the apparent meaning of the verse under discussion prohibits marriage with idol-worshipping men and women only; marriage with the people of the book is not included in this verse.

In this context, there are no grounds at all for saying that this verse abrogated verse 6 of the chapter of al-Mā'idah; This day have been made lawful for you (all) good things; and the food of those who were given the book is lawful to you and your food lawful for them; and the chaste (ones) from the believing women and the chaste (ones) from those who were given the book before you (are lawful for you) when you have given them their wage (dower) with chaste intention, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret … (5:6) Nor is there any reason for saying that this verse (2:221) joined with the verse, *... and hold not to the ties of marriage of unbelieving women ...* (60:10), abrogates verse 5:6. Nor is it correct to say that the verse 5:6 has abrogated the two verses, 2:221 and 60:10.

Why are the above opinions wrong?

It is because:

First: As explained above, the verse under discussion apparently says nothing about marriage with the people of the book, while the verse of the chapter of *al-Mā'idah* (5:6) *is* concerned only with marriage with the people of the book. As the subject matters of the two verses are totally different, there is no question of one of them abrogating the other.

So far as verse 60:10 *is* concerned, it speaks about not holding ties of marriage with unbelieving women, and at the first glance it appears contradictory to verse 5:6 which allows marriage with chaste women of the people of the book. But a little more thinking will show (as will be

explained later on) that this speaks about a man who accepts Islam and his wife remains a disbeliever, then he is forbidden to hold intact the marriage-tie with that woman, while the verse 5:6 speaks about performing a new marriage with a woman who is from the people of the book. The subject matters, therefore, of the two verses are not the same. Accordingly there arises no question of abrogation at all.

Second: Even if we accept for the time being that verses 2:221 and 60:10 forbid marriage with a Jewess or a Christian woman, the context compels us to believe that they cannot abrogate verse 5:6 which allows that marriage. Verse 5:6 shows some relaxation of the rule and Allāh describes it as His grace upon the believers. Such a verse cannot be abrogated. In Islam relaxed rules usually get the upper hand over strict ones. Therefore, if there were any abrogation, verse 5:6 would abrogate verses 2:221 and 60:10*,* and not vice versa.

Third: The chapter of *al Baqarah* (ch. 2) was the first one revealed at Medina soon after *Hijrah ;* and the chapter of *al-Mumtaḥanah* (ch. 60) was revealed at Medina before the take-over of Mecca in 8 A.H.: while the chapter of *al-Mā'idah* (ch. 5) was the last one revealed — it abrogated some previous rules but no rule revealed in it was ever abrogated.

How could the verses revealed before the chapter 5 abrogate the verse of that chapter which was yet to be revealed?

Qur'ān: *and certainly a believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress, even though she should allure you*: The people at that time accorded no dignity to slave-girls and anyone marrying such a woman immediately became an object of scorn. This verse, by qualifying the word ''bondswoman'' with the adjective ''believing'' and leaving the word ''idolatress'' without any condition, emphasizes the principle that a believing woman, even if she is a slave, is better than an idolatress even if she comes from a noble family and is rich and beautiful — the factors which usually attract a man towards a woman.

Someone has said that the word ''bondswoman'' (*amah***,** أمة) here and the word ''bondsman'' (*'abd,* عبد) in the next sentence, mean slave woman and slave man of Allāh — in other words, believing woman and believing man. But this interpretation is farfetched.

Qur'ān: *and certainly a believing bondsman is better than an idolater, even though he should allure you*: The same comment as above.

Qur'ān: *Those invite to the fire, and Allāh invites to the garden and to forgiveness by His leave* :

It explains the reason why marriage with idol-worshippers has been prohibited. The idolaters believe in falsehood, walk on the wrong path, and, thus, evil characteristics become firmly rooted in their psychology. Disbelief and sin look attractive to them and their eyes lose the ability to see the light of truth. As a result, their whole life becomes an open invitation to follow them to eternal perdition. In short, by their actions and talks they try to allure and entice the believers to the fire of hell.

The believers, on the other hand, proceed on the path of true faith, and live a righteous and virtuous life; and by their good example in words and deeds invite people to the paradise and the Lord's forgiveness by His leave, as He allowed them to call the people into the right path, leading them to eternal bliss — paradise and forgiveness.

Apparently, it would have looked proper to say, ''and these (i.e. the believers) invite to the paradise…'', as the contrasting sentence says: ''those invite to the fire.'' But Allāh used His own name instead of the believers to show that the believers in this invitation, nay, in all their activities and affairs, rely on their Creator and Lord; they are not independent of Allāh, their Master. Allāh says:*...and Allāh is the Master of the believers*. (3:68)

This sentence may be interpreted also in another way: The invitation to the garden and to forgiveness may be a reference to this law itself — the rule forbidding marriage with polytheists is in itself an invitation to paradise and the forgiveness of Allāh.

TRADITIONS

It is written about this verse that it was revealed about Marthad ibn Abī Marthad al-Ghanawī. The Messenger of Allāh sent him to Mecca to bring some Muslims out; and he was a strong and brave man. A woman, 'Unāq by name, offered him her person, but he refused; they had been friends before the advent of Islam. Then she said: ''Well, will you then agree to marry me?'' He said: ''Not before I seek permission from the Messenger of Allāh'' When he returned (to Medina), he asked permission to marry her. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-*

manthūr from Ibn ‘Abbās.

al-Wāḥidī has narrated through the chain of as-Suddī from Abū Mālik from Ibn ‘Abbās about this verse that it was revealed about ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah. He had a black slave-girl; once he became angry and slapped her (on the face). Then he felt frightened, and coming to the Prophet told him the story. The Prophet said: ‘‘What is she? O ‘Abdullāh!’’ He replied: ‘‘She keeps the fast, prays, does *wuḍū* properly, and offers testimony that there is no god except Allāh and that you are His Messenger.’’ The Prophet said: ‘‘O ‘Abdullāh! She is a believing woman.’’ ‘Abdullāh said: ‘‘By Him Who sent you with truth! I shall surely set her free and then marry her.’’ He did so. Some Muslims ridiculed him and said, ‘‘Lo! He married a slave-girl’’. They thought it better to establish marriage-ties with polytheist men and women, because they were of ‘‘honourable’’ families. Then Allāh revealed: *and certainly a believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress ...* [*ad-Durru’l-manthūr*]

Another tradition, quoted in the same book from Muqātil says that she was a bondswoman of Ḥudhayfah, whom he emancipated and married.

The author says: The above traditions are not contradictory. Maybe there were various such cases, and then the verse was revealed covering all of them.

There are some traditions showing that this verse abrogated verse 5:6, or was abrogated by it. We have shown the absurdity of these views, and we shall discuss those traditions when commenting on verse 5:6.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا
تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ۲۲۲ نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ
أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلَاقُوهُ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۲۲۳

And they ask you about menstruation. Say it is a dis comfort; *therefore, keep aloof from the women during the menstruation and do not go near them until they have become clean*; *then when they have cleansed themselves, go in them as Allāh has commanded you; surely Allāh loves those who purify themselves*. (222) *Your women are a tillage for you, so go unto your tillage when you like, and do good beforehand for yourselves*; *and fear Allāh, and know that you are to meet Him, and give good news to the believers*. (223)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And they ask you about menstruation*. *Say*: *It is a discomfort*: *maḥīḍ* (المحيض) and *ḥayḍ* (الحيض) are verbal infinitives; the Arabs say: *ḥāḍati 'l-mar'aḥ* (حاضت المرأة) when the natural system of the woman discharges the well-known periodic blood, which has its own special colour, etc. and is a peculiarity of women. Its active participle (*ismu 'l-fā'il,* اسم الفاعل) is used in both masculine and feminine genders, because there is no risk of misunderstanding. They say *ḥā'iḍ* (الحائض) and *ḥāiḍah* (الحائضة) i.e. the woman having monthly period; as they say *ḥāmil* (الحامل) and *ḥāmilah* (الحاملة) i.e. the pregnant women.

Adhā (الاذى) means discomfort and distress. Some people say that it is synonymous with *ḍarar* (harm, loss,الضّرر) . But it is not correct. The opposite of *ḍarar* (harm, loss , الضّرر) is *naf'* (benefit, profit, النّفع); but *naf'* (النّفع) is not the opposite of *adhā* (الاذى) **.** Also people say *dawāun muḍirrun* (harmful medicine, دوآء مضر); but if

they said *dawā'un mu'dhin* (دوآء مؤذ) it would give another meaning; disagreeable or unpleasant medicine. Moreover, the Qur'ān says: *They shall by no means harm you* (*lan yaḍurrūkum,* لن يضرّوكم) *but with a distress* (*adhḍ,* اذى) (3:111) There would be no sense if you read it as: ''they shall by no means harm you but with a harm.'' In some other verses, also, it is difficult to interpret *adhā* (اذى) as *ḍarar* (loss, harm, ضرر): *Surely* (as for) *those who annoy* (*yu'dhūna,* يوذون) *Allāh and His Apostle* ... (33:57); *O my people! Why do you give me trouble* (*tu dhūnanī,* تؤذوننى) *and you know indeed that I am Allāh's Apostle to you* (61:5). Apparently, discomfort (*adhā,* اذى) signifies the effect of a disagreeable thing, and there may be times when a situation can be a discomfort as well as a harm or loss.

Menstruation is called *adhā* (اذى) in the meaning described above — discomfort, distress, disagreeable.

Those who interpret *adhā* (اذى) as harm, say that the question was about sexual intercourse during the monthly period, and Allāh replied that it was harmful. The physicians have said that at that time nature is occupied with cleansing the womb and making it ready for pregnancy, and sexual intercourse in the midst of that would creat a disturbance which is harmful to the health.

Qur'ān: *therefore, keep aloof from the women during the menstruation and do not go near them*...: *i'tizāl* (اعتزال) means to withdraw, to retire, to avoid mingling. They say *'azalta naṣībahu* (عزلت نصيبه) when you separate his share and keep it in a place away from the others' shares.

Qurb (to be near, القرب) is the opposite of *bu'd* (to be far away, distant, البعد). It is used with the preposition *min* (from, من) and also without any preposition, as in this verse.

Keep aloof from woman during the menstruation means ''do not establish sexual relation with them during the passing of blood.''

People have had different views and customs about women in their monthly period. The Jews were extremely harsh in this matter. They ostracized such a woman even in food and drink. Her pots were separated, she took her meal apart from others, sat away from all the household, and slept alone. The Torah had ordained very severe rules concerning that period: about the woman as, well as about those who

were unfortunate enough to go near her or even to touch her.

The Christians had no restriction at all about mingling, or even sleeping with them. The pagans of Arabia had no fixed rule. The Arabs of Medina and its neighbourhood had adopted some of the Jewish customs, and had thus made the lives of rich women difficult for them. On the other hand some pagans liked to have sexual intercourse with them in the belief that if a woman became pregnant at that time, the child would be cruel and extremely fond of shedding blood — these were admirable qualities for a man among the bedouins!

Apparently the words of this verse confirm the Jewish custom, but it is not so. When we read the next sentence, *then when they have cleansed themselves, go in to them as Allāh has commanded you,* we know that it means 'going in to them from their front'. It means that it was only this act, i.e. sexual intercourse in to their front, which was prohibited by the preceding sentences, and that the words, ''keep aloof from them'' and ''do not go near them'' are not used in their literal meaning; rather they are metaphors for sexual relations. Accordingly, this verse prohibits only this one action, and imposes no restriction whatsoever on mingling with them in food, drink, sleep, etc. In short, Islam adopted the middle course between the severe restrictions of the Jews and the free license of the Christians.

The word ''menstruation'' (*maḥīḍ,* المحيض) appears in the question, and then again in the answer (*keep aloof ... during the menstruation*) Why has the word been repeated instead of using a pronoun in the answer? It is because there is a difference in meaning of the two words: the first refers to the menstruation, and the second to its period.

Qur'ān: *until they have become clean*; *then when they have cleansed themselves, go into them as Allāh has commanded you*:

Cleanliness (*ṭahārah,* الطّهارة) and its opposite, uncleanliness (*najāsah,* النّجاسة) are among the most extensively applied concepts in Islam. They have their own comprehensive laws which cover a major part of religious commandments. The two words, because of their very common use, have become *al-ḥaqīqatu 'sh-shar'iyyah* (الحقيقة الشّرعيّة) as though they were ''originally made to express these religious concepts.''

The meaning of cleanliness is known to the whole of mankind inspite of the differences in their languages. It shows that the idea of *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) is well-known to all human beings whatever their origin and period.

Life depends on exploiting material things, and using them to achieve its goal. Man desires whatever he desires only because of its benefit, use and characteristics. The most basic and most comprehensive are the benefits concerned with feeding and reproduction.

Sometimes some changes occur in these material things which cause repulsion; and man wants to throw such things away. Such changes appear mostly in taste, smell or colour. When this change appears, the material becomes unsavoury and repulsive. This change is called uncleanliness (*najāsah,* النّجاسة). Its opposite is *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) which implies that the thing is still in its original condition of benefit and use, which attracts the man to it.

Cleanliness and uncleanliness are, therefore, two mutually exclusive qualities of a thing: it has either a quality which makes it lie likeable or another which makes it repulsive.

Man in the beginning must have perceived these qualities within the sphere of the five senses; gradually the concept would have been widened to cover mental and spiritual subjects, depending on whether those ideas were attractive or repulsive. Thus we come to the concept of *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) and *najāsah* (النّجاسة) in parentage, character, belief, action and word.

There are four words with nearly the same meaning: *naẓāfah* (النّظافة), *nazāhah* (النّزاهة), *quds* (القدس) and *subḥān* (سبحان)

Naẓāfah (النظافة): It is the cleanliness of a thing after it had become unclean. It is exclusively used for the things which may be perceived by one of the five senses.

Nazāhah (النّزاهة): Its real meaning is ‘‘to be far away, distant’’. Its use for cleanliness is metaphorical — the thing is far from ugliness, uncleanliness.

Quds (قدس) and *subḥān* (سبحان) are preserved for mental and spiritual subjects.

Near in meaning to *najāsah* (النجاسة) are *qadhārah* (filthiness, القذارة), *rijs* (dirtiness, الرّجس) and *rujz* (uncleanliness, الرّجز).

Qadhārah (القذارة): Its real meaning is ‘‘to be distant’’. The verbs and adjectives derived from this verbal infinitive are used for a she-camel which remains aloof from the drove, for an unsocial man who does not mingle with others, for a person isolated from others and for a thing which is disliked. Therefore, its use in the meaning of *najāsah* (النّجاسة) must be metaphorical because an unclean thing is left and put aside until

it is clean again.

Rijs (الرّجس) and *rujz* (الرّجز): Their original meaning is fright and aversion. Their use in the meaning of uncleanliness is metaphorical.

Islam has extended the meaning of cleanliness and uncleanliness to cover not only the things perceived by the five senses but also to ideas and thoughts. According to Islam, even general principles and social laws are either clean or unclean. For example, Allāh says in this verse: *do not go near them until they have become clean* ... (Here cleanliness refers to cessation of menstruation, — a material cleanliness) Also, He says: *And your garments do purify* (74:4); *... but He intends to purify you* ... (5:6); *These are they whom Allāh does not intend to purify their hearts* …(5:41); *None shall touch it save the purified ones.* (56:79) Some of these verses refer to spiritual purifications and cleanliness.

The Islamic *sharī'ah* treats some unclean things as *al-a'yanu'n-najisah* (inherently unclean things, الاعيان النّجسة). Some of them are the blood, urine, stool and semen of man and of some animals, corpses, dogs and pigs. It has ordered the believers to protect themselves from these things in prayers, food and drink.

Ṭahārah (الطّهارة) is of two categories: From *khabath* (الخبث) by which one becomes clean after coming into touch with the above mentioned inherently unclean things; and from *ḥadath* (الحدث), which comes through *wuḍū* or an obligatory bath as explained in the books of Islamic laws.

It was explained earlier that Islam is the religion of monotheism. This monotheism is the root to which all the branches owe their existence. Now the belief in monotheism is the highest cleanliness before Allāh. After that come other fundamentals of faith, and they increase the spiritual purification of man. Then comes ethical righteousness, and the laws of *sharī'ah* made for the good in this world and the hereafter. The verse quoted above may be explained by keeping this principle in view. Also, it explains the verse of purity, *Allāh only desires to keep away the uncleanliness from you, O People of the House! and to purify you a* (thorough) *purifying*. (33:33)

Now we return to the explanation of the words used in this verse under discussion: ''until they have become clean'', i.e. until the blood stops. That is the beginning of the period of cleanliness (*ṭuhr,* الطّهر).

Then when they have cleansed themselves, i.e., when they have taken

an obligatory bath or at least washed the part of body from where blood comes out.

go into them as Allāh has commanded you: This command comes after the order forbidding sexual relation with them; therefore, it signifies only that the restriction is now lifted; in other words, it means that sexual relations with them are allowed after their becoming clean, not that it is obligatory. *Go into them* is a metaphor for that relation. It is an example of the character building of the Qur'ān; as is the phrase, *as Allāh has commanded you*. Sexual relations are generally regarded as an amusement. But the Qur'ān draws man's attention to the fact that it is a thing ordered by Allāh, the order being ingrained in his nature. We may call it a creative order — an order given not in words, but programmed into our creation and nature. Thus the Qur'ān reminds us that it is an action without which the human species cannot survive; such an important function should not be treated as a sport or an amusement; it is one of the fundamental laws of nature.

This verse is similar to the words of Allāh:...*now be in contact with them and seek what Allāh has written for you* ... (2:187), and:... *go into your tillage when you like, and do good beforehand for yourselves* ... (2:223)

Apparently, the order to go into them refers to that ''creative order'' which is known because Allāh has given human beings reproductive organs and has created in them the power and inclination which lead them to reproduce.

Possibly the ''command'' could be interpreted as a legislative order: that it was obligatory to marry for a sufficient number of people to ensure continuity of the human race. But such a meaning is far-fetched.

Some commentators argue that the words *as Allāh has commanded you* prohibit going into the posterior of the women. But it is the weakest argument; this subject is difficult to prove from this verse. The argument cannot be based on the order, *go into them,* because, as explained earlier, this order, coming after a prohibition, signifies only the permission to establish sexual contact, it is not an obligatory rule. Therefore, if one were to ignore it one would not be committing an offence. Nor can it be argued on the strength of the words, as *Allāh has commanded you,* because, the command referred to herein is the creative, not the legislative one, as we have explained just now. And even if we accept, for the sake

of argument, that it is a legislative order, it would be obligatory for only ''a sufficient number of people'', as we have explained above. And going against an obligatory order is unlawful only when that order is personally obligatory on oneself.

Qur'ān: *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him) *and He loves those who purify themselves*: *tawbah* (usually translated as repentance, التّوبة) means returning to Allāh. *Taṭahhur* (التّطهّر) means purifying and cleansing oneself; in other words, turning away from dirtiness and returning to the original cleanliness. The meanings of both words come true when one obeys the command of Allāh, and especially so in the matters of cleanliness and uncleanliness. By doing whatever Allāh has told one to do, and abstaining from what He has forbidden, one purifies oneself from the uncleanliness of disobedience, and comes back to his Lord. That is why Allāh has ended this verse on these words; they are, therefore, applied to all the rules mentioned before them - *Keep aloof from the women during the menstruation* and *go into them as Allāh has commanded you.*

The sentences, *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him) *and He loves those who purify themselves,* are not limited with any qualification or condition. Therefore, they apply to all the grades of cleanliness, as mentioned earlier. And the forms *mutaṭahhirīn* (المتطهّرين) and *tawwābīn* (التوّابين) signify great emphasis. These two factors taken together signify that Allāh loves all kinds of repentance (be it by asking for His for giveness, obeying all His commands or having true faith and belief) and all kinds of purification (be it by washing oneself, doing ablution, taking the obligatory bath, performing good deeds or acquiring true spiritual knowledge). Also, it signifies an increase by number: Allāh loves repeated repentance and repeated cleanliness.

Qur'ān: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go unto your tillage when you like* : *ḥarth* (الحرث) is an infinitive verb, meaning to ''to till, to cultivate''. It is also used for the land which is tilled or cultivated.

Annā (انّى) is an adverb meaning ''when'', ''whenever''. In this sentence it is synonymous with *matā* (when, متى). Sometimes it is also used for ''where''. Allāh says:... *O Maryam! Whence* (*annā,* انّى) *comes this to you? She said*: *It is from Allāh.*(3:36)

If, in the verse under discussion, *annā* (انّى) means ''where'', then its meaning would be, ''where you like''. If it means, ''when'', then it

means, ‘‘when you like’’. In any case, it gives a sort of freedom to the couple, and that is why we cannot take the words, ‘‘*so go unto your tillage*’’, to be an obligatory order. No one gives a compulsory order and then leaves it in the hands of the doer to do as he likes.

The verse begins with the sentence, *Your women are a tillage for you*; after this reasoning comes the order, and there also the word ‘‘*tillage*’’ is repeated. This emphasis shows that the freedom given to man of going in to the women is either about the place of the intercourse or about its time; but it is not a freedom of entering anywhere in her body. She is a *tillage* and that idea must be kept in mind when approaching her.

If the order means, ‘so go into your *tillage* at any place you like’, then it is not concerned with the time of intercourse, and has no conflict whatsoever with the previous verse, *keep aloof from the women during the menstruation and do not go near them.* If, on the other hand, it means, ‘so go into your *tillage* at any time you like’, then it shall be limited to the period of purity from menstruation, because of the previous verse.

Just to avoid any misunderstanding, it is necessary to point out that this verse could not have abrogated the verse of menstruation — no matter whichever of the two was revealed first: The verse of menstruation gives two reasons why sexual relation in that period is forbidden — and both reasons are still valid, in spite of the verse of *tillage*. First, it says that menstruation is a discomfort and it continues to be a discomfort. Second, it shows that this order was given to avoid dirtiness and to remain clean, and Allāh always loves those who remain clean and pure; so much so that He counts keeping them cleansed as one of His graces upon them ; *Allāh does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He intends to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you* ... (5:6) Such a language cannot be abrogated by a verse like that of *tillage*. Why? Because this verse says that your women are your tillage, so come into your tillage when you like. Now, the reason for this putative ‘‘concession’’ was present even when the prohibition was ordained. If it could not stop its promulgation, how can it cause its abrogation after it had already been firmly established? Second, the verse of tillage ends on the words, ‘‘and do good beforehand for yourselves, and fear Allāh, and know that you will meet Him.’’ Such an

ending would be out of place if the verse (of tillage) contained a concession.

The meaning of the verse is as follows: Women are to humanity as tillage is to an individual. Agricultural land is needed to preserve the seed and to produce food, so that the human race may continue to exist. Likewise, women are needed for the continuity of humanity. According to the system created by Allāh, the woman's womb is the place where a child is made and develops from a microscopic sperm to a human being. As the original place of that sperm is the body of man, He created between the man and the woman a love and compassion and an attraction which excites the man to seek the woman.

As the creative purpose of this mutual attraction is to pave the way for the continuity of the human race, there was no reason why it should be confined to one place and not another, or one time and not another, as long as it helped in achieving that goal and did not hinder any other obligatory work.

This explanation shows the relevance of the words *do good beforehand for yourselves,* coming after the verse of tillage.

Someone has written that the verse of tillage gives permission to remove the male organ from the woman just before ejaculation. Such an interpretation is patently absurd. No less absurd is the view that the words, *do good beforehand* mean saying...*bismi'llāh* ... (by the name of Allāh …...الله. بسم) before the intercourse.

Qur'ān: *and do good beforehand for yourselves*; *and fear Allāh, and know that you are to meet Him, and give good news to the believers.* Obviously, these words addressed to males, or both males and females, are a sort of encouragement to keep the human species alive through marriage and reproduction. But is not an end in itself. Mankind and its continuity is desired only for the continuity of the religion of Allāh, the dominance of monotheism and the divine worship through piety. Allāh says: *And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me*. (51:56) When He commands them to do anything concerning their life in this world, it is done only to make it easier for them to worship their Lord; it is not done with the aim of encouraging them to submerge themselves in sexual desire and wordly attractions.

No doubt the apparent meaning of *do good beforehand for*

yourselves is ‘‘reproduce and bring into this world new souls to replace those who are dying every day’’; but it is not the final goal: the real aim is to keep the remembrance of Allāh going on, by producing righteous people who will do good deeds, the recompense and reward of which will reach their forefathers who were instrumental in bringing those good-doers into the world. Allāh says: *...and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints ...* (36:12)

This leads us to believe that the real meaning of *do good beforehand for yourselves* is ‘send good deeds beforehand for the day of resurrection’. Allāh says:*...the day when man shall see what his two hands have sent before ...* (78:40); *... and whatever of good you send on beforehand for yourselves you will find it with Allāh ...* (73:20)

This verse under discussion (*and do good beforehand for yourselves, and fear Allāh, and know that you are to meet Him ...*) is similar to verse 59:18: *O you who believe! Fear Allāh, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for tomorrow and fear Allāh; surely Allāh is Aware of what you do.*

In short, the meaning of these sentences is as follows:-

and do good beforehand for yourselves: Send on good deeds beforehand for the day of resurrection. Producing children and training them to be righteous servants of Allāh and good members of the society is one of those good deeds.

and fear All`ah : *taqwā* (fear of Allāh, piety, التّقوى) consists of going into the tillage as commanded by Allāh, neither exceeding the limits imposed by Him, neglecting the divine ordinance, nor committing unlawful acts.

and know that you are to meet Him. The order, in fact, means ‘fear Allāh whom you have to meet on the day of resurrection, lest your reckoning be severe’. The same is the significance of verse 59:18, mentioned earlier which says: *and fear Allāh; surely Allāh is Aware of what you do.* It is not uncommon to use the verb ‘‘to know’’ for the meaning ‘‘to be on guard’’, ‘‘to safeguard’’ and ‘‘to look out’’. Allāh says:… *and know that Allāh intervenes between man and his heart ...* (8:24); it means, ‘be afraid of His intervention between you and your hearts.’

and give good news to the believers. Good deeds and fear of the day of reckoning are the chief characteristics of faith. Therefore, the talk was

ended by giving good news to the believers.

For this very reason, verse 59:18 began with the words: *O you who believe.*

TRADITIONS

Aḥmad, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, ad-Dārimī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Abū Ḥātim, an-Nahḥās (in *an-Nāsikh*), Abū Ḥayyān, and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Anas: ‘‘The Jews, when a woman of their house was in monthly period, turned her out of the house; they did not eat with her, did not drink with her, nor did they live with her in the same house. The Messenger of Allāh was asked concerning this matter. Then Allāh sent down the verse: *And they ask you about menstruation. Say: It is a discomfort; therefore, keep aloof from the women during the men struation ...* The Messenger of Allāh, therefore, said: ‘Remain with them in the (same) houses, and do everything except sexual intercourse.’ This report reached the Jews, and they said, ‘This man does not want to leave anything to our customs without going against it.’ Usayd ibn al-Ḥuḍayr and ‘Abbād ibn Bishr came and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! The Jews are saying so-and-so. Should we not now establish sexual relations also with them?’’ On hearing it the face of the Messenger of Allāh changed and we thought that he had become angry with them. Then they went out; and at the same moment some milk was brought to the Messenger of Allāh as a present; so he sent it behind them and made them drink it. Thus they knew that he was not angry with them.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*]

It is reported from as-Suddī about the verse, *And they ask you about menstruation* that the man who asked it was Thābit ibn ad-Daḥdāḥ. [*ibid.*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated also from Muqatil.

There is a tradition that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the word of Allāh, *go into them as Allāh has commanded you*: It is about seeking a child; therefore seek a child from where Allāh has commanded you. [*at-Tahdhīb*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked: ‘‘What can the husband of a

menstruating woman get from her?'' He said: ''Everything except the front part itself.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

Another tradition is reported from the same Imām about the woman whose blood stops at the end of her usual period. The Imām said: ''If her husband is overcome by sexual desire, then he should order her to wash her front part, then he may touch her, if he so wishes, before she takes her obligatory bath.'' Other tradition adds: ''And the bath is preferable to me.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions of the same meaning. The word used in the Qur'ān is recited *ḥattā yaṭhurna* (till they have become clean حتّى يطهرن); and it refers to the stopping of blood. Therefore, the Qur'ān and these traditions support each other.

It is said that the difference between the two words, *yaṭhurna*(they have become clean, يطهرن) and *yataṭahharna* (they have cleansed themselves, يتطهّرن) is that the second form implies doing something by one's own choice; therefore, it would mean taking the bath; but the first does not imply any choice; thus it would refer to the stopping of blood.

Accordingly, sexual intercourse is prohibited *until they have become clean,* i.e., until the blood stops. As soon as the blood stops, relations are again allowed.

When they have cleansed themselves go into them : If the cleansing refers to washing it would mean that the washing, as described in this tradition, is *sunnah* (commendable); and if it means taking the obligatory bath, then the verse would imply that it is commendable (*sunnah*) to go into them after they have taken their obligatory bath, as the above tradition says, ''and bath is preferable to me''. But in no case does this verse imply that going into them after stopage of blood and before the bath is prohibited, because the moment of prohibition lasts until the blood stops.

There is a tradition about the words of Allāh, *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him), *and He loves those who purify themselves,* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The people used to cleanse themselves (after defecation) with cotton and stones etc. Then was instituted cleansing with water, and it is a good habit. Therefore, the Messenger of Allāh ordered it and did it. Then Allāh sent down in His Book: *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him), *and He loves*

those who purify themselves. ''[*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions with this meaning, and it is said in some of them that the first man to cleanse himself with water was Barā' ibn 'Āzib; then this verse was revealed and the custom established.

There is a tradition in the same book from Salām ibn al-Mustanīr that he said: ''I was with Abū Ja'far (a.s.) when Ḥimrān ibn A'yun entered and asked him concerning some things. When Ḥimrān wanted to stand up (and go back), he told Abū Ja'far (a.s.): 'I wish to inform you — May Allāh prolong your life and may He grant us the benefit of your presence — that we come to you; and before we go out from your presence, our hearts become soft, our souls think no more about this world, and we disdain the wealth which people have in their hands. Then we go away from your presence, and when we mingle with people and traders, we (again) love this world.' Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: 'It is these hearts; at one time they become hard, at another, soft.' Then the Imam continued: 'Surely, the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) once told him : '' O Messenger of Allāh! We are afraid of hypocrisy (appearing) in ourselves.'' He asked: ''And why do you feel so?'' They said: ''When we are in your presence and you remind us (of Allāh) and invite us (to piety), we become afraid (of the displeasure of Allāh), and we forget the world and foresake it, so much so that we (seem to) see the hereafter and the garden and the fire; this all is so long as we are in your presence. But as soon as we come out of your presence, and enter these (our) houses, and feel the scent of our children and see our families, our condition changes almost completely, as though we had no conviction of anything. Do you fear that it is hypocrisy on our part?'' Then the Messenger of Allāh told them: ''Not at all. Surely, these steps are of Satan who wants to attract you towards this world. By Allāh! If you continued in that condition which you have just described, you would indeed shake hands with the angels, and would walk upon the water. And had it not been that you commit sins and then seek pardon from Allāh, He would certainly create (another) creation who would commit sins and then ask forgiveness of Allāh, so that Allāh would forgive them. Verily the believer is seduced, (but is also) often-returning (to Allāh).'' Have you not heard the words of Allāh: *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him), *and He loves those who purify themselves.* And Allāh says: *And*

that ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him ... (11:3)' ''

The author says: A similar tradition has been reported by al-'Ayyāshī in his *at-Tafsīr.*

The words of the Prophet, ''if you continued in that condition…'' point to the position of *wilāyah* (friendship of Allāh, الولاية) which means keeping aloof from the world and fixing the eyes on to what is with Allāh. We have explained it partly under verse 2:156.

His words, ''And had it not been that you commit sins ...'', allude to a mystery of the divine decree. And we shall talk about it under verse 15:21 (*And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure*) and other such verses.

The words, ''Have you not heard….'', are of Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and are addressed to Ḥimrān. These words interpret *tawbah* (التّوبة) and *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) as returning to Allāh by desisting from wrong and removing the filth of sins from the soul and the rust of mistakes from the heart. It is an example of deducing a conclusion by looking at a verse from one level while at another level a new result (but never in conflict with the first) may be obtained. For example, the verse, *None shall touch it save the purified ones* (56:79) proves at one level that none has the knowledge of the Book except the sinless members of the family of the Prophet, while, on other level, it declares that touching the writing of the Qur'ān without doing *wuḍu* or taking the bath is prohibited.

Creation progresses, taking from the treasures that are with Allāh, until it reaches the last level of *maqādīr* (the measures, decrees, المقادير). Allāh says: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure.* (15:21)

Likewise, the decrees do not come down to us except after passing through various stages of reality. This subject will be further explained under the verse, *He it is Who has revealed the Book to you*; *some of its verses are decesive ...* (3:7)

From above, it may be understood that the verse under discussion, at one level refers to returning the soul and heart to Allāh by cleansing them from the dirt of sins (as mentioned just above), and, at another level, obliges one to take the bath; and at this level these two words would mean returning the body towards Allāh by removing uncleanliness.

This explains also the tradition of the Imām: ‘‘Allāh sent down to Ibrāhīm (a.s.) uprightness (*ḥanīfiyyah,* الحنيفيّة) and it is cleanliness (*ṭahārah,* ,الطّهارة). And it is ten things — five in the head, and five in the body. That which is in the head is: trimming the moustache, keeping the beard, cutting the hair, cleansing the teeth, and picking the teeth; and that which is in the body is: removing the hair from the body, circumcision, cutting the nails, taking bath after *janābah (i.e.* after sexual intercourse or ejaculation during sleep), and cleansing by water after an evacuation of the bowel. This is the pure uprightness brought by Ibrāhīm; it was not abrogated, nor will it be abrogated upto the day of resurrection ... ’’ [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

There are many traditions showing that the above things are a part of cleanliness. Some of them say: Indeed *nūrah* (hair removing paste,النّورة) is a purifier.

There is a tradition about the words of Allāh: *Your women are a tillage for you ...* narrated by Mu‘ammar ibn Khallād that Abu ’1-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) told him: ‘‘What do you say about going into the women in their posterior? I said: ‘I have been told that the people of Medina have no objection about it.’ He said: ‘Verily the Jews said that if a man comes (into her) from her behind, his child (resulting .from that intercourse) will be cross-eyed. Therefore, Allāh revealed: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your filth from where you like,* that is, from their behind.’ ’’ [al-‘Ayyāshī]

There is in the same book a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said about this verse: ‘‘From her front and from her behind (but) in the vagina’’.

Another tradition in the same book reports that Abū Baṣīr asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about a man who enters into the posterior of his wife. The Imām expressed his abhorance of it and said: ‘‘Beware of the anus of women.’’ Then he said: ‘‘Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage as you like’’ only means ‘‘whenever you like’’.

The same book narrates from al-Fatḥ ibn Yazīd al-Jurjānī that he wrote same question to ar-Riḍā (a.s.); and the same reply came: ‘‘You asked about the man who enters into a woman in her posterior; the woman is a play-thing; she should not be hurt, and she is a tillage as Allāh has said.’’

The author says: There are numerous traditions with this meaning

narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) in *al-Kāfī, at-Tahdhīb,* and *Tafsīrs* of al-'Ayyāshī and al-Qummī. All of them show that the verse of tillage only proves that intercourse should be into the front part. Of course, there is a tradition in *Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Ya'fūr in which he says: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about going into women in their posterior; he said: 'There is no harm'; then he recited the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when* (as) *you like.*

But, apparently the meaning of ''going into women in their posterior'' means entering into vagina from behind; and the verse quoted supports this meaning, as has been seen in the tradition of Mu'ammar ibn Khallād, mentioned above.

Ibn 'Asākir has narrated a tradition from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh that he said: ''The Anṣār (of Medina) used to go into their women lying down; and the Quraysh (of Mecca) used various postures. A Qurayshite man married a woman from Anṣār, and wanted to sleep with her (in his own way). She said: except in the way it should be done. The case was reported to the Messenger of Allāh; so Allāh revealed: *so go into your tillage when* (as) *you like.* That is, in any posture, standing, sitting or lying down, but it should be into the same passage.'' [*ad Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: This meaning is narrated with numerous chains from various companions, giving the same reason for its revelation. And the tradition of ar-Riḍā (a.s.) has already been quoted giving the same meaning. The words in this last tradition, ''in one passage'' allude to the rule that intercourse should be in the front part only. There are numerous traditions showing that going into their posterior is prohibited; the traditions are from numerous chains through numerous companions from the Prophet.

Even those traditions narrated by our Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* which show that entering into their posterior is allowed but with the utmost abhorance do not offer the verse of tillage as their proof. They argue on the basis of verse 15:71, which quotes Lūṭ as saying: ''He said: 'These are my daughters if you are to do (aught)'.'' Here Lūṭ (a.s.) offered his daughters to them, knowing well that they did not enter into the front part. And this was not abrogated by any Qur'ānic verse. We shall talk about it there. Here it is enough to say that the verse of tillage has no

relevance to this topic.

But, even according to the Sunnī traditions, the ruling is not unanimous. It has been narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Mālik ibn Anas, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and others that they did not see any harm in that practice and they used the verse of tillage as their proof. Ibn ‘Umar goes so far as to say that it was revealed specifically to legalise this practice.

It is reported on the authority of ad-Dār Qutnī (in *al-Gharā’ib* of Mālik) through his chain to Nāfi‘ that he said: ‘‘Ibn ‘Umar told me, ‘Keep the Qur’ān before me, O Nāfi‘!’ Then he recited until he reached the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like.* He asked me: ‘Do you know, O Nāfi‘! about whom this verse was revealed?’ I replied: ‘No!’ He said: ‘It was revealed about a man from Anṣār who entered into the posterior of his woman; so people thought it a grave matter. Then Allāh revealed: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like.’* I said: ‘From her back side into her front part?’ He said: ‘No. But into her back side itself.’ [*ad Durru ’l-manthūr*]

The author says: This meaning has been narrated from Ibn ‘Umar with numerous chains. Ibn ‘Abdi ’1-Barr has said: ‘‘The tradition with this meaning from Ibn ‘Umar is *ṣaḥīḥ* (correct) well-known and famous.’’

Ibn Rāhwayh, Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn Jarīr, at-Ṭaḥāwī (in his *Mushkilu.’l-āthār*) and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated with good chains from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that a man entered into the posterior of his woman; people thought it bad of him; then the verse of tillage was revealed. [*ad Durru ’l-manthūr*]

al-Khaṭīb has narrated in the ‘‘narrators of Malik’’ from Abū Sulaymān al-Jawzjānī that he said: ‘‘I asked Mālik ibn Anas about intercourse with lawful women into their posterior. He told me: ‘Just now I have washed my head (i.e. taken a bath) after (doing) it.’ ’’ [*ibid.*]

aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī has narrated from the chain of Aṣbagh ibn al-Faraj from ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Qāsim that he said: ‘‘I did not find anyone whom I follow in my religion who was doubtful about its legality, (meaning, entering into the back-side ,of the women). Then he read: *Your women are a tillage for you.* Then he asked: ‘So what is more clear than this.’ ’’ [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition in *as-Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘Surely Ibn ‘Umar, May Allāh forgive him, fell into error (in interpreting the verse of tillage in this way). The fact is that there were some tribes of Medina, and they were idol worshippers, residing with some tribes of the Jews, and they were the people of the Book. And these Medinites thought that the Jews were superior than them in knowledge, and they, therefore, followed them in many of their customs. And those people of the Book did not go to the women but in one posture only (i.e. lying down), and that was most comfortable to the woman. And these tribes of Anṣār of Medina adopted this method from them. Now these Qurayshite used very strange postures; and they enjoyed keeping them in various position — lying down, facing them or entering from their back side. When the emigrants came to Medina, one of them married a woman from Anṣār and started doing like this with her. She complained of it to him and said: ‘We were doing it in one way; you do like that or keep away from me.’ This news spread, till it reached the Messenger of Allāh. Then Allāh revealed the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like.* It means, facing them, from their back side or lying down, meaning in the place of child (i.e. in the place where conception may take place).’’

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated it through other chains also, from Mujāhid from Ibn ‘Abbās.

It is reported in the same book: Ibn ‘Abdi ’l-Ḥakam has narrated that ash-Shāfi‘ī argued with Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan on this subject. Ibn al-Ḥasan argued that ‘‘the tillage can be in the front part only.’’ ash-Shāfi‘ī said: ‘‘Then doing it anywhere except in the front part will be prohibited?’’ He agreed. He (ash-Shāfi‘ī) said: ‘‘Do you think, if he did with her between her thighs or in the folds of her belly, is there any tillage in it?’’ He replied: ‘‘No!’’ He asked: ‘‘Will it then be unlawful?’’ He said: ‘‘No!’’ ash-Shāfi‘ī said: ‘‘Then why do you bring an argument which you yourselves do not believe in?’’

It is reported in the same book: Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abi ’l-Ḥātim have narrated from Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr that he said: ‘‘Mujāhid and I were sitting with Ibn ‘Abbās when a man came to him and said: ‘Will you not satisfy me about the verse of menstruation?’ He replied: ‘Surely! Recite it.’ He recited: *And they ask you about menstruation ... go into them as Allāh has commanded you.* Ibn ‘Abbās said: ‘From where the blood was

coming, you are ordered to go into the same place.' The man said: 'Then what about the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like?'* He replied: 'O Woe unto thee! Is there any tillage in the posterior? If what you say were correct then the verse of menstruation would be abrogated, because if that place was not open (because of blood) you would go into this (other) place! But his verse means ''whenever you like'' in the night or day!' ''

The author says: The last argument is defective. The verse of menstruation only says that in that period going into the front part of the women is prohibited. If, allegedly, the verse of tillage. allows going into their posterior, it would cover a new subject, and there would be no conflict between it and the verse of menstruation. So, there would be no question of either abrogating the other. Moreover, we have already explained that the verse of tillage does not say that going into women in their posterior is allowed. Of course, some traditions narrated from Ibn 'Abbās argue that the words, ''go into them as Allāh has commanded you'', prove that going into women in their posterior is forbidden. But we have already explained that it is the most defective argument, because the verse only says that entering into their front part is prohibited so long as they have not become clean. It says nothing about other matters; and the verse of filth also says nothing except that one may go into one's tillage at any time.

This subject is from Islamic law; we have dealt here with only that side of it which was relevant to the subject of *at-Tafsīr*.

LIST OF THE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS DEALT WITH IN THIS VOLUME

No/s of Verse/s	Subject	Nature of Discussion	Page
Chap. of The Cow	How can it be said that the Qur'ān was revealed in the month of Ramaḍān and in the Night of Destiny, when it was revealed piece meal?		
183-185		Qur'ānic	15
186	The meaning of Invocation.	—	39
188	Ownership is one of the recognized social principles.	Sociological	74
190-195	The War, as ordained by the Qur'ān.	Qur'ānic	93
—	Essentiality of Defence for Society.	Sociological	99
196-203	*Mut'atu 'l-ḥajj* and its unrestricted legislation.	Traditional	126
208-210	*ar-Raj'ah* (The Return) and Refutation of the objections of those who reject it.	Philosophical	156
213	Qur'ānic guidance about the reality of man and the history of mankind.	Qur'ānic	167

No/s of Verse/s	Subject	Nature of Discussion	Page
213	How mankind came into being	Qur'ānic	168
—	His composition from soul and body.	—	169
—	His perception and connection with other things.	—	170
—	His practical knowledge.	—	171
—	His exploitation of other things.	—	173
—	Man is social by nature.	—	173
—	Difference among human beings.	—	174
—	Religion removes the difference.	—	177
—	Difference in religion itself.	—	180
—	Man after this world.	—	181
—	Seven religious principles inferred from this verse.	—	191
—	The proof regarding prophethood.	—	192
—	Sinlessness of the prophets.	—	195
—	About prophethood.	—	204
—	Prophethood: from a philosophical point of view.	Philosophical	215

No/s of Verse/s	Subject	Nature of Discussion	Page
Chap. of The Cow			
213	Sociological arguments about prophethood.	Sociological	217
216-218	Forfeiture of deeds.	Qur'ānic	245
—	An essay on the rules governing actions.	Scientific	251
—	About their reward and punishment.	—	251
—	Deeds affecting each other	—	252
—	Actions preserved, written and embodied.	—	263
—	Relation between actions and ''natural ''phenomena.	—	263
—	Actions with reference to happiness and misery.	—	269
—	Actions with reference to reason.	—	273

APPENDIX 'A'

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES

THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh	Rasūlu'llāh, Nabiyyu'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabī' I, in the Year of the Elephant. (25. 8. 570 AD)	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH (25. 5. 632 AD)	Natural	Holy Medina, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27. 1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar)	15th Ramaḍān, 3 AH (1. 3. 625 AD)	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH (6. 3. 670 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Aṣghar)	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH (8. 1. 626 AH)	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (10. 10. 680 AD)	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā	Holy Karbalā' (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH (16. 12. 676 AD)	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH (28. 1. 733 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH (20. 4. 702 AD)	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH (14. 12. 765 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abd aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH (28. 10. 746 AD)	25th Rajab, 183 AH (1. 9. 799 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 148 AH – (29.12.765 AD)	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH (24. 8. 818 AD)	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs - Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH (8. 4. 811 AD)	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH (25. 11. 835 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third)	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH (27. 9. 827 AD)	3rd Rajab, 254 AH (28. 6. 868 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā), Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH (3. 12. 846 AD)	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH (1. 1. 874 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā, Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghā'ib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH (29. 7. 869 AD)	Still alive, but in occultation.	– –	– – – –

APPENDIX "B"

In this book the references of the Qur'ãnic verses have been given by writing serial number of the relevant chapter, followed by a colon (:) that is followed by the number/s of the verse/s. The names of the chapters have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The names of the chapters with their serial numbers are given here for the guidance of the readers.

To find, for instance, the verse 5:67 in the Qur'ãn, the reader should open the fifth chapter, that its, *al-Mã'idah* (اَلمَآئِدة = The Table) and then find the 67th verse.

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
1.	فاتِحَةُ الكِتاب	*Fatihatu 'l-kitãb*	The Opening of The Book
2.	البَقَرة	*al –Baqarah*	The Cow
3.	آل عِمران	*Ãl 'Imrãn*	The House of Imran
4.	النِّساء	*an-Nisã'*	Women
5.	المَائِدة	*Al-Mã'idah*	The Table
6.	الأنعام	*Al –An'ãm*	Cattle
7.	الأعراف	*al-A'rãf*	The Battlements
8.	الأنفال	*al-Anfãl*	The Spoils
9.	التَّوْبَة	*At-Tawbah*	Repentance
10.	يُونُس	*Yunus*	Jonah

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
11.	هُود	*Hũd*	Hood
12.	يُوسُف	*Yũsuf*	Joseph
13.	الرَّعد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder
14.	إبراهيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham
15.	الحِجْر	*Al–Ḥijr*	El-Hijr
16.	النَّحل	*An-Naḥl*	The Bee
17.	الإسْرآء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey
18.	الكَهْف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave
19.	مَريَم	*Maryam*	Mary
20.	طه	*Ṭã Hã*	Ta Ha
21.	الأنْبيآء	*al-Anbiyã'*	Prophets
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage
23.	المؤمِنون	*al-Mu'minũn*	The Believers
24.	النّور	*an-Nũr*	Light
25.	الفُرقان	*al-Furqãn*	Discrimination (Salvation)
26.	الشُّعَراء	*ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets
27.	النَّمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ant
28.	القَصَص	*al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Stories
29.	العَنْكَبُوت	*al-'Ankabũt*	The Spider
30.	الرُّوم	*Ar-Rũm*	The Greeks
31.	لُقْمان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman
32.	السَّجْدة	*as-Sajdah*	Prostration
33.	الأحزاب	*al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates
34.	سـبَأ	*Saba'*	Sheba
35.	فاطِر (المَلائِكة)	*Fãṭir (or, al-Malã'ikah)*	The Originator (or The Angels)
36.	يـس	*Yã Sīn*	Ya Sin
37.	الصّـافات	*aṣ-Ṣãffãt*	The Rangers
38.	ص	*Ṣãd*	Sad

S.No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
39.	الزُّمَر	*az-Zumar*	The Companies
40.	المُؤْمِن	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished
42.	الشُّورى	*ash-Shūrā*	Counsel
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments
44.	الدُّخان	*ad-Dukhān*	Smoke
45.	الجاثِية	*al-Jāthiyah*	Hobbling
46.	الأحقاف	*al-Aḥqāf*	The Sand-Dunes
47.	مُحَمّد(ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory
49.	الحُجُرات	*al Ḥujurāt*	Apartments
50.	ق	*Qāf*	Qaf
51.	الذّاريات	*adh-Dhāriyāt*	The Scatterers
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭūr*	The Mount
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon
55.	الرَّحمن	*ar-Raḥmān*	The All-merciful
56.	الواقِعَة	*al-Wāqi'ah*	The Terror
57.	الحَديد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron
58.	المُجادَلة	*Al-Mujādalah*	The Disputer
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering
60.	المُمتَحَنة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman Tested
61.	الصَّف	*aṣ-Ṣaff*	The Ranks
62.	الجُمُعة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation
63.	المُنافِقُون	*al-Munāfiqūn*	The Hypocrites
64.	التَّغابُن	*at-Taghābun*	Mutual Fraud
65.	الطَّلاق	*aṭ-Ṭalāq*	Divorce
66,	التَّحْريم	*at-taḥrīm*	The Forbidding
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
68.	القَلَم	*al-Qalam*	The Pen
69.	الحَاقّة	*al-Ḥãqqah*	The Indubitable
70.	المَعارج	*al-Ma'ãrij*	The Stairways
71.	نُوح	*Nũḥ*	Noah
72.	الجِنّ	*Al-Jinn*	The Jinn
73.	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped
74.	المُدَّثِّر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded
75.	القِيامَة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection
76.	الدَّهر (الإنسان)	*ad-Dahr* (or, *al -Insãn)*	The Time (or, Man)
77.	المُرسَلات	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones
78.	النَّبأ	*an-Naba'*	The Tiding
79.	النّازعات	*an-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers
80.	عَبَس	*'Abas*	He Frowned
81.	التَّكْوير	*at-Takwīr*	The Darkening
82.	الإنفِطار	*al-Infiṭãr*	The Splitting
83.	المُطَفِّفين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters
84.	الإنشِقاق	al-Inshiqãq	The Rending
85.	البُروج	*al-Burũj*	The Constellations
86.	الطّارق	*aṭ-Ṭãriq*	The Night-star
87.	الأعلى	*Al-A'lã*	The Most High
88.	الغاشِيَة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper
89.	الفَجْر	*Al-Fajr*	The Dawn
90.	البَلَد	*Al-Balad*	The Land
91.	الشَّمْس	*ash-Shams*	The Sun
92.	اللَّيل	*Al-Layl*	The Night
93.	الضُّحى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon
94.	الإنشِراح	*al-Inshirãh*	The Expanding

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
95.	التِّين	*At-Tīn*	The Fig
96.	العَلَق	*al-'laq*	The Blood-clot
97.	القَدر	*al -Qadr*	Power
98.	البَيِّنَة	*al -Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign
99.	الزِّلزال	*Az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake
100.	العَاديات	*al-'Ãdiyãt*	The Chargers
101.	القارعَة	*al-Qãri'ah*	The Clatterer
102.	التَّكاثُر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry
103.	العَصْر	*Al-'Aṣr*	Afternoon
104.	الهُمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter
109.	الفيل	*Al-Fīl*	The Elephant
106.	قُرَيْش	*Quraysh*	Quraish
107.	الماعُون	*al-Mã'ũn*	Charity
108.	الكَوْثَر	*al-Kawthar*	Abũndance
109.	الكافِرون	*al-Kãfirũn*	The Unbelievers
110.	النَّصر	*An-Naṣr*	Help
111.	تَبَّت	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab)*	Perish (or,The Flame)
112.	الإخْلاص (التَّوحيد)	*al Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd)*	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)
113.	الفَلَق	*al-Falaq*	Daybreak
114.	النَّاس	*an-Nãs*	Men

AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Qur'ān

BY:
al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 4

Translated by:
Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

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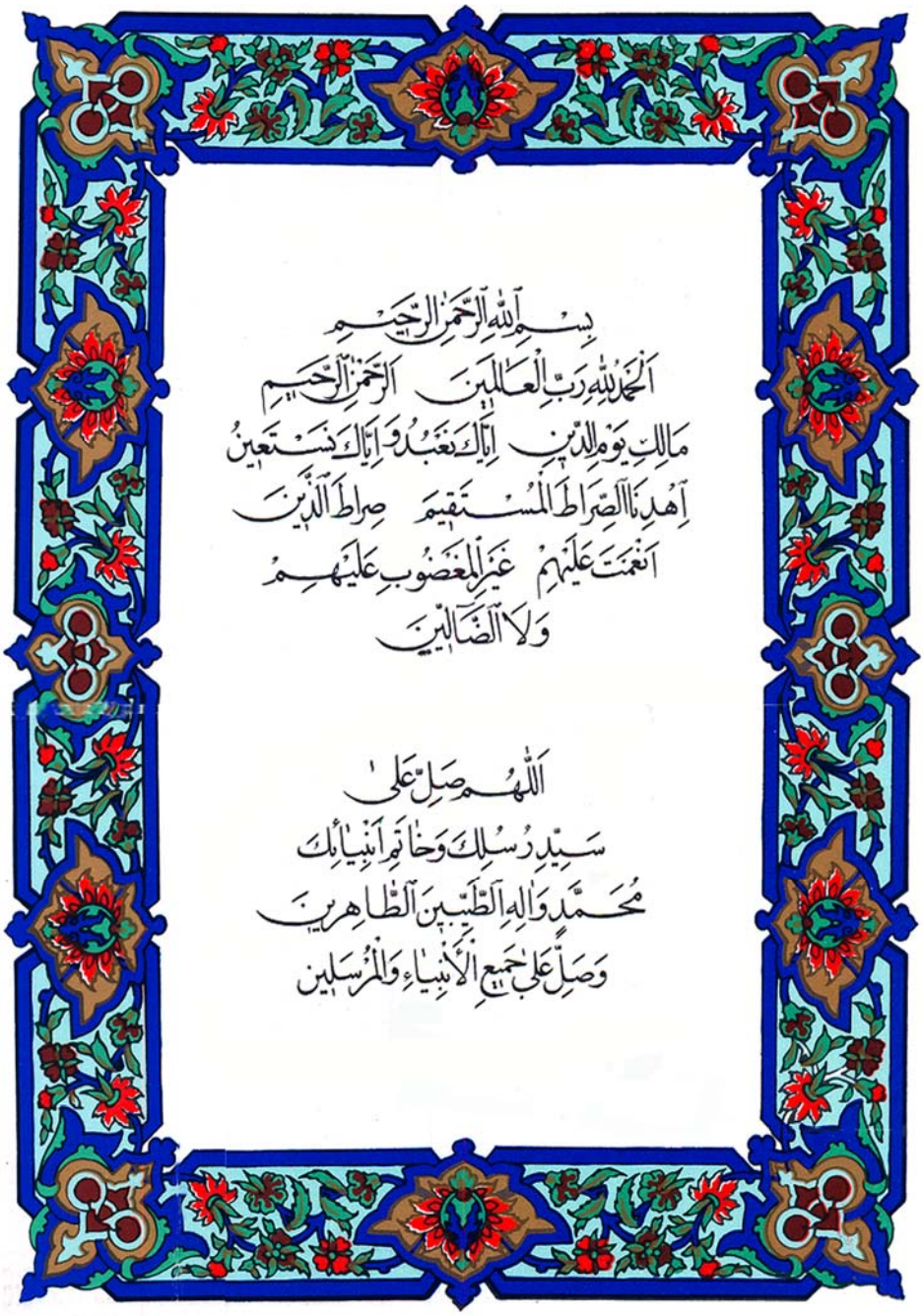
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate. The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh. the Lord of all being.
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful:
the Master of the Day of Judgement:
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succour:
Guide us in the straight path:
the path of those tthomt Thou host blessed.
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful.
nor of those who are astray.

*****

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	ك	k
ب	b	ل	l
ت	t	م	m
ث	th	ن	n
ج	j	ه	h
ح	ḥ	و	w
خ	kh	ي	y
د	d	ة	ah, at
ذ	dh		(construct state)
ر	r	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	z		
س	s		
ش	sh		**Long Vowels**
ص	ṣ	آ	ã
ض	ḍ	و	ũ
ط	ṭ	ي	ī
ظ	ẓ		
ع	‘ or ʿ		**Short Vowels**
غ	gh	ـَ	a
ف	f	ـُ	u
ق	q	ـِ	i

تصدير

١- العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤-١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، وبعد مداولات واستشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لانّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، وكفاءته الأدبيّة في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هوالزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤- قدّمنا نشر ترجمة الجزء الثاني من (الميزان) لأنّه كان قد تهيّأ للنشر، والجزء الأوّل لم يتهيّأ بعد - لأسباب لا نريد أن نشرح أمرها هنا - فلم نر من الصّالح إرجاء نشره. وقد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و(الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، وقد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة. ولكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكل جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

ومن الله سبحانه نسأل، واليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، وأن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا ويسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه وخطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى ونعم النّصير.

١٤٠٢/٤/٦
١٩٨٢/٢/١

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران — ايران

F O R E W O R D

1. al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) — may Allāh have mercy upon him — was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān* which will be published, by the help of Allāh, in the near future.

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have proceeded to publish the translation of the second volume of the Arabic *al-Mīzān* earlier as it was ready for printing, whereas the first volume is not ready yet for the reasons which we do not wish to state here. So we saw no reason in delaying its printing. We have included two

appendixes: one for the authors cited in all the volumes of *al-Mīzān*, and the other for the books cited therein. These two appendixes have been attached to the first volume of the English translation. Apart from this, the reader will find two appendixes in all the volumes of the translation of *al-Mīzān*.

* * * * *

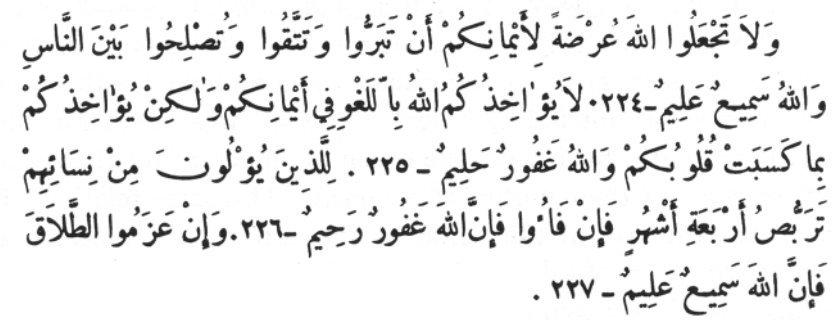
We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
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Volume Four

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وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
وَاللهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٢٤ . لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ
بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٢٥ . لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ
تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ـ ٢٢٦ . وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ
فَإِنَّ اللهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٢٧ .

And make not Allāh a target of your swearing (by Him) *against your doing good and guarding* (against evil) *and making peace between men, and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing* (224). *Allāh will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned, and Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing* (225). *For those who swear* (to abstain) *from their wives is* (ordained) *a waiting for four months; then if they go back, then Allāh is surely Forgiving, Merciful* (226). *And if they resolved on divorce, then Allāh is surely Hearing, Knowing* (2:227).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *And make not Allāh . . . and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing.''* *al-''Urḍah''* (العُرْضَة) is derived from *al-ʿarḍ* (العَرْضُ) which means to display a thing to show its fitness for the purpose for which it is made. For example, to display goods for sale, to show a house for rent,

to offer food for consumption. Some of the uses of *al-'urḍah* are: a target for shooting practice is called *al-'urḍah* of the arrows; a horse readied for a journey is called *al-'urḍah* for travel; a girl of marriageable age is called *al-'urḍah* of marriage. All these are relevant to its original meaning. But the use of this word for a hindrance on the road (and other similar uses) have come into vogue later as metaphors.

''al-Aymān''(اَلاَيْمَانُ) is plural of *al-yamīn* (اليَمينُ) and means ''oaths''. Its original meaning is the right hand. As they strike by, raise, or give, the right hand when taking an oath, showing allegiance or concluding a deal, the word was metaphorically used for the oath, borrowing the organ of an action for the action itself, because of their mutual relationship. This same relationship also allows the use of the name of the action for its organ, as *as-sabbābah* (السَّبَّابَة = the one who abuses) is used for the forefinger which is often used to point with when abusing.

The meaning of the verse, then, shall be as follows (And Allāh knows better!):

And do not use (the name of) *Allāh* (like) *a target upon which to attach your oaths which you have sworn to the effect that you will not do a good deed or will not guard yourselves against evil or will not make peace between people; because Allāh does not like it that His name be made a means of desisting from what He Himself has ordered.* (This meaning is supported by the traditions which will be quoted later.)

Based on this meaning, the verse can be analysed grammatically in three ways : —

a) *An tabarrū* (اَنْ تَبَرُّوُا = literal meaning: that you do good) is in fact *an la tabarrū* (اَنْ لا تَبَرُّوُا = that you do not do good). In the translation we have followed this meaning and the negative has been expressed by the word ''against'' (your swearing against your doing). Such an omission of the negative is common after ''*an''* (اَنْ) which turns the verb into an infinitive. See for example verse 175 of ch. 4: *Allāh makes it clear for you* (lest) *you err.* (4:177)

b) Or there is no omission; and the words ''your doing good . . .'' is governed by the negative ''make not''. The meaning, in this case, will be that Allāh forbids you to take such oaths.

c) Or the *al-'urḍah* (target) may imply excess, as a target is used for shooting practice. The verse, in this case, will be a prohibition of excessive swearing by the name of Allāh. It will mean, ''Do not swear every now and then by the name of Allāh, because it will lead you to abstain from doing good, etc.'' A habitually swearing man does not care what he swears about. As he becomes used to it, it loses its importance, and it may encourage him to make a false oath. This much about his own attitude. So far as society is concerned, he will lose his respect, people will look down upon him — after all, swearing implies that the man himself is not sure that people will accept his words as true. If, in this way, he degrades his own words, why should other believe what he says. Ultimately, he will become a subject of the verse: *and do not obey* (i.e. accept the words of) *any mean swearer.* (68:10)

The words of Allāh, ''and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing'' are a sort of threatening, whatever meaning one accepts of the preceding sentence. But the first meaning (upon which our translation is based) is the most obvious.

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned* . . . : A *''al-laghw''* (اللَّغْوُ = vain) action is that which has no effect. The effect of a thing varies according to variations in its attachments, etc. An oath may have an effect in so far as it is a word, or in so far as, it emphasizes speech; or thirdly in so far as it is a vow; or fourthly if it is broken, or if one perjures, and so on. In this verse the vain oath is contrasted with that (oath) which hearts have earned. It shows that the vain oath here means that which has no effect on the intention of the speaker, that is, such oaths which one utters (like 'No, By God', 'Yes, By God') without taking those words seriously.

''*al-Kasb''* (الكَسْبُ) means to earn profits by a work or profession etc. Originally, it was used for the obtaining of those things which fulfil material needs. Then it was metaphorically used for any good or evil a man may get as a result of any of his actions, like earning praise and good reputation through good character and social services, and earning good knowledge, superiority, and nobility by striving for them; or earning condemnation, abuse, and slander; or sin and error by one's evil actions. This is the meaning of *al-kasb* and *al-iktisāb* (الاكْتِسَابُ).

Some people say that *al-iktisāb* is used when one earns a benefit for one's own self; and *al-kasb* refers to earning a benefit whether it is done for one's own self or for others, as when a servant earns for his master, or a guardian for his ward.

In any case the active participle *al-kāsib* (الكَاسِبُ) and *al-muktasib* (المُكْتَسِبُ), (both of which mean ''one who earns'') are used only for a human being.

THE MEANING OF ''HEART'' IN THE QUR'ĀN

The above explanation is a proof that the words ''your hearts'' in the verse refer to the man himself — his spirit and soul. The faculties of thought, understanding, love, hate, fear, and so forth, may be attributed (basing what one says on the common man's belief) to the heart, as hearing is attributed to the ears, sight to the eyes, and taste to the tongue. But the word 'earning' can only be attributed to man. As the verse uses the expression, ''for what your hearts have earned'', it proves that the ''heart'' here stands for the 'soul', 'spirit'.

The same meaning applies to the verses: . . . *his heart is surely sinful* (2:283) and: . . . *and comes with a penitent heart.* (50:33)

When man looked at animals and at himself he found that perceptions and thinking sometimes become ineffective, for example, during epilepsy or lunacy, yet life continues, as is witnessed by the heart-beat and the pulse. This led him to believe that the source of life is the heart; he thought that the spirit of life first attaches itself to the heart, and that it is from there that life extends to all parts of the body. He further believed that all the psychological faculties, such as perception, will, love, hate, hope, fear and other such things, belong to the heart because it is the seat of the psyche — the spirit. Of course, every organ is the source of its own function — the mind for thinking, the eyes for seeing, the ears for hearing, the lungs for breathing, and so on. But all are like tools which are used in the work they are made for; it is the heart that is the tool-wielder.

And it is a fact that physical research and experiments have not been able to pin-point the source of control which rules over the whole body. There is no doubt that the limbs and organs of the

body, even though they are different from each other and have different functions and duties to perform, are united under the control of one ruling power, and are really one unit.

It is not that the ancients were not aware of the mind and its functions. Man knew the importance of the head from the very beginning. Does one not see that all the nations and races, with their different languages, name the ''authority'' the ''head'', and with it its derivatives. For example *ar-ra's* (الرَّأسُ = head), *ar-riyāsah* (الرِّيَاسَةُ = headship, meaning presidency) and *ar-ra'īs* (الرَّئِيسُ = head, that is, President). Then there are the phrases like head of a thread, the head (beginning) of a period, the head (starting-point) of a distance, the head (beginning) of a speech, the head (summit) of a mountain, a head (individual number) of animals or cattle, the head of the year (new year's day), etc.

Apparently, this is the reason why people attribute perception and thinking and sentiments (which are not totally void of perception) like love, hate, hope, fear, will, envoy, chastity, bravery, etc. to the heart. But by heart they mean the spirit which runs into or is attached to, the body. They attribute perceptions and sentiments to the heart, as well as to the spirit and soul, and also to their own selves. They say: I love him; my soul loves him, my heart loves him. Then the metaphorical use of heart for spirit and soul came into general use; then this use was extended to the breast, because the breast contains the heart; and, therefore, to it were attributed the faculties of perception, action and the sentiments.

There are many such uses in the Qur'ān: . . . *He expands his breast for Islam* . . . (6:125); . . *your breast straitens at what they say* (15:97); . . . *and the hearts rose up to the throats* . . alluding to the constriction of the breast (33:10); *Surely, Allāh knows whatever is in your breasts.* (5:7)

A point to consider: Can these expressions not be a support for the common belief mentioned earlier, even if it is yet to be clarified? Shaykh Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā is inclined to believe that it is the heart that perceives, and the brain is its tool.

Anyhow, now we come back to the verse. The sentence, ''but He

will call you to account for what your hearts have earned'', is a metaphor in a metaphor. The. preceding sentence says: *Allāh will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths.* The contrasting sentence should have been, ''. . . for what is firmly considered of your oath''. Instead it mentions the effect, that is, the sin, which will come into being if one breaks that vow. It is done to show that Allāh looks only at the heart, as He says:. . . *and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it Allāh will call you to account for it* (2:284); *There does not reach Allāh their flesh nor their blood, but to Him reaches your piety* . . . (22:37)

The words, ''and Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing'', hint at the undesirability of vain swearing and oath-taking, because such a thing should not be done by a believer. Allāh says: *Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers, and who keep aloof from what is vain* . . . (23:1 — 3)

QUR'ĀN: *For those who swear* (to abstain) *from their wives. . . surely Hearing, Knowing:''al-Ilā' ''*(الايْلاَء = to swear), in Islamic jurisprudence, means the swearing by husband that he will not go to his wife, provided it is done in anger with an intention to harm the wife. This is the meaning intended in this verse. The preposition ''from'' after the verb ''swear'' gives the meaning of distance; thus the verse implies the meaning of swearing to abstain and to remain aloof from the wife. The waiting of four months implies the same, because it is the period at the end of which cohabitation is, according to the *sharī'ah,* obligatory on the husband.

''If they resolved on divorce''.The verse means the intention followed by its implementation. It is also implied by the words, ''Allāh is surely Hearing, Knowing'', because ''Hearing'' can be applied to the spoken words of the divorce, not its intention only.

The words at the end of verse 2:225, ''Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing'', show that if one goes back to his wife then one shall not be punished in the hereafter. So far as this life is concerned, he is obliged to pay its penalty, *al-kaffārah* (الكَفَّارَةُ) because this penalty is not forgiven. Allāh says: *Allāh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation is the feeding of ten poor men out of the average* (food)

you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck, but whosoever cannot find (means) *then fasting for three days; this the expiation of your oaths when you swear. And guard your oaths.* (5:89)

The meaning of the verses is that if one swears to abstain from his wife, then the Muslim Qāḍī (judge) shall give him a time of four months to go back to her. If by the end of that period, he gives the penalty for the oath, and establishes .sexual relations with her, then he shall get no punishment in the hereafter. If on the other hand, he decides to divorce her, that is another way out. And Allāh is Hearing, Knowing.

TRADITIONS

There is a tradition in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And make not Allāh a target of your swearing,* that he (the Imām) said: ''It is the word of man: 'No, by God', 'Yes, by God'.''

Another tradition in the same book, from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), about this verse, says: ''That is, a man swears that he would not talk with his brother, and other such oaths, or that he would not talk with his mother.''

Another tradition in *al-Kāfī* from aṣ-Sādiq (a.s.) about it says: ''When you are called to make peace between two persons, do not say on oath that you will not carry out.''

The author says: The first tradition gives one explanation of the verse, the second and third give another. There is another tradition of nearly the same meaning in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that they said: ''He is the man who makes peace between two persons, and carries the burden of the sin that is between them . . .'' Apparently the tradition means that such a man should not swear that he will not try to do it; he should make peace between them, even if he has to carry the sin, and Allāh will forgive him, and he will be an example of him who follows this verse.

There is in *al-Kāfī* from Mas'adah from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said about the verse: *Allāh will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths* . . . ''Vain is the saying of a man, 'No, by God', and 'Yes, by God', without having any firm intention about anything. ''

The author says: The same meaning is narrated in *al-kāfī* from him by another chain; and in *al-Majma'u 'l-bayān* from him and al-Bāqir (a.s.).

There is a narration in *al-Kāfī* from both Imāms that they said: ''If a man swears that he will not go near his wife, then she has not got any say or any right for four months; and he has no sin in not going to her in that period. If the four months pass away and he does not touch her, then, so long as she is silent and does not complain, he is absolved and free (from any responsibility). Then if she brings her case (before the Qāḍī), the husband will be told: either go back to her and touch her or divorce her. 'Resolve of divorce' means that he should leave her; then when she sees her monthly blood and (afterwards) becomes clean, he will divorce her. And he has, moreover, the right of *ar-raj'ah* (الرَّجْعَةُ = returning to her; revoking the divorce) before the expiry of three monthly periods. So this is the *al-'īlā',* which Allāh revealed in His Book, and which the Apostle of Allāh ordained. ''

There is in the same book a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) in which he says, *inter alia:* ''And *al-'īlā'* is that he says, 'By Allāh, I shall not cohabit with thee so and so' or says, 'By Allāh, I shall put thee to sorrow', and then puts her to sorrow.''

The author says: There are some differences between Sunnis and Shī'ahs about some particulars of *al-'īlā'*; but the discussion of it concerns Islamic jurisprudence.

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلاَ يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا
خَلَقَ اللهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَّ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ
فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلاَحاً وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ
دَرَجَةٌ وَاللهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ـ ٢٢٨. الطَّلاَقُ مَرَّتَانِ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ
بِإِحْسَانٍ وَلاَ يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئاً إِلاَّ أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلاَّ
يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاَّ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللهِ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ
تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللهِ فَلاَ تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ
ـ ٢٢٩. فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلاَ تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجاً غَيْرَهُ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلاَ
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ـ ٢٣٠ . وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ
بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلاَ تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَاراً لِتَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ
ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ وَلاَ تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللهِ هُزُواً وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٣١ وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلاَ تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ
أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ
مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ ذَلِكُمْ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ
وَأَنْتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ٢٣٢ . وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلاَدَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ
أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لاَ

تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا لاَ تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلاَ مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ وَعَلَى
الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالاً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلاَدَكُمْ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ـ ٢٣٣ . وَالَّذِينَ
يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجاً يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْراً
فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ـ ٢٣٤ . وَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ
أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلِمَ اللهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لاَ تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلاَّ
أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلاً مَعْرُوفاً وَلاَ تَعْزِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ
أَجَلَهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ
ـ ٢٣٥ . لاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ
فَرِيضَةً وَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمُوسِعِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ مَتَاعاً بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
حَقّاً عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ـ ٢٣٦ . وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ
لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلاَّ أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ
النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلاَ تَنْسَوُا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ ـ ٢٣٧ . حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلاَةِ الْوُسْطَى وَقُومُوا لِلهِ قَانِتِينَ
ـ ٢٣٨ . فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالاً أَوْ رُكْبَاناً فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ
مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ٢٣٩ . وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجاً
وَصِيَّةً لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَاعاً إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَعْرُوفٍ وَاللهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ـ ٢٤٠ .
وَلِلْمُطَلَّقَاتِ مَتَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقّاً عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ـ ٢٤١ . كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ
لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ـ ٢٤٢ .

And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three monthly courses; and it is not lawful for them that they should conceal what Allāh has created in their womb, if they believe in Allāh and the last day; and their husbands have a better right to take them back in the meanwhile if they wish for reconciliation; and they have rights similar to those upon them in a just manner, and for the men is (right) *a degree above them, and Allāh is Mighty, Wise* (228). *Divorce is twice; then keep* (them) *in fairness or let (them) go with kindness; and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them, unless both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh; then if you fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh, there is no blame on them for what she gives up* (to become free thereby). *These are the limits of Allāh, so do not exceed them, and whoever exceeds the limits of Allāh then these it is that are the unjust* (229). *So if he divorces her she shall not be lawful to him afterwards until she marries another husband; then if he divorces her there is no blame on them both if they return to each other* (by marriage), *if they both think that they can keep within the limits of Allāh, and these are the limits of Allāh which He makes clear for a people who know* (230). *And when you divorce the women and they reach their prescribed time then either retain them in fairness or set them free with fairness, and do not retain them for injury, so that you exceed the limits, and whoever does this, he indeed is unjust to his own self, and do not take Allāh's signs for a mockery, and remember the favour of Allāh upon you, and that which He has revealed to you of the Book and the Wisdom, admonishing you thereby; and fear Allāh, and know that Allāh is the Knower of all things* (231). *And when you have divorced the women and they have ended their term* (of waiting), *then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner; with this is admonished whosoever among you believe in Allāh and the last day; this is more profitable and purer for you; and Allāh knows while you do not know* (232). *And the mothers should suckle their children for two complete years for him who desires to make complete the time of suckling, and their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father according to usage; no soul shall have imposed upon it a*

duty but to the extent of its capacity; neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child; and a similar duty (devolves) *on the* (father's) *heir; then if both desire weaning by mutual consent and counsel, there is no blame on them; and if you wish to engage a wet-nurse for your children, there is no blame on you so long as you pay what you promised according to usage; and fear Allāh and know that Allāh sees what you do* (233). *And* (as for) *those of you who die and leave wives behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten* (days); *then when they have fully attained their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a proper manner; and Allāh is aware of what you do* (234). *And there is no blame on you respecting that which you speak indirectly in the asking of* (such) *women in marriage or keep* (the proposal) *concealed within your minds; Allāh knows that you will soon mention them, but do not give them a promise in secret unless you speak in a proper manner; and do not resolve the marriage-tie until the prescribed term is completed, and know that Allāh knows what is in your mind, therefore beware of Him, and know that Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing* (235). *There is no blame on you if you divorce the women while yet you have not touched them or appointed for them a dowry, and make provision for them, on the wealthy according to his means, and on the straitened in circumstances according to his means, a provision according to usage;* (this is) *a duty on the doers of good* (to other) (236). *And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have appointed for them a dowry, then* (pay to them) *half of what you have appointed, unless they remit or he remits in whose hand is the marriagetie; and it is nearer to piety that you should remit, and do not forget generosity between you; surely Allāh sees what you do* (237). *Maintain the prayers and the middle prayer and stand up truly obedient to Allāh* (238). *But if you are in danger, then* (say your prayers) *on foot or on horseback; and when you are secure, then remember Allāh as He has taught you what you did not know* (239). *And those of you who die and leave wives behind,* (make) *a bequest in favour of their wives of maintenance for the year without turning* (them) *out, then if they themselves go away, there is no blame*

on you for what they do of proper deeds about themselves, and Allāh is Mighty, Wise (240). *And for the divorced women* (too) *provision (should be made) according to usage; (this is) a duty on those who guard* (against evil) (241). *Thus Allāh makes clear to you His signs, so that you may understand* (242).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These verses promulgate the laws concerning divorce and the period of waiting as well as about a divorcee suckling her child ; in middle of it are some rules concerning prayer.

QUR'ĀN: *And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three monthly periods: ''aṭ-Ṭalāq''* (الطَّلاَقُ **)** literally means to release from bonds, to remove the fetters. Then it was metaphorically used for releasing the women from the tie of marriage, and it was so exclusively used in this sense that eventually it became its real meaning.

''Yatarabbaṣna bi anfusihinna'' (يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِاَنْفُسِهِنَّ = should keep themselves in waiting) : *at-tarabbuṣ* (التَّرَبُّصُ) is to wait, to hold back. This word is followed here by *''bi anfusihinna''* (بِاَنْفُسِهِنَّ ; literal meaning = concerning their own selves) ; it thus gives the meaning that they should not attach themselves to any man. In other words, it ordains the rule of *al-'iddah* (العِدَّةُ = waiting period) of divorce.

''A woman is in *al-'iddah''* means that she is holding herself back from marrying again, lest the sperm of the original and subsequent husbands be mixed, and genealogies and consanguinity be corrupted.

The words ''should keep themselves in waiting'' thus not only legislate a law but also hint at its philosophy. It is not necessary for that philosophy and benefit to be found in every individual case; the laws are made keeping in view the good of the majority of people, not all.

The words thus mean: the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting, by not giving themselves to another husband, so that the sperm should not be mixed and consanguinity and parentage not corrupted.

It is an order, but the sentence (in Arabic) is constructed as a statement. This form of expression is used for emphasis.

''al-Qurū' ''(الْقُرُوءُ) is the plural of *al-qur'* (الْقُرْءُ). This is used for the monthly period and also for the period of cleanliness; and is, thus, a word made with two opposite meanings, as some people have said. But the fact is that its root *q-r-'* (قرء) indicates collection, gathering, joining together, but not every collection and gathering, only that which is followed by dispersal and transmission. Keeping this in view, it is obvious that the original meaning of *al-qur'*, would have been the period of cleanliness, because it is the time when blood accumulates in the womb; then it was used also for the period of menstruation because it is the time when blood is discharged after its accumulation.

al-Qar' (الْقَرْءُ) is also used for reading and reciting, because in recitation and reading, letters and words are first joined together and then proclaimed. The scholars of language have clearly said that *al-qar'* means collection and gathering. And that it indicates such gathering may be inferred from the following verses: *Do not move your tongue with it to make haste with it. Surely on Us is the collecting of it and ''qur'ānahu''* (قُرْاٰنَهٗ) *the reciting of it. Therefore, when We have recited it, then follow its recitation* (75:16 — 18). *And a Qur'ān which We revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees* . . . (17:106).

Both verses are concerned with the collection and revelation of the Book of Allāh; and in both it is referred to as the Qur'ān, not as the Book or the Furqān etc.

It is for the same reason that it is given the name Qur'ān.

ar-Rāghib says in his *al-Mufradāt: al-Qur'* in fact means the start of the menses after cleanliness. As it has two elements in its meaning — cleanliness and the following menses — it is used for both meanings, even separately. When a noun is made for a meaning with two elements, it is also used for those elements separately. For example *al-mā'idah* (الْمَآئِدَةُ) is used for a table upon which food is arranged; now it is often used either for the table only or the food only. But *al-qur'* was originally made for cleanliness only nor for the menses only. A girl who has not yet seen blood is not said to be in *al-qur'*; likewise a sick woman whose blood continues without stopping is not said to to be in *al-qur'*.

QUR'ĀN: *And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal what Allāh has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allāh and the last day:* The divorced woman should not conceal the fact of her being

pregnant or her monthly period. Without this prohibition she might have been tempted to conceal it, so that she might soon complete the *al-'iddah* or that her husband might not get chance of revoking the divorce.

This prohibition of concealment has a proviso: ''If they believe in Allāh and the last day'', while the basic law of the waiting period has no such clause. This clause shows that the order given is an essential requirement of the belief, and the women must adhere to it faithfully and scrupulously. It is as we say: Live with the people honestly if you want good.

QUR'ĀN: And their husbands have a better right to take them back in the meanwhile if they wish for reconciliation: ''al-Bu'ūlah'' (اَلْبُعُوْلَةُ) is plural of al-ba'l (اَلبَعْلُ), which means the male spouse, so long as the couple are married. Later, the word acquired a shade of meaning of domination, strength and firmness, because of the position of the husband vis-a-vis the wife. Now, we find other usages all based on this meaning. For example, a horse rider is called its *al-ba'l*; a high land is called *al-ba'l*, there was an idol named *ba'l* (بَعْلُ), and a date-tree is named *al-ba'l* when it grows high.

''Their husbands'': The pronoun ''their'' stands for ''the divorced women''. But the order is not for those who are given an irrevocable divorce; it is meant only for those divorced revocably.

''In the meanwhile'' refers to the period of waiting.

The proviso, ''if they wish for reconciliation'', is very important. It shows that taking them back, that is, the revocation of the divorce, must be. with good intention, with a wish to make amends. The husband should not revoke the divorce only to inflict harm and injury upon the woman, because, such a behaviour is clearly forbidden in the verse, ''and do not retain them for injury.''

''Aḥaqq'' (اَحَقُّ) is the comparative (and superlative) and means ''having more right''. it always requires another person having less right. For example, the previous husband had a right to the divorcee, and the other proposers also have right to her, but the previous husband has more right to her, because of the previous marriage-tie.

But this meaning apparently is not correct here, because this verse is not talking about a fresh marriage; it is speaking about ''taking them back'', revoking the divorce; and it is a right which no one shares with him. So, why use the phrase ''have a better right''? The fact is that there

is a very interesting deletion in the verse. Its complete meaning is: their husbands have more (or a better) right to them than another proposer, and this right can be utilized by taking them back and revoking the divorce during the period of waiting.

This right exists only in revocable divorce; and it is this circumstantial evidence which proves that the order is only about such divorcees and not about those who have been given an irrevocable divorce.

The verse explains the law concerning only those divorcees with whom marriage has been consummated, provided they are at the age of menstruation and are not pregnant. For others, there are other verses.

QUR'ĀN: *And they have rights similar to those upon them in a just manner, and for the men is* (right) *a degree above them:*

''al-Ma'rūf'' (المَعْرُوفُ = variously translated in these verses as ''a just manner'', ''fairness'', a ''lawful manner'', ''usage'', a ''proper manner'' and ''proper deeds'') literally means ''known''. It refers to the things and usages established in society by the mutual dealings of its members, and recognized as just and good by general acceptance. This word has been repeatedly used in these verses — in twelve places. It shows how much importance Allāh attaches to fairness and justice in matters concerning divorce. *al-Ma'rūf* is a comprehensive word which covers the guidance of reason, the laws of religion, nobility of character and moral and ethical values.

As Islam has built its *Sharī'ah* on the foundation of nature, (*al-ma'rūf* = known) in its eyes is that custom which is known to the people when they walk on the straight path of nature and do not deviate from it.

The natural law of society says that all the members of society should be treated equally, they should have as much rights as they have obligations. At the same time it decrees that every individual's personal perfection and attributes must be recognized. The ruler's authority, the people's subordination, the scholar's knowledge, the illiterate person's ignorance, all must be weighed in the scale of their usefulness for, and effect on, society; and with that recognition everyone should be given his proper right.

The same principle was applied by Islam concerning the rights and obligations .of woman. It gave her as much right upon the husband as it ordained upon her for the husband. At the same time, it preserved her

rightful value and place in her union with the man; and in this area, Islam found that men have a right a degree above women.

It is clear from the above that the sentence, ‘‘and for the men is (a right) a degree above them’’, is like a clause which completes the principle sentence. The whole sentence means that women, or divorcees, are equal with men, but that men are a degree above them; therefore, Allāh has given the women as much right as is laid upon them, with the preservation of the authority of men over them.

We shall discuss this subject later on.

QUR’ĀN: *Divorce is twice; then keep* (them) *in fairness or let* (them) *go with kindness; and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them:*

‘‘al-Marrah’’ (المَرَّةُ) means once; it is derived from *al-murūr* (المُرُوْرُ = to pass). *ad-daf‘ah* (الدَّفْعَةُ), *al-karrah*(الكَرَّةُ) and *an-nuzlah* (النُّزْلَةُ) have the same meaning. *at-tasrīḥ* (التَّسْرِيْحُ) means to send forth the cattle to pasture. *as-sarḥ* (السَّرْحُ) is a tree, the fruit of which is eaten by the camel. The Arabs say *sarraḥtu ’l-ibal* (سَرَّحْتُ الابِلَ = I let loose the camel to feed on *sarḥ*). *at-tasrīḥ* is derived from the same root, and is used in this verse as a metaphor for releasing the divorced woman by not taking her back during the waiting period.

‘‘Divorce is twice’’: The divorce referred to here is the revocable divorce. That is why it has been followed by the words, ‘‘then keep (them) in fairness or let (them) go with kindness’’. The third divorce, after these two, is mentioned in verse 2:230, which says: *So if he divorces her, she shall not be lawful to him until she marries another husband.*

To let them go with kindness means to let them go free by not revoking the divorce. They are either to be retained in fairness *bi-ma‘rūfin* (بِمَعْرُوْفٍ) or to be freed with kindness *‘‘bi iḥsānin’’* (بِاِحْسَانٍ). The difference between these expressions is important. Retaining the divorcee by revoking the divorce could be done with a bad intention, to injure and harm her. For example, a man divorces his wife, then waits until she nearly completes the waiting period and then he revokes the divorce and takes her back; then again he divorces her and the procedure is repeated. Such things could be done to mentally torture the woman; and it is unjust, unfair and cruel;the *sharī‘ah* of Islam dislike such behaviour. The revocation which is commendable in this religion is the one carried out for, and based on reconciliation, at which there is hope for the good companionship and love

which Allāh has created between husband and wife.

In the same way, letting her go could be done in an ugly manner; for example, quarrelling with her, showing rage and anger, and demonstrating a spirit of revenge. Such behaviour is not allowed in Islam. The *sharī'ah* says that this ''letting her go'' should be done in a manner recognized as noble by society and accepted as lawful by religion. It is this ''fair dealing'' which has been mentioned in the coming verse (*then either retain them in fairness or set them free with fairness* 2:231). But the verse under discussion goes a step further and commands the man, if he wishes to let her go, to do so ''with kindness''. The expression has been changed to prepare minds for the next rule: ''and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them''.

Obviously, the words ''in fairness'' and ''with kindness'' were necessary to prevent unscrupulous persons from misusing the law and defeating its purpose by following its letter but not its spirit. The real aim of the rule or revocation of divorce is to facilitate reconciliation. Therefore, it was necessary to ordain that it should be done ''in fairness'', not to inflict any harm up-on the woman. Allāh says in a coming verse: ''and do not retain them for injury, so that you exceed the limits''. Likewise, the purpose of the ordinance to ''let her go'' is to safeguard her rights, so that the man does not take back all or part of the dowry given to her. For this purpose the word, ''in fairness'' was not sufficient, because some societies might not think it bad to take back the dowry, in whole or part, at the time of divorce. Therefore, the expression was changed to ''with kindness''. Now it paves the way for the next sentence, ''and it is not lawful . . . '', and compensates to some degree the loss that the woman suffers in the ruination of her family life and the breaking of the marriage-tie.

QUR'ĀN: *Unless both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh:* ''Both fear'' means both have an overriding opinion that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh. ''Limits of Allāh'' are His commands and prohibitions, the things prohibited or made obligatory by Him.

The situation mentioned in this verse appears when their mentalities, characters and manners are opposed to each other, and thus hate becomes the predominant factor in¸ their relation-ship.

QUR'ĀN: *Then if you fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh, then there is no blame on them for what she gives up* (to become free thereby): The change from the dual for *''khāfā''* (خَافَا = both feared) of the previous sentence to the plural *''khiftum''* (خِفْتُمْ = you — three or more — feared) here indicates that the fear, suspicion or opinion should be a reasonable one, recognized as such by common people. Doubts based on evil suggestions, infatuations or hypochondria will not do. That is also the reason why the whole phrase, ''that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh'', has been repeated. If a pronoun were used (i.e., if you fear 'it') there would be a chance that the couple's unreasonable doubts and suspicions would become the basis of this rule. This repetition has removed the chance of such a misunderstanding.

''There is no blame on them'': Before that, the husband was prohibited from taking any part of what he had given the wife. It means that the wife, on her part, was prohibited from giving him anything back, because if she gave him anything while he was not allowed to take it, she would be cooperating with him in a sin and transgression. Now, this verse gives an exception to that general rule: In the *al-khul'* (الخُلْعُ) form of divorce they are allowed to agree on an amount which the wife pays to the husband to get herself free. In this situation, there is no blame on the husband for taking it, nor on the wife in giving it. Hence the expression, ''there is no blame on them''.

QUR'ĀN: *These are the limits of Allāh, so do not exceed them, and whoever exceeds the limits of Allāh then these it is that are the unjust:*

''These'' is the demonstrative pronoun, pointing to the above-mentioned laws. These are matters of social legislation coupled with ethical teachings and other academic subjects.

It may be inferred from these verses that one should not try to separate legislative rules from moral principles. It is wrong to stick to the letter of the law, neglecting the spirit behind it. This sanctimoniousness defeats the purpose of the *sharī'ah*, negates the aims of religion and changes the bliss of life into misery. Islam is a religion of deeds, not of words; a *sharī'ah* of action, not of dogma. The Muslims have only reached this level of retrogression and backwardness, because their whole attention was fixed on the body of the law, and they completely forgot that there was also a soul and spirit inside that body. The coming verse: ''and whoever does this, he indeed is unjust to his own self '',

proves this assertion of ours.

This verse frequently changes the pronouns from plural to singular and from second person to third person and then returns to the original form. This style helps to hold the attention of the audience, and the variation of style refreshes the mind.

QUR'ĀN: *So if he divorces her she shall not be lawful to him afterwards until she marries another husband . . . clear for a people who know:*

This verse promulgates the law of the third divorce. If after the two divorces and returns mentioned above, he divorces her a third time, she shall be prohibited to him until she marries another husband.

It is the wife herself who is said to be prohibited, while prohibition applies to marrying her as well as to cohabiting with her. This mode of expression has been used because ''she is prohibited'' implies both meanings; and, accordingly, ''until she marries another husband'' also implies marriage followed by cohabitation. Then if he, that is, the second husband, divorces her there is no blame on them both, that is, the woman and her first husband, if they return to each other, that is, by means of a fresh marriage, after reconciliation and mutual consent. The verb used is *''yatarāja'ā''* (يَتَرَاجَعَا) which means, ''both return to each other''; it is not the return or revocation after the first two divorces over which the husband has the right and which the women cannot refuse. This mutual return should be effected if they both think that they can keep within the limits of Allāh. The words ''limits of Allāh'' have again been repeated in the final sentences because these are other than those mentioned earlier.

This verse is a miracle of brevity and conciseness. Such a short verse contains fourteen pronouns all referring to different things; and although they are all near each other there is no ambiguity in the meaning, nor any difficulty in its understanding.

This verse and the two before it contain numerous common nouns and many metaphors without any adverse effect on their eloquence and elocution. For example, the phrase *''fa imsākun bima'rūfin au tasrīhūn bi iḥsānin''* (فَاِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوْفٍ اَوْ تَسْرِيْحٌ بِاِحْسَانٍ = than keeping them in fairness or letting them go with kindness) contains four common nouns coming one after other. Also, there are the following metaphorical expressions:

''What you have given them'':	Dowry.
''If you fear'':	If you have reasonable

	ground to believe.
‘‘What she gives up’’:	The redemption paid in *al-khul‘*.
‘‘So if he divorces her’’:	The third divorce.
‘‘She shall not be lawful to him’’:	He is prohibited to marry her again and cohabit with her.
‘‘Until she marries another husband’’:	Until she marries and cohabits with him. (N.B. the politeness of the Qur’ān).
‘‘If they return’’:	If they marry again.

Then there is the contrast between ‘‘keep’’ and ‘‘let go’’, and between ‘‘both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh’’ and ‘‘both think that they can keep within the limits of Allāh’’. Look also at the variation of style in ‘‘so do not exceed them’’ and ‘‘whoever exceeds them’’.

QUR’ĀN: *And when you divorce the women and they reach their prescribed time, then either retain them in fairness or set them free with fairness, and do not retain them for injury, so that you exceed the limit :*

‘‘They reach their prescribed time’’: When their prescribed time is about to expire. The verb *al-bulūgh*(البُلُوغُ = to reach) is used not only for arriving at the destination, but also for coming near it. The reason of our opting for this meaning is clear from the next words, ‘‘then either retain them in fairness or set them free with fairness’’. The husband has neither of these options when her prescribed period has expired.

The words, ‘‘and do not retain them for injury, so that you exceed the limit’’, forbid retaining her with the intention of injuring her. A preceding verse had already prohibited taking back ‘‘any part of what you have given them’’ when one decides to let them go free. The only exception is *al-khul‘* (الخُلْعُ) .

QUR’ĀN: *And whoever does this, he indeed is unjust to his own self, and do not take Allāh’s signs for a mockery;*

It describes the reason why retaining the woman with the intention of causing her harm is prohibited. Marriage completes the bliss of life. This bliss cannot be achieved unless both husband and wife are happy with each other, and complement each other to attain a natural perfection.

Dovorce disturbs that harmony; and revocation is an attempt to mend that damage, to join after separation and to unite after coming apart. How can this purpose be attained if he retains her so as to inflict harm upon her? The two purposes are diametrically opposed. Anyone who resorts to such ugly behaviour is unjust to his own soul, because he drives it away from the straight path to which human nature leads. Obviously, he treats the signs of Allāh as a joke. Allāh has not ordained a soulless *sharī'ah* concerned only with the body of deeds, like giving, taking, keeping, letting go, etc. In fact, all these rules have been made for the common weal, to make up the deficiencies of society, and to perfect the bliss of human life. Then Allāh combined these rules with good ethics to develop the psyche, and cleanse the soul. All the laws of Islam are finely meshed with fundamental knowledge, like the Oneness of God, and the Mastership of the Prophet and the Imāms etc. If anyone confines his religion to the external rules and throws things out, he surely has taken the commandments and signs of Allāh as a mockery.

QUR'ĀN: *And remember the favour of Allāh upon you, and that which He has revealed to you of the Book and the Wisdom . . . the Knower of all things :*

''The favour of Allāh'': The grace bestowed in the form of religion, or the reality of religion, that is, the blessings one gets after following the Divine Commandments, an example of which is the happy life one lives when husband and wife love and respect each other and when there is harmony in domestic life. Allāh calls the blessings of the religion His favour. For example: *This day I have perfected your religion for you and have completed My favour on you . . .* (5:3); *. . . so that He may complete His favour on you . . .* (5:6); *. . . so by His favour you became brethren . . .* (3:103).

Accordingly, the next words, ''and that which He has revealed to you of the Book and the Wisdom, admonishing you thereby'', would be a description of that favour; and the Book and the Wisdom would refer to the body and soul of the *sharī'ah* respectively — to its commandments and their philosophy.

Also, the favour may be taken to refer to all the Divine Graces — creative and otherwise. In this case, the verse would mean: Remember the mystery of your life, and think how it has been made into a perfect unit, and how the creative forces have established the wonderful harmony

between husband and wife. Then heed to the admonition of Allāh which He has addressed to you in the form of the commandments of *sharī'ah ,* and to their philosophy. If you ponder upon these matters you may hope to advance on to the road of blessings and bliss and you will not carelessly ruin the perfection of your life; and fear Allāh and remember that He knows every thing; your appearance, therefore, should not differ from the depths of your reality. In short, you should not try to defeat the purpose of the law by apparently following the letter of the law.

QUR'ĀN: *And when you have divorced the women and they have ended their term* (of waitng), *then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner:* Apparently the order in ''do not prevent them'' is addressed to guardians and other relatives against whose wishes the women cannot usually go. ''Their husbans'' means the husbands who had given them divorce. The verse forbids guardians and other relatives from preventing the woman from re-marrying her husband if, after the expiry of the waiting period, both are reconciled to each other, and wish to re-establish the marriage-tie. It often happens that the relatives of the woman do not wish her to establish such a union again with the same husband, as they hate and dislike him because he divorced her in the first place. This verse says that they should not allow such feelings to become a hindrance in the path of such a reunion.

This verse does not prove in any way that marriage is not lawful without the permission of guardian:

First: because, even if it does not prove that guardianship has no effect on marriage, it surely does not prove that it has any such effect.

Second: There is no reason to say that the command, ''do not prevent'', is addressed to guardians only. Obviously, it is a general command addressed to all the relatives whose advice or pressure may create difficulty in such a re-marriage. Also, the order, apparently, is of an advisory nature, to draw the attention of the relatives to the benefits and gains which may accrue as a result of her re-marrying the same husband. That is why it has been recommended by the words, ''this is more profitable and purer for you ''.

A commentator has said that the command, ''do not prevent'', is addressed to the husbands who give the divorce, and it forbids them to hide for some time the news of the divorce from the women so that they

have to start their ‘‘period of waiting’’ late on receiving the news, and thus are prevented from entering into marriage early. Accordingly, the meaning would be like this: ‘‘And when you have divorced the women, (O husbands!) and they have ended their term of waiting, then do not prevent them from marrying (other men who would be) their husbands.’’ But this interpretation does not conform with the words of the verse. If that were the purpose of the verse, it should have said, ‘do not prevent them from marrying’ or ‘from taking other husbands’. It would not have said, ‘‘their husbands’’. (Also, the verse says that they have already completed their period of waiting; so where is the question of unnecessarily prolonging the period of waiting?)

‘‘Fa-balaghna ajalahunna’’(فَبَلَغْنَ اَجَلَهُنَّ) literally means ‘and they have reached their term’. But it means ending their term, as we have written in the translation. If the period of waiting had not ended, no guardian or relative could prevent her return to the husband: ‘‘and their husbands have a better right to take them back in the meanwhile’’. Moreover, in that case Allāh would have said, ‘‘do not prevent them from returning’’ not ‘‘from marrying’’.

QUR’ĀN: *With this is admonished whosoever among you believes in Allāh and the last day;* It is exactly the same admonition as the one in verse 2:228, ‘‘it is not lawful for them that they should conceal what Allāh has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allāh and the last day’’. These two commands have been tied especially with the proviso of belief in Allāh and the last day, because it is the belief of *at-tawḥīd* (التَّوْحِيْدُ = Monotheism, Oneness of God); and the religion of Monotheism encourages unity, not disunity; togetherness, not separation.

In these sentences, Allāh has first used the singular pronoun (is admonished whosoever), then the plural (among you,) again the singular (believe in . . .), then again He returns to the plural (for you). Basically, the verse is addressed to the Apostle of Allāh together with his *ummah;* therefore plural pronouns are quite in order. Yet, sometimes the talk is addressed to the Apostle only, because he is the original recepient of the revelation, and others are addressed only through him. This happens mostly in those sentences in which no law or command is promulgated. So far as those verses are concerned which bring any law or command, almost all of them are in the plural form. This style alternatively widens the circle, then shortens it, then again widens it. This variation holds the

attention of the audience and keeps them alert.

QUR'ĀN: *This is more profitable and purer for you: ''Azkā''* (اَزْكي) is derived from *az-zakāh* (الزَّكوة) which means 'good and pleasant growth'; therefore, it has been translated here as 'more profitable'. Purity has been explained earlier. The demonstrative pronoun, ''this'', refers either to not preventing them from re-marrying their previous husbands, or to such re-marriage itself. The result in both cases is the same. Such a re-marriage would create harmony in place of discord and would mend broken relationships. This would strengthen the feeling of unity and accord, from which would sprout healthy religious virtues. Such a re-marriage would augment the women's virtues of chastity and modesty, and would put a protective cover on their shame. Also, it would be purer for their souls because it would prevent them from thinking about other men when searching for the next husband.

Islam is the religion of *az-zakāh* (good growth, purification), *at-ṭahārah* (الطَّهَارَةُ = cleanliness) and knowledge. Allāh says: . . . *reciting to them his communications and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom* . . . (3:164); . . . *but He intends to purify you* . . . (5:7).

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh knows while you do not know:* that is, except what He teaches you, as He says: . . . *and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom* (3:164); . . . *and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases* . . . (2:255). There is no conflict between this verse and the preceding one, ''. . . which He makes clear for a people who know'', as it means, 'who know by the teaching of Allāh'.

QUR'ĀN: And the mothers should suckle their children for two whole years for him who desires to make complete the time of suckling: The words used in this verse are ''al-wālidāt'' (الوَالِدَاتُ = those who give birth to) and *''mawlūdun lahu''* (مَوْلُوْدٌ لهُ = he to whom the child is born). The more common words *al-umm* (الأُمُّ = mother) and *al-ab* (الأبُ = father) have not been used, because *al-umm* is more general than *al-wālidah* (الوَالِدَةُ) — the grandmother, aunt and wet-nurse are also called *al-umm* (mother), but only the woman who gives birth to the child may be called its *al-wālidah.* Likewise, *al-ab* is more general than *al-wālad* (الوَالِدُ = he from whose seed the child is born); and *al-ibn* (الابْنُ = son) is more general than *al-walad* (الوَلَدُ = the born child) The rule prescribed in this verse concerns especially the born child and the woman who bore it and

the man to whom it was born. The verse has discarded even the word *al-wālid* (father) and has used a longer word *mawlūdun lahu* (he to whom the child is born) because this new word gives in a nut-shell the reason of this rule. As the child is born to the father and is attached to him in most affairs the father is obliged to bear the full responsibility for it, feeding and clothing it, care of it and bringing it up. This includes feeding and clothing the child's mother, who feeds it from her breast. On the other hand, the mother is obliged not to harm the father of the child, because it is he who is ultimately responsible for that child, born of her womb.

A strange interpretation has been written by one commentator. He says: ''Allāh used the word 'he for whom the child is born' , instead of 'father' , to show that mothers are only a means of bearing children for fathers, but that children actually belong to fathers, and that is why, at the time of mentioning parentage, only the names of the fathers are shown, not those of the mothers. And al-Ma'mūn al-Rashīd has said in a couplet :'And surely, the mothers of the people are but receptacles, where the seeds are deposited, and the sons are of the fathers only.' ''

The poor fellow forgot that this very verse says in the beginning *''awlādahunna''* (اَوْلادَهُنَّ = their, that is, the mothers' children): and again it says, *''bi waladihā''* (بوَلَدِهَا = her child). More amusing is his attempt to argue on the strength of the poetry of al-Ma'mūn. al-Ma'mūn and his ilk are too worthless to have their words quoted in an explanation of the Qur'ān. Many men of literature get confused between different disciplines; they are unable to distinguish literature from legislation, or social laws from the decrees of creation. They, therefore, offer evidence to solve a social problem or a mystery of creation.

In fact, the child belongs to both the father and mother as far as creation is concerned. But in social affairs, various nations follow various systems: in matriarchies, the child is attached to the mother; in patriarchies, to the father. This verse confirms this second system by referring to the father as "he to whom the child is born''.

''al-Irḍā' '' (الارْضَاعُ = suckling) is on the paradigm of *al-if'āl* (الافْعَالُ) from *ar-riḍā'ah* (الرِّضَاعَةُ) and *ar-raḍa'* (الرَّضَعُ); both of which mean 'to suck milk from the breast'.

''al-Ḥawl'' (الحَوْلُ) is ''year''. Its literal meaning is to turn, to change. The year is given this name because it turns and changes. ''Two complete years'': As the year is made up of many parts (e.g.360 days),

the word sometimes is used for even an incomplete period. If one stays in a place for, let us say, eleven months, he often says that he stayed there for a year. This is why the adjective, ‘‘complete’’, has been used to show that two whole years are intended here.

‘‘For him who desires to make complete the time of suckling’’: It proves that the custody (guardianship) and suckling of the child is a right of the divorced mother, and is left to her discretion. Also deciding on the end of the prescribed period is her right. If she wishes to suckle the child for two complete years, she may do so: and if she does not want so, it is at her discretion. The husband has no say in it except when the divorced wife agrees to it by mutual counsel, as is described in the words, ‘‘if both desire weaning by mutual consent and counsel’’.

QUR’ĀN: *And their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father according to the usage; no soul shall have imposed upon it a duty but to the extent of its capacity:*

Allāh has prescribed the maintenance and clothing of the mother, according to the level of *al-ma‘rūf* (المَعْرُوْفُ = known, usual), that is, as is generally known and accepted in families of that status. The reason for this rule is given in the next sentence that Allāh does not impose any duty beyond the capacity of His servants.

Upon this general and basic principle are based two rules mentioned after it: (1) The right of the woman concerning the custody and suckling of the child, and other related rules. The husband has no right to come between the child and its mother, by not allowing her to keep the child in her custody, or by preventing her from seeing it and so on. The rights of the mother must be accorded to her; otherwise, it will injure and harm her and put her under an unjustified mental and emotional strain. (2) On her part, the woman is forbidden to injure and harm the husband, for example, by not allowing him to see the child.

The above two rules are ordained in the words, ‘‘neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child’’. Why did Allāh not use a pronoun? Instead of saying, ‘‘on account of his child’’, it could be said, ‘‘on account of him’’. But a pronoun in this place would have created an apparent contradiction. The sentence mentions the father as, ‘‘he to whom the child is born’’. The pronoun ‘‘him’’ would have referred to ‘‘her child’’ in the preceding sentence. So the purport of the supposed sentence would have been: nor

shall he to whom the child is born be made to suffer on account of ''her'' child!

But the sentence in its present form does not give room for such a contradiction. Not only that; the actual style recognizes factors of creation as well as social legislation: it recognizes that in creation, the child belongs to both parents, and, therefore, it is referred to as ''her child'' and ''his child''; then it shows that in social laws, it belongs to the father, who is, thus, referred to as the one to whom the child is born.

QUR'ĀN: *And a similar duty* (devolves) *on the* (father's) *heir:* The duty imposed upon the father regarding the maintenance and clothing of the suckling mother devolves, if he dies, on his heir.

Some other meanings have been written for this verse which are not in conformity with its apparent meaning; we do not intend to quote them here. What we have written is according to the traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu'l-bayt* (a.s.), and is also in accord with the apparent meaning of the verse.

QUR'ĀN: *Then if both desire weaning by mutual consent. . . according to usage:* This is an offshoot of the right of the mother and of the avoidance of harm to either party. The upbringing and suckling of the child is not an obligation on her; it is a right of hers and she may waive her right if she so wishes. Therefore, it is perfectly right if the parents agree by mutual counsel to wean the child before the completion of the two years. Also, the father may engage another wet-nurse for the child, if the mother returns the child to him and refuses to suckle it; or if she is sick or has not got enough milk or for any other reason. But it is incumbent upon him to give the wet-nurse her rightful dues without infringing any of her rights, as Allāh says: ''and if you wish to engage a wet-nurse for your children, there is no blame on you so long as you pay what you promised according to usage''.

QUR'ĀN: *And fear Allāh and know that Allāh sees what you do:* It is an order to fear Allāh and to be careful of one's obligations towards Him, which in present context means to obey these orders and to show fairness in their implementation. As these matters may be seen and observed, Allāh reminds man to know that He sees what man does. Compare it with the ending of the previous verse which forbids husbands to retain their wives with the intention of inflicting harm upon them, and then reminds them that Allāh knows every thing. As the intention cannot be ''seen'',

man was reminded there that Allāh ‘‘knows’’ every thing, and even his intention is not hidden from Him.

QUR’ĀN: *And* (as for) *those of you who die and leave wives behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten* (days):

‘‘at-Tawaffī’’ (اَلتَّوَفِّي) means to cause to die. It is said *tawaffāhu ’llāh* (تَوَفَّاهُ اَللّٰهُ) when Allāh gave him death, and the dead man is called *al-mutawaffā* (اَلمُتَوَفَّي is one who is given death).

‘‘Yadharūn’’ (يَذْرُوْنَ) like *yad‘ūn* (يَدْعُوْنَ) means ‘‘they leave’’, or ‘‘they shall leave’’. These two verbs have no past tense.

‘‘ ‘*Ashran’’* (عَشْرًا = ten) here means ten days. ‘Days’ was deleted as the meaning was clear.

QUR’ĀN: *Then when they have fully attained their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a proper manner:*

‘‘Bulūghu’l-ajal’’ (بُلُوْغُ الْاَجَلُ = reaching the term) means completing the waiting period of death, prescribed above. ‘‘There is no blame on you . . .’’ is a way of expressing the widows’ full authority on their own affairs; if they wish to enter into marriage again, they are free to do so, and no relative of theirs, or of their deceased husbands, has any right to interfere. The verse puts a stop to the foolish custom of some societies which, owing to ignorance, blind prejudice, miserliness or envy, do not like widows to remarry. It says that widows have a right to do so, and that right is recognized by the *sharī‘ah;* no one has any power to forbid a lawful action.

Various nations had various customs regarding the widow. Some, like the Hindus, burnt her alive with the dead husband; others, like many ancient tribes in Africa and elsewhere, buried her alive with the husband’s body; some like the ancient Christians, did not allow her to marry again and she had to remain single until death released her from this chain; some others, like the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days, kept her secluded for one year, or, like some advanced societies of nowadays, for nine months; there are others who say that the deceased husband has a right upon the widow which prevents her from re-marrying for a certain period — without fixing that time. All these customs and traditions are based on the assumption that marriage basically joins two lives together, and is the manifestation of love and affection; and that this love has a sanctity which must be respected. This respect is binding on both the parties, and whoever dies first, the surviving spouse must show grace,

dignity and decorum as a natural courtesy towards his or her departed partner in life. But this courtesy is more binding on the woman, because she is expected to be a model of modesty and chastity and has to protect herself from other men's eyes. It is not in keeping with her dignity to appear as cheap merchandise handled by various admirers one after another. The above-mentioned customs and traditions are based on this belief.

Islam has prescribed a term of nearly a third of a year for this waiting.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh is aware of what you do:*

As the verse contained the rules of *al-'iddah* of death and the right of widows to remarry and as these legislations were about actions and were based on Divine wisdom, it was appropriate to remind the audience that Allāh knows all about their actions, and He knows best what should be allowed and what should be forbidden; therefore, widows have to wait in one instance and have freedom in the other.

QUR'ĀN: *And there is no blame on you respecting that which you speak indirectly in the asking of* (such) *women in marriage or keep* (the proposal) *concealed within your minds:*

''at-Ta'rīḍ'' (التَّعْرِيْضُ), translated here as speaking indirectly, is speaking obliquely in a way that the hearer understands the real aim which the speaker does not want to declare openly. The difference between speaking indirectly and metaphor is that in speaking indirectly the apparent meaning also remains valid and the indirect meaning is inferred from it. For example, the suitor says to the woman: ''I am a good companion, of generous nature.'' While the clear meaning also is valid, the purport of the talk is to let the woman know that if she married him she would be happy. But in metaphor the apparent meaning vacates its place for the metaphorical one. For example, one says about a brave man, ''I saw a lion''. Here real meaning of lion (the particular animal) is not valid at all.

''al-Khaṭb'' (الخَطْبُ) means speaking and reiterating. *''al-khiṭbah''* (الخِطْبَةُ) and *''al-khuṭbah''*(الخُطْبَةُ) both are derived from it. The former means proposing to a woman asking her hand in marriage. The suitor is called *al-khāṭib* (الخَاطِبُ plural: *al-khuṭṭāb* الخُطَّابُ); the latter means a lecture. The lecturer is called *al-khaṭīb* (الخَطِيْبُ plural: *al-khuṭabā'* الخُطَبَاءُ).

''al-Iknān'' (الاكْنَانُ) is derived from *al-kann* (الكَنُّ), and both

mean ‘to hide’, ‘to conceal’. But *al-iknān* is concealing an idea in the mind, as the verse says: ‘‘or keep concealed within your mind’’; and *al-kann* is hiding or covering something with, or in, a material thing like a cloth, a house, etc. Allāh says: *As if they were eggs carefully sheltered:* (37:49); *the like of the hidden pearls* (56:23).

The verse says that it is not improper to speak to such women indirectly, letting them know that you are interested in marrying them when they are free, or to hide this idea in your mind.

QUR’ĀN: *Allāh knows that you will mention them . . . in a proper manner:* It gives the reason of the above sentences. Mentioning such women in the context of marriage is a natural thing for you, and Allāh does not forbid a thing which is ingrained in your nature.

This is one of the rules which clearly show that Islam is based on the foundation of nature.

QUR’ĀN: *And do not resolve the marriage-tie until prescribed term is completed*

‘‘al-‘Azm’’ (العَزْمُ = resolve, determination) is to set the heart on a work with firm intention of doing it, so that no weakness remains in the effect of that resolve, unless that resolve itself is cancelled. *‘‘al-‘Uqdah’’* (العُقْدَةُ = knot, tie) is derived from *‘‘al-‘aqd’’* (العَقْدُ) which means to tie. The verse likens the bond of marriage with the knot which joins two cords together so that they become one; thus the husband and wife become one by the marriage-tie.

The marriage-tie is connected in this verse with resolve and determination, which is a matter of the heart and mind. The verse thus indicates that the reality behind the marriage rite is something dependent on, and connected with, intention, faith and belief. Marriage is, in fact, a matter based on society’s (or religion’s) recognition, and has no existence outside common belief. It is the same as was described about ownership and other such matters under the verse 2:213. The verse, thus, contains an allegory and a metaphor.

‘‘Hattā yablugha ’l-kitābu ajalahu’’ (حَتَّي يَبْلُغَ الكِتَابُ اَجَلَهُ); *‘‘al-kitāb’’* (الكِتَابُ) means ‘written’ that is, a prescribed rule, and it refers to the waiting imposed on the women who are in *al-‘iddah.* Literally the phrase means, ‘‘until the prescribed rule reaches (the end of) its duration’’.

The verse thus means: Do not perform marriage with them until their

prescribed waiting period has been completed.

It is clear from this verse that the talk in this and the preceding verses is about those women who are in the waiting period, Therefore, the definite article ‘‘the women’’ refers not to all women but to the previously-mentioned group. That is why it has been translated, ‘‘. . . in the asking of (such) women in marriage . . .’’

QUR’ĀN: *And know that Allāh knows what is in your mind; therefore beware of Him, and know that Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing:* By mentioning the Divine attributes of Knowledge, Forgiveness and Forbearance, Allāh warns the believers that the matters discussed in the two verses — proposing to women during their waiting period, and speaking to them obliquely about it, and giving them a promise in secret — are extremely perilous things; Allāh does not like them at all, although He has allowed what He has allowed.

QUR’ĀN: *There is no blame on you if you divorce the women while yet you have not touched them or appointed for them a dowry:* To touch allegorically means to cohabit. *‘‘Aw tafriḍū lahunna farīḍatan’’* (اَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيْضَةً), literally means ‘or appointed for them a (prescribed) duty’, and it refers to fixing the dowry.

The verse means that it shall not be a hindrance in divorce if the marriage was not yet consummated, or if the dowry was yet to be fixed.

QUR’ĀN: *And make provision for them, on the wealthy according to his means, and on the straitened in circumstances according to his means, a provision according to usage:*

‘‘al-Mut‘ah’’ (المُتْعَةُ) and ‘‘*al-matā‘ ’’*(المَتَاعُ) is what may be used, or enjoyed. *‘‘matti‘uhunna’’* (مَتِّعُوْهُنَّ) means ‘give them usable, enjoyable goods or wealth’. The word, ‘‘a provision’ is the object of the verb, ‘‘make provision’’ ; between the verb and its object is placed the paranthetic clause, ‘‘on the wealthy . . . and on . . . to his means’’. *‘‘al-Mūsi‘ ’’* (المُوْسِعُ) is the active participle of *‘‘awsa‘a’’* (اَوْسَعَ = he became wealthy) This paradigm is reserved for transitive verbs. Perhaps, this verb was originally used with an object; gradually the object was omitted and the verb became intransitive.

The verse says: It is incumbent upon you, if you divorce a woman when the dowry was not yet fixed, to make for her a provision according to usage. And it should be according to the means of the husband.

Accordingly, she is entitled to get an amount similar to the dowry of

her equals like her mother, her sister, etc. But this order does not cover the case of a woman divorced before cohabitation, because her case is explained in the next verse.

QUR'ĀN: (this is) *a duty on the doers of good* (to others). Apparently the attribute of doing good to others is closely connected with this legislation. As ''doing good to others'' is not incumbent, it follows that the order given above should be a recommendation, not a compulsory law. But clear traditions of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* say that the order is compulsory and obligatory. Perhaps it may be inferred from this verse in this way: Allāh has earlier said, ''Divorce is twice; then keep (them) in fairness or let (them) go with kindness''. There the Arabic word, for which we have used ''Kindness'', is *al-iḥsān* (الاحْسَانُ), which in this verse has been translated as doing good to others. Anyhow, kindness and doing good is incumbent on those who let the women go, that is, those who give divorce. Therefore, the divorcers are obliged to be doers of good. And this verse orders the doers of good to make provision for the divorced women. In other words, it obliges the divorcers to make such provision. (And Allāh knows better).

QUR'ĀN: *And if you divorce them before you have touched them . . . that you should remit:*If you divorce them before the consummation of marriage and a dowry was already fixed, then you are obliged to pay them half the prescribed amount. Of course, if the women themselves or their guardians remit this amount then the half also would be waived.

The husband may also be termed the ''one in whose hand is the marriage-tie''. Therefore, if he has already paid the full dowry and if he remits it, then it will not be necessary for the divorced wife to pay back to him half of that amount. And, in any case, remitting the due portion of the dowry is nearer to righteouness and piety. One who gives up his rightful dues (which he is entitled to, according to *sharī'ah*) shall more easily and readily turn away from what is not lawful, and shun what is forbidden.

QUR'ĀN: *And do not forget generosity between you; surely Allāh sees what you do:*

''al-faḍl'' (الفَضْلُ = translated here as generosity) originally means to exceed, to surpass. The same is the meaning of *al-fuḍūl* (الفُضُوْلُ). But *al-faḍl* is used for excellence in virtue, nobility and merit, while *al-fuḍūl* is used for unwarranted excesses, like chattering and gossiping.

The verse exhorts the separated couple to do good and be generous to each other by forgoing their own rights and giving the other party more than its due.

The comment about ‘‘surely Allāh sees what you do’’ is similar to that given concerning the last sentence of the verse 2:234.

QUR’ĀN: *Maintain the prayers and the middle prayer and. stand up truly obedient to Allāh:* ‘‘*Ḥāfiẓū’’* (حَافِظُوْا = maintain) is derived from ‘‘*al-ḥifẓ’’* (الحِفْظُ) which means to take hold of a thing and preserve it. Mostly it is used for retaining ideas and perceived pictures in the mind. The middle prayer is the prayer falling in the middle. The verse does not say which of the prayers is the middle one. It is explained in traditions which will be quoted later on.

‘‘Stand up for Allāh’’: The ‘‘*L’’* (ل = for) shows the aim, that is, purely for the pleasure of Allāh. ‘‘Standing up’’ metaphorically means to start a work and be engaged in it.’’ ‘‘*Qānitīn’’* (قَانِتِيْنَ) is derived from ‘‘*al-qunūt’’* (القُنُوْتُ) which means obedience, submission, surrender. Allāh says: *All are obedient to Him’’* (2:116); *And whoever of you is obedient to Allāh and His Apostle* . . . (33:31).

The meaning of the verse in short is: Remain engaged in the obedience of Allāh, being submissive to Him, purely for His pleasure.

QUR’ĀN: *But if you are in danger. . . what you did not know:* The conjunctive ‘‘*F’’* (ف = but) joining this sentence in the subjunctive mood with the previous verse shows that there was a deleted (but understood) conditional clause, therein: ‘‘Maintain, if you are not in danger’’. ‘‘*ar-Rijāl’’* (الرِّجَالُ) is plural of *ar-rājil* (الرّاجِل = pedestrian), ‘‘*ar-rukbān’’* (الرُّكْبَانُ) is plural of *ar-rākib* (الرَّاكِبُ = rider). This verse prescribes the rule of the prayer of danger.

‘‘*F’’* implies that maintaining the prayer and attending to it regularly is a rule which can never be relaxed. If you are not in danger, then perform it as you have been taught ; but if there is any danger or risk, then do it in the best possible way, standing or walking on foot, or even riding. Then after the danger passes away and you are secure, perform it in the usual way, and remember Allāh as He has taught you what you did not know. ‘‘*K’’* (ك = as) in ‘‘as He has taught you’’ is for analogy. ‘‘What you did not know’’ shows the magnitude of the favour of Allāh; for this reason, it points to all the things taught by Allāh, instead of mentioning only the teaching ,of the prayer.

The meaning of the sentence, thus, will be: So, remember Allāh with a remembrance equal to His favour in teaching you the obligatory prayer among other teachings concerning the rules of the religion.

QUR'ĀN: *And those of you who die and leave wives behind* (make) *a bequest in favour of their wives of maintenance for the year. . . .* ''Bequest'' in this sentence is an object; its verb ''bequeath'' is deleted because it is easily understood.

The definite article *al-* (اَلْ = the) in *''al-ḥawl''* (الحَوْلُ = the year) shows that the verse must have been revealed before the rule of *al-'iddah* of death (waiting for four months and ten days) was promulgated. The women in pre-Islamic days used to wait, after the death of their husbands, for a whole year. And this verse directs the husbands to bequeath for them enough property with which they might maintain themselves during that period of waiting, without turning them out of the house. It was their right, and they could demand it. But they could as well forgo that right and go away. In that case, there was no blame on the heirs of the deceased husband for what they did of proper deeds about themselves.

This verse is like verse 2:180: *Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth, for parents and near relatives, according to usage, a duty* (incumbent) *upon those who guard* (against evil).

Obviously, the verse under discussion was abrogated by the verses of *al-'iddah* of death and inheritance.

QUR'ĀN: *And for the divorced women* (too) *provision* (should be made) *according to usage;* (this is) *a duty on those who guard* (against evil): The command is in respect of all the divorcees. The proviso of piety, ''those who guard against evil'', implies that it is a recommendation, nor a compulsion.

QUR'ĀN: *Thus Allāh makes clear to you His signs, so that you may understand: ''al-'Aql''* (العَقْلُ) is ''to tie'',''to shackle''. Accordingly, the faculty of perception is called *al-'aql,* because it holds fast the perceived picture; the perceived idea or picture is also called *al-'aql,* as is the power by which man distinguishes between good and evil, and right and wrong. Its opposites, from various view-points, are insanity, idiocy, foolishness and ignorance.

The words used in the Qur'ān for the various facets of perception are

very many: nearly twenty. Their list, with their approximate meanings, is as follows:-

al-Yaqīn	(	اليَقِينُ	)	Conviction, Certitude
aẓ-Ẓann	(	الظَّنُّ	)	Weightier Supposition
al-Ḥisbān	(	الحِسْبَانُ	)	Reckoning, Consideration
ash-Shu'ūr	(	الشُّعُوْرُ	)	Sense
adh-Dhikr	(	الذِّكْرُ	)	Remembering
al-'Irfān	(	العِرْفَانُ	)	Knowledge, Recognition
al-Fahm	(	الفَهْمُ	)	Understanding
al-Fiqh	(	الفِقْهُ	)	Knowledge
ad-Dirāyah	(	الدِّرَايةُ	)	Comprehension
al-Fikr	(	الفِكْرُ	)	Thinking
ar-Ra'y	(	الرَّأي	)	Opinion
az-Za'm	(	الزَّعْمُ	)	Assumption
al-Ḥifz	(	الحِفْظُ	)	Preservation
al-Ḥikmah	(	الحِكْمَةُ	)	Wisdom
al-Khubrah	(	الخُبْرَةُ	)	Full Knowledge
ash-Shahādah	(	الشَّهَادَةُ	)	Witness
al-'aql	(	العَقْلُ	)	Intellect, Sense, Reason

To this list may be added:

al-Qawl	(	القَوْلُ	)	Saying, i.e., Opinion
al-Fatwā	(	الفَتْوي	)	Decree, Decision
al-Baṣīrah	(	البَصيرَةُ	)	Insight

and other words.

al-Yaqīn (اليَقِينُ = conviction) : When the conviction is so strong that the mind does not entertain the opposite idea at all.

If an idea and its opposite both are equally balanced in mind, so that no side is heavier than the other, it is called *ash-shakk,* (الشَّكُّ) that is, doubt.

But if one side has more weight than the other, the weightier side is called *aẓ-ẓann,* and the lighter one *al-wahm* (الوَهْمُ), that is, fancy, illusion.

al-Ḥisbān (reckoning, consideration) is nearer to *aẓ-ẓann* in meaning. But its use in this meaning is allegorical, as is the case with *al-'add* (العَدُّ). Both words mean ''to count''. When it is said, ''He counted Zayd

among the braves'', it is implied that he thought Zayd to be brave.

ash-Shu'ūr (sense) is derived from *ash-sha'r* (الشَّعْرُ = hair) ;therefore implies a finer perception. It is mostly used for sensing the material things. Hence the five senses are called *al-mashā'ir* (المَشَاعِرُ) .

adh-Dhikr (remembering) is to recall the picture stored in the memory after its absence from the sense; or to prevent its absence from the senses.

al-'Irfān and *al-ma'rifah* (المَعْرِفَةُ), that is, knowledge, recognition, is conformity of the picture obtained in the mind with the ideas or pictures already stored in the memory. That is why it is said that *al-'irfān* is the knowledge after a previous knowledge.

al-Fahm (understanding) is the reaction of an outside factor by which a picture is created in the mind.

al-Fiqh (knowledge) is deep etching of the above-mentioned picture in the mind.

ad-Dirāyah (comprehension) is even deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the subject, so that even hidden and lessknown points become known and clear. That is why it is mostly used when the importance of the subject matter is to be shown. Allāh says: *The sure calamity! What is the sure calamity? And what would make you ''comprehend'' what the sure calamity is!* (69:1—3); *Surely We sent it down on the night of destiny. And what will make you comprehend what the night of destiny is?* (97:1—2)

al-Fikr (thinking) is the review of the known factors to discover the unknown.

ar-Ra'y (opinion) is the opinion reached at through thinking and consideration. Mostly it is used for ''practical knowledge'', that is, what should be done and what not; rather than for theoretical subjects like physical sciences.

Nearer to it in meaning are *al-baṣīrah* (discernment, insight); *al iftā'* (الإفْتَاءُ = the giving of a decision) and *al-qawl* (saying).But the use of ''saying'' in meaning of view is metaphorical, putting an inseparable thing for its companion (as the saying necessarily shows the decided opinion of the sayer).

az-Za'm (assumption) indicates a picture in mind, whether it is a confirmed or a probable idea.

al-'Ilm (العِلْمُ = knowledge) is the comprehension which does not

allow the opposite.

al-Ḥifẓ (preservation) is to save the known picture protecting it from change and deterioration.

al-Ḥikmah (wisdom) is the knowledge which is confirmed and precise.

al-Khubrah (full knowledge): Full academic knowledge, so that the knowledgeable person perceives all the conclusions from the premises.

ash-Shahādah (witnessing) is to get the thing in specie, either through the five senses, or the internal perceptive powers like the feeling.

Apart from the last-mentioned five words, the meanings of all others are more or less related to matter, movement and change. Therefore, they are not attributed to Allāh. We do not say that He, for example, presumes, thinks, guesses or senses etc.

But the last five words are free from such defects in meanings. They do not have any shade of deficiency. They are therefore used for Him. He says: . . . *and Allāh knows what you do* (2:234); . . . *and Allāh knows every thing* (4:176); *and your Lord is the preserver of all things* (34:21); *and He is the Knower, the Wise* (12:83); *surely He is a witness over all things* (41:53).

Now we return to our original discussion. *al-'aql* is the faculty of perception which holds fast the perceived picture, according to the Creation of Allāh. It knows truth and falsity in theoretical matters, and good and evil and the benefit and harm in the practical field. First it recognizes itself, then it perceives the sensual phenomena through the five senses, then it turns to the inner feelings and through them becomes connected to the outside world — like will, love, hate, hope, fear and similar emotions and sentiments. Then it analyses the perceived ideas and pictures, and re-arranges them, generalizing and particularizing them. Then it forms an opinion in theoretical matters and decides its own course of action in practical ones. This, in short, is *al-'aql* that is, reason and its function.

But sometimes some forces overpower man by subdueing all other powers. For example, lust and anger subjugate all the other faculties, either vanquishing them completely or weakening them. Thus man deviates from the middle path, straying to excess or deficiency in his moral and ethical life. In short, reason does not function as it should normally do, even though it seems to work. It is like a judge who bases

his judgement on false testimonies or faked evidence. His judgement will be a perversity of justice, even though he does not mean to be unjust. He will be called a judge, but at the same time he will not be a judge. Likewise, when a man chooses his course of action on the basis of wrong premises, he is not working reasonably, even though this exercise is tolerantly given the name of ''reason''. It is because the man by such an exercise goes against the dictates of healthy nature and right path.

''Reason'', as defined by the divine representatives, is that which benefits a man in his religion, and leads him to the true knowledge and virtuous deeds. If it is not so, it is not ''reason'', even if it helps him in distinguishing between worldly good and bad affairs. Allāh says: *And they shall say: Had we but listened or pondered ''na'qil''* (نَعْقِلُ) *we would not have been among the inmates of the burning fire* (67:10); *Have they not travelled in the land so that they should have hearts with which to understand, or ears with which to hear? For surely it is not the eyes which become blind, but blind become the hearts which are in the breasts* (22:46).

The two verses use the verb *al-'aql* for the knowledge which man acquires on his own and the verb ''to hear'' for the perception acquired with the help of others, provided both are done through true natute. Allāh says: *And who forsakes the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool. . .* (2:130). This verse, as explained earlier, is a contraposition of the tradition: *''al-'aql* (reason, wisdom) is that by which the Beneficent (Allāh) is worshipped . . . ''

Now it is obvious that when Allāh uses the word *al-'aql* it refers to the perception which a man gets when his nature is healthy and perfect. This explains the meaning of the words of the verse, ''Thus Allāh makes clear to you His signs so that you may understand.'' The clarifying creates knowledge and knowledge is the foundation of wisdom and understanding, as Allāh says: *And these examples, We set them forth for the people, and none understand them but the learned* (29:43).

TRADITIONS

There is a tradition in *as-Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd from Asmā', daughter

of Yazīd ibn as-Sakan al-Anṣāriyyah, that she said: ‘‘I was given divorce in the days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and there was no waiting period for a divorce. When I was divorced, the (rule of) waiting period of divorce was revealed: *And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three monthly courses.’’* Thus, she was the first woman about whom the (rule of) waiting period for divorce was sent down.

And there is a tradition about this verse in *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī from Zurārah that he said: ‘‘I heard Rabī‘ah ar-Rā’ī saying: ‘In my opinion, *al-aqrā’* (الأقْرَاءُ = period) which Allāh has ordained in the Qur’ān is the period of purity between two menstruations, and not the menstruation itself.’ ’’ Zurārah said: ‘‘Then I came to Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) and narrated to him what Rabī‘ah had said. He (the Imām) said: ‘But he did not say it by his own opinion; it has reached him from ‘Alī (a.s.).’ I said: ‘May Allāh put your affairs right for you ! Was ‘Alī (a. s.) saying so?’ He said: ‘Yes! He had said, ‘‘Surely *al-qur’* (الْقُرْءُ) is *aṭ-ṭuhr* (الطُّهْرُ = the period of purity); the blood accumulates in that period and when the time comes it is expelled.’’ ’ I said: ‘May Allāh put your affairs right for you! (What do you say) If a man divorces his wife in the period of purity, without cohabiting with her (in that period), in the presence of two just witnesses?’ He said: ‘When she enters into her third menstruation, her waiting period is finished and she becomes lawful for another husband . . .’ ’’

The author says: This meaning is narrated from him (the Imām) from various chains. Zurārah asked ‘‘whether ‘Alī (a.s.) was saying so?’’ because it is generally believed by the Sunnīs that ‘Alī (a.s.) said that the word meant the period of menstruation and not of purity. (It is reported in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from ash-Shāfi‘ī, ‘Abdu ’r-Razzāq, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd and al-Bayhaqī from ‘Alī [a.s.] that he said: ‘‘It is allowed to her husband to return to her until she bathes from the third menstruation, and [then] she becomes lawful to [another] husband.) But the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* deny it; and attribute to him the word that *al-aqrā’* is the period of purity, not menstruation, as was mentioned in the above tradition. This opinion has been attributed to other companions also, like Zayd ibn Thābit, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, and ‘Ā’ishah; and it has been narrated from all of them.

There is in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) explaining the

words of Allāh: *And it is not lawful for them . . . conceal what Allāh has created in their wombs,* that he said: ‘‘Pregnancy and menstruation.’’

It is written in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī: ‘‘Surely Allāh has delegated to women (the information of) three things: purity, menstruation and pregnancy.’’

It is written in the same book about the words of Allāh: *And for the men is* (right) *a degree above them,* that the Imām said: ‘‘The right of men over women is superior to the right of women over men.’’

The author says: This is not contradictory with their equality in the ordainment of rights.

There is a tradition in *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī about the verse: *Divorce is twice; then keep* (them) *in fairness or let* (them) *go in kindness,* from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘Verily Allāh says: *‘Divorce is . . . go in kindness’*; and letting them go in kindness is the third divorce.’’

And there is a tradition in *at-Tahdhīb* from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘Divorce, according to the *sunnah*, is that he divorces her once, that is, in her period of purity, without cohabiting (in that period), in the presence of two just witnesses, then leaves her until her period of waiting expires. Thus she becomes completely separated from him. Then he may become one of the suitors, she may marry him is she so wishes; and not, if not. And if he wants to revoke the divorce, he should keep witnesses to return her (to himself) before the expiry of her period of waiting; and in this case, she will remain with him after that divorce . . .’’

Ḥasan ibn Faḍḍāl is reported in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l-faqīh* as saying: ‘‘I asked ar-Riḍā (a.s.) of the reason why the woman who is divorced (twice and returned twice) during her period of waiting, is not lawful to her husband until she marries another husband. He (the Imām) said: ‘Surely Allāh allowed him to give divorce twice, as He said: *Divorce is twice; then keep* (them) *in fairness or let* (them) *go in kindness,* that is, in the third divorce. And because he entered into what Allāh dislikes, that is, divorce, He prohibited her to him, so that she would not be lawful for him until she marries a husband other than him; so that people should not treat divorce lightly and the women should not be harmed . . .’ ’’

The author says: It is the *madhhab* of *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* as narrated by the Shī'ite sources, that divorce with one word or in one sitting is not but only one divorce, even if he said: ''I divorce thee three divorces''. But the Sunnīs have contradictory traditions about it. Some show that it would be only one divorce, others say that it would be three and some narrate it from 'Alī and Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (aṣ-Ṣādiq - a.s.). But it appears from some Sunnī traditions, narrated by Muslim, an-Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd (in their *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ*) and others that it was 'Umar who, two or three years after receiving the caliphate, validated pronouncement of three divorces with one word. It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*: 'Abdu 'r-Razzāq, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''It was (the system of) divorce during the days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and Abū Bakr and two years during the caliphate of 'Umar that three divorces (i.e., in one sitting) were (counted as) one. Then 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said: 'Surely the people are making haste in a matter in which they were given time. Therefore, (it would be good) if we sanction it.' He then validated it.''

And it is reported in *as-Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: '' 'Abd Yazīd Abū Rukānah divorced Umm Rukānah and married a woman from the tribe of Muzīnah. Then she (i.e., the new wife) came to the Prophet and said: 'He does not satisfy me even as much as this hair. (She said it taking out a hair from her head.) Therefore, separate between him and me.' On hearing it the Prophet felt enraged and called Rukānah and his brother, and asked his companions: 'Do you see that this resembles him (Abū Rukānah) in this and this, and that in this and this?' They said: 'Yes' Then the Prophet told 'Abd Yazīd: 'Give her divorce.' He did so. Then (the Prophet) said: 'Take back your wife, Umm Rukānah.' He said: 'I have given her three divorces, O Messenger of Allāh!' The Prophet said: 'I know. Yet you take her back.' '' Then he recited, *O Prophet! when you divorce women, divorce them for their prescribed time. . .* (65:1).

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from al-Bayhaqī from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''Rukānah divorced a woman three times in one sitting; then he grieved for her. So, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) asked him : 'How did you divorce her?' He said: 'I divorce her thrice in one sitting.' The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Then take her back if you so

wish.' So he took her back.'' Therefore, Ibn 'Abbās was of the opinion that the divorce can be given (once) only in every period of cleanliness; and that it is the *sunnah* which Allāh has ordered, ''Divorce them for their prescribed period.''

The author says: This meaning is narrated in other traditions also. So far as the ''sanction'' given by 'Umar is concerned, the arguments against it are like those described in the subject of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj*.

The word of Allāh, ''Divorce is twice'', has been offered as a proof that three divorces in one word (e.g., I give thee three divorces, or, I divorce thee thrice) are not effective at all. The words 'twice' and 'thrice' are not used for a thing effected by one word, and all Muslims accept this principle when they talk about *al-li 'ān* (اللِّعَانُ = mutual imprecation).

The author of *Majma'u 'l-bayān* says about the word of Allāh, ''or let (them) go with kindness'': Two interpretations have come down to us of this phrase; first, that it is the third divorce, second, that the woman should be left to complete her period of waiting, so that she becomes completely free of the marriage-bond. It is narrated from as-Suddī and aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk; and the same meaning is reported from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.).

The author says: As you see, there is a difference in the traditions about the meaning of this phrase.

It is reported in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī about the words of Allāh, ''and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them unless both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh; then if you fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh, there is no blame on them for what she gives up to become free thereby:'' aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The *khul'* (Redemption) is not effected except when the woman tells her husband, 'I shall not fulfil for you your vow' and 'I will surely go out without your permission' and 'I will surely get other man to sleep in your bed' and 'I will not take the obligatory bath of *al-janābah* on your account' (i.e., I will not sleep with you); or she says, 'I will not obey any order of yours or let you give me divorce'. When she says such things, then it is allowed to him to take back from her all that he had given her and all that he can get from her which she gives him. When both are agreed on it, he will divorce her in her period of cleanliness in the presence of the witnesses. Thus (on expiry of her

waiting period) she separates from him with one divorce; and now he may be one of those who want to marry her. And if she so wishes, she may marry him again, and if she so wishes, she may reject him. If both remarry, she will be with him, and yet two more divorces (like this) may be given to her. And he should make a condition with her (when he takes ransom from her for giving her divorce), like that made in case of *al-mubārāt* (Mutual Freeing), that 'if you take back anything from this ransom given me by you, then I have more right on you' (i.e., the divorce will become a revocable one).''

And he (the Imām) said: ''There is no *al-khul'*, *al-mubārāt* or *at-takhyīr* (option) except in a period of cleanliness without cohabitation (in that period) taking as witnesses two just men. And if a woman who obtains divorce as *al-khul'*, marries another husband and then he (also) divorces her, it is lawful for the first husband to marry her.''

And he said : ''The husband has no right to revoke the divorce in case of *al-khul'* and *al-mubārāt,* excep when the woman changes her decision (and agrees to return to him) ; then he shall return to her whatever he took from her (and then may revoke the divorce).''

It is reported in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh* from al-Bāqir (a.s.) that he said: ''When the woman said to her husband the sentence, 'I shall not obey any order of yours', whether she elaborates it or not, it becomes lawful to him to take (ransom) from her (to give her *al-khul'*) and he has no right to get her back (i.e., to revoke the divorce).''

It is written in *al-Durru 'l-manthūr:* Aḥmad has narrated from Sahl ibn Abī Ḥathmah that he said: ''Ḥabībah bint Sahl was married to Thābit ibn Qays ibn Shammās; but she disliked him; he was an ugly man. So she came and said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! Surely, I will not see him; and had it not been for fear of Allāh, I surely would have spat in his face'. So he asked her: 'Will you give him back his garden which he gave you as dowry?' She said: 'Yes.' Thereupon she gave him back his garden and (the Messenger . of Allāh) separated them. And this was the first *al-khul'* in Islam.''

at-Tafsīr of al-Ayyāshī quotes al-Bāqir (a.s.) as saying in the explanation of the word of Allāh: *These are the limits of Allāh, so do not exceed them* . . . : ''Verily, Allāh was displeased with one who fornicates, and therefore He prescribed for him a hundred lashes. Now if someone becomes enraged and increases it, then I repudiate him before

Allāh; and this is the word of Allāh: *These are the limits of Allāh, so do not exceed them.*''

It is reported in *al-Kāfī* from Abū Baṣīr that he asked (Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq - a.s.) about the woman who is not allowed to her (former) husband until she marries another husband. He (the Imām) said: ''It is that woman who is divorced then returned, then (likewise) divorced the third time; it is she who is not lawful to that husband until she marries another husband and he tastes her sweetness.

The author says: *al-'Usaylah* (العُسَيْلَةُ translated here as sweetness) means sexual intercourse. It is written in *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ: al-'Usaylah* is used in the meaning of sexual intercourse. That enjoyment was likened to *al-'asal* (العَسَلُ), that is, honey, and then was given diminutive form by adding *''h''* (ة) (because *al-'asal*, is mostly used as a feminine) ; so it became (*al-'usaylah*). Also it is said that it was given the feminine form because it means 'a piece or portion of honey' as they refer to a piece of *adhdhahab* (الذَّهَبُ = gold) as *adh-dhahabah* (الذَّهَبَةُ).

And the words of the Imām, ''and he tastes her sweetness'' are based on the words of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) which he used in the incident of Rifā'ah, ''No! Until you taste his sweetness and he tastes your sweetness''. The incident is reported in *al-Durru 'l-manthūr* as follows: ''al-Bazzāz, aṭ-Ṭabarānī and al-Bayhaqī have narrated that Rifā'ah ibn Samu'āl divorced his wife. Then she came to the Prophet and said: 'Messenger of Allāh! 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān married me and he has not but like this.' (Saying it she pointed to a fringe of her dress.) The Messenger of Allāh kept ignoring her talk; at last he told her: 'You want to return to Rifā'ah? No ! Until you taste his (i.e., 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān's) sweetness and he tastes your sweetness.' ''

The author says: This tradition is well-known; and has been narrated by a multitude of Sunnī narrators of the books of *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ* and others, as well as by some Shī'ah ones. And although the wordings of the various narratives are different from each other, most of them contain these words.

It is written in *at-Tahdhīb* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked the question whether the *mut'ah* marriage (with a second husband) would make the woman lawful (for the first one), to which he replied: ''No! Because Allāh says: *So if he divorces her she shall not be lawful to him afterwards until she marries another husband; then if he divorces her*

there is no blame on them both if they return to each other; and there is no divorce in the *mut'ah.*''

The same book quotes Muḥammad ibn Muḍārib as saying: ''I asked ar-Riḍā (a.s.) whether a eunuch could make the woman lawful (for her first husband). He (the Imām) said: 'He cannot make her lawful.' ''

It is written in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī under the words of Allāh: *And when you divorce the women and they reach their prescribed time . . . and do not retain them for injury . . .* that the Imām said: ''When he divorces her, he is not allowed to take her back (i.e., to revoke the divorce) if he does not really want her.''

It is reported in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''It is not proper for a man to divorce his wife and then to take her back (to revoke the divorce) when he does not really want her and then divorce her again. It is the injury which Allāh has forbidden. (It is improper) except that he divorces her and then takes her back and he intends to retain her.

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī under the words of Allāh: *And do not take Allāh's signs for a mockery . . .* , from 'Umar ibn aj-Jamī' through his chain to 'Alī (a.s.) in a tradition in which he said, *inter alia:* ''And whoever from this *ummah* read the Qur'ān and (even then) entered the hell, then he was from among those who took the Allāh's signs for a mockery . . . ''

It is reported in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī about the words of Allāh: *And when you have divorced the women and they have ended their term . . .*, that the sister of Ma'qil ibn Yasār was divorced by her husband, then he (the husband) left her alone until her waiting term was completed. Then again he proposed to her. Thereupon Ma'qil refused. Then the verse was revealed: *. . . then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner. . .*

The author says: This meaning has been quoted in *al-Durru 'l-manthūr* from al-Bukhārī as well as other compilers of *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* like an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, at-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd and others.

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from as-Suddī: This verse was revealed concerning Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī. He had a cousin (daughter of his uncle); her husband gave her one divorce, and her period of waiting expired. Then the (said) husband wanted to take her

back (i.e., to remarry her). But Jābir refused saying, ‘‘You divorced our cousin and now you want to marry her second time!’’ And the woman herself wanted (to marry) her husband. Thereupon Allāh sent down the verse: *And when you have divorced the women . . .*

The author says: According to the *madhhab* of *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* a brother or a cousin has no guardianship or authority over the woman in the matters of marriage. Therefore, if either tradition is accepted, it would mean that the prohibition in the verse: . . .*then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands* . . ., is not concerned with the scope of guardianship nor does it promulgate any rule except showing that it is improper to come between a man and his wife (or would-be wife). Or that this dislike or prohibition of such interference is addressed to everyone who might prevent the woman from such remarrying, whether they be a guardian or not.

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī, under the words of Allāh: *And the mothers should suckle their children for two complete years* . . ., that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘As long as the child is in the suckling-period, he is between both parents equally; thereafter, when he is weaned, the father has more right upon him than the other relatives. And if the father finds someone to suckle the child for four dirhams, and the mother says that she would not suckle him but for five dirhams, then he may take the child away from her; but it is more comforting, more uplifting and more clement to the child that he be left with his mother.’’

The same book reports that the same Imam said about the words of Allāh, ‘‘neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child’’: The woman used to resist with her hand when the man wanted to cohabit with her, saying. ‘‘I shall not allow you; I fear to become pregnant on my child.’’ And (likewise) the man used to say to the woman, ‘‘I shall not sleep with you; I am afraid that you will conceive, and thus I shall cause the death of my child.’’ Therefore, Allāh forbade the man to make the woman suffer harm, and the woman to make the man suffer.

It is narrated in the same book about the words of Allāh: *And a similar duty* (devolves) *on the* (father’s) *heir,* that one of the two Imāms (al-Bāqir or aṣ-Ṣādiq - a.s.) said: ‘‘It is about maintenance. The duty of the heir (in this respect) is like that of the father.’’

Another tradition in the same book about this verse says that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘It is not proper for the heir to make the woman suffer harm (for example) to say, ‘I shall not let her child visit her’, and to inflict harm on her child, if they have something with him; and he should not be parsimonious for him.’’

There is a tradition in the same book from Ḥammād from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘There is no suckling after weaning.’’ Ḥammād said: ‘‘I told him, ‘May I be your ransom, and what is the weaning?’ He said: ‘The two years mentioned by Allāh.’ ’’

The author says: ‘‘The two years’’ is the quotation from the verse, and that is why he (the Imām) explained it as ‘‘mentioned by Allāh.’’

It is reported in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr:* ‘‘It is narrated by ‘Abdu ’r-Razzāq (in *al-Muṣannaf*) and Ibn ‘Adī from Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘There is no orphan after puberty, and there is no suckling after weaning; and there is no (fast of) silence of the day upto the night, and there is no joining in the fast (i.e., fasting two days without breaking the fast at night), and there is no vow in a sin, and there is no maintenance in the sin, and there is no oath cutting the relationship, and there is no returning to normadic life after *al-hijrah* (الهِجْرَةُ = emigration), and there is no emigration after the conquest (of Mecca), and there is no oath (vow) for a wife with the husband nor for a child with his father nor for a slave with his master (i.e., without their permission), and there is no divorce before marriage, and there is no emancipation before owning.’ ’’

There is a tradition in *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī from Abū Bakr al-Ḥaḍramī that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘When it was revealed: *And* (as for) *those of you who die and leave wives behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten* (days), the women came arguing with the Messenger of Allāh and said: ‘We shall not wait’. The Messenger of Allāh told them: ‘It was (your custom) that when a woman’s husband died she took the dropping (of a camel) and threw it behind her in her private room and then sat down (therein); then when the same day (i.e., date) came after a year, she took (the dropping) and broke it and applied it (to her eyes) as antimony; and then she could marry. Now Allāh has put down (reduced) from you eight months.’ ’’

It is narrated in *at-Tahdhīb* from al-Bāqir (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘In

every marriage, when the husband dies it is (incumbent) upon the woman (whether she is a free woman or a slave), and by whatever system the matrimonial bond was established (whether by *mut'ah,* permanent marriage or slavery), to observe the waiting period of four months and ten days.''

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he asked al-Bāqir (a.s.): 'May I be your ransom! Why is the waiting period of a divorced woman three menstruations or three months and that of the woman whose husband dies four months and ten days?'' He (the Imām) said: ''As for the waiting period of three months for a divorced woman, it is (prescribed) to make sure that there is no child in the womb. And as for the waiting period of a woman whose husband dies surely Allāh has laid down a provision for the women and one upon them: The provision made for them is in *al-'īlā'*, a period of four months, as He says: *For those who swear* (to abstain from their wives is ordained) *a waiting for four months.* It is, therefore, not lawful for anyone (to abstain from the wife) for more than four months; because Allāh knows that it is the furthest limit to which a woman may keep her sexual desire under control. And the provision made against them is that He ordered her to observe waiting period, when her husband dies, for four months and ten days. In this way, He (Allāh) took from her for him at the time of his death what He took from him for her during his lifetime.

The author says: This meaning is also narrated from ar-Riḍā and al-Hādī (a.s.) from other chains.

It is written in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And there is no blame on you respecting that which you speak indirectly in the asking of* (such) *women in marriage:* ''The women in her *'iddah*, you speak to her in a graceful manner to attract her towards yourself. And you do not say, 'I do this and this' or 'I perform like this', hinting at indecent things.'' And another tradition says: ''You tell her, when she is in her *'iddah*, 'O so-and-so! I do not like but only that which pleases you; and if your *'iddah* expires, you will not find me missing, God willing; and you should not keep yourself (alone). All this (you may say) without resolving the marriage-tie.''

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning from the Imāms.

The *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī quotes aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he explained the words of Allāh: *And if you divorce them before you have touched them* . . ., in these words: ‘‘When the man divorces his wife before cohabiting with her, then she shall get half of her dowry; and if he had not appointed for her a dowry, then (for her) is a provision according to usage, on the wealthy according to his means and on the straitened in circumstances according to his means. And there is no waiting period for her and she may immediately marry whoever she wishes.

There is a tradition in *al-Kāfī* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the man who divorces his wife before cohabiting with her: ‘‘On him is half of the dowry, if anything was fixed (as dowry); and if nothing was fixed then he should give her a provision as other women of her status are provided for.’’

The author says: This tradition explains the words, ‘‘a provision according to usage.’’

al-Kāfī, *at-Tahdhīb*, *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī and other books narrate from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) under the words of Allāh: ‘‘In whose hand is the marriage-tie’’, that both Imāms said: ‘‘It is *al-walī* (الوَلِيُّ = the guardian of the marriage).’’

The author says: There are numerous traditions giving this explanation. And there are some Sunnī traditions narrated from the Prophet and ‘Alī (a.s.) that it means ‘‘the husband’’.

It is narrated in *al-Kāfī, Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l-faqīh, at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī and that of al-Qummī, about the words of Allāh: *Maintain the prayers and the middle prayer*, through numerous chains from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that: ‘‘Surely, the middle prayer is the noon prayer.’’

The author says: It is what is narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.) in their traditions with one voice. Of course, some of those traditions show that it is the Friday prayer. But it appears from the same traditions that they treat the noon and the Friday prayers as one prayer, not two. It is narrated in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī from Zurārah from al-Bāqir (a.s.) — and the wording quoted here is from *al-Kāfī* — that he (the Imām) said: ‘‘Allāh says: *Maintain the prayers and the middle prayer*, and it is the prayer of the noon, the first prayer the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) prayed, and it is (in) the middle of the day and between the two prayers of the day-time — the dawn and

afternoon prayers.'' And he said : ''And this verse was revealed and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was on a journey, so he (the Holy Prophet) recited *qunūt* in it and continued it likewise in the journey and at the home-town, and he added two *rak'ahs* for him who is in his home-town. And those two *rak'ahs* added by the Prophet were dropped on Friday, for him who is in his home-town, because of the two sermons recited by the Imām. Therefore, he who prays on Friday without congregation, shall pray four *rak'ahs* of noon prayer like all other days . . .''

This tradition, as you see, counts the noon and the Friday prayers as one prayer, and says that it is the middle prayer. But most *of* these tradtions are *al-maqṭū'* (المَقْطُوْعُ i.e., their chain of narrators are broken, or do not reach a *ma'ṣūm*); and those that are connected to a *ma'ṣūm*, their texts are not free from confusion, like the above-mentioned tradition of *al-Kāfī.* Moreover it does not clearly fit the meaning of the verse. And Allāh knowns better.

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr:* Aḥmad, Ibn al-Manī', an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Jābir, ash-Shāshī and ad-Ḍiyā' have narrated through the chain of az-Zibriqān: ''Verily, there was a group of the Quraysh, and Zayd ibn Thābit passed by them and they were assembled. So they sent two of their boys to him to ask him about the middle prayer. And he said: 'It is the noon prayer'. Then the boys came to Usāmah ibn Zayd and asked him (the same question). And he said: 'It is the noon prayer. Verily, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to pray the noon prayer in the summer and there would not be behind him except one or two lines, and the people were in their siesta or at their trade. Thereupon, Allāh sent down the verse: *Maintain the prayers and the middle prayer and stand up truly obedient to Allāh.* Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''The men should desist (from that behaviour) or most surely I shall burn down their houses.'' ' ''

The author says: The same reason has been narrated by Zayd ibn Thābit and others from other chains.

And know that there is much difference of opinion regarding the meaning of ''the middle prayer'', much of it arises because of differences in the Sunnī traditions. It has been said that it is the dawn prayer, and it has been narrated from 'Alī (a.s.) and some companions. Others say that it is noon prayer, and it has been reported from the Holy Prophet and a

number of the companions. Again it is said that it is the afternoon prayer, and this also has been reported from the Prophet and a number of companions — as-Suyūṭi has narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* more than fifty traditions of this meaning. Some say that it is the evening prayer. Other say that it is hidden among the prayers as the Night of Destiny is hidden among the nights of Ramaḍān. This is reported in some traditions from some companions. And also it is said that it is the night prayers ; and, lastly, that it is the Friday prayer.

It is reported in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* about the words of Allāh; *And stand truly obedient to Allāh,* that *al-qunūt* (اَلْقُنُوْتُ = obedience) is the invocation in the prayer during the standing posture, and it is narrated from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.).

The author says: Also it is narrated from some companions.

There is a tradition in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about this verse: ''(*al-Qunūt* means) one's going towards prayer and maintaining (i.e., praying) it in its time, so that nothing diverts one's attention or keeps him from it.''

The author says: There is no conflict between the two traditions, as one may easily understand.

It is reported in *al-Kāfī* about the words of Allāh: *But if you are in danger, then* (say your prayers) *on foot or on horse back . . .*, that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''When he is afraid of a beast or a thief, he will say *at-takbīr* and point (for the actions of prayer).''

And there is another tradition in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh* from the same Imām about the prayer when marching on: ''It is *at-takbīr* and *at-tahlīl.*'' Then he (the Imām) recited this verse.

There is another tradition in the same book from the same Imām : ''If you are in a fearful land and are afraid of a thief or a beast, then say the obligatory prayer and you are on your (riding) animal.''

And the same book quotes a tradition of al-Bāqir (a.s.): ''He who is afraid of a thief shall pray by sign while (riding) on his mount.''

The author says: There are numerous traditions of this meaning.

It is reported in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from Abū Baṣīr that he said: ''I asked him (the Imām) about the words of Allāh: *And those of you who die and leave wives behind,* (make) *a bequest in favour of their wives of maintenance for the year without turning* (them) *out.* He (the Imām) said: 'It is abrogated.' I said: 'And how was it?' He (the

Imām) said: 'It was (a custom) that when a man died, his wife was maintained from his capital for one year; then she was turned out without any inheritance. Then it was abrogated by the verse of one-fourth and one-eigth. Now the woman is given maintenance from her own share.' ''

There is another tradition in the same book that Mu'āwiyah ibn 'Ammār said: ''I asked him (the Imām) about the words of Allāh: *And those of you who die* . . . He said: 'It is abrogated; the verse: . . . *they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten* (days), abrogated it, and the verse of inheritance abrogated it.' ''

It is reported in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī: aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about a man who divorces his wife, should he make provision for her? He said: ''Yes. Does not he like to be one of the doers of good? Does not he like to be one of those who fear (Allāh)? ''

A SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE ABOUT WOMAN

It is well known that Islam — and we should not forget that it is Allāh who legislated it — did not base its laws on experiments, like all other laws. Yet, we are sometimes obliged to look at the rules, laws and customs of modern and even ancient peoples, so that we may rationally judge the *sharī'ah* of Islam. We have to look at the felicity of the human races and then see whether other customs and laws fulfil the requirements of humanity or not. In this way, we may see the difference between Islamic and non-Islamic rules, and appreciate the living and powerful spirit of Islam in comparison with others. That is why we refer to the history of nations and societies, and describe what they have to say on particular subject.

Accordingly, we should discuss the ideas and ideals of Islam about the following:

1. The identity of woman and the comparison of it with the identity of man.
2. Her value and importance in society — so that we may know what influence she had and has in human life.
3. Her rights and the laws made about her.

4. The foundation of the above-mentioned laws.

But before we discuss the above subjects from the Islamic point of view, it is necessary to look at history and see what her life was like before the advent of Islam, and what treatment has been accorded to her by non-Muslim nations — both civilized and uncivilized — uptil now. It is not within the scope of this book to go into the detail of these subjects; but a short review will not be out of place.

THE LIFE OF WOMAN IN UNCIVILIZED NATIONS

In uncivilized tribes and nations — like the tribes of Africa, the aboriginals of Australia, the inhabitants of the Pacific Ocean islands, the Red Indians of America, etc., a woman's life in comparison with a man's life was exactly like the life of a domestic animal as compared with the life of a human being.

Because of the natural instinct of exploitation, man believes that he has a right to possess cattle and other domestic animals, and to use them as he wishes and in any work he likes. He makes use of their hair, wool, meat, bones, blood, hides and milk; they serve him as a guard and watch; they are exploited even for breeding and procreating; their offspring and their profit serve the purpose of man; they carry his burden, are used in agriculture and hunting and satisfy the need of man in countless other ways.

These animals have no say at all about their own necessities of life and their desires, like food and drink, living space, their sexual urge, and the rest. It is only their owner who provides them with these items according to his own wish. And he would never wish but what is beneficial to himself through those animals. If we were to look from the eyes of that animal at the arrangements made by man we would surely be alternately amused and enraged at his high-handedness; we would find an animal being persecuted without any fault, another one crying for help without anyone paying any heed to it, a third one oppressing others without any hindrance; we would see one living a blissful and enjoyable life without doing any work to deserve it, like the stallion or the bull kept for breeding, which lives a most happy life according to its own view; and would find others living a distressed and difficult life without having committed any sin to deserve such a punishment, like a donkey which

carries loads heavier than itself and the horse in the mill.

Such animals do not have even the right of life. The owner believes that it is he who has the right of their lives. If someone kills a horse, he is not charged with the murder of that horse, he is only accused of destroying the property of the owner. It is because man thinks that the animal's existence is an appendage to his own existence, its life is an offshoot of his own life; and that its status is that of a hanger-on.

The position of a woman *vis-a-vis* a man in these tribes and societies is exactly the same. According to their belief, woman was created for man. She was her man's appendage even in existence and life.

It was the father who owned her so long as she was not married, and the husband assumed that right soon after marriage.

The man could sell her, gift her away or loan her to some other man for the purpose of cohabitation, procreation, or service, etc. He could mate out to her any punishment he decided upon, even the death penalty. He could abandon her, without caring whether she would die. He could kill her to feed on her meat, especially in feasts and during famine. All the properties and rights of the woman belonged to the man; only he, and not she, could enter into dealings — selling, buying, accepting, rejecting — on her behalf.

And the woman was duty-bound to obey the man — her father or husband — whether she liked it or not; she was not expected to act independently even in her, let alone his affairs. It was her duty to look after the house and the children and make sure that the man's whims and desires were properly satisfied. When there was work to do, she always got the hardest, like carrying heavy load on her back, digging the earth, etc., and from vocations and handicrafts her share was the lowest and the most worthless. Things got bad to such extent that in some tribes a woman, after giving birth to a child, had to get up at once and engage herself in household drudgery, while the man lay on her bed convalescing and getting treatment for himself.

These were her rights and her duties. Every tribe and society had its own special rules and characteristics according to its habit and habitat; anyone interested should study the books written on this subject.

WOMAN IN PRE-ISLAMIC CIVILIZATIONS

Now we come to those nations who lived under traditional well-defined customs which they had inherited from their forefathers, and which were not based on any book or codified law. Such were the people of ancient China, India, Egypt and Iran.

In all these civilizations the woman had no independence or freedom, either in her intentions or her actions; she was totally under the guardianship and mastership of man. Neither could she decide on anything concerning herself, nor had she any right to interfere in civilian affairs like the government, the judiciary, etc.

It was her duty to participate with man in all the responsibilities of life, like earning a livelihood. In addition, it was her exclusive duty to look after domestic affairs and the children. She had to obey her man in all his orders and desires.

On the whole, a woman in these societies was in a better position than her sisters in uncivilized nations. She was not killed, and her meat was not used in feasts. She was not entirely deprived of the right to property; she owned to a certain extent what she got from inheritance or marriage, though she could not administer it independently. The man had the right to take as many wives as he desired, and to divorce whomever he wished. The husband could marry after the death of his wife, but in most cases the widow had no such right; and mostly she was forbidden to participate in society beyond her door-step.

Each of these civilizations had some particular customs. The class system in Iranian society, gave women of the upper class a right to participate in government and state and to succeed to the throne. Also it recognized as valid a marriage with women having close affinity, like the mother, daughter or sister.

In China, marriage was a sort of servitude for woman. The husband almost purchased and owned her. She had no right in inheritance and could not eat with men, not even with her own sons. Polyandry was allowed; many men jointly married one woman, and shared her among themselves, and the child was affiliated in most cases with the strongest husband.

In India, she was completely an appendage of the man. She was not allowed to remarry after the death of her husband — she would be burnt

alive with the body of the deceased husband; otherwise she would live in disgrace. During her monthly period she was treated as the dirtiest thing; even her clothes could not be touched by others.

In short, the status of women in these nations was something between a human being and an animal. She was treated as a minor child under his guardianship; but unlike the child, she was never thought fit to be free from the yoke of her man's guardianship.

WOMAN IN SOME OTHER CIVILIZATIONS

There were some other nations who lived under, and were governed by, a codified law or book, like the Chaldeans, the Romans and the Greeks.

The Chaldeans and the Assyrians followed Hammurabi's Code, which made the woman an appendage of her husband; she was not independent in her decision or action. If the wife disobeyed her husband in any way, or decided independently on anything, the husband could turn her out of his home or could bring in another wife degrading the offending wife to concubinage. If she made any mistake in household management or exceeded the limits of the domestic budget, the husband could lodge complaints before the judge and on being found guilty she could be drowned in water.

The Romans were the first to enact civil laws. The earliest laws were made four centuries before the Christian era; and were gradually completed and perfected. The Roman law gave some freedom to the woman in her own affairs. The master of the house, that is, her husband and the father of her children, was vested as a sort of godhead; he was worshipped by the people of his household, as he, in his return, worshipped his forefathers and ancestors. He had full authority and decisive will in all that he desired and ordered concerning his family — he could kill them, if he so wished, without anybody lifting a finger to restrain him. The females of the family — wife, dauther and sister — were in a worse condition than the male members, even than their own sons. The women were not a part of society; their complaints were not heard, their dealings were not recognized and they could not interfere in social affairs. But the men, like brothers and sons, even the adopted ones (adoption and affiliation of children to other than their real fathers was a common practice in Roman society as well as in Greek, Iranian and

Arabian) could be granted independence in their affairs by the master of the house.

The females were not a part of the household. The men were the members of the family, and the women were their appendage. Any formal relationship, giving the right of inheritance, etc., was reserved for between the males. The women had no formal relationships — neither between themselves like mother with daughter, or sister with sister, nor between themselves and the men like wife with husband, mother with son, sister with brother or daughter with father. And there was no mutual right of inheritance except where there was the formal relationship. Of course, the natural relationship was not denied, and some consequences of that half-hearted acceptance were the prohibition of marriage between close relations in many societies, and the guardianship of the master of the house over her women.

In short, woman, in their eyes, was a parasite, completely dependent in her social and domestic life; the rein of her life and her will was in the hands of the master of the household — her father if she was with him, or husband if she lived with him, or others. The master could do with her whatever he wished, and decide about her as he thought fit. He sold her, gifted her away, loaned her to others for sexual enjoyment, gave her in repayment of debt, rent or taxes. He punished her by beating and even killing her. He had the authority to administer her property if she got hold of any through marriage or if she earned it with the permission of her master; but not through inheritance because she had no such right. Her father or other male relatives gave her in marriage and her husband had the right to dissolve the marriage.

The custom of the Greeks in the composition of the household and the mastership of the males was almost identical with the Romans. Their social and domestic organization was made up of the males; the females were their dependants. They had no independence in their will or action except under the guardianship of men. But there was a surprising contradiction in that system: if there was any decision to be taken against the woman, she was treated as an independent person, and if there was any judgement in her favour, she was a dependant of men — provided such orders were of benefit to the men. Thus, the woman was punished for all her faults and crimes as though she were independent, but she was never rewarded for her good work except under guardianship of her man.

This shows that these legal systems did not think that woman was a part of human society, not even a weaker part dependent on others; instead, they treated her as a harmful bacterium which disturbed society and damaged its health; but there was the unavoidable reality that she was needed to continue the human race; therefore it was necessary to look after her. Even then she should be punished if she made a mistake or committed a crime; and her rewards should be given to the man when she did a good work. She was not to be left to do as she liked; otherwise, society would come to harm. In this she was like a powerful enemy who has been defeated, caught and enslaved; he lives his long life under duress; if he does any wrong he is punished, but if he does a good deed he is not thanked.

As society, according to their thinking, was made up of the men only, they believed that the progeny in reality consisted of male children only, and the family could continue only when there was a male child to carry it on. This belief was the basis of the system of the adoption of sons. The house which had no male child was thought to be ruined, and such a family was deemed extinct and dead. No wonder then that they had to adopt others' sons as their own to save the family from extinction. Such adopted sons were treated as legitimate, legally recognized sons, having mutual rights of inheritance, and subject to all the rules and customs concerning natural sons. When a man thought himself to be sterile, he brought one of his relatives like a brother or a brother's son to sleep with his wife, so that she could conceive by that relative, and the son born thereof would be called his own son, and the family would continue.

Marriage and divorce in Greece was like the Roman system. They could marry more than one wife, but only one of the wives would be officially recognized; others were unofficial.

WOMAN IN ARABIA: THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE QUR'ĀN WAS REVEALED

The Arabs lived in the Arabian peninsula, an infertile land with an extremely hot climate. Most of them belonged to nomadic tribes far away from any civilization; they lived on raid and plunder. Their

neighbours were Iran on the one side, Rome (the Byzantine Empire) on the other and Ethiopia and Sudan on the third.

As a result of this geography, most of their customs and traditions were barbarous, and traces could be found in them of some Roman and Iranian traditions, as well as some Indian and ancient Egyptian customs.

The Arabs did not accord any independence to the woman in her life; nor did she have any honour or dignity except that of her family. She was not entitled to inheritance. A man could marry as many wives as he desired; there was no restriction on divorce. Daughters were buried alive. This wicked custom was started by Banū Tamīm when many of their daughters were made captive after a war against Nu'mān ibn Mundhir. This disturbed them very much and they started burying their daughters alive. Gradually the practice was adopted by other tribes. When a daughter was born, the father thought it a disgrace and hid himself from others' eyes. On the other hand, his joy knew no bounds when he got news that a son was born — the more the better, even if the son was an adopted one. They gladly affiliated to themselves the son born as a result of their adultery. Sometimes, when many people slept with one woman in one month and a son was born, every one of them claimed him for himself and often than not, this led to dispute and conflicts.

Even then, it was seen in some families that their women had some freedom, and especially the daughters were free in matrimonial affairs, their consent and choice was respected and accepted. In this they were influenced by Iranian upper class society.

Anyhow, their treatment of women was a mixture of the civilized systems of Rome and Iran (not giving them any independent rights, not allowing them to participate in public affairs like government and war, except in exceptional cases) and the barbarous systems of primitive nomads. The women were deprived of many human rights, but not because the master of the house was a sacred person deserving to be worshipped. It was simply a matter of the stronger party subjugating and exploiting the weaker one.

So far as worship was concerned, all of them (men and women both) worshipped idols, as was also done by the aṣ-Ṣābi'īn, the worshippers of stars etc. Every tribe had its own idol made according to its liking and preference. They also worshipped the celestial bodies and the angels

(whom they thought to be the daughters of Allāh!) and made idols representing them according to their own fancy. The idols were made of various materials, often of stone and wood, though Banū Ḥanīfah are reported to have made their idol from flour. They worshipped it for a long time, then came a time of famine, so they ate it. A poet says about it:

The (tribe of) *Ḥanīfah ate its lord,*
At the time of hardship and famine.
They did not fear their lord,
About (its) *evil consequences and effect.*

Sometimes they worshipped a stone; then if a more beautiful stone came to hand, the first one was thrown away and replaced by the second one. If nothing suitable was found, they took a double handful of earth, brought a sheep or goat and milked it over that mound of earth. Then they started going round it and worshipping it.

Such deprivation and misery created in woman's mind a weakness which made her an easy prey to superstition and credulity. Books of history and anthropology have recorded how she fell into error whenever she tried to explain natural phenomena and simple events.

This in short, was the condition of woman in human society in various eras before the advent of Islam. It may be seen from above that:

First: Men thought that women were human beings, but on the level of dumb animals, or with very weak and low grade human qualities, who could not be trusted if set free. The first was the view of primitive people, and the second, of others.

Second: Society did not accord her the status of a member; and she was not considered an integral part of humanity. For primitives, she was one of the necessities of life like a home and accomodation. For civilized people, she was a captive and dependdant on her masters who took advantage of her labour and always remained alert lest she escaped or cheated.

Third: Both types of societies deprived her of all common rights; she was given only that much which was necessary for her exploitation by men.

Fourth: They treated her as a strong person treats a weakling. In other words, the basis of their dealings with her was exploitation. In addition, civilized nations believed that she was a weak human being, incapable of independently looking after herself, and who could not be

trusted in any matter.

Different nations and tribes had different ways, and sometimes customs and beliefs were mixed; also there were variations in the degrees and grades of the above treatment.

WHAT ISLAM BROUGH FOR WOMAN

Woman had to undergo patiently the above-mentioned treatment, which imprisoned her in the dungeon of humiliation and disgrace. Consequently, weakness and inferiority became her second nature; she was brought up in this environment and lived and died in it. Ultimately, the word 'woman' became synonymous with 'weakness' and 'insignificance' — not only in the conversation of men but even in the language of women themselves.

Look at any society, primitive or civilized, and you will find adages and proverbs reflecting on woman's feebleness and unimportance. Take any two or more languages of different origins and unrelated developments, and you will find one thing in common: allegories, metaphors and similes connected with the word 'woman' to scold a coward, to rebuke a weakling and to chide a contemptible and despised person. An Arab poet said:

I do not know (*and would that I knew*),
Whether the family of Ḥiṣn are people or women.

Such expressions may be seen in hundreds and thousands in every language.

These idioms and expressions were enough to show what human society believed about women, even if there were nothing recorded in the books of history and culture, because the ideas and ideals of a nation may clearly be gleaned from its language.

The only thing showing any consideration and care towards her is found in a few sentences of the Torah and in the admonition of Jesus to have mercy on her.

Then came Islam, the religion of truth and monotheism, accompanied by the Qur'ān. Islam originated and initiated in her favour a system which the world had never known before, from the early dawn of humanity. It set forth straight away against the dictum of the whole

world, and rebuilt, for her, her natural place, which the world had completely destroyed, from the very beginning. It cancelled and dismissed as baseless their belief about her identity and their practice concerning her treatment.

HER IDENTITY: Islam declared that woman is as much a human being as man is. Every person, male or female, is a human being, whose substance and ingredients combinedly originate from two human beings — one male and one female, and no one has any superiority over the other except through piety. Allāh says: *O you people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is one among you who guards* (him/her self) *most* (against evil) ; *surely Allāh is Knowing, Aware* (49:13). Allāh clearly says that every human being originates and is made from two human beings, a male and a female, and they both jointly and in equal degree are the source of his existence; and everyone, male or female, is a combination of the substances taken from those two. Note that Allāh did not say as the Arab poet had said: ‘‘And surely the mothers of the people are but receptacles’’. Nor did He say like another poet:

Our sons are (those who are) *the*
sons of our sons; and as for our daughters,
Their sons are the sons of distant men.

Instead He (Allāh) declared that every one was created jointly from both male and female. All were, therefore, similar to each other. There could be no declaration more complete and more appropriate. Finally, He declared that being a male or a female or being born in a certain family or tribe is not the criterion of superiority. Superiority originates only from piety.

Also, Allāh has said: . . . *that I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other* . . . (3:195).

Here it is clearly said that endeavour is not repulsed and work is not wasted. And why? Because the one of you is from the other. This verse in this way clearly says what was implied in the words of the previous verse, ‘‘surely We have created you of a male and a female’’: The man and the woman together are a single species, without any difference in their origin and root. He goes on to say that the work of anyone from

these two groups is not wasted before Allāh; it will not be neglected, nor will its reward be given to another person; every soul is mortgaged against its own endeavours. It is not as the people have said, that women were responsible for their mistakes, but so far as their good work was concerned, its reward should be given to the men.

Every male and every female shall get what he or she does, and there is no superiority except of piety. The virtues are a part of piety like faith with its various degrees, beneficial knowledge, balanced wisdom, good character, patience and forbearance. Therefore, a believing woman (in various stages of the faith), or a learned and wise one, or one who is of noble character, will be superior in her own right, and higher in grade than those men, whosoever, who are not equal to her in these virtues. Because there is no superiority except of piety and noble character.

There are other verses of the same meaning, and rather more clear. Allāh says:

> *Whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did* (16:97).
>
> *. . . and whoever does good, whether male or female and he is a believer, these shall enter the garden in which they shall be given sustenance without measure* (40:40).
>
> *And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female and he is a believer, these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly* (4:124).

And Allāh has condemned their desdain of the daughters in these words (and it is the most telling condemnation):

> *And when a daughter is announced to one of them his face becomes black and he is full of wrath. He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which is announced to him. Should he keep it with disgrace or bury it* (alive) *in the dust? Now surely evil is what they judge* (16:58 — 59).

Obviously they hid themselves because they thought that a daughter was a disgrace for the father. They thought that she would soon reach marriageable age and would become a toy in the hands of her husband who would use her for sexual enjoyment — a shameful thing; and this

shame would effect her family and her father; it was, therefore, better to bury her alive. (The original reason of this custom has already been described.) Allāh severely condemned this practice in these word: *And when the buried alive shall be asked for what sin she was killed* (81:8-9).

There has remained a residue of such superstitions among Muslims, a legacy of their pagan ancestors, which has not been washed away from their hearts. You will see them thinking that illicit sexual relations are a shame and disgrace for the woman (even if she repents) but not for the man (even if he continues in that sin) ; while Islam has declared that disgrace and evil belongs to the sin in which the man and the woman were equal partners.

HER VALUE IN SOCIETY: Islam has made the man and the woman equal in their will and action so far as the management of their lives is concerned. Allāh said: *The one of you being from the other* (3:195). She is independent in her will and intention and independent in her action. The woman owns the products of her own will and action as the man owns his own without any difference whatsoever. *For her is the benefit of what she earns, and on her is the responsibility of what she does.*

According to Islam both are equal; the Qur'ān confirms it and Allāh shows the truth to be the truth by His words. Side by side, Islam recognizes two special qualities in her, by which the Creator has distinguished her from the man: First, she is like a tilth for the creation and propagation of the human race. The species cannot exist without her. This distinction calls for some special rules concerning her life. Second, she has a comparatively delicate body and a sensitive perception. This has a tangible effect on her life and on the social and domestic responsibilities entrusted to her.

This is her value in human society — and also the value of the man may be understood from it. These two distinctions are the basis of all the rules that are common to both groups and of those that are reserved for either of the two. Allāh says: *And do not covet that by which Allāh has made some of you excel others; men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn; and ask Allāh of His grace; surely Allāh knows all things* (4:32). It shows that the contribution made by each group to society is the criterion of the excellence granted to it. And it is this excellence which gives special status to one in comparison to the other. For example, man has been

given preference over woman in the share of inheritance; while woman has been given preference over man by being exempted from the responsibilities of maintenance. And no one should covet the preference given to someone else.

There is another type of excellence which results from the deeds of the doer, whoever he or she might be. For example, the virtues of faith, knowledge, reason, piety and other admirable qualities. And it is the grace of Allāh, He gives it to whomsoever He wishes, and ask Allāh of His grace.

The proof of the above statement is found in the words of Allāh, following the above-mentioned verse: *Men are the maintainers of women . . .* (3:34).

COMMON AND SPECIAL RULES: Woman, like man, is subject to all the rules concerning worship and social rights. She may act independently in all matter in which man is free to act, like inheritance, earning, dealings with other people, learning, teaching, making a claim, defending her rights, and so on. In all such affairs, Islam makes no discrimination between man and woman.

Of course, in other matters it has limited her sphere of activity, because of her natural characteristics. For example, she may not be made a ruler or a Qāḍī, she is exempted from participation in fighting, although she may attend the *jihād* and be entrusted with its other responsibilities, like nursing and treating the wounded soldiers; and she gets half the share of man in inhertance. She has to hide her body and the places of adornment; she has to obey her husband so far as his conjugal rights are concerned. To compensate these burdens, she is exempted from her own maintenance; it is her father or husband who must maintain her, and they are also obliged to protect her to their utmost ability, and she has the right to bring up her children. Islam has also enjoined that her person and honour must be protected — her name may not be used in an undignified manner. Also, she is exempted from worship during her monthly period and after delivery. In short, Islam says that in all conditions and in every way she should be treated with ternderness and kindness.

What she is obliged to learn and do, in brief, is as follows: On the side of learning, she must know the fundamentals of the faith and the commandments of the *sharī'ah* concerning worship and civil rules. And on the side of action, she must follow the rules of the religion and obey

her husband by giving him his conjugal rights.

But she is not obliged to earn her livelihood by any employment, handicrafts or artisanship. Nor she is obliged to take up the drudgery of domestic work. Similarly, it is not her duty to burden herself with what is considered useful for the general welfare of the society, like learning various disciplines (other than those mentioned earlier) or participating in useful industries or handicrafts.

She is not obliged to do so. But if she acquires such extra knowledge or looks after her domestic arrangements or affairs useful for the society, it will be regarded as her extra excellence, provided she keeps within the limits imposed upon her by the *sharī'ah.* It will be a matter of pride for her. Islam has allowed, nay, encouraged her to boast of such achievements before her compatriots, although it has forbidden the men to boast (except in *jihād*).

The traditions of the Prophet support what we have said. Space does not allow full details; otherwise, we would have liked to describe how the Prophet lived with his wife, Khadījah, and his daughter, Fāṭimah, as well as with his other wives; and how he behaved with the women of his community and what he said and enjoined about women. Also, we would have quoted the traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* and their women like Zaynab (d/o 'Alī), Fāṭimah and Sakīnah (ds/o Husayn) and others, and what they said about women. Perhaps we will get a chance to quote some of them in the traditions connected with the verses concerning woman.

THE FOUNDATION: The foundation upon which these rules have been built is nature. It may be understood from the explanation under the heading, ''Her value in the Society''. Further, details are as follows:

The scholars of social sciences will no doubt agree with the premise that the duties imposed by society should be based upon natural abilities and demands. It is nature which has led human beings to this collective social life from the earliest dawn of humanity. Of course, a certain society may at times deviate from the natural course. As the body, by deviating from its natural way, looses its health and becomes sick, likewise, a society, by astraying from natural dictates, deteriorates into chaos.

Society, healthy or sick, is thus based on nature; although a sick society has been contaminated by extraneous and harmful elements

during its progress.

This fact has been mentioned, or alluded to, by scholars of social sciences. And the Book of Allāh, long before these researches, has explained it in the most excellent style: *Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation, then guided it* (20:50); *Who created, then made complete, and Who made* (things) *according to a measure, then guided* (87:2—3); *And* (I swear by) *the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it* (91:7-8).

These and other such verses show that all things, including human beings, are guided to what they have been created for; and that they have been equipped with what is needed to reach their goal. The blissful life is that which conforms perfectly with the dictates of nature. It has been pointed out in these words of Allāh: *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion — the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no alteration* (by anyone else) *in the creation of Allāh; that is the established religion* . . . (30:30).

So far as social norms are concerned, nature demands that all individuals should have equal rights and duties. It does not approve of giving one more than his due and oppressing another by depriving him of his rights. But this equality does not mean that every individual should be offered every responsibility and every office. It would be wrong, for example, for a young inexperienced man to be given the place of a well-experienced official, or for an idiot to be given the chair of a professor; or to expect from a weakling the performance of a strong and brave person. If we treat capable and incapable persons equally, it will be harmful to both.

What is then the meaning of this equality? It means that every person should be given his right and put in his proper place. This equality between individuals and groups implies that each shall get his due rights without any let or hindrance; no right shall be usurped or denied unjustly. The following words of Allāh point to it:

. . . and they have rights similar to those upon them in a just manner, and for the men is (the right) *a degree above them* . . . This verse ordains equality between the rights of both groups at the same time as it shows the difference between both.

Both groups, men and women, share equally in the basic gifts of thinking and will (which in their turn create free choice). She should,

therefore, be equally free in her thought and will and should have free choice. In other words, she should be free to look after her life's affairs — as well as social, except where there is any genuine reason to the contrary. Islam gave her this freedom and independence in full measure, as has been explained earlier. She, thus, became, by the grace of Allāh, an independent personality, unfettered in her will and action by men and their guardianship. She got what the world had denied her throughout all her existence since the beginning of humanity and which was unheard of in all her history. Allāh says: *There is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a proper manner* (2:234).

But while sharing these basic qualities with man, she differs from him in other ways. An average woman lags behind an average man in the build of her body and its basic organs, like the brain, the heart, the veins, the nerves, her height and weight. (The details may be seen in any book of anatomy.) As a result, her body is comparatively soft and elegant, while a man's is tough and rough. And the fine sentiments, like love, tender-heartedness, and inclination towards beauty and adornment are more pronounced in her than in man. On the other hand, the reasoning power is more prominent in man than in woman. The woman lives a sentimental life; the man an intellectual one.

It was for this reason, that Islam differentiated between men and women in those duties and responsibilities which were related to reason and those related to sentiment. Ruling, judging and fighting have been reserved for man, because these things are closely related to reasoning and thinking. And the bringing up of, and looking after, the children, the domestic management has been reserved for woman. Her maintenance is the responsibility of her husband, for which he is compensated by a double share in inheritance.

Look at the division of inheritance in this way: It is as though inheritance is divided in two equal shares. Then one-third of the woman's share is given to the man in lieu of her maintenance. Thus the man gets two-thirds of the estate and the woman is left with one-third. But the expenses of her maintenance are not less than that of a man. In this way, she gets the benefit of the man's two-thirds share in equal measure. (One-third's benefit goes to her while the man gets the benefit of the remaining one-third.) The nett result is that the man gets two-thirds in species while

the woman gets two-thirds in benefit. Man has been given more to manage, because reasoning is his predominant characteristic; woman has been bestowed with more to benefit from and enjoy, because feeling and sentiment is more pronounced in her nature. (This topic will be explained under the verses of inheritance.) Then Allāh completed His grace and bounty to women by giving them the concessions and exemptions mentioned earlier.

QUESTION: The above-mentioned clemency granted in Islam to woman makes her idle. When she is told to hide herself from strangers and is guaranteed all the necessities of life (by transferring its burden onto man) she is bound to become slow, lazy, idle and unproductive; she will not be able to exert herself in difficult works and professions. Thus her growth will be retarded and her progress will turn into backwardness; she will not be able to contribute meaningfully in making society perfect. And experience is an irrefutable proof of this aspect.

REPLY: It is one thing to ordain laws to improve the conditions of humanity; and a completely separate thing to enforce these laws through exemplary character and good upbringing (which leads humanity to progress). It was the tragedy of Islam in the past that it did not get good rulers and striving guardians. Consequently, the laws were suffocated, upbringing halted and then turned in the opposite direction. Irrefutable experience shows that mere theories and beliefs do not produce the desired result, unless, and until, they are ingrained in the soul by exhortation and good training and example. The Muslims in their long history could not take any good example to follow from their rulers, who usurped full authority over them. Look at Mu‘āwiyah speaking on the pulpit of Iraq after taking over the caliphate: ‘‘I did not fight you to make you pray or fast — this is your own affair. I fought you only to become your ruler, and this I have now become.’’ Also look at other caliphs from the Umayyid and ‘Abbāsid dynasties and other rulers after them. All of them were of the same type. And had it not been that this religion gets its light from the light of Allāh which cannot be extinguished (and Allāh is to complete His light even if the unbelievers dislike it), judgement would have been pronounced against the Muslims long ago.

THE FREEDOM OF WOMEN IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION

There is no doubt whatsoever that Islam was the first to release woman from her bondage and to grant her freedom of will and action. All the slogans of the emancipation of woman raised in western countries are an echo of the clarion call of Islam. These nations in this matter are just following the lead given by Islam — even though they have made mistakes in this endeavour. The principle laid down by Islam is a perfectly circular ring, and nothing can be added to, or substracted from, this circle without distrubing the whole alignment.

These people tried to improve upon the masterpiece of Islam, and decided to create complete equality between man and woman in all rights and privileges. This was done after long agitations and demands. They did not pause to ponder that woman lags behind man in many powers and faculties.

They explain away the inherent weakness of the woman by attributing it to the defective training and upbringing to which she has been subjected since time immemorial (perhaps, since the beginning of humanity) even though she was equal to man in all her natural potentials.

But it may be asked that if the natural potentials of both groups were the same, why did society since the dawn of humanity decide to oppress her? Why and how did man succeeded in subjugating her in the first place? And why has this oppression never changed its course?

Western civilization, in spite of its keen desire to emancipate woman, has not succeeded in doing so. The data collected show that woman is far behind man in all those professions and activities which Islam has reserved for man, like ruling, judging and military service.

And as to what has been the fruit of this endeavour, the less said the better.

A DISCUSSION ABOUT MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Marriage is one of the fundamental sociological institutions. Mankind, since its very beginning, has been keeping to it without any disruption. Such an institution must have been based on the foundation of nature itself.

Islam has based its matrimonial laws on the correlation between masculinity and femininity. There is no need to emphasize that this complementary system created in man and woman — and it is the most intricate and interrelated system permeating their whole bodies — was not created in vain and without purpose. The male by his nature is attracted to the female and vice versa. And this system has only one goal in sight: reproduction and the continuity of the race. Marriage is based on this reality; and all its rules revolve around this axis. That is why Islam in its matrimonial laws has kept in view the fundamental principle of sexual interrelation; and on this principle are based the laws concerning chastity and conjugal rights; exclusive attachment of the wife to the husband and the rules of divorce and *'iddah;* legitimacy and parentage, the custody and upbringing of the children; inheritance and other related subjects.

Modern non-Islamic laws have laid the fondation of matrimony on a co-operation between husband and wife in their struggle for life. Marriage accordingly, is a co-operative institution much narrower than other such institutions like municipality etc.

It is for this reason that modern laws do not pay any attention to the rules of chastity etc., which are an integral part of the matrimonial laws of Islam.

This basis, co-operation in life, has given rise to a vast multitude of social problems and domestic upheavals. Apart from that, it is not in conformity with the realities of creation and nature. Why does a man want to join others and co-operate with them? It is because his well-being depends on countless things and innumerable actions which he alone cannot get and do. He is by necessity obliged to join hands with others. Consequently each person co-operates with the others, dividing labour and work according to their aptitudes. And all the required work is completed with their joint effort.

This development requires co-operation between any two persons — it does not specifically call for co-operation between a man and a woman. Therefore, building the edifice of matrimony is fundamentally wrong. Nature has based it on the need of procreation and not on social or domestic co-operation. Otherwise, there would not have been any need of any special laws for marriage; the general rules governing association and co-operation would have been enough. It would negate the virtue of chastity and fidelity, nullify the concept of legitimacy and affinity, and

abrogate the rules of inheritance — as communism has done. If we accept this ultimate result of the western philosophy of marriage, we would have to accept that all this complicated and interrelated system in the bodies of man and woman was created without any purpose.

This is a short review of the Islamic and western philosophies of marriage. More explanation will be given in some other relevant place.

So far as divorce is concerned, it is a thing which the *sharī'ah* of Islam should be proud of. It has been made lawful and this legalization also is based on nature. There is nothing in nature to interdict it. Details of the conditions of its validity will be given in the chapter of ''Divorce'' (chap.55). Here it should be noted that today all the nations of the world (not excepting the Roman Catholic countries) have had to adopt this system in their civil codes, even though previously they ridiculed Islam on this account.

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أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَـٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ - ٢٤٣ .

Did you not see those who went forth from their homes, and they were (in) *thousands, for fear of death; then Allāh said to them ''Die'';* (and) *afterwards He gave them life; most surely Allāh is Gracious to people, but most people thank* (Him) *not* (2:243).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *Did you not see those who went forth from their homes, and they were* (in) *thousands, for fear of death:* ''To see'', in this verse means ''to know''. It implies that the thing described here is so obvious that to know it is to see it. Other examples of this expression are: *Did you not see that Allāh created the heavens and the earth with truth?* (14:19); *Did you not see how Allāh has created the seven heavens one above another?* (71:15).

az-Zamakhsharī has said that the phrase ''Did you not see'' is an idiom used to express wonder and astonishment. It implies, ''Are you not surprised that . . .'' *''ḥadhara 'l-mawt''* (حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ) may mean 'for fear of death ' (as translated here) ; or it may mean, 'they were afraid

of death, a great fearing'.

QUR'ĀN: *Then Allāh said to them ''Die '';* (and) *afterwards He gave them life:* The order was 'creative', not 'legislative'. It does not mean that they did not die of a 'natural' cause, as the traditions say that they died of the plague.

Instead of saying, 'Then Allāh gave them death and afterwards gave them life', Allāh used this expression, because it more forcefully shows the effectiveness of His order and supreme domination of His power. The use of the imperative mood in matters of creation is a more forceful style; likewise, it is more eloquent and emphatic to use a news style while ordaining a legislation (''you shall not take other's property unjustly'').

''Afterwards He gave them life'' implies that they were raised from death to life, and that they remained alive for some time. Had they been resurrected just as an example and warning for others, or to complete the proof, or to explain some other reality, Allāh would have pointed it out, as is customary in the Qur'ān. (See, for example, the story of the people of the Cave.)

Moreover, the next sentence, ''most surely Allāh is Gracious to people'', also shows that they were not raised for only a short time.

QUR'ĀN: *But most people thank* (Him) *not*. The repetition of the word ''people'' here (instead of pronoun) reflects on the low level of their thinking. Moreover, the word ''people'' in the preceding sentence (''most surely Allāh is Gracious to people'') refers to the particular group that was raised from dead; while in this sentence it stands for the whole of mankind.

This verse has some connection with the next verses which describe the importance of *jihād,* fighting in the way of Allāh — *jihād* also gives a new life to the nation when it is dead.

A commentator has said that this verse is a parable to illustrate the condition of the *ummah* — how it remains backward and dies when foreigners bring it under their yoke and keep it under their rule and domination, and how later on it rises to defend its rights and snatches its freedom from that colonial power; and thus becomes alive again. The following is the gist of his argument : —

''The verse does not refer to any historical event of either the Israelites (as many traditions say) or others (as some others say).

Otherwise, it would have been essential to mention that it happened in this or that nation, or to disclose the name of the prophet concerned, as the Qur'ān invariably does in all its stories. Moreover, the Torah also does not mention it in the history of the prophet Hezekial (a.s.). This proves that the traditions narrated in this connection are from Jewish mythology which were taken over by the Muslims.

''Apart from that, there is only one death and one life in this world, as is shown by the Qur'ānic words: *They shall not taste therein* (i.e., in the Paradise) *death except the first death* (44:56). *They* (i.e., the inmates of Fire) *shall say: ''Our Lord! Twice didst Thou make us subject to death, and twice hast Thou given us life''* (40:11). Therefore, there cannot be two lives in this world.

''Obviously, the verse is a parable: A nation was attacked by powerful enemies, who humiliated and subjugated them. The enslaved nation did not defend its freedom and went out of their homes, even though they were in thousands, in great numbers, but they were afraid of death. Thereupon Allāh said to them, ''Die, the death of disgrace and ignorance''. Because ignorance and inertia is death, as knowledge and self-respect is life. Allāh says: *O you who believe ! Answer* (the call of) *Allāh and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life* (8:24). *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth?* (6:122).

''The nation died, that is, they were disgraced and overcame by their enemies and remained in that condition. Afterwards, Allāh again gave them life, by inspiring them to rise against their oppressors and to defend their rights. So, they stood up and drove their oppressors out and became independent. Those were the people to whom Allāh gave life a second time, although so far as their identity was concerned, they were not the same people who had died the death of disgrace. But as both groups were of the same nation, Allāh counted them as one people who first died and then were raised to life again. Allāh has used similar expressions in various places in the Qur'ān. For example, He says, addressing the Jews of the Prophet's time: *And We delivered you from Pharaoh's people who subjected you to severe torment* (7:141). *Then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks* (2:56).

‘‘Lastly, if this verse were not taken as a parable, it would have no connection with the verses following it, which are about fighting in the way of Allāh.’’

This interpretation is based on some patently false premises:

First: It is based on the rejection of miracles, or at least some miracles, like giving life to the dead. But we have proved the existence of miracles. Moreover, here we are dealing with the Qur’ān, and the Qur’ān loudly declares the existence of miracles, like raising the dead, etc. Even if we fail to prove such miracles through intellectual reasoning, the irrefutable fact remains that the Qur’ān believes in them.

Second: It claims that the Qur’ān proves the impossibility of more than one life in this world. But the verses describing the raising of dead (in the stories of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Īsā and ‘Uzayr) clearly and definitely prove that dead animals and persons were again raised to life in this world.

Moreover, a life in this world is not to be counted as two lives simply because a death intervenes in between. The story of ‘Uzayr is clear on this point: He remained dead for a hundred years; but on raising again he was not even aware of that death.

Third: It is a false assumption that the Qur’ān ought to have identified the nation or the prophet concerned, if it were the narration of a real event.

The style of speech differs according to its time, place and context. Sometimes details are given; on other occasions only a passing reference is made. For example, the Qur’ān refers to a people (without identifying them in any way): *Cursed be the fellows of the ditch of the fire* (kept burning) *with fuel, when they sat by it, while they were witnesses of what they did with the believers* (85:4 — 7). *And of those whom We have created are a people who guide with the truth and thereby do justice* (7:181).

Fourth: The claim that if this verse were not a parable it would have no connection with the subsequent verses, has no meaning at all.

The Qur’ān was revealed little by little, and there is no need to search for any connection between two adjacent verses unless they are clearly in one context and obviously revealed all together.

The truth is that the verse narrates a real event.

What style, eloquence and force would be in a verse which most of

the hearers believe to be a real event, while in reality it is but a parable having no factual basis at all.

Moreover, it is an invariable habit of the Qur'ān to distinguish a simile or parable from other modes of expression. For example: *Their parable is like the parable of one who . . .* (2:17). *The likeness of this world's life is only as . . .* (10:24). *The similitude of those who were placed under the Torah . . .* (62:5) and so on.

TRADITIONS

It is reported in *al-Iḥtijāj* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said, inter alia, in a tradition: ''Allāh made alive again a people who left their homes fleeing from the plague; they were innumerable. So Allāh gave them death for a long time until their bones decayed, their limbs disintegrated and they all became dust. Then Allāh sent a prophet, named Hezekiel, at a time when He wished to show him His creation. So He called them, and their bodies re-composed and their souls returned, and they stood up in the same shape as they had died, not a single one was missing from their group. Then they lived after that for a long time.

The author says: This interpretation has been narrated by al-Kulaynī and al-'Ayyāshī in some detail, and at the end of that tradition are the words, ''and about them was revealed this verse.''

* * * * *

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٤٤. مَنْ ذَاالَّذِي يُقْرِضُ
اللهَ قَرْضاً حَسَناً فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافاً كَثِيرَةً وَاللهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ
ـ ٢٤٥ . أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيٍّ لَهُمُ
ابْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكاً نُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ
أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا
وَأَبْنَائِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلاً مِنْهُمْ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ـ ٢٤٦
وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكاً قَالُوا أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ
الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللهَ
اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٤٧. وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ
فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ـ ٢٤٨. فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ
قَالَ إِنَّ اللهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ
مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلاً مِنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ

وَالَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ
يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا اللهِ كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَاللهُ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ-٢٤٩ . وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا
وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ-٢٥٠ فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَقَتَلَ
دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللهِ
النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ
- ٢٥١ . تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ - ٢٥٢ .

And fight in the way of Allāh, and know that Allāh is Hearing, Knowing (244). *Who is it that will lend to Allāh a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold, and Allāh holds and extends and to Him you shall be returned* (245). *Did you not see the chiefs of the children of Israel after Mūsā, when they said to a prophet of theirs. ''Raise up for us a king* (that) *we may fight in the way of Allāh.'' He said: ''May it not be that if fighting is ordained for you, you would not fight?'' They said: ''And what reason have we that we should not fight in the way of Allāh, and we have indeed been turned out of our homes and our children.'' But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them, and Allāh knows the unjust* (246). *And their prophet said to them: ''Surely Allāh has raised Ṭālūt to be a king over you.'' They said: ''How can he hold kingship over us while we have a greater right to kingship than he, and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth?'' He said: ''Surely Allāh has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique, and Allāh grants His Kingdom to whom He pleases, and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing''* (247). *And their prophet said to them: ''Surely the sign of his kingship is, that there shall come to you the Ark in which there is tranquillity from your Lord and residue of the relics of what the family of Mūsā*

and the family of Hārūn have left, the angels bearing it, most surely there is a sign in this for those who believe'' (248). *So when Ṭālūt departed with the forces, he said: ''Surely Allāh will try you with a stream; whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me, except he who takes with his hand as much* (of it) *as fills his hand;'' but with the exception of a few of them they drank from it. So when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said: ''We have today no power against Goliath and his forces.'' Those who thought that they would meet their Lord said: ''How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allāh's permission, and Allāh is with the patient ones''* (249). *And when they went out against Goliath and his forces they said: ''Our Lord, pour down upon us patience, and make out feet firm and help us against the unbelieving people''* (250). *So they routed them by Allāh's permission and Dāwūd slew Goliath, and Allāh gave him kingship and wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but Allāh is Gracious to the creatures* (251). *These are the signs of Allāh: We recite them to you with truth; and most surely you are* (one) *of the apostles* (252).

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

All these verses were obviously revealed together. The connection between the obligation of fighting, the exhortation of a goodly loan to Allāh and the moral of the story of Ṭālūt, Dāwūd and Goliath needs no explanation. The import of the verses is to show how fighting in the way of Allāh strengthens the collective life, what the spirit is by which a nation goes forward in its worldly and religious life, and what gives it its real happiness and felicity. Allāh declares that *jihād* is obligatory for the

Muslims, calls them to spend in His way, by contributing in preparation for war so that their military power increases and they are ready for their enemies. This spending has been called ‘‘lending to Allāh’’ because it is done in His way. Also, it very forcefully exhorts the hearers to spend in His way to gain nearness to Him. Then comes the story of Ṭālūt, Dāwūd and Goliath, so that the believers who are told to fight should take lessons from it. The moral is that the kingdom and victory belong to faith and piety, even if its adherents be small in number; and defeat and destruction is the fare of hypocrisy and sin, even if its followers be numerous. See how the Israelites lived in disgrace and servitude as long as they remained inert and idle, and were too lazy to do anyting to improve their condition. But when they stood up to fight in the way of Allāh and sought help from the word of truth, Allāh helped them to vanquish their enemy, even though only a few of them were really truthful. Look at the majority of them turning back when fighting was prescribed for them, and objecting to the appointment of Ṭālūt, and drinking from the stream, and saying that they had no strength to fight against Goliath and his armies. In spite of all these shortcomings Allāh made them victorious; they vanquished their enemy by the permission of Allāh; Dāwūd slew Goliath and kingdom was established in them. They were given a new life and their power and sovereignity came back to them. It was not but because of a word which faith and piety made them utter when they stood before Goliath and his forces: ‘‘Our Lord, pour down upon us patience and make our feet firm and help us against the unbelieving people.’’ Thus should the believers follow in the footsteps of the good people of previous nations, because they shall have the upper hand if they are believers.

COMMENTARY

QUR’ĀN: *And fight in the way of Allāh:* It makes fighting obligatory and compulsory. Here and everywhere in the Qur’ān, the order of fighting has the stipulation, ‘‘in the way of Allāh’’. It is to forestall any possible misunderstanding that this important religious duty was ordained to establish the worldly domination of the Muslims over other nations and to

spread the kingdom of the Muslim's — as many modern Muslim scholars think. The proviso, ''in the way of Allāh'', shows that this order was given to spread the domination of religion, by which the people could prosper in both worlds.

QUR'ĀN: *And know that Allāh is Hearing, Knowing:* It is a warning to the believers — they should not utter a single word against any order given by Allāh and His apostle, nor should they dislike in their hearts any such order as the hypocrites do. They should not be like the Israelites when they first objected about Ṭālūt, saying, ''How can he hold kingship over us . . .'', and then said, ''We have today no power against Goliath and his forces'', and retreated and turned away when fighting was prescribed for them, and drank from the stream after Ṭālūt had forbidden them to do so.

QUR'ĀN: *Who is it that will lend to Allāh a goodly loan, so that He will multiply it for him manifold:* The meaning of loan is wellknown. Allāh has named what is spent in His way as a loan to Himself, to exhort people to spend, and because it is done in His way, and also because it will surely be returned to them manifold.

The style has been changed from the imperative mood of previous verse (*And fight in the way of Allāh*) to the interrogative here (*Who is it that will lend?*) to refresh and enliven the mind of the audience — an order is always received with a feeling of helplessness, but not so an invitation and exhortation.

QUR'ĀN: And Allāh holds and extends and to Him you shall be returned: ''al-Qabḍ'' (القَبْضُ) is to hold a thing towards oneself. *al-basṭ* (البَسْطُ) is its opposite. *''al-Baṣṭ''* (البَصْطُ) is a rendering of *al-basṭ* — *'S'* (س) of which has been changed to *'Ṣ'* (ص) because it is joined to *'Ṭ'* (ط) which is pronounced with a full voice, and *Ṣ* also has a full voice.

This sentence mentions three attributes of Allāh: He holds, He extends and to Him all are to return. It is to remind the Muslims that whatever they spend, lending it to Him shall not be in vain, nor should they be surprised at how it will be increased manifold. Because Allāh holds and extends — He decreases whatever He pleases and increases whatever He pleases; and they are to return to Him, and then He will repay them th[e] said loan a goodly repayment.

QUR'ĀN: *Did you not see the chiefs of the children of Israel . . . in the way of Allāh: al Mala'* (المَلَاءُ) is said to mean a group of people

having the same opinion. It is derived from *al-mal'* (المَلَاءُ) to fill, because it fills the eyes by its greatness and prestige.

The request, ''Raise up for us a king (that) we may fight in the way of Allāh'', implies that the king, Goliath by name, had subjugated them and treated them so badly that they had lost all traces of a free life, like their homes and children. It happened after Allāh had saved them from the people of Pharaoh by raising among them Mūsā and making him their head, and after the rule of the successors of Mūsā had come to an end. Then the hardship increased to such an extent that their slumbering self-respect was awakened by the shock of it, and their elders went to a prophet of theirs asking him to raise for them a king to remove their internal differences and unite their power which had became ineffective because of disunity, so that they could fight under his command, in the way of Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''May it not be that if fighting is ordained for you, you would not fight?'':* The Israelites had asked their prophet to raise for them a king, so that they could fight under him in the way of Allāh. But it was not in the power of the prophet; it was the prerogative of Allāh. That is why the prophet attributed the appointment and the order of fighting to Allāh. But he did not mention the divine name clearly. In their reply he questioned them about their possible disobedience, and he knew by divine revelation that they would surely disobey. Therefore, he did not mention the name of Allāh clearly, but only indicated that the authority is from Him and of Him only. How did he indicate it? By using the word ''written'' (lit. transl.: ''if fighting is written on you'') ; and writing, in the meaning of ordaining, is done only by Allāh.

Although, the prophet knew that they would not obey the command of Allāh, he put this matter in the form of a question, so that the proof might be completed against them by their protests of sincerity, as their reply showed.

QUR'ĀN: *They said. ''And what reason have we that we should not fight in the way of Allāh, and we have indeed been turned out of our homes and our children'':* Their dispersal from their homes meant that they could not manage their affairs, as they had been sent away from their ancestral abode. Thus, ''turned out of our homes'' alludes to their

inability to look after their homes and to benefit from them. It is this meaning that justifies the use of this verb, ‘‘turned out of’’ in connection with children.

QUR’ĀN: *But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them, and Allāh knows the unjust:* It is an offshoot of their prophet’s question (*May it not be that . . . you would not fight?*) and their reply (*And what reason have we that we should not fight?*). The words, ‘‘And Allāh knows the unjust’’, show that the question of the prophet was based on divine revelation that they would surely turn away from fighting.

QUR’ĀN: *And their prophet said to them: ‘‘Surely Allāh has raised Ṭālūt . . . he has not been granted an abundance of wealth?’’:* The announcement, ‘‘Allāh has raised’’ was a reminder to them that they were mistaken in asking the prophet to raise a king for them so that they would fight. The prophet attributed this raising to Allāh to teach them that it was a prerogative of Allāh.

The declaration about Ṭālūt prompted them to protest. In their eyes, Ṭālūt had two defects, which made him unfit for kingship. The first ‘‘disqualification’’ was alluded to in their words narrated by Allāh: ‘‘How can he hold kingship over us while we have a greater right to kingship than he’’. They did not think it necessary to elaborate why they were more deserving; it means that it was an obvious thing. The fact is that the house of prophethood and the house of kingship were well-known among the Israelites — the two houses were highly respected because of these two graces of Allāh. And Ṭālūt was from neither. That is why they objected that they — the people of the house of kingship or both kingship and prophethood — had a greater right to kingship than Ṭālūt; Allāh had put kingship in their family, how could they accept its transfer to someone else?

This objection was a result of their belief that Allāh cannot abrogate or change any of His orders; they said: the hand of Allāh is tied up. (Their hands be shackled!) Their prophet replied to this objection when he said: ‘‘Surely Allāh has chosen him over you.’’

The second ‘‘disqualification’’ is described in their words, ‘‘and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth’’. Ṭālūt was a poor man. Their prophet replied to it by saying: ‘‘and He has increased him

abundantly in knowledge and physique''.

QUR'ĀN: *He said. ''Surely Allāh has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique '': al-Iṣṭifā'* (الاصْطِفَآءُ) and *al-istiṣfā'* (الاسْتِصْفَآءُ) means to choose. Its root is *aṣ-ṣafw* (الصَّفْوُ = clearness, choice) ; *al-basṭah* (البَسْطَةُ) is expansion and power. These sentences are the replies to their objections:

Objection 1: They had a greater right of kingship than Ṭālūt because they were from the chosen family.

Reply: It was a distinction given to their family by Allāh. Now that Allāh has chosen someone else, he has a greater right than they; and now his family will have precedence over theirs and he has become nobler and higher in rank than they. The superiority follows the choice of Allāh.

Objection 2: ''and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth''.

Reply: Kingship is establishment of supreme authority over a group of people. Its only purpose is to unite the people under one will and join them together by creating a relationship with all of them. Everyone shall progress on the road of perfection without colliding with one another. No one shall be given preference without justice; no one shall be kept behind without justice. In short, kingship was created so that the ruler should manage the society in such a way that every member might reach his deserved perfection. To achieve that object, the king must have two qualities: (1) Knowledge of all that is good for his people and all that is bad; (2) Physical strength to implement and enforce what he thinks is good for the people.

Allāh points this out in the words, ''and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique''. So far as wealth is concerned, to count it among the necessities of kingship is foolishness.

Then He concisely put all these arguments in one sentence: ''and Allāh grants His Kingdom to whom He pleases''. The kingdom belongs to Allāh alone; nobody has any right in it, except what Allāh bestows from it on any one. Even then it really belong to Allāh only — see how the word ''kingdom'' is qualified here by possessive pronoun ''His''. When you keep this reality in view, you will know that Allāh has full authority to do in His kingdom as He pleases and as He wills. Nobody

has any right to say 'why' or 'how'. One cannot ask why Allāh did this or that, because He is the Real cause; nor can one enquire how and by which means He did it, because Allāh is the Perfect cause and He does not need any supplementary causes. Therefore, the Israelites should not have asked why He transferred the kingdom from one family to another, or why He gave it to someone who had neither a big family nor abundant wealth.

It is true that Allāh bestows His bounty and grace as He wishes and upon whom He pleases. Still, it is not done at random or without reason. When we say, ''Allāh does what He wishes and gives His kingdom to whom He pleases'' we do not mean that Allāh does not have any object in view in His actions. Nor do we say that He acts haphazardly; that if there occurs any benefit from it, well and good, and if not, then what does it matter; -after all, the kingdom is His, He may do whatever He pleases. What we actually mean is this: Allāh is the final and real cause of every creation, with matter and without matter. Benefit and usefulness also, like all other things, are His creation. In view of this, Allāh, in His actions, cannot be governed by any aim and object, as we are; when He does a work (and whatever He does is good) or creates a thing (and whatever He creates is beautiful), His action is beneficial to His creatures. But He is not subservient to any benefit.

The above explanation serves to resolve the apparent contradiction in this verse: The authoritative declaration, ''Allāh grants His kingdom to whom He pleases'', seemingly cannot be reconciled with the reasons given earlier, ''He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique''. Had there been any discordance between His absolute power to do as He pleases, and His actions being full of benefit and reason, the two arguments could not be advanced side by side, let alone be complementary to each other.

The last sentence of the verse, ''and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing'', makes it even more clear. ''Ample-giving'' shows that He cannot be restricted by anyone or anything in bestowing His bounties or in any other action. ''Knowing'' shows that all His actions are done by His true knowledge which is never wrong. In other words, He does whatever He pleases, and He never does but what is beneficial.

''Wāsi' '' (وَاسِعٌ = translated here as ''Ample-giving'') is the

active participle of *al-wus'ah* (الوُسْعَةُ) and *as-sa'ah* (السَّعَةُ) which is the capacity of a body to accomodate another body, like the capacity of a water-pot to hold water, that of a box for things packed in it, and that of a house to accomodate its residents. Then it was borrowed for riches: but not for every wealth and not in all conditions; it is used for riches when the possibility of spending and giving is taken into consideration. It is as though the wealth has the capacity to be spent and given. It is this meaning in which Allāh is called *al-wāsi'* (الوَاسِعُ), that is, the Possessor of wealth who has power to give whatever He pleases.

QUR'ĀN: *And their prophet said to them: ''Surely the sign of his kingship is that there shall come to you the Ark in which there s tranquillity'': ''at-Tābūt''*(التَّابُوْتُ = translated here as ''Ark'') means chest. It is on the paradigm of *fa'lūt* (فَعْلُوتُ) from *at-tawb* (التَّوْبُ = to return).A chest is given this name because man returns to it every now and then.

MEANING OF ''AS-SAKĪNAH''

''as-Sakīnah'' (السَّكِيْنَةُ = tranquillity) is derived from *as-sukūn* (السُّكُوْنُ) which is opposite of movement. *as-sakīnah* is used for tranquillity of the heart. When a man is of stable mind and is not perturbed in taking a firm decision, he is said to have *as-sakīnah.* It is a virtue of a wise man who has a strong will. Allāh has made it a characteristic of *al-īmān* (الايْمَانُ = faith) in its higher degree, and has counted it as one of His most valuable gifts.

Man, according to his nature, bases his action on reasoning. He arranges logical premises, analyses the benefits of a particular action, and sees how it will effect the bliss of his life and bring the good of the society as a whole. Then he decides what to do and what not to do.

When man goes forward on the path of nature in the process of his reasoning, and his only aim is to gain real benefit and happiness in life, then his thinking is accompanied by peace of mind and tranquillity of heart without any nervousness and perturbation. On the other hand, if he clings in his life to the world and follows his low desires, he becomes confused,

and his thought and will-power are distorted by his unhealthy vision. As a result, he goes astray from the path of truth; or remains undecided, confused and irresolute in his decisions and cannot perform any difficult and dangerous task which requires strong will-power and firm feet.

A believing man, because of his belief in Allāh, relies on a firm support and an unshaking pillar of strength. He bases his life on true knowledge where doubt and confusion cannot intrude; sets forth in his actions in the light of divine commandments which he is sure are the most perfect guide. He knows that his affairs are not in his own hands; he is, therefore, not afraid of any possible loss; and if any harm comes to him, he is not sorry about it. He is not puzzled when he has to distinguish good from evil.

But a disbeliever has no guardian to look after his affairs. His good and evil are in his own hands. He wanders in the darkness of confusion, undecidedness and uncertainty, because his thoughts are permeated by low desires, spectres of unreality, and unhealthy feelings.

Allāh says :

. . .and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers (3:68). *That is because Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe, and because the unbelievers have no guardian for them* (47:11).

Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of darkness into the light; and (as to) *those who disbelieve, their guardians are the Satans who take them out of the light into the darkness* (2:257).

Surely We have made the Satans to be the guardians of those who do not believe (7:27).

It is only the Satan that frightens his friends. . . (3:175). *The Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly, and Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance . . .* (2:268).

. . . and whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allāh, he indeed shall suffer a manifest lost. He gives them promises and excites vain desires in them; and the Satan does not promise them aught but (in) *deception . . .* (it is) *a promise of Allāh, true* (indeed); *and who is truer of word than Allāh?* (4:119 — 122).

Now surely the friends of Allāh — they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve (10:62).

These verses, as you see, put all fear, grief, perturbation and deception on the side of disbelief; and the opposite virtues on the side of faith.

Even more clear is the verse:

Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth? (6:122). It shows that the disbeliever gropes about awkwardly in his journey of life because he has fallen in utter darkness and cannot see any thing. But the believer has a divine light by which he sees his path and knows what is good for him and what is bad. It is because Allāh has bestowed upon him a fresh and new life in addition to this material life which he shares with the disbelievers. That new life accompanies this light which illuminates its path. Allāh says: *O you who believe! Fear Allāh and believe in His Apostle: He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you . . .* (57:28).

Again He says: *You shall not find a people who believe in Allāh and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allāh and His Apostle, even though they were their* (own) *fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has written* (impressed) *faith, and whom He has strengthened with a spirit from Him* (58:22).

It shows that this new life is from a spirit from Allāh, and is accompanied by a firm faith deeply impressed into their hearts. These believers are strengthened by a spirit from Allāh, which confirms the faith into their hearts, gives a new life to their bodies and creates a brilliant light to lead them forward.

It is easy to see that the import of this verse is similar to that of verse 4 of chap. 48: *He it is who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they might have more of faith added to their faith — and Allāh's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh is Knowing, Wise.*

''Tranquillity'' in this verse corresponds with the ''spirit'' in the previous one; and ''having more of faith added to their faith'' of this one corresponds with ''impressing the faith into their hearts'' of the previous one. This conformity becomes more obvious when we look at the

sentence, ‘‘and Allāh’s are the hosts of the heavens and the earth’’, because the Qur’ān often uses the term ‘‘hosts’’for the angels and the spirit.

Similar in the meaning are the verses: . . . *then Allāh sent down His tranquillity on His Apostle and on the believers, and made them keep the word of guarding* (against evil), *and they were entitled to it and worthy of it* (48:26); and *So Allāh sent down His tranquillity upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see* . . . (9:40).

From the above discussion; it may be inferred that *as-sakīnah* is a divine spirit, or accompanies a divine spirit, by divine command; it creates tranquillity in heart, firmness of purpose and peace of mind. This does not involve us in far-fetched interpretations which would remove the word from its real meaning. And the traditions on this subject should be interpreted in this light.

QUR’ĀN: *And residue of the relics of what the family of Mūsā and the family of Hārūn have left, the angels bearing it . . . ‘‘al-Āl’’* (الأَلُ) of a man means those of his family who are most closely related to him; and, when used without any condition, it includes also the man himself. Therefore, the phrase here means Mūsā, Hārūn and their most closely related family-members. ‘‘The angels bearing it’’ shows the state of the Ark. The words of Allāh, ‘‘most surely there is a sign in this for those who believe’’, like the words at the beginning of the verse, prove that they had asked their prophet for a proof of the truth of what he had told them, ‘‘Surely Allāh has raised Ṭālūt to be a king over you.’’

QUR’ĀN: *So when Ṭālūt departed with the forces . . . they drank from it: ‘‘al-Faṣl’’* (الفَصْلُ) here means to depart from a place: the same is the meaning of the word in 12:94, ‘‘And when the caravan had departed.’’ Sometimes it means ‘‘to cut’’, that is, to separate two things, as Allāh says: *And He is the best of separaters* (between truth and falsehood) (6:57). Thus, the verb is used sometimes transitively and at other times intransitively.

The word *‘‘al-jund’’* (الجُنْدُ) signifies a dense concentration of something. The army is called *al-jund,* because people are densely concentrated in it. In this verse, the word is used in plural, and it shows that their number was very great — and this was after the people had ‘‘turned back except a few of them’’ (2:246).

The whole talk is a comment on the condition of the Israelites and how they ‘‘fulfilled’’ the covenant made with Allāh. All together they pleaded that a king be raised for them, and made a very strong covenant to fight under him; and they were so numerous that when they all turned back except a few of them, those few were ‘‘forces’’; and those forces also were of no avail because they drank from the stream; thus, what was left, was a residue of the residue, and among them were also those who had taken a handful of water, and as a result were overcome by cowardice and hypocrisy. And then Allāh declares how a handful of believers, who were forbearing in the way of Allāh, were given victory over the huge armies of Goliath.

‘‘al-Ibtilā’ ’’(الابْتِلاَءُ) is to test; *‘‘al-nahar’’*(النَّهَرُ) is the place in which a stream flows; *‘‘al-ightirāf’’*(الاغْتِرَافُ) and *al-gharf* (الغَرْفُ) is to raise a thing in the hand and get it, for example, raising water in the hand to drink it.

The position of the exceptional clause in this verse requires special attention: Allāh will try you with a stream; whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me, except he who takes with his hand as much (of it) as fills the hand. It would appear at the first glance that the words, ‘‘except he who takes with his hand . . .’’ should have come after the sentence, ‘‘whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me’’. But the fact is that this is not related at all with those who would drink from the stream. The Qur’ān mentions that those who would drink were not from Ṭālūt, and that is that. Then it changes the word ‘‘drink’’ to ‘‘taste’’ and says, ‘‘and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me’’. Only then comes the exceptional clause. Had this clause been put after the first sentence, ‘‘whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me’’, it would have signified that he who took only a handful of water was of Ṭālūt. This in its turn would have meant that the whole army from the beginning was of Ṭālūt, and then those who drank from the stream were cut off from him. But the present sequence, in which two categories have been mentioned — one of those who would drink and the other of those who would not drink — shows that the real position of the soldiers of the army was at that time undecided and unknown. It was only after the test of the stream that the reality was to be known. Those who would drink from it would be known to be not of

Ṭālūt; and those who would not even taste of it would be known to be of Ṭālūt. After these two separate sentences comes the exceptional clause, which removes those who would take a handful of water from the first group — but it does not put them in the second one. If there were only the first sentence, the exceptional clause would have given the meaning that by taking a handful of water one would not be cut off from Ṭālūt, that is, would remain of him. But now that two separate categories have expressly been mentioned, removal from one group does not automatically mean inclusion in the other. In short, the position of the exceptional clause shows the existence of three groups: those who were not of Ṭālūt, those who were of him, and the takers of handful of water. After crossing the stream, two later groups remained with Ṭālūt. That is why there appeared so much difference in their states; one group was forbearing, the other was restless; one had full confidence in Allāh, the other was perturbed and troubled.

QUR'ĀN: *So when he had crossed it . . . Allāh is with the patient ones.*

''al-Fi'ah'' (الفِئَةُ) means a group of people. A glance at the verses is sufficient to show that those who said, ''We have today no power against Goliath and his forces'', were those who had taken a handful of water; and those who replied them were those who had not tasted of it. ''Those who thought that they would meet their Lord'': The ''thought'' here means ''certainty'', that is, ''those who were sure . . .''. Also, it may be an allegorical style to show that in their humility they did not believe themselves worthy of meeting their Lord. They did not say, ''It is possible for a small party to vanquish a numerous host.'' Instead they said, ''How often has a small party vanquished . . .''. Thus they put forward a fact as their argument (instead of a theoretical possibility) to make the reply more convincing.

QUR'ĀN: *And when they went out . . . against the unbelieving people:*

''al-Burūz'' (البُرُوْزُ) is to appear. From it is derived *''al-barāz''* (البَرَازُ) which means to appear or set forth for battle. *''al-Ifrāgh''* (الافرَاغُ) means to pour a liquid material in a mould. In this invocation, they beg Allāh to pour down upon them patience according to their capacity. It is a very fine allegory. ''Make our feet firm'' is another allegorical expression which signifies determination, steadiness and firmness in front of the enemy, so that they do not flee from him.

QUR'ĀN: *So they put them to flight . . . taught him of what He pleased: ''al-Hazm''* (الهَزْمُ) means to repel, to drive back.

QUR'ĀN: And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but Allāh is Gracious to the creatures. It is obvious that the disorder of the earth means the disorder among those who are on the earth, that is, the disorder in human society. If society's disorder brings in its wake disorder on the earth's surface, it would also have to be included in the meaning of this verse, not because of itself but because of its being a result of society's disorder.

This verse hints at a philosophical reality, which is as follows:

The felicity and good of the human species is incomplete if there is no society and no mutual assistance. This factor depends on unity, to a certain degree, in society, so that various individuals may join together to form a single group. The group together becomes a single unit; metaphorically speaking, it becomes as though it has a single body and a single soul. It acts and reacts like a single individual. Social unity, and the place in which it occurs, that is, the assembly of human individuals, is just like unity in creation, and the place in which it occurs, that is, the universe. We know that unity in this system of creation results from the action and reaction occuring in the components of the universe. The various creative causes struggle with each other, repel, or are repelled by opposing forces, and it is as a result of this constant action and reaction that various parts of this system remain connected with each other. Otherwise, the universe would have ceased to exist.

Likewise, the system of human society is based on action and reaction, on repulsion and overpowering; otherwise the various members of society could not remain bound with each other, and society would have ceased to exist; in short the felicity of the species would have vanished. If we suppose that there is no repelling each other, in this meaning, (i.e., overpowering others and making them obey the victor's will), every individual member will do what he thinks fit, even if it goes against the interest of the other members (whether those interests are lawful is not our concern at this juncture); and those other members will have no means to prevent him from that course of action. Thus the unity of the members will cease to exist and society will be finished. We have described this subject fully under verse 2:213; where it was explained

that the basic factor upon which society is founded is the human instinct of subjugating others for one's own benefit; and mutual assistance and civilization is a side product of this instinct, it is a secondary cause.

This repulsion and overpowering is an overwhelming factor in human society. Man tries to make others do what he wants, and to repel them from what he does not like. It is seen in war as well as in peace, in comfort as well as in discomfort, in ease as well as in hardship. Man does it instinctively; he becomes conscious of it only when someone opposes his will, and then he begins the process of the said repulsion as he thinks necessary. That repulsion has degrees of strength and weakness. War is one of those degrees.

This natural instinct is seen in action when a believer repulses his oppressor in defence of his lawful rights; and it is also seen when someone uses it to protect his unlawful gains. Nature bestows its bounties on the believers and the unbelievers alike. It is not that a believer has a nature separate from that of the unbeliever. If this trait of repelling and overpowering were not present in human nature, no body would have defended anything, whether it be a lawful right or an unlawful gain.

It is this natural trait from which man gains so many benefits — first, society is founded on it, then he makes others follow his own will, and through it he keeps what he has gained, lawfully or otherwise; and it is through it that he tries to get back what has been taken from him unjustly; and lastly it is through this trait that he makes the truth live after it has died, and tries to keep society on the path of eternal bliss. In short, it is a natural factor from which man derives many more benefits than harm.

''Perhaps'' it is these things which are referred to in this sentence: *And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder.*The next sentence supports this interpretation: *And Allāh is Gracious to the creatures.*

There are some interpretations which are not so appropriate:

Some commentators have said: The repulsion mentioned here means the repelling of the unbelievers by the believers, as the context shows. Also, another verse may be quoted in its support: *And had there not been Allāh's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and*

mosques in which Allāh's name is much remembered (22:40).

Comment: The meaning in itself is correct as far as it goes; but it is not the whole meaning. What the verse means by the good of the earth, is a comprehensive and continuous good which keeps society alive; not any particular good which appears for a short time and then disappears, like in the story of Ṭālūt and in some other events.

Others have said: This verse refers to the fact that Allāh saves the sinner from perdition and destruction, because of the righteous one. Many traditions from both Sunnī and Shī'ite chains of narrators mention this fact: A tradition of jābir is recorded in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* and *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*, that he said: ''The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Verily Allāh, because of the good of a Muslim man, makes good his child and the child of his child, and the people of his house, and of the houses around it; and they remain in the protection of Allāh so long as he remains in them.' ''

Another tradition, in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī, quotes aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) as saying: ''Verily Allāh, repels (the misfortune) from that of our Shī'ahs who does not pray, because of the one who prays, and if they all unite on neglecting the prayer, all of them would perish. And verily, Allāh repels from that of our Shī'ahs who does not pay *zakāt*, because of the one who pays it, and if they all unite on its non-payment, all would perish. And verily, Allāh repels from that of our Shī'ahs who does not perform *hail,* because of the one who performs it, and if they all unite on neglecting the *ḥajj*, all would perish.''

Comment: The two verses mentioned earlier obviously do not fit the meaning of these two traditions; although it may be said that these traditions give examples as to how Allāh repels some people by some others.

Someone has said: The verse means that Allāh repels the oppressors with other oppressors.

Comment: Its absurdity is to obvious.

QUR'ĀN: *These are the signs . . . you are* (one) *of the apostles:* This verse is a sort of epilogue to conclude the story. Also the last sentence, ''and most surely you are (one) of the apostles'', creates a clear connection with the next verse.

TRADITIONS

'Abdu'r-Razzāq and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Zayd ibn Aslam that he said: ''When the verse was revealed: *Who is it that will lend to Allāh a goodly loan, so He will multiply it* . . . , Abu 'd-Daḥdāḥ came to the Prophet and said: 'O Prophet of Allāh! Do I not see our Lord asking a loan from us from the same which He has given us for ourselves?! And verily I have two plots of lands, one in the higher region, and the other in the lower one; and verily I dedicate the better one as *ṣadaqah* (alms).' And the Prophet used to say: 'How many pampered clusters of dates Abu 'd-Daḥdāḥ has got in the Garden!' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This tradition has been narrated through numerous chains.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''When the verse was revealed: *Whoever brings good deed, he shall have better than it* (27:89), the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'O Allāh! Increase for me.' So, Allāh sent down the verse: *Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it* (6:160). The Messenger of Allāh (again) said: 'O Allāh! Increase for me.' Then Allāh revealed, *Who is it that will lend to Allāh a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold.* Thereupon, the Messenger of Allāh knew that ''many'' from Allāh cannot be counted and has no limit. (*al-Ma'ānī*)

The author says: aṭ-ṬabarsĪ in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* and al-'Ayyāshī in his *at-Tafsīr* have narrated a similar tradition. And a tradition nearly like it has been narrated from Sunnī chains also.

The words of the Imām, ''Thereupon, the Messenger of Allāh knew'' : The end of the verse hints at it, ''and Allāh holds and extends'', because no limit can be put on the bounty of Allāh; He has said: *And the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:20).

A tradition of Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) recorded in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī says that this verse is about the gift for the Imām.

The author says: A similar tradition is narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) in *al-Kāfī;* it gives an example of a general rule.

Majma'u 'l-bayān says about the words of Allāh, ''when they said to a prophet of theirs'' that the prophet was Ushmu'īl who is Ismā'īl in

Arabic.

The author says: Sunnī traditions also confirm it. And Ushmu'īl is Samuel of the Bible.

al-Qummī narrated from his father from an-Naḍr ibn Suwayd from Yaḥyā al-Ḥalabī from Ḥarūn ibn Khārijah from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) saying: ''Verily, the Israelites, after the death of Mūsā, indulged in sins, and changed the religion of God, and acted arrogantly against the commandments of God; and there was a prophet among them, who ordered them (to do good) and forbade them (evil), but they did not obey him. (And it is narrated that he was the prophet, Armiah [1] — may the peace of Allāh be upon our prophet and him!) Thereupon, Allāh gave Goliath mastery over them; and he was a Coptic.[2] He humiliated them, and killed their men, and turned them out of their homes and their properties, and kept their women as slave-girls. Therefore, they resorted to their prophet and said: 'Ask Allāh to *raise up for us a king, so that we may fight in the way of Allāh.'* And there was the prophethood in one house of the children of Israel and kingship and rulership in another house. And Allāh had not kept the prophethood and kingship in one house; that is why they asked their prophet to 'raise for us a king, so that we may fight in the way of Allāh.' Thereupon their prophet said to them: *'May it not be that if fighting is ordained for you, you would not fight?'* They said: *'And what reasons have we that we should not fight in the way of Allāh, and we have indeed been turned out of our homes and our children.'* And it happened as Allāh said: *But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them; and Allāh knows the unjust.* And their prophet said to them: *'Surely Allāh has raised Talut to be a king over you.'* Then they were enraged by this (appointment), and said: *'How can he hold kingship over us, while we have a greater right to kingship then he and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth?'* And the prophethood was in the house of Lāwi[3], and the kingship in the house of Yūsuf; and Ṭālūt was from the house of

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[1] Jeremiah, in the Bible.

[2] Goliath was a Philistine. The area had political connection with Egypt. Perhaps it is in this sense that he has been called a Coptic.

[3] Levi, in the Bible.

Binyāmīn[1] , the full brother of Yūsuf, and was, thus, from neither the house of prophethood nor from that of kingship. Then their prophet said to them: *'Surely, Allāh has chosen him over you, and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique, and Allāh grants His Kingdom to whom He pleases, and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing.'* And Ṭālūt was the greatest of them in physique, the most powerful and knowledgeable of them all, but he was a poor man. So, they vilified him because of his poverty, and said that he had not been given an abundance of wealth. Thereupon, their prophet said to them: *'Surely the sign of his kingship is that there shall come to you the Ark in which there is tranquillity from your Lord and residue of the relics of what the family of Mūsā and the family of Hārūn have left, the angels bearing it.'* And it was the chest which was sent by Allāh and Mūsā's mother put him in it and threw it in the river; and it was among the Israelites and they sought blessings through it. When Mūsā was about to die, he put inside it in the tablets, and his coat of mail and whatever signs of prophethood he had, and gave it in trust to his successor, Yūsha'.[2] And the Ark remained in them until they made slight of it, and the children played with it in the streets. Thus, the Israelites remained with honour and dignity as long as the Ark was with them, but when they committed sins and profaned the Ark, Allāh took it away from them. When they asked their prophet, Allāh raised Ṭālūt as king over them, and he let them in the fight then Allāh returned the Ark to them, as he said: *'Surely the sign of his kingship is that there shall come to you the Ark in which their is tranquillity from your Lord and residue of the relics of what the family of Mūsā and the family of Hārūn have left, the angels bearing it.' ''* And he (Abū Ja'far) said: ''The residue is the children of the prophets.'' (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

The author says: The sentence, ''And it is narrated that he was the prophet, Armiah'' is another tradition, parenthetically inserted in this trandition.[3]

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1 Benjamin, in the Bible.

2 Joshua, in the Bible.

3 As mentioned in a previous tradition, the prophet was Samuel, and not

‘‘And it happened as Allāh said’’: It means that a majority of them turned back and only a small minority of them obeyed the order to fight. And some traditions say that this minority was sixty thousand souls. It has been narrated by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr* (al-Qummī narrated from his father from al-Ḥusayn ibn Khālid from ar-Riḍā, a.s.) and by al-‘Ayyāshī in his *at-Tafsīr* from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

‘‘And the prophethood was in the house of Lāwī and the kingship in the house of Yūsuf.’’ Some people say that the kingship was in the house of Yahūdhā.[1] But there is an objection on it: There was no king among the Israelites before Ṭālūt, Dāwūd and Sulaymān. So how can it be said that ‘‘before Ṭālūt’’ kingship was in the house of Judah? This objection is strengthened by the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that the kingship was in the house of Yusuf, because the kingship of Yūsuf is accepted by all.

‘‘The residue is the children of the Prophets’’: This sentence is a conjecture of the narrator. The Imām explained the words, ‘‘the family of Mūsā and the family of Hārūn’’ with the words, ‘‘the children of the prophets’’; and the narrator fancied that it was the explanation of the word, ‘‘residue’’. And this view is supported by the tradition recorded in the *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about the words of Allāh, ‘‘and residue of the relics of what the family of Mūsā and the family of Hārūn have left, the angels bearing it’’, and he replied: ‘‘The children of the prophets.’’

Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā narrated from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad from Muḥammad ibn Khālid and al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa‘īd from an-Naṣr ibn Suwayd from Yaḥyā al-Ḥalabī from Ḥarūn ibn Khārijah from Abū Baṣīr from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) saying in a tradition, inter alia: ‘‘And Allāh reports the words of Ṭālūt: *‘Surely Allāh will try you with a stream; whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me.’* But all of them drank from it, except three hundred and thirteen men, among them were those who took a handful of water as well as those who did not drink at all. When they went out against Goliath, those who had

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Jeremiah.

[1] Judah, in the Bible.

taken handful of water said, *'We have today no power against Goliath and his forces';* and those who had not taken it said, *'How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allāh's permission, and Allāh is with the patient ones.' ''* (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: That there remained with Ṭālūt only three hundred and thirteen men (equal in number to the Muslim ''army'' in the battle of Badr) is mentioned in numerous traditions from Shī'ah and Sunnī chains. The details that those who said: ''We have today no power . . .'' were those who had taken a handful of water, and those who said, ''How often a small party . . .'' were those who had not tasted it at all, may be inferred from the position of the exceptional clause in the verse, as we have already explained.

al-Kulaynī narrated through his chains from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd from Faḍālah ibn Ayyūb from Yaḥyā al-Ḥalabī from 'Abdullāh ibn Sulaymān from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) who said about the words of Allāh, *surely the sign of his kingdom . . . the angels bearing it:* ''They bore it in the shape of a cow.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

It will have been noted that we have quoted the complete chain of narrators of this tradition, although generally we do not do so in this book. We omit the chains where the traditions are in conformity with the Qur'ān, because then there is no need to mention the chains of narrators. But where the tradition mentions a thing which is not in the Qur'ān, and which cannot be inferred from it, then it is necessary to quote the complete chain. Still, we write in this book only those traditions which are correct according to the chains of the narrators, or are supported by the context or other associations.

al-'Ayyāshī writes in his *at-Tafsīr* a tradition from Muḥammad al-Ḥalabī that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Dāwūd had four brothers; and their father was an old-aged man; and Dāwūd had remained behind to look after the sheep of his father. Ṭālūt departed with his forces. Dāwūd's father called him (and he was the youngest) and said: 'O my son! Take to your brothers this (food) which we have prepared for them, so that they may get strength to overcome their enemy.' And he (Dāwūd) was short of stature, dark, with very little hair, but pure of heart. So, he went away, and (by that time) the two forces had reached near to each other.''

At this juncture, another tradition of Abū Baṣīr says that he heard the

Imām saying: ‘‘Then Dāwūd passed by a stone, and it said: ‘O Dāwūd! Take me and kill Goliath with me, because, verily, I have been created to kill him.’ So he took it and put it in his bag in which he kept the stones for his sling which he used in the herding of his sheep. On entering the army camp, he heard them greatly magnifying the affair of Goliath. So he said to them: ‘Why are you so overwhelmed by his affair? By Allāh! If I see him I will kill him.’ Thereupon, they started talking with each other about it till he was brought before Ṭālūt. Ṭālūt asked him: ‘O young man! How much strength do you have? And what experience have you of yourself?’ Dāwūd said: ‘It happens that if a lion attacks a goat of my herd and catches it; then I overtake him, catch his head, open his jaws and rescue the goat from his mouth.’ (Hearing this) Ṭālūt said: ‘Bring me a full-size coat of mail.’ It was brought unto him and he put it in Dāwūd’s neck, and lo! His body filled it completely. Thereupon, Ṭālūt and those Israelites who were present there were awe-struck by him; and Ṭālūt said: ‘By Allāh! Most probably Allāh will kill him (Goliath) by him.’

‘‘When the morning came and people gathered around Ṭālūt, and the people (of the two forces) stood against each other, Dāwūd said: ‘Show me Goliath.’ When he saw him, he took the stone, and putting it in his sling, threw it towards him, and it hit him between his eyes, reaching to his brain; and (Goliath) fell down from his stead; and people cried: ‘Dāwūd has killed Goliath.’ Then the people made him their king until nobody was heard talking about Ṭālūt. And the Israelites gathered around Dāwūd; and Allāh sent down Zabūr to him, and taught him the handicraft of iron, making it soft for him; and ordered the mountains and the birds to join him in glorifying God.’’ The Imām said: ‘‘And nobody was given a voice like him. Thereupon Dāwūd lived among the Israelites, hidden from them; and he was given strength to worship (God).’’

The author says: The Shī‘ah and Sunnī traditions unanimously say that Dāwūd killed Goliath by a sling.

‘Alī (a.s.) said: ‘‘The tranquillity which was in the Ark, was a pleasant breeze from the Garden; it had a face like that of a human being.’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* — from Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah and Ibn Jarīr, through the chain of Salmān ibn Kuhayl from ‘Alī (a.s.); — and from ‘Abdu ’r-Razzāq and

Abū ‘Ubayd and ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Ḥākim (and he has said that the tradition is ‘‘correct’’), and Ibn ‘Asākir and al-Bayhaqī (in his *ad-Dalā’il*), through the chain of Abū al-Aḥwaṣ from ‘Alī (a.s.).

al-Qummī narrated from his father from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Khālid from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) saying: ‘‘The tranquillity is a breeze from the Garden, it has a face like that of a human being.’’ (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: The same meaning has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) in *Ma‘ānī ’l-akhbār* and by al-‘Ayyāshī in his *at-Tafsīr* from ar-Riḍā (a.s.).

These traditions explaining the meaning of *as-sakīnah* (tranquillity) are not *mutawātir;* yet, if they are accepted as correct, they may be interpreted in the following way, so as to fit the meaning of the verse of the Qur’ān:

‘‘The tranquillity has a face like that of a human being.’’ It means that it is one of the stages of spiritual perfection. At that stage, the soul remains tranquil and at peace with the commands and decrees of Allāh. Such expressions, explaining a reality in an allegorical way, are found in many traditions of the Imāms’. According to this interpretation, tranquillity would mean the spirit of faith, and that is the meaning we have given to it earlier. And it is in this light that the following tradition of Abu ’l-Ḥasan (a.s.), mentioned in *Ma‘ānī ’l-akhbār,* should be seen and interpreted: ‘‘(Tranquillity) is the spirit of God, which speaks; when they differed among themselves on any matter, it spoke up and informed them (of truth). . .’’ Obviously, it means that it is the spirit of faith and it guides the believer to the truth about which the people differ.

A PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE AND THE SURVIVAL OF FITTEST

According to scientists, scientific experiments show that existing things struggle with each other for their existence, because it is ingrained in their nature to protect themselves from extinction, and to make use of their powers in the purpose for which they are created. This struggle is

carried on through mutual action and reaction — each influences the others, and is in its turn influenced by others. In the end, the more powerful and more perfect being vanquishes the weaker and the less perfect one. It means that nature goes on selecting, among individuals of a species, the fittest and the most perfect, and it alone is allowed to continue and propagate the species and all others gradually become extinct. Thus we get two laws of nature: the struggle for existence, and natural selection and survival of the fittest.

As the society is based on the demands of nature, the abovementioned two laws are found in civilization also.

The best society is the one which is based on the foundation of a complete and firm unity; in which the rights of the individuals and groups, and of society in general, are well-balanced and well-preserved. Such a society has more right to survive; and others lacking in these qualities deserve to perish and vanish. Experience has shown that only those nations do survive which look well after their collective duties, and proceed, fully alert, on the road of collective bliss and felicity. On the other hand, when disunity creeps into a nation, hearts become disunited, differences crop up, tyranny and mischief poison the atmosphere, the lords of the land indulge in luxuries and the will to strive for a cause is weakened in them, and, as a result, the nation or group is obliterated from the face of the earth.

Archaeologists have unearthed fossils, bones and skeletons of many animals which have become extinct, like the brontosaurus; or from whose species only a few examples have survived like alligators and toads. The only factors which led to their extinction were the laws of the struggle for existence, natural selection and survival of the fittest. Likewise, the species which are found today are constantly changing because of the said struggle and survival; and only the fittest and strongest deserves to survive. Then those strong and good traits are transmitted to the next generations, and thus the species continues to develop and flourish.

According to them, that is also how evolution initially began. Matter was scattered in space, and when it joined together, the stars, the planets and the species living therein came into being. Then what was fit for survival survived and existence passed on from generation to generation; and what was unable to withstand the struggle of stronger beings was

destroyed.

This, in short, is the theory of the scientists.

Later scientists have had their own objections against this theory. There are even today many weaker species, both in animals and in vegetables, that go on flourishing. For example, man has domesticated and developed many species of vegetables and animals, these varieties are definitely fitter and stronger than their natural counterparts. Yet the natural varieties go on reproducing and transmitting their weak traits to the next generations. This phenomenon shows that the supposedly basic natural laws of struggle for existence, natural selection and survival of the fittest are not comprehensive.

This difficulty led later scientistists to invent a new theory and that is adaptation to the environment. ‘‘Environment’’ covers all the surrounding conditions of time and space and factors which influence the state of a thing. The nature of thing adjusts itself to the surrounding influences. That is why every living thing, be it in the water or on dry land, in polar regions or in the equatorial zone, has limbs and faculties which are suited to that particular environment. If a life adjusts itself to the influences of its environment, it continues; otherwise, it is finished. The previously mentioned two laws — the struggle for existence, and. natural selection and survival of the fittest — should be based on this basic law of adaptation to the environment; and where this latter law is isolated, the former two laws, even if their conditions are fulfilled, cannot save a species.

The difficulty is that even this law is not comprehensive, as scientists themselves admit.

The fact, as admitted by science, is that these laws are correct to a certain extent, but they are not comprehensive and all-inclusive.

A comprehensive philosophical interpretation can be offered in the following way:

All that happens in this material world, whether it is the existence of a thing or the changes and alterations occurring in it, revolve around the law of cause and effect. Every material being tries to influence other things to make it agreeable to itself. The net result of this action is that every active agent takes some thing from the object of its action to add to its own perfection. Thus every thing is constantly engaged in preserving its

existence. To this extent, it may be accepted that there is a struggle for existence and survival in this world.

A strong active agent either changes a weaker object to suit its own needs or destroys it completely for the same purpose. Had that weaker object been stronger, it could have faced the opposite forces and preserved itself from the forced changes and destruction. To this extent, it may be accepted that there is a law of natural selection and survival of the fittest in this world.

When many causative factors gather around an object, and all, or most, of them combine to create an effect on the said object, it cannot escape from their combined force, and has to adjust itself accordingly. To this extent, the law of adaptation to the environment must be accepted.

But it must be remembered that these laws effect (in the thing which is capable of being effected) only that object's accidental properties and supplementary factors. It cannot change the thing *per se* into another thing.

Materialists do not believe that there are separate genera and species, completely different from eath other. They think all things are basically the same — one matter, and that the different shapes are the result of different accidental properties; and it is only by these accidental or supplementary factors that species differ from each other. Otherwise, there is no basic difference between them. Every thing, after disintegration, returns to the same state — matter. It is because of this view, that they said that a species changes into another through the above-mentioned laws. We shall discuss this view, God willing, in an appropriate place.

To come back to our original topic:

A commentator of the Qur'ān has said that the verse: *And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but Allāh is Gracious to the creatures,* points to the laws of the struggle for existence and natural selection. According to him other two verses also point to the same laws: *Permission* (to fight) *is given to those upon whom war is made, for they have been oppressed, and most surely Allāh is well able to assist them. Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is Allāh. And had there not been Allāh's repelling some people by*

others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allāh's name is much remembered; and surely Allāh will help him who helps Him (i.e. His cause) ; *most surely Allāh is Strong, Mighty. Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and pay the zakāt and enjoin good and forbid evil; and Allāh's is the end of the affairs* (22:39 — 41).

According to him, this verse points to the struggle for existence and for the defence of the truth; and that this struggle leads to the survival of the fittest and preservation of the beat.

The second verse, which he put for his argument, is verse 17 of chap. 13: *He sends down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus arises a foam like it; thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth; thus does Allāh set forth parables.* According to the said commentator, this verse signifies that the torrents of the happenings and the scale of the struggle throws away and nullifies the scum of falsehood which might have harmed society, and the pure gold of truth, beneficial for society, remains. It clearly shows the law of the survival of the fittest in action.

The author says: The laws of the struggle for existence and natural selection (in the meanings mentioned earlier) are correct to a certain extent, and also it is agreed that the Qur'ān supports them in the said meaning. But the two types of verses quoted by the said commentator have nothing to do with these two laws.

The first type of verse was revealed to show that Allāh's will cannot be defeated; and that the truth, that is, religious beliefs and knowledge as confirmed by Allāh, shall always prevail; and likewise, the standard-bearer of that truth shall always vanquish falsehood. To see the purpose of the verse, look again at the phrases, ''for they have been oppressed, and most surely Allāh is well able to assist them'' and ''Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is Allāh''. The purpose of those clauses is to make it clear that the believers shall be victorious; but not because of the struggle for

existence and the survival of the fittest. We should not forget that the strongest and the fittest, in the language of these laws, means the one who is the strongest and fittest in the physical and material sense; it does not mean strong in truthfulness or fittest in the spiritual sense. According to these two laws whoever is better equipped with military hardware and more trained and better disciplined, will vanquish the weaker party — it makes no difference which party is in the right and which in the wrong. But these verses tell us that the believers shall be victorious because they have long been oppressed for speaking the truth, and Allāh is truth and He shall help the truth to prevail; falsehood shall not be able to withstand the proof of truth; Allāh Himself shall assist the bearer of truth if he is sincere in his heart. The next words show this aspect clearly: ‘‘and surely Allāh will help him who helps Him; most surely Allāh is Strong, Mighty. Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer . . .’’ It shows that their confession of truth is based on sincerity. Then Allāh ends the verse on the words, ‘‘and Allāh’s is the end of the affairs.’’ This sentence reminds one of many Qur’ānic sentences which prove that creation is relentlessly progressing on the path of perfection towards truth and real felicity and bliss. Doubtlessly, the Qur’ān proves that victory is for Allāh and His forces only: *Allāh has written down, I will most certainly prevail, I and* My *apostles* (58:21), *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles, Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones* (37:171 — 173) and: *and Allāh is predominant over His affair* (12:21).

In all these verses, victory has been reserved for the people of sincere faith and true belief, irrespective of their physical or material strength, while the laws of struggle and survival are based on physical and material strength and fitness.

Likewise, the second verse, quoted by the said commentator, which describes the parable of pure water and gold in contrast to the foam and scum, is revealed to show that truth shall last and falsehood shall go away. How? It does not say. It may be by physical struggle as in the case when truth and falsehood are both of a material kind. On the other hand, it may not be governed by the law of struggle, if either truth, or falsehood, or both are of the spiritual, and not the material, world. Allāh

says: *And the faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God* (20:111); *Whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him* (2:116); *and that to your Lord is the goal* (53:42). Thus, Allāh is victorious and predominant over all things, and. He is the One, the Subduer.

It has already been explained that the verse under discussion, ‘‘And were it not for Allāh’s repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder’’, points to that reality upon which society. is based. Man’s instinct for subjugating others for his own benefit. This reality includes, to a certain extent, in the meaning accepted by us earlier, the laws of the struggle for existence and natural selection. But the basic law, which is also comprehensive, is the same instinct of subjugating others. And the verse should be interpreted in this light. It should not be based on two partial and non-comprehensive laws.

Let us look at this topic from another angle: The two laws — the struggle for existence and natural selection — demand that plurality be replaced by singularity. Both sides of the struggle aim at annihilating the opposite party, so that the victor may add to itself the advantages of the vanquished party’s existence and its attachments. And nature, by its selection aims at keeping alive only the best. The net result will be to vanquish and annihilate many and to let only the one, that is, the best and the fittest, survive. This is basically against the concept of society, because society is formed of a multitude, all of whom are expected to co-operate with, and help, each other. It is this natural law which is the basis of society and civilization, not those laws which exhort one man to eat up the other. The repelling which, as mentioned under verse 2:213, builds nations and protects them from mischief, is that repulsion which leads to togetherness and that unity which is based on plurality. It is not that repulsion which negates togetherness, nor is it that unity which destroys plurality.

The *jihād* and fighting ordained by Allāh develops the earth and protects it from chaos, disorder and mischief, because it is through this fighting that the collective rights of the oppressed and down-trodden people are revived; and not because it shatters unity, annihilates people and obliterates their foot-prints. This basic difference between the two theories must always be kept in mind.

HISTORY AND HOW MUCH THE QUR'ĀN IS CONCERNED WITH IT

Oral and written history has been the favourite subject of people since the beginning of humanity. So far as we are aware, there have always been some persons who remembered, wrote or otherwise transmitted the great and small events of the past to the generations who came later, and who preserved what they were given by the ancients. Man benefits from history in various fields of his life: society comes to know its origin; people take lessons from the achievements and failures of the past generations; events are used as stories, for information and amusement; political, economic and industrial guide-lines are charted out in the light of the experience of the past.

In spite of all these benefits, which in themselves would be enough to bestow on history a halo of virtuousity, two factors have always worked to divert it from the path of truth and reality:

First: History has always been a slave of the rulers of the time. Every government wants to advertise what is beneficial to it and to suppress the report of what may be harmful to its interests. It keeps its dark side either completely hidden or alters its details and presents falsehood disguised as truth.

Second: Even the historians, reporters, narrators and writers of the books of history can never be free from their feelings and prejudice. In the past, the historians and the governments were, on the whole, people who believed in one or another religion, and at that time, religious prejudice and national feelings tainted historical writings. Now-a-days, materialism and nationalism occupy the same place, and the reports of past and present events are seen through these glasses. Ancient writers seldom wrote anything that could damage the religious faith of their contemporaries. Modern writers seldom write anything without injecting into it some items to support their materialistic view.

Apart from these two basic factors, there were and are other difficulties which have put history into disrepute. In the old times, there were scarcely any tools to record, preserve, transmit, copy, edit and preserve historical material. Now, with the progress of technology, all such tools are in the hands of historians; but a new enemy has

overpowered them, and that is professional politics. The same event is reported in ten or twenty ways, depending on the nationality and political leaning of the reporters.

These glaring defects have robbed written history of its value. Now scholars have more confidence in archaeological evidence than in written records. Even in that field, national feelings and prejudice play their part. And politics dictate how much should be disclosed, and even what interpretation should be put on archaeological discoveries.

So, this is history and its various defects which can never be glossed over or corrected. With this background, we should never compare the historical events mentioned in the Qur'ān, with the narrations of the same events given in the books of history. The Qur'ān is a divine revelation, free from mistake and falsehood. How can it be judged with the help of history, the history which nobody believes to be free from lie and error? Many historical events, as given in the Qur'ān, like this very story of Ṭālūt, differ from the reports in the Bible. But why should we worry? The Bible is no better than other history books; The alterations, suppressions, additions and omissions carried out in these books are too well-known to need any description. The story of Samuel and Saul was written in the Bible by an unknown hand. The story of Ṭālūt in the Qur'ān is the true words of Allāh.

This much about history in general. Now let us see what is the main object of the Qur'ān in such narrations. The Qur'ān is not a book of history, nor does it describe an event with all its details as a book of history purports to do. The Qur'ān is divine speech, poured into the mould of revelation, ''With it Allāh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety.'' That is why it does not narrate an event from the beginning to the end with all its details. It only picks out a few such points of an event as will be useful to the listener as a lesson, sermon and moral. Look for example at this very story. It begins with the words, ''Did you not see the chiefs of the children of Israel'', and then picks out the following points as highlights: ''And their prophet said to them: Surely Allāh has raised Ṭālūt to be a king over you''; ''And their prophet said to them, Surely the sign of his kingdom is . . .''; ''So when Ṭālūt departed'' ; ''And when they went out against Goliath . . .'' Obviously if one wants to write the fully story of Ṭālūt, one will have to add many

paragraphs between all these highlights. But the Qur'ān is not interested in a story *per se.* We have mentioned this fact in the story of the cow, and this principle applies to all other Qur'ānic stories. It selects for description only that much which is needed to stress some points in moral lessons, wise teachings and spiritual guidance, or to show how Allāh dealt with ancient nations and the people who passed away before the Muslims. Allāh says:

> *In their stories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding* (12:111).
>
> *Allāh desires to explain to you, and to guide you into the ways of those before you* (4:26).
>
> *Indeed there have been examples before you; therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejectors. This is a clear statement for men who guard* (against evil) (3:137 — 138).
>
> There are many similar verses.

* * * * *

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ
دَرَجَاتٍ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ
اللهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَٰكِنِ اخْتَلَفُوا
فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا وَلَٰكِنَّ اللهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا
يُرِيدُ ـ ٢٥٣ . يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ
لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ـ ٢٥٤ .

These apostles, We have made some of them to excel others; among them are some to whom Allāh spoke, and some of them He exalted by degree (of rank); *and We gave clear* (evidence) *to ʻĪsā, son of Maryam, and strengthened him with the holy spirit. And if Allāh had pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another after clear arguments had come to them; but they differed; so there were some of them who believed and others who denied; and if Allāh had so pleased they would not have fought one with another, but Allāh does what He intends* (253). *O You who believe! Spend out of what We have given you, before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession; and the unbelievers — they are unjust* (254).

GENERAL COMMENT

These two verses do not differ much in context from the preceding verses which ordained fighting and spending in the way of Allāh. Then came the story of Ṭālūt, in this context, so that the believers might learn important lessons from it, and that story ended on the words, ‘‘and most surely you are one of the apostles’’ which are immediately followed by the opening sentence of this verse, ‘‘These apostles, We have made some of them to excel the others.’’ Thereafter, it describes why those who came after those apostles fought one with another. (In the story of Talut also, there was a restrictive phrase, ‘‘after Mūsā’’ to describe ‘‘the chiefs of the children of Israel’’.) Then it reverts to the exhortation of spending in the way of Allāh before the fmal day comes.

All these similarities in context strongly support the view that these two verses are connected with the previous ones, and that all of them were sent down together.

The verse purports to remove a common misunderstanding, which is as follows:

The apostleship, especially when it was accompanied by clear evidence, that is, arguments and miracles to prove its truth, should have ended the scourge of fighting. It could have happened in one of the two ways: (1) When Allāh sent the apostles and gave them clear signs for the specific purpose of guiding people to their bliss in both worlds, it would have been proper if He had also prevented them from fighting among themselves and united them all in the truth. So, why is there so much fighting going on among the followers of those apostles? This objection becomes all the more telling after the advent of Islam which counts unity as one of the pillars of its *sharī‘ah* and the basis of its laws. (2) The sending of the apostles and the giving to them of the clear signs was done for the specific purpose of creating faith in peoples’ hearts. Belief and faith is a spiritual characteristic, which cannot be created by force and coercion. Then what the use of fighting once the prophets and the apostles had been sent.

We have explained this objection together with its reply in the commentary of the verses of fighting.

In this verse, Allāh gives the following reply: The fighting among the

followers of the apostles occurred because the said followers differed among themselves. Had they not differed, there would not have been any fighting among them. The cause of the fighting was, therefore, their difference. It is true that if Allāh so wished, there would not have occurred any difference; and thus there would not have been any fighting. Alternatively, He could have disconnected the cause, that is, the difference, from its effct, that is, fighting; so that even if there was difference, there would not have occurred any fighting. But Allāh does what He wishes; and He has decreed that the effect will follow its cause; also, that the people will have freedom of choice, and that there will not be any compulsion for them to follow a certain course.

And that is why they differed, and were not prevented from it, and that is why the said difference caused the fighting.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *These apostles, We have made some of them to excel the others:* It demonstrates the greatness of the apostles and the grandeur of their status. That is why the demonstrative pronoun *''tilka''* (تِلْكَ = those) has been used, which is meant to point to a distant object. The verse shows the excellence given by Allāh to some of them over others — some of them have been given more excellence than the others. But all of them are great, as the apostleship in itself is an excellence, which all of them share. There is a difference among the apostles, of their grades and ranks; and there is a difference among their followers, as the verse describes. But the two types of differences have nothing in common: The difference among the apostles is only in their ranks and grades, but they all are one in the basic excellence of apostleship; and the conflict of the people of the apostles is the one which is found between belief and disbelief, between affirmation and negation. It goes without saying that the two differences are quite separate from each other. And that is why Allāh has used separate words for each. The difference in the rank and grade of the apostles has been named excellence, and it has been attributed to Allāh, ''We have made some of them to excel others''. The conflict of the followers of the apostles has been called a difference,

and it has been attributed to the men themselves, ‘‘they differed’’.

The verse ends on the topic of fighting, and the preceding verses were also concerned with admonition to fight in the way of Allāh, and with a story about it. It obviously means that the sentences under discussion, ‘‘These apostles . . . with the holy spirit’’, are a prologue to make the meaning of the next sentences clearer. It shows that the institution of apostleship, in spite of all its blessings and good, has not been able to end fighting among the people, because the said fighting is initiated by the people themselves.

The apostleship has a high, towering excellence; and its good and bliss have ever-lasting freshness; whenever you look at it you will see a new beauty, and whichever aspect you ponder upon, you will find a new virtue. This excellent institution, in spite of its brilliant splendour and awe-inspiring magnificence, in spite of its accompanying clear evidence and miracle, is not able to eradicate the differences of people in belief and disbelief. It is so, because this difference is caused by the people themselves. Allāh has mentioned this fact in various verses: *Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam; and those to whom the book had been given did not differ, but after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves* (3:19). *Mankind was but one nation. . . and none differed about it but the very people who were given it revolting among themselves* (2:213).

The fact remains that if Allāh had so wished He could have prevented this difference and the resulting fighting by His creative decree. But Allāh has established a system of cause and effect in the universe, and difference is the established cause of conflict and fighting. Also, if He had so wished, He could have forbidden it by His legislative decree; or He could have refrained from giving the believers the order to fight in His way. But He gave this order; and made it a criterion of faith, ‘‘so that Allāh may separate the impure from the pure’’, ‘‘and most certainly Allāh will know those who believe and most certainly He will know the hypocrites’’.

In short, fighting among the people of the apostles cannot be avoided, as there is always the possibility of people differing because of envy and revolt. The apostleship and its clear evidence are sufficient to refute wrong beliefs and clear away doubts. But envy, revolt, obstinacy and

other such moral defects cannot be removed and the earth cannot be purged of them except by fighting in the way of Allāh, which will better the condition of humanity. Experience proves that in many cases arguments alone were not effective unless they were supported by the sword. That is why Allāh ordered His apostles, whenever necessary, to stand in support of truth and fight in His way. He so ordered in the days of Ibrāhīm and the prophets of the children of Israel, and after the Apostle of Allāh came. More details have already been given under the verses of fighting.

QUR'ĀN: *Among them are some to whom Allāh spoke, and some of them He exalted by degree* (of rank): In these sentences the pronouns and verbs have been changed from the first person of the preceding one (*We have made some of them to excel*) to the third person. The reason — and Allāh knows better — may be as follows:

Meritorious epithets are of two kinds: First, that which in itself is enough to show the merit and honour of the person or thing so described; for example, the clear evidence and the miracle, and being strengthened with the holy spirit, which has been mentioned in respect of 'Īsā (a.s.). There is no doubt that these epithets are, *per se,* splendid and lofty. Second, that which in it-self has no value unless it is related to a great subject, and its merit and honour depend upon the prestige of the doer; for example, being spoken to, *per se,* has no virtue, but if one is spoken to by a great personality it bestows an honour to the man who is spoken to. And it carries a very great splendour if one is spoken to by Allāh. Likewise, being raised in rank, *per se,* has no virtue unless it is done for example, by Allāh.

In this light, we may easily appreciate the great eloquence of the Qur'ān in changing the pronouns in three sentences: ''among them are some to whom Allāh spoke, and some of them He exalted by degree (of rank) ; and We gave clear (evidence) to 'Īsā . . .'' When Allāh described the virtues of being spoken to and being raised in rank, He changed the pronouns to the third person clearly mentioning the name, 'Allāh', as the bestower of these merits. When the epithets reached clear evidence, etc., which were honoured in themselves, the pronouns reverted to the first person of the starting sentence and said: ''and We gave clear evidence to 'Īsā son of Maryam''.

The commentators advance various opinons as to who is meant by the two sentences. It is said that ‘‘some to whom Allāh spoke’’ refers to Mūsā, as verse 164 of chap. 4 says: *And We spoke to Mūsā* (directly) *speaking* (to him), and as several other verses testify. Also, it is said that it means the Apostle of Allāh, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), because Allāh spoke to him on the night of the ascension when Allāh brought him near Himself to such a degree that all intermediate links vanished completely, and Allāh addressed to him His revelation directly without any intermediary. He says: *Then he* (i.e., Muḥammad) *drew near, and he became pending* (i.e., in between the Creator and His creatures); *so he was the measure of two bows or closer still. And He revealed to His servant what He revealed* (53:8 — 10). A third interpretation is that the speaking means revelation in general, because revelation is a secret speaking, and it has been termed speaking in the verse, *And it is not for any man that Allāh should speak to him except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger so that he reveals by His permission what He pleases* (42:51). But this last interpretation does not conform with the preposition *‘‘min’’* (مِنْ = from, among) which denotes that not all, but only ‘‘some’’, of the apostles were given this distinction — and revelation was not confined to only a few of them, it was common to all.

The most appropriate interpretation is that it refers to Mūsā (a.s.), because Allāh’s speaking with him was already mentioned in a chapter of Meccan period (which was revealed long before this chapter 2, which is a Medinite chapter): *And when Mūsā came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him . . . He said: ‘‘O Mūsā! Surely I have chosen you above the people with* My *message and with my speech . . . ’’* (7:143-144). Obviously the fact that Mūsā was spoken to by Allāh had been well-understood when the verse under discussion was revealed.

Likewise, various interpretations have been offered for the sentence, ‘‘and some of them He exalted by degree (of rank)’’.

It is said that it refers to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), as Allāh raised him in status and exalted over all the apostles, because He:

— sent him towards all the men —: *And We have not sent you but to all the men . . .* (34:28);

— made him a mercy to the worlds —: *And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds* (21:107);

— made him the Last of the prophets —: . . . *but he is the apostle of Allāh and the last of the prophets* . . . (33:40);

— gave him the Qur'ān, which is the guardian over all books and explains clearly everything, and is protected from the alterations of wrong-doers, and, in short, is a miracle which will last up to the end of the world —: *And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the book and a guardian over it* (5:48); *And We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* . . . (16:89); *Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian* (15:9); *Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'ān, they could not bring the like of it, even though some of them were aiders of the others* (17:88).

— and gave him especially the established and upright religion which is responsible for all the good of this world and the next —: *Then set thy face upright to the established religion* (30:43).

Another interpretation is that it refers to various prophets who were raised in status in one way or the other. For example, the following prophets:

Nūḥ (a.s.) — : *Peace be on Nūḥ in all the worlds* (37:79).

Ibrāhīm (a.s.) — : *And* (remember) *when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, then he fulfilled them. He said: ''Surely I will make you Imām for mankind . . .''* (2:124); *And make for me a truthful tongue* (i.e., goodly mention) *among the posterity* (26:84);

Idrīs (a.s.) — : *And We raised him to a high station* (19:57);

Yūsuf (a.s.) — : *We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please* (12:76);

Dāwūd (a.s.) — : *And We gave to Dāwūd Psalm* (4:163); and likewise various other prophets.

A third interpretation is that the words, ''These apostles'', in the beginning of the verse, refer to those apostles only who have been mentioned in this chapter of the Cow, like Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Īsā, 'Uzayr, Armiah, Ushmu'īl, Dāwūd, and Muḥammad, the peace of Allāh be on them all. Out of them Mūsā and 'Īsā have especially been mentioned in this verse, and from among the rest it is Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) who has been raised in degrees of rank over the others.

A fourth interpretation: ''These apostles'' refers to only those who

have been mentioned in the preceding story; and they are Mūsā, Dāwūd, Ushmu'īl and Muḥammad. Mūsā's distinction has been mentioned, and that is his being spoken to. Then comes the topic of raising the degrees of rank, and from the above list, no one is more deserving for it than Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). Probably, that was the reason why 'Īsā had to be mentioned in this verse by name — because in the preceding story he was not mentioned at all.

But a well-balanced interpretation would be as follows:

There is no doubt that the exalted rank of the Prophet, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), is included in the meaning of this sentence; but there is no reason to suppose that the sentence refers only to his excellence or only to those prophets who are mentioned in the story of Ṭālūt or in the chapter of the Cow, because all such view are arbitrary and without any justifiable reason. It is quite obvious that the verse is general; ''these apostles'' refer to all the apostles sent by Allāh, and ''some of them He exalted by degrees of rank'' covers all those apostles who were exalted by Him in any way.

Someone has said: The context shows that the sentence, ''some of them He exalted . . .'', refers only to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). The verse gives a lesson to those nations that fight among themselves, after their apostles, even though their religion is one — and only three such nations were present when the verse was revealed: the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims. Therefore, it was appropriate to mention their apostles especially; Mūsā and 'Īsā have already been described in the verse, and it means that the remaining sentence, ''some of them He exalted . . .'', specifically refers to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).

Comment: The Qur'ān decrees that all the apostle were sent to all of mankind, as Allāh says: . . . *We do not make any distinction between any of them* . . . (2:136). The apostles brought them clear signs, arguments and miracles. This fact in itself should have been enough to cut at the root of mischief and disorder, and to prevent fighting among their followers. But those followers differed with one another because of their rebellion, envy and worldly desire. This was the basic cause which gave rise to the fighting. Therefore, Allāh ordains fighting when the good of mankind depends upon it, so that He may manifest the truth of what was true by His words, and cut away the root of the wrong-doers.

This context shows that the verse is not particularly concerned with any nation; rather its import is general.

A TALK ABOUT THE SPEECH OF ALLĀH

The sentence, ‘‘among them are some to whom Allāh spoke’’, shows that Allāh did speak to some people; it proves that an actual occurrence did happen, that it is not an allegory or analogy; and that Allāh has named that occurrence His ‘‘speech’’. We shall discuss this subject in two parts:

First: The words of Allāh prove that all the blessings, bounties and distinctions which Allāh has reserved for His prophets and apostles and which are hidden from other people’s perception, like revelation, speaking, the descent of the spirit and the angels, and the witnessing of the great divine signs; as well as the things which He has informed His prophets and apostles about, like the angels, Satan, the Tablet, the Pen, etc., are actual and factual things. There is no allegory in their claims: when they said ‘‘angels’’ they did not mean ‘‘mental powers calling towards good’’; when they talked about ‘‘revelation’’, they were not referring to ‘‘the products of those mental powers’’; the holy spirit and faithful spirit, in their language, were not used for ‘‘the highest degree of those mental powers from which pure thoughts rain down for the good of the human society’’; Satan and jinn were not allegorical names for ‘‘base desire and unjustified anger which call towards evil and disorder’’; ‘‘the whispering of slinking Satan’’ was not another name for ‘‘the evil thoughts which disrupt a good society or make one commit bad actions’’; and so on.

The Qur’ānic verses, as well as the declarations of the previous prophets, show in the clearest way that they used these words in their actual meanings, not in an allegorical style. Nobody, except an obstinate and reckless contender, can have any doubt about it — and we have not undertaken to convince such a contender! If such clear expressions were to be explained away in this way, then all the spiritual facts given by these apostles could be interpreted in purely materialistic terms, totally rejecting existence beyond the matter! We have discussed it in short in

the topic of miracle.

Anyhow, divine speech is a factual and actual thing, and it creates the same result which is created by our talking. It may be explained as follows:

Allāh has named some of His actions ‘‘speech’’ and ‘‘speaking’’: *And Allāh spoke to Mūsā* (directly) *speaking* (to him) (4:164); *among them are some to whom Allāh spoke* (2:253). And He has explained this vague expression in the verse: *And it is not for any man that Allāh should speak to him except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger so that he reveals by His permission what He pleases* (42:51). The exceptional clause, ‘‘except by revelation . . .’’, would be meaningless unless the speaking (mentioned in ‘‘should speak to him’’) is taken to mean real speaking. It then follows that the speaking by Allāh is real, even though it may have a special style and method. In short, the principle of ‘‘speaking’’ by Allāh is a reality and cannot be denied.

What is the reality of speech from our point of view? Man needs society and civilization, and, as a result, needs all the essential ingredients of co-operative civilization — and ‘‘speaking’’ is one of them. Nature has guided man to express his thoughts through the medium of the voice which is produced from his mouth. He has made various combinations of his voice as signs to describe various ideas which are produced in his mind. Needless to say that the only way to convey hidden ideas and thoughts to others is to appoint, and agree upon, some signs for them. Man needs. speech because there is no method to understand, and make others understand, other than words, the variously mixed and combined sounds which have been agreed upon as signs, and made as tokens for objects and ideas. That is why a language is closely related to the developmental stage of the society which it serves. When the society develops, the language also widens its circle to cope with it. In this manner, languages develop and widen their circles in direct relation with the development stages of the respective societies.

Speech makes others understand what is in the mind of the speaker, through the medium of combined sounds; these sounds have been agreed upon, by the speaker and the listener, as tokens and signs to convey certain ideas.

It follows that man develops speech when he is with other men.

(Also, some animals who live together in colonies, and who have voices, use some particular sounds to express some particular feelings. This may be called their speech.) If there were a man completely cut off from other human beings, he would not need any speech, because there would be no need to communicate with others. Likewise, other creatures, who do not need any society or co-operation in their existences, do not need speech; two examples of this category are the angels and Satan.

It is certain that the speech of Allāh does not emanate from Him as it does with us. The human voice issues from the larynx and arrives at particular sounds by movements of the tongue, teeth, jaws and lips, and interaction between them. And, what is more, our speech is only a sign or token which we have agreed upon; sounds, *per se,* have no value or meaning if there be no prior agreement as to what they mean. But Allāh is too great in splendour and too high in glory to have any limb or organ, or to need help from such things as words, which have no real worth at all — whose value depends upon the agreement of the speaker and the listener. Allāh has said: *Nothing is like a likeness of Him* (42:11).

Still, Allāh in the verse mentioned earlier, (*And it is not for any man that Allāh should speak to him except by revelation . . .* — 42:51), confirms for Himself the reality of speaking, although He disallows for Himself that speaking with which we are familiar. Allāh dissociates Himself from that speech which is known to us and whose only value is that of a token or sign — which depends on agreed upon meanings. But He confirms speech for Himself with its particular effect. As the particular effect is the same, that is, making the other party understand the message, it can be called ‘‘speech’’ although it has no resemblance to our speech. It is like the words, scale, lamp and armament, which were made in old days for certain primitive tools and implements, and are now equally correctly used for new types of machine scales, electric bulbs and modern military hardware, because their effects are the same, even though the shapes are completely different.

The method by which Allāh lets His apostles and prophets know what He intends to convey to them is His speech. But we have not been told what is its reality and how it happens. But, in any case, its effect is the same: making the listener understand the intended message.

Divine speech is a divine action, like His other actions — giving life

and death, sustaining, guiding, forgiving, etc. In other words, it is an attribute of action, not an attribute of person like knowledge, power and life. (The attributes of persons are not other than the person-himself). As ‘‘speaking’’ is an attribute of action, like other such attributes, it may be described in terms of space and time. Allāh has said: *And when Mūsā came to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: ‘‘My Lord: show me* (Thyself), *so that I may look upon Thee.’’ He said: ‘‘You can never see Me’’* (7:143); *. . . and indeed I created you before when you were nothing* (19:9); *. . . then Allāh said to them, Die;* (and thereafter) *He gave them life* (2:243); *We give sustenance to you and to them* (6:151); *. . Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (20:50); *then He turned to the* (mercifully) *that they might turn* (to Him) (9:118). In these verses the speech of Allāh is qualified by the time and the place of its occurrence, like His other actions, e.g., creating, giving death, life and sustenance, guiding and turning towards His servants with mercy.

This explanation is enough for *tafsīr*, which is the subject of our book. We shall comment shortly afterwards on theological disputes and philosophical arguments concerning this topic.

Here another aspect of this subject should be looked into. Allāh has not used the words ‘‘speech’’ and ‘‘speaking’’ except about His talk with human beings. Of course, ‘‘word’’ and ‘‘words’’ have been used in other contexts. He has said: *The Massiah, ‘Īsā son of Maryam is but an apostle of Allāh and His word which He communicated to Maryam* (4:171). Here, ‘‘word’’ has been used for a human being himself. Also He says: *And the word of your Lord that is the highest* (9: 40); *And the word of your Lord has been accomplished truly and justly* (6:115); *. . . the words of Allāh will not come to an end* (31:27). In these verses, ‘‘word’’ and ‘‘words’’ mean the decree of Allāh, or some sort of creation.

The word, ‘‘saying’’, has been used by Allāh referring to His talk with human beings as well as with others. He says in connection with His talk:

— with man: *So We said: ‘‘O Adam! Surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife’’* (20:117);

— with angels: *And when your Lord said to the angels: ‘‘I am*

going to place in the earth a khalīfah'' (2:30); *When your Lord said to the angels; ''Surely I am going to create a man from dust''* (38:71);

— with Satan: *He said: ''O Iblīs! what prevented thee that thou shouldst do obeisance to him whom I created with My two hands''* (38:75);

— with inanimate things: *Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it was a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth: ''Come both, willingly or unwillingly.'' They both said: ''We come willingly''* (41:11); *We said: ''O Fire! be cold and a safety to Ibrāhīm''* (21:69); *And it was said: ''O earth! swallow down thy water, and 0 sky! withhold* (thy rain). . .'' (11:44).

All the above, with their diversity, are included in the following two verses:

His command, when He intends anything is only that He says to it: 'Be' and it is (36:82).

. . . when He has decreed a matter He only says to it: 'Be' and it is (19:35).

We find that Allāh uses the word, ''saying'', about His address to those who have reason and hearing power, like man, as well as to inanimate things which do not have such powers (as we understand them) like the earth and the sky. Also, it is clear that the last mentioned two verses are a sort of explanation to the previously mentioned verses.

On pondering on all these aspects, one finds out that the divine ''saying'' means creating a thing to show the intended meaning. So far as the matters of creation are concerned, when Allāh creates a thing and brings it into existence, it exists. And the very thing is a ''saying'' of Allāh, because it, by its existence, shows the particular intention of Allāh for its creation. It is known that when He intends a thing and says to it : 'Be' and it comes into being, no word passes from the Creator to the thing created; there is in fact only the existence of the thing, and nothing else. Therefore, that is the thing created, and also it, in itself, is the word 'Be'. In short, His saying, in matters of creation, is the creation itself, it is nothing separate from it.

In matters other than creation — for example, when He says something to .a man — it means that He creates something which gives that man an inner knowledge of the intended message. It may be by

creating a voice in a body (like in the tree, for His talk with Mūsā; and in the curtain of light, in the case of the Prophet Muḥammad - s.a.w.a.); or by some other method which we do not know, or whose modelity we do not understand.

The same is, more or less, the case of His speaking to the angels or Satan. But there is an important difference.

Unlike our existence, the existence of the angels and Satan is not biological and social. As a result, they do not achieve gradual perceptive perfection as we do. They do not have to make signs and tokens to indicate their intentions. When they want to understand, or make someone else understand, a thing it is not done through the medium of the voice. There is no combined sound, emanating from the larynx with inter-related actions by various parts of the mouth; and, also, there is no hearing, through a hole called the ear, receiving the sound from the air and conveying it through an intricate mechanism to the brain. Still, the reality of ''saying'' exists in both groups — and in their like, if there by any. And, as explained earlier, that reality is ''making the addressee understand the intended message.''

In short, among the angels, as well as among the Satans, there is ''saying'', but not like ours. Likewise, between Allāh and the angels (and between Him and the Satans) there is ''saying'' but not through the medium of voice and word.

In the same way, we may explain the ''saying'' which is attributed in the Qur'ān to the animals. For example, Allāh says: . . . *an ant said: ''O ants! enter into your dwellings . . . ''* (27:18); . . . *then said* (the hoopoe): *''I comprehend that which you do not comprehend, and I have brought to you a sure information from Sheba''* (27:22).

The same meaning may be applied in the cases where Allāh ''says'' or ''reveals'' something to such animals. For example, *And your Lord revealed to the bee,* (saying): *''Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build''* (16:68).

There are some other words synonymous, or near in meaning, to ''saying'' and ''speaking''; for example, revealing, inspiring, informing and relating. Allāh says:

> *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him* . . . (4:163).

And (I swear by) *the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it* (91:7 — 8).

He (the Prophet) *said: ''Informed me the All-knowing, the All-aware''* (66:3).

He relates the truth . . . (6:57).

The explanation, written in the beginning about the speech of Allāh, applies to these words also: There is an actual and factual occurrence which Allāh has named His , speaking, revealing and inspiring etc.; and it has the same effect that speaking, etc. has; it makes no difference whether we know its reality or not. (We shall have some further discussion about Revelation in chapter 42, God willing).

Even though the basic meaning is common to all the abovementioned words, their use is determined by context, and its suitability for the literal meaning. An utterance is called ''speech'' when the main emphasis is on conveying the message to the listerner's mind; that is why this word had been used when Allāh wanted to show the excellence and high status of the prophets, because, in this context, the emphasis is on communicating which naturally draws the attention to the recipient of the communication. It is called ''saying'' when the main attention is on the intended meaning; and it is for this reason that the creative and legislative decrees and commandments are called ''saying'': *He said, ''The truth then it is and the truth do I speak, that I will most certainly fill hell with thee and with those of them who follow thee, all''* (38:84 — 85). And it is called ''revelation'' when it is hidden from others; and, therefore, the communication of the message to the prophets is named thus: *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him . . .* (4:163).

Second: How is the word ''speaking'' used? In the beginning, words were made for phenomena which can be perceived by one of the five senses. Gradually the meanings shifted towards those meaning which could be perceived by the mind only. When a word is made for a material thing is used for a mental process or a metaphysical meaning, it is in the beginning done with allegorical sense; but the continued use makes the latter its real meaning. Likewise, the advancement of civilization and technology amends, improves and changes the tools and implements

which are used by man. But even with such continuous changes and improvements, the name does not change. In old days, a ‘‘lamp’’ was a metal or earthen receptacle containing oil or fat in which a wick was placed and then lighted for illumination at night. From stage to stage it changed shape, technique and source of light; and now we have these electric bulbs, in which not a single thing of the original ‘‘lamp’’ remains. Still, we call it and similar other things ‘‘lamp’’ because the purpose is the same; this apparatus illuminates the night as the original lamp did. So long as this basic purpose is served by a new apparatus the original name, ‘‘lamp’’, is transferred to it in reality, not allegorically, even if all appearances have changed.

This example shows that a word is easily transferred to a change or new shape of the original form if the purpose of the original remains unchanged, and that this also will be its ‘‘real’’, and not ‘‘allegorical’’, meaning. Today, there are thousands and thousands of old names used for new items, and these names are treated as their real ones, not allegorical; because, in spite of radical changes in shapes and techniques, the original purpose has remained intact. Likewise, in every language there are countless words which were made for material things, and were later used for metaphysical objects — in reality, not as an allegory.

It shows that when the words ‘‘speaking’’ and ‘‘saying’’ are used in places where the effect is ‘‘letting the audience know the message’’ they are used in their real meaning. It is for this reason that we said earlier that when ‘‘saying’’ or ‘‘speaking’’ was attributed to Allāh, it was used in its real sense. It is the same with other words which are used sometimes for Allāh, and at other times for human beings, like life, knowledge, will, giving, withholding, etc. As the net result and effect of these words is found in the person and actions of Allāh, they are attributed to Him in their real meanings, even though their modelity and other aspects are totally different from what we understand from these words.

The same is the explanation of ‘‘exalting the apostles by degrees of rank’’. This exalting is a real thing, and not just a thing found in the mind of the speaker. We have already explained the difference between real existence and the existence in mind, under the heading ‘‘Knowledge and Action’’ under verse 2:213. We gave there the example of the phrase ‘‘a man who is president’’. Now ‘‘a man’’ has a real existence, but his ‘‘being president’’ is a thing found in the minds of people only. Such

aspects have no existence outside the mind.

Many sincere men of religion have fallen into the error of thinking that this exalting by Allāh is also like the above-mentioned presidency. Once they had committed themselves to this explanation, they had to say that the effects of that exalting (for example, the things of the next world — paradise, hell, the questioning, the reckoning etc.) had the same relationship with this exalting as the parapharnalia of the presidency have with the said office — that the said relationship was, so to say, in the mind of the speaker only; it had no existence outside. They did not realize that such an explanation lowers the dignity of God, reducing Him to a position of sub-ordinate to His own suppositions and thoughts — Glorified is He from such sacrilegious imputations. Such people, because of that basic error, are not ready to believe that the prophets of Allāh and His chosen servants have been give some really-existing spiritual perfections, which the Qur'ān and the traditions clearly attributed to them; these people try to interpret such verses and traditions in such a way as to rob them of their real existence and turn them into the above-mentioned things which exist only in the mind.

QUR'ĀN: *And We gave clear* (evidence) *to 'Īsā, son of Maryam, and strengthened him with the holy spirit:* In this sentence, the original ''first person'' pronouns have been used; and we have already explained the reason for this. A question arises as to why only 'Īsā, and no other prophet, has been mentioned here by name. The reason is this: What has been mentioned in his excellence — giving clear evidence and strengthening with the holy spirit — are things common to all apostles. Allāh says: *Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear evidence* (57:25); *He sends down the angels with spirit by His commandments on whom He pleases of His servants,* (saying): *Give the warning . . .* (16:2).

But these otherwise common factors were found in 'Īsā in a rather special way. All his miracles — raising the dead, creating the bird by breathing into it, giving sight to the blind, curing lepers and giving information of the unseen — had a very special relation with the life and the spirit. Therefore, those factors were mentioned as the special excellence of 'Īsā, and his name was clearly mentioned. Had Allāh only said, ''and We gave clear evidence to some of them and strengthened him with the holy spirit'', it would not have pointed especially to 'Īsā,

because, as you know, these two factors were common to all apostles. It was necessary to mention the name to show that these were given to ʻĪsā in a rather special way. Moreover, ʻĪsā himself was a clear evidence of the power of Allāh, as he was born without a father. Allāh says: *and made her* (Maryam) *and her son a sign for the worlds* (21:91). Thus, the son and his mother together were the signs of Allāh, and it was their special distinction.

QUR'ĀN: *And if Allāh had pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another after clear arguments had come to them'':* Here Allāh again refers to Himself in the third person, because the context demands a clear declaration that the divine will cannot be obstructed and His power cannot be foiled. All happenings, in all their positive and negative aspects, are under divine control and authority. It is the attribute of godship which emanates unlimited power and unrestricted authority; and that is why the divine name, Allāh, had to be clearly mentioned to emphasize the fact that if Allāh had so willed, they would not have fought. This force could not be produced by saying, ''if We had so willed . . .'' And it is for the same reason that the divine name, and not the pronoun, has been repeated in the next sentences, ''and if Allāh had so pleased they would not have fought'', and ''Allāh does what He intends''.

QUR'ĀN: *But they differed; so there were some of them who believed and others who denied:* We have already described why Allāh attributed the difference to the people, and not to Himself. He has declared several times that the difference in belief and disbelief appeared among people because of their envy, rebellion and evil desire; and such things cannot be attributed to Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *And if Allāh had so pleased they would not have fought one with another, but Allāh does what He intends:* We have already explained this. If Allāh had so wished, ie could have disconnected the cause, the difference, from its effect, the fighting. But Allāh does what He intends, and He has decided that the difference will cause the fighting, according to the system of cause and effect which He has decreed in this world.

In short, the verse says that the apostles sent by Allāh are His servants, very near to Him, above mankind in their excellence; they have

been exlated, some above others, in the degrees of their ranks but they all equally share the basic excellence of apostleship. They came to their peoples with clear, arguments and miracles; they clearly pronounced the truth and unmistakably showed the right path. It might have been expected that their followers, after them, would not have abandon the unity, love and mutual regard in the cause of the religion of Allāh. But there was another factor, lurking about, and that was their envy and rebellion, which divided them up into believers and non-believers; and this difference spread and affected all aspects of their lives. If Allāh had so wished, He could have taken away the causative power of this difference, and then it would not have led to fighting. But He did not wish so, and let the system of cause and effect take its course; and He brings out what He wishes.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! Spend . . . and the unbelievers — they are unjust:* The meaning is quite clear. The last sentence implies that not spending in the way of Allāh is unbelief and injustice.

TRADITIONS

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh: *These apostles . . .:* ''There is in this (verse) that which may be a proof that the companions of Muḥammad did differ (among themselves) after him, so there were some of them who believed and others who disbelieved.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah said: ''I was standing with the Leader of the faithfuls, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) on the day of the Camel. There came a man and stood before him and said: 'O Leader of the faithfuls! These people (i.e., the enemies) said *takbīr* (*Allāhu Akbar*), and we said it; and they said *tahlīl* (*lā ilāha illa 'llāh*) and we said it; and they prayed and we prayed. Then, on what (ground) are we fighting them?' He ('Alī - a.s.) replied: 'On (the basis of) this verse: *These apostles, We have made some of them to excel others; among them are some to whom Allāh spoke and some of them He exalted by degree* (of rank); *and We gave clear* (evidence) *to 'Īsā, son of Maryam, and strengthened him with the holy spirit. And if Allāh had pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another — so* we are those after them — *but they*

differed; so there were some of them who believed and others who disbelieved; and if Allāh had so pleased they would not have fought one with another, but Allāh does what He intends. So we are those who believed and they are those who disbelieved.' Thereupon, the man said: 'These people are unbelievers, by the Lord of the Ka'bah!' Then he attacked and fought them until he was killed; may Allāh have mercy on him!'' (*at-Tafsīr,* of al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: This event has been narrated by al-Mufīd in his *al-Amālī,* and by ash-Shaykh in his book of the same name, and by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr.* This tradition shows that 'Alī (a.s.) interpreted ''disbelief'' in this verse in a general sense, which includes hidden, disbelief as well as open disbelief which is termed *al-kufr* (الكُفْرُ = infidelity) in Islam and with which Islam deals in a special way. It is well-known from traditions and history that 'Alī (a.s.) did not treat his opponents (in the battles of the Camel, Ṣiffīn and Nahrawān) like any group of the unbelievers — they were not dealt with like unbelievers, whether from the people of the book or others, nor like the apostates. The only implication of this special treatment is that he thought them to be unbelievers in their hearts but not openly. And he (a.s.) used to say: ''I fight against them on the interpretation (of the Qur'ān), not on (its) revelation.''

The verse clearly supports this meaning. It says that the clear evidence brought by the apostles did not prevent the fighting of their followers because they differed among themselves; and such a difference cannot be removed by those arguments and evidence because it is not based on reason but on envy and rebellion. The verse thus describes the phenomenon mentioned in the following verses:

> *And peple were naught but a single nation, then they disagreed; and had not a word already gone forth from your Lord, the matter would have certainly been decided between them in respect of that concerning which they disagree* (10:19).
>
> *Mankind was but one people, so Allāh sent the prophets . . . And none differed about it but the very people who were given it after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves; whereupon Allāh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed* (2:213).

. . . and they shall continue to differ, except those on whom your Lord has mercy . . . (11:118 — 119).

All this shows that difference about the book, that is, about the religion, between the followers of the apostles, after the departure of those apostles, cannot be avoided. Allāh says particularly about this *ummah: Or do you think that you would enter the Garden while yet the like of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you?* (2:214). And He informs us of the complaint of His Apostle on the Day of Resurrection: *And the Apostle cried out: ''O my Lord! surely my people treated this Qur'ān as a forsaken thing''* (25:30). In these, and many other verses, this factor has been explicitly or implicitly mentioned.

And it is a fact that difference in the Muslim *ummah* started in the days of the companions. History and *mutawātir* and near *mutawātir* traditions clearly show that, in the troubles and discords which started soon after the Apostle, the companions themselves dealt with each other in this same way. In their own eyes they were treading the path of the discord and difference mentioned in these verses. And none of them claimed that he was above any difference on account of *'iṣmah* (sinlessness) or good tidings given to him by the Apostle, or *ijtihād,* nor did anyone say that he was not included in these verses. (We do not include *Ahlu 'l-bayt* of the Prophet in the term 'companion'.) More details of this difference is beyond the scope of this book.

al-Mufīd narrates in his *al-Amālī* from Abū Basīr that he said: ''I heard Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) say: 'Allāh, Great is His name, was ever Omniscient in His person and there was nothing to be known; and He was ever Omnipotent in His person and there was nothing to be ordained.' I said: 'May I be your ransom! Was He then ever Speaking?' He said: 'Speech is created. There was Allāh and He was not speaking, then He created speech.' ''

Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā said: ''Abū Qurrah, the traditionalist, asked ar-Riḍā (a.s.) and said: 'Tell me, may I be your ransom! About Allāh's speaking to Mūsā.' He (the Imām) said: 'Allāh knows better in which language He spoke to him.' Abū Qurrah caught his own tongue and said: 'I am asking you about this tongue.' Thereupon Abu '1-Ḥasan (a.s.) said: 'Glorified is Allāh from what you say! And may Allāh protect you (from

thinking) that He might resemble His creatures or might speak like they speak; rather, He, Golorified be He, there is nothing like Him, nor there is any speaker or doer like Him.' (Abū Qurrah) said: 'How?' (The Imām) said: 'The speech of Allāh with His creature is not like the speech of a creature with another creature; and He does not speak with a mouth and tongue; rather He says to it: 'Be' and it is. It was by His will He addressed (His) command and prohibition to Mūsā without any meditation in His Self.' '' (*al-Iḥtijāj*)

Alī (a.s.) said in a sermon: ''Speaking, not by meditation, Wishing, not by contemplation.'' (*Nahju 'l-balāghah*)

In the same book, he ('Alī-a.s.) says, *inter alia,* in another sermon: ''He Who spoke to Mūsā (directly) speaking, and showed him of His great signs, without limbs and organs and without implements, sound or uvula.''

The author says: The traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* with this meaning are numerous, and all of them show that the speech of Allāh (to use the terminology of the Qur'ān and *sunnah*) is an attribute of action, and not an attribute of Person.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SPEECH OF ALLĀH

Philosophers point out that when a speaker conveys his thought to the mind of a hearer, by means of words, it is popularly called speech and talk, and its net result is that the hearer understands and the speaker is understood. The reality of speech is ''what conveys an idea to the other party''; rather particulars — the medium of words, and their being produced by the passage of air through the larynx, mouth, and lips and their entering the ears of the hearer — are inconsequential; they are not essential to the reality of speech. Whatever describes the intended meaning is speech; even the movement of your hand to call someone to your side or to indicate to him to sit down, etc. is your speech, albeit without your uttering a single word.

Taking this as their basis, the philosophers say: the things found in the universe depend on their causes for their existence and for their

characteristics. By their existence they pronounce the existence of their causes; and by their characteristics and faculties they show the characteristics and faculties of their causes. Therefore, every ‘‘effect’’ is a speech for its cause, and by this speech that cause talks about its own perfection.

And all existing things taken separately or jointly, and their aggregate, the universe, are, in this way, the speech of God; by this speech, God describes His perfect attributes which are otherwise hidden from us. Allāh is the Creator of the universe, and the universe is His creation. In the same manner, He speaks via the medium of the universe about His names and attributes, and the universe is His speech.

They go even further: They say that deep thinking leads one to the belief that the ultimate ‘‘speech’’ is God Himself. We say that the universe leads to the Creator; but leading is a quality of existence and nothing in the universe exists on its own. Every thing exists because God has given it existence. When a thing leads to the Creator, it does so by the existence and qualities given to it by the Creator. In other words, it is the Creator Himself Who leads to Himself through His creation. In the same way, it is He Himself Who leads to His creation. He Himself leads us to Himself; in this sense, He is the speech and the Speaker and the meaning; and at this stage, we may say that His speech is His person or an attribute of His person. Also, He Himself, by creating the universe, leads us to His power and wisdom; the universe is, thus, His speech to lead us to the Creator; and in this sense, speech (i.e., the universe) is an attribute of His action.

The author says: Quite apart from the question of the correctness of this interpretation, the words of the Qur’ān do not support it.

Speech, as mentioned in the Qur’ān and *sunnah*, is something different from the Speaker and the hearer. Allāh says: *Among them are some to whom Allāh spoke* (2:253); *and Allāh spoke to Mūsā* (directly) *speaking* (4:164); *and Allāh said: ‘‘O ‘Īsā!’’* (3:55); *and We said: ‘‘O Ādam!’’* (2:35); *Surely We have revealed to you* (4:163); *informed me the All-knowing, the All-aware* (66:3); there are numerous similar verses. Obviously, the speech or talk mentioned in them cannot mean the Person of Allāh by any stretch of imagination.

DISCUSSION OF SPEECH IN THEOLOGY: This subject was

among the very first points of contention in the Muslim world; and that is why theology was named *'ilmu 'l-kalām* (عِلْمُ الْكَلاَم = the knowledge of speech) in Islam. The question which split the Muslim scholars was whether the speech of Allāh was eternal.

The Ash'arites said that it was eternal. But they invented a new meaning for 'speech'. According to them, 'speech' means the thought and meaning which is found in the mind of the speaker, and the spoken word is a mere manifestation of that 'speech'. They named it *al-kalāmu 'n-nafsī* (الْكَلاَمُ النَّفْسِيُّ) that is, the speech found in the person. Armed with this new meaning, they said that the ideas and thoughts of Allāh are nothing more or less than the Knowledge of Allāh. And, as the knowledge of Allāh, they are self-existent, eternal. So far as the spoken words are concerned, they are obviously created, and separate from the person of Allāh.

The Mu'tazilites said that it was created. And they interpreted 'speech' as the words which are spoken and which show the meanings for which they are made. They said that this was the meaning of 'speech' as understood by all; and what the Ash'arites had named ''the speech found in the person'' is not speech; it is knowledge. In other words, when we talk, we do not find in our minds anything other than the mental pictures or the meanings which we express in our words. If that mental picture is called ''the speech found in the person'' then it is knowledge and nothing else. And if they use this name for something else, that something is unknown to us all.

The Ash'arites say that it is possible to use two or more adjectives or names for a single thing, depending on the aspect or aspects which are to be emphasized. Now, if we think about that mental picture in terms of its being the picture of a truth or fact, then it will be called ''knowledge''; and if we look at it as a picture which can be transmitted to others, then it will be called ''speech''.

The author says: All this conflict and polemic is quite beside the point. The Knowledge of Allāh, whether its meaning, is *al-'ilmu 'l-ḥūḍūrī* (العِلْمُ الْحُضُوْرِيُّ), that is, the knowledge which is always present; the knowledge which is not separate from the person of Allāh.

And what these theologians, the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites, are arguing and talking about is *al-'ilmu 'l-ḥuṣūlī'* (العِلْمُ الْحُصُولِيُّ), that is, the knowledge which is acquired. Such knowledge is acquired when ideas

are produced in the mind; these ideas do not exist outside the mind. And we have proved somewhere else that ideas and quiddities are abstract things which do not exist outside the minds of human bings (and of some animals which perform their duties of life with the help of the five senses and some feelings).

Allāh, High and Glorified is He, is too great to be attributed with a ‘‘mind’’ with which He might perceive ideas and quiddities, which are not found outside the imagination of the perceiver. Otherwise, He would become a compound or composed thing and would be liable to transitory phases; and even His speech would have the potentiality to be wrong. Great and Glorified is He from such things.

It is clear from the above explanation that the polemics of the Muslim theologians are totally beside the point. What they were talking about was a kind of acquired knowledge which is beneath Divine dignity. And the ever-present and eternal Knowledge of Allāh is not under dispute as it is not called ‘‘speech’’ even by the Ash‘arites.

Further details, as to how He knows the ideas which we express in words, will be given in a more appropriate place.

* * * * *

اللهُ لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لاَ تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلاَ نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰاتِ
وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا
خَلْفَهُمْ وَلاَ يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلاَّ بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمٰوَاتِ
وَالأَرْضَ وَلاَ يَؤُدُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ـ ٢٥٥ .

ALLĀH *is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtak e Him nor sleep; whatever is the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His Permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything of His Knowledge except what He pleases; His Chair* (Knowledge) *extends over the heavens and the earth; and the preservation of them both tires Him not; and He is the Most High, the Great* (2:255).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist:* In the chapter of the Opening, some explanation was given of the name, ''Allāh'', and it was mentioned that it ultimately means ''The Being Who concentrates in

Himself all the attributes of perfection''; it makes no difference whether it is derived from *alaha 'r-rajul* (اَلَهَ الرَّجُلُ = the man was bewildered; yearned for) or from *alaha* (اَلَهَ = worshipped). ''He besides Whom there is no god'': It has been explained under verse 2:163. Its literal translation is, ''there is no god except He''. It shows that other deities worshipped besides Allāh, in fact have no existence at all.

''Ever-living'': *''al-ḥayy''* (اَلحَيُّ) is on a paradigm which denotes perpetuity; the word, therefore, means not only living but Ever-living. Man, in the very beginning, found out that there were two kinds of things around him: first, those things whose condition do not change as long as they exist, like stones and other such materials; second, those which go on changing, like trees, animals and man himself. He also found that after sometimes such things start to deteriorate, and even lose consciousness; still they exist; until at a certain point when their existence come to an end. Thus he realized that there was something else, besides the senses, which keeps one alive and which is the source of all the senses and their perceptions. He called it ''life'', and its absence was named ''death''. It is life which is the source of knowledge (perception) and power.

Allāh has mentioned this life in many places as an accepted fact: *Know that Allāh gives life to the earth after its death* (29:17); *And among His signs is this, that you see the earth still, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells; most surely He who gives it life is the Giver of life to the dead* (41:39); *Neither are the living and the dead alike* (35:22); *We have made of water every thing living* (21:30). These verses describe all three kinds of living things, the vegetable, the animal and the human being.

Likewise, Allāh describes various types of life; . . . *and are pleased with the world's life and are content with it* . . . (10:7); *They shall say: ''Our Lord! twice didst Thou make us subject to death and twice hast Thou given us life* . . . (40:11). The two lives refered to in this verse are the life of *al-barzakh* (اَلبَرْزَخُ = the period after death in this world and before the Dayof Resurrection) and the life on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, there are various types of life, as there are various types of living things.

Although Allāh mentions the life of this world as an accepted fact, in various other verses of the Qur'ān He describes it as an unsound,

imperfect and insignificant thing, as He says: . . . *this world's life is nothing compared with hereafter but* (only a) *means* (13:26); . . . *coveting the* (transitory) *goods of this world's life* . . . (4:94); . . . *desiring the adornments of this world's life* . . . (18:28); *And this world's life is naught but a play and an idle sport* . . . (6:32); . . . *and this world's life is naught but means of deception* (57:20). So these are the attributes used for this world's life. It is a means, and a means is sought to obtain an end and to reach a goal, it is not an end in itself. It is a transitory thing, and transitory things go away soon. It is an adornment, and an adornment is used to attract eyes towards the things adorned: in other words, what catches the eyes is not the real thing, and the real thing does not attract the eyes. It is a play, and a play keeps you oblivious of the really important responsibilities. It is a vain sport, and a vain sport is indulged in for imaginary, not real, reasons. And it is a means of deception, and such a thing deceives man.

A comprehensive verse, which also explains the above-mentioned ones, is the following:

> *And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play; and as for the next abode, the most surely is the life — did they but know!* (29:64).

The life of this world, in comparison to the life hereafter is not a real life, as the above-mentioned verse shows. It is transitory, while the life hereafter is the real life, because that life will not end; death will not reach it. Allāh says: . . . *in security; they shall not taste therein death except the first death* (44:55 — 56); *They shall have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet* (50:35).

Thus, there will be no death in the life hereafter, and there shall be no deficiency in that life nor there shall be any annoyance for them. But the first factor, that is, security is the basic characteristic of that real life.

The life hereafter, therefore, is the real life because there is no death in it; and, as Allāh Himself has declared in many other verses, it is He Who controls it. Obviously, the life hereafer is also dependent and not independent. It has not got this characteristic of eternity by itself; it is a gift given to it by God.

Going a step further, it will be realized that the real life is only that which 'cannot' be overtaken by death. The life hereafter 'will not' be overtaken by death; but it 'can' be overtaken, if God so pleases. Therefore, that also is not ''real'' life. Real life is that in which non-existence at any stage is impossible; which is essential being; in other words, where life is not acquired by the person, but the person is life itself and life is the person himself. Allāh says: *and rely on the Ever-living Who dies not* (25:58). Thus, the only real life is Divine Life, Essential Being.

The above discourse shows that the exclusiveness in the verse: *He is the Living, there is no god but He* (40:65) is real, not relative: In reality, He is the only Living One, because real life, unconquered by death or deterioration, is His alone.

In the verse under discussion, as in a similar verse: *Allāh there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting* . . .(3:2), the word ''Allāh'' is the subject, ''there is no god but He'' is its first predicate, ''the Ever-living'' is the second and ''the Self-subsisting . . .'' the third predicate. Accordingly, the meaning would be ''Allāh is the Ever-living . . .''; and life would be reserved for Allāh only; others would get life only when He bestows it on them.

''al-Qayyūm'' (الْقَيُّوْمُ = the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist) is on the paradigm of *fay'ūl* (فَيْعُوْلُ), from the verb *al-qiyām* (الْقِيَامُ = to stand); as is *al-qayyām* (الْقَيَّامُ) on the paradigm of *fay'āl* (فَيْعَال), in the same meaning. It is a paradigm which is used to show the maximum degree of a quality. The original meaning of the verb (to stand) has, by association, been extended and now it is used for protecting a thing, accomplishing a task and managing it, bringing up a thing, looking after it and having power over it. Allāh clearly said that He ''stands'' with the affairs of His creation, that is, watches it, looks after it and brings it up and has all power over it. He says: *Is it He then who stands over* (i.e., watches) *every soul as to what it earns?* (13:33). Another verse is more comprehensive: *Allāh bears witness that there is no god but He* (and so do the angels and those possessed of knowledge), *standing with* (maintaining) *justice, there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise* (3:18). He maintains His creation with justice. He does not give and does not withhold but with justice — and existence is nothing except giving

and withholding. He gives to everything what it deserves. Lastly, He declares that this maintaining with justice is according to His two great names, the Mighty, the Wise: by His Might He maintains every thing; and by His Wisdom He, does justice to it.

Allāh is the origin of every thing. Existence as well as all attributes, qualities and the effects of every thing begin from Him. All other ‘‘origins’’ originates from Him. He stands over every thing in the real and comprehensive sense of ‘‘standing’’, as explained above. There is no weakness or flaw in His ‘‘standing’’; and other things cannot stand except by Him. This attribute is reserved for Him in both ways: ‘‘Standing’’. cannot be found except in Allāh, and Allāh is never anything but standing. The former is understood by the syntax of the sentence: Allāh is the ‘‘Standing’’. The latter is understood by the next sentence: ‘‘Slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep’’.

This discourse leads us to believe that the name *al-qayyūm* (The Standing) is the basis for all the divine names which refer to His attributes of action in any way, like the Creator, the Sustainer, the Originator, the Resurrector, the Bestower of life, the Giver of death, the Forgiver, the Compassionate, the Affectionate and so on.

QUR’ĀN: *Slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep: ‘‘as-Sinah’’* (السِّنَةُ) means drowsiness; *‘‘an-nawm’’*(النَّوْمُ) is sleep, the inert condition in which the muscles are relaxed and the consciousness suppressed by natural factors in the body of an animal or a human being. *‘‘ar-Ru’yā’’* (الرُّؤْيَا = dream) is something else; it is the vision which passes through the mind in sleep.

A criticism has been levelled against this sentence that is contrary to the sequence demanded by rhetoric: when two things are thus mentioned [i]n an affirmative sentence the weaker point is mentioned first and then one progress to the stronger one; for example, we say, ‘‘Zayd can carry a load of fifty kilogram, even a hundred.’’ But in a negative sentence the sequence is reversed; it goes from stronger to weaker point; for example, ‘‘He cannot carry a load of a hundred kilogram, let alone fifty’’; ‘‘he does not spend hundreds of pounds on himself, let alone tens.’’ According to this rule, as the sentence here is negative, it should have been written thus: ‘‘Sleep does not overtake Him nor slumber’’.

REPLY: The sequence does not always follow the affirmativeness or

negativeness of the sentence. Look, for example, as the sentence, ‘‘He is too weak to carry a load of twenty kilogram or even ten.’’ It is an affirmative sentence, and still the stronger point comes first. It would be against the norms of rhetoric, if the weaker point, that is, 10 kilogram were mentioned first. In fact, the only correct procedure is to look at the context and see what it demands. Now, look at this Qur’ānic sentence. Sleep is more contrary to the attribute of ‘‘Standing’’ in comparison to slumber. Therefore, eloquence demanded that, first, slumber be denied, and. then the stronger point, sleep, be negated. The meaning, thus, will be: The weaker factor (slumber) has no effect on His power and standing, nor does even the stronger one (sleep).

QUR’ĀN: *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?:* The perfect and comprehensive ‘‘Standing’’ of Allāh means that He owns, in real ownership, the heavens and the earth and what is in them. That is why His attribute of ‘‘Standing’’ is followed here by a declaration of that ownership. It was for the same reason that the attribute of ‘‘Standing’’ was joined with the declaration of His Oneness: His Oneness would not be complete if He were not ‘‘Standing’’.

There are two sentences here, both of which are followed by other sentences to remove chances of misunderstandings. The sentence, ‘‘whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His’’, is followed by the sentence, ‘‘who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?’’ And the next sentence, ‘‘He knows what is before them and what is behind them’’, is followed by the words, ‘‘and they cannot comprehend anything of His Knowledge except what He pleases.’’

‘‘Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His’’: Allāh owns everything, and has authority over them all. Things and all their attributes, properties and traits exist because of God and by Him. The verse, from the word ‘‘the Self-subsisting’’ upto this sentence, proves that the total authority is Allāh’s alone. There is no work connected with anything, right from its existence upto its ultimate end, that is not done by Him and does not proceed from Him.

On realizing this eternal truth, one might wonder about the system of ‘‘cause-and-effect’’ prevalent in this world. What is the significance of

these causes? How could they have any influence on any effect when nothing has any effect or power except Allāh?

The sentence, ‘‘who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?’’ answers this speculation. These causes are intermediaries in such affairs. In other words, they are intercessors who cause the bringing of a thing or effect into being, by the permission of Allāh. Intercession means being an intermediary in bringing about a good or averting an evil. There is no doubt that an intercessor has some influence on the affairs of the thing for which he intercedes. Such influence could be contrary to the complete authority and total sovereignty of Allāh, had it not been based on the permission of Allāh Himself. But every cause draws its effectiveness only from the decree of Allāh Himself. There is no cause and no instrument which is independent of the will of Allāh. Every cause is a cause, because Allāh has made it so. Therefore, whatever effect and influence it has on anything is in fact done by Allāh. Ultimately, there is no authority except that of Allāh, and no ‘‘standing’’ except His.

As already explained, intercession means being an intermediary in the world of cause and effect — it may be a creative intercession, that is, being an intermediary cause of creation; or a legislative intercession, that is, interceding in the award of recompense on the Day of Judgement, as is clearly mentioned in the Qur’ān and *sunnah* (as was described in the commentary on verse 2:48). The sentence, ‘‘who is he that can intercede with Him . . .’’ is preceded by a description of His ‘‘Standing’’ and total authority; these two attributes cover His power and authority in both creation and legislation. Therefore, the intercession mentioned in this sentence must cover both creative and legislative intercessions.

The context of this verse, so far as intercession is concerned, is like the following verses: *Surely your Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is firmly established on the ‘Arsh* (Throne) *regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after His permission; this is Allāh, your Lord; therefore worship Him; will you not then ponder?* (10:3); *Allāh is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods, and He is firmly established on the ‘Arsh* (Throne); *you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor; will you not then ponder?* (32:4). It was

described in the topic of intercession that it includes creative causation as well as legislative intercession. Every cause intercedes with Allāh for its effect, and becomes a medium for bestowing the grace of existence on it, by adhering to the divine attributes of grace and mercy. The system of ‘‘cause-and-effect’’ is found in intercession as well as in prayer and invocation. Allāh says: *All those who are in the heavens and the earth do beseech Him; every day He is in a* (new) *splendour* (55:29) ; *And He gave you of all that you ask Him* (14:34). This aspect has been described in the commentary on verse 2:186.

QUR’ĀN: *He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases:* The sentence comes after the topic of intercession, and in its context it is like the following verses: *Nay! They are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves, and for fear of Him they tremble* (21:26 — 28).

Apparently, the pronouns of the third person plural in the verse under discussion refer to the intercessors, who are implied in the preceding sentence. To say that ‘‘He knows what is before them and what is behind them’’ is to say that He encompasses them completely. He has given them permission to intercede; but it does not mean that they can do anything without His prior permission. Nor may others take undue advantage of that intercession.

The following two verses throw light on the same subject: *And we do not come down but by the command of your Lord; His is whatever is before us and whatever is behind us and whatever is between these, and your Lord is not forgetful* (19:64); *The Knower of the unseen! So He does not reveal His secret to any, except to him whom He chooses of an apostle; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him, so that He may know that they have indeed delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them and He takes account of every thing* (72:26 — 28). These two verses show that Allāh encompasses the angels and the prophets, so that they cannot do anything without His permission; they cannot descend unless bidden to do so, and cannot deliver except what He wishes them to deliver. It may be inferred

that ‘‘what is before them’’ refers to what is seen by them; and ‘‘what is behind them’’ to what is not seen by them and is far away from them. In other words, the two phrases refer to the seen and the unseen. In short, the sentence says that Allāh knows very well what is present with them and what is yet to come to them; and then the talk is completed by the words, ‘‘and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases’’. He knows them and encompasses what they know, but they cannot comprehend His knowledge except what He pleases.

We have proved that the intercessor, in this verse, means both creative causes and legislative interceders. The pronouns used in three places in this verse are those of the third person plural, masculine gender, normally used for rational beings. Someone might think that these pronouns could not be used for creative causes (as these causes are not ‘‘people’’ or rational beings). It is not so. Intercession, interceding, glorifying the Creator and offering thanks to Him are normally the acts of rational beings; and for this reason the Qur’ān mostly uses such pronouns even for inert or lifeless things, when it declares them to perform such deeds. Allāh says:. . . *and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification* (17:44); *Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it was vapour, so He said to it and to the earth; Come both willings or unwillingly. They both said. We come willingly* (41:11). In both verses the pronouns of rational beings have been used for ‘‘everything’’ and for the heaven and the earth. There are many similar verses.

The sentence, ‘‘and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases’’, shows total authority and perfect management. Perfect management demands that the subordinate should not know what is to happen next; otherwise, he might try to wriggle out of a forthcoming unpleasant situation, and the plan of the manager might be put in disorder. It is easy to see in the light of the above discussion the import of this sentence: it wants to show that the management of all affairs is in the hands of Allāh only, and it is done by His knowledge and by His control of the intermediary causes which He Himself has created. So far as these intermediary causes are concerned (and especially those with life and intellect), their effectiveness and their knowledge is derived

from His knowledge, will and pleasure — and ultimately is a reflection of divine knowledge and power. And none of them can proceed against the will and decree of Allāh in any way.

The sentence, moreover, shows that knowledge (not ‘‘the thing known’’) is of Allāh only. No creature has any knowledge except what Allāh is pleased to bestow upon him. It is the same as when Allāh has said that power, honour and life belongs to Him only. For example: . . . *and O that those who are unjust could see, when they see the chastisement, that the power is wholly Allāh's, and that Allāh is severe in requitting* (evil) (2:165); *Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allāh* (4:139); *He is the Living, there is no god but He* (40:65). The following verses also may be brought as evidence that knowledge belongs to Allāh only: *surely He is the Knowing, the Wise* (12:83); *and Allāh knows while yo do not know* (3:66). There are many other verses of the same meaning.

The verb of knowledge in the preceding sentence has been changed to the verb of comprehension here and it has raised the verse to a very high plane of eloquence.

QUR'ĀN: *His Chair* (knowledge) *extends over the heavens and the earth: ‘‘al-Kursi’’* (الكُرْسِيُّ) means chair. Metaphorically it sometimes is used for kingdom; thus the chair of king means the sphere of his authority and the region under his sovereignty.

The preceding sentences show that the whole universe belongs to Allāh and is encompassed by His knowledge. This sentence also says that His ‘‘Chair’’ extends over the whole universe. It is reasonable to believe that the extension of the ‘‘Chair’’ refers to all-encompassing divine authority. The ‘‘Chair’’, thus, would mean the divine position by which the heavens and the earth are maintained, possessed, managed and known. Ultimately, the ‘‘Chair’’ would be a degree of divine knowledge. And extension of the chair would mean maintainance and preservation of everything that is in the heavens and in the earth, with all its characteristics; and that is why the sentence is followed by the words, ‘‘and the preservation of them both tires Him not.’’

QUR'ĀN: ‘‘and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great’’*: ‘‘al-Awd’’* (الأَوْدُ) means to tire, to weigh down, to depress. Although, the objective pronoun after the verb ‘‘tires’’

is generally taken to refer to ‘‘Allāh’’ (as is seen in the translation), equally correctly it may be taken to refer to the ‘‘Chair’’ and then it would be translated as ‘‘tires it not’’. The declaration at the end of the verse that ‘the preservation of the heavens and the earth tires Him not’ is befitting to its beginning: ‘‘Slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep’’.

This verse, in short, says that there is no god except Allāh, for Him is Life and to Him belongs the attribute of *al-qayyūmiyyah* (الْقَيُّوْمِيَّةُ = Standing, Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist), in its unrestricted sense without any weakness or defect. That is why the verse ends on the words, ‘‘and He is Most High, the Great’’. He is Most High: the hands of creatures cannot reach Him and can in no way weaker His authority or enfeeble His being. He is Great: the great number of the creatures does not overwhelm Him, and the magnitude of the heavens and the earths does not tire Him.

This sentence also shows that eminence and greatness in their true sense are for Allāh only. This restriction is real, because eminence and greatness are parts of perfection, and every perfection in its real sense is found in Allāh only. Also, the restriction may have been used to strengthen the claim that the eminence and greatness are reserved for Allāh only — the heavens and the earth are insignificant before His majesty and greatness.

TRADITIONS

al-‘Ayyāshī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.): ‘‘Abū Dharr said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! What is the best of that which has been revealed to you?’ He said: ‘The verse of the ‘‘Chair’’. The seven heavens and the seven earths in the ‘‘Chair’’ are but like a ring thrown in a vast open space.’ Then he said: ‘And surely the excellence of *al-‘Arsh* (الْعَرْشُ = the Throne) over the chair is like that of the open space over the ring.’ ’’

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has quoted the first part of this tradition in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from Ibn Rāhwayh (in his *al-Musnad*) who has narrated it from ‘Awf ibn Mālik from Abū Dharr; and also he has quoted Aḥmad, Ibnu ’ḍ-Ḍarīs and al-Ḥākim (who said that it is correct)

and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Shu'abu'l-'īmān*) who have narrated it from Abū Dharr.

Aḥmad and aṭ-Ṭabarānī have narrated from Abū Amāmah who said: ''I said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! Which (verse) revealed to you is the greatest?' He said: 'Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; the verse of the Chair.' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has also narrated the same thing through al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (in his *Tārīkh*) from Anas from the Prophet.

In the same book he quotes ad-Dārimī who has narrated from Ayfa' ibn 'Abdullāh al-Kalā'ī that he said: ''A man said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! Which verse in the Book of Allāh is the greatest?' He said: 'The verse of the Chair; *Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist . . .*' ''

The author says: This verse was named ''the verse of the Chair'' in the early period of Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet; and was thus described by the Prophet himself as the traditions quoted from him and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* and the companions prove. That this verse was given a special name shows how much importance was attached to it. It could only be because of the highest nobility of its meaning and the elegance and grace of its style. It establishes the pristine belief of the Oneness of God (*Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god*), and then goes on to the attribute of ''standing'' which is the foundation of all His names which describe His attributes of action. Then it gives details of those attributes in all small and big things and affairs of the universe, showing that whatever emanates from His authority is a part of that authority. It is because of these fine points that the traditions have called it ''the greatest verse of the Qur'ān''. It deals in detail with various aspects of monotheism and divine authority. Of course, there are some other verses which deal with this subject, for example; *Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names* (20:8). But it lacks the details which have been given in this verse of the Chair. It is for this reason that some traditions have said that the verse of the Chair is the chief of all the verses of the Qur'ān. See for the proof the tradition narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Abū Hurayrah from the Prophet. Some, other traditions say: Every thing has a summit, and the summit of the Qur'ān is

the verse of the Chair. It has been narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from 'Abdullāh ibn Sinān from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.).

aṭ-Ṭūsī has narrated in his *al-Amālī,* through his chains from Abū Amāmah al-Bāhilī that he heard 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) say: ''I do not think that a man who enters into Islam on attaining wisdom, or was born in Islam (i.e., in a Muslim family) should pass a night's darkness . . .'' (At this juncture Abū Amāmah interrupted by asking, ''and what is the meaning of a night's darkness?'' 'Alī [a.s.] said: ''the whole night'') ''until he recites this verse: *Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god . . . '';* and he recited the complete verse upto the end: *and the preservation of them both tires Him not; and He is the Most High, the Great.* Then he said: ''If you but knew what it is (or, as another version says, ''what is in it'') you would not leave it on any condition. Surely, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'I have been given the verse of the Chair from the treasure (that is) below *al-'Arsh* (the Throne); and no prophet before me was given it:' '' Then 'Alī (a.s.) continued: ''I have not spent a single night, since I heard it from the Messenger of Allāh, without reciting it . . .''

The author says: This has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* quoting 'Ubayd, Ibn Abī Shaybah, ad-Dārimī, Muḥammad ibn Naṣr, Ibnu 'ḍ-Ḍarīs and ad-Daylamī, all from 'Alī (a.s.). There is a multitude of traditions, from both Sunnī and Shī'ite sources, about the excellence of this verse. The tradition of the Prophet quoted in this tradition (''I have been given the verse of the Chair from below the Throne'') has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* on the authority of al-Bukhārī (in his *at-Tārīkh*) and Ibnu 'ḍ-Ḍarīs from the Prophet. It may be inferred from it that the Chair is below *al-'Arsh* and is encompassed by it. We shall describe it later.

Zurārah said: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *His Chair extends over the heavens and the earth* — whether the heavens and the earth encompass the Chair or the Chair extends over the heavens and the earth? He said: 'Verily, every thing is in the Chair.' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: In many traditions the same point has been emphasized in reply to similar questions. This question looks strange, because nobody has ever recited the verse in a way which could justify such confusion. Apparently, the questions were based not on the recital

of the Qur'ān but on the common understanding that the Chair was a particular body kept over the heavens or over the seventh heaven (i.e. above the material world), and from there the affairs of the material world were managed. That being the picture of the Chair in their minds, it was reasonable to suppose that the heavens and the earth encompassed the Chair because it was placed over the heavens as a wooden or iron chair is placed over a floor. And with this background it would seem more appropriate to say that the heavens and the earth encompassed the Chair. And that gave rise to the question as to why Allāh, instead, said: ''His Chair extends over the heavens and the earth?'' A question of the same type was asked about the '*Arsh* and the reply was given that the extension (or encompassing) was not as a material thing encompasses another material thing.

Ḥafṣ ibn al-Ghiyāth said: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *His Chair extends over the heavens and the earth.* He said: 'His knowledge.' '' (*Ma'āni'l-akhbār*)

There is another tradition in the same book from the same Imām about this verse which says: ''The heavens and the earth and whatever is between them is in the Chair, and the Throne is that knowledge which no one can measure.''

The author says: These two traditions show that the Chair is one of the levels of the knowledge of Allāh. Many other traditions supports this interpretation.

As will be explained later, there exists a level of knowledge which is not limited or measured. In other words, there is a world, on a higher plane than ours, whose constituents are not bound by material dimensions. They exist and at the same time are known to Allāh. And that knowledge also is unlimited. God willing, we shall describe it in detail when commenting on the verse 10:61: . . . *and there does not lie concealed from your Lord the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heaven, nor any thing than that nor greater, but it is in a clear book.* This boundless knowledge has been refered to in the tradition of the Imām in these words, ''and the *'Arsh* is that knowledge which no one can measure.'' The import of the tradition is not to show the great number of the known things, because number is not unlimited and anything which is created is finite. What the tradition wants to say is that the limitations and restrictions of this material world are not

found in that world. Existence, on that level, is perfect and the conditions, dimensions and distinctions of this material world are not found there. It is as Allāh says: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure* (15:21).

When those existing things are known by unlimited knowledge, that is, when they exist without any limitation attached to them, that knowledge is called *al-'Arsh* (The Throne); and when they exist in the world of limitations and known with those limitations, that knowledge is called *al-Kursī* (The Chair).

At this stage we may probably say that the words, ''He knows what is before them and what is behind them'' allude to this plane of knowledge. What is before them (i.e. the future) and what is behind them (i.e. the past) is not what is with them (i.e. the present). It refers to a plane where past, present, and future loose their limitations of time, and are all equally present.

Ḥannān said: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the Throne and the Chair. He replied: 'Verily, the Throne has many diverse attributes. Allāh uses in the Qur'ān various adjectives to describe its various aspects. He says: *the Lord of the great Throne* (9:129). It means; Lord of the great kingdom or authority. And He says: *The Beneficent* (God) *on the Throne is firm* (20:5). It means that He is firm in His kingdom. And it is the knowledge of the ''how'' of the things. Also, the Throne, although together with it, is distinct from the Chair; because they are two of the greatest doors of the unseen, and they both are unseen. And they are together in the unseen, because the Chair is the manifest door of the unseen, from which appears creation and from which all the things come. And the Throne is the concealed door of the unseen in which is found the knowledge of the states, conditions and existence; of measure and limit; of will and intention; as well as the knowledge of words, actions and omissions, and the knowledge of the beginning and the return. Thus, the two are two gates of knowledge joined together, because the dominion of the Throne is other than the dominion of the Chair, and its (the Throne's) knowledge is more hidden than the knowledge of the Chair. That is why Allāh said, ''the Lord of the great Throne'' ; that is, its attribute is greater than that of the Chair, and both are joined in it.' '' (Ḥannān says) ''I said: 'May I be your ransom, then why did it become associated with the

Chair in excellence?' He (the Imām) said: It was associated with it because the knowledge of the state and condition is found in it. And in it are found the manifest doors of *al-badā'* (البدآء = the decree hidden from other); as well as its reality and the dimensions of its joining and separating. Therefore, they are two neighbours, one of which contains the other in itself. And by similitudes are turned those who know, and so that they may offer proof for the truth of their claims. Because He chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy, and He is the Mighty, the Powerful.' '' (*at-Tawḥīd*)

The author says: The words of the tradition, ''the Chair is the manifest door of the unseen'', may be understood in the light of the short explanation given earlier. The level of the knowledge of measured things is nearer to our material world than infinite knowledge which has no limits. Further explanation will be given under verse 7:54: *Surely your Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time, and He is firm on the Throne.*

''And by similitudes are turned those who know'': It is an indication that the words, throne, chair and similar other expressions, are similitudes which have been given to people for their understanding, and only those who have knowledge understand this.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a tradition: ''Every thing which Allāh has created is in the receptacle of the Chair, except His Throne, because that is too great for the Chair to encompass.'' (*al-Iḥtijāj*)

The author says: Its meaning may be understood from the earlier discourse. And it is in conformity with other traditions. Contrary to it there is a tradition which says that the Throne is that knowledge which Allāh gave to His prophets and apostles and the Chair is that knowledge which no one was made aware of. It has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣadūq through Mufaḍḍal from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.). But in view of all other traditions, it can only be surmized that the narrator was confused and changed the names, Throne and Chair, from their proper places. If this is not accepted then the tradition will have to be discarded like the one that is attributed to Zaynab al-'Aṭṭārah.

al-'Ayyāshī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: ''Verily the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them is created in the hollow of the Chair; and it has four angels who bear it by the order of

Allāh.''

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated it from ʻAlī (a.s.) through Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah. It is the only tradition narrated from *Ahlu 'l-bayt* which says that there are angels who bear the Chair. But other traditions mention such bearers only for the Throne; and it is in conformity with the Book of Allāh, as He says: *Those who bear the Throne and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord . . .* (40:7); *and above them eight shall bear on that day the Throne of your Lord* (69:17). It may be said that the Chair is somewhat joined with the Throne, as a manifest side of a thing is joined with its hidden side; and in this way the bearers of one may be called the bearers of the other.

al-ʻAyyāshī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* from Muʻāwiyah ibn ʻAmmār that he asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about (the verse), *Who is it that can intercede with Him but by His permission?* He said: ''We are those intercessors.''

The author says: It has also been narrated by al-Barqī in *al-Maḥāsin.* You know that the intercession in this verse is common to creative and the legislative intercedings, and therefore includes the intercession of the Prophet and the Imāms. This tradition, thus, gives an example of the intercessors.

* * * * *

لاَ إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّيْنِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُـــوتِ
وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقٰى لاَ انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ
ـ ٢٥٦ . اللهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولٰـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ـ ٢٥٧ .

There is no compulsion in the religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves the rebels (false deities) *and believes in Allāh, he indeed has laid hold on the strongest handle, for which there is no break off; and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing* (256). *Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and* (as to) *those who disbelieve their guardians are the rebels, they take them out of the light into the darkness. They are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide* (257).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *There is no compulsion in the religion; truly the right*

way has become clearly distinct from error: ''al-Ikrāh'' (الاِكْرَاهُ) means to compel someone to a work without his willingness. *''ar-Rushd''* (الرُّشْدُ) is to get at the reality of an affair; to reach the right path. *''al-Ghayy''* (الغَيُّ) is its opposite. These two words are more general than ''*al-hudā''* (الهُدَي) (to find the path which leads to the destination) and *''aḍ-ḍalāl''* (الضَّلاَلُ) (not to find such path) respectively. Obviously, when the word *ar-rushd* is used for reaching the right path it is done in the way of applying a general word for a particular example: a walker reaches reality when he travels on the right path. Thus the words *ar-rushd* and *al-hudā* are made for two different meanings, but one is used for the other because of a special associations. Allāh says: . . . *then if you find in them maturity of intellect: ''rushdan''* (رُشْداً) (4:6); *And certainly We gave to Ibrāhīm his rectitude: ''rushdahu''* (رُشْدَهُ) *before* (21:51).

The same applies to *al-ghayy* and *aḍ-ḍalāl.* That is why we have mentioned before that *aḍ-ḍalāl* is to deviate from. the right path but with knowing and remembering the goal and destination; while *al-ghayy* is to deviate from the right path without even remembering the goal and destination — without knowing what one wants and where one wants to go.

''There is no compulsion in the religion'' negates and disapproves compulsion and coercion in religion. Religion is a set of truths which are believed in, and some of them are then acted upon. In short, religion is belief and faith, it is a matter of conscience, and such a thing cannot be created by coercion and compulsion. One may force someone to do a certain physical action against his will but he cannot be forced to believe against his will. Belief follows reason and understanding; and nothing but reason and understanding can create it.

''There is no compulsion in religion'' may be treated as a bit of information or a piece of legislation. If it is information of a creative decree, it will give rise to a legislative order that compulsion should not be used in matters of belief and faith. And if it is an order in the form of information then the meaning is clear. Apparently, this alternative is more correct, because the next sentence (''truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error'') gives the reason for this legislation. And this prohibition of compulsion for religion is based on a factor of creation: the

fact that compulsion can influence physical action but not matters connected with the heart and conscience.

‘‘Truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error’’: As mentioned above, it gives the reason for the prohibition of compulsion. A wise person resorts to compulsion only when the truth of the order cannot be explained, either because the person so coerced has no capacity to understand it or for some other reasons. But there is no need for compulsion in an important matter whose advantages and disadvantages are clearly defined and the reward and punishment of accepting and rejecting well-explained. A man, in such a clear matter, should be free to choose his course of action himself — whether he takes it or rejects it, whether he wants the rewards of obedience or is prepared to take the punishment. The realities of religion have been explained, and its path well-laid; the divine revelation and prophetic explanation have illuminated this highway to the utmost degree. It has now been made clear that the religion is truth, that the only right thing is to accept it and follow it; and that if one deviates from this road he will fall in perdition. Why should anyone, after all these clarifications, compel others to follow the religon?

It is one of the verses that show that Islam is not based on the sword and killing, and that it does not allow Muslims to compel or coerce others to accept Islam. It is contrary to the view held by many Muslims and non-Muslims alike that Islam is the religion of the sword. They bring as their evidence the legislation of *jihād* which is one of the pillars of Islam.

We have already clarified, while writing the commentary on the verses of fighting, that the fighting ordained by Islam is not for the purpose of material advancement nor for spreading the religion by force. It was ordained only for reviving the truth and defending the most precious treasure of nature — the faith of monotheism. Where monotheism is accepted by the people — even if they remain Jew or Christian — Islam does not fight with them. Therefore, the objection arises from clouded thinking.

The verse: ‘‘There is no compulsion in the religion’’, is not abrogated by the verse of the sword, although some writers think so. The order is followed by its reason: ‘‘truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error’’. Such an order cannot be cancelled unless and until its reason is also abrogated. So long as the reason is valid the rule must

remain valid. There is no need to emphasize that the verse of the sword cannot negate the clear distinction of the right way from error. For example, the verses: . . . *and kill them wherever you find them*. . . (4:89) and: *And fight in the way of Allāh* . . . (2:190), have no effect whatsoever on the clear distinction of truth from falsehood; and therefore they cannot abrogate an order based on that distinction.

In other words, this order is based on the fact that the right way is made clearly distinct from error. And this distinction is as valid after the revelation of the verses of fighting as it was before that. And as the cause is not changed, the effect, that is, the said order, cannot be changed or cancelled.

QUR'ĀN: *Therefore, whoever disbelieves in the rebels* (false deities) *and believes in Allāh, he indeed has laid hold on the strongest handle, for which there is no break off: ''aṭ-Ṭāghūt''* (الطَّاغُوْتُ) means rebellion and transgression. This paradigm conveys an intensification of the meaning of the root like *al-malakūt* (المَلَكُوتُ = great kingdom) and *al -jabarūt* (الجَبَرُوْتُ = great power). *aṭ-Ṭāghūt* is used for the agents and causes of rebellion and transgression like false deities and idols, satans, jinn and wrong leaders among the human beings; and, in short, everyone who is followed without the permission of Allāh. This word is common for masculine and feminine genders, as well as for singular, dual and plural numbers.

In this sentence, disbelief in the rebels has been mentioned before belief in Allāh. This sequence keeps in view the next sentence (*he indeed has laid hold on the strongest handle*). When one wants to lay one's hold on a thing, one has to discard all other things before that. In other words, one has first to leave unwanted things, then comes the stage of holding fast to the desired thing. Therefore, the verse mentioned first the rejection (of the rebels) and then the belief (in Allāh). *''al-Istimsāk''* (الاستِمْسَاكُ) means to hold fast; *''al-'urwah''* (العُرْوَةُ) denotes that part of thing which is made to hold it by, like the handle of a bucket, or of a pot. Also, this word is used for evergreen plants and trees. Its root meaning is attachment; it is said *'arāhu* (عَرَاهُ) and *i'tarāhu* (اِعْتَرِيهُ), both of which mean ''was attached to him''.

The sentence, ''he indeed has laid hold on the strongest handle'', is based on allegory. It conveys the idea that belief in Allāh has the same

relation with eternal bliss that a pot's handle has with that pot and its contents. You cannot be sure of your hold unless you keep the handle in your grip; likewise, one cannot be hopeful about eternal and real bliss unless one believes in Allāh rejecting all false deities.

QUR'ĀN: *For which there is no break off; and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing: ''al-Infiṣām''* (الانفِصَامُ) is to be cut off, to be broken. The phrase, ''for which there is no break off'' describes the condition or state of the handle, and emphasize the phrase, ''the strongest handle''. The next sentence, ''and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing'', points to the fact that belief and disbelief are matters connected with the heart and the tongue.

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe . . . in it they shall abide:* Some explanation has been given, in a previous verse, of ''bringing out of the darkness into the light''. It has been described there that this bringing out and other such phrases express real things, and that they are not used in any allegorical sense. There are two other interpretations given by other commentators of the Qur'ān, which we shall quote here before commenting upon them :

First Interpretation: This bringing out of the darkness into the light and other such phrases are allegorical expressions. They are used for man's actions and physical stillness and movements, and for the good or evil results of such actions. Accrodingly, ''light'' is used for correct belief which removes the darkness of ignorance, the confusion of doubt and the perplexity of the heart. Also it is a metaphor for good deeds because its connection with the right path is clear and its effect on bliss self evident. And the ''light'' has all these attributes and qualties. On the other hand, ''darkness'' is metaphorically used for wrong belief, confusion and doubt as well as for evil deeds. According to this interpretation, the bringing out from darkness into the light (attributed to Allāh) and taking out of light into the darkness (attributed to the rebels and false deities) refer to only true and wrong beliefs and good and evil deeds respectively — there is nothing other than those beliefs and deeds. Allāh or the false deities do not do any action (like bringing out) in this respect, nor is there any effect of such action (like light and darkness).

Second Interpretation: Surely Allāh does the actions like bringing the people out of the darkness into the light, giving life, bestowing

abundance and mercy and similar things. And surely there appear effects of such actions, like light and darkness; the soul and mercy; and the coming down of the angels. But our intellect cannot comprehend it and our senses cannot perceive it. Even then, we believe, as we have been told by Allāh — and Allāh speaks the truth — that these things do exist and that they are the actions of Allāh, although we do not understand them.

This interpretation, like the first one, treats words like light, darkness, taking out, etc. as metaphors. The only difference between the two is that the first one says that the light and the darkness are our correct and wrong deeds and beliefs; and this one says that the light and the darkness are things other than our beliefs and deeds, but we have no way of knowing them or comprehending and understanding them.

Both the interpretations are far from the truth. One has failed to reach the target, the other has overshot it. The fact is that these things, which Allāh has said He creates and does when we obey Him or disobey Him, are real things; there is no allegory in such expressions, but these divine actions are related to our beliefs and deeds — are inseparable from them. And we have already explained this. Of course, it is admitted that the sentences, ‘‘He brings them out of the darkness into the light’’, and ‘‘(they) take them out of the light into the darkness’’, are metaphors and mean ‘‘He guides them’’ and ‘‘they misguide them’’ respectively.

In other words, there are two separate matters to decide:

1) Whether the light, the darkness and other such expressions refer to some real things in this life or are merely metaphors?

2) If they refer to some real things then, is the use, for example, of the word ‘‘light’’ for guidance real or metaphorical? According to what we have already explained, such expressions refer to real things in this life. And using the ‘‘light’’, for example, for guidance is metaphorical.

And in any case, the two sentences mentioned above, are metaphors to denote guidance and misguidance. If we were to interpret them in their literal sense, it would mean that the believer and the disbeliever both have light and darkness together. ‘‘Allāh brings the believers out of the darkness into the light’’, if literally interpreted, would mean that the believer was first in the darkness! Conversely, the second sentence would mean that the disbeliever was first in the light! How can this meaning be

correct about the overwhelming majorities of believers and disbelievers who are born in believing or disbelieving families and remain in light or in darkness (as the case may be) from their birth? Such literal interpretation would mean that a child remained in light and darkness at one and the same time; and when, on attaining majority, he accepts the true faith by his own choice, he is removed out of the darkness into the light, and if he disbelieved, he was taken out of the light into the darkness. The absurdity of such an interpretation is quite obvious.

(Of course, it may be said that man in his creation, has the light of natural faith. But it is a general light, which needs details and particularization. In this way, he has the natural light; but, at the same time, is in darkness, so far as detailed knowledge and good deeds are concerned. And, looking from these different angles, it is possible for the light and the darkness to be present in one place at one time. When the believer acquires correct faith, he goes out from that darkness into the light of knowledge and good deed. And the disbeliever, by his disbelief goes out from the natural light into the darkness of disbelief and evil deeds.)

Allāh in both sentences has used ‘‘the light’’ (in the singular) and ‘‘the darkness’’ (in the plural). It is to indicate that truth is one — there is no difference in it; and that falsehood is multifaced, diverse and variable — there is no unity in it. Allāh says in another place: *And* (know) *that this is My path, the straight one, therefore follow it; and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you away from His path* (6:153).

TRADITIONS

Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, an-Naḥḥās (in his *an-Nāsikh wa ’l-mansūkh*), Ibn Mandih (in his *al-Gharā’ib*), Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Marduwayh, al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*), aḍ-Ḍiyā’ (in his *al-Mukhtārah*) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘(It was customary for) a woman of the Anṣār that if her child died in infancy, she would make a vow that if her child lived she would turn him into a Jew. Thus, when the tribe of Nadīr was banished (from Medina), there were many children of the Anṣār among them. They said that they would not

leave their sons (to migrate). Then Allāh sent down the verse: *There is no compulsion in the religion.''* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: The same thing has been narrated, by other chains, from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr and ash-Sha'bī.

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Mujāhid that he said: ''(The tribe of) Naḍīr had suckled some people from the tribe of Aws. When the Prophet ordered their banishment, their foster sons from the Aws said: 'We shall go with them and enter into their religion.' But their families prevented them and compelled them to (accept) Islam. Then came down the verse about them: *There is no compulsion in the religion.* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This thing too has been narrated from other sources. It is not in conflict with the preceding tradition (about the vow of the women of the Anṣār), as both may be correct.

Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said about the words of Allāh: *There is no compulsion in the religion:* ''It was revealed about a man from the Anṣār (from the clan of Banu Sālim ibn 'Awf), named al-Ḥuṣayn, who had two Christian sons, and he himself was a Muslim. So he said to the Prophet: 'Should I not compel them, because they have refused, but (remain) the Christianity.' Thereupon, Allāh sent down this (verse) about hint.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The light is the progeny of Muḥammad and the darkness are their enemies.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: This tradition gives examples of the light and the darkness, or explains its inner meaning or interpretation.

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أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَيٰهُ اللهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ـ ٢٥٨ ـ أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحْيِي هَٰذِهِ اللهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللهُ مِأَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْماً أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِأَةَ عَامٍ فَانْظُرْ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانْظُرْ إِلَىٰ حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنْشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْماً فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ـ ٢٥٩ ـ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِنْهُنَّ جُزْءاً ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْياً وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ـ ٢٦٠ .

Did you not see him who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord, because Allāh had given him the kingdom? When Ibrāhīm said: ''My Lord is He Who gives life and cause to die'', he said: ''I give life and cause death.'' Ibrāhīm said. ''So surely Allāh brings the sun from the east, then bring it (you) *from the west.'' Thus he who disbelieved was confounded; and Allāh does not guide aright the unjust people* (258). *Or like him who passed by a town, and it had fallen down upon its roofs; he said: ''How will Allāh give it life after its death?'' So Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him to life. He said: ''How long have you tarried?'' He said: ''I have tarried a day, or a part of a day.'' Said He: ''Nay! You have tarried a hundred years; then look at your food and drink — years have not passed over it; and look at your donkey; and that We may make you a sign to men; and look at the bones, how We assemble them together, then clothe them with flesh.'' So when it became clear to him, he said: ''I know that Allāh has power over all things''* (259). *And* (remember) *when Ibrāhīm said: ''My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead.'' He said: ''What! and do you not believe?'' He said: ''Certainly, but that my heart may be at ease.'' He said: ''Then take four of the birds, then cut them* (into pieces), *then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise''* (260).

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COMMENTARY

The three verses describe the Oneness of the Creator and His Omnipotence. They have, therefore, some connection with the preceding verses; and possibly these were revealed together with them.

QUR'ĀN: *Did you not see him who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord: ''al-Muḥājjah''* (المُحَآجَّةُ) is to bring a proof against the opposite party's, to prove one's own claim or to refute the other party's argument.

The basic meaning of *al-ḥujjah* (الحُجَّةُ) is intention; now it is generally used for ‘‘proof’’ by which one intends to prove one’s claim. The phrase ‘‘about his Lord’’ is connected with the verb ‘‘disputed’’. The pronoun in ‘‘His Lord’’ refers to Ibrāhīm, as may be inferred from the next sentence, ‘‘Ibrāhīm said: ‘My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die.’ ’’ The man who disputed with Ibrāhīm was the king of his time; and according to history and traditions, he was the Babylonian king, Namrūd (Nimrod).

We may understand the nature of this argument and the subject of the dispute, if we look at the context of the verse and reflect upon the behaviour of mankind in the past as well as in the present.

Man, by his nature, has always remained submissive to the powers about him which effect, in one way or the other, his life. No student of anthropology, who has studied the behaviour of the ancients, or has looked at the present generations of various nations, can have any doubt about it. We have described it in preceding discourses; and also it has been pointed out that man, by his nature, accepts that there is a Crator for the universe, Who has brought it into existence, and Who manages it. Every man, by the dictate of nature, believes this — be he a monotheist (a follower of the prophets), a polytheist (like an idol-worshipper) or an atheist (like a materialist). Nature’s demand cannot be negated so long as man is man (although the effect of it may at times become weaker or dormant).

Primitive man, in his simplicity, thought of every thing in the light of his own experience. He saw that he performs different acts by means of his different organs and limbs; and likewise, in society’s structure, various people discharge various duties and functions. And the natural phenomena in the world happen because of their respective natural causes which are closely related to them. Yet, his nature led him to believe in a Crator who had all the affairs of the universe in His hand. Not surprisingly, he thought that every phenomenon of the world had a special deity of its own — and all those deities were under the authority of a Supreme God. Sometimes he named them deities for various things; for example, the deity of the earth, the deity of the rivers, the deity of fire, the deity of wind, etc. At other times, he attributed these functions to the stars, and especially to the planets, the sun and the moon, ascribing to each various faculties believing that each of them affected this world of ours in its own way. This belief was held by the Sabaeans. The next stage was to make images and statues for those lesser deities. Then he started to worship those idols

so that the particular image might intercede on behalf of the worshipper with its particular deity, which in its turn was expected to intercede with the Supreme God — thus ensuring bliss and success for the worshipper in this life and after death.

That also explains why the idols were made in different shapes in different tribes. Views and opinions as regards the attributes of various species and the conceptions of their related deities could not be the same in two nations; and even in one nation they changed with the times. Sometimes other considerations and inclinations crept into the system. Gradually, the idols usurped the place of the said deities, and even the Supreme God was relegated to obscurity. Worshippers intended to give their devotion more and more to what was near them, which they could see and touch, and thus they tended to forget what was beyond their five senses. In this way, idols took the place of the Creator. All this happened because initially they thought that those lesser deities had some influence and control over the affairs of their lives — that the will of those deities dominated their own will and that those deities' management prevailed over their own plans and management.

When some powerful personality appeared on the scene and took the reins of the kingdom in his hands, he often exploited this trend of thought; he had their affairs and their lives in his hands, and it was easy for him to claim for himself the status of divinity, declaring himself to be a god. This is what was done by Pharaoh, Namrūd and many others. It is interesting to note that such people included themselves in the list of deities, while, like their subjects, they continued to worship the idols of their nations. But invariably they always ended up by usurping the dominant position for themselves. In this design of theirs the same process of thought helped them which had raised the idols' status in their people's eyes: the king's influence, authority and hold over his people were more manifest than those of the other deities. Pharaoh declared before his people: *''I am your most high Lord''* (79:24). And he made this claim of supremacy while continuing to worship the other deities. Read for proof the words of Allāh giving the import of the talk of the courtiers of Pharaoh with him showing the danger from Mūsā (a.s.): *''. . . and to forsake you and your gods?''* (7:127). The same was the claim of Namrūd as may be inferred from his assertion: ''I give life and cause death.''

The above discourse may easily explain this dispute between Ibrāhīm (a.s.) and Namrūd. Namrūd believed that there was a Supreme God. Otherwise, he would not have been confounded by the argument of Ibrāhīm (a.s.), ‘‘So surely Allāh brings the sun from the east, then bring it (you) from the west.’’ If he had not believed in a Supreme God, he could have said that it was he (i.e., Namrūd) or some other deity, who brought the sun from the east, and not Ibrāhīm’s Allāh. Apart from the Supreme God, he and his people believed in some other deities too. The lifestory of Ibrāhīm provides ample proof that they worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars, as well as idols. Also read the talk of Ibrāhīm with his uncle on the subject of idols, and see how he shattered their idols (except the big one). All of it shows that Namrūd believed in the divinity of Allāh, as well as in other deities, but at the same time claimed to be a god — indeed the highest god — himself. That was why he tried to prove his own divinity in this dispute with Ibrāhīm, and did not even mention the other, lesser, deities.

Now we should look at the dispute. It was Ibrāhīm’s claim that his Lord is Allāh, and no one else. Namrūd said: ‘‘No! I am your Lord and the Lord of everyone else.’’ Ibrāhīm argued: ‘‘My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die.’’ Namrūd said: ‘‘I give life and cause death.’’ He wanted to show that he held the power which Ibrāhīm attributed to his Lord; therefore, Ibrāhīm should submit to him, and worship him, neither Allāh nor other lesser deities deserved to be worshipped. Note that he did not add ‘‘and’’ in his reply; he did not say, ‘‘and I give life . . .’’ Why? Because the conjunctive ‘‘and’’ would have meant that he shared this power with Allāh; and he did not want to admit any such ‘‘partnership’’ he wanted to be worshipped as the most supreme Lord of the universe. And it was for this very reason that he did not say either, ‘‘and the gods give life . . .’’

He could not honestly refute the argument of Ibrāhīm; so he resorted to sophism, fallacy and deception. When Ibrāhīm mentioned life and death, he meant life and death as we find them in living things. His argument was that these living things could only be created by One who was the source of life. Lifeless nature cannot bestow life on others when it has no life itself. Nor can other living things give life to others, because their life is their existence and their death their extinction — and a thing cannot create or destroy its own self.

If Namrūd had interpreted Ibrāhīm's argument honestly, he could not have refuted it at all. But he resorted to deception, interpreting life and death with an allegorical meaning. ''To give life'' really means, for example, to create a living foetus; but it may be used equally correctly (but in metaphorical way) if you rescue someone from an extremely dangerous situation. Likewise, ''to cause to die'' really means the act of God by which a soul departs from a body; but metaphorically it may be used for murder, etc. Taking advantage of this metaphorical usage, Namrūd ordered two prisoners to be brought before him; one he ordered to be killed and the other was set free. It was at this stage that he uttered the words, ''I give life and cause death''. The courtiers were taken in by this ruse and accepted the ''truth'' of the argument. Ibrāhīm was not in a position to unmask the fallacy of this reply; he saw how Namrūd has duped the audience with his deception and how blindly they agreed to his sophism. Nobody would have agreed with Ibrāhīm even if he had tried to expose that fallacy. Therefore, he switched to another clearer argument which his obstinate opponent could not twist in any way, and said: ''So surely Allāh brings the sun from the east; then bring it (you) from the west.''

Those people (or some of them) believed the sun to be a deity. (Look at the story of Ibrāhīm, concerning the stars, the moon and the sun in the Qur'ān 6:77 — 78) But they also believed that these sources of light and their various phases, rising, setting, etc., were ultimately in the hands of Allāh, who, according to them, was Lord of Lords, God of gods. When a doer does an act by his own free will, he may just as easily reverse that action if he so changes his intention; the direction of his action follows his will. Therefore, when Ibrāhīm put this argument before Namrūd, he was confounded. He could not say: ''The rising of the sun from the east has been, since the very beginning, a matter of chance; it needs no cause'', because commonsense demands a cause for an effect. Nor could he say: ''This system is not caused or controlled by Allāh'', because he himself professed to believe in the Lord of Lords who controlled the sun, etc. And he could not say: ''It is I who bring it from the east''; because Ibrāhīm had already closed this line of argument by saying, ''then bring it (you) from the west''. He was thus ignominiously humiliated and disgraced. ''And Allāh does not guide aright the unjust people.''

QUR'ĀN: *Because Allāh had given him the kingdom?* The import of this

sentence is like one's saying: ''He mistreated me because I did good to him.'' The speaker wants to say: I did good to him; it was to be expected that he also would do good to me; instead, he misbehaved towards me. An Arabic proverb points to this very trait of human nature: ''Be on guard against the evil of him to whom you did good.'' A poet says:

His sons rewarded Abu 'l-Ghaylān, for his old age
and good deeds, as was rewarded Sinimmār.[1]

In this sentence L (ل = because) is deleted but understood. It puts a reason in place of its opposite. This style puts the accusation in a sharper perspective. The rebellion and trangression of Namrūd would have been understandable if there had been any ungenerosity shown towards him by Allāh. But Allāh did nothing to him except good and He gave him the kingdom too. Therefore, this generosity was mentioned as the cause of his rebellion, to emphasize his ingratitude. In a way, it is like the verse: *And Pharaoh's family took him* (Mūsā) *up, so that he might be an enemy and a grief for them* (28:8).

This is one reason why his getting the kingdom has been mentioned here. There is another reason too: to show that his claim was absurd *ab initio.* He claimed to be god because of the kingdom which was given to him by Allāh; he did not own it himself. He had become Namrūd, the king, the mighty and powerful, because, Allāh had made him so. Strip him of this bounty of Allāh and what was left of him? Just a common man with no special quality or attribute. That is the reason why Allāh did not mention him by name; he was described just as the one who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord. This was done to show his insignificance and lowliness.

Why did Allāh say that it was He who gave Namrūd the kingdom? In previous discourses it has been shown that this cannot be objected to. The kingdom, like all other powers and authorities, is a bounty and grace of Allāh; He gives it to whom He pleases and man has been give the knowledge of God in his nature, and because of that natural instinct he inclines towards Him. Now, if he made good use of that kingdom putting

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[1] Sinimmār, an architect of repute, built the palace, al-Khawarnaq, for King Nu'mān. When it was completed, he was thrown down from the roof and thus died. The King gave this order so that he could not build such a palace for anyone else.

every thing in its place, it would be a bliss and blessing for him, as Allāh says: *And seek by means of what Allāh has given you the future abode . . .* (28:77). And if he transgressed the limits and deviated from the right path, it would become a curse and perdition for him, as Allāh says: *Did you not see those who changed Allāh's favour for ungratefulness and made their people to alight into the abode of perdition?* (14:28). It has already been explained that every thing is attributed to Allāh, but in a way that is befitting to His majesty, glory and sanctity — from the view of the good points of that thing, and not from that of its bad points.

One commentators has erroneously thought that the pronoun, ''him'', in the phrase, ''because Allāh had given him the kingdom'' refers to Ibrahim. According to him, it means that Namrud disputed with Ibrāhīm because Allāh had given Ibrāhīm the kingdom; that it refers to the kingdom of Ibrāhīm mentioned in the Qur'ān: *Or do they envy the people for what Allāh has given them of His grace? So indeed we have given to Ibrāhīm's children the Book and the wisdom, and We have given them a great kingdom* (4:54). According to that commentator, the kingdom in the verse under discussion cannot refer to that of Namrūd, because it was a kingdom of oppression and sin; it cannot be said that such a kingdom was given by Allāh.

But this assumption is wrong because:

First: The Qur'ān attributes such a kingdom and many similar things to Allāh. For example, it quotes the believer from the family of Pharaoh as saying: *O my people! Yours is the kingdom this day, being masters in the land. . .* (40:29); and the words of Pharaoh himself are quoted (without any adverse comment): *O my people! Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine?* (43:51). And at the same time it declares: . . . *to Him* (i.e. Allāh) *belongs the kingdom . . .* (64:1). This verse confines the kingdom to Allāh; there is no kingdom but of Him and from Him. The Qur'ān quotes Mūsā (a.s.) as saying: *Our Lord! Surely Thou host given to Pharaoh and his chiefs finery and riches in this world's life . . .* (10:88); and Allāh says about Qārūn: . . . *and We had given him of the treasures, so much so that its keys would certainly weigh down a company of men possessed of strength . . .* (28:76); and He says addressing his Prophet: *Leave Me and him whom I created alone, and I gave him vast riches. . .* (74:11 — 12); there are many similar references.

Second: Such an interpretation does not fit the obvious meaning of

the verse. The verse shows that Namrūd was disputing with Ibrāhīm about the latter's belief and monotheism, not that he had any argument with him about his kingdom. The kingdom was already in Namrūd's hands and Ibrāhīm had no worldly kingdom for which Namrūd could have disputed with him.

Third: Everything is attributed to Allāh, as explained earlier, and kingdom is no exception. There is no snag in attributing it to Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *When Ibrāhīm said: ''My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die'':* Life and death are found even in vegetation; but Ibrāhīm (a.s.), in this argument, meant the life and death found in animals and human beings, or he kept in view their general meaning which included human life and death. The evidence for this meaning may be seen in the reply of Namrūd: ''I give life and cause death''. Obviously Namrūd, by this claim, did not mean the giving of life to vegetables (through tilling and farming), or animals (by breeding inem and bringing the male and female together). This type of life giving was not special to him; any human being could do it. The traditions also support our interpretation: he had two prisoners brought before him, he freed one and killed the other, and then he said: ''I give life and cause death''.

Ibrāhīm (a.s.) selected for his proof the authority of giving life and causing death, because nature, having no life or sense itself, cannot give life to any thing; and more evidently, it cannot be supposed to give life to animals and humans as it is accompanied by sense and perception. And the same is the case with death. Such a clear and indisputable proof failed to convince the people of Namrūd. Their intellectual degradation and mental confusion had sunken far lower than the level which Ibrāhīm (a.s.) had credited them with. They thought that the life and death referred to included the metaphorical meaning of freeing from prison and killing. Thus, Namrūd claimed, and they vouched that he gave life and caused death.

This talk shows how low the level of intellectual development was in that time, as far as abstract and non-material ideas were concerned. Do not be misled by their advanced civilization, signs of which are found in the archaeological remains of the Babylonia of the Chaldeans and the Egypt of the Pharaohs. Material advancement is one thing, and progress in abstract and non-material ideas is something else. We see the same phenomenon in this world of ours which has made a fantastic advancement in the material

field, and has sunk so terribly low in morality, ethics and spiritual knowledge.

Ibrāhīm (a.s.) did not put before them the argument that the whole universe needed an Omnipotent, Omniscient Originator of the heavens and the earth. He had used this method in his early days; and Allāh quotes him as finally saying: *''Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists* (6:79). No doubt, those people, forced by natural instinct, believed vaguely in a Supreme Creator. But their intellectual capacity was too limited to let them clearly and truly understand about that Creator. Had Ibrāhīm (a.s.) put this argument before them, they could not have appreciated it at all. Look, at what they understood from his argument: ''My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die ! ''

QUR'ĀN: *he said: ''I give life and cause death'':* Therefore, I am that Lord of yours who, you say, gives life and causes death.

QUR'ĀN: *Ibrāhīm said: ''So surely Allāh brings the sun from the east, then bring it* (you) *from the west''; thus he who disbelieved was confounded:* When Ibrāhīm (a.s.) saw that his argument based on giving life and death had been twisted by his opponent, and that the public had been mislead by that deception, he thought it would be useless to clarify what he meant by giving life and causing death. Instead, he switched to another argument. Even then, he based this second argument on his opponent's claim in the first argument. That is why he began the second argument with ''So''; it shows a connection with the preceding sentence, and its import is as follows: If what you say is correct, and you are my Lord, and the Lord, as we both accept, manages and looks after this universe, then Allāh manages the sun by bringing it from the east; so show your authority by bringing from the west. It will clearly prove that you are the Lord, as Allāh is the Lord of everything, or that you are Lord of Lords. Thus, the disbeliever was confounded.

Ibrāhīm (a.s.) offered his second argument as an offshoot of Namrūd's claim, to remove the chance of someone thinking that Namrūd's argument was complete, perfect and irrefutable. And he changed the word ''my Lord'' (used in the first argument) to ''Allāh'' (in this argument) because the opponent had misused that adjective and claimed that it referred to him. To remove the chance of that type of sophistry, Ibrāhīm (a.s.) used the proper name, ''Allāh''.

It has been described earlier that it was not possible for Namrūd to reply to this argument in any way, and, as a result, he was confounded and remained silent.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh does not guide aright the unjust people:* Apparently it gives the reason for Namrūd' being confounded, not for his disbelief. Allāh did not guide him, and, therefore, he was humiliated; had Allāh guided him aright, he would have been able to reply to Ibrāhīm. It does not say that Allāh did not guide him and therefore he became an unbeliever. Obviously, the talk centres around his dispute and argument, and is not about his belief.

The word ''unjust people'' hints at the cause of not being guided. Allāh does not guide them because they are unjust. The same point has been kept in view wherever such sentences have been revealed. Allāh says: *And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allāh while he is invited to Islam? And Allāh does not guide the unjust people* (61:7); *The similitude of those who were placed under the Torah, then they did not hold it, is as the similitude of the donkey bearing books; evil is the similitude of the people who belie the signs of Allāh; and Allāh does not guide the unjust people* (62:5). ''Transgression'' is likewise the cause of not being guided, as Allāh says: *but when they turned aside; Allāh made their hearts turn aside; and Allāh does not guide the transgressing people* (61:5).

In short, injustice is to turn aside from the path of justice, and to leave aside what should be done, and to do what should not be done. It diverts man from his intended goal, and leads him to disappointment and failure in the life hereafter. This fact is made abundantly clear in many verses of the Qur'ān, which puts much emphasis on it.

GOOD AND EVIL DEEDS, *VIS-A-VIS* GUIDANCE AND MISGUIDANCE

Good deeds cause guidance and evil deeds make one go astray. It is a universal rule to which there is no exception. The Qur'ān describes it in different words, and has based on it many of its realities. Allāh says: *Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal) (20:50). It means that everything, after its creation is completed, is

guided by Allāh to the goals of its creation and to its perfection. For this purpose, it has been bound to other things, and takes their advantage through action and reaction, uniting and separating, associating and dissociating, advancing and retreating, taking and leaving and so on and so forth. No mistake occurs in the effect of the system of creation, and it never misses its targets. For example, when a fire licks dry wood, it does not want to cool it; and when a tree grows it does not intend to make itself smaller. The Qur'ān says: . . . *surely my Lord is on the straight path* (11:56). Thus, in the world of creation the effect never fails to follow the cause, and there is no discord in it.

The above paragraph gives us two axioms: creative guidance is general and the fact that no mistake ever occurs in creative matters. These two realities are the basis of the system of cause and effect. There is a way, or ways, between a thing and its intended goal, and only through those specific ways it can reach there. A seed grows into a tree only if it passes along its own particular path, complying with all its conditions and means. And a fruit tree grows only its own particular fruit, not something else. In short, each cause creates its own particular effect, and each effect follows its own particular cause. Allāh says: *And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth* (abundantly) *by the permission of its Lord, and* (as for) *that which is bad* (its herbage) *comes forth but scantily* (7:58). Reason and experience vouch for it; otherwise, the law of cause and effect would go awry.

Creation guides everything to a particular goal; and that goal can be reached through that particular way. It is the system created by Allāh who has perfected everything. Every link in this chain of causes leads to a particular end; and if a single link is changed, the effect will invariably change. This much about creation.

The same rule applies to other fields like social affairs. Society too is the result of creative factors and follows the laws of ''creation''. Social affairs and the activities of society are connected with their own effects: those activities can result only in those particular effects, and those effects can be produced only by those particular activities. Good upbringing can be accomplished only by a ''good'' tutor; if a ''bad'' tutor brings up a child, even if he shows himself to be a good man and actually sticks to good and proper methods in his bringing-up the hidden evil will unfailingly pollute the mind of the child, and it will

produce an undesirable and evil result. A hundred veils and a thousand curtains cannot prevent the tutor's spiritual evil effecting the character of the pupil. When someone unlawfully takes hold of a country, or when an incompetent judge sits and delivers judgements on public disputes, or when someone takes upon himself, without the sanction of the *sharī'ah,* to discharge a social responsibility, its evil effects most certainly manifest themselves in society. Let a wrong disguise itself as right, or an evil masquerade as good, or a lie take the place of truth, or dishonesty appear as honesty, or deception camouflage itself in sincerity — all these disguises may fool the onlookers for a period, but ultimately all the protective coverings must come off, revealing the ugly reality underneath. It is the system created by Allāh in His creatures, and: *you shall not find any alteration in the system of Allāh, and you shall not find any change in the system of Allāh* (35:43).

The truth does not die, nor does its effect fade, even if, for a short time, it is not perceived by lookers on. And a lie can never stand on its feet, nor can its effect be sustained — even if at times it causes confusion. Allāh says: *So that He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false . . .* (8:8). Allāh shows the truth of what is true by stabilizing its effect; and manifests the falsehood of what is false by exposing its corruption and depravity and unmasking its reality. He says: *Have you not seen how Allāh sets forth a parable of a good word* (being) *like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and whose branches are in heaven, yielding its fruits on every moment by the permission of its Lord? And Allāh sets forth parables for men that they may reflect. And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface, it has no stability. Allāh confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter, and Allāh lets the unjust go astray, and Allāh does what He pleases* (14:24 — 27). Thus Allāh lets the unjust people go astray in their affairs. And what is their affair? It is that they want their evil ways to lead to good results. As Allāh quotes Yūsuf (a.s.) as saying: *I seek Allāh's refuge! Surely my Lord made good my abode: Surely the unjust do not prosper* (12:23). An unjust person cannot prosper in his injustice, nor can his injustice lead him to where a virtuous man is led by his virtue and a pious one by his piety. Allāh says: *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them unto Our ways; and Allāh*

is most surely with the doers of good (29:69). And He says: . . . *and the* (good) *end is for piety* (20:132).

The Qur'ānic verses with this meaning are very numerous; but the most complete and most comprehensive is the following:

> *He sends down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam; and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it, thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth, thus does Allāh set forth parables* (13:17).

As mentioned earlier, reason also confirms this truth. The universal system of cause and effect demands it and human experience testifies that it is so. Every man knows one or another episode which shows that the end of unjust people is always bad, and that their endeavours never succeed.

QUR'ĀN: *Or like him who passed by a town, and it had fallen down upon its roofs: ''al-Khāwiyah''* (الخَاوِيَةٌ) means empty. The Arabs say *khawati 'd-dār* (خَوَتِ الدَّارُ) to indicate that ''the house became empty''. *''al-'Urūsh''* (العُرُوْشُ) is the plural of *al-'arsh* (العَرْشُ = trellis); it is a roof-like structure standing on poles or pillars used as support for climbing plants, like vines. Allāh says: *garden trellised and untrellised* (6:141). This word is also used for *as-saqf* (السَّقْفُ = roof). But there is a difference *as-saqf* is only a roof or house-top which is laid on the walls: *al-'arsh* is the top together with its poles or pillars. Because of this difference, it is idiomatic to say for a ruined village that, *''hiya khāwiyatun 'alā 'urūshihā''* (هِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلي عُرُوْشِهَا) which literally means, ''it is empty on its trellis''; but it would be wrong to say: ''empty on its roof''.

Many explanations have been given by the commentators for the conjunctive ''Or'' in ''Or like him who . . .'' It is said that:

1) It is in conjunction with ''him (he) who disputed with Ibrāhīm'', in the previous verse; and *''K''* (ك = like) is in place of *mithl* (مِثْل = like). The meaning accordingly is, ''Or have you seen like him who passed . . .'' This commentator thinks that the word ''like'' in this context indicates that it is a separate proof.

2) The word ''like'' is extra. The meaning, accordingly, will be

‘‘Did you not see him who disputed with Ibrāhīm . . . or him who passed . . . ’’

3) The conjunction is of meaning, and not of words. The meaning is, ‘‘Have you seen like him who disputed . . . or like him who passed . . . ’’

4) It is the continuation of the argument of Ibrāhīm in reply to his opponent’s claim. According to this interpretation, Ibrāhīm told Namrūd that if he claimed to give life then he should give life like him who passed by a town . . .

But you will notice that none of the above explanations is satisfactory.

The author believes that the conjunction is of meaning, as claimed in the third explanation, but not in the way described there. Allāh had earlier said: ‘‘Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of darkness into the light; and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are rebels; they take them out of the light into the darkness’’. It had shown that Allāh guides the believers to the truth, and that He does not guide the disbelievers; instead they are misled by the guardians whom they have taken for themselves. Now Allāh gives three examples, showing three consecutive methods of His guidance. Guidance is of three types, or, let us say, three stages:—

First: Guidance through reasoning and argument, as is seen in the story of Namrūd who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord. Allāh guided Ibrāhīm to the truth, and his opponent was misguided by his disbelief. In this story the guidance of Ibrāhīm is not mentioned clearly; rather more attention is given to his opponent’s affairs, and it has thrown light on a new fact: ‘‘Allāh does not guide aright the unjust people’’.

Second: Guidance through demonstration, as is seen in the story of him who passed by a town which had fallen down upon its roofs. In it, what had seemed difficult to him (i.e. ‘‘how Allāh would make a thing alive after its death?’’)was shown to him actually happening. He was given death and then made alive. In this way he was guided to the truth through demonstration.

Third: Guidance by demonstrating the fact and simultaneously unveiling its cause. It is the most effective method and the highest stage of guidance. This method was used in the third story, in which Ibrāhīm, by permission of Allāh, made the four birds alive.

Let us suppose that a man has not seen cheese, and has some doubt

about it. His doubts may be removed if someone who has seen it and tasted it testifies before him about it. The second and more effective method is to show him a piece of cheese and make him taste it. The third and the most effective way of removing the doubt would be to put a pot of milk before him and make cheese from it before his eyes and then let him taste it.

The three verses describe these three consecutive stages. Each one begins in a different style: ‘‘Did you not see him who . . .’’, ‘‘Or like him who passed by a town . . .’’, ‘‘And (remember) when Ibrāhīm said . . .’’ Each of these styles could have been used to describe the three events. It could have been said: Allāh guides the believers to the truth; have you not looked at the story of Ibrāhīm and Namrūd, or at the story of him who passed by a town, or at the story of Ibrahim and the birds. Alternatively, it could have been said: Allāh guides the believers to the truth; either as He guided Ibrāhīm in his dispute with Namrūd (and it was one way of guidance), or as He guided him who passed by a town (and it was another way of guidance), or as He did in the event of Ibrāhīm and the birds (and it was the third way of guidance.

Thirdly it could have been said: Allāh guides the believers to the truth; remember the episodes which prove it — remember the story of the dispute, and remember him who passed by a town, and remember when Ibrāhīm said: *‘‘My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead.’’*

But Allāh used a different style for each verse, as it is more refreshing for the mind, and excites a new interest in each episode.

Now we may revert to the original topic, how this verse is in conjunction with the preceding one. The conjunctive ‘‘or’’ in ‘‘or like him’’ joins this sentence with a deleted but understood word in the preceding verse. The reconstructed sentences would be like this: Either like him who disputed with Ibrāhīm . . . or like him who passed by a town. Likewise, the conjunctive ‘‘and’’ in the next verse joins it with deleted but understood words in the preceding two verses. The sentences then would be like this: Remember the story of dispute . . . and remember him who passed by a town . . . and remember when Ibrāhīm said . . .

Allāh has not disclosed the identity of him who passed by. Nor has the name of the town or the people who used to live in it been mentioned. Nor have those been identified for whom the said passer-by was made a

sign. It would appear that their identities should have been disclosed as it would have removed many doubts. But a far more important consideration made it necessary to keep all these details vague.

The sign shown, that is, giving life to the dead, was a very compelling and overwhelming one, as was the guidance resulting from it; also, the passer-by had used words which reflected his thought that it was not an easy task. Therefore, the norms of eloquence demanded that it be described as a very insignificant affair, so that the said passer-by as well as the audience of the Qur'ān would not be over-awed by it; and so that they could appreciate that it was not a big task as far as the power of Allāh was concerned. Have you not seen that great people talk about great affairs and about their great officers and nobles in a very ordinary manner; they want to emphasize that such affairs or such people have no greatness for the speakers. The same principle has been applied here: bare facts have been mentioned, but all details as to who, where and when have been omitted; it is to show that this affair was not an important one in the eyes of Allāh. It was for the same reason that the name of the opponent of Ibrāhīm (in the first story) was omitted, and the names of the birds and the hills, and the number of pieces the birds were cut into, and so on, in the third story.

Only the name of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) has been mentioned in the two stories. The Qur'ān accords him a special honour and distinction. For example: *And this was Our argument which We gave to Ibrāhīm against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please . . .* (6:83); *And thus did We show Ibrāhīm the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that he might be of those who are sure* (6:75). The same special consideration prompted mentioning his name in the two stories.

The point mentioned above also explains why Allāh mentions the matters of giving life and causing death, in most places, as a very unimportant and insignificant thing; as He says: *And He it is Who originates the creation, then returns it, and it is most easy to Him; and His are the most exalted attributes in the heavens and in the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise* (30:27); *He said: ''O my Lord! how shall 1 have a son, and my wife is barren, and I myself have reached indeed the extreme degree of old age?'' He said: ''So shall it be; your Lord says: It is easy to* Me, *and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing''* (19:8 — 9).

QUR'ĀN: *he said: ''How will Allāh give it life after its death?''* ''It'' refers to the ''town''; but it metaphorically means ''people of the town''. It is like the words of the Qur'ān: *And ask the town in which we were* . . . (12:82); that is, ''the people of the town''.

He uttered these words because he felt that it was a very great thing and that it manifested the power of Allāh as few other things did; not that he thought life-after-death improbable. That is why he said at the end of the episode, ''I know that Allāh has power over all things''. He did not say, 'Now I know', as the wife of the chief of Egypt had said: *Now has the truth become established.* . . (12:51). Further details will be given later.

Furthermore, the passer-by was a prophet to whom Allāh had spoken, and was a sign sent to the people; and the prophets are sinless. They can never entertain any doubt or suspicion about Resurrection, which is one of the pillars of the religion.

QUR'ĀN: *So Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him to life:* The clear meaning is that he was given death by the taking out of his soul, remained dead for a hundred years, then was made alive by the returning of his soul to him.

One commentator has given a strange explanation of this verse. He says: The ''death'' mentioned in this verse means a coma, that is, a prolonged loss of consciousness in which the subject remains barely alive but has no sense or feeling. It may continue for days, months and even years, as is evident from the story of the Fellows of the Cave and their sleep in the cave which lasted for three hundred and nine years; then they were awakened. Allah has used that sleep and re-awakening as a proof of Resurrection. Therefore, this story too is like that one.

The said commentator goes on to say: The known duration of coma does not exceed a few years. A coma lasting for a hundred years is an unusual occurrence, but He who puts a man in a coma for a few years also has the power to keep him in that condition for a hundred years; and when it comes to accept what is clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān, we believe that we should only see whether it is possible or impossible; and if it is possible we must accept it. Allāh has offered this episode of keeping him in a coma for a hundred years and then returning his senses and feelings to him after such a long period as a proof that life can be returned to the dead after a gap of thousands of years.

This was his explanation. Let us suppose for the time being that the Fellows of the Cave were kept in a coma — the word used for them in the Qur'ān is ''asleep'', not comatose. But how could their supposed coma infect this passer-by? The Qur'ān clearly says: ''Allāh caused him to die''. Death means loss of life; and not coma. A commentator has no right to invent a meaning for a word. He has used analogy where no one has allowed it, and that is in the matter of finding the meaning of a word. And if Allāh could keep that passer-by comatose for a hundred years when it is not an usual occurrence, why could not He keep him dead for a hundred years and then resurrect him? One unusual occurrence is like another, according to the said commentator. So why invent one meaning and reject the other which incidently is the real meaning? The trouble with him is that, for his own reasons, he thinks that the resurrection of the dead in this world is impossible — without giving any reason to support his belief. That is why he has misinterpreted the next sentences, ''and look at the bones, how We assemble them together, then clothe them with flesh''. We shall comment upon it afterwards.

In short, the meaning of the words: ''Allāh caused him to die . . . then raised him to life'', is quite clear, and no doubt can be entertained about it, especially when we look at the preceding and following sentences: ''How will Allāh give it life after its death?''; ''look at your food and drink — years have not passed over it''; ''and look at your donkey''; ''and look at the bones''.

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''How long have you tarried?''He said: ''I have tarried a day or a part of a day''. Said He: ''Nay! You have tarried a hundred years'': ''al-Labth''* (اللَّبْثُ) is to tarry, to stay, to abide. The uncertainty in the reply, ''a day or a part of a day'', shows that the time of day of his resurrection was different from that of his death — for example, the forenoon and afternoon. He thought that he had slept and was now woken, then he looked at the difference in the time, and was uncertain whether a night has passed while he was still asleep. Therefore, he said: ''a day'' (if a night has passed), ''or a part of a day'' (if he had woken up the same day). Allāh said: ''Nay! you have tarried a hundred years.''

QUR'ĀN: *''then look at your food and drink — years have not passed over it; . . . then clothe them with flesh'':* There are many apparently puzzling things in these sentences: The word, ''look'', has been repeated

three times, when, at a first glance, only one would have been enough; there is mention of food, drink and a donkey, when apparently there was no need for it; and the sentence, ‘‘and that We may make you a sign to men’’, has been written in between, when seemingly it would have been more appropriate after the next sentence about assembling the bones and clothing them with flesh. Moreover, what he had wondered about, the resurrection of bodies after a long gap, after undergoing all types of deterioration, had been clearly demonstrated by his own resurrection; then what was the need to tell him to look at the bones? But if we ponder deeply on the various implications of this verse, all these doubts will be removed. Let us look at the story, which is as follows:

The verse make it clear that the passer-by was a virtuous servant of Allāh, who was well aware of divine power and majesty, and followed His commandments. Not only this, he was a prophet whom Allāh had spoken to. The clear implication of his words: ‘‘I know that Allāh has power over all things’’, is that he was fully aware of the power of Allāh even before this episode. And the style of the sentences, ‘‘then raised him to life. He said: ‘How long have you tarried?’ ’’ implies that he was well accustomed to being spoken to by Allāh, and that it was not the first revelation. Otherwise, the sentence should have been somewhat like this: ‘then when He raised him to life, He said . . .’ See how the first divine talk with Mūsā has been mentioned: *So when he came to it, a voice called: O Mūsā* (20:11); *And when he came to it a voice called from the right side* . . . (28:30).

He had departed from his home for a place which was at some distance from his town. This is inferred from the facts that he rode on his donkey, and took food and drink for his provisions. On the way, he passed by a town which had fallen ‘‘on its roofs’’. It was not his intended destination; but as he passed by it, he stood there, seeing in it a warning lesson for mankind, a town turned into ruins, whose inhabitants had perished, overtaken by death all together, whose rotten bones were scattered everywhere in full view of the passers-by. He pointed to the dead and said: ‘‘How will Allāh give it life after its death?’’ He did not mean ‘‘How will this town be populated again?’’ Otherwise, he would have used the word *‘‘yu‘ammir’’* (يُعَمِّرُ = will make populated), and not *‘‘yuḥyī’’* (يُحْيِي = will make alive) which he did use. Moreover, a ruined town may become inhabited again, and there is nothing extraordinary in

this development to cause wonder and awe. How do we know that the bodies and bones were in full view of the passers-by? Because if they had been buried and he had stood looking at their graves, Allāh would have clearly mentioned the graves, instead of the town.

Anyhow, he stood taking lessons from the scene before his eyes. He was over-awed by it and thought about the length of time involved, and the continuing deterioration of the parts of the body until it turns into dust. At this stage, he said: ‘‘How will Allāh give it life after its death?’’ This question was based on two factors: The length of time, (How will Allāh give it life after such a long gap since its death?) and the deterioration of the body (How will it be resurrected when all its parts and limbs have been scattered and untold number of changes have come over it?) Therefore, Allāh explained both questions together. The first question was answered by giving him death and resurrecting him after a hundred years. The second question was answered by giving life to the bones of his donkey under his own eyes.

Thus, Allāh gave him death and then raised him from the dead. The two things happened at different times of the day, as has been explained above. Allāh asked him: ‘‘How long have you tarried?’’ He replied: ‘‘I have tarried a day or a part of a day’’. Obviously, he was given death in the early part of the day, and resurrected in the afternoon. Had it been the other way round, he would have said, ‘‘a day’’ without any hesitation. Allāh pointed out to him: ‘‘Nay! you have tarried a hundred years.’’ Thus he realized that he had thought a hundred years like a day or a part of a day. This was the reply to his question about the length of time.

Then Allāh gave him the proof of his remaining dead for a hundred years by saying, ‘‘then look at your food and drink — years have not passed over it; and look at your donkey’’. As he had not realized that he had died and had been brought to life after such a long time, the information that he had tarried a hundred years was liable to be doubted (not necessarily by him), because his body had not changed at all; and if a man dies and a hundred years pass over him, his body usually undergoes innumerable changes until the bones rot and turn into dust. To remove this possible doubt, Allāh ordered him to look at his food and drink which had not changed a bit all this time; and to look at his donkey whose bones had rotted. The condition of the donkey would indicate the

length of time and the condition of the food and the drink would show him the possibility of remaining in one condition for such a long period without undergoing any change.

It shows that the donkey had also been given death and had become rotten. But the Qur'ān, in its unsurpassed good style, did not like to mention the donkey's death when it had said that the prophet had been caused to die.

In this way Allāh made him realize that his amazement, which was based on the length of time, was not appropriate. He himself admitted that a hundred years were to him like a day or a part of a day. It was the same feeling which the resurrected will show on the Day of Resurrection. Thus he became aware that the time passed between death and resurrection, whether short or long, has no effect whatsoever on the power of Allāh Who rules over everything. His power is no subservient to time and space. Changes, whether big or small, which occur in a body make no difference to His power. Giving life to old dead bodies is as easy to Him as resurrecting new ones. Old and new, far and near, are all equal to Him. As He says: *Surely they think it to be far off, and We see it nigh* (70:6 — 7); *. . . the matter of the Hour is but as the twinkling of an eye or it is still nearer . . .* (16:77).

''And that We make you a sign to men'': The conjunction ''and'' signifies that there was some other purpose also. It means: We did what We did so that We may explain to you certain things and so that We may make you a sign to men. Thus there were two aims: the purpose of showing him how Allāh assembled the bones and clothed them with flesh was to show him how He gives life to the dead; and the purpose of causing him to die and to make him alive again was to demonstrate that fact to him and to make him a sign for other men. That is why the sentence, ''and that We make you a sign to men'', was written before the mention of the bones and their being clothed by flesh.

The above discourse also shows why the word ''look'' has been repeated thrice in this verse. Each order has a special purpose which is not shared by the other two.

Allāh gave him death and then made him alive. In this way, he himself experienced what most people will feel on the Day or Resurrection; as Allāh says: *And at the time when the Hour shall come, the guilty shall swear* (that) *they did not tarry but an hour; thus they*

used to utter lies. And those who are given knowledge and faith will say: Certainly you tarried according to the decree of Allāh till the Day of Resurrection; so this is, the Day of Resurrection, but you did not know (30:55 — 56).

Then Allāh explained to him the second aspect of his question: How will the parts and components of the body return to their original shape, after all those innumerable changes? So Allāh told him to ''look at the bones, how We assemble them together, then clothe them with flesh''. Obviously, it refers to the bones of the donkey, and not to those of the dead people of the town. Otherwise, not he alone, but all the resurrected people of the town would have become ''signs'' of Allāh to the mankind.

The commentator whose misinterpretation of ''death'' and ''life'' we have commented upon earlier explains away this sentence in a strange way as well. He says that the ''bones'' refer to the bones in a living body; the fact that they grow and are clothed with flesh is a proof of resurrection. The Creator Who gave it life and growth is surely the Resurrector of the dead; surely He has power over everything. Allāh has argued for resurrection in a like manner by referring to the dead earth which is made alive again with vegetation.

Such an interpretation is obviously absurd.

The explanation which we have given above show that the whole story beginning from: ''So Allāh caused him to die'' upto the end of the verse is one single reply to the prophet's question, ''How will Allāh give it life after its death?'' There is no repetition in it at all.

QUR'ĀN: *So when it became clear to him, he said: ''I know that Allāh has power over all things'':* He returns, after the demonstration, to the knowledge which he already had before that. It seems that when the question as to how Allāh could make it alive came into his mind, he satisfied his curiosity by remembering the all-encompassing power of Allāh. Then Allāh made the matter clear to him by demonstrating how He gives life to the dead. After this re-assurance, he clearly knew the truth of his previous knowledge, and spoke to Allāh in these words, the import of which is as follows: Thou hast always guided me aright; and what I had always known about Thy Omnipotence was not to be doubted; it was the truth which I should always rely upon.

One may find examples of such re-assurance everywhere. Many are

the times when a man has definite knowledge of a subject, then some thought occurs in his mind which goes against that, not because of any doubt or ignorance, but because of some other factors. Thereupon he satisfies himself about the previous certainty, till the doubt is removed. Then, he returns to his previous knowledge and says: 'I know that it is so'. In this way his knowledge is confirmed and his perplexity is removed.

In short, the sentence, ''I know that Allāh has power over all things'', does not mean that before it became clear to him, he was in some doubt about the power of Allāh. Such an interpretation would be wrong, because:

First: He was a prophet, who was spoken to by Allāh. And the prophets cannot be ignorant of Allāh's person and attributes; and especially of His Omnipotence which is an attribute of person.

Second: Had he been ignorant of Allāh's power, he would have said, ''Now I know . . .'' or ''Now I knew . . .'' But he said: ''I know'', that is, from before.

Third: What he had seen was a proof that Allāh had power to give life to the dead. It did not prove that He had power ''over all things''. But he said that he knew that Allāh had power over all things. It shows that this knowledge was not based on that demonstration.

Of course, it is possible that a man of lesser strength of character would be stunned and bewildered by such a manifestation of divine power, and would declare, forgetting all other things, that He Who gives life to the dead has power over all things. But it would be just a conjecture, based on fear and awe; it would be wiped out as soon as that fear or awe was removed. Moreover, it would not be acceptable to him who has not experienced that fear or awe. In any case, such an illogical conclusion cannot be relied upon. But we see in this verse that Allāh confirms his declaration by putting it under His seal of approval. It naturally, follows that this knowledge had not come to him as a result of that manifestation.

In other words, if he had acquired that knowledge through that manifestation, then all he would have known was that Allāh had the power to give life to the dead. He should therefore not have said that Allāh had the power over all things. Such talk would be wrong in fact, and would be beneath the dignity of a prophet.

QUR'ĀN: *And* (remember) *when Ibrāhīm said: ''My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead'':* It has been explained earlier that the conjunctive ''and'' is related to a deleted (but understood) word, ''remember''; and that that deleted word governs the adverb ''when''. Someone has said that the word ''when'' is governed by ''What ! and do you not believe?'' But this is patently wrong.

The plea of Ibrāhīm, ''My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead'', proves:

First: that he asked for demonstration, not for logical reasoning. The prophets (and especially a prophet like Ibrāhīm, the friend of Allāh) are too great to believe in resurrection on the Day of Judgement without any logical reason. A belief without reason is either blind following, or also is based on defective intellection. And neither of these two can be attributed to Ibrāhīm (a.s.). Moreover, he used the word ''how'' which is used to ask about the state and condition of a thing, not about the thing itself. When you say: ''Have you seen Zayd?'', the question is about the seeing itself. But if you say: ''How did you see Zayd?'', the seeing is already known and accepted; the question is only about the condition of it and its particulars. When Ibrāhīm (a.s.) asked, ''how Thou givest life to the dead'', he already knew by logic and reason that Allāh gives life to the dead; now he only wanted to see how it was done.

Second: that the question asked by Ibrāhīm (a.s.) could mean either of the two following things:

1) How could the material parts of a dead man come together after being scattered hither and thither, and how could they accept life and become alive? In other words, how could they be governed by the power of Allāh?

2) How does Allāh bestow life on the dead. The first question is concerned with the effect and the result; the second one with the reason and the cause. This second aspect is in a way the kingdom, which Allāh mentions in the Qur'ān: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, ''Be'', and it is. Therefore, glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him you shall be brought back* (36:82 — 83).

Which of the two questions did Ibrāhīm (a.s.) ask? He asked the second one, and not the first, because:

a) he asked ''how Thou givest life''. He wanted to see the action of

Allāh. The effect of the action on the dead was not his primary concern; otherwise he would have asked ‘‘how the dead become alive’’;

b) if he only wanted to see how dead bodies respond to life, Allāh could have given life to any dead animal before the eyes of Ibrāhīm (a.s.), and there would have been no need to make it happen in Ibrāhīm’s hands;

c) if he wanted to see how a dead body comes to life, then the story should have been ended on something like, ‘‘Know that Allāh has the power over all things’’, and not on the words actually used, ‘‘Know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.’’ The Qur’ān always uses the appropriate adjectives at the end of verses. The first meaning of the question concerns the power of Allāh and if that was the purpose of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) in asking, the attribute of power should have been mentioned at the end. But Allāh used the attributes of Might and Wisdom which are more appropriate for bestowing of life, rather than for the acceptance of life by matter.

A commentator has interpreted this verse in a strange way, which is given hereunder. (Our comments on this interpretation will be given afterwards.) He says:

When Ibrāhīm (a.s.) said: ‘‘My Lord! Show me . . .’’, he only wanted to ‘‘know’’ how the dead were given life; he did not want to ‘‘see’’ how it was done. And the reply does not go beyond that information. The said commentator further says: There is nothing in this verse to show that Allāh ordered him to give life to the birds. Nor that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) did as he was ordered. Not every order is intended to be complied with. Information is often given in the imperative mood. Suppose that someone asks you how ink is made. You tell him: ‘‘Take this and that material and then mix it in this way, and your ink shall be ready.’’ You want to explain to him how ink is made; not that you are ordering him to make ink then and there, even though you use the imperative mood.

He further says: There are many verses in the Qur’ān in which information has been given in the form of an order. This particular verse gives just a similitude for the resurrection of the dead. It tells Ibrāhīm: Take four birds, make them tame and train them so that they obey your call. (The birds are the fittest of all animals for such training.) Then put each bird on a mountain, and then call them. See how swiftly they come to you, their separation and their distance from you shall not prevent

them from coming to you, flying. The same is the similitude of the decree of your Lord. When He intends to give life to the dead, He calls them with the word of creation, ‘‘Be alive’’, and they at once become alive. It is the same as was in the beginning of creation. He said to the heaven and to the earth, ‘‘Come both willingly or unwillingly’’; they both said, ‘‘We come willingly’’.

The said commentator has given two ‘‘proofs’’ for his interpretation:

First: The word of Allāh, *‘‘fa-ṣurhunna’’* (فَصُرْهُنَّ) according to him means ‘‘make them inclined’’. That is, tame them and make them affable towards yourself. It is because of this meaning that it is followed by the preposition *‘‘ilā’’* (إِلي = to). The verb *ṣāra* (صَارَ) when followed by *ilā* gives the meaning of inclination.

He says that it is wrong to say (as commentators have done) that *fa-ṣurhunna* means, ‘‘then cut them into pieces after killing them.’’ This interpretation is not in conformity with the preposition mentioned above.

He further says: Some commentators have said that the preposition is related to the word *‘‘fa-khudh’’* (فَخُذْ = then take), and the verse in effect says, ‘‘then take to you four of the birds, then cut them into pieces’’. But such an interpretation is against the clear sequence of the words.

Second: Apparently, the pronouns in the words *fa ṣurhunna* (make them inclined), *‘‘minhunna’’* (مِنْهُنَّ = a part of them), *‘‘ud‘uhunna’’*(اُدْعُهُنَّ = call them) and *‘‘ya’tīnaka’’* (يَأْتِيْنَكَ = they will come to you), all refer to the ‘‘birds’’. If we accept the interpretation of the commentators that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was told to cut the birds into pieces and that after mixing their parts, he was to put portions of them on mountains, and after that he was to call them, then the pronouns would differ in their meanings: the first two would refer to the birds, and the third and fourth to the pieces of the birds. And such a thing is against the apparent meaning of the Qur’ān.

The said commentator wrote the above-mentioned two arguments. Another commentator, who agrees with him, has added three more ‘‘proofs’’, which we append below:

Third: What is the meaning of ‘‘showing how a thing is created?’’ Does it mean demonstrating how the scattered parts and components are joined and assembled and how they change back to their original living

shape? If yes, then it could not be shown by cutting the birds into pieces, mixing them together and putting small portions on far away hills. How could Ibrāhīm (a.s.) see from such a distance what changes and movements were occurring in the smallest atoms of the pieces? Or, does it mean showing him how Allāh gives life to the dead? In other words, does it mean comprehending the reality of the creative decree? But the creative decree is the divine will which brings things into being; and the Qur'ān openly says, and Muslims agree, that it is impossible for a human being to comprehend the creative decree of Allāh; the attributes of Allāh cannot be subjected to ''how''.

Fourth: The words of the Qur'ān ''then place on every mountain . . .'' point to some delay, and it is in conformity with the idea of taming and training. The same is the import of the words *fa ṣurhunna* which should be translated, ''then make them inclined''. The idea of killing the birds and cutting them into pieces does not conform with the ''delay'' implied in *''thumma''* (ثُمَّ = then).

Fifth: If the events occurred as most of the commentators say, then the verse should have ended on the divine name ''Powerful'' and not on ''Mighty, Wise''; because ''Mighty'' is the one who cannot be comprehended.

The author's comments: The above was the interpretation of this group. But if you ponder on the explanation given by us earlier, you will realize that none of their arguments are valid. The plea of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) begins with the word, ''show me''; then come the words, ''how Thou givest life . . .''; and the verse goes on describing how this ''giving life'' was performed in the hands of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) himself. Add to it the words, ''then place on every mountain a part of them''; clearly ''a part'' refers to a part of the bird, not a complete and alive bird. All this clearly negates the interpretation offered by these people.

Now let us look at their arguments.

Reply to the first argument: *fa ṣurhunn* definitely means, ''then cut them into pieces''. The preposition *ilā* (to) is used here to imply inclination. This implication of it was described in the commentary of the words *''arrafathu ilā nisā'ikum* (الرَّفَثُ اِلي نِسَآئِكُمْ = to go into your wives) (in verse 187 of this chapter). Thus, its complete meaning is: cut them into pieces inclining them towards you.

Reply to the second argument: All the four pronouns refer to the

birds. Now comes the question: how could the pronouns in ''call them'' and ''they will come to you'' refer to the birds, when there was no bird at all, when only the pieces of those birds had remained? This question arises because the said commentator does not know the difference between mere verbal speech and creative speech. See, for example, the verse: *Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it was a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth: ''Come both, willingly or unwillingly'' They both said: ''We come willingly''* (41:11). Here Allāh addressed the heaven, while it was non-existent; only its matter was present at that time. Likewise, Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was told to call the birds, while they did not exist; only their pieces existed at that time. Then there is the verse: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, 'Be', and it is* (36:82). Here a non-existent thing is addressed by the creative speech ''Be''.

The fact is that verbal speech requires an addressee to exist before the speech. But the opposite is true in the case of creative speech. There, the existence of the addressee follows that speech. In this case, the talk, address or speech means ''creation''; and existence is caused by creation. In the above-mentioned verse 36:82 ''and it is'' (i.e., existence) depends on the creative word ''Be'' (i.e., creation).

Reply to the third argument: We believe that the second alternative is correct: that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) wanted to see how Allāh gives life to the dead; he did not want to see how a dead body accepts life.

The said commentator has argued against this alternative. He says that it implies comprehension of the will of Allāh, which, being an attribute of Allāh, is impossible to comprehend.

But the fact is that the will of Allāh is an attribute of action, and is inferred from divine actions like creating, giving life, and so forth. What is impossible to comprehend is the Person of Allāh, as He says: . . . *they do not comprehend Him in knowledge* (20:110).

Will is deduced from action. It is creation accompanied by the existence of the created thing. It is the word ''Be'' mentioned in verse 36:82: ''. . . that He says to it 'Be' and it is''. This word, ''Be'', is the kingdom of everything that is mentioned in the next verse: *Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of everything* . . . (36:83). And Allāh has said that He had shown Ibrāhīm (a.s.) the great kingdom of His creation: *And thus did We show Ibrāhīm the kingdom*

of the heavens and the earth, and that he might be of those who are sure (6:75). Obviously, among the great kingdom shown to Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was this giving life to the birds, mentioned in this verse.

Why are these people so confused? It is because they do not understand the force behind such miraculous happenings. They think that when Ibrāhīm (a.s.) called the birds and they became alive, or when ʻĪsā (a.s.) said to a dead body, ‘‘Rise up by permission of Allāh’’ and it rose up, or when Sulaymān (a.s.) ordered the wind to blow and it did so, it was because of some effective cause which was hidden in those words by Allāh; or because of the thinking process of these prophets which showed itself in these words (made of letters), as our words lead one to their meanings. These people do not realize that all this was based upon these prophets' spiritual connection with the divine power which can never be overpowered; and with Allāh's Omnipotence which knows no bounds and which is the real power that brings everything into being.

Reply to the fourth argument: The delay inferred from the word *thumma* (then) is found in cutting the birds into pieces as well, dividing and mixing the parts and putting them on various mountains. This matter needs no elaboration.

Reply to the fifth argument: This argument, in fact, goes against the objector. What he wants to prove is that Allāh only explained to Ibrāhīm (a.s.), in an academic and theoretical manner, how the things were made alive; He did not show it to him by demonstration. If that was the case, then the verse should have been ended on the adjective ‘‘Powerful’’, instead of ‘‘Mighty, Wise’’. We have explained earlier that the adjectives ‘‘Mighty’’ and ‘‘Wise’’ are more appropriate for our explanation of the verse.

Another commentator has interpreted this verse in another wrong way. He thinks that what Ibrāhīm (a.s.) wanted to see was how a dead body accepts life and becomes alive; that his question was concerned with the effect and the result, not with its reason and cause. His argument is as follows:

Ibrāhīm (a.s.) did not ask about any religiously essential matter. He only wanted to know how the dead become alive, so that he might have knowledge of it. It is not necessary for true belief to know ‘‘how’’ the dead are resurrected. Thus Ibrāhīm (a.s.) wanted to acquire some knowledge which was not necessary for true belief. This view is

supported by the mode of the question: ‘‘how?’’ This particle is used to ask about a state or condition. If you say ‘‘How does Zayd judge between people?’’, the fact that he does judge between people, is already known to you. What you want to know is only the condition under which, and the manner in which, he does this work. On the other hand, if you want to enquire about the fact of his judging, you would say ‘‘Does Zayd judge between people?’’ It proves that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) already knew and believed that Allāh gives life to the dead; he only wanted to know how it was done. Then why did Allāh tell him: ‘‘What! and do you not believe?’’ This question was asked to remove any possible misunderstanding about Ibrāhīm’s faith. The mode of questioning, used by Ibrāhīm, is mainly to ask about the state and condition. But it is also used, at times, to show the disability of the person so addressed. Someone claims that he can lift an extremely heavy weight, and you tell him: ‘‘Well, show me how you lift it’’. This question shows your conviction that he is unable to do so. As Allāh knew that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) had not meant any such thing in his question. He put this counter-question to him, so that he might clarify this point in unambiguous words, and might thus remove any misunderstanding that the wording of the first question could have caused. In this way, his prestine faith was clearly confirmed and no hearer could entertain any doubt about it. The words ‘‘but that my heart may be at ease’’ mean that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) wanted his heart not to wonder hither and thither thinking about various ways in which a dead body might become alive again. He wanted it to be at ease by seeing it with his own eyes. That his heart was not at ease before had no adverse effect on his faith in the power of Allāh to give life to the dead. And when he was shown how the dead were made alive, nothing was added to his already perfect faith. He just acquired some knowledge which was not very necessary for the faith.

Then, after a long discussion, he says: This verse shows the excellence of Ibrāhīm (a.s.). He was at once shown what he had asked for, and that, also, in the easiest way; while ‘Uzayr [1] was shown what he wanted to know after undergoing death for a hundred years.

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[1] ‘Uzayr = Ezra or Ezrah of the Apocrypha. He is known as Esdras in the Roman Catholic Bible.

The author's comments: Our previous explanation is enough to show that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) wanted to know how Allāh gives life to the dead and not as to how the dead accept life. He wanted to see the cause, not the effect. That is why he said, ''how Thou givest life to the dead'' (active voice); and did not say, ''how the dead are made alive'' (passive voice). Then there is the fact that the whole episode was made to happen through the activities of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) himself. If he had wanted to see only the effect (and not the cause), it would have been enough to show him any dead body coming alive, as was shown to the one who passed by a town when it had fallen upon its roofs; Allāh told him to ''look at the bones, how We assemble them together, then clothe them with flesh''. There would have been no need to make everything happen through the agency of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) himself. The trouble is that these people measure the spiritual condition of the prophets with the measure of their own common spirits, and in this way fail to understand how the prophets receive divine knowledge and how they perform miracles. They do not appreciate the difference between showing a prophet how the dead became alive and making him the active agent to give life to the dead: for them, both have the same significance! They have lost touch with divine realities, and fallen into this error. And the more they search for the truth, the farther they go from it. See how he interprets the ''ease of heart''. He says that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) wanted his heart not to wonder hither and thither thinking about the various ways in which a thing might be made alive. This alleged wondering hither and thither is a nonsense that is utterly impossible for a prophet like Ibrāhīm (a.s.).

Moreover, if Ibrāhīm (a.s.) had wanted to see how dead bodies come alive, the reply was not an answer to his query at all. He said, ''how Thou givest life to the dead ''. The word used in the question is *''al-mawtā''* (المَوْتي = the dead ones); it is plural and general. He might have meant the dead men, or the dead ones in general, including dead human beings and all types of animals. But Allāh showed him only the resurrection of four birds.

Then the said commentator has shown, according to his thinking, the superiority of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) over 'Uzayr (whom he identifies as the passer-by, mentioned in the preceding verse). He thinks that the two stories have the same significance; both men wanted to see how the dead were made alive and both were shown. But, as we have mentioned

earlier, neither story is concerned in any way with that question. And he has been unable to see the brilliant exposition and deep realities which the two verses contain.

Lastly, if the verse intended just to explain how the dead come alive, it would have been appropriate to end it on the adjective ‘‘Omnipotent’’, or ‘‘Powerful’’, and not on ‘‘Mighty, Wise’’. See, for instance, the following verses:

And among His signs is this, that you see the earth still, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells: most surely He Who gives it life is the Giver of life to the dead; surely He has power over all things (41:39). As you see, the verse explains ‘‘how’’ the dead are given life, and it ends on the attribute of Omnipotence.

Have they not seen that Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth and was not tired by their creation, is able to give life to the dead? Aye! He has surely power over all things (46:33). Here again the ‘‘how’’ is explained through a simile, and the verse ends on the attribute of power.

QUR’ĀN: *He said: ‘‘What! and do you not believe?’’ He said: ‘‘Certainly, but that my heart may be at ease’’: ‘‘Balā’’* (بَلٰي = certainly) is used to negate a negative question; and thus the negative of the question becomes positive. For example, Allāh asked the souls: *‘‘Am I not your Lord?’’ They said: ‘‘Certainly’’* (7:172). Had they replied, *na‘am* (نَعَمْ = yes), it would have become infidelity. *at-Ṭamānīnah* (الطَّمَانِيْنَةُ) and *al-iṭmīnān* (الاِطْمِيْنَانُ) is the quiet of the heart after its being troubled and agitated. It is derived from the words, *iṭma’annati ’l-arḍ* (اِطْمَأَنَّتِ الاَرْضُ = the earth was depressed) and *arḍun muṭma’innah* (اَرْضٌ مُطْمَئِنَّةٌ = low land) which are used when the earth becomes low, so that if the water comes in, it stays therein and if a stone falls in, it remains motionless.

Allāh said: ‘‘and do you not believe?’’ Had He said, ‘do you not believe?’, it would have shown that the original question (*‘‘Show me how Thou givest life to the dead’’*) was asked because of disbelief; and it would have become an admonition and reproach. By adding ‘‘and’’, Allāh showed that Ibrāhīm’s question was quite in order, but it should not be associated with disbelief in resurrection. *‘‘wa’’* (وَ = and) is a conjunctive and it joins two words, phrases or sentences. When Allāh added it in His question, it changed the import of the sentence. Now it means: Your question is in order, but it is associated with disbelief in

resurrection? Without this conjunctive, it would have meant: Do you ask it because you do not believe? It would have turned it into a censure and reprimand.

''Belief'' mentioned in the divine question is general, it is not used with any condition or restriction. It signifies that one cannot believe in Allāh if one is doubtful about the resurrection of the dead. No doubt the question ''and do you not believe?'' was asked in the context of giving life to the dead. But the context does not restrict the general meaning of the word. ''Belief'', therefore, retains its unconditional meaning, and shows that nobody could be a believer unless he believed in resurrection.

Likewise, the words of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) quoted by Allāh ''that my heart may be at ease'' are unconditional. It means that he wanted to acquire total tranquillity and to cut at the roots of all types of fancies and imaginations. Human imagination is bound to the senses; all its activities are confined within the circle of the things perceived by these senses. It shrinks from those things which are known through reason only, even when a man believes them to be true, like those principles of metaphysics which are beyond the sphere of matter and which cannot be known through any of the five senses. The mind resists those realities even when their premises are sound and certain. There always remain some vague doubt about the authenticity of those conclusions. Such doubts and conflicting ideas become stengthened by inclinations and desires, although the spirit firmly accepts the truth of those principles and believes in them unconditionally. Thus, belief and faith should remain firm and intact ; the imagination should only harm it by a slight distress, which we may call pricks. A man sleeps in a dark room in which is placed a dead body. He knows that the dead person is just a lump of matter without any sense or will; it cannot harm anybody in any way. But the imagination refuses to accept this truth, it goes on thinking fantastic things concerning that dead body; and it frightens the man to such an extent that it may happen that he loses the balance of his mind, or even dies because of terror.

This example shows that the existence of some thoughts or fantasies conflicting with the sure truths, is not always contrary to faith and belief. But surely it annoys the spirit and robs it of its tranquillity and ease. Such an imaginary distress cannot be removed except by demonstration or sensual perception. That is what is meant

by the saying: Seeing has an effect which knowledge does not have. For instance, Allāh informed Mūsā (a.s.), when he was at his appointed place, that his people had gone astray and were worshipping a calf. Hearing it, he believed it. Yet, his distress and anger showed itself only when he returned to them and saw them with his own eyes, in their idolatory. Then his violent grief reached its highest point; he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by the head dragging him towards himself.

From this and the previous explanations it is clear that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) had not asked to see a phenomenon which could be perceived through the senses; that is, he did not want to see how the parts and pieces of a dead body accept life after death. He wanted to see the action of Allāh in giving life to the dead. But this action could not be seen, although it was not unrelated to a perceived phenomenon, that is, the acceptance of life by the pieces of the dead bodies. Thus Ibrāhīm (a.s.) had in fact asked for an evident truth and certainty.

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''Then take four of the birds, then cut them* (into pieces), *then place on every mountain a part of them, t h e y will come to you'':* The word *''ṣurhunna''* (صُرْهُنَّ = c u t them into pieces) is derived from *ṣāra; yaṣūru* (صَارَ، يَصُوْرُ = he cut / he inclined; he is cutting/he is inclining). Another recitation is *ṣirhunna* (صِرْهُنَّ), derived from *ṣāra; yaṣīru* (صَارَ، يَصِيْرُ.) with the same meanings. The context shows that it means ''cut them''. The preposition, *''ilā''* (إِلي = to) gives a hint of inclination, as was explained earlier. The meaning, then, will be: cut them (into pieces), inclining them towards you; or, incline them towards you cutting them into pieces.

Anyhow, the above sentences are the answer to the prayer of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) when he said: ''My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead.'' Obviously, the answer should fit the question. The norms of eloquence and the wisdom of the speaker leave no room for verbosity; a wise and eloquent speaker does not allow his speech to be encumbered by unnecessary words which have no bearing on the intended meaning. This is especially so with the Qur'ān, the best speech, revealed by the best of speakers to the best of hearers. The story is not as simple as it appears at first glance. Had it been so, the answer would have been completed by the giving of life to any dead body in any manner, and the extra details would have been deemed unnecessary. But the facts tell us

otherwise: Allāh included in it many extra particulars and details. It was decided that the dead to be given life should be from among the birds; they should be alive, should be four in number, they should be killed and their parts and pieces be mixed together, then the mixed matter should be divided into many portions; then every portion should be placed in places distant from each other like the peak of this mountain and summit of that hill; then they should be given life through Ibrāhīm (a.s.), that is, the very man who had asked for it ; and thus they should all gather around him alive and none the worse for their experience.

All these details and peculiarities must have had some connection with the aim of the story. The commentators have written many reasons for these points, which only add to the readers' confusion (as may be seen in the more extensive books of exegesis of the Qur'ān).

However, these particulars must have been related to the question. We fmd that there are two aspects in the question of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) which require special attention:

First: His use of the active voice, ''how Thou givest life''. He wanted to see the giving of life, in-as-much as it is an attribute of Allāh. He did not want to see it from the other side, that is, how the various parts of a dead body accept life after death.

Second: His use of the plural, ''dead ones'', which is an added particular.

Keeping these two matters in view, we fmd that the answer fits the question perfectly, there is nothing unnecessary or extraneous in it.

The first aspect was fully answered by making it happen through Ibrāhīm (a.s.) himself. The words ''then take'', ''then cut them'' and ''then place'', were all essential for this purpose. Finally Allāh said, ''then call them, they will come to you flying''. Their coming to Ibrāhīm flying, that is, their life, was caused by Ibrāhīm's call. Allāh made his call the cause of the giving of life to the dead birds — and there is no bestowing of life except by the decree of Allāh. The call of Ibrāhīm, by order of Allāh, had a sort of connection with the decree of Allāh which gives life to all. In this way, Ibrāhīm saw this bestowing with his own eyes, and saw how the divine decree creates life. Had the call of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) not been connected with the decree of Allāh (*Who, when He intends a thing, say to it ''Be', and it is*), and had it been connected, like our own talk, with the images in his mind only, it could not create

anything, could not give life to any dead thing.

The second aspect, the use of the plural, ‘‘dead ones’’, shows that the multiplicity of the dead had some bearing on the question. The bodies, after they had died, their components disintegrated, their shapes altered and their conditions totally changed, could not be recognized, nor could there remain any connection or attachment between their former parts; they became lost in the darkness of nothingness, like forgotten myths that exist neither in reality nor in the imagination. Ibrāhīm (a.s.) wanted to see how the life-giving power of Allāh would encompass them when there was nothing to be encompassed.

This same question was asked arrogantly by Pharaoh, and Mūsā (a.s.) replied to him by knowledge. Allāh says quoting this talk: (Pharaoh) *said: ‘‘Then what is the state of the. former generation?’’ He* (Mūsā) *said: ‘‘The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a book; errs not my Lord, nor does He forget’’* (20: 51 — 52).

Anyhow, this aspect of the question was answered by Allāh when He ordered Ibrāhīm (a.s.) to take four of the birds (perhaps, the birds were chosen for this demonstration because it could be carried out on them easily and without delay) so that he might observe their ways, see their distinguishing features and particular shapes, and thus might know them perfectly. He was then ordered to kill them, chop and mince them, mixing their small particles completely together. Then he was required to divide that mixture into portions and put each portion on a separate mountain, so that there should not remain any chance of recognition. Then he was to call them, and they would come to him flying. By this demonstration, he would see that the re-establishing of separate identities and the bestowal of life follows the call; and that the call was addressed to their souls. The body follows the soul, it is not the other way round. The body is a dependant of the soul, and not vice versa. The body has the same relation to the soul that a shadow has to the body. The shadow appears when the body exists; it inclines according to the inclination of the body; and when the body ceases to exist, the shadow becomes extinct. Likewise, when Allāh creates a living thing, or gives life to a dead animal or man, the creative decree affects, originally, the spirit, and the material parts follow the spirit and come into being, because of the special bond created by Allāh between the spirit and its body — the bond which is preserved by Allāh and which we cannot comprehend. In this

way, the identity of the body follows the identity of the spirit, without any gap and without any hindrance. Allāh refers to it in His words, ‘‘they will come to you flying’’, that is, without any delay whatsoever.

The same principle has been enunciated in verse 32:10 — 11, *And they say: ‘‘What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new creation?’’ Nay! they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say: ‘‘The angel of death who is given charge of you causes you to die, then to your Lord you are brought back.’’* We have explained to some extent this verse while discussing the non-materiality of the soul; further details will be given in a proper place, God willing.

‘‘Then take four of the birds’’: He was given this order so that he might identify them perfectly. Thus there would be no room for doubt when they had been made whole and alive again. Also he would observe their particulars and peculiarities, and then would see how all distinctions had been lost after death.

‘‘Then cut them (into pieces), then place on every mountain a part of them’’: Kill them, cut them into pieces, mix those pieces all together and divide the portions on the mountains found in your locality. In this way, the parts of each bird would be scattered here and there, and they would not be recognizable.

This order indicate that this event occurred after Ibrāhīm (a.s.) had migrated from Babylonia to Syria; because there are no mountains in Babylonia.

‘‘Then call them’’: Call the birds ‘O peacock!, O this!, O that!’ The pronoun ‘‘them’’ refers to the ‘‘four birds’’. If Allāh had wished Ibrahim to call the pieces of the birds, He-would have said *‘‘nādihinna’’* (نَادِهِنَّ = cry out to them), because the pieces were on far away mountains, and not *ud‘uhunna* (اُدْعُهُنَّ = call them) which is used for calling someone nearby. The order to ‘‘call them’’ indicates that he was to call the birds (i.e., their spirits) themselves.

‘‘They will come to you flying ’’. That is, they will get their own bodies and shapes, and will acquire all their faculties and powers including flying.

QUR’ĀN: *And know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise:* He is Mighty; if a thing ceases to exist, it is not lost to Him. He is Wise; He does not do a thing but by its proper method. He creates bodies by creating souls, and

not the other way round.

TRADITIONS

About the words of Allāh: *Did you not see him who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord:* aṭ-Ṭayālisī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that he said: ‘‘He who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord was Namrūd (Nimrod), son of Kan‘ān.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Abū ‘Alī aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said: ‘‘There is a difference of opinion as to the time when this dispute occurred. It is said that it was when he shattered the idols, before he was thrown into fire. (It is reported from Muqātil.) Also it is said that it was after he was thrown into fire, and it had became cool and safe for him. (It is reported from aṣ-Ṣādiq - a.s.)’’ (*Tafsīru ’l-burhān*)

The author says: The verse does not say when the dispute had taken place. But it may fairly be inferred that it was after Ibrāhīm had been thrown into fire. The stories written in the Qur’ān about the early period of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) — when he argued with his uncle and other people and then shattered the idols, give us to understand that he first met Namrūd when he was taken to his court accused of breaking their idols; and Namrūd ordered him to be burnt alive. At that time Namrūd was too busy in sentencing him to have any dialogue with him about his Lord: whether it was Allāh or Namrūd. Also, if this event had occurred at that time, Namrūd would have disputed with him on behalf of the idols, and not for establishing his own divinity.

There are many traditions, narrated by the Sunnī and the Shī‘ite narrators that the one ‘‘who passed by a town and it had fallen down upon its roofs’’ was the prophet, Armiah. Other traditions say that he was ‘Uzayr. But both types of traditions are ‘‘solitary’’, (i.e., not *mutawātir*) and one is not bound to accept any of them. Moreover, the chains of some are weak. The Qur’ān too is silent about the passer-by’s identity, and the Bible does not mention this story.

The story given in those traditions is long, and there are some differences among them. In any case, those traditions are beyond the scope of our book. Those wishing to read them should look for them into

other books.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) told in a tradition about the words of Allāh: *And* (remember) *when Ibrāhīm said: ''My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead . . . '':* ''And this verse is allegorical; it means that he (Ibrāhīm - a.s.) asked about 'how'?, and 'how' is an action of Allāh, Mighty and Great is He; (it is a thing that) if a knowledgeable person did not know it he cannot be faulted for it nor can any defect be attributed to his belief in monotheism . . .'' (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbar*)

The author says: The meaning of this tradition may be understood from our earlier explanations.

'Alī ibn Asbāṭ says that Abu '1-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) was asked about the words of Allāh: *He* (Ibrāhīm) *said: ''Certainly! but that my heart may be at ease.''* ''Was there any doubt in his heart?'' The Imām said: ''No! but he wanted an increase (in it) from Allāh . . .'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: This matter has been narrated in *al-Kāfī* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) and al-'Abdu 's-Ṣāliḥ (a.s.). Its meaning has been explained earlier.

al-Qummī narrated from his father from Ibn Abī 'Umayr from Abū Ayyūb from Abū Basīr from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) saying: ''Verily Ibrāhīm saw a dead body on a river-bank; aquatic carnivores were eating it, then they attacked each other and some of them ate the others. Ibrāhīm was astonished (to see it) and said: *'My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead.'* Allāh said: *'What! and do you not believe?' He said: 'Certainly, but that my heart may be at ease.'* Allāh said: *'Then take four of the birds, then cut them into pieces, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.'* Thereupon, Ibrāhīm took a peacock, a rooster, a pigeon and a crow. Then Allāh said: 'Cut them into pieces and mix their flesh together and place them separately on ten mountains.' Thereafter he (Ibrāhīm - a.s.) called them and said: 'Be alive by the permission of Allāh.' The birds began assembling, the flesh and bones of each joining together with its head; and they flew towards Ibrāhīm. (Seeing it) Ibrāhīm said: 'Verily, Allāh is Mighty, Wise.' '' (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: al-'Ayyāshī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from Abū Baṣīr from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.); and it has been narrated through Sunnī

chains from Ibn ‘Abbās.

The words of the Imām: ‘‘Verily, Ibrāhīm saw a dead body . . . *‘My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead’ ’’,* describe the reason why Ibrāhīm asked this question: he had just seen the pieces of the body being disjoined and scattered, and their condition changed. He observed their dispersal in all directions and the deterioration in their condition which was to such an extent that nothing of the original body remained there.

Question: The tradition apparently says that the doubt was that which is known as the doubt of the eater and the eaten; because it mentions that the carnivores attacked each other and some of them ate the others, and that the wonder and question of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was based on this phenomenon.

Comment: There are two doubts: 1) the scattering and dispersal of the parts of the bodies, the change in their properties and shapes, in short, their complete extinction so that apparently nothing remained to accept the life; 2) the parts of one animal become the parts of another animal; how could the two animals be resurrected whole? The part of one is also the part of another; whichever is resurrected whole, the other one will be incomplete. This is called the doubt of the eater and the eaten.

The answer given by Allāh — that the body follows the soul — is sufficient to remove both doubts. But what Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was ordered to do was not related to the doubt of the eater and the eaten; it was directly concerned with the first doubt — dispersal of the parts and total extinction, even though the basic answer removes both doubts.

What the tradition mentions some of the carnivores eating the others is not intended to be a part of the explanation of the verse.

The Imām (aṣ-Ṣādiq - a.s.) has said: ‘‘Thereupon, Ibrāhīm took a peacock, a rooster, a pigeon and a crow.’’ Some other traditions say that the birds were a vulture, a duck, a peacock and a rooster. It has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣādiq in *‘Uyūnu ’l-akhbār* from ar-Riḍā (a.s.). It has also been reported from Mujāhid, Ibn Jarīḥ, ‘Atā’ and Ibn Zayd. Still others say that it was a hoopoe, a sparrow-hawk, a peacock and a crow. It has been narrated by al-‘Ayyāshī, through Ma‘rūf ibn Kharabbūdh, from al-Bāqir (a.s.): and is reported from Ibn ‘Abbās too. Another Sunnī tradition quotes Ibn ‘Abbās as saying that the birds were a crested crane, a peacock, a rooster and a pigeon. There is only one name which appears in

every report: peacock.

The Imām said: ‘‘place them separately on ten mountains.’’ That the mountain were ten is unanimously mentioned in the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt.* Somone has put their number as four; another as seven.

‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm said: ‘‘I was present in the court of al-Ma’mūn and with him was ar-Riḍā (‘Alī ibn Mūsā). al-Ma’mūn said to him: ‘O Son of the Messenger of Allāh! Is it not your belief that the prophets were sinless?’ He said: ‘Certainly.’ Then he (al-Ma’mūn) asked him (ar-Ridā - a.s.) about some verses of the Qur’ān, and said to him, among others: ‘Now tell me about the words of Allāh: *‘‘My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead. ’’He said: ‘‘What! and do you not believe?’’ He said: ‘‘Certainly, but that my heart may be at ease.’’* ar-Riḍā said: ‘Verily Allāh, Blessed and High is He!, had revealed to Ibrāhīm: ‘‘I am going to take from my servants a friend; if he asks me to give life to the dead, I will grant his prayer.’’ It came into the heart of Ibrāhīm that he was that friend. Therefore, he said: *‘‘My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead. ’’Allāh said:¸ ‘‘What ! and do you not believe?’’* Ibrāhīm said: *‘‘Certainly, but that my heart may be at ease* about Thy friendship . . .’’ ’ ’’ (*‘Uyūn ’l-akhbār*)

The author says: We have expressed our views (while discussing about the Garden of Adam) about ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm and about this tradition which he has narrated from ar-Riḍā (a.s.).

However, this tradition throws some light on the fact that the status of the friendship of Allāh brings with it the granting of prayers. The language supports this too. *al-Khallah* (الخَلَّةُ) means ‘need’. The friend is called *al-khalīl* (الخَلِيْلُ) because when friendship is perfect, one friend describes his needs to the other friend — and why should one describe his need if his friend cannot fulfil it?

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ
فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِأَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ - ٢٦١ .
الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ ثُمَّ لاَ يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلاَ أَذًى لَهُمْ
أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَهُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ - ٢٦٢ . قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ
وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى وَاللهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ - ٢٦٣. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لاَ تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلاَ يُؤْمِنُ
بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ
صَلْداً لاَ يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللهُ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ - ٢٦٤ .
وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللهِ وَتَثْبِيتاً مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ
جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ
وَاللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ - ٢٦٥ . أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ
وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ
ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ - ٢٦٦ . يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ
وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلاَ تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
بِآخِذِيهِ إِلاَّ أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ - ٢٦٧ . الشَّيْطَانُ

يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلاً وَاللهُ
وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٦٨. يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْراً
كَثِيراً وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ـ ٢٦٩ . وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ نَفَقَةٍ أَوْ
نَذَرْتُمْ مِنْ نَذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللهَ يَعْلَمُهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ـ ٢٧٠ . إِنْ تُبْدُوا
الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ
عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ـ ٢٧١ . لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَيْهُمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا
ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ـ ٢٧٢.
لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْباً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ
الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَافاً وَمَا
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢٧٣ . الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ سِرّاً وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ ـ ٢٧٤ .

The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grains; and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases; and Allāh is Ample-giving, All-knowing (261). *Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, for them is their reward with their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve* (262). *A kind word and forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury; and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Forbearing* (263). *O you who believe! do not nullify your charity by reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men and does not believe in Allāh and the last day. So his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock with* (some) *earth upon it, then a heavy rain falls upon it, so it leaves it just a bare stone. They shall not gain anything of what they have*

earned. And Allāh does not guide the unbelieving people (264). *And the parable of those who spend their wealth seeking the pleasure of Allāh and keeping firm their souls is as the parable of a garden on an elevated ground, upon which heavy rain falls so it brings forth its fruit twofold; but if heavy rain does not fall upon it, then light rain* (is enough). *And Allāh sees what you do* (265). *Would anyone of you like that he should have a garden of palms and vines with streams flowing beneath it; he has in it all kinds of fruits; and old age has overtaken him and he has weak offspring, when* (lo!) *a whirlwind with fire in it smites it so it gets burnt up. Thus Allāh makes the signs clear to you, that you may reflect* (266). *0 you who believe! spend* (benevolently) *out of the good things that you have earned and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at what is bad of it, that you may spend* (in charity), *while you would not take it yourselves unless you connived at it; and know that Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praiseworth* (267). *Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to abomination; and Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance; and Allāh is Ample-giving, All-knowing* (268). *He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good; and none but men of understanding mind* (269). *And whatever alms you give or* (whatever) *vow you vow, surely Allāh knows it, and the oppressors shall have no helpers* (270). *If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to poor, it is better for you; and this will remove from you some of your sins; and Allāh is aware of what you do* (271). *To make them walk in the right way is not incumbent on you, but Allāh guides aright whom He pleases; and whatever good thing you spend, it is to your own good, and you do not spend but to seek Allāh's pleasure, and whatever good thing you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged* (272). (Charity is) *for the poor who are besieged in the way of Allāh — they cannot go about in the land; the ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of their self-control* (from begging) ; *thou wouldst recognize them by their countenance; they do not beg from men importunately; and whatever good thing you*

spend, surely Allāh knows it (273). *Those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly, for them is their reward with their Lord, and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve* (274).

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

The context of the verses indicates that they must have been revealed all together. Their theme is spending in the way of Allāh. They begin with a parable to show that charity increases in the hands of Allāh, one to seven hundred or even more, by the permission of Allāh. Another parable shows that this increase is sure to happen; it cannot fail. They go to forbid insincerity in spending, that is, spending to show others how generous one is, and give one more parable to demonstrate the futility of this, that such spending does not increase and bears no fruit. Also, they admonish the believers not to follow charity with reproach and injury, because these two evils nullify alms and make their reward forfeit. Then they say that spending should be from their good and lawful wealth, and not from unlawful or worthless things, as it shows niggardliness and miserliness. Thereafter they prescribe who should be given charity — the poor men who are besieged in the way of Allāh. Finally it again reminds them of the great reward of charity which they shall find with Allāh.

In short, the verses exhort the believers to spend and explain to them the following things:

First: The purpose of spending: It should be to seek the pleasure of Allāh, not to show off to people.

Second: The fashion and condition of this good work: It should not be followed by reproach and injury.

Third: The quality of the wealth to be spent: It must be lawful and good, not unlawful or worthless.

Fourth: The qualification of the receivers: It should be given to those poor who are besieged in the way of Allāh.

Fifth: The rewards of such spending in this world and in the next.

SPENDING IN THE WAY OF ALLĀH

One of the two pillars of Islam is the Rights of the people; and spending for the welfare of the people is one of the things to which Islam pays the utmost attention. It exhorts a believer to spend for this purpose, and has laid down the rules and opened up the ways for such spending — some of these ways are obligatory and others highly recommended: *zakāt, khums* (the one-fifth tax), penalties to expiate certain illegalities, various types of redemption, obligatory spending and recommended charities. Then there are laws to establish and regulate endowments, settlements for residence, or for life, wills, gifts and many similar things.

All this has been done to improve the living standars of the poor classes — the people who cannot meet their expenses without help from others. The intention of Islam is to raise their level to bring them nearer to the people of means.

On the other hand, it has strictly forbidden the rich people from pompous living and showing off their wealth. It has allowed them to live in a reasonable and honourable manner; but has prohibited extravagance and the squandering of wealth in a lavish style which is above the reach of the average person.

The aim of both sets of rules was to create a community life that would be neither too low nor too high, whose various groups would be nearer to each other, and would have a fairly uniform standard of life. Such a society would give life to the institution of unity and co-operation; and would eradicate conflicting designs and uproot enmity and antagonism. The Qur'ān holds that the true religion must organize life in all its multifarious activities, putting it in order in such a way that man's bliss is guaranteed in this life as well as in the next one. Such a religion will bless man with true knowledge, noble character and pleasant life; he will be free in this life to enjoy the bounties given to him by Allāh, and to remove from himslef unpleasant things and all types of misfortune.

This will be possible only when society enjoys a good life and all its members share its bliss equally or almost equally. This, in its turn, demands that all their needs are fulfilled and the condition of society reformed. All this needs money and wealth. The way to get that money for this most important purpose is by contributions from the members of society — they are required to spend out of what they have earned by

their labour. Surely the believers are brothers to each other; and the earth is of Allāh, and property and wealth belong to Him.

This is a fact, the truth of which was demonstrated by the Prophet during his lifetime when he had the authority in his hands. He showed its correctness and' demonstrated how it created a stable society, growing, developing and bearing good results.

It was this society for which the Leader of the faithfuls, ‘Alī (a.s.) felt nostalgia, and the passing away of which he remembered sorrowfully, in one of his speeches:

‘‘You live in a period when the steps of virtue are moving backwards, and the steps of evil are moving forward; and Satan is increasing his eagerness to ruin people. This is the time when his equipment is strong, and his traps have been widely spread and his prey has become easy (to catch). Cast your glance wherever you like. Do you see (anything) except a poor man suffering (the pangs of) poverty, or a rich man changing Allāh’s favour for ungratefulness, or a miser trampling the right of Allāh to increase his wealth, or an arrogant person (who behaves) as though his ears hear any counsel with difficulty.’’ (*Nahju ’l-balāghah,* Sermon 129).

The passage of time has proved the validity of this Qur’ānic system — that the various classes should be brought together, the poor should be helped through ‘‘spending’’, and the rich forbidden extravagance, pomposity and vanity. When western culture took the upper hand, people’s ideals and outlook changed. They clung to the earthly life, tried their utmost to acquire and keep all worldly trinkets coveted by animal greed and sensual desires, and adopted for it whatever means they could. The result: wealth was confined within a limited circle, the pleasures of life were reserved for a wealthy minority, and the only share of the lower class in it was deprivation. The upper classes continued to swallow each other like cannibals, until a very select group monopolized the blessings and bliss of this life and the vast majority, that is, the common people, were denied even the right of life.

This behaviour generated all evil tendencies on both sides; it gave rise to the saying, ‘‘Every man for himself’’. No one leaves anything nor does he spare anything. It has resulted in a class struggle, and open enmity between the two groups, the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, each side wanting to exterminate the other. This was the basic cause of the

World Wars and the emergence of Communism. Truth and nobility have been cast aside, peace of mind and tranquillity of heart have departed from the world, and the human species on the whole does not have any feeling of joy in life. This is the position which the chaos of human society has reached today — what tomorrow holds is more grievous and horrible.

One of the most damaging factors in this social disorder is the closure of the gate ‘‘spending’’, and the opening of the doors of interest. Allāh has explained the evil of this in seven verses coming after these verses of ‘‘spending’’; Allāh had warned the mankind that if interest becomes widespread, the world will fall in disorder. It is one of the prophecies of the Qur’ān which has been fulfilled in these days. When the Qur’ān was revealed, interest was a foetus; now it has been born from the womb of western economy and is growing by leaps and bounds.

To understand what we have just mentioned, read the following verses:

Then set your face uprightly for the (right) *religion in natural devotion* (to the truth) ; *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no alteration in the creation of Allāh; that is the right religion, but most people do not know — turning to Him. And be careful of* (your duty to) *Him, and keep up prayer and be not of the polytheists, of those who, divided their religion and became sects, every sect rejoicing in what they have with them. And when harm afflicts men, they call upon their Lord, turning to Him; then when He makes them taste of mercy from Him, lo! some of them begin to associate* (others) *with their Lord, so as to be ungrateful for what We have given them; but enjoy yourselves* (for a while), *for you shall soon come to know . . . So give to the near of kin his due, and to the needy and the wayfarer; this is the best for those who desire Allāh’s pleasure, and these it is who are successful. And whatever you lay out as interest, so that it may increase in the property of men, it shall not increase with Allāh; and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allāh’s pleasure — it is these* (persons) *that shall get manifold . . . Disorder has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return. Say: ‘‘Travel in the land, then see how was the end of those* (who were) *before* (you); *most of them were polytheists.’’ Then set thy face upright to the right religion before there comes from Allāh the day which cannot be averted; on that day they shall become separated* (30:30 — 43). There are verses

of the same import in the chapters of Hūd, Yūnus, the Night journey, the Prophets etc. We shall explain them later on.

This is apparently the reason why these verses of spending exhort the believers and give so much emphasis to ‘‘spending’’.

COMMENTARY

QUR’ĀN: *The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is as the parable of a grain . . .:* ‘‘The way of Allāh’’ means anything which leads to the pleasure of Allāh; any religious purpose for which work is done. The phrase in the verse is unconditional, although it comes after the verses of ‘‘fighting in the way of Allāh’’, and although the phrase ‘‘in the way of Allāh’’ is combined in many verses with fighting. But such recurring usage does not restrict the phrase to fighting.

Some scholars have said: The words, ‘‘as the parable of a grain growing seven ears . . .’’ actually mean, ‘‘as the parable of him who sowed a grain that grew seven ears . . .’’ The ‘‘grain growing seven ears’’ is the parable of property spent in the way of Allāh, and not ‘‘of those who spend’’ that wealth. And it does not need much explanation.

This interpretation, although sound in itself, is not in total conformity with the Qur’ān. On deep contemplation, we find that an overwhelming number of the Qur’ānic parables are of this same style. See, for example, the following verses:

And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who shouts to that which hears not but a call and a cry . . . (2:171). As we see, it is the parable of him who calls the disbelievers, not of the disbelievers themselves.

> *The likeness of this world’s life is only as water which We sent down from the sky; by its mingling, the herbage of the earth which men and cattle eat grows; un.til when the earth puts on its golden raiment and it becomes garnished, and its people think that they have power over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, so We render it as reaped, as though it had not been in existence yesterday; thus do We make clear the signs fora people who reflect* (10:24).
>
> *. . . the parable of His light is as a niche in which is a lamp . . .* (24:35).

Look also at other parables mentioned in these very verses:

So his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock . . . And the parable of those who spend their wealth seeking the pleasure of Allāh and keeping firm their souls is as the parable of a garden on an elevated ground . . .

There are many such verses and all of them have one thing in common — all restrict themselves to the main element of the likeness, the essential ingradient of the parable; and omit other factors for the sake of brevity.

A parable is an actual or imagined story which has a marked resemblance to the subject matter in some aspects; it creates a picture in the mind which helps to fully grasp the idea for which the parable has been used. For example, there are the Arabic proverbs, ‘‘I have neither she-camel nor he-camel’’; and, ‘‘In summer you wasted the milk’’. These sayings remind the hearer of the related true stories by fitting the story to the topic at hand, and at once the picture flashes before his mind’s eyes in clear perspective. That is why it is said that proverbs do not change.

Another example: ‘‘The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is as the parable of the one who sows a grain, it growing seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grains.’’ This is an imaginary story.

The basic element of a parable — the essential ingredient of the similarity that produces the clear and well-defined image of the topic — is sometimes the whole story; and occasionally a part of the story. Examples of the former are:

And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the earth’s surface; it has no stability (14:26).

The similitude of those who were placed under the Torah, then they did not hold it, is as the similitude of the donkey bearing books (62:5).

The example of the latter, where the basic element is only a part of the story, is this parable under discussion — spending in the way of Allāh has been likened to the grain growing seven ears, every ear having a hundred grains. This is the basic element of analogy; but in explaining it we earlier added the words, ‘‘of him who sows’’; it was added just to complete the story.

In the Qur'ānic parables, where the basic element of the analogy is the whole story, Allāh has mentioned it without any omission. But where that element is only a part of the story, only that part has been described and others have been left out. Why should the full story have to be described when the purpose of the parable is fully served by the short version. Moreover, this style creates alacrity in the hearer's minds — they do not find what they anticipate and an unexpected picture is flashed before their minds' eyes. But it fully serves the purpose: it is different from the anticipated picture and yet it is the same. This is brevity through alteration in its finest way; and the Qur'ān uses it whenever necessary.

QUR'ĀN: *Growing seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grains: ''as-Sunbul''* (السُّنْبُلُ = ear of corn, spike) is on paradigm of *fun'ul* (فُنْعُلُ). It is said that its root meaning is to draw a curtain. The ear of corn was given this name because it hides the grains in their husks.

A most foolish objection has been levelled against this verse, that it is a simile of a thing which is not found in the world — no ear contains a hundred grains.

Reply: It is not necessary for a similitude that the picture compared with be found outside the imagination. Analogies with imaginary ideas and images are found by their thousands in every language.

Moreover, ears containing a hundred grains, and a single seed yielding seven hundred grains are very often found in many places.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases; and Allāh is Ample-giving, All-knowing:* Allāh gives more than seven hundred to whom He pleases: He is Ample-giving; no one can put any hindrance on His generosity; nor can anyone restrict His grace. Allāh says: *Who is it that will lend to Allāh a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold* (2:245). In this verse, ''manifold'' is unrestricted; there is no numerical limit to it.

Someone has said: This sentence means, ''Allāh increases this much, that is, seven hundred for one, for whom He pleases.'' According to this interpretation seven hundred would be the limit of multiplication.

But if we accept this interpretation as correct, then this sentence would show the cause of the previous statement (. . . *seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grains*). In that case, it should have begun with the word *inna* (اِنَّ = verily, surely, indeed). See for example another verse, where the causative sentence begins with the word ''surely'':

Allāh is He Who made for you the night that you may rest therein and the day to see; most surely Allāh is Gracious to men (40:61). There are many verses in the same style.

The seven-hundred-fold reward is unrestricted — it is not restricted to the Hereafter. The promise is as valid for this world as it is for the Hereafter.

And on reflection, one has to support this idea. You spend your property in the way of Allāh; you may be thinking at first that you have lost that property without getting anything in exchange. But if you ponder a little on this matter you will appreciate that mankind is like one living body; it has various limbs and organs, all of different shapes and with distinctive names, but all of them are united in the goal of life, all are joined together in each other's effects and benefits. If one of these limbs loses its health, becomes weak or falters in its function, the whole body is adversely affected and fails to reach its goal. The eyes and the hands are two organs with different names and separate functions. But man has been given his eyes so that he may distinguish objects from each other through light, colour and distance. When this task is accomplished, the hands come into action to take hold of what man should acquire for himself, and to repulse what should be repulsed. If the hands fail in their function, man has to make up the loss through other limbs; but, to begin with, it creates untold misery and hardship for him, and also decreases the normal functions of those limbs to the extent they are used as substitutes for the hands. But if other limbs were to send to the ailing hands some of the blood cells and energy from their own stock and the hands to become restored to health, the whole body would grow better and every limb would share in the benefits — the benefits which may be hundreds and thousands times more than the small amount of blood, etc., which it expended for the hands.

Likewise, when a man spends for the betterment of the condition of another, it saves the beneficiary from evils which are generally caused by poverty; he feels love for the benefactor in his heart, his tongue speaks his name with respect; and he busies himself in his work with more vigour and energy and thus prospers. The whole of society feels its good effects, and as a member of that society, the benefactor also shares in that social upliftment. This is more evident when the spending is done for social services like education, training, etc. This much about general

spending.

When that spending is done in the way of Allāh, seeking His pleasure, the increase is sure to occur without fail. If wealth is spent, but not for the pleasure of Allāh, then it is done for selfish aims — the rich man spends on a poor man to avert his evils from himself. Or he thinks that if the poor man becomes self-supporting, the whole of society will become a better place to live in, and in this way the benefactor will live in it more happily. This type of spending is a sort of subjugation of the poor who is exploited by the rich for selfish purposes. Such a charity creates bad effects in the poor. Sometimes these hard feelings accumulate and then burst out in riots and revoultions.

But the spending which is done only for the pleasure of Allāh is free from these defects; it creates only good, and only bliss and blessings result from it.

QUR'ĀN: *Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, for them is their reward with their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve:*

''al-Itbā' '' (الاتْبَاعُ) is used with both transitive and intransitive meanings. It means 'to follow' and 'to persue' ; and 'to attach one thing to other'. This word has been used in these two meanings in the verses: *Then they persued them at sunrise* (26:60); *And We attached to them a curse in this world* . . . (28:42).

''al-Mann'' (المَنُّ) means to say what may turn charity into annoyance, for example, to tell the beneficiary: ''I gave you this and that''. The root-meaning of this word, as has been said, is ''to cut''. The word has been used in this meaning in the verse: . . . *for them surely is a reward never to be cut off* (41:8).

''al-Adhā'' (الأذي) is immediate harm, a little injury. *''al-Khawf''* (الخَوْفُ = fear) is the expectation of harm or trouble. *''al-Ḥuzn''* (الحُزْنُ = grief) is the sorrow which greatly disturbs the soul, and which is caused by a real or almost real misfortune.

QUR'ĀN: *A kind word and forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury. . .:* ''Kind word'' is that which is not disliked by the common man. It may vary according to circumstances. *''al-Maghfirah''* (المَغْفِرَةُ = forgiveness) literally means to cover. *''al-Ghinā''* (الغِني = self-sufficiency) is the opposite of need and poverty. *''al-Ḥilm''* (الحِلْمُ = forbearance) means to remain silent when confronted with disagreeable

words or actions.

The contrast between a kind word and forgiveness, on the one hand, and charity followed by injury, on the other, shows that the ‘‘kind word’’ means that if one wants to turn away a suppliant without fulfilling his need and the suppliant has not uttured unpleasant words, one should express one’s good wishes and utter good words to him. The ‘‘forgiveness’’ refers to the same situation, provided the suppliant has said unpleasant things about the intended benefactor. In both cases, if one uses a kind word and forgives the suppliant it is far better than fulfilling his need and then following it with reproach and injury. Such reproach, in fact, shows that the benefactor thinks that what he has spent is a great wealth, and that he is annoyed with the people’s requests and supplications. But a believer should be far above such moral defects and petty thoughts. The believer must mould himself on the attributes of Allāh. And Allāh is Self-sufficient: no bounty is great in His eyes; He gives and bestows whatever He wishes. Also He is Forbearing: He makes no haste in meting out punishment to evil-doers; He does not become angry on His creatures’ follies. It was to point out this important matter that the verse ended the sentence, ‘‘and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Forbearing’’.

QUR’ĀN: *O you who believe! do not nullify your charity by reproach and injury:* The verse proves that charity becomes forfeited if it is followed by reproach and injury.

Some people say that this verse shows that subsequent sins (and especially big ones) nullify the good deeds preceding them. But this inference is uncalled for. The verse .only talks about reproach and injury *vis-a-vis* charity.

The topic of forfeiture has already been explained in detail.

QUR’ĀN: *Like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men and does not believe in Allāh and the last day:* As the verse is addressed to the believers, and as one who does a good deed to show to men is not a believer (because he does not do that deed for the sake of Allāh) the prohibition was not extended to showiness; it was confined to reproach and injury, because there is no danger of showiness for a believer. The verse likens the almsgiver who follows his alms with reproach and injury to the one who spends to show off to men; and the likeness is in the forfeiture of charities, although there is a difference between both. The

charity of one who spent to show off to men was null and void *ab initio;* while that of the one who followed it with reproach and injury was correct and valid to begin with, but was later nullified because of these sins.

The verb ‘‘does not believe’’ has the same form and tense as the preceding one, ‘‘spends’’; it does not say ‘‘did not believe’’. This similarity of tense shows that the disbelief here implies the showing person’s disbelief in the divine call of spending and in His promise of its great reward. Had he believed in the divine call to the believers to spend in His way, and also in the last day when the promised reward would be given, he would have done his good deed to seek the pleasure of Allāh and would have longed for the reward of the last day, instead of doing it to be seen by men.

It shows that disbelief here does not imply that the showy person does not believe in Allāh at all.

Also it proves that doing a deed with the intention of showing off to men implies that such a doer has no faith in Allāh and the last day, in so far as that deed is concerned.

QUR’ĀN: *So his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock . . . does not guide the unbelieving people:* The pronoun, ‘‘his’’ refers to ‘‘him who spends his wealth to be seen of men’’; the parable is for him. *‘‘aṣ-Ṣafwān’’* (الصَّفْوَانُ) and *‘‘aṣ-ṣafā’’* (الصَّفَا) are smooth rock. The same is the meaning of *‘‘aṣ-ṣald’’* (الصَّلْدُ).

‘‘al-Wābil’’ (الوَابِلُ) is heavy rain, descending with force. The pronoun in ‘‘They shall not gain ’’ refers to ‘‘him who spends to be seen of men’’, because ‘‘him’’ stands for the whole group of showy persons. The sentence ‘‘They shall not gain anything of what they have earned’’ describes the reason for the analogy; and it is the common factor of the two sides of this simile. The sentence ‘‘And Allāh does not guide the unbelieving people’’ describes the general principle: a man who does a deed to show to people is in that particular respect an unbeliever, and Allāh does not guide such people. This sentence, therefore, gives the reason for the forfeiture mentioned in this verse.

The man who spends to show off to people can get no reward for such spending. Look at a smooth rock, upon which is some earth, then a heavy rain falls upon it. Now, rain, and especially a heavy downpour, is the apparent cause of the earth coming to life again; it makes it green and

adorns it with plants. But if earth settles on a smooth rock it cannot remain in place in a heavy rainfall; it is washed away and the bare rock is left there for everyone to see — the rock which cannot absorb water, nor can it nourish a seed to grow. Rain and earth both together are the most important causes of plant life and growth; but as their place was a smooth rock their effect was totally nullified, although none can attribute any fault or defect to these two life-giving ingredients.

Thus is the case of the man who does a good deed but not with intention of seeking the pleasure of Allāh; his action becomes totally null and void, even when the deed, for example, spending in the way of Allāh, is among the most effective causes of getting divine reward. But the heart of such a man is like that smooth rock; it is unable to receive divine mercy and grace. And thus he gets nothing of what he had earned.

The verse shows that the acceptance of a deed depends on sincere intention and on the pure aim of seeking the pleasure of Allāh. Sunnīs and Shī‘ahs have narrated from the Prophet that he said: ‘‘Verily, deeds are according to intentions’’.

QUR’ĀN: *And the parable of those who spend their wealth seeking the pleasure of Allāh and keeping firm their souls:* ‘‘Seeking the pleasure of Allāh’’ means doing what Allāh has ordered His servant to do. When the master gives an order to his servant and the servant complies with that order, the master faces him, pleased with him, Likewise, Allāh orders His servant concerning certain things and when the servant obeys His command Allāh turns towards him with pleasure and mercy.

The phrase ‘‘and keeping firm their souls’’ has been interpreted in various ways:

a) It means ‘‘certitude and confirmation’’.
b) *‘‘at-Tathbīt’’* (التَّثْبِيْتُ = to keep firm) means *at-tathabbut* (التَّثَبُّتُ = to make sure). The phrase means that they want to make sure where they spend their wealth.
c) It means to make sure how they spend: if it is for the pleasure of Allāh, they spend it; if there is any shade of impurity in intention, for example, and eargerness to be seen by men, they desist from spending.
d) It means keeping the souls firm in obedience to Allāh.
e) It means establishing the soul firmly in faith by making it accustomed to spending property for the sake of Allāh.

Obviously, these interpretations do not fit the verse unless one is prepared to stretch the meaning of the word ‘‘keeping firm’’ beyond its linguistic limit. Probably a more appropriate interpretation (and Allāh knows better!) may be as follows:

Allāh, first, unconditionally praised spending in His way, and mentioned that it had a very great reward in the presence of Allāh. Then He excluded two kinds of spending, because Allāh is not pleased with them and no reward will be given for them: 1) spending to show off to people, and such a deed is null and void *ab inition;* 2) spending that is followed by reproach and injury, for although such a deed is valid initially, it becomes nullified because of the subsequent sins of reproach and injury.

In these cases the deed is nullified, either because the doer does not seek the pleasure of Allāh from the very beginning (as in the first case) or because his soul changes the initial correct intention and seeks wordly satisfaction through reproach and injury (as in the second case).

Now Allāh describes the condition of His good servants who spend purely for His sake. These are they who spend to seek the pleasure of Allāh and then ‘‘keep firm their souls’’ on this pure intention without following it with bad deeds which could nullify it.

In short, ‘‘seeking the pleasure of Allāh’’ neans that the doer of a good deed should not contaminate his intention with showiness or other such things which would indicate that his action is for other than Allāh. And ‘‘keeping firm their souls’’ means that he should fix his soul firmly in that pure and uncontaminated intention.

This ‘‘keeping firm’’ is done by the soul on the soul. Grammatically, *‘‘tathbītan’’* (تَثْبِيْتاً = keeping firm) is *‘‘at-tamyīz’’* (التَّمِيْزُ = accusative of specification); *‘‘min’’* (مِنْ = from) shows origination; *‘‘anfusihim’’* (اَنْفُسِهِمْ = their souls) is the subject ‘‘from’’ which the action of ‘‘keeping firm’’ originates; its object is another *‘‘anfusahum’’* (اَنْفُسَهُمْ = their souls) which is deleted but understood. Accordingly, the phrase means that their souls keep firm their souls.

Alternatively, the word, ‘‘keeping firm’’ may be *‘‘al-maf‘ūlu ’l-muṭlaq’’* (المَفْعُوْلُ المُطْلَقُ = cognate accusative) for emphasis of a deleted but understood verb of the same meaning.

QUR’ĀN: *As the parable of a garden on an elevated ground . . . what you do:* The root word *ar-rabā’* (الرَّبَاءُ) means increase. *‘‘ar-*

Rabwah'' (الرَّبْوَةُ) means a good earth which increases its growth and gives a high yield. The word is also used as *ar-rubwah* (الرُّبْوَةُ) and *ar-ribwah* (الرِّبْوَةُ). *''al-Ukul''* (الأُكُلُ) is what is eaten, *al Aklah* (الاكْلَةُ) means one morsel. *''aṭ-Ṭall''* (الطَّلُّ) is a drizzle, which has little effect.

The parable has been revealed to show that spending which is done to seek the pleasure of Allāh cannot fail to bring about a good effect. The spending was done for Allāh and its connection with Allāh has continued; therefore, divine care always looks after it, making it grow and flourish; it must surely bring forth its fruits. Of course, the degree of care varies according to variation in the degree of purity of the intention; and the strength of the deed is correlated with the firmness of soul.

There is a garden on a good earth; a heavy rain falls on it and it brings forth its fruits abundantly — although the yield may vary in quality and quantity, according to the amount of rain which falls on it.

As there is bound to be such variation, the verse ended on the sentence, ''and Allāh is aware of what you do''. He never has any doubt in the matter of rewards; the rewards of various deeds are never confused in His eyes; He does not give this one's recompense to that one, and that one's to this one.

QUR'ĀN: *Would anyone of you like . . . that you may reflect: ''al-Wudd''* (الوُدُّ) is to love, to long for, to yearn *''al-jannah''* (الجَنَّةُ) is a clump of trees, their branches touching each other. *''al-Jann''* (الجَنُّ) means to cover, to shield. A garden is called *al-jannah* because it covers the earth and protects if from the rays of the sun, and the like. This word is used for a clump of trees only, not for the plot of land upon which those trees stand. That is why it is correct to say, as the verse says, ''streams flowing beneath it''; if the word included the earth, the phrase would have been wrong. When the plot or earth is intended, the expression is changed: . . . *a lofty ground having meadows and springs* (23:50). On the other hand, the phrase, ''garden beneath which rivers flow'', repeatedly occurs in the Qur'ān.

The preposition ''of'', in ''a garden of palms and vines'', is for description; it describes the main type of trees and fruits; it does not give a full list of them. If the major part of a garden contains palms, it is generally called a palm garden, although it contains other trees also.

That is why Allāh said immediately after it, ‘‘he has in it all kinds of fruits’’. *‘‘al-Kibr’’* (الكِبْرُ) is old age; *‘‘adh-dhurriyyah’’*(الذُّرِّيَّةُ) means children, offspring; *‘‘aḍ-ḍu‘afā’ ’’* (الضُّعَفَآءُ) is the plural of *‘‘aḍ-ḍa‘īf’’* (الضَّعِيْفُ = weak).

This parable joins the old age of the progenitor with the weakness of the progeny to emphasize the utmost need of the said garden, in the absence of any other means of livelihood. Had the garden owner been young and strong he could have earned his livelihood with his hands even if the garden had been burnt down. Alternatively, if he had had no weak offspring, even if he had been an aged person, he would not have felt the effects of this calamity so much; he would have known that his days were numbered and soon he would be free from all troubles. And if he had been of old age but had had strong offspring who could have work and earn their livelihood, they could have lived on their earning and the loss of the garden would not have caused much distress. But when old age coincides with weak offspring and the garden is burnt down, all possible means of livelihood are cut off. The old man cannot regain his youth and strength, so that he can re-create the garden as he had done before. His offspring are weak and they cannot do it themselves. And the garden is burnt down, it cannot regain its bloom and fruit.

‘‘al-I‘ṣār’’ (الاعْصَارُ) is a cyclone. This parable puts before our eyes the position of those who spend their wealth and then follow it with reproach and injury, and thus their deed is nullified; and there is no way to return that deed to its state of validity again. The parable perfectly fits this situation.

Through this parable Allāh expects such people to ponder upon their position. Such deeds are done only when people are overtaken by such evil traits as love of wealth and honour, pride and avarice. These evil traits do not let them contemplate and meditate; do not give them a chance to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is harmful, between good and bad. And if they had stopped to ponder they would have seen the truth.

QUR’ĀN: *O you who believe! spend* (benevolently) . . . *Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praiseworthy: ‘‘at-Tayammum’’* (التَّيَمُّمُ) is to aim, to intend; *‘‘al-khabīth’’* (الخَبِيْثُ = bad) is opposite of *‘‘aṭ-ṭayyib’’* (الطَّيِّبُ = good); ‘‘of it’’ is related to the word ‘‘bad’’. The phrase ‘‘that you may spend in charity’’ shows the ‘‘state’’ of the subject of the verb ‘‘do not

aim''; the phrase ''while you would not take it yourselves'' shows the ''state'' of the subject of the verb ''you may spend it''; it is governed by the same verb. The phrase ''unless you connive at it'' is in place of an infinitive verb. It is said that a *''li''* (لِ = because) is understood before it — thus it would mean, ''except because of your connivance at it''. Others have said that a *''bi''* (بِ = with) is understood here — in this case it would mean ''except with your connivance at it''

Whatever the grammatical explanation, the meaning of the verse is a quite clear. Allāh explains the condition of the wealth which should be spent: it should be from one's good property; and not from bad property which the spender himself would not deign to accept unless he connived at it. Giving bad wealth in charity is not generosity at all; it is getting rid of an unwanted item. Such spending will not create any love of generosity in the donor's heart, nor will it bring to him any spiritual perfection.

That is why the verse ends on the sentence ''and know that Allāh is Self-suficient, Praiseworthy''. When you spend anything, keep in view the Self-sufficiency and Praiseworthiness of Allāh. He needs nothing, yet He appreciates your good spending. Therefore, spend from your good property.

Or, it may mean: He is Self-sufficient and Praiseworthy. You should not bring to Him what is not fit for His Great Sanctity.

QUR'ĀN: *Satan threatens you with poverty . . . Allāh is Ample-giving, All-knowing:* The verse explains that choosing a bad thing for charity is not good for the charity-giver; it is only good property which is good for them to spend. The prohibition is for their own good, as the thing prohibited is bad for them. They dislike giving good items in charity because they believe that a good property makes one wealthy and rich; they therefore resist the idea of giving it away in charity. A bad item is worthless, and so they are ready to donate it in alms. But it is the temptation of Satan who frightens his friends with poverty. The fact is that donating property and spending it in the way of Allāh to seek His pleasure is just like any other good trade and dealing — it has its recompense and profit, as Allāh has mentioned in these verses. Moreover, it is Allāh who makes one rich and bestows abundance; property, by itself, has no power to enrich anyone. Allāh says: *And that He it is Who enriches and gives to hold* (53:48).

In short, it was a mistake on their part to withhold the good and likeable items from their charity because of fear of poverty. Allāh points this out in the sentence ‘‘Satan threatens you with poverty’’. This sentence puts the cause (Satan’s threatening) in place of its effect (fear of poverty). This figurative expression has been used to indicate that this fear is damaging to their interest, because whatever Satan incites one to do is bound to be wrong and an error — either directly or indirectly, that is, through something disguised as right.

Someone might have thought that this fear of poverty was reasonable, even if it was caused by Satan. The next sentences do not leave any room for such a misunderstanding: ‘‘and enjoins you to abomination’’. This withholding, this heavy-heartedness in spending good things creates in their souls the trait of miserliness and niggardliness, which in its turn leads one to disobey and reject those commands of Allāh that effect one’s wealth and property; it is clear disbelief in the Great Lord. Also, it casts the needy people into the perdition of poverty, privation and depression, which in its turn leads to loss of lives, and honour, and to every hope of crime and abomination. Allāh says: *And there are those of them who made a covenant with Allāh: ‘‘If He gives us out of His grace, we will certainly give alms and we will certainly be of the good.’’ But when He gave them out of His grace, they became niggardly of it and they turned back and they withdrew. So He made hypocrisy to follow as a consequence into their hearts till the day when they shall meet Him because they failed to perform towards Allāh what they had promised with Him and because they told lies . . . Those who taunt the free-givers of alms among the believers and them who cannot find but their hard earnings, so they scoff at them; Allāh will pay them back their scoffing, for them is a painful chastisement.* (9:75 — 79)

‘‘And Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance; and Allāh is Ample-giving, All-knowing.’’: It further removes the earlier-mentioned possible misunderstanding. Allāh had already clearly told the believers that there is either truth or falsehood; there is no third alternative. Truth is the straight path, that is from Allāh; and falsehood is from Satan. Look at the following verses of the Meccan period: . . . *and what is there after the truth but error?* (10:32); *Say: ‘‘Allāh guides to the truth’’* (10:35); . . . *surely he* (i.e. Satan) *is an enemy, openly leading astray* (28:15). In short, the above-mentioned sentence

reminds them that the idea of niggardliness coming into your mind because of the fear of poverty is based on a bad judgement; forgiveness of Allāh and increase in wealth (mentioned in previous verses) come from spending from good property, not from niggardliness or from giving away unwanted items.

The sentence ‘‘Allāh promises . . .’’ puts (like the preceding sentence ‘‘Satan threatens you . . .’’) the cause in place of its effect. Also, it shows the contrast between the promise of Ample-giving, All-knowing Allāh and the threat of Satan, so that the spenders may look at both and choose for themselves what is in their own interest.

The verse, in short says:

You choose bad items for spending, instead of good property, because you are afraid of poverty; and because you are unaware of the good results which accrue from spending good things. So far as the fear of poverty is concerned, it is the evil suggestion of Satan, and Satan always wants to put you in perdition and lead you to falsehood and abomination: you should never follow his evil whisperings. What follows a charity of good things is abundance and forgiveness. And it is sure to follow, because it is Allāh Who has promised it, and His promise is true; He is Ample-giving — it is easy for Him to fulfil His promise and to give you abundance and forgiveness from Himself; He is All-knowing, not a single thing or condition is hidden from Him; therefore, what He has promised is based on His All-encompassing knowledge.

QUR’ĀN: *He grants wisdom to whom He pleases: ‘‘al-Ītā’ ’’* (الاِيْتَآءُ) is to grant, to give. *‘‘al-Ḥikmah’’* (الحِكْمَةُ = wisdom) is on paradigm of *fi‘lah* (فِعْلَةُ) which denotes a species or a variety of it. Its literal meaning will, therefore, be a sort of precision and perfection, or a species of perfect and precise thing in which there is no defect or flaw. Mostly it is used for intellectual cognition that is true and not liable to falsehood and error at all.

This sentence shows that what has preceded it (spending, its causes and its good effects on human life) is based on wisdom. *al-hikmah* (wisdom) is a true proposition, conforming to the facts; it contains the bliss and felicity of man, because it clarifies the divine realities concerning the origin and the end of the world and mankind, and explains the principles of the physical world in-as-much as it touches on human bliss and felicity; it includes the fundamental truths of nature upon which

are based the laws of religion.

QUR'ĀN: *And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good:* The meaning is clear. The sentence is in the passive voice, although the preceding sentence has clearly said that it is Allāh Who grants wisdom; this passive voice has been used to show that wisdom, in itself, is the source of a great good; whoever gets it, is bound to get that great good; and that good is not only because wisdom is given by Allāh. If ''giving'' is attributed to Allāh it does not necessarily mean that the thing given is good, or that it will end in good. Allāh says about the Qur'ān: . . . *and We had given him of the treasures, so much that its keys would certainly weigh down a company of men possessed of strength . . . Thus We made the earth to swallow up him and his abode; so he has no body of helpers to assist him against Allāh* . . . (28:76 — 81).

The verse attributes ''great good'' to wisdom, instead of unqualified ''good'', although wisdom has a high status and a great splendour. It was to show that every affair depends, for its good end, on the care and help of Allāh; and that blessings and bliss is good only when its end is good.

QUR'ĀN: *And none but men of understanding mind: ''al-Lubb''* (اللُّبُّ) literally means kernel, the softer part within hard shell. It is used in the meaning of *al-'aql* (العَقْلُ = understanding because understanding has the same position *vis-a-vis* the man as the kernel has *vis-a-vis* its hard shell. It is used in this very meaning in the Qur'ān. The use of the noun *al-'aql* with the meaning of understanding, seems to be of a later origin; that is why it has not been used in this form in the Qur'ān; although its verb have often been used, for example, *''ya'qilūn''* (يَعْقِلُوْنَ = they understand). *''at-Tadhakkur''* (التَّذَكُّرُ) means to remember, to mind. It means going from a conclusion to its premises or from the premises to their conclusion. The verse shows that wisdom depends on minding, which in its turn depends on understanding. There is no wisdom where there is no understanding. Some details about understanding have been given earlier in the discussion about the words used for perception.

QUR'ĀN: *And whatever alms you give or whatever vow you vow surely Allāh knows it; and the oppressors shall have no helpers:* What Allāh has called you to spend, and what you have made obligatory on yourselves through a vow is not hidden from Allāh. He shall give rewards to him who obeys Him, and shall chastise him who is unjust to others and oppresses them. There is a shade of threatening in this sentence (. . .

Allāh knows it), and this is emphasized by the next sentence: ''and the oppressors shall have no helpers''.

This last sentence proves four things:

First: The oppression in this verse means the oppression of the needy and poor by not spending on them and by withholding their financial rights. It does not mean other sins and injustices, because there are helpers, atonements and interceders in the case of other sins. For example, there is repentance, the avoidance of great sins, and the intercessors on they Day of Resurrection for the sins concerning the rights of Allāh. Allāh says: . . . *do not despair of the mercy of Allāh; surely Allāh forgives the faults altogether . . . And return to your Lord . . .* (39:53 — 54); *If you avoid great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins* (4:31); . . . *and they do not interced except for him whom He approves* . . . (21:28).

This also explains why this verse mentions ''helpers'' (in the plural). It is because there shall be many helpers in case of other sins.

Second: This oppression, that is, neglect of charity, is not liable to expiation. Had it been a minor sin, it would have been wiped out by expiation. In other words, it is a great sin. Also, it proves that it is not forgiven by repentance. It gets support from the traditions which say that repentance from sins concerning the rights of people is not accepted unless the sinner returns and gives all the due rights to those who possess them. Nor shall the intercession of the intercessors avail them on the Day of Resurrection, as is clearly seen in the words of Allāh: *Except the people of the right hand, in gardens; they shall ask each other about the guilty: ''What has brought you into Hell?'' They shall say: ''We were not of those who prayed, and we used not to feed the poor . . .'' So the intercession of the intercessors shall not avail them* (74:39 — 48).

Third: This oppressor is not of those with whom Allāh is pleased. Intercession shall be for only those whose religion Allāh approves and is pleased with. (Vide the topic of Intercession.) This shows why Allāh used, in verse 2:265, the words ''seeking the pleasure of Allāh'', and did not say ''seeking the Person of Allāh''.

Fourth: Not spending property on the needy and poor when they are present and need assistance is a great and mortal sin. Allāh has counted some kinds of not spending as equivalent to ascribing partners to Allāh and disbelieving in the last day. For example, He says about not giving

alms: . . . *and woe to the polytheists, who do not give zakāt and they are unbelievers in the hereafter* (41:6 — 7). It should be noted that this chapter is from the Meccan period when *az-zakāt* (الزَّكوة = poor rate) as known to us was not ordained. Therefore, it must refer to general alms.

QUR'ĀN: *If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to the poor , . . . and Allāh is aware of what you do: ''al-Ibdā' ''* (الإبْدَآءُ) means to show, to exhibit. ''*aṣ-Ṣadaqāt''* (الصَّدَقَاتُ) is the plural of *aṣ-ṣadaqah* (الصَّدَقَةُ), which means expenditure in the way of Allāh; it is a general word used for both obligatory and voluntary spending. Sometimes it is said that its original meaning is voluntary spending.

Allāh praises both ways of spending because each has some good effects. Giving alms openly presents a practical example of enjoining good; it encourages people to spend and to be generous. Also, it makes the needy and poor happy — they see that there are in society people who have sympathy with them, that there is some wealth earmarked for them, and kept in reserve for the day they will need it. This, in its turn, removes their pessimistic feelings, gives them a new vigour to persue their activities, and creates a feeling of oneness between them and the wealthy members of society. And all these effects are good.

Hiding alms and giving secretly to the poor is also good; such an alms-giving is far removed from showiness, reproach and injury; it protects the poor members of society from shame and disgrace, and preserve their honour and prestige in the eyes of the public.

Thus, open charity creates good effects in society much more than secret charity; and secret charity is purer in intention.

The foundation of religion is purity of intention; the more a deed is nearer to this purity, the more it is nearer to excellence. That is why Allāh gave more weight to secret alms: ''and if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you''. Needless to say that ''better'' is in the comparative.

And Allāh is well-aware of the actions of His servants; there is no chance of His mistaking the ''better'' deed for some thing else, ''and Allāh is aware of what you do''.

QUR'ĀN: *To make them walk in the right way is not incumbent on you, but Allah guides aright whom He pleases:* It is a parenthetic sentence addressed to the Prophet, in between the general talk addressed to the believers. The Apostle of Allāh felt that there were many

differences in various aspects of the charities given by the believers: some of them were sincere, while others indulged in reproach and injury, or were reluctant to spend out of their good property. This observation saddened him, because all of them were believers. Therefore, Allāh consoled and comforted him by reminding him that the belief found in them and their guidance are in the hands of Allāh; He guides whom He pleases to belief and the various degrees of it; it is not in the power of the Prophet to create it or to preserve it. Therefore, it is not the responsibility of the Prophet to preserve their belief, nor should he worry about its weakening or extinction, nor should he be disappointed by the threatenings and harsh tone used in some of these verses.

When an infinitive verb is joined to a noun or pronoun in a possessive phrase, it implies that verb's coming into being. In this verse Allāh has used the phrase *''hudāhum''* (هُدَاهُمْ) which means ''their guidance''. As explained above, it implies the ''guidance'' which actually exists. That is why we have translated it as ''To make them walk in the right path''.

Apart from this, whenever Allāh has attributed guidance to Himself, showing that the Prophet has no power to guide them, it has been done to comfort and console him.

In short, this sentence is parenthetic, inserted between the address to the believers, so that the Prophet may not be disheartened. It is like verse 75:16 — 18: *Do not move your tongue with it to make haste with it. Surely on Us is the collecting of it and the reciting of it. Therefore when We have recited it, then follow its recitation.*

When the purpose was served, the speech reverted to the original talk with the believers.

QUR'ĀN: *And whatever good thing you spend . . . and you shall not be wronged:* Now the speech is again addressed to the believers, in a style which is devoid of both good news and warning, unaffected by the tone of mercy or anger. Obviously, it results from the preceding words, ''but Allāh guides aright whom He pleases''.

Now the speech only calls them to spend, clearly saying that the speaker has nothing to gain from this call. Whatever benefits are in spending are for their own good — provided they do not spend except to seek Allāh's pleasure. The sentence ''and you do not spend but to seek Allāh's pleasure'' shows the state of the principle sentence, and its meaning is: ''and whatever good things you spend it is to your own

good while you do not spend but to seek Allāh's pleasure''.

As it was possible for someone to think that this benefit (which was supposed to accrue to them from spending) was just a name without any substance, Allāh continued the verse, saying ''and whatever good thing you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged''. These sentences make it clear that the benefit of this recommended spending, that is, the reward promised for it in this world and in the hereafter, is not an imaginary thing; it is a factual and actual existent; Allāh shall pay it back in full to the spender, and he shall not be wronged, that is, his repayment shall not be reduced or lost.

The verb, ''shall be paid back to you in full'', is in the passive voice. The payer (i.e. Allāh) has not been mentioned by name. This style was opted for so that the speech may be more effective. Whatever benefit is there, is for the spender only; the Giver of the rewards gains nothing from it; look here, even His name is not mentioned in this verse.

The verse, in short, is like a speech which has no speaker; if there is any benefit from it, it will accrue to the listener only.

QUR'ĀN: (Charity is) *for the poor who are besieged in the way of Allāh . . . surely Allāh knows it: ''al-Ḥaṣr''* (الحَصْرُ) gives the meaning of constraint. ar-Rāghib has written in his *al-Mufradāt: al-Ḥaṣr* and *''al-iḥṣār''* (الاحْصَارُ) mean to prevent people from the way of the House (of Allāh). *al-iḥṣār* is used for the manifest hindrance (like the enemy) as well as for the hidden snag (like sickness). But *al-ḥaṣr* is used for the hidden hindrance only. Therefore, the words of Allāh: *but if you be prevented* (2:196), cover both types of hindrance; so also are the words ''for the poor who are besieged in the way of Allāh''. But the words of Allāh ''or who come to you, their hearts shrinking'' refer to hidden hindrances like cowardice and miserliness.

''*at-Ta'affuf''* (التَّعَفُّفُ) means to acquire the characteristics of chastity and integrity; *''as-sīmā''* (السِّيْمَا) is the sign, the mark, *''al-ilḥāf''* (الالْحَافُ) is to beg importunately.

The verse explains the way to use alms — the best use: those poor persons who have been besieged in the way of Allāh and are confined in it, because of some factors beyond their control. For example: an enemy who took away their dress and covering, or prevented them from going out to earn their livelihood; a sickness which closed the door of income

for them; an activity (like acquiring knowledge) which does not leave them time to earn their livelihood.

The words, ‘‘the ignorant man (i.e., ignorant of their condition) thinks them to be rich on account of their self-control’’, mean that they do not display their poverty, except that which cannot be hidden in any way, like the etchings of poverty on their faces, or like old clothes, etc.

It is said that the words ‘‘they do not beg from men importunately’’ mean that they do not beg from men at all, so that it could push them to importunity. Once a man begs from someone for his needs, he loses his restraint and soon a time comes when he begs from everyone importunately and shamelessly.

More probably, the sentence means what it says; it negates importunity in asking from men, and not discrete asking. Importunate begging may mean such asking which exceeds the limit of the necessary description of one’s needs. It should not be forgotten that explaining one’s needs in extreme hardship is not only allowed but sometimes becomes even necessary. But exceeding that limit is importunity, and is condemned.

Allāh said ‘‘thou canst recognize them by their countenance’’; and did not say ‘‘you can recognize them’’. It was done to protect their honour and preserve their self-respect, because of which they exercised self-control and did not ask from men indiscreetly. Had Allāh said ‘‘you can recognize them’’ it would have meant that their poverty was well-known to everyone; and it would have been against their honour, an open humiliation. But there is no disgrace for them if the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) knows their conditions by looking at their countenance: after all, he is their Prophet, sent to them, has mercy on them and is kind to them. This is the reason — and Allāh knows better — why in this sentence the singular pronoun has been used, in contrast to the other pronouns in this verse.

QUR’ĀN: *Those who spend their wealth . . . nor shall they grieve:* The words ‘‘secretly’’ and ‘‘openly’’ are opposite to each other and they describe the condition of spending. This verse covers all possible times (*by night and by day*) and conditions (*secretly and openly*) of spending; it shows how much those spenders were keen on obtaining the reward, and how deep was their desir o seek the pleasure of Allāh. As a result, Allāh turned towards them with mercy and promised them a good

promise in the language of kindness and grace: ‘‘for them is their reward with their Lord, and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve’’.

TRADITIONS

It is narrated in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr,* about the words of Allāh: *and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases:* Ibn Mājah has narrated from al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Abu ’d-Dardā’, Abū Hurayrah, Abū Amāmah al-Bāhilī, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh and ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn, all of them narrating from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) that he said : (And Ibn Mājah and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn from the Messenger of Allāh that he said:) ‘‘He who spent a property in the way of Allāh and himself stayed in his house, shall get for every dirham seven hundred dirhams; and he, who himself fought in the way of Allāh and spent his property in this way, shall get on the Day of Resurrection for every dirham seven hundred thousand dirhams’’. Then he (the Prophet) recited this verse: *and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases.*

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘When a believer does well in his deed, Allāh multiplies his deed, every good deed seven hundred times. And this is the word of Allāh: *and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases.* Therefore, make good your deeds which you do to obtain the reward of Allāh.’’ (*at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī)

This tradition has been narrated by al-Barqī also.

‘Umar ibn Muslim said: ‘‘I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) saying: ‘When a believer does well in his deed, Allāh multiplies his deed, every good deed seven hundred times. And this is the word of Allāh: *and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases.* Therefore, make good your deeds which you do to obtain the reward of Allāh.’ I (i.e. ‘Umar ibn Muslim) said: ‘And what does ‘‘making good’’ mean?’ He said: ‘When you pray, make your *rukū‘* and *sajdah* good, and when you fast, keep away from that which spoils your fast, and when you do *ḥajj,* be on guard against all that is forbidden to you in your *ḥajj* and *‘umrah.’* Then he said: ‘And every deed that you do should be clean from impurity.’ ’’(*ibid.*)

In the same book there is a tradition from Ḥimrān from Abū Ja‘far

(a.s.). Ḥimrān said: ‘‘I asked him (i.e. Abū Ja‘far - a.s.): ‘Do you think that a believer has superiority over a Muslim in anything like inheritance, judgements and orders, so that a believer should have more than a Muslim in inheritance or other things?’ He said: ‘No. They both proceed on the same path (i.e., are equal) in all this, when the Imām decides between them; but the believer has a superiority over the Muslim in so far as their deeds are concerned.’ ’’ He (Ḥimrān) said: ‘‘I told him: ‘Has not Allāh said: *Whoever brings a good deed he shall have ten like it?* And you think that they (i.e., the other Muslims) are gathered together with the believers in prayer, fasting and the *ḥajj*?’ He (the Imām) said: ‘Has not Allāh said that Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases manifold? Thus, the believers are those for whom the good deeds are multiplied, for every good deed seventy fold; so this is among their excellence; and Allāh multiplies for the believer his good deeds according to the rectitude of his belief a manifold multiplication; and Allāh does for the believer what He pleases.’ ’’

The author says: There are other traditions with this meaning. And all of them are based on the view that the sentence: *and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases* is general, and that it covers doers of other good deeds also, in addition to those who spend in the way of Allāh. And this view is the correct one; because the only thing that can be said for limiting it to the spenders is the fact that it was revealed in the context of spending; but we know that if a verse is revealed at a certain time or in a certain context, that time or that context does not restrict the general meaning of the word or the sentence.

And as the verse is not limited to spending, likewise, the word *‘‘yuḍā‘if’’* (يُضَاعِفُ = increases, multiplies) should be treated as general; it implies every kind of increase, in number as well as in other ways. In short, the meaning of the verse will be: And Allāh increases, enhances and multiplies a good deed in any way He pleases for anyone He pleases; He multiplies for every doer of good his good deed seven hundred times, or more, or less, as He increases for those who spend more than seven hundred times when He so pleases.

Question: You said earlier that it was wrong to interpret this sentence as saying ‘‘and Allāh multiplies this multiplication for whom He pleases’’, and now you interpret it here in this very way.

Reply: What we refuted there was limiting this meaning to those who

spend. And this tradition also rejects the idea that the verse is limited in any way.

The words of the Imām ‘‘Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases manifold’’ combine two verses together: one, this very verse under discussion, and second, verse 245 of this second chapter: *Who is it that will lend to Allāh a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold.*

It may be inferred from this traditon that the deeds of (those of) other sects of Islam (apart from the believers) may be accepted and given their reward. We shall discuss this topic under verse 98 of chap. 4: *Except the weakened ones from among the men . . .*

The author of *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* says: This verse is general about spending in all these things (i.e. *jihād* and other ways of charity); and the same is narrated from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.).

‘Abdu ’r-Razzāq has narrated in his *al-Muṣannaf* from Ayyūb that he said : ‘‘A man came to the Prophet from Ra’s Tall. There-upon they (i.e. the companions) said: ‘How brave is this man? Would that his bravery were in the way of Allāh!’ The Prophet said: ‘Is only he who was killed in the way of Allāh?’ Then he explained: ‘The one who went out in the earth seeking a lawful (earning) to sustain his parents is in the way of Allāh; and the one who went out seeking a lawful (earning) to sustain his family is in the way of Allāh; and the one who went out seeking a lawful (earning) to sustain himself is in the way of Allāh; and the one who went out vying in exuberance is in the way of Satan.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibnu ’l-Mundhir and al-Ḥākim have narrated (and the latter has said that it is correct) that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) asked al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib: ‘‘O Barā’! How is your spending for your mother?’’ (And al-Barā’ was generous to his family.) He replied: ‘‘O Messenger of Allāh! How good it is! (i.e, it is very good).’’ (The Prophet) said: ‘‘Verily, your expenditure on your family and child and servant is alms; therefore, you should not follow it with reproach or injury.’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: The traditions containing this meaning are numerous from the chains of both sects; and those traditions say that every deed which Allāh is pleased with is in the way of Allāh; and every expenditure in the way of Allāh is alms.

There is a tradition in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī, under the verse: ‘‘Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh . . . ’’, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.)

that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Whoever conferred something good on a believer and then injured him (i.e. his feelings) with his talk or reproached him has surely nullified his charity . . .'' aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: *aṣ-Ṣafwān* (الصَّفْوَانُ) is a big rock in a desert. *al-Wābil* (الوَابِلُ) is rain; and *aṭ-ṭall* (الطَّلُّ) is what settles at night on trees and plants. *al-I'ṣār* (الاعْصَارُ) is wind.

Ibn Jarīr has recorded from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *O you who believe! spend* (benevolently) *out of the good things that you have earned* (he said, ''from gold and silver''), *and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth,* (he said, ''from grain and dates and everything in which *zakāt* is prescribed). (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, at-Tirmidhī (and he has said that this tradition is correct), Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu '1-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Marduwayh, al-Ḥākim; (and he has said that it is correct) and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan)* have narrated from al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib, that he said about the words of Allāh, *and do not aim at what is bad of it that you may spend* (in charity): ''It was revealed about us, the group of the Helpers (*anṣār*). We owned date-palms. (It was our custom that) a man used to come from his trees, however numerous or few they might be; and he brought a bunch of dates or two, and hung it in the mosque; and the people of the ''raised platform'' (*Ahlu 'ṣ-Ṣuffah*) had nothing to sustain them. Therefore, when one of them felt hungry, he used to come to that bunch and hit it with his stick; thus, unripe and ripe dates dropped down and he ate them. And there were some people, not inclined to generosity, who brought bunches which had gone bad and had dried, and also broken bunches; and they hung them (in the mosque). Thereupon, Allāh sent down the verse: *O you who believe! spend* (benevolently) *out of the good things that you have earned and what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at what is bad of it that you may spend* (in charity), *while you would not take it yourselves unless you connived at it.* Allāh commented that if one of you were given a present like that which he gave in charity he would not accept it except if he connived at it or felt shy of rejecting it.'' al-Barā' then said: ''Therefore, everyone of us used to bring the best that he had.'' (*ibid.*)

There is a tradition in *al-Kāfī,* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh: *O you who believe! spend* (benevolently) *out of the*

good things that you have earned and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at what is bad of it that you may spend (in charity): ‘‘When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) ordered *az-zakāt* (poor-rate) on dates, some people used to bring various types of dates as poor-rate, (dates) of the worst kind. They took out as their poor-rate the dates called *aj-ju‘rūr* and *al-mi‘āfārah,* those with little flesh and big stones. And others brought good dates. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Do not estimate these two (types of) dates and do not bring any of them (as poor-rate).’ And concerning this was revealed: *and do not aim at what is bad of it that you may spend* (in charity), *while you would not take it yourselves unless you connived at it.* And conniving means to take these two dates.’’

There is another tradition from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the above-mentioned verse, that he said: ‘‘The people had earned bad earnings in the (days of) ignorance. When they became Muslims, they wanted to take that (unlawful earning) from their property to give it in charity. But Allāh did not allow them except that they should take out from the best of their earnings.’’

The author says: There are may traditions with this meaning from the chains of the both sects.

It is quoted in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī about the words of Allāh: *Satan threatens you with poverty* . . . that Allāh means, ‘‘Satan tells you, ‘Do not spend, otherwise you shall become poor’, and Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance’’, that is, He shall give you if you spend for His sake and shall reimburse you abundantly.

at-Tirmidhī (and he has said that this tradition is correct), an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Bayhaqī (in his *ash-Shu‘ab*) have narrated from Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘Verily, Satan has a nearness with the son of Adam and the angel has a nearness (with him). As for the nearness of Satan, it is a threatening with evil and a denying of truth. And as for the nearness of the angel, it is promising of good and a confirming of truth; therefore, whoever felt it, should know that it is from Allāh, so let him thank Allāh. And whoever felt that other (effect), should seek the protection of Allāh against Satan.’’ Then (the Messenger of Allāh) recited: *Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to abomination* . . . (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

at-Tafsīr of al-‘Ayyāshī quotes Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good,* that he said: ‘‘The knowledge (of Allāh). ’’

The same book quotes aṣ-Sādiq (a.s.) as saying: ‘‘Verily, wisdom is the knowledge (of Allāh) and understanding of the religion.’’

al-Kāfī quotes aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) as saying in explanation of this verse : ‘‘Obedience to Allāh and knowledge of the Imām.’’

The author says: There are other traditions with the same meaning; and they present some examples of a general meaning.

There is in *al-Kāfī* a tradition: from a group of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid, from some of our companions, who mentioned the chain of narrators reaching the Messenger of Allāh; the narrator said that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘Allāh did not distribute among (His) servants anything better than wisdom; so, the sleep of the wise is better than the wakefulness of the ignorant, and the staying of the wise is better than the rising of the ignorant. And Allāh did not send any prophet nor any apostle till (his) understanding was perfected and his wisdom was superior to all the wisdom of his people. And what the prophet keeps hidden in his mind is superior to the endeavours of the endeavourers. And the servant does not fulfil his obligations (towards) Allāh until he knows Him; and all the worshippers together do not reach in the excellence of their worship what a wise (person) attains; and the wise people are the people of understanding; Allāh says: *and none but men of understanding mind.*’’

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘Wisdom is the light of knowledge, and the weighing scale of piety, and the fruit of truth; and if you were to say that Allāh did not bestow upon His servant a bounty greater and higher and better and more magnificent than wisdom, you would be saying (the truth). Allāh, Powerful and Great is He, has said: *He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good; and none but men of understanding mind.*’’

The author says: There are many traditions about the verse: *And whatever alms you give . . .,* concerning the alms, the vow and the injustice, which we shall write, God willing, in more appropriate places.

It is reported in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from several chains from Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn Jubayr, Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr and others that the Messenger of Allāh used to forbid (the giving of) alms to non-Muslims; and the

Muslims disliked spending on their non-believing relatives. Then, Allāh sent down this verse: *To make them walk in the right way is not incumbent on you* . . . Thereupon, (the Messenger of Allāh) allowed it.

The author says: It has already been explained that the phrase *''hudāhum''* (هُدَاهُمْ = their guidance; to make them walk in the right way) appropriately means guiding the Muslims themselves by making them follow the right path; it has no connection with the unbelievers. The verse, therefore, is quite unrelated to the story of its revelation mentioned in the above report. Moreover, the very next verse which prescribes the group on which the alms should be spent (*for the poor who are besieged in the way of Allāh* . . .) does not support this story.

So far as spending on a non-Muslim is concerned, the generality of the verse is enough to allow it provided it is done in the way of Allāh and to seek the pleasure of Allāh.

al-Kāfī quotes aṣ-Sādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you,* that he said: ''It is in other than *az-zakāt;* verily *az-zakāt* is openly, not secretly.''

There is another tradition in the same book from the same Imām: ''Whatever Allāh has made obligatory on you, announcing it is better than hiding it; and whatever is voluntary, hiding it is better than announcing it.''

The author says: There are other traditions with the same meanings as the two above traditions. And its meaning may be clearly understood from earlier explanations.

It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayān,* under the verse: (Charity is) *for the poor who are besieged in the way of Allāh* . . ., that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: ''It was revealed about the companions of the raised platform.'' the author of *Majma'u 'l-bayān* goes on to say that the same thing has been narrated by al-Kalbī from Ibn 'Abbās. ''And they were about four hundred men; they had no houses in Medina, nor were there any people of their clans where they could find shelter. Therefore, they got themselves settled in the mosque; and they said: 'We shall go out in every expedition sent by the Messenger of Allāh.' Therefore, Allāh exhorted the people to (help) them. Then (it became a custom that) if a man took his meal and some food was left over, he brought it to them.''

In *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī, Abū Ja'far (a.s.) is quoted as saying: ''Verily Allāh hates the one who begs importunately.''

It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayān,* under the words of Allāh: ''Those who spend their wealth by night and by day . . .'' Ibn 'Abbās said describing the reason of its revelation: ''It was revealed about 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.); he had four dirhams; and he gave them in charity, one at night-time, and one in the day-time, one secretly and one openly. Then came down this verse: *Those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly . . .''* aṭ-Ṭabrisī (author of *Majma'u 'l-bayān*) further said: ''And the same is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.).''

The author says: And this thing has been narrated by al-'Ayyāshī in his *at-Tafsīr;* al-Mufīd in his *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ,* and aṣ-Ṣadūq in his *'Uyūnu 'l-akhbār.*

'Abdu 'r-Razzāq, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, aṭ-Ṭabarānī and Ibn 'Asākir have narrated through the chain of 'Abdu '1-Wahhāb ibn Mujāhid from his father from Ibn 'Abbās about the words of Allāh: *Those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly . . .,* that he said: ''It was revealed about 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) that he had four dirhams; and he spent them (in charity) at night one dirham, and in the day one dirham, and secretly one dirham, and openly one dirham.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

al-Burhān (*Tafsīr*) quotes Ibn Shahrāshūb (in his *al-Manāqib*) who narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, as-Suddī, Mujāhid, al-Kalbī, Abū Ṣāliḥ, al-Wāḥidī, aṭ-Ṭūsī, ath-Tha'labī, aṭ-Ṭabrisī, al-Māwardī, al-Qushayrī, ath-Thumālī, an-Naqqāsh, al-Fattāl, 'Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥusayn and 'Alī ibn Ḥarb aṭ-Ṭā'ī (in their books of *at-Tafsīr*) that: 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib had some silver dirhams; so he gave in charity one at night and one in the day, and one secretly, and one openly. Thereupon was revealed (the verse): *Those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly* . . . Thus Allāh named (his) every dirham a wealth and gave him the good news of acceptance.

It is written in some books of *tafāsīr* (pl. of *tafsīr*, i.e., commentary) that the verse was revealed about Abū Bakr; he gave in charity forty thousand dinars — ten by night, and ten by day and ten secretly and ten openly.

The author says: al-Ālūsī has written in his *at-Tafsīr* under this tradition: ''al-Imāmu 's-Suyūṭī has commented that the report of his (i.e., Abū Bakr's) giving forty thousand dinars in charity has only been

narrated by Ibn ‘Asākir in his history from ‘Ā’ishāh, and there is no mention of the revelation of this verse in that report. It seems that those who claimed it (i.e., the revelation of the verse about Abū Bakr) inferred it from the tradition narrated by Ibnu ’l-Mundhir from Ibn Isḥāq that he said: ‘When Abū Bakr died and ‘Umar became Khalīfah, he addressed the people; he thanked Allāh and praised Him as He should be praised; then he said: ‘‘O people! verily, some avarice is poverty, and some abandoning of hope is self-sufficiency; and verily you gather what you do not eat, and you hope for what you do not get. And know that some miserliness is a branch of hypocrisy; therefore, spend for your own good.’’ Then he said: ‘‘So where are the people of this verse?’’ — and saying it, he recited this verse. And you know that these words do not show in any way that this verse was revealed about Abū Bakr.’ ’’

It is reported in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr,* through various chains, from Abū Amāmah, Abu ’d-Dardā’, Ibn ‘Abbās and others that the verse was revealed about the people of the horses.

The author says: ‘‘The people of the horses’’ refers to those who kept the horses (for the purpose of *jihād*) and spent on them by night and by day. But the wording of the verse, ‘‘secretly and openly’’, does not fit this interpretation. What would be the sense of this generalization and particularization in the case of spending on horses?

There is also in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from al-Musayyab that this whole verse was revealed in praise of ‘Abdu ’r-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf and ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān when they spent on ‘‘the army of straitened circumstances’’ (i.e., army of Tabūk).

The author says: The same objection arises here as has been levelled against the preceding interpretation — that it does not fit the wordings of the Qur’ān.

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الَّذِيْنَ يَأْكُلُوْنَ الرِّبٰا لَا يَقُوْمُوْنَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُوْمُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ
مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبٰا وَأَحَلَّ اللهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ
الرِّبٰا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَانْتَهٰى فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ
فَأُولٰئِكَ أَصْحٰابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيْهَا خَالِدُوْنَ ـ ٢٧٥ . يَمْحَقُ اللهُ الرِّبٰا وَيُرْبِي
الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيْمٍ ـ ٢٧٦ . إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ـ ٢٧٧ . يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللهَ وَذَرُوْا مَا بَقِيَ
مِنَ الرِّبٰا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ـ ٢٧٨ . فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوْا فَأْذَنُوْا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ
وَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُؤُوْسُ أَمْوٰالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُوْنَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُوْنَ ـ ٢٧٩ . وَإِنْ كَانَ
ذُوْ عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلٰى مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوْا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ـ ٢٨٠ .
وَاتَّقُوْا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُوْنَ فِيْهِ إِلَى اللهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفّٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُوْنَ ـ ٢٨١ .

Those who swallow down interest cannot stand except as one whom Satan has confounded with (his) *touch does stand. That is because they say, trade is only like interest. And Allāh has allowed trade and forbidden interest. To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allāh; and whoever returns* (to it) — *these are the inmates of the fire; they shall abide in it* (275). *Allāh effaces interest, and He causes charities to grow; and Allāh does not love any ungrateful sinner* (276). *Surely they who believe and do good deeds and establish prayer and pay the poor-rate they shall have their reward with*

their Lord and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve (277). *O you who believe! fear Allāh and forgo what remains* (due) *from interest, if you are believers* (278). *But if you do* (it) *not, then be apprised of war from Allāh and His Apostle; and if you repent, then you shall have your capital; neither shall you deal unjustly, nor shall you be dealt with unjustly* (279). *And if* (the debtor) *is in straitened circumstances, then let there be respite until* (he is in) *ease; and that you remit* (it) *as alms is better for you, if you knew* (280). *And fear the day in which you shall be returned to Allāh; then every soul shall be paid back in full what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly* (281).

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GENERAL COMMENT

These verses were revealed to emphasize the prohibition of interest and to put strong pressure on the interest-takers; they are not the verses that originally legislated the prohibition of interest; their language is not that of legislation. The law forbidding interest was ordained most probably by the following verse of the third chapter :

O you who believe! do not devour interest, making it double and redouble, and fear Allāh, that you may succeed (3:130).

Also look at one of the verses under discussion: ‘‘O you who believe! fear Allāh and forgo what remains (due) from interest, if you are believers’’. It shows that the Muslims, even after the previous prohibition, sometimes took interest; and therefore Allāh ordered them to desist from this practice and to remit that part of the interest which remained due from the debtors. With this background, the meaning of the following sentence becomes quite clear: ‘‘To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allāh . . .’’

Even long before the verse of the third chapter, a Meccan chapter (the

30th), had condemned the practice of taking interest: *And whatever you lay out as interest, so that it may increase in the properties of men, it shall not increase with Allāh; and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allāh's pleasure — it is these* (persons) *that shall get manifold* (30:39).

It shows that interest was a thing abhored since the early days of the Call, before the *hijrah;* then it was clearly forbidden in the third chapter; and finally it was most forcefully condemned and denounced in these seven verses (under discussion), the style of which clearly shows that interest was forbidden long before they were revealed. It also proves that these seven verses were revealed after the third chapter.

Moreover, interest was prohibited in Judaism, as Allāh says about the Jews: *And their* (Jews') *taking interest, though indeed forbidden were they against it* (4:161); and also He says quoting them: *this is because they say: there is nothing upon us in the matter of the unlearned people* (3:75). Add to it the fact that the Qur'ān verified their book and did not abrogate this law. All of this together was enough to make the Muslims understand that interest was prohibited and forbidden in Islam.

These verses of interest have some connection with the preceding verses of spending in the way of Allāh. And this connection has been clearly pointed out in these verses: for example, ''Allāh effaces interest and He causes charities to grow''; ''and that you remit (it) as alms is better for you''. Likewise the verse of the thirtieth chapter contrasts it with alms; and that of the third chapter is followed by praise of spending, exhorting the believers to spend benevolently in the way of Allāh.

Moreover, reason also recognizes the contrast and mutual opposition of interest and charity. Interest is taking without giving anything in exchange; charity is giving without taking anything in exchange. The evils emanating from interest are poles apart from the good effects of charity. Charity spreads mercy and love, strengthens the morale of the poor members of society, increases wealth, maintains good social order, and then as a result of mutual love and respect, peace reigns over the land. The evils resulting from interest are exactly opposite to these good effects.

Allāh has, in these verses, condemned interest in the most emphatic words. No other deed has been condemned in such a harsh tone. The only exception is befriending the enemies of religion, which also has been

execrated with equal force. All other major sins have been condemned emphatically in the Qur'ān, but the level of their condemnation is far below that used for these two evils. Not only fornication, liquor and gambling, but even more grievous sins like murder and creating mischief in the earth seem milder than these two — interest and making friends with the enemies of religion. Why? The reason is very clear. The bad effects of the above-mentioned sins remain mostly confined to individuals, one or more; further, they impair only some particular psychological traits of the doer.

But these two evils bring such destruction in their wake that religion is uprooted and even its signs are obliterated; the life-line of human social order is severed; human nature is over-powered by their harmful intoxication, and it loses all its control over the people's thinking and action.

History has shown why the Qur'ān had spoken so forcefully against befriending the enemies of religion and against interest. Look at the pitiable condition of the Muslim countries. They started adulating the enemies of Islam, making friends with them and adoring them. They inclined psychologically towards them. And now we see the result: they have fallen down into the pit of perdition; they are plundered and pillaged by the same ''beloved'' enemies; they have no control over their own destiny; they have lost their wealth, their honour and even their identity; they deserve neither death nor life; they are not allowed to die, and they are not given any breathing space to enjoy the bounties of life. Religion has departed from there, and virtue abandoned them long ago.

As for interest, it caused the treasures of the earth to be concentrated in few select houses, and the wealth to be hoarded by the takers of interest. The money gave them power over other less fortunate human beings. It was the real cause of the world wars. It divided mankind into two opposing groups: the wealthy who enjoy all the blessings of life, and the poor who fmd it difficult to meet their barest necessities. The grouping has already appeared. It is a calamity which has shaken the earth and levelled the mountains. It is threatening humanity with downfall and the world with destruction. *Then evil was the end of those who did evil* (30:10).

You will see that what Allāh described about interest and making

friends with the enemies of religion was a forecast of the carnage .which has now come true.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *Those who swallow down interest cannot stand except as one whom Satan has confounded with* (his) *touch does stand: ''al-Khabṭ''* (الخَبْطُ) means to walk unevenly; to grope about awkwardly. They say *khabaṭa 'l-ba'īr* (خَبَطَ البَعِيْرُ = the camel became disorientated in its walk).

Man has a straight path for his life, from which he normally does not deviate. He acts according to the norms of the society in which he lives; those norms are based on reasonable ideas, and man tries to fit his individual and social activities to them. He eats when he is hungry, drinks when thirsty, desires rest when tired, and looks for shelter when staying somewhere, and so on. He feels happy with some things, and becomes annoyed with others. When he wants some task done, he produces its cause, and when he needs an effect, he brings about its necessary ingredients.

This, in short, is man's normal way of life — the actions related to the ideas, in a well-balanced relationship. Man was guided to this straight path by a power ingrained in his nature, the power that discrimantes between good and bad, differentiates between beneficial and harmful, and distinguishes virtue from evil.

But a man whose discriminating power is confounded sees no difference between good and bad, between beneficial and harmful and between virtue and evil. He treats every thing like its opposite. It is not because he has forgotten the meaning of good and bad — after all, he is a human being who has his own freewill and choice, and a man can only do a man's deeds. Rather, it happens because he believes evil to be virtue, and virtue to be evil. He is, in short, confused and confounded; he applies the rules in completely wrong places, and does not know which demands which.

It is not that he always treats the normal as abnormal and vice versa. If it were so, he would have at least been consistent in his

misjudgements. We could have said that he had some organized way of thinking, although he applied his judgements in a wrong way. But he has not even this consistency. Good and bad, virtue and evil, normal and abnormal, all are equal in his eyes. Whatever he wants at a given moment is to be done and obtained — like a camel that has become disorientated; he starts walking forward, no matter which direction he happens to face at that time; he has lost his bearing, and normal and abnormal are the same to him.

This is, then, the condition of the interest-taker.

What do we mean by interest? It is giving a thing and later taking back a similar thing plus an increase. Social life is based on a sound principle. Let us say that Zayd has a property in excess of his needs, and he needs something else which Bakr has got. Now Zayd may give his excess property to Bakr and take in exchange Bakr's property (which, incidently, is in excess of Bakr's requirements). It is trade and it is the dictate of human nature.

But giving a property and taking back a similar thing with some increase nullifies the demands of nature and destroys the basis of the economy. The property is snatched from the hands of the debtor, and accumulates in the coffers of the interest-taker. The interest-taker's wealth grows and grows; but this growth is achieved by adding another man's wealth. Thus wealth goes on decreasing and diminishing, on the one side, and increasing and accumulating on the other.

The debtor who has to pay interest is burdened with that much extra expenditure; as the days pass, he goes on paying interest, without getting anything in exchange; his need of more and more money increases and he is caught in a vicious circle — he must borrow ever more to fulfil his normal needs as well as to pay the ever-increasing expense of interest. Thus his life is ruined.

Interest is, therefore, diametrically opposed to the balance and equilibrium of society; it destroys that system which man had created with the guidance of the Divine Creation.

So, this is the interest-taker, confounded like the one touched by Satan. Taking interest makes his reason topsy-turvy; he sees no difference between normal and abnormal, between trade and interest. When he is told to leave interest and stick to trade, he says: ‘‘Trade is

only like interest; it has no superiority over interest; why should I leave interest and stick to trade?'' That is why Allāh showed his confusion by quoting his reply, ''trade is only like interest''.

From the above discourse, the following matters become quite clear:

First: The word ''standing'' in the phrase, ''cannot stand except as one whom Satan has confounded with (his) touch does stand'', means ''managing'' one's life and ''looking after'' one's livelihood. It is one of the meanings of ''standing'' which people generally use in their speech. Allāh says: . . . *so that men may stand with justice* (57:25); . . . *the heavens and the earth stand by His command* (30:25); . . . *and that you should stand for the orphans with justice* (4:127). This word has not been used here with the meaning of ''standing up'' (i.e., as opposed to ''sitting''), because such an interpretation would not fit the topic, and the meaning of the verse would not be correct.

Second: ''Confoundedness of the touched one in standing'' does not refer to the involuntary movements of an epileptic during or after an attack of epilepsy, as some commentators have written. Such a meaning would have no relevance to the topic at hand. Allāh has given us the simile of the interest-taker who does not differentiate between trade and interest, and who acts according to that idea. This is done by his own choice and will — the choice that is based on his confused thinking. There is nothing in it like the involuntary convulsions of an epileptic.

This phrase, in short, means that the interest-taker manages the affairs of his life and livelihood as does the one whom Satan has confounded with his touch.

Third: There is a fine point in saying ''they say, trade is only like interest'' instead of saying ''interest is only like trade''. The reason for choosing the former expression may be understood from the above explanations. For an interest-taker, normal and abnormal are both alike. We shall explain it in detail later on.

Fourth: The similitude, that is, ''as one whom Satan has confounded with (his) touch'', gives a hint that this may happen sometimes in cases of lunacy. The verse does not say that every madness is caused by the touch of Satan; but it indicates that some cases of lunacy are the result of Satan's touch. Further, the verse does not say that this touching is done by Iblīs himself, because Satan means the evil one; this word (Satan) is

used for Iblīs as well as for other evil ones among the jinn and human beings. And Iblīs is from the jinn. What looks certain from this Qur'ānic hint is that the jinn are instrumental in the madness of some persons, if not of all.

Some commentators have opined that this simile is not based on any fact. People in those days believed that lunacy was caused by the touch of the jinn; and Allāh used that belief of their's for this similitude; it is just talking to people in their own language. There is, of course, no harm in it, because it is just a similitude; it does not confirm that common belief. Such a comparison is not wrong just because the thing has no actual existence. What the verse, therefore, means is simply this: 'These swallowers of interest are like a lunatic who is confounded by the touch of Satan.' It is against belief in the Justice of Allāh to say that madness could be caused by the touch of Satan. Allāh is Just; He cannot give Satan authority to overpower the intellect of His servant, or to subdue His believing servant.

But this opinion has many flaws:

1) Allāh is too Great to insert any vain or incorrect promise in His talk without indicating its invalidity. Allāh has said about His Book: *and most surely it is a Mighty Book; falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it, a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One* (41:41 — 42); *Most surely it is a decisive word, and it is no joke* (86:13 — 14).

2) He says that it is against belief in the Justice of Allāh to say that Satan can manipulate and disturb the intellect of a person, and can turn him into a lunatic. Well, is it not against belief in the Justice of Allāh to say that lunacy occurs because of natural causes? Are not the natural causes created by Allāh? And yet they do disturb the mind of man.

The fact is that there is no problem in believing that Allāh allows the mind of man to be disturbed — no matter through which agency it is done. Because Allāh at once removes all responsibilities away from such man. Of course, there could be a problem if his thinking power were taken away and still the responsibilities of a sane person were imposed on that man. Also it would be against belief in the Justice of Allāh to say that Satan can manipulate a sane man in such a way that, in spite of his sanity, he sees truth, falsehood and virtue as evil and vice versa.

But there would be no problem if a man's intellect is disturbed or ceases to exist provided the responsibilities of sanity are also removed from him — no matter whether the disturbance occurred through natural causes or through Satan's touch.

Moreover, when we attribute madness to the touch of Satan we do not mean that he confounds the intellect directly without any middle cause. Rather, we believe that natural causes, like nervous disorders and psychological disturbances are the near causes, and Satan is a cause beyond these causes. Likewise, many miracles are attributed to the angels, although there occur natural causes in between. An example of this may be seen in two verses both of which quote Ayyūb (a.s.) beseaching his Lord after his affliction. In one verse he says: *Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment* (38:41); and in the other he says: *Harm has afflicted me and Thou art the Most Merciful of the merciful* (21:83). ''Harm'' here refers to his sickness; and sickness has its own natural causes. See how, in the first verse, he attributes his sickness, caused by natural causes, to Satan.

The root of the trouble is this: When the materialists hear us attributing events to Allāh (or attributing some happenings to the spirit, to an angel or to Satan) they think that it amounts to a rejection of natural causes, and that it sets metaphysical agencies in the place of physical causes. They should be somehow made to understand that by such declarations we add one more (metaphysical) link at the farther end of the chain of (physical) causes. We do not replace the physical causes with metaphysical ones. (We have mentioned this fact in previous discussions several times.)

Fifth: Also, it is wrong to say, as some other exegetists have done, that the similitude aims at describing the state of interest-takers on the Day of Resurrection; and that they will rise from their graves on that day like an epileptic who is afflicted by madness.

Evidently, the verse does not support this meaning. The tradition which describes the condition of interest-takers is about the Day of Resurrection; it does not purport to explain the similitude of this verse.

It is written in *al-Manār* (*Tafsīr*)*:* ''The similitude, that one who swallows interest stands like one who has been confounded by the touch of Satan, has been explained by Ibn 'Aṭiyyah as follows: 'The aim is to

show the likeness of the interest-taker in this world to the one who is confounded and afflicted with epilepsy; as it is said about the man who is convulsed with various involuntary movements, that he has gone mad.'

''I say (the author of *al-Manār*): This is the meaning which comes into my mind on reading this verse. But a major group of commentators have gone against it. They have said: 'The standing mentioned in the verse refers to the rising from the grave at the time of resurrection; that Allāh has made it a sign of the interest-takers on the Day of Resurrection that they shall be raised like epileptics.' They have narrated it from Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Mas'ūd; and aṭ-Ṭabarānī has narrated a tradition of 'Awf ibn Mālik (which he has referred to the Prophet): 'Beware of the sins that shall not be forgiven: embezzlement, so whoever embezzles anything, shall be brought with it on the Day of Resurrection; and interest, so whoever swallows interest shall be raised on the Day of Resurrection as a lunatic who gropes hither and thither aimlessly.' '' (The author of *al-Manār* goes on saying:) ''The commonly under-stood meaning is the one given by Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, because when the word 'standing' is used, one generally understands it to mean managing some affairs; and there is no association to show that it refers to the rising from grave. So far as traditions are concerned none of them is free from one or another defect in the chains of narrators; and those traditions were not revealed together with the Qur'ān, nor does the *al-marfu'* (المَرْفُعُ = tradition raised to the Prophet) purport to interpret this verse. (It only talks about the condition of interest-takers on the Day of Resurrection, without mentioning this verse.) And had not this tradition been there no-one would have interpreted this verse except in the way Ibn 'Aṭiyyah has done . . . And it was the custom of the forgers of traditons, when they were perplexed by the apparent meaning of a Qur'ānic verse, to forge a tradition to explain it; and there are few exegetical traditions that are really correct.''

He is right when he exposes the mistake of the exegetists. But he himself has gone wrong when he tries to explain the meaning of this similitude. He says: ''What Ibn 'Aṭiyyah has said is quite clear. Those who are entangled in the love of wealth do become its slave. Their whole existence revolves around money; they want wealth for the sake of wealth. They have abandoned the natural means of earning, and have concentrated on earning money through money only. In this way, their

souls deviate from the straight path of moderation on which most of the people are. This immoderation, this loss of equilibrium, shows itself in their movements and actions. Look at the speculators on the stock exchange or compulsive gamblers; the more they indulge in these activities the more they become entangled in it, until a time comes when their behaviour becomes illogical, and their movements disorientated. It is this aspect which is the common factor between their activities and the movements of confounded lunatics. The Arabic word translated as ''has con-founded'' is derived from *al-khabṭ* (الخَبْطُ) which means disorganized movement.''

The author's comment: To say that the interest-takers' movement become disorientated and disorganized is correct in itself. But interest-taking is not the only cause of such disorientation. This occurs when man forgets that he is a servant of his Creator and Master, and when material pleasure becomes his only goal — and this is the final reach of his knowledge! Then he loses self-control (which come through religion) and sobriety of demeanour. And he gets at once affected by every big or small worldly pleasure; and this results in a disorientation of his movements. It may be observed in any person who is immersed in worldly pleasure, and who has forgotten Allāh, even if he has not taken a single penny as interest all his life.

Nor is that disorientation the purpose of this similitude. The proof, given in the verse, of their being confounded does not fit this supposed purpose of the similitude. Allāh says that they are confounded in their standing, ''because they say, trade is only like interest''. If that disorientation of their behaviour was the purpose of the similitude, it would have been more appropriate to prove it by their disorganized actions and disorderly movements.

Obviously, what we have described in explanation of this simile and about its purpose, is the only reasonable interpretation.

QUR'ĀN: *That is because they say, trade is only like interest:* We have already described why trade was likened to interest, and not interest to trade. A man confounded in his thinking and disorientated in his movements is in an abnormal condition. Good and bad, virtue and evil are both the same to him. If you tell him to leave the bad deed that he is doing and to do the good, he will reply to you — if he replies — that

what you tell him to do is like that which you are forbidding him; that has no preference over this.

Now note the difference. If he had said, ‘‘what you forbid me to do is like that which you tell me to do’’, he could not be said to be confounded or mad. At the most he would have been called a sane person who is mistaken in his view. Why? Because his reply would have shown that he knows that the thing ordered is good and should be done; but he mistakenly thinks that the forbidden thing also is good like the former. In other words, he knows and appreciates the superiority of good actions. He does not think that nothing is good or bad, or that all are equal.

Interest-takers say that trade is like interest. It shows that they have lost their bearings; they do not accept that trade has any superiority over interest. If they had said ‘‘interest is like trade’’, it would have meant that they were not confounded, they knew that trade was a good thing; but they thought that interest too was good like trade. In that case; they could have been called rejectors of the *sharī‘ah* and sinners against Allāh, but not ‘‘confounded like the one touched by Satan’’.

Ponder over the sentence, ‘‘That is because they say, trade is only like interest’’. Apparently they had not spoken these words by their tongues; it was their state and behaviour which was crying out loudly about their thinking. This style of narrating the state as uttered speech is very common in every language.

Once it is understood, the error of the following two interpretations becomes self-evident:

1) Some people have said: The interest-takers said that trade was like interest, because they treated both in a like manner. The reason why they reversed the simile and said, ‘‘trade is like interest’’ was to emphasize — it was as though interest was the main thing and trade a secondary matter which would become respectable if it was likened to interest.

All this is out of place. They did not utter this sentence in words, so that it should require all this explanation.

2) Someone else has said: Maybe the simile is not reversed. They thought that trade was allowed so that one might earn profit. And profit was a certain thing in interest and rather uncertain in other means of earning. Therefore, they gave primacy to interest and assigned a

secondary place to trade.

The same comment applies here as was written about the first.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh has allowed trade and forbidden interest:* It is a new sentence. It is not in conjunction with the preceding sentence, and does not show the state of that sentence. In other words, it does not mean: ''they say trade is only like interest, while Allāh has allowed trade and forbidden interest''. If a sentence, beginning with a verb in the past tense, is inserted to denote the state of the preceding sentence, it invariably always begins with *qad* (قَدْ = a prefix, used before past and aorist tenses); for example, ''Zayd came to me'' *wa qad ḍaraba 'Umar* (وَ قَدْ ضَرَبَ عُمَرَ = when he had beaten 'Umar). In this verse, the meaning of the preceding sentence does not allow one to say that this sentence is its 'state'. The phrase denoting 'state' restricts the main sentence to the time and state denoted. If we treat this sentence as a phrase of state, it would mean: ''The interest-takers' confoundedness (because of their saying that trade is only like interest) is confined to the time when Allāh allowed trade, and forbade interest''. But the fact is otherwise. They were confounded before this legislation as much as they were after it.

Therefore, this is an independent sentence, and not a phrase of state. Also, this sentence is not the original legislation forbidding interest. As mentioned in the beginning, these verses evidently show that interest was already prohibited before they were revealed. They explain and emphasize what was legislated by the following verse of the third chapter: *O you who believe! do not devour interest making it double and redouble, and fear Allāh, that you may succeed* (3:130).

Therefore, the sentence, ''And Allāh has allowed trade . . .'' does not ordain a new law; it just refers to a previously given order, and paves the way for the next sentence, ''To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, he shall have what has already passed . . .'' This is the apparent meaning of the verse.

Someone has said: The words, ''And Allāh has allowed trade and forbidden interest'' are meant to refute the interest-takers' assertion, ''trade is only like interest''. If their claim were correct, the legal position of trade and interest would not have been different from each other in divine legislation, while the fact is that Allāh has allowed one and forbidden the other.

Reply: The argument mentioned above is correct in itself; but it is not in conformity with the wording of the verse. It could be correct only if this sentence were a phrase of state. But it is not so.

Someone else has written another explanation: The sentence, ‘‘And Allāh has allowed . . .’’, means that the increase of wealth through trade is not like its increase through interest, because ‘‘I have allowed trade and forbidden interest; and order is My order, and creatures are My creatures; I ordain about them as I wish, and make them obey My command in any manner I please; none among them has any right to protest against My decision.’’

Reply: This also is dependent on the wrong theory that this sentence is a phrase of state. Moreover, it is based on a denial of any relationship of cause and effect between religious laws and their benefits. If you accept this interpretation, you will have to reject the relationship of cause and effect in the whole universe, and to attribute every action to Allāh without apparent and middle causes. Evidently such an idea is wrong. Further, this explanation is against the Qur’ānic style. The Qur’ān often explains the reason for a given order, and mentions the general or special benefits emanating from a particular law. Even in the present instance, various sentences hint at the reason upon which this rule is based: ‘‘. . . and forgo what remains (due) from interest if you are believers’’; ‘‘neither shall you deal unjustly, nor shall you be dealt with unjustly’’; ‘‘Those who swallow down interest . . . trade is only like interest ’’. All these hint at the reason why trade has been allowed: It is in conformity with nature’s demand; and why interest has been forbidden. First, it is a deviation from the straight path of life; second, it is not in conformity with belief in Allāh; and third, it is injustice.

QUR’ĀN: To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allāh; and whoever returns (to it) — these are the inmates of the fire; they shall abide in it: These sentences branch out from the preceding sentence, ‘‘And Allāh has allowed trade . . .’’ The principle laid down in this statement is not restricted to interest; it is a general rule although it is mentioned in a particular context. The meaning, therefore, will be as follows: ‘‘What We have told you on the subject of interest, is an admonition; and to whomsoever the admonition comes from his Lord

and he desists, for him shall be what has already passed and his affair rests with Allāh; accordingly, if you now desist from interest, you shall have what you have already taken, and your affair rests with Allāh''.

It is clear from the above explanation that ''the admonition has come'' means ''the information of the law ordained by Allāh has reached''; ''then he desists'' means ''then he repents and desists from the forbidden action''; ''for him shall be what has already passed'' means ''the ordained law shall not be applied retrospectively, rather it shall be enforced from the time the information has reached him''; ''for him shall be what has already passed and his affair rests with Allāh'' means that he shall not be affected by the ever-lasting punishment mentioned in the next sentence (*and whoever returns* [to it] — *these are the inmates of the fire; they shall abide in it*). In this way, they shall be allowed the benefit of their previous action, still their affair is in the hands of Allāh — He may leave them free in some matters, and may sometimes oblige them to make up for the past shortcomings.

This verse needs special attention. Beginning from the words ''to whosoever then the admonition has come'' upto the end of the verse, in spite of the given concession and the severe threatening, a basic principle is explained; it is a general law covering all mortal sins. Yet people have missed this clear point, and have interpreted it as though it were confined to the topic of interest only.

In view of the above-mentioned generality, the words, ''for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allāh'', can be taken only as a general principle — its particulars depending on the nature of the sin concerned. Whoever desists from a sin after receiving the admonition from his Lord, shall be forgiven the sins committed in the past — no matter whether the transgression was against Allāh or against the people. But it does not mean that he shall automatically be absolved from its other consequences. His affair is in the hands of Allāh: He may prescribe for him some expiation or amendment — as, for example, if he neglects prayers, he should pray and make up the arrears; if he did not fast, he should fast the same number of other days; if he took any property unlawfully, he should return it to the lawful owner, and he should undergo the prescribed penal sentences in relevant cases — all this going hand in hand with repentance and desisting from that sin in the

future; and thus the past sins are forgiven. Or, Allāh may forgive the sin altogether, after repentance, without imposing any penalty or expiation — as, for example, when a polytheist repents and enters into Islam, or when a liquor-drinker or a singer repents and desists from these sins. The words, ‘‘To whosoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists’’, are general; they cover all the believers and unbelievers of the Prophet’s time as well as all those who came later or shall come afterwards.

‘‘And whoever returns (to it) — these are the inmates of the Fire; they shall abide in it’’: The word, ‘‘returns’’ here is in contrast to the word, ‘‘desists’’, in the preceding sentence. There-fore, it means, ‘‘does not desist’’. Thus, it refers to the person who goes on committing that sin and does not accept the divine command. Such an attitude exposes the infidelity or apostasy that is hidden in his heart even if he does not utter a single word to show it. Whoever returns to a sin and does not desist from it, and does not even feel ashamed of it, has in fact not submitted to the command of Allāh; and he shall never succeed. Thus the two sides mentioned in this verse are: (1) accepting and obeying the divine command which creates the resolve that one will not go against the law; (2) continuing in the sin which proves that one has not accepted that divine command, which, in its turn, makes one liable to remain in the Fire for ever.

The Mu‘tazilites offer this verse as a proof of their belief that the one who commits a major sin shall remain in the Fire forever.

The author’s comment: No doubt that the verse shows that not only the one who commits a major sin, but anyone who commits any sin, shall remain in chastisement for ever. But it is conditional; it refers to only that sinner who commits a sin and does not accept the divine command. And such a person will admittedly abide in the Fire. But it is different from the view of the Mu‘tazilites.

Other commentators have mentioned many possibilities and explanations about the words of Allāh, ‘‘for him shall be what has already passed’’, ‘‘his affair rests with Allāh’’, and ‘‘whoever returns . . .’’ But all those discussions are based on their erroneous understanding of the verse (as we have explained earlier). It is not worthwhile mentioning them here, since their very basis is wrong.

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh effaces interest, and causes charities to grow. . . .: ''al-Maḥq''* (اَلْمَحْقُ) is gradual decrease and deterioration leading to extinction; *''al-irbā' ''* (الاِرْبَآءُ) is to make grow; *''al-athim''* (الاَثِيْمُ) is the sinner. The verse contrasts the growing of charities with the effacement of interest. It has been described earlier how the growing and multiplication of charities is not confined to the hereafter; it is its general characteristic which is found in this world as well as in the hereafter. Therefore, effacement and obliteration of interest must also be common to this world and the hereafter.

It is the characteristic of charity that it grows and grows, necessarily and inevitably. It spreads love, propagates mercy, creates good accord, unites hearts and brings peace and security in society; it protects the psyche from evil thoughts and anger. The members of such a society never think to usurp other's property, or to take it openly by force, or stealthily by theft, and so forth. Charity leads them to unity, co-operation and mutual help. As a result, most of the ways in which property can deteriorate become closed; and it helps in making property grow, and grow many times.

On the other hand, it is the characteristic of interest that it gradually obliterates and destroys wealth. It spreads hard-heartedness and cruelty, creates enmity and distrust, destroys peace and security and incites the ''have nots'' to take revenge from the ''haves'' in any possible way — be it by talk or by action, be it directly or indirectly; in short, it leads towards disunity and discord. As a result, most of the ways of deterioration and destruction of the property are opened; and wealth becomes a target misfortune and calamity.

These two items — charity and interest — have a direct impact on the life of the poor section of society. Needless to say, poverty and need inflame their feelings, and they are provoked to defend their rights and are ready to confront the others, come what may. With this background, if society treats them with kindness and does good to them without asking for anything in exchange, their noble feelings are stirred and they welcome this generosity with goodwill and brotherly feelings; and it creates loving effects. If, on the other hand, they are treated with hard-heartedness and greed, and are faced with danger to their property, honour and life, they stand up to take their revenge from their oppressors in any possible way.

Those who have seen and heard about those who swallow interest know that such people seldom escape the evil effects of such confrontation. Often their properties are lost, their houses are ruined and their endeavours go in vain.

It is necessary to mention here two things:

First: The causes upon which social effects are based differ from physical and creative causes in one important aspect. While the perfect physical and creative causes can never fail to produce their effects, social factors and causes bring about the expected result in most, but not all, cases. We deal with someone in a certain manner and expect those results which appear in the wake of that behaviour — in most cases.

If we ponder upon the Qur'ānic verses which describe the benefits and harms of the given actions, we shall find that the Qur'ān (when it shows the relation between actions and their causes, and between actions and their effects) has adopted this very system, and mentions a frequently recurring effect as an ever-recurring one.

Second: Society is like an individual in its various conditions and states. An individual is born, lives, dies, acts and leaves his footprints on the sand of life. Likewise, a society has its own birth, life, death, actions and effects. Allāh says in the Qur'ān: *And never did We destroy a town but it had a fixed-term. No people can hasten on their doom nor can they postpone* (it) (15:4 — 5)

But an individual's life and death are different from a society's, as are the effects of their respective activities.

Now, if an individual's characteristic spreads to the whole of society, the ways of its existence and extinction, as well as its effects will change considerably. Let us look, for example, at chastity and licentiousness. They have an effect on life, when they are found in an individual. People generally look down upon a profligate man, they do not like to set up marriage with him; his company is avoided and he is not trusted. It all happens when it remains an individual's vice, and if society on the whole is free from this evil. But if this debauchery spreads in society, and people become used to it, the above-mentioned effects simply vanish away. Those effects were the product of general abhorance and common distaste of this evil; when it spreads to the whole of society, that abhorance and distaste give way to general

acceptance. In this way, this effect of an individual's immorality ceases to exist when that immorality spreads to the whole of society. Yet its other evil effects will surely follow: venereal disease will spread, reproduction will be effected; and other undesirable social evils would increase — for example, natural affinities will be destroyed and relationships will be upset.

Also, the effects of a characteristic found in an individual are felt very soon, while those of the same characteristic found in a society take a longer time to appear.

Allāh effaces interest and makes charities grow. But there is a difference between an individual taking interest and a society doing so. When an individual indulges in this sin, the interest almost always destroys him; few and far between are the cases in which an interest-taker, because of some other mitigating factors, escapes this punishment. But retaliation is not so swift in case of a society wallowing in interest. Look at today's world: interest is a recognized institution of all societies and governments; the economy is founded, and laws are made, on the foundation of interest, and it is interest that is the corner-stone of banking. Now some of the evil effects mentioned above may not happen in this case, because society has adopted it and people never pause to think about its evils and wickedness. Yet, its natural results must follow: the accumulation of wealth on one side, and an all-pervasive need on the other. Complete separation of, and confrontation between, the two — the have and have-nots — have already appeared; and its ill effects are already darkening the world's atmosphere. This has taken longer to appear than in case of an individual; yet judging from the life-span of society it has appeared rather soon. The life of society is different from an individual's; and a day for society may be equal to an aeon in the eyes of an individual. Allāh says: *and We bring these days to men by turns* (3:140). This ''day'' refers to the time when people stand against people, nations against nations, governments confronting governments, and states opposing states.

It is necessary that man's bliss be always cared for, be it of an individual, of society or of the whole of humanity. The Qur'ān looks after both types of bliss — of an individual as well as of the whole of mankind. It was sent down to manage the man's affairs, and to safeguard

the world's happiness and felicity — of the individual as well as of the species, in the present day as well as in the time to come.

Let us now look at the words of Allāh: ''Allāh effaces interest and He causes charities to grow''. These sentences describe the ultimate state of these two activities — whether done by individuals or by society. Effacement is the inseparable characteristic of interest, as growth is that of charity. Interest is effaced, although it is named *ar-ribā* (الرِّبَا = growth); and charity continuously grows, although it is not called by any such name. And to this reality Allāh draws our attention in these words: ''Allāh effaces interest, and He causes charities to grow''; thus He attributes ''growth'' to charities of all kinds, and describes interest *ar-ribā* (literally, growth) in a word, effacement, which is its opposite in meaning.

After this explanation, the weakness of the following interpretations of other exegetists becomes obvious:

1) Someone has written: the effacement of interest does not mean that such money is lost or that such endeavours do not succeed. Because experience proves otherwise. What is actually meant by the sentence ''Allāh effaces interest'' is that Allāh deprives the interest-taker from the main objective of this activity. The interest-taker aims at hoarding wealth through interest so that he may enjoy a good life; but he never gets a chance to rejoice in his wealth, as he remains too busy in adding money to money. Then he has to remain on guard against defaulters; and ultimately he passes his days in disappointment when he finds that he has become unpopular and is especially hated by the poor.

The weakness of this interpretation is obvious.

2) Other exegetists have said: The frame of reference for this effacement is the life hereafter. The one who takes interest neglects many good deeds because of his involvement in interest; and his many acts of worship are nullified because he uses money gained by interest in them.

The author's comment: No doubt, this xplanation gives examples of effacement. But effacement is not restricted to the life hereafter.

3) The Mu'tazilites attempt to prove from the words, ''and whoever returns (to it) — these are the inmates of the Fire; they shall abide in it '', that one who commits a major sin shall remain in Hell for ever.

We have already shown the defect of this argument, and described

the true import of this sentence.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh does not love any ungrateful sinner: ''al-Kaffār''* (الكَفَّارُ) translated here as ''ungrateful'' is on a paradigm which is used for emphasis. Thus, it means, ''inveterately ungrateful''; ''abstinately unbelieving''.

This sentence gives the main reason of the effacement of interest. The swallower of interest shows his obstinacy and ingratitude for the countless bounties of Allāh. He puts obstructions in the natural path of human life, that is, in natural modes of dealing; he rejects a major part of the rules about worship and mutual dealings; he uses the unlawful money of interest for his food, drink, clothing and housing, and in this way nullifies most of his acts of worship. Also, by using that money in his commercial transactions, he invalidates most of his dealings and usurps others' property, and the liability for such things remains on his own head. Further, he tramples ethical values under foot, remains immersed in greed and avarice, becomes hard-hearted and uses force and coercion to collect from his debtors what he thinks is his due. In this way, all his faculties and actions are submerged in disbelief and ingratitude. And also he is *''athīm''* (اَثِيْمٌ), that is, sin is ingrained in his nature. And Allāh does not love him, because He does not love anyone sunk in ingratitude, sin and disbelief.

QUR'ĀN: *Surely they who believe . . . nor shall they grieve:* It is a general principle — those who believe and obey the divine law, ''they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve ''. This general rule fits those who spend in charities and desist from swallowing interest, which Allāh has forbidden.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! fear Allāh and forgo what remains* (due) *from interest, if you are believers:* The verse addresses them with their attribute of belief and faith, and then reminds them to fear Allāh. It prepares the ground for the order which follows, ''and forgo what remains (due). from interest ''. It shows that when these verses were revealed, there were some believers who indulged in this sin and their debtors still owned them some interest payments. Therefore, Allāh ordered them to forgo that amount. This order was followed by the threat ''But if you do (it) not, then be apprised of war from Allāh and His Apostle''.

It supports the tradition (to be quoted later) which gives the reason why these verses were revealed.

The verse ends on the words, ''if you are believers''. This shows that desisting from interest is an inseparable characteristic of belief. It puts more emphasis on the preceding sentences: ''and whoever returns (to it) — these are the inmates of the Fire . . .'', and ''Allāh does not love any ungrateful (unbeliever) sinner''.

QUR'ĀN: *But if you do* (it) *not, then he apprised of war from Allāh and His Apostle: ''al-Idhn''* (الاذْنُ) means to know. *''Fa'dhanu''* (فَأْذَنُوْا = be apprised, know) has also been recited as *fa'ādhinu* (فَأْذِنُوْا = announce) imperative mood of *al-'īdhān* (الايْذَانُ = to announce). The preposition ''*bi''* (بِ) in *''biḥarbin''* (بِحَرْبٍ = of war) gives the meaning of certainty. The meaning thus shall be: Be sure of war from Allāh and His Apostle. ''War'' is used as a common noun, to hint that it shall be a great war, or to refer to various kinds of war. The war is attributed to Allāh and His Apostle because it is in connection with a law which was legislated by Allāh and promulgated by His Apostle. Had it been connected with Allāh only, it would have been a creative decree. So far as His Apostle is concerned, he is not independent of Allāh in any affair; Allāh says: *you have no concern in the affair* (3:128).

How do Allāh and His Apostle wage war with one who does not obey a law? They fight with such a disobedient Muslim to compel him to submit to divine authority, as is declared in the Qur'ān: . . . *then fight that* (party) *which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allāh's command* (49:9).

Moreover, Allāh has another way of defending His laws; and that is fighting against the offenders through the agency of nature. He lets the masses flare up against them; and in this way their lands are devastated and their footprints obliterated. Allāh says: *And when We wish to destroy a town, We send Our commandment to the people of it who lead easy lives, but they transgress therein; thus the word proves true against it, so We destroy it with utter destruction* (17:16).

QUR'ĀN: *And if* (the debtor) *is in staitened circumstances, then let there be respite until* (he is in) *ease: ''Kāna''* (كَانَ = is) in the beginning of the verse has not been used as an auxiliary verb; it is an independent verb and means ''exists''; *''an-naẓirah''* (النَّظِرَةُ) is respite, a

moratorium. *''al-Maysarah''* (المَيْسَرَةُ) is ease, affluence; it is the opposite of *''al-'usrah''* (العُسْرَةُ = straitened circumstances).

The verse says: If there is one of your debtors who is at present unable to repay your loan, then give him respite until he is affluent enough to repay it.

The verse is general and not restricted to the loan given with interest, although it covers such cases also. They used to demand repayment when the stipulated time came; if the debtor was not in a position to pay, he asked for some more time, agreeing to pay more interest. The verse forbids this interest, and tells the creditor to give his debtor respite until he is in ease.

QUR'ĀN: *and that you remit* (it) *as alms is better for you, if you knew:* If you forgo the loan and remit it as charity, it shall be better for you; because by this remittance you will change into charity what you intended to increase through interest; in other words, you will change what was sure to be effaced with what is sure to grow many times.

QUR'ĀN: *And fear the day . . . and they shall not be dealt with unjustly:* This is the epilogue of the preceding verses of interest; it reminds the believers of the Day of Resurrection, and mentions some of its aspects which are relevant to this topic. The verse prepares the audience to fear Allāh and desist from the things forbidden by Allāh, especially concerning the people's rights upon which whole edifice of life is founded. It says that a day is coming in which you shall be returned to Allāh and then every soul shall be paid back in full what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.

What is the meaning of being returned to Allāh while we are never far from Him? And what is this ''paying back in full''? We shall explain it, God willing, in the sixth chapter (The Cattle).

It has been said that this verse was the last one to be revealed to the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). A tradition to this effect will be found in the following discussion.

TRADITIONS

There is a tradition in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī, under the verse:

‘‘Those who swallow down interest . . .’’, that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘When I was taken to the heavens, I saw such a group that if any of them wanted to stand up, he could not do so, because of the bulkiness of his stomach. I said: ‘Who are they, O Gabriel?’ He said: ‘These are they who swallow up interest; they cannot stand except as one whom Satan has confounded with (his) touch stands; and lo! they are on the path of the people of Pharaoh; they are exposed to the Fire in morning and at night, and they say: ‘‘Our Lord ! when shall the Hour come?’’ ’ ’’

The author says: It is an illustrative example pertaining to the period between death and resurrection. It confirms the Prophet’s words: ‘‘As you live, so shall you die; and as you die, so shall you be raised.’’

al-Isbahānī has narrated, in his *at-Targhīb,* from Anas (ibn Mālik) that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘The swallower of interest shall come on the Day of Resurrection, confounded, dragging both his sides.’ Saying it, he recited: *they cannot stand except as one whom Satan has confounded with* (his) *touch stands.’’* (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: There have come numerous traditions about the punishment for interest, both from Shī‘ah and Sunnī chains. Some of them say that interest is equal to seventy acts of incest the swallower of interest would have committed with his mother.

There is a tradition in *at-Tahdhīb* that ‘Umar ibn Yazīd Bayyā‘ as-Sābirī said: ‘‘I said to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.): ‘May I be your ransom! Verily, people say that taking profit from a ‘‘needy’’ person is unlawful.’ He said: ‘Have you seen anyone, whether rich or poor, purchasing anything unless he ‘‘needs’’ it? O ‘Umar! Allāh has allowed trade and forbidden interest. Therefore, take profit; but do not take interest.’ I said: ‘And what is interest?’ He said: ‘Dirhams by dirhams, two against one; and wheat by wheat, double (weight) against single (weight).’ ’’

‘Ubayd ibn Zurārah narrates from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘There is no interest except in that which is measured or weighed.’’ (*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l-faqīh*)

The author says: There is a difference of opinion as to which things are liable to interest. It is the *madhhab* of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) that there is no interest except in gold and silver and those things which are measured

or weighed. Further details are beyond the scope of this book, as the topic concerns Islamic jurisprudence.

There is a tradition in *al-Kāfī* from one of the two Imāms (al-Bāqir or aṣ-Sādiq - a.s.) and in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord,* that he said: ''The admonition is repentance.''

Muḥammad ibn Muslim said: ''There came to Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) a man from Khurāsān who had dealth with interest till he had amassed a fortune. 'He asked the scholars of jurisprudence, and they said: No deed of yours shall be accepted until you return it (the interest) to its owners.' Then he came to Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and told him his story. Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: 'Your way out is the verse from the Book of Allāh, Mighty and Great is He ! *To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allāh*'. Then he (the Imām) said: 'Admonition is repentance.' '' (*at-Tahdhīb*)

There is a tradition in *al-Kāfī* and *Man lā yaḥduruhu 'l-faqīh* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Every interest which people swallowed because of ignorance, and then they repented, it shall be accepted from them when the repentance is known from them.'' And he said: ''If a man inherits a property from his father, and he knows that that property includes interest, but it is mixed up with (the money of) trade, then it is lawful for him; so let him consume it. And if he recognizes something of it (interest) then he should keep his principal and return the excess.''

A tradition is narrated in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh* and *'Uyūnu 'l-akhbār* from ar-Riḍā (a.s.): ''It (interest) is a major sin, after explanation.'' And he said: ''And to treat it as a small matter is to enter into disbelief.''

The Imām was asked about a man who consumes interest thinking that it is lawful. He said: ''There is no harm for him in it until he takes it on purpose (i.e. knowing that it is unlawful). When he indulges in it on purpose, then he shall be (liable) to the place which Allāh has mentioned.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

It is reported in *al-Kāfī* and *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about the words of Allāh: *Allāh effaces interest, and He causes charities to grow. . . ,* and was told (by the asker): ''I have seen

(many a man) who swallows interest and his wealth increases.'' He (the Imām) said: ''What effacement could be more effective than that of the dirham of interest? It obliterates religion; and if he repented, his wealth would go and he would become poor.''

The author says: The tradition, as you see, explains effacement in terms of religious obliteration — he does not become owner of that property and he is not allowed to use it. Charity is just its opposite in these respects. This tradition does not go against the general meaning of effacement which we have written earlier.

'Alī (a.s.) said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has cursed five persons concerned with interest: the one who consumes (i.e. takes) it, the one who gives it to be consumed, its two witnesses and its writer.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: The same thing has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from the Holy Prophet through several chains.

There is a tradition in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Ayyāshī from al-Bāqir (a.s.) that he said: ''Allāh, High is He, has said: 'I have given (some) authority to others (i.e. angels etc.) about things, except charity, because I take hold of it with My (own) hand. So much so that a man or a woman gives half a date in alms, and I nurture it for him as one of you nurtures his calf and colt; until I shall leave (i.e., return) it on the Day of Resurrection (and it shall be) bigger than the (mountain) of Uḥud.' ''

The same book quotes 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (peace be on them both) narrating from the Prophet that he said: ''Verily, Allāh nurtures the alms for one of you, as one of you brings up his child; until he (the alms-giver) shall find it on the Day of Resurrection, and it shall be like Uḥud.''

The author says: The matter has been narrated also through a Sunnī chain from many companions like Abū Hurayrah, 'Ā'ishah, Ibn 'Umar, Abū Barzah al-Aslamī, all from the Prophet.

It is written in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī that when Allāh sent down (the verse): *Those who swallow down interest . . . ,* Khālid ibn al-Walīd stood up before the Messenger of Allāh and said: ''O Messenger of Allāh! My father lent (money) with interest in the (tribe of) Thaqīf, and he told me at the time of his death to collect it. Thereupon Allāh revealed: *O you who believe! fear Allāh and forgo what remains* (due)

from it. . .''

The author says: Nearly the same thing has been narrated in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* from al-Bāqir (a.s.)

as-Suddī and 'Ikrimah have said: (This verse) was revealed about the balance of interest due to al-'Abbās and Khālid ibn al-Walīd; they were partners in pre-Islamic days, they lent with interest to some people of Banū 'Amr ibn 'Umayr, a clan of the (tribe of) Thaqīf. Then came Islam, and they had great riches in interest. Thereupon, Allāh revealed this verse. So the Prophet said: ''Now, surely every interest of the pre-Islamic days is waived, and the first interest which I waive is that of al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib; and all the blood of pre-Islamic days is waived, and the first blood which I waive is that of Rabī'ah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib'' (He was given to Banū Layth for suckling and was killed by Banū Hudhayl.) (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: This has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from as-Suddī. But there the name of Khālid is not mentioned openly. It says that it was revealed about al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and a man from Banū al-Mughīrah.

Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī (who has said that it is correct), an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from 'Amr ibn al-Aḥwaṣ that he participated in the last pilgrimage with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); so he (the Messenger of Allāh) said: ''Now surely every interest of the days of ignorance is waived, you shall have your capital, neither shall you deal unjustly, nor shall you be dealt with unjustly.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions with a similar meaning. What is deduced from Shī'ah and Sunnī traditions is that the verse was revealed about some interest money which Banū al-Mughīrah had due from Thaqīf; and they used to lend money to them with interest in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. When Islam came, Banū al-Mughīrah demanded from Thaqīf the balance which was due; they refused to pay (interest) because Islam had waived it. Their case was put before the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); then this verse was revealed.

It supports what we have mentioned in the General Comment that interest was prohibited in Islam long before these verses were revealed;

and that the aim of these verses was to emphasize that prohibition.

With this background, those few traditions which say that the law prohibiting interest was revealed in the last days of the Apostle of Allāh, and that he died before he could explain the rules concerning interest are not worthy of interest. Such traditions are reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr,* through Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Marduwayh from ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab that he said in a lecture ‘‘Among the last verses to be revealed was that of interest; and the Apostle of Allāh died and he had not explained it to us. Therefore, leave what seems doubtful to you for what is not doubtful to you.’’

Moreover, it is the *madhhab* of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that Allāh did not give death to His Prophet until He had legislated all that was needed by people for their religious affairs, and until His Prophet had explained it all to his people.

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* through several chains from Ibn ‘Abbās, as-Suddī, ‘Atiyyah al-‘Awfī, Abū Ṣāliḥ and Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr that the last verse to be revealed was: *And fear the day in which . . . shall not be dealt with unjustly.*

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘Much stress was laid on the prohibition of interest so that people should not refrain from doing good through loan or charity.’’ (*Majma‘u 'l-bayān*)

The same book narrates from ‘Alī (a.s.): ‘‘When Allāh intends to destroy a town, interest appears among them.’’

The author says: The earlier comments make the meanings of these traditions clear.

The author of *Majma‘u 'l-bayān* writes under the verse, ‘‘And if (the debtor) is in straitened circumstances, then let there be respite until (he is in) ease’’: ‘‘There is a difference of opinion regarding the definition of straitened circumstances. And it has been narrated from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: ‘It is when he does not have anything in excess of his own sustenance and that of his dependants, in the sense of economics.’ . . . to give respite to a poor man is compulsory in every religion, as is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk and al-Ḥasan; and similar traditions have come from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillāh (peace be upon them both). al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘Until (he is in) ease’, means, until his report reaches the Imam; then the Imām shall repay (on his behalf) out of

the share of 'those in debt', provided he had spent that loan on lawful expenses.''

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The Messenger of Allāh ascended the pulpit one day; he thanked Allāh and praised Him and asked for His blessings on His prophets, and then said: 'O people! he who is present should convey (it) to him who is absent. Now, whoever gives respite to a poor person, Allāh shall credit him every day with charity equal to his money (given in loan), until he recovers it.' '' Then Abū 'Abdillāh (aṣ-Ṣādiq - a.s.) said: *''And if* (the debtor) *is in straitened circumstances, then let there be respite until* (he is in) *ease; and that you remit* (it) *as alms is better for you, if you knew* that he is in straitened circumstances, then give him your money (principle) as alms, as it is better for you.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: This tradition explains the divine words ''if you knew''; and its other meaning has been mentioned earlier. The tradition on this and related subjects are very numerous; and the reader is advised to refer to the chapters concerning loans in the books of Islamic jurisprudence.

ABOUT INTEREST

It has been repeatedly mentioned that man has only one aim in sight when he does any work. That aim is to gain perfection in his life; in other words, to fulfil his physical and material needs. He does a work and obtains the necessities of life. Thus, he is the rightful owner of his work and of the things made by him. The word ''work'' is used here with a comprehensive meaning; it includes his actions and reactions as well as every relationship with other things which produces an effect on them, and which society acknowledges. He acquires and reserves for himself what effect he has produced on a matter, and believes that it is his lawful property; the sane persons of society also accept his owner-ship of that item.

But it was not possible for him to fulfil all his needs by his own labour. This led to mutual co-operation in society; it became inevitable for one to benefit from others' endeavours. This resulted in the mutual

exchange of properties. It became customary that a man worked in one or a more vocations, and produced many necessary items, then kept for himself according to his needs, and exchanged the excess items for what he needed from another man's products. This was the foundation of mutual dealing and barter.

Now, it was found that most of the products and items were totally different from each other; many were of completely different species; some were in great demand while others were not needed so frequently; one thing was found in large quantity while the other was rare, and so on. This created difficulties in bartering. Fruit is used for eating, a donkey for carrying loads, water for satisfying the thirst, and pearls and gems for jewelry, and so on. All these things have different values as necessities of life, and are totally unrelated to each other. How can they be exchanged with justice and fairness?

Thus arose the need to fix the value of a thing in terms of money. They took a rare item, like gold, and turned it into a standard by which the value of other products and goods could be decided. They also fixed units of length, mass and weight, for example, the metre, the litre and the kilogram to measure and weigh goods. In this way, confusion and complication was removed, and the worth of a thing in relation to other things could be decided by comparing both with gold. Let us say that a carat of diamond is equal to four dinars, and a certain heap of wheat flour is equal to one-tenth of a dinar. Now we can easily decide that a carat of diamond is equal to forty such heaps of wheat flour.

Gradually, it was found more practicable to make coins of some other metals also, like siliver, copper, bronze and nickel; finally currency notes made of paper came into being. The details about this may be found in books on economics.

Now the road of trade and commerce was open. Some people took for themselves the occupation of keeping various commodities with them and exchanging them for money or other goods. Their purpose was to earn profit by this exchange. The profit represented the extra price obtained from the customer for the goods sold.

Then a time came when people began treating money as though it was all that was needed for life. The price almost usurped the place of the commodity itself. It was because by acquiring money man could acquire

all the necessities of life.

Some people treated it as a commodity to be sold and purchased. These people are called money-changers. They change foreign and local currencies and earn profit by this transaction.

This is an outline of the story of trade and money. It will be seen from above that its basic element is bartering one thing for another, because someone needed one thing more than another; or exchanging an item for its price, because one needs the profit. In all these cases, the thing given is always different from the thing received in exchange. It is this difference upon which commercial life is based.

So far as exchanging a commodity for the same type of commodity (e.g. wheat for wheat) is concerned, it could be either without any increase or with increase. If it is without increase (e.g. lending money or food grain and taking it back without any increase), then it is a reasonable dealing, which sometimes becomes necessary; it corrects the imbalance of society, fulfils the needs of the poor, and no harm comes out of it. But if it is with increase on the side of repayment, then it is interest. Now, let us see what its effect can be.

The basic element of interest is the exchange of one commodity for the same commodity with an increase in repayment; for example, lending ten dirhams for a fixed time and taking back twelve dirhams; or selling an item on credit at ten dirhams and recovering twelve at the end of the stipulated term. Why does a buyer or debtor take any money or commodity on loan? Because his needs are greater than his earnings. Let us say that he earns ten dirhams daily, while his necessities cost him twenty. He is obliged on the first day to take a loan of ten dirhams, with interest of two dirhams. On the second day, he has to pay two dirhams of interest from his earnings of ten; now he is left with eight dirhams only, so he has to take another loan of twelve dirhams with larger interest. This is the beginning of his ruin. Day by day, ever larger portions of his earnings go in paying ever-increasing interest, until a day comes when the interest eats up his total earnings; he pays ten in interest and is left without a single dirham to meet his needs. It is sheer destruction of life and livelihood.

And the lender gets back his own ten, plus the ten of the debtor; he gets the whole twenty. The wealth of both sides accumulates on one side,

while the other side is left in the lurch with-out any money.[1]

In this way, interest leads to the destruction of the poor section of society, and all wealth gravitates towards the already wealthy group. Because of this financial strength, they become arrogant, they manipulate the money market, and rule over people's properties, honour and lives in any way they wish and desire (exploitation of others is, after all, ingrained in human nature). On the other hand, the deprived and exploited people try their best to protect themselves from this humiliation, and to free themselves from the domination and exploitation by wealthy persons; they use all means of defence and offence available to them. As a result of this confrontation, chaos appears on the earth, and disorder and violence spread in society. Humanity races towards extinction and civilization towards obliteration.

This is apart from the periodic loss of capital — not every debtor is able, or willing, to pay the accumulated principal plus interest.

This much about loans which rich people give to poor persons. In other cases of interest, for example, commercial loans given by banks to traders to increase their trade, the defects are not so transparent. But their least harm. is that they gradually pull wealth to those trading houses by increasing their capital far in excess of their actual capacity and strength. Then those commercial concerns try to compete with each other; the more powerful ones, swallow up the weaker ones. In this manner, weaker traders go out of business; the list of needy persons becomes longer and longer; and wealth concentrates in a few houses.

The scholars of economics must admit that the only reason why communism was started, and why socialism spread so much, was the preposterous and exorbitant accumulation of wealth withint a few houses,

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[1] This is now happening on a much larger scale in dealings between developed and developing nations. The former started giving interest-bearing loans to the latter, to ''help'' them out of their troubles. (Of course, this ''generosity'' had many strings attached to it; but that is not our concern here.) Every poor nation fell into this trap. Many such loans accumulated; and after a short respite the interest on them began falling due in rapid succession. Many nations, unable to meet their obligations, took further loans to repay the interest due. It is an open secret that many a poor nation has already been swallowed up to its neck in this quicksand.

while the overwhelming majority was deprived of the bare necessities of life. The reader should be made aware of an interesting phenomenon. The wealthy minority always swore in the name of civilization, justice and freedom; they preached equality and human rights. They said with their mouths what was not in their hearts. They used words for totally opposite ideas. By this method, they hoped to keep the common people, the exploited masses, in their place, to keep them lulled in their servitude, so that they might go on oppressing them more and more. But very soon it boomeranged back to them; the cunning phrases of the exploiters came back to haunt them; they planned, and Allāh also planned, and Allāh is the best of planners; thus evil was the end of those who did evil.

And only Allāh knows what the future holds for this troubled humanity.

Another evil effect of interest springs from the facility it provides for accumulating wealth in the hands of a few. Huge amounts of money, in millions and billions, are kept idle in the strong rooms of banks. Some people enjoy extravagant living and inexhaustible luxuries, idling their times on the thrones of their financial empires; at the same time, there are others who spend their lives in idleness, but for a totally different reason; these hungry masses remain idle, because they are unemployed. One group does not work because of its superabundant treasures; the other group does not work because it is deprived of employment. Both become idle — an affront to human nature which says that man must work for his livelihood.

ANOTHER DISCOURSE ABOUT INTEREST

al-Ghazālī has written in his *Iḥyā'u 'l-'ulūm* (chapter of ''Thanks'') as follows:

''One of the bounties of Allāh is the creation of the dirham and the dīnār; and the world cannot do without them. They are two metals, which are of no use in themselves; still mankind depends upon them. Every man needs a multitude of items like food, clothing and various other necessities. Sometimes he does not have what he needs, and has in his hands what is not needed by him. For example, he has in his possession a

quantity of saffron, but he is in need of a camel to ride. And someone else has a camel which he has no use of, and he needs saffron. Both should exchange their properties. But it is necessary to estimate the worth of the things so changed. Naturally, the owner of the camel will not give away his camel in lieu of a small quantity of saffron. And there is no correlation between camel and saffron, so that it can be said that the camel owner should be given saffron, for example, equal in weight to the camel. The same difficulty would arise if one wanted to purchase a house with cloth, or flour with a donkey. These things have no correlation with each other. Exchange would be extremely difficult in this way.

‘‘These unrelated and dissimilar items neeed an intermediary who can decide between them with justice, and can fix each item’s place, worth and rank. By this assignment of ranks, it would be known which things are equal and which are unequal.

‘‘Accordingly, Allāh created the dirham and the dinar as two judges for, and intermediaries between, properties, so that properties might be measured by them. Now, it can be said that this camel is worth one hundred dīnārs, and this much saffron is equal to one hundred dīnārs, therefore, this camel is equal in value to this amount of saffron.

‘‘This comparison by means of the two metals is possible because they are not wanted in themselves. If they, like other commodities, were wanted in themselves, somebody would have needed them and another could have refused to accept them if he had no use of them at that actual time. And the whole system would have been disturbed. Therefore, Allāh created them to circulate in the hands of people, and to decide between properties with justice.

‘‘There was also another benefit: One may acquire all things through the dirham and the dīnār. It is because they are precious items in themselves, and they are of no use in themselves. Their relationship with all other commodities is the same. Therefore, for anyone who owns them, it is as though he owns everything. This benefit is not found in other thing. A man who owns a cloth has only that cloth; if he needs food, he cannot be sure that the owner of the food will accept his cloth in exchange; perhaps that man needs a horse; why should he take cloth? Hence the need of a thing which in appearance is nothing, and in reality is everything.

‘‘Only that thing which has no particular form of its own can have an equal relation to various different things. A mirror has no colour of its own, therefore it reflects every colour which comes before it; prepositions have no independent meaning of their own, so they make other words’ meanings clear. Likewise coins serve no purpose on their own, that is why all purposes are served through them. This is the second benefit; there are other benefits also; but they are not mentioned *here* for the sake of brevity.’’

After this al-Ghazālī expresses his views, the gist of which is as follows:

‘‘As these two coins are the bounties of Allāh (because of the benefits mentioned above) anyone who uses them in a way that nullifies their originally intended benefits is guilty of ingratitude against the bounties of Allāh.’’

After this, he infers the reasons for many laws from his above-mentioned principle:

According to him ‘‘it is because of this principle that the hoarding of the dirham and the dīnār is prohibited, as this is injustice and nullifies their benefit. Hoarding them is like putting a judge in prison — it prevents him from discharging his duties, and creates disorder in society.’’

He also says: ‘‘It is because of this reason that one is not allowed to make or use pots of gold or silver. Using them as pots turns them into things that are wanted for their own sake, while they have been created only as a means to acquire other things. This also is injustice; it is like forcing a judge to work as a weaver, to collect levies or to do other such jobs which are done by lowly people.’’

And he has justified the prohibition of interest in the dirham and the dīnār by the same principle. According to him, it is injustice and ingratitude against the bounties of Allāh, because gold and silver have been created for the sake of other things, not for their own, as there is no need which can be fulfilled by gold and silver in the same way as gold and silver.

This was, in short, al-Ghazālī’s explanation. But he seems confused in his principle, as well as in the reasons by which he has inferred various rules from that principle.

First: He says that gold and silver are not sought for their own sake. If so, then how could they determine the value of other things? The hand is used to measure the lengths of things. How is that done? By the length of the hand itself. A piece of iron is used to determine the weight of a thing. How is it done? By the weight of the iron itself. If gold and silver were unwanted in themselves, how could they decide the worth, that is, ‘‘wantedness’’, of other things?

Further, he admits that they are precious items in themselves. How can they be precious in themselves unless they are wanted for their own sake? How can a thing be called ‘‘precious’’ if it is not wanted?

Moreover, if they were created only as a means to acquire other things, then there should be no difference between gold and silver in worth and prestige. But the fact is otherwise. According to al-Ghazālī’s principle, both metals should be equal in value!

Second: The reason why the hoarding of gold and silver is prohibited is not that which al-Ghazālī has thought — that a hoarder treats them as though they were wanted for their own sake. The real reason has been mentioned in the words of Allāh: *And* (as for) *those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allāh’s way, announce to them a painful chastisement* (9:34). It is clear that their hoarding is prohibited because it deprives the poor of their dues; and also because they are needed for keeping the cycle of work, payment and exchange in motion.

Third: The reason which he has ascribed to the prohibition of making and using pots of gold or silver, that it is injustice and ingratitude, is equally applicable to ornaments made of gold and silver, as well as to money changing. And these things have not been prohibited by the *sharī‘ah,* nor are they considered by religion as injustice or ingratitude.

Fourth: What he has written as the reason for the prohibition of interest in gold and silver neither includes all cases of interest nor excludes cases of ‘‘non-interest’’. If the reason given by him, that is, injustice and ingratitude, were the real reason, it would have prohibited even money-changing and foreign exchange, just like those financial dealings in which interest is involved. And it would not have prevented interest in other things which are measured or weighed, like wheat and milk.

Therefore, his whole explanation is wrong in basic principle as well as in the other topics based on that principle.

The real reason for the prohibition, which Allāh has mentioned, fits perfectly the explanation given before by us: that the excess amount is taken without giving anything in exchange. Allāh says: *And whatever you lay out as interest, so that it may increase in the properties of men, it shall not increase with Allāh; and whatever you give in charity, desiring Allāh's pleasure — it is these that shall get manifold* (30:39). This verse shows that interest increases ''in the properties of men''; in other words, it increases by adding to itself parts of other people's properties, as a seed grows by nourishing itself on earth, and adding parts of the earth to itself. Likewise, interest grows and grows while other people's properties go on decreasing until they are totally expended.

It is this Qur'ānic reason which we have described earlier.

Also, look at the words of Allāh, ''and if you repent, then you shall have your capital; neither shall you deal unjustly, nor shall you be dealt with unjustly''. The verse says that you shall not deal with people unjustly, nor shall you be dealt with unjustly by the people or by Allāh. It means that interest is injustice against the people.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُبْ
بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ
وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئاً فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي
عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهاً أَوْ ضَعِيفاً أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ
وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ
مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى وَلَا
يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيراً أَوْ كَبِيراً إِلَى
أَجَلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَى أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ
تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا
وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللهُ وَاللهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ - ٢٨٢ . وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ
وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِباً فَرِهَانٌ مَقْبُوضَةٌ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضاً فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي اؤْتُمِنَ
أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ - ٢٨٣ .

O you who believe! when you deal with each other in contracting a loan for a fixed time, then write it down; and let a scribe write it down between you with justice; and the scribe should not refuse to write as Allāh has taught him, so he should write; and let him who owes the debt dictate, and he should fear Allāh, his Lord, and not diminish anything from it, but if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding, or weak, or (if) *he is not able to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate with justice; and call in to witness from among your men two witnesses; but if there are not two men, then one man and two women from among those whom you approve of the*

witnesses, so that if one of the two errs, the (second) *one of the two may remind the other; and the witnesses should not refuse when they are summoned; and disdain not of writing it* (whether it is) *small or large, with its fixed time, this is more equitable with Allāh and assures greater accuracy in testimony, and the nearest* (way) *that you may not entertain doubts* (afterwards); *except when it is ready merchandise which you give and take among yourselves from hand to hand, then there is no blame on you in not writing it down; and have witnesses when you trade with one another; and let no harm be done to the scribe or to the witnesses; and if you do* (it) *then surely it will be a transgression in you, and fear Allāh; and Allāah teaches you, and Allāh knows all things* (282). *And if you are on a journey and you do not find a scribe, then* (there may be) *a security taken into possession; but if one of you trusts another, then he who is trusted should deliver his trust, and let him fear Allāh, his Lord; and do not conceal testimony, and whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful; and Allāh knows what you do* (283).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! when you deal with each other in contracting a loan . . . and Allāh knows all things: ''at-Tadāyun''* (التَّدَايُنْ) is to give a loan to another; *''al-imlāl''* (الإمْلاَلُ) and *''al-imlā' ''* (الإمْلاَءُ) both mean 'to dictate'; *''al-bakhs''* (البَخْسُ) is to diminish, to do justice; *''as-sa'mah''* (السَّأمَةُ) is to be fed up; to disdain; *''al-muḍārrah''* (المُضَآرَّةُ) on the paradigm of *''al-mufā'ilah''* (المُفَاعِلَةُ) from *''aḍ-ḍarar''* (الضَّرَرُ =harm) means to harm one another; *''al-fusūq''*(الفُسُوْقُ) is transgression, refusal to obey; *''ar-rihān''* (الرِّهَانُ) has also been recited as *ar-ruhun* (الرُّهُنُ), both are the plurals of *ar-rahn* (الرَّهْنُ = the thing mortgaged, pawned or deposited as security).

‘‘And let him who owes the debt dictate . . . but if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding . . .’’ The whole phrase ‘‘he who owes the debt’’ has been repeated here instead of using a pronoun. It was done to remove any possible misunderstanding, as a pronoun could easily be mistaken to refer to the ‘‘scribe’’ mentioned in the preceding sentence.

‘‘. . . or (if) he is not able to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate . . .’’ The manifest and separate pronoun *‘‘huwa’’* (هُوَ = translated here as ‘‘himself’’) has been included in the sentence to show that in this particular case the debtor and his guardian both have the right to dictate. In the first two situations, when the debtor is deficient in understanding or is weak (in body or mind), the guardian has total authority, and the debtor himself cannot deal in his own affairs. But in this third situation when the debtor is, for any reason, unable to dictate himself, then the guardian shall have joint authority to do so. Therefore, this pronoun has given the following meaning to the phrase: ‘‘what such a debtor himself can do, he should do it; but what he is unable to do, his guardian shall do it ’’.

‘‘ . . . so that if one of the two errs, the (second) one of the two may remind the other’’: In this sentence a word, *ḥadhar* (حَذَرَ) is understood before *an* (اَنْ); together they literally mean, ‘‘lest one of the two errs . . .’’; the words, ‘‘one of the two’’ have been repeated in this sentence. While at first glance it would appear that the second phrase could be replaced by a pronoun, the fact is that the two phrases do not have the same significance. The first phrase (*if one of the two errs*) refers to either of the two without pointing to a particular woman; the second phrase (*the one of the two may remind . . .*) points particularly to the second who has not erred. That is why we have added the word (second) in its translation.

‘‘And fear Allāh’’; The believers should guard themselves against disobeying the orders and prohibitions promulgated in this verse. ‘‘And Allāh teaches you’’; it is an independent sentence, not connected with the preceding one, ‘‘and fear Allāh’’. The sentence describes the grace of Allāh bestowed on the believers. In this respect it is like the words of Allāh in the verse of inheritance: *Allāh makes it clear to you lest you err* (4:176). Allāh in both these sentences shows that He has bestowed His bounties upon the believers by teaching them the rules of religion and by

instructing them as to what they were allowed to do and what not.

Some people have said that the sentence, ‘‘and fear Allāh, and Allāh teaches you’’, were connected to each other. According to them, they show that there is a relation of cause and effect between the two — when people fear Allāh then Allāh teaches them.

Comment: The principle mentioned above is correct in itself, and is supported by other verses of the Qur’ān and by traditions. But this verse has nothing to do with that principle. The second sentence begins with ‘‘and’’; if it had wanted to enunciate that principle, the word ‘‘and’’ would not have been there; the sentence would have been like this: ‘‘and fear Allāh, He will teach you’’. Moreover, the said interpretation is not supported by the context; if we accept it then the end of the verse will be quite irrelevant to the main topic of the verse.

The above-mentioned reconstruction of the verse gives us another argument against that interpretation. Had that meaning been correct, the divine name, Allāh, would not have been repeated in ‘‘and Allāh teaches you’’, a pronoun would have been more appropriate.

In these three consecutive short sentences, the divine name, Allāh, has been repeated three times. It was necessary in the first sentence, ‘‘and fear Allāh’’; it had to be repeated in ‘‘and Allāh teaches you’’, because it was an independent sentence; and in the last sentence, ‘‘and Allāh knows all things’’, the name gives the proof of this statement — He knows all things because He is Allāh.

The two verses contain nearly twenty basic rules concerning loan, mortgage, evidence, etc. There are numerous traditions about these and related topics. But the proper place to go into these details are the books of jurisprudence. Therefore, we shall not quote them here.

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لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللّٰهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٢٨٤).

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's; and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it, then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise whom He pleases; and Allāh is powerful over all things (284).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's:* Allāh is the Owner of all creation, whether it is in the heavens or in the earth. This declaration paves the way for the next sentence, ''and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it''. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; and among those things are you as well as your actions, and all that your souls have earned. Therefore, Allāh encompasses you and preserve your deeds; it makes no difference to Him whether your actions are manifest or hidden, He will call you to account for them.

It has been said that the heavens have an affinity with the mind's

faculties, psychological traits and spiritual characteristics. What is in our souls or minds is a part of what is in the heavens, and it belongs to Allāh. When the hidden traits and characteristics manifest themselves through the actions of the body; they become a part of what is in the earth, and that also belongs to Allāh. Thus, whatever is found in our minds, whether it is manifested or remains hidden, belongs to Allāh, and He will decide about it after calling us to account for it.

QUR'ĀN: *and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it: ''al-Ibdā' ''* (الإبْدَاءُ = to manifest) is opposite of *''al-ikhfā' ''* (الإخْفَاءُ = to hide).

''What is in your souls'' means ''what is settled in your minds''; it is the meaning that is understood by scholars of the language as well as the general public. It refers to traits and characteristics, whether good or bad, like belief and disbelief, love and hate, strength or weakness of the will, and so on. These traits may be manifest or hidden. They are manifested through the actions of body, which may be perceived by others and which prove the existence of those traits in the doer. One knows that but for those particular traits, for example, love or hate, belief or disbelief, inclination or repulsion, those deeds could not be done. In this manner, actions manifest the motives that are fixed in the minds of the doers.

Conversely, these traits may remain hidden if one does not do any action that could prove their existence in one's mind.

We have said above that ''what is in your souls'' means what is settled in your minds. It does not mean ineradicable and firmlyrooted characteristics; rather it refers to the substantial existence of such characteristics from which actions may emanate.

The two alternatives, ''whether you manifest . . .'' and ''hide it'', show that those characteristics are capable of being shown or hidden; it may be a well-ingrained trait or some appropriate psychological state. But it does not, and cannot, mean passing notions and transient ideas that invade one's mind without one's intention; for example, the mental image of a sin when one has no intention or inclination to do it. The words of the verse do not include such involuntary notions, because they are not ''settled'' in the mind, nor does any action emanate from them.

The verse, in short, says that mental states, the characteristics and traits settled in mind, are the basis of a man's actions, obedient as well as

disobedient; and Allāh will call man to account for them. In this respect, this verse has the same significance as the following verses:

Allāh will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned (2:225).

. . . his heart is surely sinful (2:283).

. . . surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that (17:36).

These verses prove that there are some conditions and characteristics of hearts, that is, minds, for which man will be called to account. The following verse also proves it:

Surely (as for) *those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter . . .* (24:19).

It shows that the chastisement shall be because of the ‘‘love’’ of circulating scandal; and love is a state of mind.

This is the apparent and clear meaning of this verse. It proves that man shall be called to account for what is settled in his mind, whether he hides it or shows it. But the verse is silent on the questions as to whether the chastisement in all cases — manifesting it or hiding it, acting according to one’s intention or not doing so, succeeding in the intended transgression or not succeeding — will be the same or different.

Most of the commentators have misunderstood the significance of the verse. They have thought that it is said that man will be asked about even a passing notion that invades the mind, even if it has not settled therein and even when it is beyond the control of a man. Holding a man responsible for such fleeting notions is, without doubt, imposing a duty beyond the limit of one’s ability. From this point on, these commentators have differed among themselves.

a) Some have admitted that Allāh might impose on a soul a duty beyond its furthest limit.

Others have tried to escape from this difficulty in various ways :

b) Some have accepted that the verse ordained for man what was in fact a duty beyond his ability. But, they claimed, it was abrogated by the sentence in the next verse: ‘‘Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability’’.

Comment: It has been clearly shown that the verse does not include such transitory ideas and notions. Therefore, the whole argument and interpretation is out of place. Moreover, imposing a duty beyond one's ability is, *ab initio*, against reason; Allāh cannot do so even for a single moment. He has declared that He never ordained anything in religion beyond our ability: . . . *and* (He) *did not lay upon you any hardship in religion* (22:78).

c) Some others said that the verse was connected with the preceding one, and that it speaks particularly about the hiding of testimony.

Comment: This restriction of meaning is clearly against the general nature of the verse.

d) Still others have said that it was restricted to the unbelievers. Only they shall be called to account for their fleeting fantasies.

Comment: This restriction too is against the generality of the verse.

e) Someone else has interpreted the verse in this way: If you manifest your hidden evil by committing transgression openly, or if you keep it hidden by committing sins secretly, in both cases Allāh will call you to account for it. According to this interpretation, the chastisement shall be, not for the ideas, but for the sins.

Comment: Such interpretation is totally against the apparent and clear meaning of the verse.

f) Yet others have said that ''what is in your souls'' means any kind of idea, whether fixed or otherwise. But ''Allāh will call you to account for it'' means ''Allāh will inform you of it''. According to this interpretation, the verse is similar to the verse: . . . *so He will inform you of what you did* (5:105). Whether we manifest such ideas and notions or hide them, Allāh will tell us about them on the Day of Resurrection.

Comment: This interpretation too, like the preceding one, is totally against the clear meaning of the verse.

QUR'ĀN: *then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise whom He pleases; and Allāh is powerful over all things:* The alternatives of ''forgiveness'' and ''chastisement'' give a hint that ''what is in your souls'' refers especially to evil thoughts and characteristics. Although ''forgiveness'' has also been used in the Qur'ān in a few such cases where no sin was involved, it is a very uncommon, indeed a rare, usage,

and there should be some strong reason and clear association before the word ‘‘forgiveness’’ is being diverted to such meaning.

‘‘And Allāh is powerful over all things’’: It gives the reason for the said forgiving and chastising; or it may show the reason for the whole verse.

TRADITIONS

It is narrated in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim from Abū Hurayrah that he said: ‘‘When the verse: *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's; and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it* was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) were very much perturbed. They came to the Messenger of Allāh and crouched down (before him) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! we were ordered to do what we were able to do — prayer, fasting, fighting and charity; but (now) Allāh has sent down this verse and it is beyond the extent of our ability.’ Thereupon, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Do you want to say as the people of the book before you said, ‘‘We hear and we disobey’’? Rather, you should say, ‘‘We hear and obey; our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave) and to Thee is (our) march.’’ ’ When they recited it, and their tongues had been subdued by it, Allāh immediately revealed: *The Apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and* (so do) *the believers . . . . and to Thee is* (our) *march.* When they did so, Allāh abrogated that (law) and revealed (the verse): *Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability . . .’’*

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* through Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd (in his *an-Nāsikh wa ’l-mansūkh*), Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Abū Hurayrah; and he has narrated another tradition with nearly the same meaning through several chains from Ibn ‘Abbās. And the abrogation has been narrated through several chains from other companions too, like Ibn Mas‘ūd and ‘Ā’ishah.

And it has been narrated from ar-Rabī‘ ibn Anas that the verse is

confirmed and unabrogated; and that ‘‘calling to account’’ means that Allāh will inform the servant, on the Day of Resurrection, about his deeds which he did in this world.

And it has been narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās through several chains that the verse is restricted to hiding and giving testimony. Accordingly, it is a confirmed verse, not abrogated.

And it has been narrated from ‘Ā’ishah that calling to account means the vexation and grief which a man feels when he intends to commit a sin and does not do it. This interpretation also treats the verse as confirmed and unabrogated.

And it has been narrated, through the chains of ‘Alī, from Ibn ‘Abbās about the words of Allāh: *and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it* (i.e. all your hidden and manifest affairs) *Allāh will call you to account for it,* that it is not abrogated. When Allāh gathers the creatures on the Day of Resurrection, He shall say: ‘‘I shall inform you of what you had hidden in your souls which my angels were not aware of.’’ Then, as for the believers, He shall tell them what they had imagined in their souls, and will forgive them. It is the word of Allāh: *Allāh will call you to account for it,* that is, will inform you. And as for the people of doubt and suspicion, He shall inform them of the denial of truth which they had kept hidden; and it is the word of Allāh: . . . *but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned.*

The author says: All these traditions, in spite of their mutual differences. have one thing in common: All are against the clear meaning of the Qur’ān, as explained earlier. The verse clearly says that men will be called to account for what their hearts have earned either directly or through other limbs; and there is no ‘‘earning’’ in passing notions and fleeting images which invade the mind. And testimony does not differ in this from other affairs, nor is there any difference in this matter between a believer and an unbeliever; and ‘‘calling to account’’ evidently does not mean informing someone of his transitory thoughts; it obviously means calling one to account for reward or punishment. This is the clear meaning of this verse, and all other verses confirm this meaning.

So far as those traditions are concerned which say that this verse was abrogated, there are several defects in them.

First: They are against the evident meaning of the Verse, as

explained above.

Second: They claim that there is no injustice in imposing a duty on a soul beyond the limits of its ability. Such a thing is evidently invalid, and especially so if it is attributed to Allāh. The subsequent abrogation cannot right this wrong, rather the incongruity will increase; the tradition says, ‘‘. . . when they recited it . . . Allāh abrogated . . . ’’, in other words, the order was abrogated before it was acted upon. And such an ab ogation is not acceptable in Islam.

Third: You will see in the commentary of the next verses that the sentence, ‘‘Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability’’, is not capable of abrogating any rule. That verse says that every soul is confronted by whatever it has earned, whether it finds it hard to bear or easy. If such a thing was imposed upon a soul which it did not have the strength to bear, or if such a burden was laid upon it as was laid upon those before us, it was all the result of what the soul had itself earned, because of its wrong choice; it should not blame anyone but itself. With this background, the sentence: *Allāh dos not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability:* looks like a parenthetic sentence, written to remove any postiihie misunderstanding.

Fourth: The subject of the next two verses has nothing to do with fleeting thoughts and transitory ideas ; nor do those verses stand face to face with this verse as an abrogating verse stands in relation to an abrogated one.

In short, the purpose of the next verses is quite different from the aim of this verse, as you will see.

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آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ
رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ـ ٢٨٥ . لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْساً إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ
وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن نَّسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ
عَلَيْنَا إِصْراً كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ
عَنَّا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ـ ٢٨٦ .

The Apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) *the believers; they all believe in Allāh and His angels and His books and His apostles; We make no difference between any of His apostles; and they say: ''We hear and obey; our Lord! Thy forgiveness* (do we crave), *and to Thee is* (our) *march''* (285). *Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it* is (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it* (the evil of) *what it has wrought; ''Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or do a mistake; Our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and forgive us and have mercy on us; Thou art our Guardian, so help us against the unbelieving people''* (286).

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

These are the last verses of this chapter. They summarize the details given in it, and recapitulate its main objective. As we mentioned at the beginning, the chapter aimed to show that it was an integral part of the worship of Allāh to believe in all that He sent to His creatures through His apostles, without making any difference between those apostles. It is this reality which is described in the first of these verses: ‘‘The Apostle believes . . . between any of His apostles’’.

The chapter then gives many stories of the Israelites: How Allāh bestowed upon them His countless bounties, like the Book, the prophethood, the kingdom, etc., and how they answered it with disobedience, rebellion, breach of covenant and even infidelity. It is these stories that are obliquely hinted at in the remaining part of the first and the whole of the second verse, where the believers are reported as saying ‘‘We hear and obey’’, and then they go on seeking the protection, forgiveness and help of Allāh.

Thus, these verses connect the end of the chapter with its beginning. The epilogue is a mirror of the prologue.

Allāh opens this chapter by describing the qualities that are essential for a God-fearing people, and without which they cannot discharge their duties towards their Lord. He says that His pious and God-fearing servants believe in the unseen, keep up prayer, spend out of the sustenance given to them by Allāh, believe in that which was revealed to the Apostle and to the previous apostles and are sure of the life hereafter (vide verses 2 — 5 of this chapter). Allāh guides them through the Qur’ān; and then He shows the contrast between them and the infidels and hypocrites.

Then the talk turns to the affairs of the people of the Book and especially the Jews. It explains how Allāh, in His grace, guided them, and exalted them with His bounties and favours. And what was their response to all those favours? They became arrogant, disobeyed the commandments of Allāh, and repaid His bounties with ingratitude; they stood against Allāh and His apostles, bore malice against His angels, and made differences between one apostle and the other, and one book and the other. As a result, Allāh laid on them heavy burdens, like the

order to kill their own people; and imposed upon them that which they had no strength to bear, like turning them into apes, and sending lightening and plague from the sky on them.

After going into all these details, Allāh recounts in these two verses the good attributes of the Apostle and the believers who have followed him; He shows that their condition is in clear contrast with that of the people of the Book. They have responded to the divine bounties and guidance with submission and obedience; they believe in Allāh, His angels, His books and His apostles, without making any difference between any of the apostles. And they know their own limitations as powerless mortals, and recognize the all-pervasive power of Allāh. Although they have unconditionally submitted to the Caller towards the truth, they confess that they cannot do justice to that Call because of their inherent weakness and ignorance. They are afraid that they may transgress the limit by forgetfulness or mistake, or that they may fall short in their duties of divine worship; they are worried lest a sinful act puts them in disgrace, as happened with the people of the Book before them. Therefore, they beseech the All-merciful Lord and pray to Him not to punish them if they forget or make a mistake, not to lay on them a burden and not to impose upon them that which they have not the strength to bear; they entreat Him to pardon them, to forgive their mistakes and to have mercy on them, and to help them against the unbelieving people.

This is the true place of these two verses in the scheme of this chapter; they are a sort of resume of the chapter. This observation should be enough to further repudiate the claims of the commentators:

a) that these verses were connected with the preceding one: ‘‘and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it’’;

b) that this preceding verse imposed a duty upon every soul beyond the limit of its ability;

c) that the first of these verses, ‘‘The Apostle believes . . . and to Thee is (our) march’’, describes how the companions submitted to, and accepted, this imposition of duty beyond the limit of their ability;

d) And that the second of these verses, ‘‘Allāh does not impose . . . help us against the unbelieving people’’, abrogated that verse which

imposed such duty.

Moreover, our explanation is in perfect harmony with the reported ‘‘reason of revelation’’ of this chapter, that it was the first chapter revealed at Medina. The Prophet emigrated to Medina, and settled therein; the Medinite believers, that is, the Helpers (*anṣār*), eagerly accepted the divine religion, and stood up to help the Apostle of Allāh with their properties and lives; the Emigrant believers (*muhājirūn*) abandoned their properties and homes, and left their families and children in the cause of Islam, and came to Medina to remain with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). That was indeed the time when Allāh should have praised them for their answering the Call of His Prophet with acceptance and obedience, and thanked them for their submission.

The last sentence ‘‘Thou art our Guardian, so help us against the unbelieving people’’ also indicates that this prayer was at a time when Islam had begun its march forward, and when there was danger of attack from the unbelievers.

This verse contains wonders of elocution; there is generality followed by specification, and brevity by amplification; it shows the servants of Allāh the perfect way of submission and servitude; and, in short, contains all the basic elements of perfection and felicity.

COMMENTARY

QUR’ĀN: *The Apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and* (so do) *the believers;* This makes known the belief of the Apostle and the believers. The Apostle has been mentioned separately as the one who believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord; then the believers have been joined to him in this virtue; it has been done to maintain the dignity of the Apostle. It is the usual style of the Qur’ān: On such occasions, it first mentions the name of the Apostle separately, and thereafter the believers are joined to him. Look, for example, at following verses: . . . *then Allāh sent down His tranquillity on His Apostle and on the believers* (48:26); . . . *on the day on which Allāh will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him* . . . (66:8).

QUR’ĀN: *they all believe in Allāh and His angels and His books and His*

apostles: This specifies the generality of the preceding sentence: ‘‘What has been revealed’’ to the Messenger of Allāh demands belief in Allāh and acceptance of the truth of the books and apostles and angels who are Allāh’s honoured servants. Whoever believes in what has been revealed to the Messenger of Allāh must believe in all those things, in a suitable manner.

QUR’ĀN: *We make no difference between any of His apostles:* It is the quotation of the believers’ saying, without using the introductory verb, ‘‘They said’’. We have explained in the commentary of verse 2:127 (*And when Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl were raising the foundations of the House; ‘‘Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing’’*) the general reason for this type of quotation, and how it is one of the most elegant styles of the Qur’ān. Apart from that basic reason of portraying the speakers before the eyes and ears of the imagination there was in this case one particular reason for omission of the words ‘They said’: this speech depicts the believers’ state of mind; it does not describe their verbal declaration. Even if we suppose that they actually uttered these words, each of them must have done so individually and in his heart; they never said it jointly and together by their tongues. It was only their shared faith that announced this belief, not in words but in their state of minds, which spoke louder than the words.

This verse quotes two sayings of the believers, one after another, but with different styles: ‘‘We make no difference . . .’’ is without the words ‘They said’; then the sentence is followed immediately by, ‘‘and they say: ‘We hear and obey . . .’ ’’ which, as we see, is introduced with, ‘‘they say’’. Yet both are the believers’ sayings when they answered the Call of the Prophet. The reason for this difference is that the first sentence describes the state of their minds, while the second was actually uttered by them in words.

The verse begins by describing the belief of all the believers, ‘‘everyone of them’’ taken separately. Then it turns to plural verbs and pronouns (*We make no difference* . . .), and it continues upto the end. What was done in this respect by the people of the Book was done by their whole of their nations. The Jews made a difference between Mūsā on the one hand, and ‘Īsā and Muḥammad on the other; the Christians made a difference between Mūsā and ‘Īsā on one hand, and Muḥammad on the other. Thus they became divided into many groups and sects,

although Allāh had created them one people. Also, they were chastised and heavy burdens were imposed on the whole of their groups jointly, not separately. And the prayer at the end of the verse 'to be helped against the unbelieving people' was, likewise, a collective affair. Therefore, all these things demanded plural words. In contrast to this, ''belief'' is a personal and individual matter, and it was appropriate to describe it in an individualistic style and a singular number.

QUR'ĀN: *And they say: ''We hear and obey; Our Lord! Thy forgiveness* (do we crave), *and to Thee is* (our) *march'':* ''We hear and obey'' is not information; it is the declaration of their submission to the divine command. To hear allegorically means to accept and believe in; to obey is used for complying with order. Together these two words point to the acceptance of the call through believing with the heart and doing one's duty with the body. Thus hearing and obeying refer to perfect belief.

Their declaration to hear and obey is, thus, fulfilment of the rights Allāh has on His servants; it is the sum total of the duties that Allāh has imposed upon them: to hear and to obey. It is the ''worship'' mentioned in the following verses : *And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me. I do not desire from them any sustenance and I do not desire that they should feed Me* (51:56 — 57); *Did I not enjoin you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely, he is you open enemy, and that you should worship Me; this is the right way* (36:60 — 61).

And Allāh has decreed on His Own Self a right for His servants, in consideration of the above-mentioned duty imposed on them, that is, forgiveness. It is a thing which nobody can do without — right from the apostles and the prophets to an ordinary believers. Allāh promised them that He would forgive them if they obeyed and worshipped Him. This promise was the first thing ordained when the *sharī'ah* was given to Adam: *We said: Get down you therefrom all together; and when there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve* (2:38). And it is what forgiveness means.

The believers said ''We hear and obey''; their declaration of faith and obedience was unconditional, they did what was expected of them

about the rights of their Lord. Then they asked the Lord to bestow upon them His promised grace, that is, forgiveness. They said: ‘‘Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is (our) march.’’ *‘‘al-Maghfirah’’* (المَغْفِرَةُ) , and *al-ghufrān* (الغُفْرَانُ), both of which are translated as ‘‘forgiveness’’, literally mean ‘‘to cover’’. When Allāh forgives the sin of a servant, the due punishment is averted from him; in other words, Allāh covers and hides his shortcomings. This grace will be bestowed upon the servant when he reaches His Lord. That is why they said, soon after praying for forgiveness, ‘‘and to Thee is (our) march.’’

QUR’ĀN: *Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it* (the evil of) *what it has wrought: ‘‘al-Wus‘ ’’* (الوُسْعُ) is ability and power. Originally, the word was used for dimension, to show the area or capacity of a place or receptacle; then the power of man was thought of as a receptacle from which his actions come forth. A man has the ability to do a certain task; it is as though the said task is accomodated in his ability. On the other hand, a task which he cannot do is too great for his power and ability. In this way, the word ‘dimension’ came to mean power and ability.

As mentioned above, it is the sum total of the rights of Allāh on man that he should hear and obey. Obviously, man can say ‘‘I hear’’ only about that which he can understand; how can he answer by hearing and accepting what he cannot understand? Also, he can say ‘‘I obey’’ only about that which can be performed by his faculties and organs directly or through some tools. Obedience means that man follows the given order, and his faculties and organs are actuated to perform accordingly. The question of obedience does not arise about things that cannot be done; for example, if one is told to hear by his eyes, or to sit in two rooms at the same time, or that one should be born from his parents a second time. No such order can be given by any sane person. When the believers answer the Call of religion with hearing and obedience, it means that the Call is about such things that are within their power and ability; and it is these things which man obeys or disobeys, earning for himself what will benefit him or harm him. The ‘‘earning’’, mentioned in this verse, is the best proof to show that what man earns, he earns through his ability and power.

The words of Allāh ‘‘Allāh does not impose upon any soul . . .’’ describe the divinely established system that Allāh does not impose upon His servants what is beyond their power; for example, He does not tell them to believe in that which is beyond their understanding; nor does He ordain for them a duty which they cannot do. This is, also, the custom of all sane persons. It is a sentence that is neither more nor less than the believers’ declaration ‘‘We hear and obey’’; it agrees with it perfectly.

This sentence, that is, ‘‘Allāh does not impose upon any soul . . .’’, is in perfect harmony with the preceding and the following sentences. It is related to the preceding one, as it shows that Allāh does not impose any duty except that which the servants can hear and obey, that is, which is within their ability and power.

And it is related to the following sentences, as it shows that what the Apostle and the believers prayed for — that Allāh should not punish them if they forget or do a mistake, and should not lay on them burden as He laid on past nations, and should not impose upon them anything which they do not have strength to bear — was not an imposition beyond the extent of their ability, although such things, if imposed, could cause hardship. When Allāh imposes upon a group that which they have not the strength to bear, it is not the imposition of a duty; it is the imposition of a punishment for their transgression and rebellion.

Forgetfulness and committing mistakes, *per se,* are beyond man’s power; but, more often than not, it is man himself who paves the way for them. It is possible to prevent these two (forgetfulness and erring) by desisting from those things which cause them. It is especially true in cases where one forgets or commits a mistake because of his wrong choice.

The same may be said about laying on one a burden like that which was laid upon previous people. It refers to the cases in which Allāh imposed hard rules in place of easy ones, when those people went against those easy rules. It was not the unwarrantable imposition of duty beyond one’s ability; it was brough upon them by those people themselves because of their wrong choice. And such punishing rules are not bad in law.

QUR’ĀN: *Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or do a mistake.* They first said, ‘‘We hear and obey’’ which showed their

unconditional surrender and obedience. Then they looked at themselves and became aware of their intrinsically weak and imperfect being. Also, they remembered what had happened to previous nations. This prompted them to beseech their Lord for mercy, and they prayed to Him not to take them to task as He had done with past people. They sought His protection because Allāh had taught them that there was no power or strength except from Allāh, and that nothing can save from Allāh's displeasure except His mercy.

Why did the Apostle prayed to Allāh in these words when he was sinless and protected from mistake and forgetfulness? He did so because his sinlessness had come from Allāh; he was protected from mistake and forgetfulness by Allāh's protection. Therefore, it was quite in order for him to include himself in the group of believers to ask from his Lord what he knew was a grace of the Lord.

QUR'ĀN: *Our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us: ''al-Iṣr''* (الاصْرُ = burden) is also interpreted as detaining a thing by force. This is not very far from the first meaning: If a thing is confined and detained forcefully it puts a heavy burden on it.

''Those before us'' refers to the people of the Book and especially the Jews, because this chapter describes many strories about them; and because the seventh chapter, *inter alia,* refers to the Apostle of Islam in these words: . . . *and removes from them* (the people of Torah and Injīl) *their burden and the shackles which were upon them* . . . (7:157).

QUR'ĀN: *Our Lord! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear:* It does not refer to unbearable rules of the *sharī'ah,* because reason does not allow such rules, and Allāh has Himself said that He does not impose any duty beyond one's limit of ability; and the words of the believers ''We hear and obey'' show that Allāh's commandments are within their ability to understand and act.

This sentence in fact refers to severe punishments meted out to previous peoples — the imposition of retaliatory hard rules, sending upon them severe chastisements or transforming them into animals or insects.

QUR'ĀN: *And pardon us and forgive us and have mercy on us: ''al-'Afw''* (العَفْوُ) is to erase the signs of a thing; *al-maghfirah* is to cover it ; *''ar-raḥmah''* (الرَّحْمَةُ) is mercy. From the linguistic point of view, the three sentences proceed from branch to root and from particular to

general. The believers beseech Allāh first to erase and eradicate the sign of their sin (by removing its due punishment from them) , then they ask Him to cover and hide the sin (by letting all concerned forget about it completely); lastly they crave for His mercy that will cover the sin and make them worthy of of His grace.

The three sentences are in conjunction with the previous ones: ‘‘Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or do a mistake . . .’’ The context shows that the pardon, forgiveness and mercy asked for are in connection with such sins which they might commit by forgetfulness or mistake. Therefore, the forgiveness asked for in this verse is in a particular context; it is not like the forgiveness aked for in the previous verse, ‘‘Thy forgiveness (do we crave) ’’, which is an unrestricted and unconditional forgiveness in consideration of the believers’ unrestricted and unconditional acceptance of the Call.

It is clear from the above that there is no repetition of the prayer of forgiveness, because both are in separate contexts.

In these prayers the word ‘‘Lord’’ has been repeated four times. This was done to invoke the divine mercy. The name ‘‘Lord’’ by contrast, hints to the servitude and total dependence of the beseecher.

QUR’ĀN: *Thou art our Guardian, so help us against the unbelieving people:* It is an independent sentence and a separate prayer. *‘‘al-Mawlā’’* (المَوْلي) means ‘helper’ — not any helper, but that one who looks after the affairs of the helped one. The root word is *al-wilāyah* (الولايَةُ = to govern, to rule, to take charge of). Allāh is the Ruler of the believers; therefore, He is their Guardian in all their affairs. Allāh says: . . . *and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers* (3:68); *That is because Allāh is the Master of those who believe, and because the unbelievers have no master for them* (47:11).

This prayer of theirs shows that their only desire, after hearing and obeying the basic religion, was to spread the true faith and to fight in the way of Allāh to establish the word of truth, so that all the nations could unite in that cause. Allāh says: *Say: ‘‘This is my way: I invite you unto Allāh; with clear sight* (are) *I and he who follows me; and glory be to Allāh, and I am not of the polytheists’’* (12:108). To call to the faith of monotheism is the way of true religion. It involves one in fighting, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and in all the methods of

propagation of religion. This is done to remove the root of discord from the human species. The importance attached to this endeavour may be understood from the verse: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed unto you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and ʻĪsā, that establish the religion and be not divided therein* (42:13).

This prayer of the believers (*Thou are our Guardian, so help us . . .*) proves that the first thing that came into their minds after firmly deciding to hear and obey, was the general call to invite the whole of mankind to the religion of truth. And Allāh knows better.

Wa ʾl-ḥamdu li ʾllāh (And praise and thank be to Allāh).

* * * * *

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AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Qur'ān

BY:

al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

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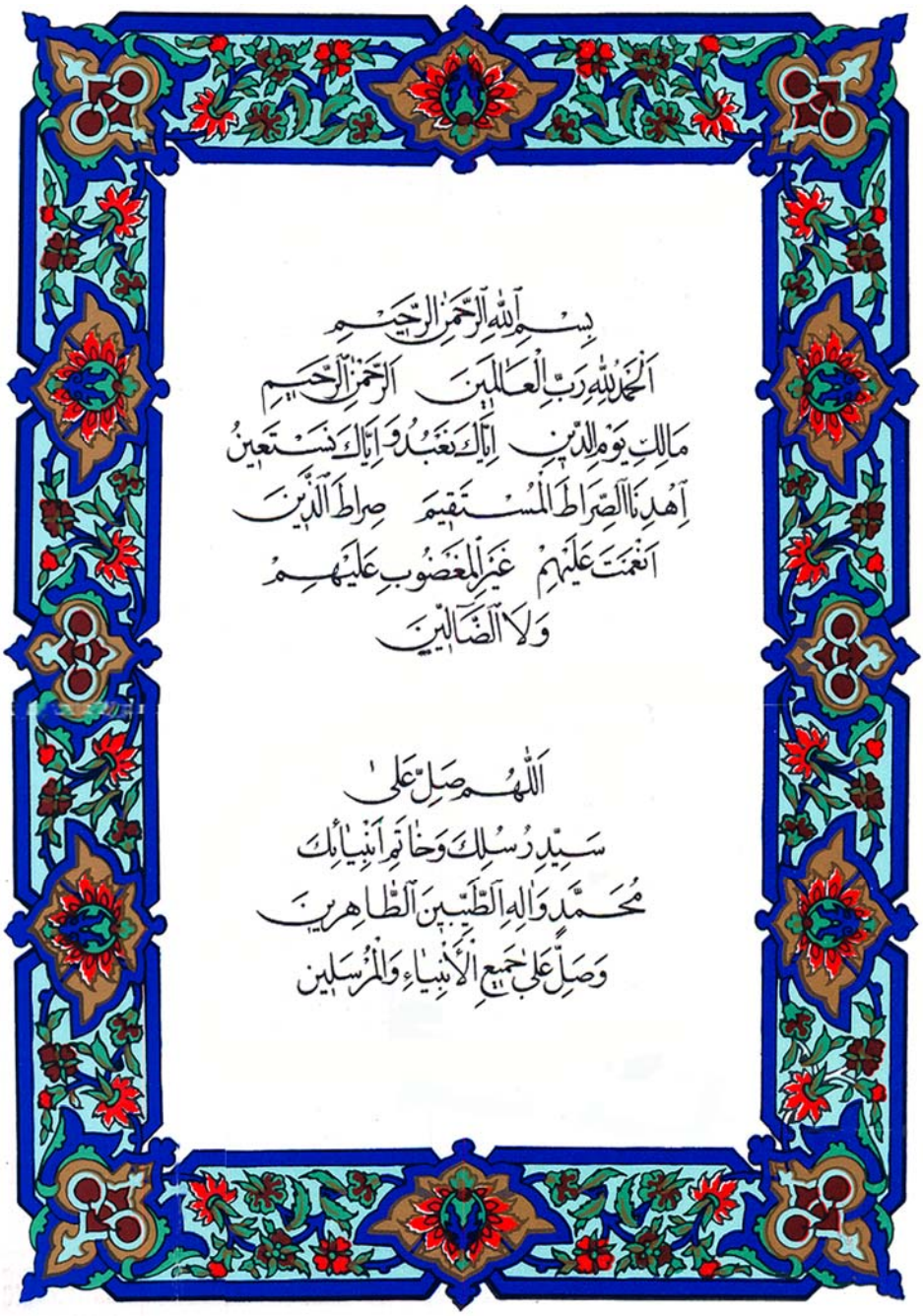
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou halt blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteraion
ء	’	ك	**k**
ب	**b**	ل	**l**
ت	**t**	م	**m**
ث	**th**	ن	**n**
ج	**j**	ه	**h**
ح	**ḥ**	و	**w**
خ	**kh**	ي	**y**
د	**d**	ة	**ah, at** (construct state)
ذ	**dh**		
ر	**r**	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	**z**		
س	**s**		
ش	**sh**	**Long Vowels**	
ص	**ṣ**	آ	**ã**
ض	**ḍ**	و	ũ
ط	**ṭ**	ي	**ī**
ظ	**ẓ**		
ع	‘ *or* ‘	**Short Vowels**	
غ	**gh**	ـَ	**a**
ف	**f**	ـُ	**u**
ق	**q**	ـِ	**i**

تصدير

١- العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤ - ١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، وبعد مداولات واستشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لأنّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، وكفاءته الأدبيّة في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هوالزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤- قدّمنا نشر ترجمة الجزء الثاني من (الميزان) لأنّه كان قد تهيّأ للنشر، والجزء الأوّل لم يتهيّأ بعد - لأسباب لا نريد أن نشرح أمرها هنا - فلم نر من الصّالح إرجاء نشره. وقد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و(الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، وقد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة. ولكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكل جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

* * *

ومن الله سبحانه نسأل، واليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، وأن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا ويسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه وخطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى ونعم النّصير.

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران — ايران

F O R E W O R D

1. al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabātabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) — may Allāh have mercy upon him — was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*.

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the sixth volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*. This volume corresponds with the first half of the third volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allāh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete

translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mīzān:* One for the authors and the other for the hooks cited throughout this work.

* * * * *

We implore upon Allāh to affect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Heiper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(*Board of Writing, Translation and Publication*)

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al-Mīzān

Volume Five

ch.3, vrs. 1- 41

Chapter Three

Āl ʻImrān
(The House of Imran)
200 verses — Medina

بِسْمِ ٱللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ الٓمٓ ــ ١ . ٱللهُ لاٰ إِلٰـهَ إِلَّا هُـوَ الْحَيُّ
الْقَيُّومُ ــ ٢ . نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقاً لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ
التَّوْرَاةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ــ ٣ . إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَاللهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ــ ٤ .
إِنَّ ٱللهَ لاٰ يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي ٱلسَّمَاءِ ــ ٥ . هُوَ ٱلَّذِي
يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلٰـهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ــ ٦ .

In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Alif lām mīm (1). *Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist* (2). *He has revealed to thee the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the Torah and the Injīl* (3) *aforetime, a guidance for the people, and He sent down the al-Furqān. Surely they who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh — they shall have a severe chastisement; and Allāh is Mighty, the Lord of retribution* (4). *Allāh, surely nothing is hidden from Him in the earth or in the heaven* (5). *He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He likes; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise* (6).

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

This chapter aims at exhorting the believers to remain united in religion and to defend its cause with patience, forbearance and determination. It makes them aware of the dangers surrounding them: Their enemies, the Jews, the Christians and the polytheists, have made their preparations, and are determined to extinguish the Light of Allāh with their hands and mouths.

In all likelihood, the chapter was revealed all together; its verses — 200 in all — seem to be well-connected and adhere to a laid down scheme. From the beginning to the end, the verses are related to one another and have consistent aims.

It looks as if this chapter was revealed when Islam had begun to spread in Arabia, but had not yet established a firm foothold outside Medina. It mentions the battle of Uḥud, describes the planned imprecation with the Christians of Najrān; speaks about the Jews and exhorts the believers against the polytheists; and in all these discourses, there is a constant refrain telling them to remain patient and united. It supports the view that this chapter was revealed at a time when the Muslims were engaged in defence of religion with all their might and when all their resources were devoted to this one task. On one side, they had to remain alert against internal sabotage planned by the Jews and the Christians; the believers had not only to refute their arguments, but also to neutralize their craftily-planned subterfuges to demoralize the Muslims. On the other, they had to fight the polytheists; they lived in a state of war, and peace seemed a forlorn hope. The call of Islam was reaching far and wide; this had prompted the enemies of truth — the Jews, the Christians and the Arabian polytheists — to attack the Muslims, in order to annihilate them before it was too late. Beyond the boundary of Arabia, the Byzantines and the Persians had the same design.

Allāh in this chapter reminds the believers of the realities of religion that would make them happy and remove from their hearts the rust of doubts and satanic suggestions; and will keep them on guard against the deceptions of the People of the Book. He makes it clear that He has not relinquished the management of His kingdom for a single moment; nor have His creatures made Him weary. He has chosen the religion for them, and has guided a group of His servants to it — according to His established system: the system of cause and effect. Believer and unbeliever both walk on this very path. One day it is the unbeliever

that looks victorious, the other day the believer vanquishes the unbeliever. The world is the place of tests and trials; the time is the time of action; and the result will be known tomorrow — not today.

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist:* Its explanation has been given in ''the verse of the Chair'' (2:255). It might be inferred from it that Allāh looks after the affairs of creation and management in the most comprehensive and perfect way. The whole universe, all the things and their actions and reactions, are managed by Allāh. This management is not like that of the physical and natural causes that create an effect on an object but have no sense or understanding themselves. His management is that of ''life'' that entails knowledge and power. The Divine knowledge is comprehensive — nothing is hidden from Him; the Divine power controls everything — nothing can happen unless He intends it to happen and allows it to appear.

That is the reason why, after two more verses, it has been said: *Allāh, surely nothing is hidden from Him in the earth or in the heaven* (5). *He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He likes . . .* (6).

These six verses are a sort of prologue of this chapter, giving in a nutshell what the chapter contains in detail. Of these verses, this one is a sort of introducing speech, describing a basic truth that leads to the intended result. And the fifth and sixth verses, mentioned above, give the reason of the preceding verses. Therefore, the main theme of the prologue is contained in the two verses of the middle: *He has revealed to you the Book with truth, verifying that which is before . . . and Allāh is Mighty, the Lord of retribution.*

According to these verses, the believers must remember that Allāh, in Whom they believe, is One in His Godhead, maintains the creation and manages its affairs — a living management; He cannot be overpowered in His kingdom, nor there happens anything therein except what He intends and allows to happen: If they believe in it, they shall know that it is He Who has revealed the Book that guides to the truth; the Separator that distinguishes the right from the

wrong. They shall appreciate that in this matter also, He has decreed the same system of cause and effect, and has therefore given the man freedom of choice; he who believes shall have his reward; he who disbelieves, shall get its chastisement, because Allāh is Mighty, the Lord of retribution. It is because He is Allāh, besides Whom there is no god to decide in these affairs; nothing of His servants' affairs is hidden from Him; their belief and disbelief is not independent of His will and decree.

QUR'ĀN: *He has revealed to you the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it:* The word translated as ''revealed'' is a verbal form of *''at-tanzīl''* (اَلتَّنْزِيْلُ). It was explained in the second volume that *at-tanzīl* (to send down) implies gradualness, while *''al-inzāl''* (اَلْاِنْزَالُ) shows sending down all at once.

It may be argued that the following verses go against this implied gradualness: . . . *Why has not the Qur'ān been revealed to him all at once?* (25:32); . . . *Is thy Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?* (5:112); . . . *Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord? Say: Surely Allāh is able to send down a sign* . . . (6:37). In all the four instances, verbs derived from *at-tanzīl* have been used, but they do not mean gradual descent. An exegete has tried to overcome this difficulty by suggesting that the words, ''sent down (i.e., revealed) to you the Book'', means: sent it down sending after sending.

Reply: Gradualness in revelation (sending down) does not necessarily mean considerable gap between revelation of one part and the other. There are composite things whose existence is the same as that of their parts, like rain. Sometimes the speaker looks at the rain as a whole, and treats it as one undivided thing — it is quite in order, in this case, to describe it with the verb *al-inzāl* (sending down all at once), as Allāh says using this same verb: *He sends down water from the heavens* (13:17). At other times, He looks at its parts, that is, drops of water, descending one after the other — it does not matter whether the gap between two drops is considerable or minimal — and then it may be described with the verb *at-tanzīl* (sending down gradually), as Allāh has done in another verse: *And He it is Who sends down the rain* . . . (42:28).

It appears from above that the verses, put forth against our explanation that *at-tanzīl is* for sending down gradually, are not against it at all. For example, the verse, . . . *why has not the Qur'ān been revealed to him all at once?* means: Why has not the Qur'ān been revealed to him verse after verse at one stretch without considerable gaps between their revelation? Other verses may be correctly understood in this light. So far as the said exegete's proposed meaning is concerned, it, first of all, necessitates inventing a meaning according to one's own liking, and it is not permissible in any language. And even then the suggested meaning does not remove the objection in any way.

Allāh frequently uses the words, *at-tanzīl* and *al-inzāl* when describing the revelation of the Book to the Prophet. ''Coming down'' requires a higher level from which a thing departs and a lower level where it reaches and settles. Allāh has used for His Person the attribute of highness, as He says, for example: . . . *surely He is High, Wise* (42:51). And He has said about His Book that it is from Him: *And when there came to them a Book from Allāh verifying that which they have* . . . (2:89). Therefore, it is very appropriate to use the word, ''coming down'', when describing the revelation settling down into the heart of the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).

''al-Ḥaqq'' (اَلْحَقُّ) and *''aṣ-ṣidq''*(اَلصِّدْقُ) both are translated as ''truth''. But *al-ḥaqq* is the information inasmuch as there is an established fact in front of it; and *aṣ-ṣidq is* the information inasmuch as it conforms with a such a fact. The emphasis in the former is on the established fact, while in the latter it is on conformity.

According to this explanation, the word *al-ḥaqq* is used for Allāh and for other existing realities, because they are true and actual facts about which the information is given. Anyhow, the word ''truth'', as used in this verse, means an established fact that cannot be invalidated.

The preposition *''bi''* (بِ = with) in *''bi 'l-ḥaqq''* (بِالْحَقِّ = with truth) is for togetherness. The verse, therefore, means: He has revealed to you the Book, a revealing accompanied by truth. Naturally, this accompanying would mean that untruth and falsehood could never mix with it; it is always safe from falling a prey to falsity and lie. The verse, thus, hints at this fact obliquely.

Some other exegetes have explained the preposition, ''with'', in some other ways; but none of them is free from defects.

''at-Taṣdīq'' (اَلتَّصْدِيْقُ) is derived from *aṣ-ṣidq* (truth) and means to verify, to acknowledge the truth of, to believe one to be truthful in the given information. ''That which is before it'', refers to the Torah and Injīl. Allāh says: *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance . . . and We gave* (ʻĪsā) *the Injīl in which was guidance . . . And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the book and a guardian over it . . .* (5:44 — 48). These verses show that the Old and the New Testaments that are today in the hands of the Jews and the Christians contain between them some of the revelations sent to Mūsā and ʻĪsā (a.s.), although they are not free from omissions and alterations. The Torah and the Injīl found in the days of the Apostle of Allāh were the same Pentateuch and the same four Gospels that are known to us today; and the Qur'ān verifies the same scriptures that were in existence then and have continued to our days. But this verification is partial, not total. There are many Qur'ānic verses that speak of omission and alteration in these two scriptures. Allāh says: . . . *We cursed* (the Jews) *and made their hearts hard; they alter the words from their places, and have forgotten a part of what they were admonished with ... And of those who say, ''Verily, we are Nazarenes* (*Naṣārā* = Christians)'', *We did take their covenant, but they forgot a portion of what they were admonished with . . .* (5:13 — 14).

QUR'ĀN: *and He revealed the Torah and the Injīl, aforetime, a guidance for the people:* Torah is a Hebrew word for ''law''. Injīl is the Arabic rendering of a Greek word, meaning 'good news'[1]. Some people say that it is derived from a Persian word[2]. We shall discuss in detail about these two books under the verse: *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light . . .* (5:44).

The Qur'ān insists on naming the book of ʻĪsā as Injī1 (Gospel, in

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[1] Greek word, euangelion, means ''good news''. In old English it was translated to 'godspell' (good tidings, good news) which later became gospel, a name now used in English for the Injīl (*tr.*).

[2] There is no evidence to support this claim (*tr.*).

singular) and on saying that it was sent down from Allāh. It is in spite of the fact that there are several Gospels, and the four attributed to Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, existed since before the revelation of the Qur'ān, and were well-known at that time. These two factors — the use of singular, Gospel, and the declaration that it was sent down from Allāh — clearly show the Qur'ānic belief that there was a Gospel, revealed to 'Īsā (a.s.) that was later altered and deleted.

Anyhow, the references to these two books so early in the beginning is an allusion to the Jews and the Christians, hinting that the affairs of these two groups (including the story of 'Īsā) are to be described in this chapter.

QUR'ĀN: *and He sent down the al-Furqān: ''al-Furqān''*(اَلْفُرْقَانُ) as explained in *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ,* is what distinguishes truth from falsehood. The word, literally, means ''that which distinguishes one thing from another''. Allāh says: . . . *on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met* . . . (8:41); . . . *He will grant you a distinction* . . . (8:29). The distinction and discrimination, that Allāh approves in matter of guidance, is the distinction between truth and falsehood in belief and knowledge, and between what consistitutes the duty of a servant of Allāh and what does not do so. Thus, *al-Furqān* (distinction) may correctly be used for all basic principles and adjunct matters revealed by Allāh to His prophets — whether it is in form of a book or not. Allāh says: *And certainly We gave to Mūsā and Hārūn the al-Furqān* . . . (21:48); *And when We gave Mūsā the Book and the distinction* (al-Furqān) . . . (2:53); *Blessed is He Who sent down the al-Furqān upon His servant that he may be a warner to the nations* (25:1).

Allāh has also described the same meaning with the word, *''al-mīzān''* (اَلْمِيْزَانُ = weighing scale, balance) in the verse: *Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down with them the Book and the balance that men may conduct themselves with equity* (57:25). This verse has the same import as the verse: *Mankind was but one people; so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the Book with truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed* (2:213). The balance, like the distinction, is the religion that decides between the people with equity, and contains the true

knowledge and explains the duties of the servants towards their Lord.

Others have interpreted the word 'distinction' in various ways: It has been said that the word means the Qur'ān; the proof that separates right from wrong; the convincing argument of the Prophet against those who talked with him about 'Īsā; the (Divine) help; or the wisdom. But what we have said gives the basic meaning and implication of the word.

QUR'ĀN: *Surely those who disbelieves . . . the Lord of retribution: ''al-Intiqām''* (اَلْاِنْتِقَامُ = retribution) is said to mean punishing the wrong-doer for his wrong. It is not done necessarily to satisfy the feeling of the wronged party. Of course, this happens in man's retribution; when one does a wrong to us, it causes a damage or shortcoming on our side, and we make that up by severe retribution that assuages our heart feelings. But Allāh is too great to get any profit or loss from any action of His servants. Yet, He has given us a promise — and His promise is true — that He shall surely judge between His servants with truth, and will give them their dues — if good, then good, and if evil, then evil. He has said: *And Allāh judges with the truth* (40:20); . . . *that He may reward those who do evil according to what they do, and* (that) *He may reward those who do good with goodness* (53:31). He is Mighty in the most comprehensive meaning of the might, nobody and nothing can do any harm to Him. (It has been said that the basic meaning of the ''might'' is invincibility.)

The verse says that surely those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh — they shall have a severe chastisement. The chastisement is not restricted to the Day of Resurrection or to the next world. The verse, therefore, may refer to chastisement in both worlds — this life as well as the life hereafter. This is a Qur'ānic dictum to which the scholars have paid little attention. This neglect betrays a basic misunderstanding of ours: We never think that a thing is a chastisement unless it inflicts pain upon our body or causes decrease or deterioration in our material belongings. Loss of property, death of kith and kin and weakness or sickness of body are the examples of chastisement in our eyes. But the Qur'ān gives us a totally different concept of chastisement.

CHASTISEMENT AS EXPLAINED BY THE QUR'ĀN

In the eyes of the Qur'ān, a man who forgets his Lord lives a straitened life — even though in our eyes he may be living most luxuriously. Allāh says: *And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life . . .* (20:124); and it counts even the wealth and the children as chastisements, even though we count them as pleasant blessings: *And let not their properties and their children excite your admiration; Allāh only wishes to chastise them with these in this world and* (that) *their souls may depart while they are unbelievers* (9:85).

It was described, in short, under the verse 2:35 (*And We said: ''O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the garden . . . ''*) that:

First: Man's joy and sorrow, pleasure and displeasure, attraction and repulsion, enjoyment and suffering, all depend on his views as to what constitutes his good fortune, and what his misfortune.

Second: Comfort and discomfort etc., vary according to the subjects to which they are related. The spirit has its own joy and sorrow; and the body its own comfort and discomfort. Likewise, animal's sense of ease or pain is not on the same level as that of man.

A man having material outlook does not acquire the Divine attributes, and his characteristics do not reflect the light of sublime virtues. Such a man counts the material felicity as the true felicity; in his eyes, spiritual bliss is not a bliss at all. He remains inordinately engrossed in wealth, children, prestige and worldly power and domination. It is reasonable to suppose that once he gets these things he would be happy and his bliss would be complete. But reality belies expectation. What he wanted was pure blessing free from every shade of distress. What he got was a pleasure surrounded by a thousand agonies. When he had not got what he longed for, he was distressed because of deprivation; when he got it he was grieved because it was very different from what he expected. Each acquirement brought with it a lot of stings; the causes he relied upon failed to bring about the desired effects. And as he had not established any connection with the 'real cause' beyond the apparent

causes, he could not find solace in any misery, nor could he get peace of mind in any adversity. Thus, even after getting what he strived for, he remained in despair and desolation.

Such dissatisfaction of man with what he gets spurs him to even farther goals, in the hope of a really blessed future. And the story is repeated again and again. He remains worried before getting his objective; he becomes distressed after getting it.

The Qur'ān, on the other hand, teaches us that man is made of two things: a spirit that is eternal, and a body that is subject to changes and deterioration. He remains like this, until he returns to his Lord; then he gets eternity without any change or deterioration. Whatever constitutes the bliss of the spirit, (for example, knowledge) is his real bliss; and whatever is the bliss of the spirit and the body together, like property and children, is also his bliss and felicity — and what a good thing it is! — provided it does not divert his attention from Allāh and does not tie him down to materialistic ideas. In the same way, a thing which causes discomfort, or even destruction, to the body, but brings about spiritual blessings, is his blessing (like being killed in the way of Allāh, destruction of property in the cause of religion and so on). It is like tolerating, for a moment, the bitter taste of a medicine to secure permanent health.

On the contrary, what brings about a comfort to the body but harms the spirit, is the real suffering of man; it is his chastisement and evil reward. The Qur'ān calls the comfort of the body only as a brief enjoyment: *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities* (fearlessly). *A brief enjoyment! then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting place* (3:196 — 197).

Also that which harms the body and spirit both, is called by the Qur'ān a chastisement. The unbelievers too call it a chastisement, but their reasoning is different from that of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān calls it a chastisement because it harms the spirit; they call it a chastisement, because it harms the body. Look, for example, at various retributions sent down to previous nations. Allāh says: *Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with 'Ād, the* (people of) *Iram, possessors of many-columned buildings, the like of which were not created in the cities; and* (with) *Thamūd, who hewed out the rocks in the valley; and* (with) *Pharaoh, the lord of the stakes, who*

transgressed in the cities; so they made great mischief therein? Therefore, your Lord let fall upon them the whip of chastisement. Most surely your Lord is on watch (89:6 — 14).

The pleasure and displeasure, for sentient things, depend on feeling and perception. We do not count a pleasant thing used by us, as a blessing, if we did not feel it. Likewise, a painful experience is not painful to us if we do not feel its affect.

It shows that what the Qur'ān teaches us about the happiness and unhappiness is quite different from material comfort and discomfort. Man, surrounded by material things, needs some especial training to perceive the real happiness as happiness, and the real unhappiness as unhappiness. It is for the purpose of this training, that the Qur'ān asks its people not to attach their hearts to other than Allāh; to realize that their Lord is the Real Owner Who owns everything; everything depends on Him; nothing should be obtained but for His sake.

A man having this outlook will always find in this world unlimited sources of happiness: either the bliss of spirit and body together, or that of the spirit only. Other things, he will count as misfortune and as sources of unhappiness.

But a man who is entangled in worldly pleasure and material comfort, thinks, at least in the beginning, that what he has acquired of the trinkets of this world is a blessing and good fortune for him, that it is the root of his happiness. But soon he realizes that he is wandering aimlessly in a desert full of dangerous beasts, poisonous snakes and tormenting scorpions. What he thought to be his good fortune turns into greatest misfortune. Allāh says: *Therefore, leave them to go on with* (false) *discourses and sport until they come face to face with that day of theirs which they are promised* (70:42); *Certainly you were heedless of it; but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp* (50:22); *Therefore turn aside from him ' '. turns his back upon Our reminder and does not dec 're anything but this world's life. That is the* (last) *reach of the, knowledge* . . . (53:29 — 30). Whatever pleasure they get is contaminated with a lot of worry and distress.

This leads us to believe that the perception and thinking found in the people of Allāh and the Qur'ān, are quite different from those of

other people, although both groups are human beings. And between the two extremes there are countless ranks of those believers who have not yet perfected their divine character.

This, in short, is the chastisement, as explained by the Qur'ān. Of course, the Qur'ān uses the word torment or chastisement for bodily discomfort and pain also. But it counts it as the discomfort of body, unrelated to the real, that is, spiritual chastisement. Allāh quotes Ayyūb (a.s.) as saying: *The Satan has affected me with toil and torment* (*'adhāb*, عَذَاب) (38:41); also He says: *And when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people who subjected you to severe punishment* (*sū'a 'l-'adhāb*, سُوْءَ الْعَذَابِ), *killing your sons and sparing your women, and in this there was a great trial from your Lord* (7:141). Note how Allāh calls what they were subjected to as a trial and test from Allāh, but a torment in itself — not from Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh, surely nothing is hidden from Him in the earth or in the heaven:* In the preceding verse, Allāh mentioned, as the reason of His punishing the disbelievers, the fact that He ''is Mighty, the Lord of retribution''. But there was a possibility of misunderstanding there — someone might think that the Mighty Lord of retribution might remain unaware of one's disbelief and thus one might escape His retribution. Hence, this verse that shows that He is such a Mighty One that nothing is hidden from Him.

Possibly, what is ''in the earth'' and ''in the heaven'' may refer to the actions done by the body's organs, and the ideas settled in the mind, respectively, as we had hinted in commentary of the verse: . . . *and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it* (2:284).

QUR'ĀN: *He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He likes: ''at-Taṣwīr''* (اَلتَّصْوِيْرُ) is to give ''*aṣ-ṣūrah* (اَلصُّوْرَةُ) form a thing. The ''form'' means two-dimensional pictures as well as three-dimensional objects — or, as they say in Arabic, that which does not have a shadow, and that which has; ''womb'' is uterus, the organ in female mammal in which child or young is conceived and nourished till birth.

This verse takes the discourse to a level higher than the preceding

two. First it was said that Allāh would chastise those who disbelieve in His signs, because He is Mighty, Lord of retribution Who knows what is hidden and what is manifest; He is not overpowered in His affairs; He it is Who dominates everything. Now this verse says that the reality is even greater than that. The one who rejects Allāh's signs and disobeyes His commandments has no power of his own to do any work — even when He disbelieves in Divine signs and thinks that he is independent of Allāh in his actions, he does so by the power given to him by none other than Allāh. It is not that he overpowers the decree of Allāh, nor that he disturbs the fine system which Allāh has established for His creatures; nor does his will overcome the will of Allāh. The fact is that Allāh Himself has given him the latitude to do as he wishes — whether he walks on the straight path of belief and obedience or wanders away in the wilderness of disbelief and disobedience. Allāh has given this freedom of choice to man so that the test may be meaningful; so that whosoever wishes so, may believe, and whosoever wishes so, may disbelieve. And they do not wish except that Allāh wishes, the Lord of the universe.

Everything — including the belief and disbelief — is from a Divine decree: Allāh has created everything and programmed it in such a way that it smoothly proceeds towards its intended goal and acquires its objective. And this Divine decree is all-encompassing and predominates all wills and power. And Allāh is Predominant in His affairs, Overpowering in His will, Guardian over His creatures. Man, in his ignorance, thinks that he does what he does, by his own will and choice, and that when he goes against the commandments of Allāh, he disturbs the system which Allāh has established. But the reality is otherwise. Man is irremovably imprisoned in the above-mentioned Divine system; and even this transgression and rebellion is governed by that very system — the system of free will and choice. To this hints the sentence, ‘‘He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He likes’’. Your existence is so programmed from the ##earliest days of your foetal life that you irresistibly proceed on the road Allāh has opened for you — opened it by giving you freedom of will, not by compelling you to follow a certain path.

The verse only mentions the decree so far as man is concerned; it

does not involve itself with other things; thus it keeps itself confined to the topic at hand. Also, it is an oblique hint against the Christians concerning their belief about Jesus Christ; even the Christians do no deny Christ's development inside the womb; and that he did not make himself.

Allāh changed the pronoun from singular (revealed to ''thee'') to plural (shape ''you'') in this verse to show that even the belief of the believers, just like the disbelief of the disbelievers, is not independent of that decree. By appreciating this truth, the believers will be happy with the mercy and bounties that Allāh has bestowed on them; and will not be depressed on hearing about the retribution that shall be meted out to disbelivers.

QUR'ĀN: *there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise:* The verse reverts to the initial topic, that is, monotheism. It, in a way, condenses the arguments for the sake of emphasis. The topics described in the preceding verses — guiding the creatures after creating them, revealing the book and establishing a criterion for discrimination between right and wrong, confirming the arrangement by punishing the disbelievers — all need a god to manage them; and as there is no god except Allāh, then it is He Who guides the people, reveals the Book and sends down the distinction, and chastises those who disbelieve in His signs; and whatever He does, He does it by His Might and His wisdom.

TRADITIONS

It is reported in *Majma'u 'l-bayān,* from al-Kalbī, Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq and ar-Rabī' ibn Anas that eighty odd verses from the beginning of the chapter were revealed about the delegation of Najrān. And they were sixty riders; they came to the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); and among them were fourteen persons from their nobles; and three among those fourteen had the final authority in their hands: (1) al-'Āqib, the leader of his people and their counsellor, they did nothing without his advice, and his name was 'Abdu '1-Masīḥ; (2) as-Sayyid, their patron and leader of their

caravan, and his name was al-Ayham; and (3) Abū Ḥārithah ibn ‘Alqamah, their bishop, prelate, religious leader, and head of their schools; he had very high prestige in their eyes and had studied their books; the Byzantine emperors accorded him great respect, and had built for him many churches; all this was because of his learning and energetic efforts.

So they came to the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in Medina, and entered his mosque when he had finished the afternoon prayer. They had put on fine Yemenite clothes: cloaks and mantles; (they were) handsome like the people of Balḥārith ibn Ka‘b. Some of the companions of the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); who had seen them, have said: ‘‘We never saw a delegation like them.’’ Then the time of their prayer came, and they started ringing their bell and stood up and prayed in the Mosque of the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). The companions said: ‘‘O Apostle of Allāh. This (is happening) in your mosque?’’ The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘Do not disturb them’’. So they prayed facing towards the east. Then as-Sayyid and al-‘Āqib had a talk with the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) then invited them to become Muslim. They replied: ‘‘We had been Muslims (i.e., believers) before you.’’

He said: ‘‘You both tell wrong. What prevents you from accepting Islam is your claim that Allāh has a son, and your worship of the cross and your eating the pig.’’

They said: ‘‘If he (i.e., Jesus Christ) was not son of God, then who was his father?’’

Then they all started arguing about Jesus. Thereupon, the Prophet told them: ‘‘Do you not know that there is no son but that he resembles his father?’’

They said: ‘‘Yes.’’

He said: ‘‘Do you not know that our Lord is Ever-living, He shall not die? And that ‘Īsā will die?’’

They said: ‘‘Yes.’’

He said: ‘‘Do you not know that our Lord is the Guardian of everything; He protects it and gives it sustenance?’’

They said: ‘‘Yes.’’

He said: ‘‘Does ‘Īsā possess any such power?’’

They said: ‘‘No.’’

He said: ‘‘Do you not know that nothing is hidden from Him in the earth or in the heaven?’’
They said: ‘‘Yes.’’
He said: ‘‘Then does ‘Īsā know anything of it except that which he was taught?’’
They said: ‘‘No.’’
He said: ‘‘So our Lord shaped ‘Īsā in the womb as He liked; and our Lord neither eats, drinks nor does He discharge excrement?’’
They said: ‘‘Yes.’’
He said: ‘‘Do you not know about ‘Īsā that his mother kept him (in womb) as a woman does, and gave birth to him as a woman does; then he was fed as a child is fed; then he used to eat, drink and discharge excremenent?’’
They said: ‘‘Yes.’’
He said: ‘‘Then how can it be as you think?’’

Thereupon, they remained silent. Then Allāh revealed about them eighty odd verses from the beginning of the Chapter of ‘‘The Family of ‘Imrān’’.

The author says: The same thing has been narrated by as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from Abū Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu ’l-Mundhir from Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far ibn az-Zubayr; and also from Ibn Isḥāq from Muḥammad ibn Sahl ibn Abī Amāmah.

The story shall be quoted later; as regards their claim that (only) the first eighty odd verses were revealed in this connection, it appears that it was their personal opinion; otherwise, as earlier explained, the context and style obviously show that the whole chapter was revealed all together.

It is narrated from the Prophet: The unfortunate is he who became unfortunate in the womb of his mother; and the fortunate is he who became fortunate in the womb of his mother.

It is narrated in *al-Kāfī* from al-Bāqir (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘When Allāh wants to create a semen — and it is among that from which covenant was taken from the loin of Adam — (or as He may decide later); and (wants) to put it in the womb, He excites the man for sexual intercourse, and

reveals to the womb, ‘Open thy door so that My creature and My firm decree may enter into thee.’ So it opens its door. The sperm reaches the womb, and moves therein for forty days: then it becomes a clot for forty days; then becomes a lump of flesh for forty days, then flow in it interlaced veins. Then Allāh sends two creator angels who make in the wombs what Allāh wishes; they enter into the belly of the woman, from the woman’s mouth; so they reach the womb, and in it is the ancient spirit, that was transferred into loins of men and wombs of women. Then they blow in it the spirit of life and eternity, and they create openings for his hearing and sight, and (make) his limbs and all that is in the stomach, by permission of Allāh. Then Allāh reveals to the two angels: ‘Write on him My decree and My destiny and firm order; and write down that I may change that which you write.’ They say: ‘O Lord! what are we to write?’ Thereupon Allāh reveals to them to raise their heads towards the head of the mother. They raise their heads, and lo! there is a tablet striking the mother’s forehead. They look into it and find in it his features, his embellishment, his death time, his covenant — whether he shall be a fortunate or an unfortunate one, and all his affairs. Thereupon, one of them dictates to the other; thus they write down all that is in the tablet, and make it conditional on the final decision (of Allāh). Then they seal the writing and put it between his eyes. Then they make him stand upright in the womb of his mother.’’ (The Imām) said: ‘‘Sometimes he disobeys and turns upside down, and it does not happen except in case of an arrogant and rebellious one. And when time comes for the foetus to come out, developed or undeveloped, Allāh reveals to the womb: ‘Open thy door so that My creature may go out to My earth, and My order may be enforced about him, because now time has come for him to go out.’ ’’ (The Imām) said: ‘‘Then the womb opens the door of the child; so he turns upside down, his feet go over his head, his head reaches the lower part of the (mother’s) stomach. (It is done) so that delivery may be easier for the woman and the child. Then Allāh sends to him an angel, named ‘the Admonisher’, who sternly tells him to go out; the child becomes frightened; when it delays some more, the angel tells him once again to get out; the child becomes (even more) frightened and falls on the earth crying, terrified because of that rebuke.’’

The author says: The words of the Imām, ‘‘When Allāh wants to

create a semen'', mean, when Allāh wants to create a well-made perfect human being from a semen. The parenthetic sentence, ''it is among that from which covenant was taken'' alludes to the fact that man before coming into this world existed in a world, called in the traditions as ''the world of motes'' and ''the world of covenant''; and this life follows the pattern of that one. Whatever soul made covenant in that world must surely be born in this world well-made and perfect. The other parenthetic sentence, ''or as He may decide later'', refers to that foetus that is not from among those who had covenanted in that world; such foetus does not develop to its perfection and is miscarried. The phrase, ''and to put it in the womb'' is in conjunction with the preceding words, ''when Allāh wants to create''. ''They enter into the belly of the woman, from the woman's mouth'': There is a possibility that the phrase, ''from the woman's mouth'', is an explanatory note added by the narrator of the tradition; this possibility is supported by the fact that the word ''woman's'' has been repeated instead of saying ''from her mouth''. But if it is the word of the Imām then it shows that their entrance is not as a body enters into another body. The way into womb is from vagina; the only other way may be through blood-vessels including that through which menstrual blood reaches uterus. Surely, this passage is not easier than the vagina. And it proves that their entering through mouth has some reason other than the ease of passage. ''And in it is the ancient spirit that was transferred into loins of men and wombs of women'': Probably it is the spirit of vegetation that is the source of nourishment and growth. ''Then they blow in it the spirit of life and eternity'': Apparently, the pronoun, ''it'', refers to the ancient spirit; accordingly, the spirit of life and eternity is blown into the spirit of vegetation. If the pronoun stands for the ''lump of flesh'', then it would mean that the spirit of life and eternity is blown into the lump of flesh that has already got vegetative life. In any case, it shows that flowing of human spirit into foetus is a forward step of vegetative life; and that at that stage it gets a new vigour and vitality.

The above explanation also throws light on transference of the ancient spirit into loins of men and wombs of women. The spirit exists with the body, that is, the semen and the menstrual blood that feeds the foetus; and these two things are parts of the bodies of the parents. Thus, the foetus has its share from the lives of its parents, and they in their turn

are parts of the lives of their parents, and so on. Whatever happens to a man is somewhat a reflection of the lives of his father and mother. In a miniature form he represents all his ancestors — he is in a way the ‘‘contents’’ of the book that existed before him [1].

This also may explain the sentence, ‘‘Allāh reveals to (the angels) to raise their heads towards the head of the mother’’. So far as the decrees concerning the child are concerned, their link with his father was disconnected when the semen separated from him; now his only relation is with the mother. It is referred to in these words: ‘‘and lo! there is a tablet striking the mother’s forehead.’’ The forehead is centre of perceptive powers and a main feature of one’s appearance. The angels on studying it find in it the child’s features, appearance and life as well as his covenant, whether he will be a fortune or an unfortunate person; in short, they see in it all his affairs; one of the angels dictates it all to the other — their mutual relationship is like that of an active agent and a passive one. They write all that is in the tablet. ‘‘And make it conditional on the final decision of Allāh’’: The feature does not contain all the causes and factors affecting a man’s life. External events and circumstances also play important part in it. Hence the need of this conditional phrase [2].

This tradition attributes to Allāh all the details of conception and birth of a child: Allāh excites the man; reveals to the womb, sends two angels to shape the child, and another angel to get him out of the womb, and so on. The tradition does not deny the existence of natural causes for these events. According to Islam, there are two sets of perfect causes for every happening — one metaphysical and the other physical. They are not against one another; nor do they together constitute a joint perfect cause. Both are perfect causes — each on its own level.

Allāh sends the prophets and Imāms, to guide the people to their

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[1] Probably, this phenomenon may be illustrated by DNA, the hereditary material of life, found in chromosomes, in viruses, and in bacteria. This microscopic compound is the instrument through which hereditary characteristics are transmitted to the next generation .(*tr.*)

[2] Probably, the author wants to say that the angels write down his affairs as much as his hereditary characteristics reveal; but leave out the changes that may be affected in it by factors of environment.(*tr.*)

spiritual bliss and happiness; and to lead them to their spiritual perfection, The path laid down for it is spiritual. It is those divine leaders' duty to talk to their people in a way that they may proceed and progress on this path. For this purpose, it is essential that the people be reminded of their Lord at every step. That is why the religious guides attribute man's all affairs to Allāh, mention the agency of angels and explain that good fortune and felicity depend on their help; and that misfortunate and trouble are caused by the Satans and their deception; then they remind that ultimately everything is attributed to Allāh, so far as it is proper for His sanctity and sublimity. Thus, the people come to understand guidance and misguidance, profit and harm and, in short, every affair of the life hereafter.

But those leaders did not deny the natural causes, nor did they put it in second place. Physical and natural causes are one of the two pillars of human life; they are the foundations upon which is based the life of this world. It is essential for man to know all about these causes too as it is for him to know all about metaphysical and spiritual causes. Only then he will know his own ''self''; and that will lead him to know his Lord.

هُوَ ٱلَّذِي أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ
الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا
تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلاَّ ٱللهُ
وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ
إِلاَّ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ــ ٧ . رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ
لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ــ ٨ . رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ ٱلنَّاسِ
لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّ ٱللهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ــ ٩ .

He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book, of it there are some verses decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous; then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is ambiguous, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it (their own) *interpretation, but none knows its interpretation except Allāh; and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: ''We believe in it, it is all from our Lord''; and none do mind except those having understanding* (7). *Our Lord! Make not our hearts to deviate after Thou hast guided us* (aright); *and grant us from Thee mercy; surely Thou art the most liberal Giver* (8). *Our Lord! Surely Thou art the Gatherer of men on a day about which there is no doubt; surely Allāh fails not* (His) *promise* (9).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book:* In this verse, the verbal form *''al-inzāl''* (اَلْاِنْزَالُ = to send down all together) has been used, instead of *at-tanzīl* (اَلتَّنْزِيْلُ = to send down gradually) that was used in the verse 3. It is because this verse looks at the whole Book in its entirety, and describes some especial characteristics of the complete Book. It discloses that the Book on the whole contains some decisive verses and some ambiguous ones, import of which may be known by returning them to the decisive ones. As the Book is here looked at as one entity, the use of the verbal form *al-inzāl was* more appropriate.

QUR'ĀN: *of it there are some verses decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous: ''al-Muḥkamāt''* (اَلْمُحْكَمَاتُ = translated here as decisive) is derived from the root word *ḥ — k— m* (حكم); this root implies that a thing is so protected that nothing can pervert or break it or interfere with it. Some infinitive verbs made from it are *al-iḥkām* (اَلْاِحْكَامُ = to make precise, to confirm, to strengthen), *at-taḥkīm* (اَلتَّحْكِيْمُ = to arbitrate) and *al-ḥukm* (اَلْحُكْمُ = to judge); some other words are *al-ḥikmah* (اَلْحِكْمَةُ = perfect knowledge, wisdom) and *al-ḥakamah* (اَلْحَكَمَةُ = bit of a horse's bridle). All these meanings have the elements of protection and preciseness in them. Some people say that the root-word gives the meaning of protection and reformation.

al-Iḥkām of the verses means making them so precise that no ambiguity remains therein, contrary to *''al-mutashābihāt''* (اَلْمُتَشَابِهَاتُ = ambiguous) ones.

Before going further, it should be mentioned here that in various places, Allāh has described all the verses as being *al-muḥkamāt;* and again the whole Book has been called *al-mutashābih* (اَلْمُتَشَابِهُ). But the words have been used in those verses for meanings other than ''decisive'' and ''ambiguous'' respectively. Allāh says: (This is) *a Book, whose verses were confirmed; uḥkimat* (اُحْكِمَتْ),*then they were divided, from one Wise Allaware* (11:1). This verse uses the verbal form of *al-iḥkām* (to confirm, to make precise); but it goes on to mention ''division''; this association shows that the verb *al-iḥkām* (to confirm) refers to that state when the Book, before its revelation, was

an indivisible one; it points to that ‘‘confirmation’’ and stability which was found in it before it was subjected to particularization for the purpose of revelation. This confirmation is an attribute of the whole Book; and obviously it is something different from *al-iḥkām* (decisiveness), mentioned in the verse under discussion, which is an attribute of only a part of the Book — those verses that are unambiguous in their meaning.

In other words, when Allāh divided the verses of the Book in two categories, the decisive (i.e., unambiguous) and ambiguous, it was self-evident that the preciseness and decisiveness mentioned in this verse was not the same preciseness and confirmation which was attributed to the whole Book in verse 11:1.

Likewise, Allāh says: *Allāh has revealed the best discourse, a Book mutashābihan* (مُتَشَابِهاً), *conforming* (in its various parts) *oft-repeated* . . . (39:23). Here the whole Book has been called *mutashābihan* (conforming); so we know that in this verse it means something other than *mutashābihāt* (ambiguous), mentioned in the verse under discussion, in which only apart of the Book is given this name.

The decisive, unambiguous verses have been called *‘‘ummu’l-kitāb’’* (اُمُّ الْكِتَابِ =translated here as the ‘‘basis of the Book’’). *‘‘al-Umm’’* (اَلْاُمُّ) literally means a thing to which another thing returns; in which it takes refuge. That is why the mother is called *al-umm.* The decisive and unambiguous verses have been given this title because the ambiguous verses return to them. One part of the Book (i.e., the ambiguous verses) returns to the other part, (i.e., to the unambiguous ones). The possessive case ‘‘the basis of the Book’’ does not imply that this basis is something different from the Book, as is the case, for example, in ‘‘the mother of the children’’ — the mother is different from the children. Rather it denotes a portion or part, as in the phrase, ‘‘women of the nation’’ women are a part of the nation; in the same way the basis of the Book is a part or portion of the Book. The Book contains some verses that are the basis of the other verses. ‘‘Basis’’ is singular; it shows that there is no difference in the unambiguous decisive verses; all are united and well-connected.

The verse contrasts the decisive verses with the ambiguous ones — which it calls *mutashābihāt. ‘‘at-Tashābuh’’* (اَلتَّشَابُهُ) means

similarity of different things in some of their characteristics and conditions. As mentioned above, Allāh has praised the Qur'ān with this word in the verse: *Allāh has revealed to thee the best discourse, a Book conforming* (in its various parts), *oft-repeated, whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord . . .* (39:23). Obviously, it refers to the fact that there is a consistency in the style of the Qur'ān; eloquent composition and elegant modality, coupled with unveiling of realities and guidance to unalloyed truth (as the words used in this verse show) are the common and ever-present features of the Book.

But *at-tashābuh* mentioned in the verse under discussion means something different. The verse contrasts such verses with the decisive ones that are the basis of the Book, and then goes on to say that those in whose heart there is perversity follow such verses seeking to mislead people and to give them their own interpretation. This context makes it clear that the adjective *mutashābihāt,* refers here to ambiguous verse whose connotation cannot be decided by the hearer just by hearing; his mind remains undecided between one meaning and the other; this continues until he refers to the decisive verses and only then is able to fix the true connotation and semantic value of the ambiguous one. At this stage, the ambiguous verse too becomes decisive and unambiguous but with the aid of decisive verse; while the decisive verse is decisive by itself.

For example, when man first hears the verse, *The Beneficent God* (*istawā,* اِسْتَوَي =) *firmly sat upon the Throne* (20:5), he is unable to decide whether these words have been used in their literal sense. Then he refers to other verses like: *nothing is like a likeness of Him* (42:11); then only he understands that ''firmly sitting on the Throne'' means mastery over the kingdom and dominance over the creatures; that it does not mean sitting in a place or on a thing, because it is an attribute of body and Allāh is not a body, because nothing is like Him. Thus, by returning that ambiguous verse to a decisive one, he will translate it as, ''The Beneficent God is firm in power''.

Another example: When the verse: *Looking to their Lord* (75:23), is returned to the verse: *Visions comprehend Him not, and He comprehends* (all) *visions* (6:103), it becomes clear that ''looking at'' in the former does not mean ''seeing'' with the eyes.

In the same way, when an abrogated verse is returned to the abrogating one, it is known that the order given in the former was for a limited time until the latter was revealed. And so on.

This is the meaning of ‘‘decisive’’ and ‘‘ambiguous’’, as an average man may easily understand, looking at the whole verse together. At least this verse is surely ‘‘decisive’’, even if all others be not.

Just think of the troubles that would crop up if this verse is said to be ambiguous: First, the whole Qur’ān would be ambiguous, as no other verse has clearer meaning; second, the categories (decisive and ambiguous) mentioned in it would be meaningless; third, the remedy shown in the words, ‘‘they are the basis of the Book’’, would be useless; fourth, the words of Allāh: *A Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur’ān for a people who know, a herald of good news and a warner* . . . (41:3 — 4), would not be true; fifth, the argument contained in the verse: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur’ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82), would not signify anything. Add to it all those verses that say that the Qur’ān is a light, a guidance, a clarification, an explanation and an open reminder, etc., that shall be deprived of meaning if this verse under discussion is said to be ambiguous.

No one can find a single verse in the Qur’ān whose words or phrases are bereft of meaning. Every verse points to its true meaning — either it is the only meaning understood by an Arabicspeaking person, or is one of several meanings which may be inferred from it. When a verse is ambiguous and can be interpreted in more than one way, the true meaning is surely one of those interpretations. The true meaning cannot go against the accepted principles of the Qur’ān, like the existence of the Creator, His Oneness, coming of the prophets, promulgation of the law, the Day of Judgment etc. It conforms with those principles, and is based on them; and those principles decide which of the possible meanings is the true one. Thus, some parts of the Qur’ān explain the others; some verses are the basis to which the others are returned.

When such a reader shall read this verse, ‘‘of it there are some verses decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous’’, he will certainly know that the decisive are those

verses that contain the accepted principles of religion, and ambiguous those whose meaning can be decided through these principles.

Question: In every subject there are some principles and some adjuncts; the latter are invariably always referred to the former. It is true in other writings as much as about the Qur'ān. But it does not create ambiguity in other books. So why in the Qur'ān?

Reply: The Qur'ān contains two sets of realities, and there is possibility of ambiguity in each:-

First: There are high spiritual and metaphysical realities that are beyond the scope of perception or matter. A man of average understanding, on hearing such verse, is perplexed whether the words have been used in their literal (that is often physical) meaning, or denote something higher. For example, when he hears the words: *Most surely your Lord is on watch* (89:14); *And your Lord comes . . .* (89:22), his mind races at first to the literal senses of these words, which if accepted, would show that Allāh is a body! The uncertainty is removed when he refers these verses to the Qur'ānic principles which show that Allāh is not a body, and that matter and actions and reactions connected with matter cannot be attributed to Him.

This type of ambiguity occurs in all metaphysical and spiritual talks and writings; it is not peculiar to the Qur'ān. Other scriptures — the unaltered parts — when talking of high spiritual things face the same difficulty. Even philosophy suffers from this handicap. To this fact, the Qur'ān refers in the following verse:

> *He sends down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam; and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth; thus does Allāh set forth parables* (13:17).
>
> *Surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may understand. And surely it is in the Original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom* (43:3 — 4).

Second: There are social legislations and other rules. Some rules, when the reasons for which they were legislated were no longer valid, were abrogated. Moreover, the verses were revealed piecemeal. These two factors create ambiguity in such verses; and it is necessary to return the abrogated verses to the abrogating ones; and then the ambiguousness goes away.

QUR'ĀN: *then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is ambiguous, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it* (their own) *interpretation: ''az-Zaygh''* (اَلزَّيْغُ) is deviation; it is accompanied by anxiety and disquite. The verse goes on to contrast such people with those who are firmly rooted in knowledge, who say: ''We believe in it, it is all from our Lord.'' It divides the people, so far as their behaviour regarding the Qur'ān is concerned, in two categories: There are they in whose hearts is deviation, who are worried and pertubed — they follow the ambiguous verses to mislead the people and to interpret the verses according to their own liking. And there are those who are firmly rooted in knowledge, with stable mind — they follow the decisive verses, and believes in the ambiguous ones but do not act upon them, and pray to Allāh not to make their hearts deviate after guidance has come to them.

It shows that ''following ambiguous verses'' means to act upon them. They are condemned because they follow the ambiguous verses without returning (i.e., referring) them to the decisive ones. Had they referred them to decisive verses before acting upon them, it would, in effect, have been acting upon the decisive verses; and they would have been free from reproach.

''al-Fitnah'' (اَلْفِتْنَةُ = literally, mischief) means here to mislead the people. Making mischief and misleading are near in meaning. Allāh says that they follow ambiguous verses so that they may mislead the people. Not only this — they want something even more grievous: They seek to acquire the knowledge of the interpretation of the Qur'ān; their aim is to find everything from ambiguous verses, so that they would be independent of the decisive ones, and thus the foundation of the religion of Allāh would be destroyed completely.

''al-Ta'wīl'' (اَلتَّأْوِيْلُ) is derived from *al-awl* (اَلْأَوْلُ = to return).

at-Ta'wīl of an ambiguous verse is its ''returning base'' to which it is returned. *at-Ta'wīl* of the Qur'ān is the source from which it gets its realities. For want of a better word, it is mostly translated as interpretation, final interpretation, or the end; although these words do not convey its true connotation. We shall try to lead the reader step by step to its real significance.

Allāh has used the word *at-ta'wīl* in various places in the Qur'ān:

1. *And certainly We have brought them a Book which We have made clear with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe. Do they wait for aught but its final interpretation? On the day when its final interpretation comes about, those who neglected it before will says: ''Indeed the apostles of our Lord had brought the truth . . .''* (7:52 — 53).

That is, what the apostles told their people was all truth: that Allāh is their True Lord; that what they call upon besides Allāh has no reality at all; that the prophethood is truth and the religion is truth; that Allāh will surely raise those who are in graves; in short, all the information about the unseen, truth of which will be manifest on the Day of Resurrection.

Keeping in view this manifestation, it has been said that *at-ta'wīl* of a verse is the fact with which that verse conforms, and that it would be manifested later on; like the happenings on the Day of Judgment that would be in conformity with the informations given by the prophets and the Books.

But this explanation is not comprehensive. It covers only those verses that describe the Divine attributes and actions, and explain the events of the Day of Judgment. But many more verses have no ''facts'' that would manifest themselves later on: the verses containing law and rules — they give orders, not information, and thus have no facts to conform with; the ones describing what is a clear rational proposition, for example, many ethical teachings — their *ta'wīl* (in the proposed events) is within themselves, it is not to appear later; those narrating the stories of the prophets and past nations — their *ta'wīl* has already appeared, it is not to appear on the Day of Judgment. And the verse under discussion is talking about *at-ta'wīl* of the whole Book: *''Ta'wīlahu''* (تَأْوِيْلُهُ =)its, i.e., Book's, final interpretation. Clearly the suggested meaning of *at-ta'wīl*

cannot be applied here, because, as described above, it is true for only a portion of the Book, not for the whole.

2. *And this Qur'ān is not such as could be forged by those besides Allāh, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a clear explanation of the Book, there is no doubt in it, from the Lord of the worlds. Or do they say: ''He has forged it?'' Say: ''Then bring a chapter like this and call whom you can besides Allāh, if you are truthful.'' Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to them; even thus did those before them reject* (the truth); *see then what was the end of the unjust* (10:37—39).

Here again *at-ta'wīl* has been attributed to the whole Book.

Someone has improved upon the definition of *at-ta'wīl* suggested in (1); he has said: *at-ta'wīl* is the real fact upon which the talk depends. If the talk contains an information, then the event or fact mentioned is its ''interpretation'' — it does not matter whether the events have already passed, like those of the prophets and past nations, or will be manifested in future, as concerning the verses describing the attributes, names and promises of Allāh and all that is to happen on the Day of Judgment; and if it promulgates a law, then the benefit emanating from it is its ''interpretation''. Look, for example, at the words of Allāh: *And give full measure when you measure out, and weigh with a true balance; this is good and the fairest ''in the end''* (17:35). The original word, translated here as ''in the end'', is *''ta'wīla''* (تَأْوِيْلاً). It shows that the ''final interpretation'' of giving full measure and weighing with true balance is the benefit accruing to the society from honest dealing.

But this explanation too is defective, as will be seen from the following clarifications.

First: The verse of measure and weight is clear on one point: the ''final interpretation'', that is, the social benefit, depends on people's doing what they have been told to do, that is, on their actually giving full measure and correct weight; those benefits would not occur merely by promulgating this rule. In other words, the final interpretation is a real fact (benefit to the society) that emanates from a real fact (measuring and weighing correctly).

Obviously, the ‘‘final interpretation’’ is a real fact; and the thing that ‘‘returns’’ to it, or, let us say, through which that final interpretation emanates is also a real fact — it is not only an information or order. When Allāh says that the verses of the Book have ‘‘final interpretation’’, it means that those verses narrate some real facts (as, for example, in the stories) or are concerned with actually-existing practical matters (as, for example, in the verses promulgating laws), which, in their turn, have a final interpretation. This capability of having a final interpretation is not an attribute of the speech; it is the property of the subject matter of the speech.

Second: As explained earlier, *at-ta'wīl* literally means to return, or the returning base. But it is not every return or returning base, but a special type of it. A dependent returns to his principal, but the principal is not his ‘‘final interpretation’’; all numbers return to ‘‘one’’, but ‘‘one’’ is not their final interpretation.

To understand it more clearly let us look at the Qur'ānic story of Mūsā and Khiḍr (a.s.). Khiḍr (a.s.) used the word *at-ta'wīl* twice when he told Mūsā: . . . *now I will inform you of the interpretation of that with which you could not have patience* (18:78); *This is the interpretation of that with which you could not have patience* (18:82).

What he explained to Mūsā was the true significance of his three actions which Mūsā had misjudged because of his unawareness of their real purposes.

The three events were as follows:

1. . . . *until when they embarked in the boat he made a hole in it* . . . (18:71).
2. . . . *until when they met a boy, he slew him* (ibid. 74).
3. . . . *until when they came to the people of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused to receive them as guests. Then they found in it a wall which was on the point of falling, so he set it upright* (ibid. 77).

And this is how Mūsā (a.s.) misconstrued these events:

1. (Mūsā) *said: ‘‘Have you made a hole in it to drown its inmates? Certainly you have done a grievous thing’’* (ibid. 71).
2. (Mūsā) *said: ‘‘Have you slain an innocent person otherwise than for manslaughter? Certainly you have done a horrible thing*

(ibid. 74).

3. (Mūsā) *said: ''If you had pleased, you might certainly have taken a recompense for it''* (ibid. 77).

And the following are the ''final interpretations'' of them, as explained by Khiḍr (a.s.):

1. *''As for the boat, it belonged to* (some) *poor men who worked on the river and I wished that I should damage it, and there was behind them a king who seized every boat by force''* (18:79).

2. *''And as for the boy, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should oppress them by disobedience* (to them) *and disbelief* (in God). *So we desired that their Lord might give them in his place one better than him in purity and nearer to having compassion''* (ibid. 80 — 81).

3. *''And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city,.and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man; so your Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure, a mercy from your Lord . . .* (ibid. 82).

Then he answered all the objection of Mūsā (a.s.) in a short sentence: *''And I did not do it of my own accord''* (ibid.).

It is now obvious that the ''return'' mentioned in these verses is just as a punishment given to a child ''returns'' to his character-building — he is punished for the ''purpose'' of his reform. It is this type of ''return'' that is meant by *at-ta'wīl* in the above-mentioned verses. It does not mean that conformity which a true information has with its fact — as the sentence, Zayd came, has with the coming of Zayd.

For further clarification let us look at uses of this word in Chapter 12 (Joseph):

1. *When Joseph said to his father: ''O my father! surely I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon — I saw them prostrating before me''* (12:4); *And he raised his parents upon the throne and they* (all) *fell down in prostration before him, and he said: ''O my father! this is the interpretation of my vision of old; my Lord has indeed made it to be true . . .''* (ibid. 100).

In this instance, the dream he saw of the sun, the moon and

eleven stars prostrating before him ‘‘returned’’ to the prostration of his parents and eleven brothers. But this ‘‘returning’’ was just as an allegory returns to the thing for which it is used.

The same is the case with the following verses:

2. *And the king said: ‘‘Surely I see eleven fat kine which seven lean ones devoured; and seven green ears and* (seven) *others dry; O Chiefs! explain to me my dream, if you can interpret the dream’’. They said: ‘‘Confused dreams, and we do not know the interpretation of* (such) *dreams.’’ And of the two* (prisoners) *he who had found deliverance and remembered after a long time said: ‘‘I will inform you of its interpretation, so let me go.’’ Joseph! O truthful one! explain to us seven fat kine which seven lean ones devoured, and seven green ears and* (seven) *others dry, that I may go back to the people so that they may know.’’ He said: ‘‘You shall sow for seven years continuously, then what you reap leave it in its ear except a little of which you eat. Then there shall come after that seven years of hardship which shall eat away all that you have beforehand and laid up in store for them, except a little of what you shall have preserved"* (12:43 — 48).

3. *And two youths entered the prison with him. One of them said: ‘‘I saw myself pressing wine.’’ And the other said: ‘‘I saw myself carrying bread on my head, of which birds ate. Inform us of its interpretation; surely we see you to be of the doers of good’’* (ibid.36); *‘‘O my two mates of the prison! as for one of you, he shall give his lord to drink wine; and as for the other, he shall be crucified, so that the birds shall eat from his head; the matter is decreed concerning which you enquired’’* (ibid. 41).

4. ‘‘. . . *and teach you the interpretation of saying . . . ’’* (ibid. 6).

5. . . . *and that We might teach him the interpretation of sayings* . . . (ibid. 21).

6. *‘‘. . . and taught me of the interpretation of sayings . . . ’’* (ibid. 101).

The word *at-ta’wīl* in all these verses is used for the events to which the dreams referred. The dreamers saw the events not as they actually happened but in their allegorical forms; and Joseph ‘‘retuned’’ those allegories to the real events which they represented.

The dreams were the forms, and their interpretations were the substances behind those forms. In other words *at-ta'wīl* (interpretation) is the reality that is allegorically represented by the words or expressions; those words or expressions must be ''returned'' to the realities which they represent, if one wants to know their true significance.

The verse quoted above in the story of Mūsā and Khiḍr (peace be on them) also were of the same nature, as are the words of Allāh mentioned earlier: *And give full measure when you measure out, and weigh with a true balance; this is good and the fairest ''in the end''* (17:35).

Pondering over the verses about the Day of Judgment, one realizes that this word has been used in the same meaning in the earlier-mentioned verses: *Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to them* (10:39); *Do they wait for aught but its final interpretations? On the day when its final interpretation comes about* . . . (7:53). Look at verses such as: *Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp* (50:22). It shows that the vision with which man will see the informations brought by the prophets and the Book turning into reality will be of a different kind — that perception will not be like this physical perception, which we are used to in this world. Even the manifestation of the Day of Judgment as well as the governing principle of that day shall be something beyond the worldly perception of ours. (It will be further explained somewhere else.) Therefore, when it is said that the informations given in the Book and tradition shall ''return'' to their true meanings on the Day of Judgment it is not the same thing as fulfilment of a forecast in future.

From the above discourse, it becomes clear that:

First: The sentence, ''This verse has an *at-ta'wīl* to which it returns'', conveys a meaning different from the sentence, ''this verse is ambiguous and it returns to a decisive verse ''.

Second: *at-Ta'wīl* is not a peculiarity of the ambiguous verses; it is an attribute of the whole Qur'ān; decisive verses have their *at-ta'wīl,* as do the ambiguous ones.

Third: *at-Ta'wīl* is not the meaning of a word; it is some real fact

found outside the imagination. When we say that this verse has an *at-ta'wīl,* we mean that the verse describes a real fact (past or future) or a real happening, which in its turn points to another reality — and that is its *at-ta'wīl,* or final interpretation.

Note: In later days, this word was taken to mean ''the interpretation that is against the apparent meaning of the word''. But it is not interpretation; it is misinterpretation, an abuse of language. This wrong connotation was unknown at the time when the Qur'ān was revealed, and there is no evidence to suggest that this late meaning is intended in this verse.

QUR'ĀN: *but none knows its interpretation except Allāh:* Apparently, the pronoun, ''its'' refers to ''the part of it which is ambiguous''; also, the pronoun, ''it'' in the immediately preceding phrase, ''to give it (their own) interpretation'', refers to the same. But it does not necessarily mean that only the ambiguous verses have their ''final interpretations''.

Another possibility: This ''its'' may refer to ''the Book'', as does the pronoun, ''it'', of the phrase, ''they follow the part of it''.

The restriction, ''none . . . except'', apparently means that the knowledge of its interpretation is restricted to Allāh. The word, ''and'', in the next words, ''and those firmly rooted in knowledge'' is to begin a new sentence; and this new sentence describes the state of the second category which is in clear contrast with the first one, ''those in whose hearts there is perversity''. People, in their acceptance of the Book, are of two categories; those who follow the ambiguous part of the Qur'ān, and those who, when coming to such a verse, say, ''We believe in it, it is all from our Lord''. And what is the basis of this difference? It is the perversity of the hearts, on one side, and firmly rooted knowledge, on the other.

The word, ''and'', in ''and those firmly rooted in knowledge . . .'' is not a conjunctive, that is, it does not say that ''those firmly rooted in knowledge'' know, as Allāh does, the interpretation of the ambiguous verses. Had it been so, the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) would certainly have been one of them; rather he would be the first and foremost of them — it is unthinkable that the Qur'ān was revealed to him and he did not know what it meant! And, as

mentioned in volume 4 (Eng. transl. p.320), whenever the Qur'ān mentions a group or describes the virtue of a people and the Apostle is among them, it invariably always mentions his name separately and first of all, and then the whole group is mentioned together. This protocol maintains the dignity and prestige of the Apostle. Look for example at the following verses:

The Apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) *the believers* (2:285).

Then Allāh sent down His tranquillity upon His Apostle and upon the believes (9:26).

But the Apostle and those who believe with him . . . (9:88).

. . . and this Prophet and those who believe . . . (3:68).

. . . on the day on which Allāh will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him (66:8).

Therefore, if Allāh had intended to say that ''those firmly rooted in knowledge'' knew the final interpretation of the ambiguous verses — and the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) is certainly one of them — He would have mentioned his name separately and said: ''none knows its interpretation except Allāh and His Apostle and those firmly rooted in knowledge''. However, it may be argued that as the verse had begun with the words, ''He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book'', it necessarily showed that the Apostle knew the Book; therefore, there was no need to mention his name again.

Apparently, the knowledge of the interpretation is restricted to Allāh — so far as this verse is concerned. Although there are exceptions to it, they only serve to prove the rule. There are, for instance, several verses that say that the knowledge of the unseen is restricted to Allāh; yet an exception is given in the verses: *The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any except to whom He chooses of an apostle . . .* (72:26 — 27).

Also, there would be no difficulty if other verses were to show that the very people who were firmly rooted in knowledge were exempted from this restriction. This verse describes one characteristic of those people — that they believe in the ambiguous verses, but refrain from acting upon them and leave the matter in the hand of Allāh, contrary to the behaviour of those whose hearts are perverted. If other verses showed that all or some of those who were

firmly rooted in knowledge knew the reality of the Qur'ān and the interpretation of its verses, then it could not be said that they were contradictory to this verse — because their subject matter would be quite different from this one.

QUR'ĀN: *and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: ''We believe in it, it is all from our Lord'': ''ar-Rusūkh''* (اَلرُّسُوْخُ) is to be firmly rooted, fixed or established. The contrast shown between them and those whose hearts are perverted, and then the praise that they say, ''We believe in it, it is all from our Lord'' , gives their full description: They have knowledge of Allāh and of His signs, a knowledge that is immune from every doubt and suspicion; their knowledge of decisive verses is firmly established, there is no uncertainty in it; they believe in it and act upon it; and when they find an ambiguous verse, their hearts are not perturbed, nor it affects their knowledge of the decisive verses; so they believe in that ambiguous verse, but refrain from acting upon it.

Their declaration, ''We believe in it, it is all from our Lord'', gives both the proof and the conclusion. Decisive verses and ambiguous ones, all are from Allāh — therefore, one must believe in all of them. Decisive verses have clear meanings; therefore, one must also act upon them; the ambiguous ones also must be believed in, because they are from Allāh; but only that meaning can be accepted and acted upon that does not go against a decisive verse. In other words, ambiguous verses must be returned to the decisive ones.

Therefore, the sentence, ''it is all from our Lord'', is the proof of two things: (i) Decisive verses must be believed in and followed; (ii) Ambiguous ones must be believed in, but for the purpose of action they should be returned to the decisive ones.

QUR'ĀN: *and none do mind except those having understanding: ''at-Tadhakkur''* (اَلتَّذَكُّرُ = translated here as ''to mind'') means to turn towards the premises to get to the conclusion. It has been mentioned above that the believers' declaration, ''it is all from our Lord'', was their proof by which they found the righteousness of their behaviour; therefore, Allāh called it *''at-tadhakkur''* and praised them for it.

''al-Albāb'' (اَلْاَلْبَابُ) is plural of *al-lubb* (اَللُّبُّ) which means an understanding, clear and free from defects. The people of understanding have been praised very handsomely by Allāh in His Book. According to the Qur'ān, it is they who believe in Allāh, turn towards Him and follow the best word; it is they who always remember their Lord, and consequently acquire true knowledge through its premises, and they become the people of wisdom and knowledge. Read the following verses:

> *And* (as for) *those who keep off from the worship of the idols and turn to Allāh, they shall have good news; therefore, give good news to My servants, those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allāh has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding* (39:17 — 18).
>
> *Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding, those who remember Allāh standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth . . .* (3:190 — 191).

This unceasing remembrance, and the resulting humility and submissiveness keep them pondering on the signs of Allāh from which they get the true and real knowledge. Allāh says:

> *. . . and none minds but he who turns* (to Him) *again and again* (40:13).
>
> *. . . and none do mind except those having understanding* (2:269; 3:7).

QUR'ĀN: *Our Lord! make not our hearts to deviate after Thou hast guided us* (aright); *and grant us from Thee mercy; surely Thou art the most liberal Giver:* This prayer is an indication of their firmly rooted knowledge. They know their Lord and understand His power. They believe that everything belongs to Him only, and that they have no authority whatsoever on their own selves. There is a possibility that Allāh may cause their hearts to deviate even after their firmly rooted knowledge. Therefore, they seek refuge in their Lord and ask Him not to make their hearts deviate after He has guided them aright, and to grant them His own mercy so that this bounty may remain with them for ever and ever, helping them to walk on the straight

path, bringing them nearer and nearer to their Lord.

Why did they ask from Allāh to grant them mercy from Himself, when they had already asked Him not to make their hearts deviate? It is because non-deviation of heart does not necessarily mean remaining firmly rooted in knowledge. It is possible that one's heart is not deviated, but at the same time is deprived of the knowledge — one in this condition would be figuratively speaking in a vegetative state: neither blessed with knowledge nor cursed with deviation; rather in a state of ignorance and feebleness. But they know that their firmly rooted knowledge is a must for them; so they pray for the Divine mercy, so as not to be deprived of that knowledge.

Apart from that, they are still on their way; and before the journey is completed they are in need of every type of mercy — the mercies that cannot be known or counted except by Allāh. Those knowledgeable believers are fully aware of this great need of theirs. The sentence coming after this verse, ''Our Lord! surely Thou art the Gatherer of men on a day about which there is no doubt'', shows their awareness of their dependence on Divine mercy till the end of this journey.

The first prayer (*make not our hearts deviate after Thou hast guided us aright*) seeks to ward off a misfortune; the second one (*and grant us from Thee mercy*) pleads for the greatest fortune, the Divine mercy that would keep their hearts alive for ever. The word, ''mercy'' has been used as a common noun, and it has been qualified with the phrase, ''from Thee''; they have used this style to show that they do not know anything about this mercy; the only thing they know is that, but for this mercy of their Lord, they cannot succeed in any way.

They sought refuge in Allāh from the deviation of their hearts and asked from Him His mercy. It proves that they knew that everything belonged to Allāh; their eyes were directly on the Real Cause, ignoring all the middle causes.

QUR'ĀN: *Our Lord! surely Thou art the Gatherer of men on a day about which there is no doubt; surely Allāh fails not* (His) *promise:*

This pleading of theirs gives the reason of their prayer for mercy. They know that this system of creation, this call to the religion, this

striving by man in his path of life, all are precursors of their gathering together on the Day of Resurrection when no one shall avail anyone and none shall be helped except by the Divine mercy. Allāh says: *Surely the day of discrimination is their appointed time, of all of them; the day on which a friend shall not avail* (his) *friend aught, nor shall they be helped, save those on whom Allāh shall have mercy* . . . (44:40 — 42). That is why they prayed to Him for His mercy; and left all its details to His discretion, so that it be of real benefit to them.

They said that there was no doubt about that day. It showed their deep concern about the mercy asked for. Then they ended their prayer on the sentence, ‘‘surely Allāh fails not (His) promise’’. They were firmly rooted in knowledge; knowledge about a thing is not firmly established unless one knows the cause from which that thing emanates. They had no doubt about the Day of Resurrection, because it had been promised by Allāh; and Allāh does not fail His promise.

This pleading contains a proposition followed by its reason. They have used the same style in the whole invocation.from the very beginning:

They said, ‘‘We believe in it’’, and gave its reason in the next sentence, ‘‘it is all from our Lord’’.

Then they prayed, ‘‘Our Lord! make not our hearts deviate’’, and added a phrase that gives a sort of its reason, ‘‘after Thou hast guided us (aright)’’.

Then came the pleading, ‘‘and grant us from Thee mercy’’, followed by its reason, ‘‘surely Thou art the most liberal Giver’’. In fact there is a double proposition and likewise a double reason in this prayer. They did not ask for ‘‘any’’ mercy, but a mercy ‘‘from Thee’’. Thereafter, the sentence giving the reason contains two singular pronouns of second person: *‘‘Ka’’* (كَ = Thou) and *‘‘anta’’* (اَنْتَ = Thou) and the predicate has been given the definite article, *‘‘al’’* (اَلْ = the); these two restrictive devices emphasize that the only Giver is Allāh; and hence they have asked for only His mercy.

They are the people who believed in their Lord and remained firm on it. Therefore, Allāh guided them aright and perfected their wisdom. Now they do not utter any word except with knowledge, nor do they do any work that is not based on knowledge. Consequently, Allāh praised them

by calling them as ‘‘those firmly rooted in knowledge’’; and gave them the title of ‘‘people of understanding’’.

If you read once again how Allāh has praised the people of understanding, you will see that all those attributes perfectly fit these people. Look again, for example, at the verses: *And* (as for) *those who keep off from the worship of the idols and turn to Allāh, they shall have good news; therefore give good news to* My *servants, those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allāh has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding* (39:17 — 18). These verses say that the people of understanding have faith, follow the best of the word and turn to Allāh. The same characteristics have been attributed in this verse to those who are firmly rooted in knowledge.

They have used the second person singular pronouns for Allāh throughout the prayer; but have ended it with mentioning the Divine name (and thus switching to third person) and said: ‘‘surely Allāh fails not (His) promise’’. It is because this promise is not especially for them; it is a general promise; therefore they changed the phrase, ‘‘Our Lord!’’ to the Divine name ‘‘Allāh’’, as this name shows His sovereignty over all things.

A DETAILED DISCOURSE ABOUT THE DECISIVE AND AMBIGUOUS VERSES AND THE INTERPRETATION

What we have explained above about the meaning of decisive and ambiguous verses, as well as their ‘‘interpretation’’, is what one understands after deep consideration of the Qur’ānic verses and the traditions of our Imāms.

But the Muslims have entangled themselves in sharp controversies about every aspect of these subjects right from the early days; and divergent views have been quoted regarding every detail even from the companions of the Prophet and their disciples. And in all this confusing polemics, not a single explanation conforms with ours; we may say that none of them even superficially resembles it.

The main cause of this conflict is the confusion which exists

about the subject matter — they have mixed the discussion of decisive and ambiguous verses with that of interpretation. As a result, they are in a muddle concerning the issues to be decided; there is disorderliness in their ways of arguments and they are confused about the conclusions drawn from their discourses. We propose to give a systematic analysis of all their opinions under different headings.

1. The Decisive and the Ambiguous Verses

''al-Iḥkām'' (اَلْاِحْكَامُ = to make precise, to conform, to make decisive, to strengthen) and *''at-tashābuh''* (اَلتَّشَابُه = conformity of one thing with other, ambiguity) are commonly used words with clear meanings. Allāh has attributed these adjectives and verbs to the whole Book: (This is) *a Book whose verses were confirmed . . .* (11:1); . . . *a Book conforming* (in its various parts), *oft-repeated . . .* (39:23). These verses point to the fact that the whole Book has a forceful eloquence, and a well-integrated style, and that its various parts conform with each other in structural elegance and elocutionary beauty — and its every word leads to sublime realities.

But when we look at the verse, ''He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book, of it there are some verses decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are ambiguous . . .'', we know that the adjectives, *''al-muḥkamāt''* (اَلْمُحْكَمَاتُ = confirmed, decisive) and *''al-mutashābihāt''* (اَلْمُتَشَابِهَاتُ = conforming, ambiguous), as used in this verse, mean something different from the earlier mentioned two verses. Why? Because this verse divides the verses in two categories and then says that only one is ''decisive'' and the other is ''ambiguous''. These words in this verse cannot have the same meanings which were applicable to the whole Book.

The exegetes should have endeavoured to find out from the Qur'ānic verses themselves which meanings could be applied in this case. Instead, various people have interpreted them, according to their own thinking, in more than fifteen ways:

First: The decisive are the three verses in Chapter 6 (Cattle): *Say: ''Come I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you —*

(remember) *that you do not associate anything with Him and be good to* (your) *parents, and do not slay your children for* (fear of) *poverty — We provide for you and for them — and do not draw near to indecencies . . . this He has enjoined you with that you may be mindful* (6:152 — 154). And the ambiguous are those parts that confused the Jews, and they are the ‘‘letter symbols’’ revealed at the beginning of many Qur’ānic chapters, like *Alif lām mīm rā, Ḥā mīm,* etc. As it happened, the Jews tried to interpret them in the light of their numerical values, and they thought that *Alif lām mīm* hinted that the Muslim nation would continue for only 71 (1 +30 +40) years. Then other ‘‘letter symbols’’ were revealed, and the Jews became confused.

This opinion has been attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, a companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Comment: First, it is an opinion without any proof or evidence. Second, there is no evidence that decisive and ambiguous verses are only those three and the letter symbols respectively. Third, if we accept this view, then almost the whole Qur’ān — except those three verses and the letter symbols — would fall in a third category ‘‘non-decisive, non-ambiguous’’; but the verse clearly divides the whole Book in two categories only.

The fact is that attribution of this view to Ibn ‘Abbās is out of place. According to the narration, he had said that the three verses were decisive — he had not said that the decisive verses were only these three. It is reported in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from Sa‘īd ibn Manṣūr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Ḥākim (who said that the tradition was correct) and Ibn Marduwayh that ‘Abdullāh ibn Qays said: ‘‘I heard Ibn ‘Abbās saying about the words of Allāh: *of it there are some verses decisive;* he said: three verses at the end of the Chapter of the Cattle are decisive: *Say: ‘Come . . . ’* and two following verses.’’

That he mentioned these verses just as an example, is supported by another tradition narrated from him by the same author — that explaining the words of Allāh, ‘‘verses decisive’’, he said: ‘‘From here, *Say: ‘Come. . . ’* upto three verses, and from here, *And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship* (any) *but Him . . .* (17:23 — 25) upto three verses ’’.

Both traditions clearly show that he mentioned these verses as

examples of decisive verses; not that the decisive verses were only these.

Second: Opposite of the first view: The decisive are the letter symbols at the beginning of various chapters; and ambiguous are all the other verses.

It has been attributed to Abū Fākhitah; he said about the words of Allāh, *they are the basis of the Book,* that they are the opening words of the chapters; the Qur'ān is composed from them: *Alif lām mīm; this Book, there is no doubt in it,* the Chapter of the Cow is composed from them: *Alif lām mīm; Allāh is He besides Whom there is no god,* the Chapter of the Family of 'Imrān is composed from them.

A similar interpretation is reported from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, about the words: *they are the basis of the Book.* He said: ''The basis of the Book,because they are written in all the books.''

It appears that, according to Abū Fākhitah and Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, the letter symbols at the beginning of the chapters are just that — the symbols of the alphabets; and that by putting them in the beginning, Allāh has drawn the attention of the hearers to the fact that this Book, which is revealed to you, is made up of these alphabets from which words and sentences are made, and yet no one can bring a like of it.

It is one of the views about the significance of the letter symbols.

Comment: First, it is based on a premise (the supposed significance of the letter symbols) which itself is without any proof or evidence. Second, it is not in conformity with the verse under discussion. According to this interpretation the whole Qur'ān, other than the letter symbols, is ''ambiguous''; and Allāh has in this verse condemned those who follow the ambiguous verses, and has said that it results from perversity of their hearts; it means that one should not follow any verse of the Qur'ān, except the letter symbols — and there is nothing to follow in those symbols! On the other hand, Allāh praises those who follow the Qur'ān; in fact, to follow it is the most important obligation. For example, He says: . . . *and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful* (7:157).

Third: Ambiguous means unspecified, indistinct, vague verses, and decisive are the specified and clear ones.

Comment: The particulars mentioned in the verse, about the decisive and ambiguous verses, do not fit this interpretation.

A word is called vague and indistinct, when various aspects of its meaning are mixed together and it is difficult to disentangle them and to know which one is really intended. Such a word is not acted upon unless it is joined by another clarifying word which makes its meaning clear, and then it is acted upon and followed.

It must be noted here that, in the above-mentioned case, what is followed is the same previously indistinct and vague word as clarified by the distinct and clear one. The clarifying word, in itself, is not followed.

Therefore, if ambiguous means the vague and indistinct verse and decisive is the distinct and clear one, then it is the ambiguous verse that should be followed when clarified by the decisive one — and not the decisive verse itself. Accordingly, to follow an ambiguous verse should not invite condemnation and should not be associated with perversity of heart.

And coming to the practical side, no one — neither those whose hearts are perverted nor those who are firmly rooted in knowledge — follows a vague word unless it is clarified. But Allāh condemns the former for following ambiguous verses. It means that ambiguous verses are not vague.

Fourth: Ambiguous are those verses which were abrogated; one believe in them but does not act upon them. Decisive are the verses that abrogated the former, because they are believed in and acted upon.

This opinion has been ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn Mas‘ūd and some other companions. And that is why Ibn ‘Abbās used to say that he knew the interpretation of the Qur’ān.

Comment: First, even if we accept this explanation as correct, there is no proof that only the abrogated verses are ambiguous. The description that some people follow the ambiguous verses to mislead the people and to interpret them in their own way, is true about a lot of unabrogated verses too, like the ones about the attributes and actions of Allāh. Second, this explanation leaves a majority of the verses unaccounted for — those that neither abrogated any, nor were abrogated by any. Was there a third category, which Allāh did not

mention?

And so far as the view of Ibn ‘Abbās is concerned, it is known that his explanation of decisive and ambiguous verses was more comprehensive, and that he mentioned these two types — abrogated ones and those that abrogate — just as examples. It is quoted in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’1-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim, through the chain of ‘Alī, from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The decisive verses are the ones that abrogated other verses, contain the lawful and unlawful, describe the limits and duties, and (in short) those which are believed in (and acted upon); and the ambiguous are the ones that are abrogated, in which there is some juxtaposition, the parables, the oaths, and that which is believed in but not acted upon.’’

Fifth: Decisive are those verses whose proof is clear and evident, like the proofs of Oneness of Allāh, and of His power and wisdom. And ambiguous are those which require thinking and consideration.

Comment: What is the meaning of a verse having clear and evident proof? Does it mean that the main idea of a verse should have a rational and self-evident proof? If so, then all verses containing the laws or explaining the duties would become ambiguous, because not a single such law has a self-evident rational proof. Consequently, acting upon the verses containing the rules of the *sharī‘ah* would be condemnable! And Islam says that they must be followed and acted upon! Or does it mean that the idea of a verse should have a clear proof from the Book itself? If so, then all the verses do have this quality. And why not? After all, it is a Book, conforming in its various parts, oftrepeated, a light, a clear discourse. So, according to this interpretation, all the verses would be decisive, and there would remain no ambiguous one. But the Qur’ān says that some of its verses are ambiguous.

Sixth: Decisive is everything that can be known with the help of a clear or hidden proof; and ambiguous is that which cannot be known in any way, like the time of resurrection.

Comment: Being decisive or ambiguous are the characteristics of the verses of the Book. The Arabic name of a verse is *al-āyah* (اَلْاٰيَةُ = sign), because it shows a reality from the Divine realities. Whatever is described by a Qur’ānic verse cannot be said, by any stretch of

imagination, to be ‘‘unknowable’’; nor is it incomprehensible — it may surely be correctly understood either by itself or with the help of other verses. How can it be said that a verse intends to say something but its words fail to convey the intended meaning? Allāh has described His Book as the guidance, the light and the clarification; and that even unbelievers could comprehend it — let alone the believers: *A revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful Allāh, a Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'ān for a people who know; a herald of good news and a warner but most of them turn aside so they hear not* (41:2—4); *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82). Obviously, no subject matter dealt with in the Qur'ān is incomprehensible or unknowable. And what cannot be known, like the time of resurrection and other secrets of the unseen, has not been touched by any verse. So, how can any verse be called ambiguous in the suggested meaning?

In fact, this explanation confuses between the meanings of ‘‘ambiguous’’ and ‘‘final interpretation’’, (the true significance of which has already been described by us in the beginning).

Seventh: Decisive are the verses containing the laws and the *sharī'ah;* and ambiguous are the other verses, some of which affects the others.

This opinion has been attributed to Mujahid among others.

Comment: This interpretation is wrong in both ways: Apparently ‘‘affecting each other’’ means helping in fixation of the intended meaning, as a. specifying word qualifies a general one; or as a context pin-points the idea conveyed. If so, then even the verses containing the laws should be counted as ambiguous, because they too are subject to this inter- action.

On the other hand, this interpretation gives an impression about the basic characteristic of a decisive verse: That there is no vagueness in its meaning; it distinctly points to its intended idea; that its import is known by itself, while others' sense is understood by its help. If it is so, and if it is accepted that only the verses containing the laws are decisive, then nothing of the Qur'anic knowledge and realities (except the rules of the *sharī'ah*) can be known; there is

supposedly no decisive verse in that group and, therefore, those verses cannot be referred to any decisive one, and consequently, their substance would remain unknowable for ever.

Eighth: Decisive is the verse that cannot be interpreted except in one way; ambiguous is the one that may be interpreted in more than one way.

It has been ascribed to ash-Shāfi‘ī. Probably, he means that the decisive verse ‘‘apperently’’ has only one meaning; and the ambiguous has more than one ‘‘apparent’’ meaning.

Comment: This ‘‘explanation’’ just changes one word with another: ‘‘decisive’’ has been changed to ‘‘one having only one meaning’’, and ‘‘ambiguous’’ to ‘‘one having more than one meaning’’.

Apart from that in his view, *at-ta’wīl* (interpretation) signifies the meaning of the word; and, as we have earlier explained, it is not correct. If ‘‘interpretation’’ is the same thing as the meaning of a word, then its knowledge could not be restricted to Allāh, (or to Allāh and those firmly rooted in knowledge). We know that the verses of the Qur’ān explain the meanings of each other; and believers and unbelievers; those firmly rooted in knowledge and those in whose hearts is perversity — all equally understand this meaning.

Ninth: Decisive are those verses which have been confirmed and in which the news of the prophets and their peoples has been given in detail; and those ‘‘conforming to each other’’ are those stories that have been repeatedly mentioned in various chapters and whose words conform to each other.

According to this interpretation, the two categories — decisive and ambiguous — are confined to the stories only.

Comment: First, there is no proof that the Qur’ānic division is confined to the verses of the stories. Second, the given characteristics of decisive and ambiguous verses — that those who follow the ambiguous do so to mislead the people and to give the verse their own interpretation; and that following the decisive verse has no such defect — do not agree with this explanation. These characteristics are found in other verses as much as in stories, and in once narrated story (like instituting the *khilāfah* in the earth) as well

as in oft-repeated ones.

Tenth: Ambiguous is that verse which needs explanation; decisive one does not need it. This view is ascribed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

Comment: The verse containing the *sharī'ah* need to be explained by the Prophet, although they are certainly among the decisive ones. On the other hand, the abrogated verses are among the ambiguous ones (as was described earlier), and they do not need any explanation (because they are not acter upon), even though in all other respects they are like any other verse of the *sharī'ah.*

The suggested meaning is, therefore, neither all inclusive nor exclusive.

Eleventh: Decisive is the verse that is believed in and acted upon; and ambiguous is believed in but not acted upon.

It has been attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah. Perhaps, he wanted to say that the stories and informations were ambiguous, and those containing the laws were decisive. If this is the idea behind this explanation, then it could be counted as a separate view; otherwise, it could be fitted to many of the previously mentioned opinions.

Comment: It would mean that all verses, other than those concerning the *sharī'ah,* would be ambiguous. In other words, it would be impossible to have knowledge of any Divine reality or any spiritual fact mentioned in the Qur'ān (other than the matters of law) because there would be no decisive verse in that group to which the rest of it could be referred.

On the other hand, abrogated verses are concerned with the *sharī'ah,* but certainly they are not decisive.

Apparently, he looked at the words, ''. . . those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is ambiguous'', and ''those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: 'We believe in it, it is all from our Lord' ''; and then paraphrased it in these words that decisive verses are believed in and acted upon while ambiguous ones are believed in but not acted upon. He did not realize that this believing in and following, or only believing without following, expresses the duty of the believer 'after' he has distinguished between the decisive and ambiguous verses. In other words, it is not the criterion by which one may know the decisive verses from the

ambiguous; there must be some other test to distinguish between the two categories.

Twelfth: Ambiguous are those verses which describe the attributes, whether of Allāh, for example, All-knowing, Powerful, Wise and All-aware, or of His prophets, for example, the verse about ʻĪsā (a.s.): . . . *and His Word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a Spirit* (proceeding) *from Him* . . . (4:171), and other verses of this type.

It too has been attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah.

Comment: Accepted that the verses of attributes are ambiguous; but there is no evidence that ambiguous verses are confined to only those.

He has written a long passage from which it appears that he takes these two terms in their literal meaning. A gist of his discourse is as follows:

‘‘Decisive is the verse whose meaning is distinct; ambiguous is the one which has two or more possible meanings. The two concepts are relative: may be a verse is ambiguous for an ordinary man, and distinct and decisive for a more knowledgeable one. This relativity manifest's itself very clearly in the verses of attributes. Most of the people fail to understand their significance. Their comprehension does not go beyond the limits of the matter. They interpret the Divine Attributes — knowledge, power, sight, hearing, pleasure, displeasure, hand, eye and other such expressions — in material terms, or in wrong ways. Thus people are misled, wrong beliefs and practices crop up and various schools of thoughts come into being.

‘‘So this is the meaning of decisive and ambiguous. Both are within the purview of human knowledge. What cannot be known is the interpretation of ambiguous verses, that is, the reality that is hidden behind such verses. Let us say that we know the meaning of the words of Allāh: *Most surely Allāh has power over everything,* and *Most surely Allāh knows everything.* Still, we do not know the reality of His power and knowledge. The same is true about all Divine Attributes and actions. It is this final interpretation of the ambiguous verses which no one knows except Allāh.’’

We shall comment on it when discussing the subject of ‘‘interpretation’’.

Thirteenth: Decisive is what can be reached by the understanding; ambiguous is opposite to it.

Comment: First, it is an opinion that is not supported by any proof. Second, it is correct that the Qur'ānic verses may be divided in this way; but this division is totally different from that which groups the verses in two categories of decisive and ambiguous. The characteristics of decisive and ambiguous do not fit to the two sides of this division. Third, it is not all inclusive; the verses of the *sharī'ah* are surely decisive, and human understanding has no way to reach them.

Fourteenth: Ambiguous is a verse whose interpretation is against the apparent meaning of its words. Decisive is opposite to it; its interpretation is the same as its apparent meaning. This is the view popular among the later scholars; and they use the word *at-ta'wīl* for an interpretation that is against the apparent meaning of the words.

Perhaps, the same was meant by the scholar who said: Decisive is that verse whose interpretation is the same as its revelation, and ambiguous is the one that cannot be comprehended except through interpretation.

Comment: It is a new terminology and the given characteristics of decisive and ambiguous verses do not agree with it.

Ambiguous is an expression that is capable of more than one meaning; but only one of those meanings is intended. And that intended meaning is not its ''interpretation''. The interpretation, as explained earlier, is a common factor of all the Qur'ānic verses, the decisive and the ambiguous alike.

Moreover, there is not a single verse in the Qur'ān whose connotation is against its apparent meaning. A few verses that give such impression, are governed by the decisive verses — and the Qur'ānic verses explain each other. Obviously, a meaning based on context and associations cannot be said to be against the apparent meaning; and especially when the Speaker Himself declares beforehand that various parts of His speech are all related to each other and should be understood with each other's help, and that no difference can be found in it if one ponders over it; *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82).

Fifteenth: If there is unanimity about the interpretation of a verse, then it is decisive; otherwise, it is ambiguous.

This opinion is ascribed to al-Aṣamm. Perhaps, what he says may be expressed in other words: There is no difference of opinion as to what a decisive verse means; while there is always such a difference about an ambiguous one.

Comment: If that be the criterion, then the whole Qur'ān would become ambiguous, contrary to the division mentioned in this verse. Not a single verse is free from controversy; there is always some difference either about its word or its meaning; always some disagreement whether its apparent meaning is intended. This has led some people to say that the whole Qur'ān is ambiguous; and he offers the verse: . . . *a Book conforming in its various parts* (39:23), as his proof. He seems oblivious of the inherent contradiction in this reasoning: This argument means that at least this verse is decisive so that it may be relied upon, while he wants to prove from it that not a single verse is decisive!

Some others, believing that the whole Qur'ān was ambiguous, said that the apparent meanings of the Qur'ān are not a proof at all.

Sixteenth: Ambiguous is the verse that is difficult to explain, because it resembles another verse — the difficulty may arise because of the word or because of the meaning.

It is the opinion of al-Rāghib. He has written in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān:*

''Ambiguous verses of the Qur'ān are those that are difficult to explain because of their resemblance to other verses — it is either in word or in meaning. The religious scholars have said: 'The ambiguous is the verse whose apparent meaning does not indicate its real connotation.' The fact is that the verses, when compared to each other, are of three kinds: The decisive, the ambiguous, and that which is decisive in some respects and ambiguous in others.

''The ambiguous, in all, is of three kinds: ambiguous in word, ambiguous in meaning, and ambiguous in word and meaning both.

''The ambiguous in word is of two kinds: Where ambiguousness is caused by one word — it is not a commonly used word, like *al-abb* (اَلْاَبُّ = herbage) and *yaziffūn* (يَزِفُّوْنَ = they are hastening); or has more than one meaning, like *al-yad* (اَلْيَدُ = hand, power) and *al-'ayn* (

اَلْعَيْنُ = eye, sun, supervision) — and where ambiguousness results from the structure of the sentence. This may happen in one of the three ways: when some explanatory words are omitted for the sake of brevity, for example: *And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four* (4:3); when some words are added into the sentence for some reason, for example: *There is nothing like the likeness of Him* (42:11) — it would have been easier to understand for a common man if it were said, 'there is nothing like Him'; and when a word is transferred from its usual place for rhyming or other reasons, for example: . . . *Who revealed the Book to His servant and did not make in it any crookedness. Rightly directing* . . . (18:1 — 2) — the word, 'Rightly directing' describes the state of ''the Book'' and should have come soon after it; another example: . . . *and were it not for believing men and believing women . . . had they been widely separated* . . . (48:25).

''And the ambiguous according to meaning are the attributes of Allāh and details of the Day of Resurrection. These things are beyond the limit of our imagination — we cannot imagine a thing that is not perceived by us, or does not resemble any such perceived thing, at least.

''And the ambiguous in word and meaning both is of five kinds: First, the ambiguity, because of quantity; when it is arguable whether the word is used in its general or particular meaning, for example, ''kill the polytheists''. Second, the ambiguity because of quality; whether the given order is obligatory or recommended, for example, ''then marry such woman as seem good to you''. Third, the ambiguity because of time, when it is arguable which of the two given orders is abrogated and which one abrogated it. Forth, ambiguity because of the place and the incident about which the verse was revealed, for example: *And it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses from their backs* . . . (2:189); and *Postponing* (of the sacred month) *is only an addition in unbelief* (9:37). It is difficult for a man who does not know the pre-Islamic Arabs' customs to understand these references. Fifth, ambiguity because of the conditions that make an action valid or void, for example, the conditions of prayer and marriage.

‘‘If you ponder on these divisions, you will see that all that the exegetes have written or said concerning the meaning of the ‘ambiguous’, comes under one or the other of its headings and sub-headings; for example, the saying that ambiguous are the letter symbols, or Qatādah’s opinion that the ambiguous is the abrogated verse, and the decisive is that which aborgated it, and the view of al-Aṣamm that there is unanimity about the interpretation of decisive verses, while there is no such unanimity about ambiguous ones.

‘‘Then all the ambiguous verses — whatever the reasons of their ambiguity — are of three categories: First, that which cannot be known by anyone in any way, like the time of resurrection, the appearance of the walker of the earth, and what that walker is, etc. Second, that which may be understood by man, like the uncommon words and complicated syntax. Third, that which may be comprehended by some of those who are firmly rooted in knowledge, and may remain hidden from others. It is this third category, about which the Prophet prayed for ‘Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him), ‘O Allāh! give him the knowledge of religion and teach him the ‘‘interpretation’’ ’; and prayed like this for Ibn ‘Abbās too.’’

This was the opinion of ar-Rāghib; it is the most comprehensive of all such views; and combines many of the previously mentioned opinions.

Comment: First, it is against the obvious meaning of the verse to say that ‘‘ambiguousness’’ includes such cases as the uncommon words, complicated sentence-structure, generality and particularity of expressions etc. The verse says that the ambiguous verses may be understood by referring them to the decisive ones. But the above-mentioned word problems cannot be solved by the decisive verses; there are other methods to solve them, like the grammer, dictionary etc.

Moreover, the verse says that those who follow the ambiguous verses do so to misguide and to interpret them in their own ways. But nobody follows a general word without knowing its particulars, or an uncommon word without ascertaining from the dictionary what it means. If anyone did so, people would not listen to him, because it would be against the universally accepted principles of language; and, as no one would listen to him, there could be no misleading and

no misinterpreting.

Second, his final division of the ambiguous into three categories — that which can be understood by common man, that which cannot be understood, and that which can be understood by some and not by others — shows that he thinks that ‘‘interpretation’’ is a peculiarity of ambiguous verses. But we have already explained that ‘‘interpretation’’ is common to both ambiguous and decisive ones.

These were the opinions of the scholars about the meanings of the decisive and ambiguous verses. As you have seen, none of them is free from defects, nor does any conform with the clear purport of the verse. What one understands from the verse is this: An ambiguous verse is capable of more than one meaning, but the more apparent meaning is doubtful — not because of any difficulty of language or syntax (which can easily be removed with the help of well-recognised literary and linguistic methods), but because it is against the semantic value of a decisive verse. Therefore, the actually intended meaning may be ascertained only with the help of that decisive verse.

Obviously, the apparent meaning of an ambiguous verse should be familiar to the common people and the simple minds would readily accept it and believe in it. Or if both meanings require some explanation, then the explanation leading to unintended meaning would be easier to understand for an uninitiated and unlearned man.

Look at the innovations and wrong sectarian beliefs; study the never-ending schisms that have been shattering the Muslim community since the moment the Prophet left this world; try to find out the basic cause of their differences in matters of belief and law — and you will see that most of them have resulted from following the ambiguous verses and from interpreting them in a way not approved by Allāh.

Every sect proves its beliefs from the Qur’ānic verses: A party finds in it evidence that Allāh is a body; a group proves from it that man has no free will concerning his actions, while another faction tries to show that man is totally independent of Allāh in this respect; some people argue that the prophets committed mistakes and sins, and they quote the verses in their support; a circle says and proves it from the Qur’ān, that Allāh is so sublime that even ‘‘Divine

Attributes'' should not be attributed to Him, while another faction says, and proves it too from the Qur'ān, that Allāh is just like His creatures and His attributes are separate from His Person. And so on and so forth. All this is a result of following the ambiguous verses without ''returning'' them to the relevant decisive ones.

Then look at a group saying that the laws of the *sharī'ah* were ordained to serve as a path to reach the goal; if one finds a shorter route that leads to the same destination, it would be obligatory to walk on this new route, because the main thing is to reach there, through any easy way. Another one says that the rules of the *sharī'ah* were promulgated to lead the man to perfection; there is no justification of burdening a man with them after he has reached that goal — therfore, one who has attained perfection is not obliged to observe the rules of the *sharī'ah.* All the rules of the *sharī'ah,* all the religious obligations, the complete penal code and all Islamic policies were established and enforced in the days of the Prophet, not a single item was neglected or kept in abeyance. Then, after his departure, the Muslim governments began suspending law after law. It was a continual process. Whenever a law or a penalty was discarded, those who were responsible for it argued: The religion was sent down for the good of the world and the good of the man; what we have adopted now, in place of the old out-moded law, is far more better for the people. Now, we have reached a stage where it is said: The only purpose of the *sharī'ah* was to make the world a good place to live in; the world, nowadays, is not in a mood to accept the policies and punishments prescribed by Islam — it cannot digest it; the advanced civilization demands advanced and civilized laws — the laws of Islam are not good for this stage. Also, it is said: The religious rites were established so that they might purify the hearts and lead the minds to correct perception; those hearts that have been well-trained by the society and those spirits that are solely devoted to the service of mankind, do not need such purifications as ablution, obligatory bath, prayer and fast etc.

Ponder over such views — and their number is beyond counting — and then study the words of Allāh, ''then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is ambiguous, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it (their own)

interpretation'', and you will have to admit that all those disorders and calamities that befell Islam and the Muslims, have emanated from only one source — following the ambiguous verses seeking to give them one's own interpretation.

That is the reason — and Allāh knows better — why the Qur'ān has used such a tough language in this respect, most strictly forbidding the Muslims to follow the ambiguous verses seeking to mislead the people, and to interpret them according to one's own liking; and why it has condemned the tendency of distorting the signs and words of Allāh, explaining them without true knowledge, and following the footsteps of Satan. It is the usual practice of the Qur'ān to put greatest emphasis on condemning those matters that were likely to destroy any fundamental part of the religion, which, in its turn, could lead to ruination of the whole structure. Look, for example, at the severest admonitions against befriending the unbelievers; about the love of the near relatives of the Prophet; for staying of the wives of the Prophet inside their houses; against the interest; and concerning the unity in the word of religion etc.

What is the basic source of perversity of heart and of the tendency to mislead the people? It happens when one is inclined towards this material world, loves to remain on the earth for ever and succumbs to desires. How can the rust of perversity be removed? How can the door of misdirection be closed shut? The only way is to remember the Day of Reckoning, as Allāh says: (as for) *those who go astray from the path of Allāh, for them surely is a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning* (38:26). That is why those who are firmly rooted in knowledge and who do not wish to interpret the Qur'ān in a way their Lord does not approve, point to this fact at the end of their prayer: ''Our Lord! Surely Thou art the Gatherer of men on a day about which there is no doubt; surely Allāh fails not (His) promise.''

2. ''The Decisive Verses are the Basis of the Book.'' What does it mean?

A group says: The decisive verses are the basis of the Book — it

means that they are the foundation of the Book upon which the edifice of religion, its principles and laws, are built up; and religion is only a collection of beliefs and deeds. Therefore, such verses are believed in and acted upon. So far as the ambiguous verses are concerned, they are believed in but not acted upon, because their meanings are not distinct and their connotations are vague.

Comment: This meaning necessarily emanates from some of the opinions about the meaning of the decisive and ambiguous verses. If one believes that ambiguous is the verse whose interpretation is difficult to comprehend, or that its ambiguousness may be removed totally or partially with the help of reason, grammar, dictionary or other means used to solve a word-problem, then he would have to explain the ‘‘basis of the Book’’ in the way written above.

Others say that the sentence, ‘‘Decisive verses are the basis of the Book’’, refers to the fact that ambiguous verses return, that is, are referred, to them. But what is the meaning of this ‘‘return’’ or reference? Some people say: It means that ambiguous verses should be believed in, but when it comes to action, only the relevant decisive verse should be followed. For example, an abrogated verse should be believed in, but at the time of action it should be returned to its relevant decisive verse, that is, the one that abrogated it.

Comment: This explanation is not very different from the first one.

There is a third explanation and it is the correct one: The decisive verses are the basis of the Book, inasmuch as they clarify and explain the ambiguous ones and remove their ambiguousness.

As explained in the Commentary, *‘‘al-umm’’* (اَلْاُمُّ = translated here as ‘‘basis’’) literary means a thing to which another thing returns. The word ‘‘basis’’ or foundation does not convey the full sense of this word. The first explanation interprets it merely as the foundation; but it does not explain its full import. The word *al-umm* points to a special kind of return — as a part returns to its whole, or a branch returns to its roots; the thing that returns is derived from, and is a part of, the thing to which it returns. This word, therefore, indicates that ambiguous verses have such meanings that branch out from, and return to, the decisive ones. And that is why the decisive ones explain and clarify the ambiguous ones.

Moreover, the ambiguous is given this name because it is capable of more than one meaning; and not because it has an ‘‘interpretation’’ — interpretation is found in decisive verses also; the Qur’ānic verses explain each other, and it is only decisive verses that can clarify the ambiguous ones. Let us repeat the example of the verse: *Looking to their Lord* (75:23); it is ambiguous; but when it is returned to the words of Allāh: *nothing is like a likeness of Him* (42:11), and: *Visions comprehend Him not* (6:103), it becomes clear that ‘‘looking at’’ in this phrase means something different from the optical vision connected with the eyes.

Likewise, Allāh has said: *The* (Prophet’s) *heart belied not what he saw. What! do you then dispute with him as to what he saw? . . . Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord* (53:11 — 18). The verse proves that the heart has a sight of its own. And this vision of heart is something different from ‘‘thinking’’ and ‘‘consideration’’. Because the thought and consideration is a process that consists of a subject and a predicate; while vision is a single action, it looks at the object without joining it to any subject or predicate. Therefore, this vision of heart is neither a material nor a mental consideration; it is the orientation of heart towards the object.

The same is the case with all other ambiguous verses.

3. The Meaning of *‘‘at-Ta’wīl’’*

According to some exegetes *at-ta’wīl* (interpretation) is synonymous for exegesis, explanation or meaning of the sentence. Meanings of some parts of the Qur’ān are certainly known to the people. Accordingly, the interpretation mentioned in the verse (*seeking to give it their own interpretation, but none knows its interpretation except Allāh*) must be restricted to the meaning of the ambiguous verses. Therefore, they say that none can know, in any way, the meaning of an ambiguous verse, except Allāh — or except Allāh and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge.

Another group says that ‘‘interpretation’’ is the meaning that is against the apparent meaning of the word. This explanation has become so wide spread that, at present, it has become the real

meaning of *at-ta'wīl,* while originally this word meant ''to return'' or ''the returning place''. Anyhow, this explanation is popular among the later exegetes, while the first-mentioned explanation was familiar to the ancients, whether they believed that its knowledge was restricted to Allāh only, or said that they too, who were firmly rooted in knowledge, knew it; for example, it has been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he used to say: ''I am one of those who are firmly rooted in knowledge and I know its interpretation.''

A third group says: ''Interpretation'' is that meaning of the verse which is not known except to Allāh (or to Allāh and the ones firmly rooted in knowledge), and which is against the apparent meaning of the word. In other words, an ambiguous verse has many meanings — one behind the other; some meanings are showing themselves just behind the words, and may be perceived by one and all; others are far behind and none knows them except Allāh (or except Allāh and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge).

There is, within this group, a difference of opinion as to how those various meanings are related to the word. It is sure that all of them are not on the same level; otherwise, it would mean that one word is used in more than one meaning at the same time, and that is not permissible in language (as has been explained in the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence). Therefore, those meanings must be taken consecutively. Now comes the difference: Some say that one meaning is the real one; the second is its concomitant; the third is the second's concomitant and so on. Others say that the meanings are all ranked one behind the other, as an esoteric meaning is hidden behind a manifest one. When a man speaks a word, he intends it to convey its familiar meaning, .and with the same intention he aims at its esoteric meaning. You say: Give me water to drink. You ask only for drink; but that very word is also a demand to satiate your thirst; and this in its turn is a call to satisfy a need of life, and then a determination to acquire the perfection of existence. Note that you had not given four orders; you only told him to give you water to drink, but this one demand contained in itself all the unspoken but intended demands — one inside the other.

There is a fourth explanation: Interpretation is not a sort of a meaning intended from the word. It is a thing really existing outside

imagination, upon which the talk is based. If the speech is of imperative mood — enjoining or forbidding — then its interpretation is that reason for which the said commandment is given. There is an order: Establish prayer. Its interpretation is that spiritual perfection which illuminates the soul of the one who prays, and prevents him from evil and sin. If the speech is an information — of a past event — then that event itself is its interpretation. Look, for example, at the verses narrating the stories of the prophets and their peoples. And if it is an information of a present or future happening, then it is of two kinds: (1) If the subject may be perceived by one of the senses or comprehended by mind, then its interpretation is the same subject as it exists or shall exist in reality: For example, Allāh says: *and among you are those who hearken for their sake* (9:47); and: *The Romans are vanquished, in a near land, and they, after being vanquished, shall overcome within a few years* (30:2 — 4). (2) If it is a future event of unseen that cannot be perceived by worldly perceptions, nor can it be comprehended by our minds, like the affairs of the Day of Resurrection, the time of its happening, the raising of the dead and their gathering together, the questioning, the reckoning, the flying of the books of deeds etc., and like the reality of the Divine Attributes and Actions. (These latter are above the reach of time and beyond the limit of minds), then too their interpretation is the same reality that exists or shall exist outside imagination.

There is a big difference between the verses that describe these last-mentioned realities (attributes and actions of Allāh and the affairs related to the Day of Resurrection) and those describing other subjects. It is possible to know the interpretation of the verses that describe other subjects; but so far as the verses describing the Divine Attributes etc., are concerned, none knows their interpretation except Allāh; although those who are firmly rooted in knowledge may be given this knowledge by Allāh to the extent of their mental capacities and spiritual perfection. Still, the reality, that is, the full and final interpretation, is not given to any creature at all.

These are the four main opinions concerning the meaning of ‘‘interpretation’’. There are some other views also; they are, in fact, various branches of the first opinion although those who expressed them have not acknowledged this fact: —

1. Exegesis is more general than interpretation. Exegesis is mostly used for explanation of words; interpretation is mostly used for explanation of the meanings and sentences. The term, ‘‘interpretation’’ is generally used only for the Divine Books; while exegesis is used for other books too.

2. Exegesis is explanation of a word that has only one meaning; interpretation is choosing, with help of some rules and reason, one meaning out of several possible ones.

3. Exgesis shows the definite meaning of the word; interpretation chooses one among many possible meanings. (It is not very different from no. 2.)

4. Exegesis shows the reason of the meaning; interpretation explains the reality of the meaning. For example, look at the verse: *Most surely your Lord is on watch* (89:14). Its exegesis shall be as follows: *‘‘al-Mirṣād’’* (اَلْمِرْصَادُ = watching place) is on paradigm of *al-mif‘āl* (اَلْمِفْعَالُ) from the verb *raṣada; yarṣudu* (رَصَدَ ، يَرْصُدُ = he watched; he is watching). And its interpretation is the warning against slackening in matters of the *sharī‘ah* and thinking little of the commandments of Allāh.

5. Exegesis is a description of the clear meaning of a word; interpretation is the explanation of its difficult meaning.

6. Exegesis is concerned with tradition and narration; interepretation is related to reason.

7. Exegesis is limited to following and listening (what the ancients said); interpretation is concerned with inference and reason.

These seven are in fact various facets of the first opinion; and all objections levelled against that are valid about these too. Anyhow, one cannot rely on any of the four opinions or their branches.

One defect is common to all: They presume that ‘‘interpretation’’ is the meaning of the verse, or that it is the happening or cause to which the verse refers. But it has been explained in the Commentary that ‘‘interpretation’’ is not the meaning of a verse — it does not matter whether the meaning is the apparent one or is against it. Also, it has been clarified therein that although interpretation is a real event or fact, but not every event — it is that fact with which the word has the same relation as a proverb has with its purpose; or as an exterior has with its interior.

The detailed comments on the four opinions are as follows:

About the first opinion: One who believes it, must also believe that at least some of the Qur'ānic verses are unintelligible; that its ''interpretation'', that is, exegesis cannot be understood from its words. But there is no such verse in the Qur'ān; the Qur'ān clearly says that it has been revealed so that an average mind may easily understand it.

A man having this opinion cannot avoid this difficulty except by saying that the only ambiguous verses are the letter-symbols at the beginning of some chapters, as their meanings are not known to the people. But, there is no proof that only the letter-symbols are ''ambiguous''; and just because *at-ta'wīl* means to return and *at-tafsīr* (اَلتَّفْسِيْرُ = exegesis) also has a shade of this meaning in it, it does not follow that both are synonymous — a mother is the returning place for her children, but she is not their ''interpretation''; a principal is the returning place of his dependents, but he is not their ''interpretation''. Moreover, according to the verse, one of the characteristics of the ambiguous verses is that perverted persons follow them to mislead the people. But who has ever been misled by letter-symbols? Most of the misguidance in Muslim community has occurred because of following those verses that describe the attributes of Allāh and other such things.

About the second opinion: It says that there are verses in the Qur'ān whose intended import is against their apparent meanings, and those apparent meanings cause misguidance in religion as they are against the decisive verses. This statement boils down to this: The verses of the Qur'ān are contradictory to each other and that contradiction cannot be removed unless some verses are deprived of their open meanings and given some such connotations that, in normal course, would not be understood from them.

This, in its turn, would invalidate the argument contained in the words of Allāh: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82).

If the discrepancy between two verses can be removed only by saying that one or both do not mean what their words apparently say; that they have an interpretation (i.e., a meaning against the apparent

one) that is not known to anyone other than Allāh, then the verse 4:82, written above, cannot prove that the Qur'ān is from Allāh. One can easily remove contradiction and discrepancy from any literary or academic work of any author, if one were to change the apparent meanings of contradictory statements and give them new connotations unknown to any linguist. But such removal of contradiction would not prove that that work is a Divine revelation. The fact is that every speech — even one that is admittedly false or is just a jumble of words — can be presented as a true fact or a serious discourse if its words were given some hitherto unknown meanings against their clear connotations. But such an absence of discrepancy would not mean that that speech was from a Speaker Who is above the changes, Whose decrees and statements do not contradict each other, Who is not liable to forgetfulness and error, Who is Allperfect by Himself and has not acquired perfection through trial and error, experience and passage of time.

The verse 4:82, proves that the Qur'ān is understandable to common minds and may be pondered and meditated upon; that no verse of it has a meaning that is against the clear dictate of Arabic language; in short, it does not contain puzzles and riddles.

About the third opinion: No one who has meditated on the Qur'ān would deny that the Qur'ānic verses have various consecutive connotations — one behind the other. But all those connotations are, in fact, various levels of the meanings of the words — and especially so if we say that they are concomitants of the first meaning. And their understandability varies according to the intelligence levels of the readers. But this idea has no resemblance with *at-ta'wīl* (interpretation). Remember what Allāh has said about the ''interpretation'' of the Qur'ān that none knows it except Allāh. And note the fact that one does not need piety and spiritual purity to understand a complicated or deep philosophical discourse; what one requires is a sharp intelligence. Then you will realize that it would be inappropriate to say that only Allāh knew the interpretation (in the meaning given in this opinion) of the Qur'ān. (It does not mean that piety and spiritual purity do not help in comprehension of Divine knowledge and realities; but they are not the main foundation of this comprehension. This place is reserved for intelligence and scholarship.)

About the fourth opinion: He is right when he says that *at-ta'wīl* (interpretation) is not restricted to the ambiguous verses, it is found in the whole Qur'ān. Also, he is right in saying that interpretation is not the meaning of the word; it is a real fact on which the speech is based. But he is wrong when he says that every fact, referred to by the verse, is its interpretation, and when he says, for example, that the past events or the future happenings are the interpretations of the relevant verses. Again, he is wrong in thinking that only the verses describing the Divine Attributes and the events of the Day of Resurrection are ambiguous. Why do we say that he is wrong in these assumptions? The answer is as follows:

What is the meaning of the words: ''and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation, but none knows its interpretation except Allāh''? Do the pronoun ''it'' and ''its'' refer to ''the Book''? In other words, does the verse say that none knows the interpretation of the whole Book except Allāh? If the interpretation means real events and causes mentioned in the verses, then the above statement would not be correct, because interpretations (in the. meaning just described) of a great many verses are known to many other than Allāh and other than those who are firmly rooted in knowledge; in fact, it may be known to even those in whose hearts there is perversity — such are the verses narrating the stories of the past nations and the current events, and even the verses dealing with laws and ethics. Everyone can acquire the knowledge of these things, and no one can fail to understand their interpretation (in this meaning).

Or, do the pronouns, ''it'' and ''its'' refer to ''the part of the Book that is ambiguous''? If so, then it will be correct to restrict the knowledge of its interpretation to Allāh (or to Allāh and those firmly rooted in knowledge). And then it would be the import of the verse that none, except Allāh (and those firmly rooted in knowledge) should seek to interpret the ambiguous verses; otherwise, the people would be misled and misguided.

But it would be wrong in this case to say that only the verses describing the attributes and actions of Allāh, and those connected with the Day of Judgement were ambiguous. Misguidance is caused by misinterpretation of other types of verses too; for example, the verses related to the *sharī'ah* and the stories of the prophets and their nations. It has been claimed by a group that the main purpose of the

law is to reform and develop the society; if the good of the society depends on a law other than the one ordained by religion, or if that ordained law is no longer suitable for this enlightened era, a new law should be adopted and the religious command should be discarded. Likewise, it has been claimed that the miracles attributed by the Qur'ān to the prophets were not supernatural events; they were normal occurrences, which the Qur'ān narrated in a way as to put on them a halo of mystery; as a result of this dramatic style, it succeeded in attracting the attention of the audience and to make them submit to what they thought to be a super-power, above all powers. Such misleading explanations and interpretations are found in their hundreds in all the sects that have deviated from true Islam. And all are the result of interpreting the Qur'ān according to one's own liking, seeking to mislead the people. Therefore, it is wrong to say that only those verses are ambiguous which describe the Divine Attributes and the affairs of the Day of Resurrection.

Now, it should be clear that the meaning of ''interpretation'' given by us in the Commentary is the only true one:

Interpretation is that reality to which a verse refers; it is found in all verses, the decisive and the ambiguous alike; it is not a sort of a meaning of the word; it is a real fact that is too sublime for words; Allāh has dressed them with words so as to bring them a bit nearer to our minds; in this respect they are like proverbs that are used to create a picture in the mind and thus help the hearer to clearly grasp the intended idea. That is why Allāh has said: (I swear) *by the Book that makes manifest* (the truth); *surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may understand. And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom* (43:2 — 4). And this thing has been explicitly and implicitly mentioned in several Qur'ānic verses.

Moreover, you have seen in the Commentary that whenever the Qur'ān uses the word, ''interpretation'' (and it has been used seventeen times), it intends this very meaning, described by us.

4. Does Anyone, Other than Allāh, know the ''interpretation'' of the Qur'ān

This issue too has caused sharp controversy among the exegetes. The main reason of the controversy is the meaning of ‘‘and’’, in the sentence, ‘‘and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord’’. Is it a conjunctive? Or, has it been used only to begin a new sentence?

Some early exegetes, some Shāfi‘ites and most of the Shī‘ites believe that it is a conjunctive; that the verse says that those too who are firmly rooted in knowledge know the interpretation of the ambiguous verses of the Qur’ān.

Most of the early exegetes and the Ḥanafites believe that with this ‘‘and’’ a new sentence begins; that none knows the interpretation of the ambiguous except Allāh, Who has kept this knowledge to Himself. Both groups bring in their support a lot of academic explanations and traditions; the polemics goes on, arguments are put forward, are refuted by the opposite group, then the refutations in their turn are refuted; thus it goes on and on.

Both sides suffer from confusion about the issue to be decided. They have confused the interpretation of the Qur’ān with returning the ambiguous verse to the decisive. Therefore, it will be a waste of time and space to quote here their arguments and counter-arguments. So far as the traditions are concerned they are against the clear meaning of the Qur’ān:

1. Let us look, to begin with, at the traditions that say that those who are firmly rooted in knowledge know the interpretation. These traditions use ‘‘interpretation’’ as synonymous for the ‘‘intended meaning of the ambiguous’’; but, as mentioned repeatedly, interpretation of the Qur’ān is something else.

It has been narrated through the Sunnī chains that the Prophet prayed for Ibn ‘Abbās: ‘‘O Allāh! give him knowledge of the religion and teach him the interpretation.’’ And Ibn ‘Abbās is reported as saying: ‘‘I am among those who are firmly rooted in knowledge and I know its interpretation.’’ Also he said: ‘‘The decisive are the verses that abrogated and the ambiguous are the abrogated ones.’’ All these traditions put together give an impression that the decisive verse is the interpretation of the ambiguous one.

But we have already explained that this verse is not concerned with this sort of interpretation.

2. Now we come to those traditions that show that knowledge of the interpretation of the ambiguous verses is restricted to Allāh:

a) Ibn ‘Abbās is reported to recite the verse in this way: ‘‘and none knows its interpretation except Allāh, and say those who are firmly rooted in knowledge: ‘We believe in it . . .’ ’’ The same recitation is ascribed to Ubay ibn Ka‘b. Likewise, Ibn Mas‘ūd is reported to recite: ‘‘And its interpretation is not except with Allāh. And those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it . . .’ ’’

But such traditions can prove nothing: First, because such uncommon recitations are of no value at all; secondly, utmost that can be shown from them is that this verse does not prove that those who are firmly rooted in knowledge know the interpretation; but there is a world of difference between not proving that Zayd exists and proving that he does not exist.

b) It is narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarānī from Abū Mālik al-Ash‘arī that he heard the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying: ‘‘I am not afraid for my *ummah* but from three things: that their wealth would increase, and they would envy each other and kill each other; and that the Book would be opened for them, and the believer would take it seeking to interpret it, *and none knows its interpretation except Allāh; and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it, it is all from our Lord’; and none do mind except those having understanding;* and that their knowledge would increase and they would waste and neglect it.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

This tradition — if we accept that it has any relation with the subject matter — would only show that common believers did not know the interpretation; but it could not be proved from it that those too who were firmly rooted in knowledge did not have its knowledge. And the controversy is about this latter group; it is not about general believers.

c) Some people offer those traditions as their proof which say that the decisive verses should be followed and ambiguous ones should only be believed in.

But such traditions have no relevance to the issue under dispute.

d) al-Ālūsī has quoted in his *at-Tafsīr: al-Marfū'* (اَلْمَرْفُوْعُ)[1] tradition through Ibn Jarīr from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''The Qur'ān has been revealed on four words: The lawful, and the prohibited (none is excused from acquiring its knowledge); and the explanation (it is done by the scholars); and the ambiguous, none knows it except Allāh, and the one who claims to know it (except Allāh) is a liar.''

Let us have a cursory glance at this tradition: First, some names from the chain of its narrators are omitted. Secondly, it is against the previously mentioned traditions that say that the Prophet prayed for him to be given the knowledge of interpretation, and against his own claim that he had this knowledge. Thirdly, it is against the clear import of the Qur'ān that interpretation is something other than the meaning of the ambiguous.

What is, then, the reply to the question asked in the beginning? Does anyone, other than Allāh, know the interpretation of the Qur'ān? The answer is: Yes, the Qur'ān proves the possibility of the knowledge of its interpretation to someone other than Allāh; although this verse does not prove it.

Let us explain the second statement first. The context shows the theme of this verse: It wants to say that the Book is divided in two categories — the decisive and the ambiguous — and also the people are of two types: there is a group which, because of perversity of hearts, seeks to follow the ambiguous verses; and there is another group that is firmly rooted in knowledge and therefore follows the decisive verses and believes in the ambiguous ones. It is clear, in this light, that the phrase, ''those who are firmly rooted in knowledge'', is used here primarily to describe their good faith and behaviour *vis-a-vis* the Qur'ān, and to extol their virtue in contrast to those in whose hearts there is perversity. The sentence aims at nothing else. And there is no reason, so far as this verse is concerned, to join those who are firmly rooted in knowledge, with Allāh, in knowledge of the Book's interpretation. The arguments put forward in this respect are

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[1] *al-Marfū':* is a tradition in which a narrator mentions the name/s of person/s from whom he narrates, but a later narrator omits his/their name/s. (*tr.*)

defective, as we have shown above.

In short, the restriction, ‘‘none knows its interpretation except Allāh’’, remains valid, without any opposing or qualifying clause — there is no conjunction, exception or qualification in this absolute statement. Therefore, so far as this verse is concerned, the knowledge of the Qur’ān’s interpretation is reserved for Allāh.

Nevertheless, there may be other proofs to show that someone, other than Allāh, may be knowing this interpretation. There are in the Qur’ān instances in which an absolute restriction of one verse has been qualified by another. Take the example of the knowledge of the unseen. The Qur’ān has declared in many verses that it is confined to Allāh:

Say: ‘‘No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen but Allāh’’ (27:65).

Say: ‘‘The unseen is only for Allāh’’ (10:20).

And with Him are the keys of the unseen — none knows them but He (6:59).

And after all these restricting statements, comes the following verse:

The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses of an apostle’’ (72:26 — 27).

This verse clearly says that some persons other than Allāh, that is, the chosen apostles, are given the knowledge of the unseen.

Now time has come to discuss the first statement: Other verses of the Qur’ān prove that it is possible for someone, other than Allāh, to have the knowledge of the Qur’ān’s interpretation:

As repeatedly explained, interpretation is a real fact existing outside imagination, and the meaning of the verse has the same relation with it as a proverb has with its purpose and purport. Interpretation is not the meaning of the verse; rather it transpires through that meaning — a special sort of transpiration. There is a proverb in Arabic used when someone intends to do a work but has already destroyed its means: ‘‘In summer you spoiled the milk.’’ When it is used, its literal meaning (a woman’s spoiling the milk in summer) does not fit the occasion, yet it presents a clear picture before the eyes of the audience, and that picture leads to the purpose

of the talk.

The same is the case of the interpretation. There is a spiritual reality which is the main objective of ordaining a law, or basic aim of describing a Divine Attribute; there is an actual significance to which a Qur'ānic story refers. That spiritual reality or actual significance is not seen in the words or the meaning of the verse — that order, prohibition, explanation, or narration does not mention that spiritual reality or actual significance in its words. But it transpires from that order etc., because the order etc., is founded it We may as well say that the order or story etc., points to that spiritual reality or significance. A man tells his servant: ''Give me water to drink.'' This order emanates from the natural instinct of man to perfect his existence. It is this basic reality that demands preservation of self; this in its turn arranges to replace what is used up in the body; this requires replenishment with food and drink; this need is announced through hunger and thirst; thirst demands satiation, which in its turn causes the man to give that order to his servant. The interpretation of the said order, therefore, is the natural instinct of man to perfect his existence. If this reality, this natural instinct, changes for any reason, the order, ''Give me water'', also would change.

Likewise, various societies have some recognized ethical and social norms based on what they think to be good or evil. This in its turn, depends on a set of customs and traditions that are firmly settled in the doer's mind, through heredity and environment. This compound cause is the interpretation of his action and inaction. If those social factors change for any reason, his action and inaction will also change.

A subject — whether it is an order, a story or any other topic — that has an interpretation will certainly change if that interpreation changes. Now ponder on the words of Allāh: *then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is ambiguous, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it* (their own) *interpretation, but none knows its interpretation except Allāh.* Note that they have been condemned because they try to give that verse their own interpretation which is not the real one; and this misinterpretation causes misguidance and makes people go astray.

Had they followed its true interpretation then it could not be condemned. They would have followed truth and reality, it would have led them to the relevant decisive verses, and it would have been a praiseworthy act.

Now it is clear that the interpretations of the Qur'ān are the facts actually existing outside imagination; the Qur'ānic verses its spiritual realities, laws and stories — are based upon them; if supposedly any of those facts changes for any reason, the relevant verses would also surely change.

This fits perfectly the purport of the verse: (We swear) *by the Book that makes manifest* (the truth), *surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand. And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom* (43:2 — 4). This verse shows that the Qur'ān, when it was with Allāh, was too elevated to be comprehended by human understanding; too precise and firm to admit any break or fragmentation. But Allāh, because of His mercy, made it into a Book to be recited, and clothed it with Arabic language, so that people may understand what they could not comprehend as long as it was in the original, or basis, of the Book. This original or basis of the Book has been mentioned in these verses: *Allāh effaces what He pleases and establishes* (likewise), *and with Him is the basis of the Book* (13:39); *Nay! it is a glorious Qur'ān, in a guarded tablet* (85:21 — 22).

And in a general way the following verse also proves it:

(This is) *a Book, whose verses were confirmed* (or, made decisive), *then they were divided, from one Wise, All-aware* (11:1). The confirmation and decisiveness refers to its condition when it was with Allāh without any fragmentation or break, and the division refers to that state when it was made into chapters and verses and was revealed to the Prophet.

This last condition (division), which is based on the first (confirmation), is mentioned in the verse: *And a Qur'ān which We revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees, and We sent it down* (i.e., revealed it) *in portions* (17:106). It is clear that the Qur'ān, in its original, was undivided, then it was made into portions and sent down piecemeal and revealed gradually.

The above statement does not mean that the whole Qur'ān, when it

was with Allāh, was arranged in chapters and verses, a sort of a book written and bound, and then it was divided into pieces and sent to the Prophet a little bit at a time, so that he might read to the people by slow degrees, as a teacher divides a book in portions and teaches the student every day a portion according to his mental capacity. There is a basic difference between revealing the Qur'ān to the Prophet in portions and teaching a student a book, piece by piece. The verses were revealed according to the events that had a bearing on their revelation. But there is no such thing in teaching of a student. Various pieces that are to be taught to a student may be, and are, gathered and put together in a book form beforehand; then the teacher teaches a piece or a portion every day, as he thinks fit. But it cannot be said about many Qur'ānic verses, such as the following: *so forgive them and pass over them* (5:13); *fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you* (9:123); *Allāh has surely heard the plea of her who pleads with you about her husband and complains to Allāh* (58:1); *Take alms out of their wealth, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby* (9:103); there are numerous such verses. It is not possible to ignore the reasons and occasions that resulted in their revelation; one cannot arbitrarily say that this or that verse was revealed in the earlier or later days of the Call, discarding the reasons of its revelation. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Qur'ān was with Allāh in chapters and verses, as we know, it today.

And it shows that the ''Qur'ān'' mentioned in the verse, ''And a Qur'ān which We revealed in portions'', refers to a Qur'ān other than this one which is made of chapters and verses.

What one understands from the above verses, is that there is something, beyond this Qur'ān which is read and understood by us. And that ''something'' has the same relation with this Qur'ān as the spirit has with the body, or as the significance of a proverb has with that proverb. It is that spirit of this Qur'ān which is called by Allāh as: *the confirmed* (or wise) *Book* (10:1). The Qur'ānic teachings and meanings depend upon it. That spirit of the Qur'ān is not made of words or words' meanings.

The above-mentioned characteristics of the spirit of the Qur'ān are the same as those of the ''interpretation'' of the Qur'ān. The above discourse makes it even clearer; and makes us realize why it is said that the interpretation of the Qur'ān cannot be even touched by

common minds and unclean spirits.

Then Allāh says: *Most surely it is an honoued Qur'ān, in a Book that is hidden; none do touch it save the purified ones* (56:77 — 79). These verses clearly say that the purified servants of Allāh do touch the honoured Book which is hidden and protected from any change; minds cannot reach it, because that also would be a sort of a change. Anyhow, the purified ones do touch it — the only meaning of the words — ''touch'' in this context is that they know it and understand it. Also, it is known that this hidden Book is the same ''basis of the Book'' and ''original of the Book'' mentioned in the verses: *Allāh effaces what He pleases and establishes* (likewise), *and with Him is the basis of the Book* (13:39); *and surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom* (43:4).

Those are the people whose heart are purified; and this purification emanates from none other than Allāh, because He has attributed this purifying to Himself: *Allāh only desires to keep away the uncleanliness from you, O People of the House! and to purify you a* (thorough) *purifying* (33:33); *. . . but He intends to purify you* (5:6). Wherever in the Qur'ān, the spiritual purification is mentioned Allāh has attributed it to Himself or to His permission. What is this purity? It is removal of impurity and uncleanliness from the heart. What is meant by ''heart'' in this context? It is the means of perception, understanding and will. The purity of heart, then, is the purity of the soul in knowledge and belief as well as in will. Thus, the heart remains firm in its true beliefs, without any doubt or confusion; and this firmness makes it steadfast in following and acting upon that true belief and knowledge, obeying the commandments of Allāh, without deviating to the path of desire, without breaking the covenant of knowledge. Such a man is said to be firmly rooted in knowledge. Because the same are the characteristics, described by Allāh, of those who are firmly rooted in knowledge. Allāh has praised them that they are rightly guided and steadfastly firm on what they know; that there is no perversity in their hearts and they do not seek to mislead the people. These are the same characteristics as of the purified ones. It means that the purified ones are firmly rooted in knowledge.

But there is a fine distinction that should not be overlooked. What has

been proved above is this: The purified ones know the interpretation of the Qur'ān; and it is a concomitant of their purity that they are also firmly rooted in knowledge — because that purification is attributed to Allāh Who cannot fail in what He intends.

But it does not mean that the knowledge of the Qur'ānic interpretation is given to them because of their being firmly rooted in knowledge. In other words, the firmly rooted knowledge is not the cause of their knowledge of the Qur'ānic interpretation, because the verse does not prove it; rather it may be inferred from its context that they were not conversant with that interpretation: ''(they) say: 'We believe in it, it is all from our Lord' ''. Moreover, Allāh has praised some of the people of the Book that they were firmly rooted in knowledge, and has extolled them for their acceptance of true faith and good deeds; and still it does not show that they knew the interpretation of the Book. The relevant verse is as follows: *But those firmly rooted in knowledge among them as well as the believers believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down before you* . . . (4:162).

Also, it should be noted that the verse: *None do touch it save the purified ones* (56:79), proves only that the purified ones ''touch'' the hidden Book; in other words, they know the interpretation of the Qur'ān to a certain extent. But it does not say that they have comprehensive knowledge of its complete interpretation, or that they are not unacquainted of any portion of its interpretation at any time. The verse is silent on this matter. If it is to be proved, some other evidence should be brought for it.

5. Why the Book Contains the Ambiguous Verses

One of the objections levelled against the Qur'ān is the one based on the presence of the ambiguous verses in it. They say: The Muslims claim that whatever the mankind would need for its guidance upto the Day of Resurrection is in the Qur'ān; that it is a decisive word that distinguishes between truth and falsehood. And then we see that every group, among the innumerable Muslim sects,

relies on the Qur'ān to prove the correctness of its beliefs and actions. It would not have been possible if there were no ambiguity in its verses. Had this Book been made clear and kept free from this maze of ambiguous verses, it would have served its purpose in a better way, and there would not have been any chance of controversy and perversity.

The Muslims have variously replied to this objection; some of the replies are patently absurd and foolish. For example:

''The presence of ambiguous verses makes it hard to get to the truth, and entails intense search and research. This makes the true believer eligible to better and greater reward! ''

''Had it clearly supported a certain sect, all other sects would have left it unread and unstudied. It is because of the ambiguous verses that all of them look into, and ponder on it; and thus there remains a possibility that they would see the right path and follow it.''

''The ambiguous verses have made it necessary to seek support of one's views from rational arguments. Thus, these verses take the Muslims out of the darkness of blind following into the light of contemplation and research.''

''The presence of such verses compelled the Muslims to argue about their various interpretations; and this is in its turn led them to master various branches of knowledge, like language, conjugation, syntax, and fundamentals of jurisprudence! ''

Such replies do not merit any comment. There are three other replies which we append below with our comments:

First: The Qur'ān contains ambiguous verses, so that the hearts may be purified by believing in them. Had all the verses been distinct, decisive and clear — about which nobody could have any doubt — believing in them would have not been a meaningful and significant thing; it would have not entailed surrender to the words of Allāh and submission to His apostles.

Comment: Submission is the reaction of a weaker person in front of a stronger force. A man surrenders before a thing, the greatness of which he comprehends; or before a thing that is beyond his comprehension, and with whose greatness he is completely overwhelmed; like the power, greatness and other Attributes of Allāh

— when man tries to understand them, he feels stunned and bewildered.

But why should he submit to a thing which, although beyond his comprehension, seems to him within his grasp? If a man mistakenly believes that he knows the interpretation of an ambiguous verse (although in fact he does not know it), he will never submit himself to it nor will he surrender before its greatness.

Second: Ambiguous verses were revealed to motivate the minds to meditate and research. Had all the verses been distinct there would not have been any need for mental exercise and the power of understanding would have withered away. And understanding is the most precious element of human life; it must be nourished and developed for the sake of human perfection.

Comment: Allāh has ordered the man to meditate and ponder on the signs found in the universe and in the man himself — this exhortation is sometimes phrased in general terms and often with reference to particular subjects, like the creation of the heavens, the earth, the mountains, the trees, the animals and the human beings; the difference in colours and languages of mankind etc. He has called him to think and meditate, to walk in the earth and take lesson from the previous nations' affairs. He has forcefully urged them to apply the minds to the wonders of the world and to think hard. And He has extolled knowledge and cognition in the best terms.

Was not all this enough for sharpening the mind and intensifying the intelligence? Was there any further need of sending down ambiguous verses — to trap the minds and ensnare the intellect?

Third: The prophets were sent to all the people — the average ones and the above average, the intelligent and the dull, the learned and the ignorant. Some realities and ideas cannot be explained in plain language. Such subjects must necessarily be described in a language clothed with allegory and metaphor. Only the learned, intelligent and the above average persons will be able to understand it; common people must necessarily be told to believe in it and leave the matter to Allāh.

Comment: The Book, according to the verse under discussion, contains some ambiguous verses, and some decisive ones which are the basis of the Book, and which do explain the ambiguous verses

when they are returned to them (decisive ones). In other words, the ambiguous verses do not contain any ideas other than those which may be clarified by the decisive ones. And it leaves the question still unanswered: What is the use of the ambiguous verses when all their meanings are clearly described by the decisive ones?

The exegete, who wrote this reply, seems a bit confused. He has divided the meanings of the Qur'ān into two mutuallyexclusive groups: Meanings that may be understood by one and all (and they are the meanings of the decisive verses), and those that cannot be understood except by some special people (and they are the connotations of the ambiguous ones). If we accept this classification, then the ambiguous verses shall not be returned to the decisive ones — but it is against the clear declarations of the Qur'ān that its verses explain each other.

If no reply is free from defect, then what is the answer to the question given in the beginning?

The fact is that the presence of ambiguous verses is necessary in the Qur'ān, and it has resulted from the existence of the interpretation. When we use the word, ''interpretation'', we refer to its true connotation explained under the third heading. Various ambiguous verses, when compared with each other, lead to the said interpretation.

To understand this statement, one should first ponder on the style of the Qur'ān, the factors on which the Divine teachings are based, and the ultimate aim of the revelation. We may describe it as following:

1. Allāh has said that there is an interpretation for His Book. All the Qur'ānic realities, laws and teachings move around that interpretation. But the said interpretation is a sublime reality; minds cannot grasp it; intelligence cannot reach it; and imagination cannot perceive it. The only exception is of those purified souls from whom Allāh has removed every impurity; only they can touch it.

It is the ultimate that Allāh demands from human beings — that they should answer His call to acquire the real knowledge of His Book. This Book has the explanation of everything, and the key to its secrets is the Divine Purification. Allāh says: *Allāh does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you* (5:7). In other words, the ultimate

aim of ordination of the *sharī'ah* is the said Divine Purification.

This human perfection, like other ideals, is not attained except by a few special persons, although the Call is addressed to all. The religious training creates purity in various degrees in various people. Some reach its highest point, some to various points in between. It is like the piety (i.e., fear of Allāh) to which Islam invites: . . . *fear Allāh as is due to Him* . . . (3:102). But only a handful of believers acquire perfect piety; others remain behind them, and a third band behind the second, and so on. It happens because people differ in their aptitudes and understanding.

The same is the case with social norms. The society expects every member to reach the zenith of all desirable characteristics, like knowledge, industry, riches, comfort etc. — but only a few attain this goal; others remain behind at various points in the way, because of difference in their abilities.

Although society never remains without some individuals who attain the highest possible rank in all perfections, not everyone reaches there.

2. The Qur'ān declares that the only way by which a man can reach this destination is to know himself, by acquiring true knowledge and acting upon it. On the side of knowledge, he should be taught the realities about his beginning and end as well as about what is between these two points; then he may truly know himself, in the context of all relevant realities. On the side of action, he should be made to follow the social rules — the rules that would make him live a good social life, and would not hinder him from the pursuit of knowledge and contemplation; then he should be told to perform rites of Divine Worship — these rites, if performed regularly, draw the soul towards the Creator, help the heart in concentrating on one's beginning and end, and bring it nearer to the spiritual perfection and purity, keeping it clean from the filth and dirt of materialism.

First study the verse: *To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed lifts them up* (35:10). Then add to it the following, among other such verses:

> *Allāh does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you . . .* (5:7).

O you who believe! take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way (5:105).

Allāh will exalt those of you who believe and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees (58:11).

Then you will clearly see what was the aim of Allāh in sending down the religion and guiding the man to it, and appreciate the way He used for this guidance.

Through all this, we reach to an important conclusion:

The social laws of Islam are the stepping stones for the rites of Divine Worship, which in their turn lead the man to the knowledge of Allāh and of His Signs. Even a minor infringement of, and change or alteration in, these social laws would disturb and deflect the commandments concerning Divine Worship; and that in its turn would disrupt the man's knowlede of Allāh.

It is a clear conclusion; and the experience shows its truth. If you ponder on the manner in which corruption stealthily crept into Islamic affairs, and find out how it began and where it has reached, you will see that it began with social laws, then surreptitiously it contaminated the rites of worship and ended with the rejection of the spiritual realities and man's knowledge of Allāh.

Also, it was described earlier that the misleading began with following the ambiguous verses, seeking to interpret them according to the people's own liking.

3. Religious guidance is based on two pillars: Prohibition of blind following, and progress of knowledge among the religionists to the furthest limit. It is in conformity with the ultimate goal of Islam, that is, the knowledge. There is not a single Divine Book, nor a single religion, that puts so much empahsis on knowledge, and so forcefully exhorts its followers to seek it to the farthest corners of the world as Islam does.

That is why the Qur'ān explains first, the spiritual realities, and then shows the relation of its practical laws to those realities. It tells the man that he exists because Allāh has created him by His own power; and has appointed some intermediate agents for his creation and survival, like the angels, the skies, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the vegetables, the animals and, in short, the time and the space. Now he is being irresistibly driven towards his returning place and time; striving hard to reach his Lord to

meet Him; then he shall be recompensed for what he has done — either to the paradise or to the hell. This is the first set of the spiritual knowledge.

Then the Qur'ān teaches him which deeds would lead him to the felicity of the paradise, and which to the infelicity of the hell. In other words, it teaches him the rules of Divine Worship and the social laws. This is the second set of that knowledge.

Then it makes him understand that these laws and commandments lead to the bliss in the next world. In other words, it tells him that the second set is related to the first; that these laws have been ordained for his own benefit, as they contain his good of this world as of the next. This is the third set.

The second set is like the preliminary; the first is like its conclusion; and the third is like the binding cord that joins the second set with the first. The verses describing all these sets are numerous and clear in their meaning; and it is not necessary to quote them here.

4. People, generally, do not comprehend what cannot be perceived by the five senses; they do not understand ideas and realities beyond the limit of matter and nature. And those who train their minds through academic exercises to understand abstract ideas and spiritual meanings, are not all on the same level — each attains a certain degree of intellectual development and can-not understand that which is beyond it. This phenomenon causes sharp divergence in their perception of spiritual and metaphysical subjects. This vast difference is a fact tha none can deny.

When we want to explain to someone a certain new idea we can do so only with the help of his previously acquired knowledge. If his perception is limited to the natural phenomena, that new idea can only be explained within the framework of that limited understanding. For example, if one wants to explain the ''taste'' of marriage to a minor child, one could only say that it was sweet like honey. And if that person has some advanced intellectual capacity, we may explain those spiritual realities to the extent of his ability.

Also, it should be understood that the religious guidance is not for a special group; it is for all the people.

5. These two factors — the difference in people's understanding and the fact that religious guidance is meant for all the people — together with the existence of the interpretation for the Qur'ān, made it necessary that the spiritual realities be described in the words and phrases akin to proverbs and simile. It takes what the man already

knows and uses it, because of a certain similarity, to create a picture of what he does not know. As a commodity is weighed with a stone or iron weight — there is no resemblance between the stone or iron and that commodity in form or substance, mass or volume, kind or species; the only similarity is in weight.

The Qur'ān has, in the verses quoted earlier (e.g., *Surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān, so that you may understand. And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom,* 43:3 — 4) has hinted to this fact. But it has not stopped there. It has described it clearly with the help of a parable concerning truth and falsehood; *He sends down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling form, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth; thus does Allāh set forth parables* (13:17).

This parable is as much true about Allāh's action as it is about His word. His action, like His word, is meant for truth; but both are accompanied by some unintended things. Those unintended things temporarily cover, and come above, the intended truth; but they soon go away; the truth remains and survives to benefit the people, and the scum is removed by another truth.

The above-mentioned phenomenon is a mirror of the ambiguous verses. Such a verse contains a true meaning that is actually intended; but it is accompanied by another unintended meaning that hides the intended one and races to the minds before it. But soon it is overcome and removed by another truth (a decisive verse) that indentifies the true meaning, and erases the unintended one, although it had temporarily gained the upper hand. It is so that the truth is shown to be truth by His words, and falsehood is seen to be falsehood, even though the guilty may be averse to it.

This explanation shows how the parable fits the Divine words; it may in the same manner be applied to His actions.

The parable shows that the Divine realities and spiritual knowledge are like the water which Allāh sends down from the heavens. At that time it is water, in the pure sense of the word,

unencumbered with any other condition. Then it starts flowing in the valleys; and now it takes the shape of the watercourse — a wide river, a narraow stream and so on. These shapes and measures are established facts, they are not imaginary things. (In this respect they resemble the benefits of the rules of the *sharī'ah* — we have said that they are the binding cord that connect those rules with the spritual truths. This characteristic of the rules is an established fact; it does not depend on verbal description.)

Those rules, in the course of their flow, are often accompanied by swelling foam that appears for a time being and then vanishes. An example may be given of an abrogated verse; in the nature of thing it should have remained in force permanently, but another verse comes along, abrogates it, and puts another rule in its place. This development also is an established fact; it does not matter whether this religious reality has been clothed with words.

The spiritual realities and metaphysical ideas, inasmuch as they are placed in the containers of the words, take the shape of those containers; and are fettered with the demands of the word and the language — though originally they had no such limitation or restraint. These words are true and fact, because they were chosen by the truthful Speaker to convey His message. Yet they are like a similitude that represents the real meaning — the meaning that is unfettered by the words, unencumbered by the shapes of these containers. Therefore, the words pass through the minds of the hearers and unintended meanings surround them and ride high above them. It happens because the minds look at the words in the light of their previously acquired ideas. This mostly happens about those realities that are not familiar to common minds, like the spiritual facts, the real reason for which a certain rule was ordained and so on. But so far as the rules themselves are concerned, there occurs no change, because invariably always they talk about what is within the sphere of man's own activities, and is, therefore, familiar to him. This discourse shows that ambiguous verses are ambiguous because they contain the spiritual realities and not the rules of religion and *sharī'ah.*

6. Now we have reached the stage where we may explain why the presence of ambiguous verses was necessary in the Qur'ān.

The verbal expressions of the Qur'ān are like similitudes to the sublime Divine realities. Those realities have been brought down, in these verses, to the level of common minds. An average mind does not perceive except the natural phenomena; it cannot comprehend the abstract Divine realities unless they are put in the mould of concrete expressions.

When pure spiritual facts are expressed in terms of body and matter, either of the two things may happen — both of them dangerous:

a) The mind may stop at those material expressions, taking them to mean natural phenomena. It will thus fail to see the reality beyond those expressions. It will, in short, take a proverb in its literal sense, not knowing that it signifies something else; and that that something is often not shown by its letters. Thus the intended meaning will be neglected. The minds will not try to look behind the screen of the words, as it will not know that it has missed anything.

b) If the mind realizes that the verse is a sort of a similitude and tries to see beyond the curtain of the words, by removing from it unwanted elements that have no bearing on its intended significance, then there is a danger that it may discard some important element or leave intact some unnecessary one.

There is an Arabic proverb: ''In the morning, the travellers appreciate the previous night's journey.'' Because we know the story behind this saying, when we hear it, we dispense with all its surrounding details, like the morning, the travellers and the previous nights's journey. What we understand from the proverb is this: A work is appreciated only when it is completed and its good results begin to appear; but so long as the man is engaged in that work and is undergoing hardships in that activity he does not like it. If we did not know the story, and stopped at the literal meaning of the proverb, we would not know its significance, and the proverb would turn into a proposition or news.

On the other hand, if we did not know the story but realized that it was a proverb, we would not know how much of it should be discarded and what was its true significance.

There is only one way to avoid these two dangers, and that is to express that one significance in various proverbs, moulding each in a

different mould — one proverb would contain some details that would be missing from the other, and the former would not have some details of the latter, and so on. In this way, those sentences would, through comparison and action and reaction, clarify each other and all together would show their true significance. First, the hearer, on hearing various expressions, would realize that they were not used in their literal sense; they were like the similitudes describing an abstract idea in the moulds of various concrete expressions. Thereafter, he would be in a position to know which details were to be discarded and which to be retained — because the essential factors would be present in every sentence, while unnecessary ones would be missing from one or the other.

This device to explain difficult ideas and complicated thoughts is not peculiar to the Qur'ān. It is found in every language, every nation and every place. Man, by his nature, knows that if only one story, proverb or similitude is given to illustrate an abstract idea, unessential details would confuse the minds, and might convey to them a wrong meaning. Therefore, he tries to make the audience understand his idea with the help of a lot of stories and varied similitudes. So that they may distinguish the true significance from the unnecessary details.

It is now crystal clear that it was necessary — nay, essential — that the Qur'ān should contain ambiguous verses; and that that ambiguousness should be removed with the help of other unambiguous verses. Those who object on the presence of such verses in the Qur'ān do not know what they are talking about.

6. Conclusion

This discourse on ambiguous and decisive verses and the Qur'ānic interpretation has become a bit lengthy. But through it, we have been able to clarify the following ten points:

First: The Qur'ān contains two kinds of verses, the decisive and the ambiguous. If a verse, seen alone, is capable of more than one meaning, it is ambiguous; otherwise, it is decisive.

Second: The whole Qur'ān, with all its decisive and ambiguous

verses, has its interpretation. That interpretation is not the connotation of its words; it is an actually existing reality; a reality that has the same relation with the knowledge, facts and ideas mentioned in the Qur'ān, as the significance of a proverb has with that proverb. All the Qur'ānic knowledge is like a similitude for the Qur'ānic interpretation that is with Allāh.

Third: The interpretation may be known to the purified servants of Allāh; they are the ones who are also firmly rooted in knowledge.

Fourth: It has been said in the second conclusion that the Qur'ānic knowledge and ideas are like a similitude for the Qur'ānic interpretation. Now, we come to a further lower level, that is, the Qur'ānic words and expressions. These words and expressions, in their turn, are like a similitude to the abovementioned Qur'ānic knowledge, facts, and ideas.

Fifth: It was as essential for the Qur'ān to include some ambiguous verses, as it was to have some decisive ones.

Sixth: The decisive verses are the basis of the Book, to which the ambiguous ones are returned, that is, the latter are explained with the help of the former.

Seventh: Decisiveness and ambiguousness are relative qualities. The same verse may be decisive in one context and ambiguous in another. Also, it may be decisive in comparison to one verse and ambiguous in relation to the other.

There is no absolutely ambiguous verse in the Qur'ān; although there is no reason why one or more verses may not be decisive.

Eighth: It is essential that the verses of the Qur'ān should explain each other.

Ninth: The meaning of the Qur'ān has various grades. They are placed vertically one behind the other. They are not ranked side by side, horizontally; otherwise, it would entail the use of one word in more than one meaning — and it is not permissible. Nor are they like real and metaphorical meanings; nor like various adjunct meanings attached to a real one. Rather, they are all various grades of the one real meaning — thus, they all are its real meanings, and the peoples' minds comprehend its various grades, according to their intellectual and spiritual capacity.

This statement requires some elaboration:

Allāh has said: *Fear Allāh as is due to Him* (3:102). The word, *''at-taqwā''* (اَلتَّقْوي = piety, fear of Allāh), denotes abstaining from what Allah has forbidden and doing what He has ordered. As the verse shows, the highest grade of piety is the one mentioned therein: ''as is due to Allāh''. By inference, there must be other lower grades. ''Piety'', or in other words, ''good deeds'', are therefore of various grades, one above the other.

Also, He says: *Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allāh like him who has brought upon himself the wrath from Allāh, and whose abode is hell? And it is an evil destination. They are of* (diverse) *grades with Allāh, and Allāh sees what they do* (3:162 — 163).

It shows that all deeds — good and evil alike — are of various grades and ranks. That the diverse grades mentioned in the verse refer to the deeds, is clear from the concluding sentence, ''and Allāh sees what they do''. Two more verses are as follows:—

And for all are grades according to what they did, and so that He may pay them back fully their deeds and they shall not be dealt with unjustly (46:19).

And all have grades according to what they do; and your Lord is not heedless of what they do (6:132).

There are many verses of this tenor, and among them are those that show that the grades of the paradise and depths of the hell are based on the grades and degrees of the good and bad deeds respectively.

It is known that action, of whatever kind it may be, emanates from knowledge, that is, from the relevant conviction of the heart. That is why Allāh has proved infidelity of the Jews, evil intentions of the polytheists, and duplicity of the hypocrites from their actions; as the belief and faith of the prophets and the believers has been proved from their actions. The verses having this semantic flow are very numerous and there is no need to quote them here.

Every action emanates from a relevant knowledge and demonstrates it. And then that action enhances that relevant knowledge and belief and makes it firmly settled in the mind and soul. As Allāh says:

And (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways; and Allāh is most surely with the*

doers of good (29:69).

And worship thou thy Lord until there comes to you the certainty (or, that which is certain) (15:99).

Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allāh and used to mock them (30:10).

So He made hypocrisy to follow as a consequence into their hearts till the day when they shall meet Him because they failed to perform towards Allāh what they had promised with Him and because they told lies (9:77).

There are a lot of verses of this significance; and they show that every action — good or bad — creates knowledge or ignorance (i.e., wrong knowledge) respectively.

There is a verse that contains the gist of this topic about good deeds and useful knowledge:

To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed lifts them up (35:10).

It clearly says that the good word, that is, true belief, ascends to Allāh and brings the believers nearer to Him; and the good deeds lifts this knowledge and belief up. The ascension of knowledge and belief depends on their purity from doubt and confusion; and on undisturbed attention of the soul towards Allāh. The more intense this purity, the higher the reach of that knowledge and belief.

The words used in the verse hint to this fact: The good words do ascend, and the good deeds do lift them up. Ascension is opposite of descension, and lifting up is opposite of putting down. When a thing moves from a lower to a higher level it is described in these two terms that look at the two points of the movement. It is said to be ascending, because it moves towards the higher level, coming nearer to it; and is said to be rising or lifting up, because it leaves the lower place moving away from it.

The good deeds lift the man up and remove him away from this transient world and its base desires. They do not let him ensnare himself in the trinkets of this material life, or to go and get lost in the maze of the unenduring and ever-changing ‘‘knowledge’’. The more the good deeds lift him up, the higher his good words do ascend, and purer becomes his spiritual knowledge, farther from the impurities of confusion, doubt and imagination.

The good deeds are of diverse grades and degrees; and every grade lifts the good words and creates the knowledge of Divine realities according to its own strength and condition.

The same details are true, in reverse, for the evil deeds and bad words, that is, wrong knowledge. Evil deeds sink down the man into the yawning depths of ignorance, hypocrisy and infidelity. This subject was discussed in short in the Commentary of the verse, *Guide us to the straight path* (1:6).

Now, it is clear from above that people are of different grades and ranks, so far as their nearness or distance from Allāh is concerned. It all depends on their good or evil deeds and good or evil words, that is, knowledge. It goes without saying that what people of a certain grade would understand from a Divine Speech would be quite different from what those on a higher or lower level would understand from the same. That is what we mean when we say that the Qur'ān has various meanings, all ranked vertically one behind the other.

Allāh has mentioned in the Qur'ān various categories of His servants, and has reserved for each a special kind of knowledge and cognition, For example:

a) Those who are freed (from sins) — they have been given knowledge of the attributes of their Lord: *Hallowed be Allāh, from what they ascribe, except the servants of Allāh, freed* (from sins) (37:159 — 160). They have also been given some other knowledge, which we shall describe, Allāh willing, in some other place.

b) Those who are sure — they have the distinction. of being shown the kingdom of the heavens and the earth: *And thus did We show Ibrāhīm the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure* (6:75).

c) Those who turn to Him again and again — they have been favoured with minding: . . . *and none minds but he who turns* (to Him) *again and again* (40:13).

d) The learned ones — they understand the parables of the Qur'ān: *And these examples, We set them forth for the people, and none understand them but the learned* (29:43). They are also the people of understanding who meditate on the Qur'ān: *Do they not then reflect on the Qur'ān? Nay, on the hearts there are locks*

(47:24); *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān ? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82). The three verses point to the same meaning — those who understand and meditate on the Qur'ān, know the true meaning of the ambiguous verses returning them to the decisive ones.

e) The purified ones — they have the special distinction of the knowledge of the interpretation of the Book: *Most surely it is an honoured Qur'ān, in a Book that is hidden; none do touch it save the purified ones* (56:77 — 79).

f) The friends of Allāh — they are the people submerged in the love of Allāh; they are inattentive to everything other than Allāh; that is why they are afraid of nothing and grieve for nothing: *Now surely the friends of Allāh — they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve* (10:62).

Likewise, there are those who are near to Allāh, the chosen ones, the truthful ones, the good ones and the believers. Each of these groups has a special kind of knowledge and perception reserved to it; and we shall describe them under relevant verses.

Face to face with these, are the grades of evil and falsehood, every grade having a peculiar type of misinformation and ignorance. The people of those grades are called unbelievers, sinners, unjust and so on. They are inclined to misinterpret the signs of Allāh, and not to grasp the spiritual realities and their knowledge. For the sake of brevity, the verses are not given here.

Tenth: The Qur'ānic verses have the capacity to be applied wherever their meanings come true. A verse is not confined to the event or circumstances in which it was revealed. It covers all situations that are akin to the circumstances of its revelation. In this respect also they are like the proverbs that are not restricted to their original occasion, but are applied to all similar situations. The principle is called the ''flow of the Qur'ān'', of which a short description was written in the beginning of the first volume.

TRADITIONS

It is written in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī: Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) was

asked about the decisive and the ambigous verses. He said: ‘‘The decisive is that which is acted upon; and the ambiguous is that which is doubtful for the one who is ignorant of it.’’

The author says: There is a hint in the last sentence that the knowledge of the meaning of the ambiguous verse is possible to him who is not ignorant of it.

The same book quotes the same Imām as saying: ‘‘The Qur’ān is decisive and ambiguous. As for the decisive, you believe in it, act upon it and submit to it; and as for the ambiguous, you believe in it but do not act upon it. And it is the word of Allāh, Mighty and Great is He: *then as for those in whose hearts there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is ambiguous, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it* (their own) *interpretation, but none knows its interpretation except Allāh; and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it, it is all from our Lord.’* And those who are firmly rooted in knowledge are the progeny of Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.).’’

The author says: We shall discuss the last sentence later.

The same book quotes Mas‘adah ibn Sadaqah as saying: ‘‘I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the abrogating (verse), and the abrogated, and the decisive and ambiguous (ones). He said: ‘The abrogating is the firm (verse) that is acted upon; and the abrogated is the one that was acted upon and then came the verse that abrogated it; and the ambiguous is the one that is doubtful to him who is ignorant of it.’ ’’

In another tradition this reply is reported as follows: ‘‘The abrogating is the firm (verse); and the abrogated is the one that passed away; and the decisive is the one that is acted upon; and the ambiguous is the one whose one part resembles the other.’’

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a tradition: ‘‘So the abrogated (verses) are among the ambiguous ones.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: ‘‘He who returned the ambiguous (part) of the Qur’ān to its decisive (part), was guided to the straight path.’’ Then he said: ‘‘Verily, there is ambiguous in our traditions, like the

ambiguous of the Qur'ān; therefore, return its ambiguous to its decisive, and do not follow its ambiguous, lest you go astray.'' (*'Uyūnu 'l-akhbār*)

The author says: All the above-mentioned traditions explain the term ''ambiguous'' in nearly the same way. All of them support our earlier statement that the verses' ambiguousness may be removed by explaining them in the light of the decisive verses. Also, it was explained why the abrogated verse was counted among the ambiguous: It is because it seems to promulgate a perpetual law and then comes the abrogating verse and shows that its ''perpetuity'' is cut short. The word of the Imām, that there was ambiguous in their traditions like the ambiguous of the Qur'ān and decisive like the decisive of the Qur'ān, is supported by many other traditions of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), that are nearly *al-mutawātir*. Reason also supports it. Their traditions deal with the same subjects that are described in the Qur'ān; and ambiguousness is the characteristic of those subjects inasmuch as they are clothed with the words; it is not a characteristic of the word, *per se*. In short, ambiguousness happens because the verses are like the parables of the sublime spiritual facts. And this factor is equally present in the traditions. Therefore, like the Qur'ān, the traditions also are ambiguous and decisive. And it has been narrated that the Prophet said: ''We, the group of the prophets, have been ordered to talk with the people according to the capacity of their understanding.''

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad from his father (peace be on them both) that a man said to Amīru 'l-mu'minīn (a.s.): ''Will you describe to us our Lord, so that we may love and know Him more.'' Hearing it, he became angry and delivered a sermon, in which he said:

''You should stick, O servant of Allāh: to what the Qur'ān has shown you about His attributes, and the Apostle has guided you about His knowledge; and seek illumination from the light of his guidance, because it is a bounty and a wisdom that you have been given. Therefore, accept what you have been given and be of the grateful ones. And whatever task Satan imposes on you, which neither the Book has imposed upon you nor the traditions of the Apostle and the (truly) guiding Imāms have ordered you (to know), then entrust its knowledge to Allāh; and do not (try to)

measure the greatness of Allāh. And know, O servant of Allāh! that those who are firmly rooted in knowledge are those whom Allāh has kept above the need of crashing into the screens put before the unseen; so they took it upon themselves to acknowledge all that they were unaware of its explanation, from the unseen that is screened off, and they said: *'We believe in it, it is all from our Lord.'* And Allāh has praised (them for) their acknowledging their inability to get that which their knowledge had not encompassed. And when they refrained from going into what Allāh had not ordered them to search, Allāh called this refraining as *being firmly rooted in knowledge.* Therefore, be content with this much, and do not measure the greatness of Allāh with the measure of your understanding; otherwise, you would be of those who are doomed to perdition.''

The author says: The sentence, ''And know . . . that those who are firmly rooted in knowledge . . .'', throws further light on the meaning of ''and'' in the word of Allāh, ''and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say . . .''. This tradition shows that, according to the Imām, that ''and'' is not a conjunctive; it starts a new sentence, as we have explained in the Commentary. What this tradition, however, shows is that this verse does not prove that those who are firmly rooted in knowledge know the interpretation of the Qur'ān; not that it proves that they do not know the said interpretation. It does not deny the existence of other proofs to show that they know this interpretation, as we have explained earlier; and some traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* also support it. The words, ''are those whom Allāh has kept above the need of . . .'', are the predicate of the subject, ''those who are firmly rooted . . .''

The sermon exhorts the enquirer to hold fast to the practice of those who are firmly rooted in knowledge; to confess his ignorance of what he does not know — in this way he would become one of them.

It means that, according to the Imām, those people are firmly rooted in knowledge who hold fast to what they know and do not cross the boundary to what they do not know. ''The unseen that is hidden behind the screens'' is the intended meaning of the ambiguous verse that is hidden from common minds. That is why the

Imām mentioned soon after that they ‘‘acknowledge all that they were unaware of its explanation from the unseen . . .’’; note that he did not say, ‘‘unaware of its interpretation . . .’’.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘We are those who are firmly rooted in knowledge; and we know its interpretation.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: It may appear from this tradition that the Imām took the word ‘‘and’’, in the verse, ‘‘and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge’’, as a conjunctive and that, in addition to Allāh, those also knew the Qur’ānic interpretation who were firmly rooted in knowledge. But this apparent connotation is not in place, because of the explanation given earlier, and also because of the preceding tradition.

Also, it is possible that the Imām used the word ‘‘interpretation’’, as a synonymous for ‘‘exegesis’’; such usage was common in the early centuries.

‘‘. . . and we know its interpretation’’: A preceding tradition also had said: ‘‘And those who are firmly rooted in knowledge are the progeny of Muḥammad’’. This statement is found in other traditions too. All this is a part of the flow of the Qur’ān — applying the verses wherever they fit perfectly.

It is reported in *al-Kāfī* from Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam that he said: ‘‘Abu ’l-Ḥasan Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (a.s.) told me: ‘. . . O Hishām! Verily, Allāh quoted a good people as saying: *Our Lord! Make not our hearts to deviate after Thou hast guided us* (aright); *and grant us from Thee mercy; surely Thou art the most liberal Giver.* They were aware that the hearts could deviate and return to their blindness and perdition. Verily, he did not fear Allāh who did not understand from Allāh; and (as for him) who did not understand from Allāh, his heart would not be resolute with a confirmed knowledge, which he could visualize and whose reality he could find in his heart. And only that one can be like this whose word confirms his deeds, and whose private (life) is in conformity with his manifest (one); because Allāh (Honoured is His name!) did not prove (one’s) esoteric (and) hidden wisdom except through its manifestation and declaration.’ ’’

The author says:‘‘Verily, he did not fear Allāh who did not

understand from Allāh'': It expresses the same idea as the words of Allāh: *Verily fear Allāh only those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge* (35:28). The sentence, ''and (as for him) who did not understand from Allāh, his heart would not be resolute with a confirmed knowledge . . .'', is the best expression to explain the significance of being firmly rooted in knowledge. Unless a reality is thoroughly understood, the loopholes of doubts and confusion would not be closed, and the heart would remain perturbed and perplexed in believing it. But when the understanding is completed and the heart resolutely believes in it, it would not go against the dictates of that firm knowledge; and would not fo[l]low the temptations of desire. Then there would be no discrepancy between his secret and open lives; what would be in his heari: would manifest itself through his deeds; what he would say would conform with what he does.

The words, ''and only that one can be like this whose word confirms . . .'', describe the characteristics of those who are firmly rooted in knowledge.

Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and aṭ-Ṭabarānī have narrated from Anas, Abū Amāmah, Wāthilah ibn Asqa' and Abu 'd-Dardā' that the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was asked about: *those who are firmly rooted in knowledge.* He said: ''He whose oath is abode by, and his tongue is truthful, and his heart is steadfast, and whose stomach and genitals are chaste, then that is among those who are firmly rooted in knowledge.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This tradition may be explained in terms of the preceding one.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ''Verily, those who are firmly rooted in knowledge are those in whose knowledge there is no discrepancy.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: This explanation fits the verse perfectly. The verse shows that perversity and deviation of heart is opposite of firmly rooted knowledge. Therefore, there would be no deviation, confusion and discrepancy in the knowledge of those who are firmly

rooted in knowledge.

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad, at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, aṭ-Ṭabarānī and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Umm Salmah: ‘‘Verily, the Apostle of Allāh used to say very often in his invocations, ‘O Allāh, O Turner of the hearts! Keep my heart firm on thy religion.’ I said: ‘O Apostle of Allāh! and do the hearts turn?’ He said: ‘Yes. Allāh has not created a single human being from the progeny of Adam but that his heart is between two of the fingers of Allāh; then if He wills, He keeps it straight; and if He wills, He turns it away . . .’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: This idea has been narrated through several chains from a number of companions, like Jābir, Nawwās ibn Sam‘ān, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar and Abū Hurayrah. The well-known are the words of the tradition of Nawwās: ‘‘The heart of the son of Adam is between two of the fingers of the Beneficent (Allāh).’’ And the same words have been narrated, as I think, by ash-Sharīf ar-Raḍī in his *al-Majāzātu ’n-nabawiyyah.*

It has been narrated from ‘Alī (a.s.) that he was asked: ‘‘Is there with you anything of the revelation? (i.e., Do you receive any revelation from Allāh?) He replied: ‘‘No, by Him Who split the grain and created the soul! Except that Allāh gives a servant understanding of His Book.’’

The author says: It is one of the most important traditions. The least that may be proved from it is that all that astonishing knowledge that spread from him and which even today stuns the minds, was all derived from the Qur’ān.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) narrated from his father through his forefathers (peace be on them all) that the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘O people! You are in an interim station, and you are riding on a journey, and the speed with which you are taken away is fast; and you have seen the night and the day and the sun and the moon (how) they wear out every new (thing), and bring near every distant (object), and bring out every promised (affair); therefore, prepare your outfit for the distant journey.’’ The Imām

said that at this point al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad stood up and asked: ‘‘And what is the interim station? O Apostle of Allāh!’’ He said: ‘‘The house of communication and cessation. Therefore, when mischiefs come to confuse you like the segments of a dark night, then hold fast to the Qur’ān; as it is the intercessor whose intercession shall be granted; and a credible advocate; and whoever keeps it before him, it will lead him to the Garden; and whoever keeps it behind, it will drive him to the Fire; and it is the guide that guides to the best path; and it is a Book in which there is explanation, particularization and recapitulation; and it is a decisive (word), and not a joke; and there is for it a manifest (meaning) and an esoteric (one) ; thus its apparent (meaning) is firm, and its esoteric (one) is knowledge; its exterior is elegant and its interior deep; it has (many) boundaries, and its boundaries have (many) boundaries; its wonders shall not cease, and its (unexpected) marvels shall not be old. There are in it the lamps of guidance and the beacon of wisdom, and a guide to knowledge. for him who knows the attributes. Therefore, one should extend his sight; and should let his eyes reach the attribute; so that one who is in perdition may get deliverance, and one who is entangled may get free; because meditation is the life of the heart of the one who sees, as the one having a light (easily) walks in the darkness; therefore, you must seek good deliverance and (that) with little waiting.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: al-‘Ayyāshī has narrated it upto the words, ‘‘therefore, one should extend his sight’’.

It is narrated in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said that the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘The Qur’ān is a guide from wilderness, an eyesight for the blind, a pardon for the sinner, and a light against darkness; a brightness from the happenings, and safety from disaster, and guidance from going astray; a clarity in the chaos, and the means to reach (safely) from this world to the next; and there is in it the perfection of your religion; and no one deviated from the Qur’ān except to the Fire.’’

The author says: There are countless such traditions narrated from the Prophet and the Imams of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (peace be on them

all).

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār that he said: ''I asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.) about this tradition: 'There is no verse in the Qur'ān but it has an exterior and an interior, and there is no word in it but it has a boundary, and every boundary has a watching place.' (I asked him) what was the meaning of exterior and interior. The Imām said: 'Its exterior is its revelation; and its interior is its interpretation; some of it has already passed (i.e. happened) and there is some of it that has not come about yet; it runs along as run the sun and the moon, when a thing of it comes (to its appointed place and time) it happens. Allāh has said: *and none knows its interpretation except Allāh and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge;* we know it.' ''

The author says: ''Some of it has already passed and there is some of it that has not come about yet'': Apparently the pronoun ''it'' stands for the Qur'ān — for its revelation and interpretation both. Therefore, the sentence ''it runs along as run the sun and the moon'', will apply to both the revelation and the interpretation. So far as the revelation (i.e., the revealed word) is concerned it is the same thing as applying the verse to all situations in which its import comes true; and which is termed as the flow of the Qur'ān. For example, look at the verse: *O you who believe! fear Allāh and be with the true ones* (9:119). It was addressed, initially, to the believers who were present at the time of its revelation. Now it is applied to all the believers who came afterwards and will come upto the Day of Resurrection. It is the most obvious application that is practised not only by the Muslims but by all sensible persons in every language.

But there are some other ways of finer and still more finer applications. For example, when the verses of fighting are used to exhort, the believers to fight against their own selves, or when the verses condemning the hypocrites are applied to the sinful believers, it is a finer application.

When one proceeds further in one's spiritual journey then the above-mentioned verses of fighting and hypocrisy as well as the verses concerning the sinners are applied to those virtuous servants

of Allāh who for a fleeting moment turn towards unavoidable worldly affairs, thus disrupting their meditation, remembrance of, and presence before, Allāh. Needless to say that it is a much more finer application than the previous ones.

And its finest application comes when those most perfect, most virtuous and most beloved servants of Allāh apply those verses to themselves because they, in their love of Allāh, think that they have failed in discharging their duty to Allāh.

From the above discourse, it becomes clear that:

First: The Qur'ān has connotations of varying degrees, that are applied to various groups according to their spiritual perfection. Those who have described the stages of faith in, and love of, Allāh, have mentioned even more finer applications than those written above.

Second: ''Exterior'' and ''interior'' are relative attributes. Every exterior is interior when seen in relation to a more exterior meaning; and every interior is exterior in comparison to a more interior one. The following tradition explicitly mentions this fact.

al-'Ayyāshī has narrated, in his *at-Tafsīr,* from Jabir that he said: ''I asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.) the explanation of (a verse of) the Qur'ān, and he xplained it to me. Thereafter, I asked him (the same question) and he gave me a different reply. So I told him: 'May I be your ransom! You had given me, before this day, a different reply to this very question!' Thereupon he said: 'O Jābir! verily, the Qur'ān has an interior, and for its interior there is an interior; and (it has) an exterior, and for its exterior there is an exterior. O Jābir! and there is nothing farther from the understanding of the men than the explanation of the Qur'ān. Verily a verse, its first (part) is about (i.e., throws light on) one subject, and its middle is about another matter, and its end is about a third thing, and (still) it is a well-connected speech, (that) revolves in various ways.' ''

The same book narrates a tradition from the same Imām in which he said: ''If a verse is revealed about a people and those people die, that verse does not die. Otherwise, nothing would have survived of the Qur'ān. But the Qur'ān, its first is applied to its last, so long as the heavens and the earth will continue. And for every group there is

a verse, which they recite, they are from it (i.e., it is applied to them) either from good or from evil.''

Ḥumrān ibn A'yan said: ''I asked Abū Ja'far(a.s.) about the exterior of the Qur'ān and its interior; and he said: 'Its exterior are those people about whom the Qur'ān was revealed; and its interior are those who do as those had done; that which was revealed about those flows about these (i.e., is applied to the followers also).' '' (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbār*)

It is narrated in the *Tafsīr aṣ-Ṣāfī* that 'Alī (a.s.) said: ''There is no verse but it has four meanings: Manifest, and esoteric, and boundary and rising (or watching) place. So, the manifest is the recitation, and esoteric is the comprehension, and boundary is the commandments of lawful and unlawful, and rising (or watching) place is the Divine purpose, expected of the servant through this verse.''

The author says: ''Recitation'' is counted as one of the meanings; it shows that this word refers to the apparent meaning of the verse. Then ''comprehension'', which is given as its opposite, would mean the inner (esoteric) meaning hidden behind the apparent one; ''the commandments of lawful and unlawful'' refers to that Qur'ānic knowledge which one acquires in its first or intermediate stages; thus it stands face to face with the ''rising (or watching) place'' which is the highest grade of the meaning. Probably, the boundary and the rising place are relative terms, as the manifest and the esoteric are — thus every higher grade may be called a rising place in comparison to a lower level.

''al-Maṭla' '' (اَلْمَطْلَعُ = rising place, horizon) may also be read *al-muṭṭala'* (اَلْمُطَّلَعُ = the watching place). As the Imām has said, it refers to that Divine purpose for which the verse was revealed and which the servant of Allāh is expected to fulfil.

These four meanings have also been mentioned in a famous tradition of the Prophet which is as follows:

''Verily, the Qur'ān has been revealed on seven letters: For every verse of it, there is an exterior and an interior, and for every boundary there is a rising place.''

In another version the last sentence is as follows: ''and for each

there is a boundary and a rising place''.

According to the first version (''for every boundary there is a rising place''), it means that for each exterior and interior — that is, the boundary — there is a rising place to which it ascends. This meaning is clear. And the second version (''for each there is a boundary and a rising place'') may also be interpreted in the same way: each exterior and interior has a boundary, that is, its own meaning, and each has a rising place to which it ascends — in other words, it would be referring to the ''interpretation''. But this explanation is not in conformity with the tradition of 'Alī (a.s.) mentioned above (''There is no verse but it has four meanings . . .'').

In the light of the above given discourse, the four terms may be explained in the following way:

The exterior is the manifest meaning that is understood from the words of the verse.

The interior is the esoteric meaning which is hidden behind the manifest one. It may be one or more — one behind the other — nearer to the manifest one or distant, with or without any intermediate link.

The boundary is the meaning, whether the exterior or the interior.

The rising place is that meaning from which the boundary (as explained above) arises. In other words, it is the esoteric meaning that is immediately adjacent to the boundary.

There is a tradition, narrated through both the Shī'ah and the Sunnī chains, from the Prophet that he said: ''The Qur'ān has been revealed on seven letters.''

The author says: Although there are some minor differences in the wordings of various versions of this tradition, it has been narrated by so many people as to make it nearly *al-mutawātir;* and the narrations are nearly similar in meaning, and have come both from the Shī'ahs and the Sunnīs. There is a great controversy concerning the meaning of this tradition — some forty explanations have been given for it. But, in reality, there should not be any difficulty in understanding it, because its explanation is given in the traditions themselves; and that should be followed, instead of

inventing new explanations.

Some of these traditions say: The Qur'ān has come down on seven letters: order, restraint, exhortion, intimidation, argument, stories and parables.''

Another version counts them as follows: restraint, order, lawful, unlawful, decisive, ambiguous and parables.

'Alī (a.s.) is reported as saying: ''Verily Allāh revealed the Qur'ān on seven categories, each of which is sufficient and satisfying; and they are: order, restraint, exhortion, intimidation, argument, parables and stories.''

Therefore, the seven letters must be explained as seven modes of address, seven kinds of expression. They are seven; yet they are one in their aim, because all invite to Allāh, and call to His straight path.

It may be inferred from these traditions that all fundamental spiritual knowledge is confined within the parables; because other six categories cannot be applied to those realities, except by stretching the meanings of the words.

TRADITIONS ON INTERPRETING THE QUR'ĀN ACCORDING TO ONE'S OPINION

The Prophet said: ''Whoever interprets (i.e., explains) the Qur'ān according to his opinion, should settle himself in his seat of Fire.'' (*aṣ-Ṣāfī*)

The author says: This matter has been narrated by both the Sunnīs and the Shī'ahs. And there are many other traditions of the same import, narrated from the Prophet and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

It is narrated in *Munyatu 'l-murīd* that the Prophet said: ''Whoever spoke about the Qur'ān without knowledge, should settle himself in his seat of Fire.''

The author says: Also, it has been narrated by Abū Dāwūd in his *as-Sunan.*

The Prophet said: ‘‘Whoever speaks about the Qur’ān without knowledge, shall come on the Day of Resurrection reined with a rein of fire.’’ (*Munyatu ’l-murīd*)

The same book narrates that the Prophet said: ‘‘Whoever spoke about the Qur’ān of his own opinion (even if) he was right, he committed wrong.’’

The author says: This tradition has also been narrated by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī and an-Nasā’ī.

The Prophet said: ‘‘What I am afraid of, most of all, concerning my *ummah* after me, is the man who will take the Qur’ān putting it in wrong place (i.e., giving wrong interpretations).’’ (*al-Munyatu ’l-murīd*)

Abū Baṣīr said that Abū Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ‘‘Whoever interprets the Qur’ān according to his own opinion, if he gets to the right interpretation, he shall not be rewarded; and if he errs then he shall be farther away from the heaven. (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The same book quotes Ya‘qūb ibn Yazīd who narrated from Yāsir that ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: ‘‘Opinion in the Book of Allāh is infidelity.’’

The author says: This theme is found in other traditions written in *‘Uyūnu ’l-akhbār, al-Khiṣāl* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī among other books.

The words of the Prophet: ‘‘Whoever interprets (i.e., explains) the Qur’ān according to his opinion’’: *ar-Ra’y* (اَلرَّأيُ = opinion) means the belief reached at after diligent research. It is also used for the opinion based on desire and one’s own inclination. The Prophet has used the phrase, ‘‘his opinion’’; it shows that what is condemned is the interpretation of a verse independently without looking at other relevant verses. It does not forbid striving hard and doing one’s utmost to understand the meaning of the Qur’ān; nor does it say that one should confine oneself to what has been said in the traditions of the Prophet and *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.) relating to the exegesis of the verses (as many traditionalists think). Otherwise, it would be diametrically opposed to the many verses which show that the

Qur'ān is plain Arabic and which exhort the people to meditate on it; also it would be against many traditions that tell them to turn to the Qur'ān and judge the traditions by it.

What the words, ''according to his opinion'', refer to is explaining the Qur'ān according to one's personal views by being independent of other Qur'ānic declarations. This happens when an exegete depends solely on the instruments of Arabic language and literature, which are used for understanding a human talk. When we hear a speech of a man we at once look towards the rules of the language so that we may understand what the speaker means, and in this way we decide its import; we use this method everywhere, even in legal matters like testimony and acknowledgement. We use this method because human speech is based on the rules of language and rhetorics.

But the Qur'ān's diction is not based on this foundation, as we have explained earlier. The whole Qur'ān is a speech whose sentences and verses are all related to one another; at the same time they are separate from each other; one part speaks with, and leads to the others, as 'Alī (a.s.) has said: ''Obviously, it is not enough to look at a single verse in the light of language and literature and decide what it means, unless one meditates on all the relevant verses and strives one's utmost to find out from all of them together what that particular verse means. The verse 4:82 points to this very fact, as we have explained in the topic of brevity: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy.''*

Explaining the Qur'ān according to one's opinion is, thus, prohibited. And this prohibition is directed to the way of exegesis, and not to the exegesis itself. In other words, the Prophet has forbidden the people to try to understand the Divine words by the same methods which are used to understand a human speech — it is irrelevant whether they succeed in comprehending its true meaning or not. That is why he (s.a.w.a.) has said in another tradition: ''Whoever spoke about the Qur'ān of his own opinion, (even if) he was right, he committed wrong.'' This dictum clearly proves that the mistake lies in choosing the way; it does not matter whether that way takes one to the true destination or not. The same is the explanation

of the words, narrated in the tradition of al-‘Ayyāshī: ‘‘if he gets to the right interpretation, he shall not be rewarded’’.

This view is supported also by the state of affairs in the days of the Prophet. The revelation of the Qur’ān wa not yet completed; and what was revealed was not yet arranged; not all the Muslims had in their hands all the revealed verses — most of them had only a few chapters and verses with them. Had they been allowed to explain every piece or verse separately, without comparing that piece with other relevant verses, they would almost certainly have fallen into error.

It appears from the above discourse that what the exegete has been forbidden is to interpret a verse of the Qur’ān independently, relying on his own knowledge and opinion, without reference to another authority. In other words, it is necessary, when one wants to explain a Qur’ānic verse, to seek help from others by referring the matter to them. Who is that other authority? It could only be either other Qur’ānic verses, or the traditions. The second alternative is out of question, because the Prophet has ordered the Muslims to refer the traditions to the Qur’ān; it cannot be the other way round. The tradition’s meanings and even their authenticity is tested by the Qur’ān; how can tradition decide the meaning of the Qur’ān? Thus, there remains only one valid and approved way of explaining the verses of the Qur’ān, and that is with the help of other relevant verses.

This much is enough to show the irrelevance of numerous explanations written about the tradition of ‘‘interpretating the Qur’ān by one’s own opinion’’. The scholars have explained this tradition in not less than ten ways:

First: It means interpreting the Qur’ān without expertise in those subjects which are essential for knowing its exegesis. And as-Suyūṭī has said in *al-Itqān* that they are fifteen in all: Language, syntax, conjugation, etymology, styles of literature, rhetoric, elocution, recitation of the Qur’ān, roots of religion, fundamentals of jurisprudence, reasons and occasions of revelations (as well as the stories mentioned in the Qur’ān), abrogating and abrogated verses, law of the *sharī‘ah*, traditions that explain the general and unspecific verses, and the gifted knowledge. This last phrase refers to a

tradition of the Prophet: ‘‘Whoever acts upon what he knows, Allāh gives him knowledge of what he does not know.’’

Second: It refers to the attempts of finding the interpretations of the ambiguous verses, which no one knows except Allāh.

Third: It is interpretation of the Qur’ān to support a wrong belief or action. It happens when an exegete makes his own view or belief the foundation upon which he builds the exegesis of the Qur’ān; he fits the verse on his own belief in any possible way — no matter how weak or far-fetched that might be.

Fourth: It is declaring, without any proof, that a certain explanation is the meaning really intended by Allāh.

Fifth: It refers to explaining the Qur’ān according to one’s inclination and desire.

These five explanations of the said tradition have been narrated by Ibnu’n-Naqīb, as as-Suyūṭī has quoted in *al-Itqān.* There are five other explanations which we enumerate here from other books:

Sixth: It is explaining the difficult passages of the Qur’ān in a new way which was not narrated from the companions and their disciples — because such an interpretation would make the exegete liable to the displeasure of Allāh.

Seventh: The tradition is about explaining the Qur’ān in a certain way, while the speaker knows that it is not the true explanation.

These last two have been mentioned by Ibnu ’l-Anbārī.

Eighth: The tradition forbids talking about the Qur’ān without knowledge and without making sure — it does not matter whether the speaker knows or not that another explanation is true.

Ninth: It forbids reliance on the apparent meaning of the Qur’ān. It is the explanation of those who think that the apparent meaning of the Qur’ān is not a valid authority; to understand a verse, one must look to a clear tradition narrated from a sinless authority (i.e., the Prophet, his daughter and the twelve Imāms, peace be on them all). But in fact it shall not be an exegesis of the Qur’ān; rather it shall be following the tradition. Anyhow, according to this group, exegesis of the Qur’ān depends on the explanation of a sinless authority.

Tenth: There were some people who believed that the Qur’ān had valid apparent meanings, but said that common people could not understand it. According to this view also, relying on the apparent

meaning of the Qur'ān was forbidden by this tradition. One must look for clear traditions of the sinless authorities to interpret the Qur'ān.

These are ten explanations of the said tradition — although some may in effect be identical to some others. In any case, none of these is supported by any proof. Moreover, some are obviously wrong, or their inaccuracy may be understood from what we have earlier said about this tradition. There is no need to point it out again.

There are many verses that support the traditions mentioned earlier: —

Do they not meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy (4:82).

Those who made the Qur'ān into shreds (15:91).

Surely they who distort Our signs are not hidden from Us. What! is he then who is cast into the fire better or he who comes safe on the Day of Resurrection? Do what you like, surely He sees what you do (41:40).

. . . (there are those who) *alter words from their places* . . . (4:46).

And pursue not that of which you have not the knowledge (17:36).

Such verses in conjunction with the above-mentioned traditions make it clear that the prohibition contained in those traditions is about the method used for the exegesis; they show that when explaining the Divine Speech, one should not adopt the same means that are used for explaining human talks.

What is the difference between Divine and human speeches? It is not in the use of words, the construction of sentences or the style of elocution. The Qur'ān is in plain Arabic, and all norms of eloquence have been mentioned in it. Allāh Himself has said: *And We did not send any apostle but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly* (14:4); . . . *and this is clear Arabic language* (16:103); *Surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand* (43:3).

The difference between the two is about the meaning and its application. This statement needs some elaboration:

We are at home in this material word, and surrounded with its

natural phenomena. As a result, when we hear a word our mind, first of all, looks at its physical connotation and application. When a fellow human being describes a thing or affair, we apply his words to what we are accustomed to in this world; because we know that the speaker too is governed by the same forces as we are, and his comprehension and cognition is not different from ours. In this way the application of a word affects its meaning — it may particularize a general meaning or vice versa; the circumstances may manipulate a word's connotation in a lot of ways. It is what we call rational context, in contrast to the textual evidence.

For example, if we hear a powerful and wealthy man saying, ''There is not a thing but with us are the treasures of it'', first we shall look at the literal meaning of this sentence, then will come the stage of its application. At this stage, we shall say that he has many strong and well-protected buildings which have got a lot of containers of various types to store his treasures, that consist of a large quantity of gold, silver, currency notes, bonds, jewels, various commodities, ornamental items, arms and ammunitions etc. We get this picture in our mind because this is what we call treasure and that is how it is kept safe and secure. But we will never imagine that he has in his treasury the earth and the heavens, the continents and the oceans, the sun and the moon, the animals and the human beings. These too are ''things'', but they are not possessed, gathered and put in a treasury. Because of this rational context we do restrict the generality of the word ''thing'' and apply it to a few selected items only; and in those items too only a small amount is presumed to be kept in his treasury. We know that a lot of things are not treasured, and what is treasured, only a small amount comes into possession of one man, and that small quantity is preserved in strong, impregnable buildings to protect it from theft and other damages. And this knowledge of ours has restricted the general meaning of the words, ''thing'' and ''treasures''.

But now we hear Allāh revealing to His Apostle (s.a.w.a.): *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it* (15:21). If our mind is not developed, and is still on the lowest rung of comprehension, we shall interpret this verse in exactly the same manner. Of course, we shall not have any proof to say that the verse

has been used in the same sense; yet we shall rush to that explanation, because our mind is accustomed to it. This is, then, explaining the Qur'ān according to our own opinion without knowledge.

Now let us say that our understanding is a bit more developed, and we know that Allāh does not gather things to put them in a treasury. We think over this verse and read the next sentence: *and We do not send it down but in a known measure;* and then we compare it with another verse : . . . *and* (in) *what Allāh sends down sustenance from the cloud, then gives life thereby to the earth after its death . . . there are signs for a people who understand* (45:5). We shall at once say that the word ''thing'', in the verse under discussion, refers to the sustenance like bread and water; and that ''sending it down'', in the next sentence, refers to the coming down of rain. We shall give it this interpretation because we do not know of anything, except the rain, that comes down from heavens; therefore, we shall say that accumulation of everything near Allāh and then its coming down in measured quantity refers to the accumulation of rain and its coming down to the earth to produce food grains. This too shall be interpreting the Qur'ān according to one's own opinion ''without knowledge''. What is our argument? It is that we do not know of anything, except the rain, that descends from the heaven. But ''not knowing'' that a certain thing exists is quite different from ''knowing'' that it does not exist.

If our knowledge is more advanced and our mind more developed, we shall try not to say anything concerning the Qur'ān without knowledge. We shall say that the words of the verse are general; they should not be restricted in any way. ''Thing'' includes everything, and the word, ''treasures'', covers every single item of everything. We shall arrive at the conclusion that the sentence describes the affairs of the creation and the creatures. Then will come the puzzling sentence, ''and We do not send it down but in a known measure''. Doubtlessly, human beings, animals and vegetables do not come down from the heavens; they grow from, and are born on, the earth. Faced with this difficulty, we shall say that the first sentence, ''And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it'', is a metaphorical way of saying that everything in

its existence is subservient to the will of Allāh; that the Divine will is like a treasure that holds every creature, and only as much issues forth from it as is willed by Allāh. But this interpretation also, like the previous two, is based on ‘‘not knowing’’. We ‘‘do not know’’ that the things descend (in the meaning known to us) from Allāh, and, therefore, we explain away the sentence in an allegorical way.

If you look at the Divine names, attributes and actions as described in the Qur’ān, or at the Qur’ānic declarations about the angels, the Divine Books, the apostles and the Day of Resurrection and its details, or at the laws of the *sharī‘ah* and their significance as given in the Qur’ān, and then ponder on the way people want to interpret them in the light of rational context, you will see that all such exercises are but interpretations according to one’s own liking without knowledge; that they should better be called misinterpretations.

We have shown under the fifth heading in the discourse of the decisive and the ambiguous verses that the Qur’ānic expressions *vis-a-vis* the Divine realities are like a proverb in relation to its significance; and those realities have been explained in various expressions and diverse wordings, so that all taken together may lead the hearers to their real significance. That is why the verses are said to be witnesses of each other; and that is how they explain one another. Otherwise, the Divine realities could never be correctly explained; and people would have fallen in the pitfall of interpreting the Qur’ān without knowledge.

The above discourse shows that interpreting the Qur’ān according to one’s own opinion is always accompanied by speaking about it without knowledge. The tradition of the Prophet points to this fact: ‘‘Whoever spoke about the Qur’ān without knowledge should settle himself in his seat of Fire.’’

It is such interpretations that make it look as though the verses of the Qur’ān were contradictory to one another. Interpreting the verses by one’s own opinion, without true knowledge, disturbs the semantic flow of the Qur’ān. Thus the verses are misinterpreted, the words shifted from their right places and used in wrong contexts. Then it becomes necessary for these exegetes to explain some or most of the verses in a way that is against their apparent meanings; Divine words

and sentences are given such meanings which the linguists had never heard of. Thus we find a group explaining away the verses of free will and choice, and their opponents misinterpreting the verses of Divine decree and measure. Most of the Muslim sects are guilty of this type of misinterpretation, especially in those verses whose apparent meanings go against their beliefs. They seek refuge in clothing such verses with meanings of their own choice, and their socalled arguments boil down to this sentence: The apparent meaning of this verse is against what has already been established by rational proofs; therefore, it must be given a new meaning, against the apparent one.

This practice creates confusion; the logical sequence of the verses is disrupted, their semantic flow is disturbed and they seem to contradict each other. Thus both lose their validity.

It is known that there is no discrepancy in the Qur'ān. If a certain explanation shows that two verses are contradictory to each other, the only defect would be in that explanation.

This has been termed, in many traditions, as hitting one part of the Qur'ān with the other. See for example the following traditions:

It is narrated in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from aṣ-Ṣādiq from his father (peace be on them both) that he said: ''A man does not hit a part of the Qur'ān with the other (part) but that he becomes an infidel.''

Ma'āni 'l-akhbār, al-Maḥāsin (through their chains) and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī: aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''A man does not hit a part of the Qur'ān with the other (part) but that he becomes an infidel.''

aṣ-Ṣadūq says that he asked Ibnu 'l-Walīd what this tradition meant. He replied: ''It is replying'to a man concerning the exegesis of one verse, with the exegesis of another one.''

The author says: This reply of Ibnu 'l-Walīd is somewhat vague. If by this expression he means the above-mentioned mixup — as the polemicists, argue by offering one verse ''against'' another, adhering to the one and explaining away the other — then he is correct. But if he wants to disallow explaining one verse with the help of the other

and bringing the one as evidence for the other, then it is wrong, as may be seen from the following two traditions too:

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Nu‘mānī, through his chains to Ismā‘īl ibn Jābir that he said: ‘‘I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣādiq (peace be upon them both) saying: ‘Verily, Allāh — Benevolent and High is He — sent Muḥammad and ended with him (the chain of) the prophets thus there is no prophet after him; and He sent down to him a Book, and ended with it (the chain of) the Books; thus there is no (Divine) book after it. He allowed in it the lawful (things) and prohibited in it the unlawful; so its lawful is lawful upto the Day of Resurrection, and its unlawful is unlawful upto the Day of Resurrection; there is in it your *sharī‘ah,* and the information of the people (who passed away) before you and (who are to come) after you; and the Prophet (may Allāh have mercy on him and his progeny!) appointed it as a standard (that will remain) for ever in his successors. But the people left them (those successors) although they were the witnesses over the people of all times; and they (i.e., the people) deviated from them, then they killed them, and followed others and gave those others their unalloyed obedience. (This continued) till they extended their enmity to him who showed his love of those invested with authority (from Allāh) and who sought their knowledge. Allāh has said: . . . *and* (they) *have forgotten a part of what they were admonished with, and you will not cease to be informed of deceit from among them* (5:14). And it is because they hit a part of the Qur’ān with the other; and they argued with the abrogated (verse) thinking that it was the abrogating one, and debated with the help of the ambiguous thinking that it was the decisive; and offered a particularized verse for their argument assuming that it was a general one; and stuck at the beginning of a verse leaving aside the reason of its interpretation; and they did not see what was the beginning of the speech and what was its end; and they did not know its arrival or its departure, because they did not take it from its people; thus they went astray and misled others.

‘‘ ‘And know, may Allāh have mercy on you! that he who does not distinguish in the Book of Allāh the abrogating verse from the abrogated one, and a specific from a general one, and a decisive from an ambiguous; and does not differentiate between a permission and an obligation, and does not recognize a verse of Meccan period from a

Medinite one, and does not know the reasons of revelation; and does not understand the difficult words of the Qur'ān (whether simple or compound); and does not comprehend (what has been hidden in it of) the knowledge of (Divine) decree and measure; and is ignorant of advancing and delaying (in its verses); and does not distinguish the clear from the deep, nor the manifest from the esoteric, nor the beginning from the termination; and is unaware of the question and the answer, the disjoining and the joining, and the exceptions and the allinclusive, and is ignorant of an adjective of a preceding (noun) that explains the subsequent one; and is unaware of the emphasized subject and the detailed one, the obligatory laws and the permissions, the places of the duties and rules, and the meaning of its lawful and unlawful (in which the unbelievers have perished); and does not know the joined words, and the words that are related to those coming before them, or after them — then such a man does not know the Qur'ān; nor is he among the people of the Qur'ān; And if someone claims knowledge of these variations, without a proof, then he is a liar, a doubting (person), and a fabricator of lies against Allāh and His Apostle, and his resting place is the hell, and what an evil destination it is!' ''

It is written in *Nahju 'l-balāghah* and *al-Iḥtijāj* that 'Alī (a.s.) said in a sermon: ''When a legal problem is put before one of them he passes judgment on it according to his opinion. Then exactly the same problem comes before another of them and he gives an opposite verdict. Then these judges bring this matter to their leader who had appointed them and he confirms all their (contradictory) verdicts, although their Allāh is one and their Prophet is one and their Book is one. Is it because Allāh had ordered them to differ and they obeyed Him? Or He had prohibited them from it but they disobeyed Him? Or is it that Allāh had sent an incomplete religion and sought their help to complete it? Or, they are His partners, so that it is their right to say and it is His duty to agree? Or is it that Allāh sent a complete religion but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) fell short of conveying it and handing it over (to the *ummah*)? And Allāh,¸ the Glorified, says: *We have not neglected anything in the Book* (6:38); and that in it is the clarification of everything; and He has said that one part of the Book confirms the other and that there is no discrepancy in it: *And if it were from any other than Allāh, they*

would have found in it many a discrepancy (4:82). And verily, the exterior of the Qur'ān is elegant and its esoteric (meaning) is deep. Its wonders cannot be enumerated, and its marvels will not cease; and the darknesses cannot be removed except by it.''

The author says: This narration clearly shows that every religious opinion and view must be based on the Qur'ān. The sentence, ''in it is the clarification of everything'', paraphrases a Qur'ānic verse, (. . . *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* [16:89]).

Ibn Sa'd, Ibnu 'ḍ-Ḍurays (in his *al-Faḍā'il*) and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father from his grandfather: ''The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) appeared before a group who were bandying arguments about the Qur'ān, and he was very angry and said: 'This is how the nations before you went astray — they disputed with their prophets and hit one part of the book with the other.' Then he said: 'And verily the Qur'ān has not been revealed so that its parts would contradict each other; rather, it has been revealed so that its part would confirm each other. Therefore, follow what you know (of it) and believe in what is ambiguous to you (from it):' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Aḥmad has narrated in another way from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) heard some people disputing with one another. So, he said: ''That is how those who were before you had perished; they hit one part of the Book of Allāh over the other. And the Book of Allāh has been revealed (and) its one part confirms the other; therefore, do not (try to) refute its one part with the other part. What you know of it, you should believe in it, and what you do not know of it, you should leave it to him who knows it.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: As you see, these traditions count ''hitting one part of the Qur'ān with the other'' as opposite to ''confirming some of its parts with the others''. In other words, this ''hitting'' refers to confusing the meanings of the verses, disturbing their aims and objects, mistaking, for example, the decisive verses for the ambiguous ones and vice versa. It means that speaking in the Qur'ān accroding to one's own opinion, and

explaining the verses without knowledge (described in earlier quoted traditions) and hitting some parts of the Qur'ān with the others (mentioned in the above traditions) refer to one and the same thing, that is, explaining the Qur'ān with the help of other than the Qur'ān.

Question: No doubt, the Qur'ān was revealed so, that the people may comprehend and understand it. See, for example, these two verses:

Surely We have revealed to you the Book with the truth for the sake of men . . . (39:41).

This is a clear statement for men (3:138).

Also there is no doubt that it was the Prophet who had the authority to explain it. As Allāh says: . . . *and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them* . . . (16:44). And surely he explained it to his companions, who transmitted it to their disciples. What has come to us from the companions and their disciples is doubtlessly the explanation given by the Prophet, and we cannot disregard it, as the Qur'ān tells us to follow what is given to us by the Prophet. As for those explanations which the companions gave us without ascribing them to the Prophet, it is true that they cannot have the same authority as the Prophet's declarations; yet we feel more at ease with them (instead of looking for them on our own). Why? Because either they had heard it from the Prophet, or they were led to it by their expertise in religion — the expertise they had acquired from the Prophet's instruction and exposition. The same applies to their disciples and the disciples' disciples. Surely the meaning of the Qur'ān could not be hidden from them — they had deep rooted knowledge of Arabic language; they were keen on learning the Qur'ānic interpretation from the Prophet himself; and they strived their utmost to acquire the knowledge of religion. All this may be seen in biographical details of the early scholars of religion.

Looking at the above-mentioned details, we come to the conclusion that deviating from their method and tradition, going out of their company or explaining any verse in a way that is not found in their opinions and sayings, is an innovation; and that one must remain silent where they have not given any opinion.

What the companions and their direct and indirect disciples have said is enough for the purpose of understanding the Qur'ān. There are thousands of traditions on exegesis, and as-Suyūṭī has counted some seventeen thousand traditions on this subject, narrated from the Prophet and his companions and their disciples.

Reply: Its reply may be inferred from what we have written earlier. There are numerous verses which invite the public in general, the believers as well as the unbelievers, those who were present at the time of revelation as well as those who came later or shall come in future, to understand the Qur'ān and meditate and ponder on it. For example, see the verse 4:82 which has been quoted repeatedly: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy.* It clearly shows that the Qur'ānic knowledge may be acquired through meditation and contemplation; and that by this process the apparent discrepancy between the verses disappears completely. Remember that this verse puts a challange to unbelievers that they would not find any discrepancy in the Qur'ān if they pondered on it. And in this context they could not be advised to go to the companions and their disciples if they wanted to understand its meaning; nay, even the advice to refer to the Prophet would have been irrelevant: If the Prophet's explanation were in conformity with the apparent meaning of the verse, then people would understand that meaning from the verse itself on meditation and contemplation — and there would be no need to refer to the Prophet. And if his explanation were against the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān — a meaning that an average man would not understand from the words — then the challenge would be futile and the argument of the verse 4:82 would not stand.

Of course, so far as the details of various Qur'ānic laws are concerned, they cannot be known without the Prophet's explanation, as the Qur'ān itself says: . . . *and whatever the Apostle gives you, take it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back* . . . (59:7). Also, the details of the Qur'ānic stories and of the Day of Judgment depend on his exposition.

It shows that the Prophet's responsibility, in this respect, was of teaching only. A teacher guides and helps his student in understanding what would be difficult to comprehend without his

help. The teaching brings the meaning nearer to the mind; it does not create a meaning. The teacher arranges the subject matter to make it easier to comprehend, so that the student is not obliged to waste his time and energy in self-education — a proposition that carries with it a risk of wrong deductions. This aspect of the Prophet's responsibilities is mentioned in many verses. For example, . . . *and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect* (16:44). . . . *And teaches them the Book and the Wisdom* . . . (62:2). The Prophet, therefore, teaches the people what the Qur'ān itself says and the Divine Speech itself shows, and which the people themselves may understand even if it requires some meditation. It is not the Prophet's function to bestow on the verses such meanings as cannot be normally understood from those words. Such an explanation would not conform with the following Qur'ānic declarations:—

A Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'ān for a people who know (41:3).

. . . *and this is clear Arabic language* (16:103).

Then there are the traditions of the Prophet exhorting the Muslims to hold fast to the Qur'ān and to verify with its help the traditions attributed to him. It necessarily follows that all what the Prophet has said may be known from the Qur'ān. Otherwise, he could not tell us to check with it all the sayings attributed to him.

Now, if we say that understanding of the Qur'ān depends on the Prophet's explanation, it would be a vicious circle. The Qur'ān would be understood only if explained by the traditions, but the authenticity of the tradition could be established only if one understands the Qur'ān.

Now we come to the traditions narrated from the companions. First, we are faced with the problems concerning the chains of the narrators, because not all of them are free from one or the other defect. Second, the companions have differed a great deal with one another in their expositions of the Qur'ān. Third, in many cases, divergent views have been ascribed to a single companion, as anyone may find out by looking in the books of traditions and exegesis. What is one supposed to do when faced with such discrepancies? We

are told by these people that we should choose one of those diverse opinions and stick to it; that we should not destroy the ‘‘composite unanimity’’ of the companions, nor should we go outside their circle. But the trouble is that the companions themselves were not averse to differ from each other; then why should we not differ from them? They themselves never claimed that their opinions were vested with an authority which others were duty bound to accept; nor did they ever say that, although they differed from one another, others should not differ from them.

If we were stuck up with the Qur’ānic exegesis narrated from the companions and their disciples, the forward march of knowledge would be arrested and academic research negated. Look at the explanations transmitted to us from the early scholars, and study the books of exegesis written in early centuries. You will find that they contain only simple word meanings, and are devoid of deep thoughts and fine ideas. If we stop at those explanations, where we can find the vast and deep knowledge mentioned in the verse: . . . *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* . . . (16:89).

Then it is said that it is unthinkable that the companions did not know the meaning of the Qur’ān, in spite of their keen interest in religious knowledge and their understanding and serious efforts in this way. But the very discrepancy in their various explanations belies this argument. Discrepancy and difference could not occur unless the truth was hidden from their eyes, and unless they were confused.

The truth is that the highway to the understanding of the Qur’ān is wide open; and the Divine Speech itself leads one to its own understanding; it does not depend, for this purpose, on any other guide. It is a Book introduced by Allāh as the guidance, the light and the clear explanation of everything. It cannot be said to need another guide, to seek illumination from another light or to depend on an outside factor for its own explanation.

Question: The correct traditions say that the Prophet said in his last sermon: ‘‘Certainly I am leaving among you two weighty things: The bigger one and the smaller one. As for the bigger one, it is the

Book of Allāh; and as for the smaller one, it is my progeny, the people of my house. Therefore, keep me in mind about these two things; because you shall never go astray so long as you hold fast to them.'' This tradition has been narrated by both sects from a great many companions of the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); it has come to us through so many chains that one can entertain no doubt about its authenticity. The traditionalists have counted that it has been narrated by thirty-five companions. Some narrations contain the sentence: ''They shall not separate from one another till they come to me on the reservoir (i.e., Kawthar).'' This tradition proves that the words of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) on the Qur'ān are a binding authority and that one must adhere to what has come down to us from them concerning the exegesis. Otherwise, one would be guilty of separating the Qur'ān from the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

Reply: What was said earlier regarding the explanation of the Prophet applies here too. The tradition quoted in the question is not intended to negate the authority of the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān, nor does it say that the exegesis given by the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) is the only authoritative explanation. The Prophet has used the words, ''they shall not separate from one another''. It means that authority belongs to the Qur'ān and the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) together; the Qur'ān explains its meaning and makes manifest the Divine realities, and the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) guide to the true path and direct the people to the Qur'ānic aims and goals.

Moreover, like the Prophet, the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) too have directed the Muslims to hold fast to the Qur'ān, to meditate on it and to verify from it the traditions attributed to them.

Furthermore, a considerable number of the exegetical traditions of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) themselves have used the method of explaining a verse with the help of the other. This method can be meaningful only if the Qur'ānic verses may be understandable to an average man — provided the correct direction is followed.

Apart from these rational arguments, some traditions of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) explicitly mention this fact. al-Barqī has narrated through his chains from Abū Labīd that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said in a tradition: ''Whoever thought that the Book of Allāh was vague, fell in perdition and destroyed others.'' Another tradition has been

narrated in the same book as well as in *al-Iḥtijāj* that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: ''When I narrate to you anything, you should ask me where it was in the Book of Allāh . . . ''

The above discourse makes it clear that there is no conflict between those traditions which say that the Qur'ānic knowledge is not unintelligible and that it may be understood with the help of the Qur'ānic verses themselves, and those which are apparently against it. For example, it is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from Jābir that he said: ''Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said: 'Verily, the Qur'ān has an interior, and for its interior there is an exterior.' Then he said: 'O Jābir! and there is nothing farther from the understanding of the men than it (i.e., the Qur'ān). Verily, a verse, its first (part) is revealed about one subject and its middle (part) about another thing, and its end about something else; and yet it is a well-connected speech, (that) revolves in various ways.' '' This theme has been given in various other traditions. In some of them, the sentence, ''and there is nothing farther from the understanding of the men . . . '', has been ascribed to the Prophet. Also, 'Alī (a.s.) is reported as saying: ''Verily, the Qur'ān may be explained in many ways; it has many faces . . .''

It is clear that what has been allowed, nay, encouraged, is explaining it through its own path, and what has been forbidden is explaining it through another path. The prescribed way is exegesis of the Qur'ān with the help of the Qur'ān itself, explaining a verse with another verse. A man can do so only when he is well-versed in the traditions of the Prophet and his *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.); it gives him correct perspective and creates in him a discriminating taste. It is after acquiring this taste that one may explain the Qur'ān with confidence. And Allāh is the best Guide.

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إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلاَ أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ ٱللهِ شَيْئاً وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ وَقُودُ ٱلنَّارِ ــ ١٠ . كَدَأْبِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأَخَذَهُمُ ٱللهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَاللهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ــ ١١ . قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ــ ١٢ . قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللهِ وَأُخْرَىٰ كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَيْهِمْ رَأْيَ الْعَيْنِ وَاللهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ــ ١٣ . زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ ٱلشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ ٱلنِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ ٱلذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَاللهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ ــ ١٤ . قُلْ أَؤُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ ٱللهِ وَٱللهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ــ ١٥ . الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ ٱلنَّارِ ــ ١٦ . ٱلصَّابِرِينَ وَٱلصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ــ ١٧ . شَهِدَ ٱللهُ أَنَّهُ لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلٰئِكَةُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِماً بِالْقِسْطِ لاَ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ــ ١٨ .

(As for) *those who disbelieve, surely neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allāh, and those it is who are the fuel of the fire* (10). *Like the wont of the people of Pharaoh and those before them; they rejected Our signs, so Allāh caught them for their sins; and Allāh is severe in requiting* (evil) (11). *Say to those who disbelieve: ''You shall be vanquished, and gathered to hell; and wretched is* (it as) *the resting place''* (12). *Indeed there was a sign in the two hosts* (which) *met together in encounter; one party fighting in the way of Allāh and the other unbelieving; they saw them twice their number with the sight of the eye; and Allāh aids with His aid whom He pleases; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight* (13). *It has been made to seem fair to men, the love of desires of women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver and well-bred horses and cattle and tilth; this is the provision of the life of this world; and Allāh is He with Whom is the best destination* (14). *Say: ''Shall I tell you of what is better than these?'' For those who guard* (against evil) *are gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow, to .abide in them, and pure mates and Allāh's pleasure; and Allāh sees the servants* (15). *Those who say: ''Our Lord! surely we believe, therefore forgive us our sins and save us from the chastisement of the fire''* (16). *The patient, and the truthful, and the devout* (ones) *and those who spend* (benevolently) *and those who ask for forgiveness before dawn* (17). *Allāh bears withness that there is no god but He, and* (so do) *the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining* (His creation) *with justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise* (18).

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GENERAL COMMENT

It was described earlier that when this chapter was revealed, the Muslims were hard-pressed by internal sabotage and external

hostilities. There were inside Medina the hypocrites and their informants, who listened to, and spread the evil whisperings of, the enemies of Islam to upset the Muslims' programmes and make their efforts ineffective. And almost the whole Arabia and the two most powerful neighbouring empires were bent upon their annihilation. The polytheists, the Jews and the Christians, all were united in their determination to kill Islam in its infancy with all possible means — by words or by swords. This chapter was revealed to exhort the Muslims to remain united, firm and patient. These qualities would keep their society healthy, eradicate the internal troubles and confound the external enemies.

The preceding verses had mentioned the hypocrites' perversity, and exhorted the Muslims to faithfully follow what they had learned of the realities of religion, and to surrender themselves to, and believe in, what they do not understand of the Qur'ān. The verses warned the Muslims not to follow the ambiguous parts of the Qur'ān, seeking to give them their own interpretation; otherwise, their well-balanced religion would be distorted and they themselves would fall into perdition. In this way, they would be deprived of their felicity; their religious guidance would give way to misguidance, and their unity would turn into disunity.

Now, these verses turn to the unbelievers and polytheists. These infidels will soon be vanquished; they cannot defeat the purpose of the Almighty Allāh, nor can they triumph in their rebellion. What has misled them into straying is their entanglement with inordinate pleasures of this world. They think that their riches and their children can make them independent of Allāh; but they are mistaken in their thinking; because Allāh is predominant in His affairs. If wealth and man-power could make anyone independent of Allāh, they would have saved the people of Pharaoh and other unjust nations in the past, who had acquired much more power and strength. But Allāh caught them for their sins and they could do nothing. Likewise, these enemies of Divine religion would soon be vanquished. Therefore, the Muslims should remain on guard; they should not fall victim of these desires and pleasures. If they followed this guidance, they would get felicity in this world and eternal reward in the next — and, of course, the pleasure of their Lord is the greatest reward.

In short, these verses are mainly concerned with the affairs of the

unbelievers. (With verses coming after these begin the comment on the People of the Book).

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: (As for) *those who disbelieve, surely neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allāh:* That is, their wealth and children shall not make them independent of Allāh.

Man's first instinctive awareness is of his dependence on others. This instinct guides him to his Maker and Sustainer. Looking at intermediate causes he, first of all, realizes that for the development and perfection of his body ¸he depends on food and children. Then his attention is drawn to other animal perfections like fancy attire, comfortable abode, attractive spouse and things like that. At this stage, the desire of food changes into that of wealth and property, because he thinks that wealth is the panacea of all difficulties of life. Now he believes that the felicity of his life comes from wealth and children; in other words, wealth replaces food. At this stage his short-sightedness prevents him from seeing beyond these intermediate causes; he thinks that they are independent causes and forgets his Lord. His heart becomes inseparably attached to wealth and children; and this ignorance leads him to perdition. He fails to see the signs of his Lord and disbelieves in them. He does not realize that his lord is Allāh besides Whom there is no god, the Ever-living, the Selfsubsisting; nothing can ever be independent of Him; nothing can ever avail against Him.

The above explanation also makes it clear why the verse has given precedence to wealth over children — man's dependence on wealth (or food, a kind of wealth) precedes his dependence on children — although at times his love for children overpowers his lust for wealth.

The verse seems to have abridged a long sentence. Its full import is as follows: Those who disbelieve have rejected Our signs and they think that their wealth and their children will avail them against Allāh; but they are mistaken, because nothing can ever avail anyone against Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *and those it is who are the fuel of the fire: ''al-Waqūd''* (اَلْوَقُوْدُ) is fuel; that which feeds a fire and enflames it. The verse runs on the line of the following two:

. . . then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel . . . (2:24).

Surely you and what you worship besides Allāh are the firewood of hell . . . (21:98).

This subject has been explained to some extent in the Chapter of the Cow.

This sentence has many devices that are used for restriction: It is an *al-jumlatu 'l-ismiyyah* (اَلْجُمْلَةُ الْاِسْمِيَّةُ = nominal sentence; a sentence that begins with noun or pronoun) ; it begins with a demonstrative pronoun and uses a pronoun that points to a distant object; has inserted a second disjunctive personal pronoun between the subject and the predicate; and has added the words ''of fire'' after the word, ''fuel'' — all these things clearly show that only the unbelievers are the fuel of the fire; they are the basic source of the chastisement; they are the fuel that keeps the hell burning; others will burn in the flames that will be fuelled with the unbelievers: The verse 8:37 points to this fact: *That Allāh may separate the impure from the pure, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into hell* . . .

QUR'ĀN: *Like the wont of the people of Pharaoh . . . Allāh is severe in requiting: ''ad-Da'b''* (اَلدَّأْبُ) is continuing movement. Allāh has said: *And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses* . . . (14:33). Thereupon the word was used for habit, custom or wont, because that also is a perpetual movement. In this verse, it has been used in this latter meaning.

''Like the wont . . .'' is related to a deleted sentence which may be understood from the phrase, ''shall not avail them''; ''the wont'' is explained by the words, ''they rejected Our signs''. Thus, the complete sentence would be as follows: Those who disbelieve have rejected Our signs and continued on this habit unfailingly; they think that their wealth and their children will avail them against Allāh; it is like the wont of the people of Pharaoh and those before them, who also had rejected Our signs. ''So Allāh caught them *'bi-dhunūbihim'*

(بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ) for their sins.'' *''bi''* (بِ = translated here as ''for'') apparently shows the reason; in other words, Allāh caught them because of their sins. But the two verses stand face to face comparing the condition of these unbelievers with that of the people of Pharaoh and those who lived before them. It strongly suggests that *''bi''* here points to the instrument of this catching. The unbelievers are the fuel of the fire, which shall burn them and they shall get the punishment by their own fire. Likewise, the people of Pharaoh and those who were before them were caught by their own sins; the chastisement meted out to them was another form of their own misdeeds; it was their own evil plan which surrounded them, their own injustice and oppression that destroyed them. Allāh says: . . . *and the evil plan does not beset any save the authors of it* (35:43); . . . *and they did not do Us any harm, but they did harm their own selves* (2:57).

The above explanation makes the meaning of the next sentence clearer: ''and Allāh is severe in requiting (evil)''. The chastisement meted out by Allāh is not confined to one direction, one place or one state. When a man punishes another man, his punishment comes from only a certain direction, for example, from above or below etc., and at one place, not at the others. The man so punished may run away from that particular place, or may shield himself against that particular direction. But the Divine chastisement is all-encompassing. He catches a man by the misdeeds and sins committed by that man himself; his action is always with him, in his exterior as well as in his interior; it does never separate from him. That sin turns its doer into a fuel of the fire, a fire that surrounds not only all sides of his exterior but permeates even his inner self; he cannot save himself by running away; nor can he benefit from standing still; there is neither any shelter nor any refuge against it. That is why Allāh is called ''severe in requiting evil''.

First, the verse mentioned the Divine name in the third person (Allāh), then it was changed into the first person (Our signs), again it was reverted to the original third person (Allāh caught). This change in the middle of the sentence serves two purposes: It freshens the mind and puts more emphasis on the truth of the proposition. Suppose someone says: ''That man is foul-mouthed and uses obscene language; and I myself have experienced his indecent

manner; therefore, you should avoid his company.'' The sentence, ''I myself have experienced his indecent manner'', confirms the preceding information of his obscenity, by turning the news into experience and into a sort of testimony.

The import of the verse then would be — and Allāh knows better — something like this: The people of Pharaoh had the same traits as these unbelievers have. They disbelieved and rejected Our signs. There is no doubt at all about it, as We were present there and yet they rejected Our own signs, so We caught them.

When this purpose was served, the pronouns were again changed to the third person. This reversion also served two purposes: It puts the sentence on the orginial track and brought into focus the great and all-encompassing Divine authority and power. The name, Allāh, brings to mind the fact that He has all the world's affairs in His Own hands and looks after every big and small thing. It was not difficult for Him to catch the disbelievers for their sins.

And that is why the name has been repeated in the next sentence. It says, ''and Allāh is severe in requiting'', instead of saying, ''and He is severe . . .'' The name draws attention to the fact that their disbelief and their rejection of the signs was nothing but a rebellion against Almighty Allāh; and it is easy for Him to catch the offenders and give them severe punishment, because He is Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *Say to those who disbelieve: ''You shall be vanquished . . . the resting place'': ''al-Ḥashr''* (اَلْحَشْرُ) is to force a group out from their abode. It is never used with a singular object. Allāh says: . . . *and We will gather them and leave not any one of them behind* (18:47). *''al-Mihād''* (اَلْمِهَادُ) literally means bed.

The context proves that ''those who disbelieve'' refers to the polytheists, because in the first verse also this phrase has been used for the same group, and not for the People of the Book. Both verses are inter-related — the previous one mentioned that they put their confidence in wealth and children and sought strength from them; and this one says that they shall surely be vanquished and shall all be driven together to the hell.

QUR'ĀN: *Indeed there was a sign in the two hosts* (which) *met*

together in encounter: The context shows that this verse also is addressed to ‘‘those who disbelieve’’; that it is the continuation of the preceding verse which told the Prophet to tell the unbelievers that they would be vanquished. There is also another possibility: It may have been addressed to the believers, inviting them to ponder on the grace of Allāh bestowed on them on the day of Badr. He helped them with His wonderful aid by affecting the sights of the eyes in a previously unheard of way. If this explanation is accepted then this verse enlarges the circle of audience — the preceding ones were addressed to the Prophet only, but this one includes the believers too. But the first explanation is more appropriate.

The verse does not name the event to which it refers; but the description fits on the battle of Badr. This chapter was revealed after the battle of Badr, or even Uḥud. The style shows that the event referred to was well-known to the audience who knew it with all its particulars. It was only in the battle of Badr that Allāh affected the visions of the participants. In Chapter 8, this phenomenon has been described in the following words: *And when He showed them to you, when you met, as few in your eyes, and He reduced you to appear as few in their eyes, in order that Allāh might bring about a matter which was to be done; and to Allāh are returned all affairs* (8:44). But this verse mentions reducing them to appear as few; while the verse under discussion talks about showing them as twice their number. Probably, Allāh made the believers appear as few in the eyes of the polytheists, so that the enemies of Islam would feel bold to attack the believers and would not abandon the thought of fighting; then after the start of the encounter, He made them appear as twice their number, so that the enemies would flee away and be vanquished.

In any case, if the verse is addressed, through the Prophet to the polytheists, it does not fit except the battle of Badr. (Some reciters have recited, ‘‘you saw them’’, instead of ‘‘they saw them’’; this recitation also supports the above-given explanation.)

What the verse says is this: O polytheists! if you have any wisdom, then what you saw on the day of Badr should be enough to convince you that victory belongs to the truth, that Allāh helps by His aid whom He wishes, and that He cannot be overpowered by wealth or children. The believers, on that day, were fighting in the

way of Allāh: they were a small and weak band, not even one-third of the army of the unbelievers; and their strength was not even worthy of comparison with that of the unbelievers; the Muslims were only three hundred and thirteen souls, their armament and provision amounting to a grand total of six coats of mail, eight swords and two horses. And the army of the polytheists consisted of nearly one thousand warriors, their provisions, strength, horses, camels and other preparations were beyond estimate. But Allāh helped the believers, in spite of their small number and weaknesses, over His enemies; He made the Muslims appear twice their actual number, in the eyes of the polytheists; and the angels were sent to help the believers. The polytheists, who thought that their wealth and children would make them strong and victorious, were destroyed; and their great multitude and overwhelming material strength proved totally ineffective against Allāh.

The wont of the people of Pharaoh and those who were before them — their rejecting the Divine signs and being caught by Allāh for their sins — has been repeated twice in Chapter 8.

The polytheists have been admonished and reminded of the the events of Badr. It is a hint that the victory of the Muslims mentioned in the preceding verse is the victory by killing and destroying the enemies. These verses, therefore, threaten the polytheists of fighting.

QUR'ĀN: *one party fighting in the way of Allāh and the other unbelieving:* Allāh did not say, ''and the other in the way of Satan'', or, ''in the way of false deities'' etc. The talk is not concerned with comparison between the two ways; its main purport is to show that nothing can be independent of Allāh; that nothing can avail against Him; and that the victory belongs to Him. The comparison is, thus, between the belief in Allāh and fighting in His way on one hand and disbelieving in Allāh on the other.

It appears from the context that the pronouns, ''them'' and ''their'', in the phrase, ''they saw them twice their number'' stand for the phrase, ''one party fighting in the way of Allāh''. In other words, it says that the unbelieving party saw the believers twice the actual number of the believers, that is, the believers appeared in their eyes as six hundred and twenty-six (instead of the three hundred and

thirteen). The words do not support the idea that the two pronouns stood for the two groups separately. In other words, the verse does not say that the unbelievers saw the believers twice the number of the unbelievers themselves.

Someone has mentioned another possibility: That both pronouns stood for the unbelieving party, and that the unbelievers saw themselves twice their own actual number, and instead of one thousand they saw themselves as two thousand. In this way, they saw the believers even smaller in proportion than they actually were; three hundren and thirteen is less than one-sixth of two thousand, while the believers were in fact about one-third of the enemies. It would also explain the verse 8:44 mentioned earlier: *And when He showed them to you, when you met, as few in your eyes, and He reduced you to appear as few in their eyes* . . . Without this explanation the two verses would appear contradictory to each other.

Reply: If Allāh wanted to say what has been suggested above, it was necessary to say clearly, ‘‘they saw themselves twice their own number’’. To express this idea in the present form (*they saw them twice their number*) creates confusion, which is unworthy of an eloquent talk. Also, it is wrong to think that this verse appears contradictory to the verse 8:44. To show contradiction, one would have to prove that both verses refer to the same time and the same situation. But it cannot be done. Probably, Allāh made each group appear, as fewer than their actual number, in the eyes of the opposite party; it made them bold to attack and start fighting. Then, after the battle waxed hot and the opposing forces raged into each other, Allāh made the unbelievers see the believers twice their actual number, and they lost their heart, were demoralized and fled away. So, where is the supposed discrepancy?

This case is similar to the two verses describing the affairs of the Day of Resurrection: So *on that day neither man nor jinn shall be asked about his sin* (55:39); *And stop them, for they shall be questioned* (37:24). There is no conflict here because each verse is about a different time and stage.

Some other exegetes have written some other views about the two pronouns; but as all of them are against the apparent meaning of the word, there is no use of quoting them here.

QUR'ĀN: and Allāh aids with His aid whom He pleases; most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight: ''at-Ta'yīd''(اَلتَّأْييدُ = to strengthen) is derived from al-ayd (اَلْاَيْدُ = strength). ''al-Abṣār'' (اَلْاَبْصَارُ) is sight. Some people say that here it refers to the eyes, because the verse describes how Allāh influenced their eye-sight. Others say that it means wisdom and knowledge, because it is through them that one may take lesson from some event. But this controversy is misplaced, because Allāh counts him who does not take lesson from events and parables as blind; and says that eyes must see and differentiate the truth from falsehood. It is a sort of claim that the truth, to which Allāh invites all His creatures, is a manifest, embodied substance which is within the perception of these physical eyes. In short, the body's eye and the mind's eye are treated as one (metaphorically, ofcourse) so far as comprehension of spiritual knowledge is concerned, because this knowledge is open for all to see. This theme is found in many verses, some of which are as follows: *For surely it is not the eyes that become blind, but blind become the hearts which are in the breasts* (22:46). In other words, the eyes are in the breasts, not in the heads: . . . *and they have eyes which they do not see with* . . . (7:179). This verse shows astonishment at their being blind to the truth: . . . *and put a covering upon his eyes* (45:23).

All of it shows that ''sight'' in this verse refers to the manifest eyes; this expression is based on an implied claim that it is these eyes that see the truth and take lesson from the past experience. It is a fine exmaple of *al-isti'āratu bi 'l-kināyah* (اَلْاِسْتِعَارَةُ بِالْكِنَايَةِ = a simile which contains neither the first or second side nor its particle — instead it mentions only a concomitant of the second side in order to hint at the allegory). Its import is to show that truth is such a manifest substance that it may be seen by these eyes. What has enhanced further the beauty of this expression is the context — the verse describes the effect the Divine decree had had on their eyesights.

Obviously, the sentence, ''most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight'', is not a part of the talk which the Prophet was to address to the unbelievers (*Say to those who disbelieve* . . .). It is addressed to the Prophet himself. Its proof is the singular second person pronoun *''ka''* (كَ = thou) added as suffix in *''dhālika''* (ذٰلِكَ = this). It is an indication that the unbelievers are so blind of hearts

that they cannot take lesson from past events; therefore, they are not worthy of any advice.

QUR'ĀN: It has been made to seem fair . . . : This and the following verses elaborate the preceding ones (As for those who disbelieve surely neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allāh . . .). The unbelievers erroneously thought that these things would make them independent of Allāh. Now, this verse explains the reason of their mistaken idea: They have submerged their souls under the love of these worldly materials and are so overwhelmed with them that they have forgotten the life hereafter. But they are mistaken, because these things are just the provisions of this transient life, their only purpose is to pave the way for the next destination that is with Allāh. These people are oblivious of the reality of this worldly provision: Allāh has ingrained in human nature the love of these fair and beautiful items, so that this worldly life may attain its completion and perfection. Without this inclination, continuity of human race would be endangered. It is through this love and desire that the decree of Allāh is enforced: . . . *and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time* (2:36). Allāh created in man this inclination, so that he may use it as a means to reach his final destination; so that he may take from it what would benefit him in the next life. People were not expected to treat these worldly trinkets as permanent things, or to forget what lies ahead. They are on journey, going forward to their Lord; they should not take the path as the destination. Allāh says: *Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* (as to) *which of them is best in deed. And most surely We will make what is on it bare ground without herbage* (18:7 — 8).

But these simpletons thought that these apparent causes of worldly pleasure were independent of Allāh, (while actually they were created by Allāh to be a means to obtain the pleasure of Allāh). Instead, the unbelievers thought that these things would avail them against Allāh. By their behaviour, they turned the bliss into misery, and changed the reward into punishment. Allāh says: *The likeness of this world's life is only as water which We sent down from the sky; by its mingling the herbage of the earth of which men and cattle eat grows; until when the earth puts on its golden raiment and it*

becomes garnished, and its people think that they have power over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, so We render it as reaped, as though it had not been in existence yesterday; . . . And on the day when We will gather them all together, then We will say to those who associated others (with Allāh); *Keep where you are, you and your associates; then We shall separate them widely one from another . . . and they shall be brought back to Allāh, their true Master, and what they did fabricate shall escape from them* (10:24 — 30). These verses show that the life and its adornments are in the hands of Allāh; none but He controls them. Man, in his foolishness, is deceived by its appearance and thinks that he is in control of his own affair, and that it is he who manages it and keeps it in order. He ascribes some associates in it, like idols and things like idols (wealth and children etc.). But Allāh will make him aware of his follies; the embellishments will go away, the relationship between him and his associates will be cut off, and all that man had fabricated against Allāh will be lost to him. Then he will understand that what he was admonished with in this world was true. Alas! understanding at that time when he will be returned to his Lord, will not benefit him at all.

Allāh says: ‘‘It has been made to seem fair to men the love of desires . . .’’ The question is: Who has made it to look fair to man? The world appears before man’s eyes as a beautiful and adorable thing — it shows the elegance of independence and beauty of purpose. Does Allāh make it appear in this light? Reason says, No. The All-knowing Wise Lord is too great to manage a thing in such a way that it would defeat His Own purpose. He says: . . . *surely Allāh attains His purpose* (65:3); *and Allāh is predominant over His affair* (12:21). If this phenomenon is to be attributed at all, it should be attributed to Satan. Allāh says: . . . *and Satan made what they did fair-seeming to them* (6:43). *And when Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them* . . . (8:48).

Of course, it is all according to the system decreed by Allāh. He has given the man freedom of will to choose his own path, and Allāh does not interfere in the man’s choice. This system is called ‘‘permission’’, it is so that the test may be conducted, and so that the spiritual training may progress in a just manner. Allāh says: *Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘‘We believe’’, and not be*

tried? And certainly We tried those before them, so Allāh will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars. Or do they who work evil think that they will escape Us? Evil is it that they judge (29:2 — 4).

There is a verse in which this ‘‘making fair-seeming’’ has been attributed to Allāh: *Thus have We made fair-seeming to every people their deeds* (6:108). This verse may be explained by the above-mentioned system of ‘‘permission’’. It may also be explained in the light of the previously explained verse: *Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* (as to) *which of them is best in deed* (18:7).

This ‘‘making fair-seeming’’ is of two kinds. First, world and worldly embellishments are made fair-seeming to man so that he may use it wisely — to get happiness in the next world, and to seek the pleasure of Allāh in all his actions through this wealth, honour, children and self. It is a good and divinelyinspired characeristic and Allāh has attributed it to Himself in the verse 18:7 (*Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment . . .*), and in other verses mentioned earlier. Also the following verse refers to this reality: *Say: ‘‘Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allāh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?’’* (7:32).

Second, world is made to appear lovely in the eyes of man, to ensnare his heart, so that he may forget his Creator. It is an evil plan which Allāh has attributed to Satan, and admonished His servants to remain on guard against it. For example: *. . . and Satan made what they did fair-seeming to them . . .* (6:43); *He* (Satan) *said: ‘‘My Lord! because Thou hast left me to stray, I will certainly make* (evil) *fair-seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly cause them all to go astray . . . ’’* (15:39); *. . . the evil of their doings is made fair-seeming to them . . .* (9:37), etc.

Sometimes even this type of ‘‘making fair-seeming’’ is attributed to Allāh, inasmuch as Satan and all other causes of good and evil do whatever they do only because Allāh has given them the ‘‘permission’’ (as explained above). This system was necessary to attain the Divine purpose of test, in order that the doers of good may succeed because of their good intention and choice; and the sinners

may be separated from them.

The above explanation makes it clear that it is not Allāh who has made it seem fair to men the love of various desires mentioned in the verse under discussion. No doubt, every ‘‘making fair-seeming’’ may be attributed to Allāh, either directly, (if it is a good adornment leading man to His worship) or indirectly, that is, by permission (if it makes one to forget one’s Creator). But this verse contains some factors which cannot be attributed to Allāh directly. Therefore, it was in keeping with the good manners of the Qur’ān not to attribute this adornment to Allāh; instead, it attributes it to some unspecified agent — it could be either Satan or the man himself.

An exegete has rightly said that the implied doer of the verb, ‘‘It has been made to seem fair’’, is Satan, because the love of desires is not a likeable trait, nor is the love of excessive wealth; and therefore, it cannot be attributed to Allāh. Allāh has attributed to Himself the good things mentioned at the end of this verse and in the next one.

But another commentator has said that it cannot be attributed to Satan. He says: The matters related to the human nature and its love and inclinations can never be ascribed to Satan; what may be attributed to him is evil whispering that makes evil thoughts and deeds look attractive to man. He continues his argument as follows: The Qur’ān has never attributed to Satan anything except making evil deed fair-seeming. Allāh says: *And when Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them* (8:48); *. . . and Satan made what they did fair-seeming to them* (6:43). But the Book does not attribute the realities and natures of the things except to the Wise Creator Who has no partner. Allāh says: *Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* (as to) *which of them is best in deed* (18:7); *Thus have We made fair-seeming to every people their deeds* (6:108). The verse talks about the ‘‘people’’, which is another way of talking about the nature of society.

Comment: He is right when he says that the realities and natures of things cannot be attributed to other than Allāh. But he is mistaken in thinking that the verse speaks about the naure of man, or about his natural traits. This statement of ours may be understood if wo look at

the central theme of this chapter.

The main purpose of this chapter is to describe the following realities:

Allāh is Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist: He manages all affairs of all His creatures; He creates them and looks after them. He guides them to their eternal bliss. Those who indulge in hypocrisy, reject His signs or revolt against Him by differing in His Book — the hypocrites, the unbelievers, the polytheists and the People of the Book — in short, all those who obey Satan and follow their desires, cannot weaken the authority of Allāh, nor can they overpower Him, nor is His all-encompassing management affected by their misbehaviour. Everything, including the creatures' belief and disbelief, obedience and disobedience, is based on the system decreed by Allāh. He has created in this world the systems of the cause and effect, and of the test and trial. He has created the nature, its properties and traits, its inclinations and actions. It has been done so that man may proceed forward to his Lord, may attain nearness to Allāh and may get eternal honour in the Divine presence.

It was because of this system of test that He permitted Satan and did not prevent him from whispering into men's hearts and putting evil ideas into their minds. Nor did He prevent man from obeying Satan or following his own base desires. By this ''permission'' the test and trial remains free and fair; those who believe are distinguished from the disbelievers and the hypocrites; and the pure hearted servants of Allāh are raised in status to become witnesses of Allāh.

These things have been described in this chapter to give comfort to the believers. At that time they were overwhelmed by hardships and difficulties. Within their society, they had to endure the double-dealings of the hypocrites and ignorance of those with disease in their hearts. These two groups disturbed their plans and disrupted their affairs; as a result the commands given by Allāh and His Apostle were not fully obeyed. On the outside, they were in constant danger from various groups. There were, within Arabia, the polytheists and the People of the Book (especially, the Jews); and the neighbouring Romans and Persians were threatening them with all their might and forces. All those disbelievers were mistaken and

confused in their ideas and ideals. They were entangled in this transient world and its embellishments; they thought that it was their goal and final destination. They had forgottent that this world was only a path, and the destination was the next world.

It is obvious that the chapter discusses the nature of the people, but in a wider framework that includes the purpose of their creation, and all that it entails, like the character and behaviour, the good and evil deeds, the obedience and disobedience. It declares that all this is under the management of Allāh, Who can never be defeated or overpowered — neither in this world nor in the next. In this world, all things happen by His ‘‘permission’’, which makes the test meaningful. In the next world, all will be based on the principle of recompense — good for good and evil for evil.

The verses under discussion also were revealed with the same theme. The disbelievers were given those bounties in order that they might obtain with their help the pleasure of Allāh and enter into His paradise. Instead, they rejected the signs of their Lord and changed those bounties into a source of eternal misfortune; they relied on those worldly embellishments; and thought that those things would avail them against Allāh; in short, they were so enchanted by created things that they forgot the Creator. But these people cannot weaken the hold of Allāh over them; they cannot overpower Him, nor can they escape from Him. Allāh shall catch them for their sins, and shall help His believing servants against them. He shall gather all the disbelievers together unto hell and it is an evil abode. It is their greatest mistake to rely on that which is only a provision of this worldly life, and to forget that the best destination is with Allāh.

These verses too speak about the nature of the disbelievers, but in a wider context that includes their good and bad deeds.

Therefore, it is wrong on the part of that exegete to think that, because the verse speaks about human nature, the verb, ‘‘It has been made to seem fair’’, cannot be attributed to other than Allāh.

Further, he has offered the verse: ‘‘Thus have We made fair-seeming to every people their deeds’’, as a proof that realities can only be attributed to Allāh, and it is only the deeds that may be attributed to Satan. But this verse clearly proves the opposite, because it attributes the deeds to Allāh. Its context further

strengthens this proposition. The complete verse is as follows: *And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allāh, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allāh out of ignorance. Thus have We made fair-seeming to every people their deeds; then to their Lord shall be their return, so He will inform them of what they did* (8:108). It makes clear what we have said.

Another exegete has said: This ‘‘Making fair-seeming’’ is of two types: Commendable and condemnable. Likewise, human actions are of two kinds: good and evil. Only that which is commendable, good and praiseworthy can be attributed to Allāh; and the other type is escribed to Satan.

Comment: The above statement is correct to a certain extent — in so far as the direct attribution is concerned. In other word, it is valid about the direct actions of Allāh. Allāh does not do except good and He does not enjoin indecency and evil. But there is no reason why actions, other than the good and praiseworthy, should not be attributed to Him indirectly. In other words, Allāh may ‘‘permit’’ His creatures to do good or evil as they like. They do whatever they do by the power given to them by Allāh, and according to the system of test decreed by Him. And in this sense, all actions may be ascribed to Allāh — indirectly, of course. If one says that some actions cannot be ascribed to Allāh even indirectly, it would be difficult for him to believe that Allāh is the Lord of everything, Creator of everything and Owner of everything, or that He has no partner or colleague in any affair at all. Moreover, the Qur’ān contains many verses in which ‘‘unpraiseworthy’’ actions have been ascribed to Allāh: *Allāh makes whosoever He wills go astray* (13:27)*; . . . Allāh made their hearts turn aside* (61:5); *Allāh mocks them and leaves them alone in their inordinacy* (2:15); *. . . We order the people of it who lead easy life, so they transgress therein* (17:16); there are many verses of this kind in the Qur’ān.

What is the source of this erroneous ideas of people like that exegete? They looked at things and meditated on their mutual relationship, on their actions and their effects. They thought that every single thing has an independent existence, is separate from all surrounding things, and has no connection with things that have

passed nor with those that are yet to appear.

Allāh has decreed that every event should be a result of interaction of numerous causes. But these people put every thing and every event in a separate pigeonhole, unconnected with any other thing or event. According to their thinking, each event is related only to its immediate cause, and each action belongs only to its doer; other, distant causes have nothing to do with that event or action. Planets revolve, rivers flow, ships run, earth supports its inhabitants, vegetables grow, animals walk and man lives and strives: All these phenomena are separate from each other; there is no bond that binds them to one another; neither any metaphysical reality joins them together nor any physical force keeps them united.

Going a step further, they ascribed the same separateness to human actions and affairs. Virtue and evil, felicity and infelicity, guidance and misguidance, obedience and disobedience, benevolence and malevolence, justice and injustice, nothing is related to any other thing, nothing has any connection with anything else in its existecne.

These people have overlooked the most obvious reality — that the universe, with all sorts of creatures and all kinds of components, is a single entity, whose parts are finely aligned together. Not only that — its components are often interchanged: Today it is a human being, tomorrow it will change into dust and the day after tomorrow will grow as a grass; one's life is the other's death; the ''new'' arises from the ashes of the ''old''.

The events happening herein are likewise all related to each other; they are the links that are connected together to form the chain that is called the universe. An apparently insignificant alteration in the position of a small link affects the positions of all other links on both sides. A minute change in an atom causes changes in the whole system of the world, although we may not notice it. (If we do not know that a thing exists, it does not mean that it does not exist.)

This universal inter-relation was known to, and described by, the ancient philosophers; and it has been fully manifested by modern sciences. And the Qur'ān had explained to the Muslims this phenomenon long before they learned it from philosophers, scientists and mathematicians of other nations, and then started to do their own researches on these lines. The Divine Book tells us how the system

of the heavens and the earth are interlocked, how one affects the other, how all are joined together in attaining to the purpose of creation, how the Divine decree permeates every thing, how all are proceeding towards their Lord, and how the final destination is with Allāh.

Likewise, the characteristics and attributes of our actions are linked together. Even the opposite actions stand face to face with each other, and if one of them goes away, the other would not be recognized. It resembles the physical world where making of one thing depends on unmaking of the other, and the one's progress causes the other's retrogress. If one of the opposite is missing, the other's desired effects on the society would also disappear. The same is the case of virtue and evil as shown by the Divine religion. Obedience is a virtue because disobedience is an evil; good deeds deserve good recompense because bad deeds attract severe requital; reward is pleasant because punishment is unpleasant; and pleasure is desired because displeasure is undesireable. Man by nature gravitates towards felicity and happiness; and runs away from infelicity and unhappiness. If this natural movement stops, the existence itself would dissolve into nothingness.

Obedience, then good deeds, then reward, then pleasure, then happiness — it is a chain that runs parallel to disobedience, then evil deeds, then punishment, then displeasure, then unhappiness. Each side manifests itself by hiding the other; each one gets life in the death of its opposite. How can one call to good deeds without warning against its opposite misdeeds?

We can see in this light that in the Divine wisdom it was necessary for the universe to contain the opposites — virtue and evil, obedience and disobedience. At this stage, there appears an important difference: Creation and destruction, making and unmaking in all things, except human actions, are attributed to Allāh, because the creation and all its affairs are in His hands, He has no partner or colleague. So far as the actions are concerned, if they are good and virtuous, they too are directly attributed to Allāh, because He has guided the man to them. But evil deeds and affairs, like whispering of Satan, overpowering of man by desires or rule of a tyrant over a nation, may be indirectly attributed to Allāh, inasmuch as He withdraws His help from the doers of such deeds

and leaves them free to go astray. It is this factor that is called ''permission''. It is correct to say that Allāh has permitted Satan to misguide human beings with his whisperings and deceptions; that He does not prevent man from following his base desires; and that He does not hinder an unjust person from his oppression. He has decreed this system because felicity and infelicity are based on freedom of choice; if a man succeeds, it shall be by his own free choice; and if he fails, it too shall be by his own free choice. Otherwise, the proof of Allāh could not be completed against His servants, and the intended test would be irrelevant.

What prevented the said exegete and others like him from letting the Qur'ānic arguments and expressions progress to their logical result, was their reluctance to accept what seemed to them a wrong conclusion. Those who believed that everything is done by Allāh and that there is no cause other than Allāh were disinclined to accept that things were linked together in a chain of cause and effect, because, according to their thinking, it implied a reduction in the all pervasive power of Allāh. Others thought that if deeds of all types could be attributed to Allāh — directly or indirectly — it would absolve the man from responsibility of his action, as it would mean that he was not free in his action; rather he was a helpless tool in the hands of Allāh. Once it was accepted, the system of test, reward and punishment would be negated; and there would be no justification for ordaining the Divine law and religion.

But they should have meditated on the words of Allāh revealed in the Qur'ān: . . . *and Allāh is predominant over His affairs* (12:21); . . . *surely His is the creation and the command* (7:54); *Now surely of Allāh is what is in the heavens and the earth* . . . (10:55). There are many similar verses that prove what we have explained above; and a short description of this topic was given under the verse: *Surely Allāh is not ashamed to set forth any parable* — (that of) *a gnat or any thing above that* (2:26).

Now we return to our original topic: Apparently the doer of the verb, ''It has been made to seem fair'', is something other than Allāh — it is either Satan or the man's soul itself. There are four reasons to support this view of ours:

First: The verse condemns the disbelievers because they are inclined to these embellishments of the world — wealth and children

— and think that these things may avail them against Allāh. It is an adornment that turns one away from remembrance of Allāh, and it is not proper to ascribe such a ‘‘making fair-seeming’’ to Allāh.

Second: If this ‘‘making fair-seeming’’ is attributed to Allāh, it would point to the natural inclination, ingrained in human creation. In that case, it was more appropriate to use the word, *‘‘al-insān’’* (اَلْاِنْسَانُ = human being, man) or ‘‘children of Adam’’; because Allāh uses such words on such occasions: *Certainly We created man* (al-insān) *in the best make. Then We rendered him the lowest of the low* (95:4 — 5); *And surely We have honoured the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land and the sea, and We have given them of the good things, and We have made them to excel by an appropriate excellence over most of those whom We have created* (17:70). But in the verse under discussion Allāh has used the word, *‘‘an-nās’’* (اَلنَّاسُ = men, people) which more often than not has been used in the Qur’ān to show worthlessness of the people referred to, to show their immaturity and narrow-mindedness. For example, . . . *but most men do not consent to aught but denying* (17:89); *O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female* . . . (49:13), etc.

Third: The items of desires enumerated in this verse do not fit properly the inclinations ingrained in human nature. If the Qur’ān wanted to refer to the natural desires, then it would have been more appropriate to change the words, ‘‘women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver’’ with the words, ‘‘spouses, and children and wealth’’. After all the natural inclination towards the opposite sex is found in women as much as in men; and the parents love their daughters as much as their sons; and man loves wealth in general and not only the hoarded treasures of gold and silver.

Those who say that the doer of the verb, ‘‘It has been made to seem fair’’ is Allāh, have had to say that the word, ‘‘women’’, refers to matrimony in general; the ‘‘sons’’ means children of both sexes; and the phrase, ‘‘hoarded treasures of gold and silver’’ stands for wealth in general. They say that the words used in the verse have been given just as the most popular examples of every item.

But it is stretching the meanings too far.

Fourth: To say that it is Allāh Who has made these items fair-seeming to men is not in conformity with the end of the verse: ‘‘this

is the provision of the life of this world; and Allāh is He with Whom is the best destination. Say: 'Shall I tell you of what is better than these?' '' Obviously these words have been used to divert their attention from these worldly desires, and create in them love of the things that are with Allāh — paradise, pure mates and pleasure of Allāh. The natural desire of worldly embellishments has been created by Allāh, in order that man may use them to reach his spiritual destination — the same paradise and pleasure of Allāh. That natural desire is the means to obtain that result. If Allāh admonished men to forget these worldly desires and yet told them to reach the intended goal it would be self-contradictory. Who would want to satiate his hunger and yet abstain from food?

Question: This verse in its theme is not different from the verse, Say: ''Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allāh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?'' Say: ''These are for the believers in the life of this world, purely (theirs) on the Resurrection Day . . . '' (7:32). In this verse the embellishment is ascribed to Allāh; likewise, the doer of this ''making fair-seeming'' in the verse under discussion should be Allāh.

Reply: There is a clear difference in the import of the two verses. The verse under discussion condemns these desires; because they divert the attention of men from Allāh and from what is with Allāh. It exhorts them to turn aside from these worldly entanglements and to look forward to what is with Allāh. The theme of the verse of Chapter 7 is quite different. It says that these embellishments have been created for the benefit of human beings; the believers enjoy them in this world together with the others; and it will be reserved for the believers only in the next world. It should be noted that this verse uses the word ''His servants'', instead of the ''men'' and it counts the embelilishment as ''the good provisions''.

Question: What has been made fair-seeming is ''the love of desires'', not the desires themselves. The fact that love seems fair to man and attracts him is a natural reality. The expression, that love has been made fair-seeming to men, means that it has been made effective in their hearts; in other words, love has been created in

their hearts; and creation cannot be attributed to other than Allāh. Therefore, He is the doer of this verb.

Reply: The context (to which we have referred) shows that adornment of love means that love has been given a power that attracts people to itself and prevents them from looking at other things. Adornment is an attractive thing that is used or worn by another thing; it attracts the people primarily to itself and then transfers that attraction to the wearer or user. A woman uses cosmetics and ornaments, in order to attract her man to herself — by way of those embellishments. Primarily the man is attracted by those embellishments, but the real objective of the woman is to attract him to herself. In this background, the semantic flow of the word, ‘‘It has been made fair-seeming . . . the love of desires . . .’’ is that primarily the love attracts the men to itself but the real objective is to enchant the people and let them sink in inordinate desire of the named trinkets of the world. In short, the effect of love is not the true objective; and therefore the argument mentioned in the question is out of place. The real goal (which has been condemned) is the desire, as may be seen in the verse: *But there followed after them an evil generation, who neglected prayer and followed the sensual desires, so they shall soon meet* (the result of their) *sin* (19:59). This meaning is supported by the given list of the desired things. Moreover, the word ‘‘desire’’, although used here for desired things, has a shade of inordinate passion in its meaning.

QUR’ĀN: *of women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver and well-bred horses and cattle and tilth: ‘‘an-Nisā’ ’’* (اَلنِّسَاءُ = women) is plural, it has no singular from this root; *‘‘al-banīn’’* (اَلْبَنِيْنَ = sons) is plural of *al-ibn* (اَلِابْنُ = male offspring, direct or indirect); *‘‘al-qanāṭīr’’* (اَلْقَنَاطِيْرُ) is plural of *al-qinṭār* (اَلْقِنْطَارُ = a waterskin full of gold, a filled waterskin); *‘‘al-muqanṭarah’’* (اَلْمُقَنْطَرَةُ) is passive participle (object-noun) of *al-qinṭār* although the latter is an inflexible noun. In Arabic language, they often ascribe to an inflexible noun a shade of meaning that makes it resemble an infinitive verb, and then make various words from it, for example, *al-bāqil* (اَلْبَاقِلُ), *at-tāmir* (اَلتَّامِرُ) and *al-‘aṭṭār* (اَلْعَطَّارُ) for seller of *al-baql* (اَلْبَقْلُ = vegetable), *at-tamr* (اَلتَّمْرُ = date) and *al-‘iṭr* (اَلْعِطْرُ =

perfume) respectively. It qualifies the word *al-qanāṭīr* (اَلْقَنَاطِيْرُ = treasures) with an adjective *al-muqanṭarah* (اَلْمُقَنْطَرَةُ = treasured, hoarded) which is derived from the same word. This device doubly confirms the meaning of the qualified words, for example, *danānīr mudannarah* (دَنَانِيْرُ مُدَنَّرَةٌ = coined dinars), *dawāwīn mudawwanah* (دَوَاوِيْنُ مُدَوَّنَةٌ = recorded register), *ḥijāb maḥjūb* (حِجَابٌ مَحْجُوبٌ = veiled curtain) and *sitr mastūr* (سِتْرٌ مَسْتُورٌ = concealed screen). *''al-Khayl''* (اَلْخَيْلُ = horses) ; *''al-musawwamah ''* (اَلْمُسَوَّمَةُ) has two meanings: left free to pasture or branded. *''al-An'ām''* (اَلْاَنْعَامُ) is plural of *an-na'am* (اَلنَّعَمُ) which means camel, cow, buffalo, goat and sheep; *al-bahīmah* (اَلْبَهِيْمَةُ) is more general than that and is used for all quadrupeds and excludes carnivora, birds and insects. *''al-Ḥarth''* (اَلْحَرْثُ = tilth) has a meaning of earning in it; it means farming (or cultivated plant) for a livelihood.

The list of desired things given here does not mean that every man has so many loves of desires, as some exegetes have thought; they took the verse to refer to the natural love of spouse, children and wealth. But then they had to explain why human being has been referred to as ''men'' or people, why ''children'' has been changed to ''sons'' and why ''wealth'' has been described as ''hoarded treasures''.

The fact, however, is that the verse only says that people, in their inordinate love of worldly desires, are of various types: There are some lecherous persons whose only aim in life is lusting after women; it brings in its train numerous sins and social ills, like using musical instruments, singing, drinking liquor and many other evils. Such debauchery is found mostly in men; women as a rule are free from it (except, in rare cases). Then there are those who ardently love their sons and want their number to increase in order to become a strong and powerful clan; this tendency is more prominent in nomadic tribes, and it especially concerns the sons, not the daughters. A third category is of those greedy avaricious persons who live only for the purpose of hoarding treasures and riches; this madness manifests itself especially in filling their coffers with gold and silver, or similar things like currency notes and bonds, other items are not valued very much by such people. This covetousness is predominent in inhabitants of villages and towns, and is seldom seen

in nomads. Finally, come those who want to own a string of pedigreed horses. (It is those who are fond of horsemanship or horse-race); some others love to have cattle; yet others eagerly desire for agricultural farm. The last named three types of desire are sometimes found together.

People usually are overwhelmed by one of the above-mentioned desires primarily, and the rest is given a secondary place. One seldom (or, never) finds a man whose love of all these items is of equal degree.

Other desired ‘‘things’’, like power, position, prestige, presidency, ministry etc., are only imaginary things, that have no existence outside imagination. Man desires them not for their own sake, but only because they give him a chance to acquire wealth. And, in any case, it is not the purport of the verse to enumerate all the desires.

It proves what we mentioned earlier that the ‘‘love of desires’’ means inordinate attachment to these things (and it is ascribed to Satan); it does not refer to the natural love that has been ingrained in human psyche (and which is attributed to Allāh).

QUR’ĀN: *this is the provision . . . best destination:* These desires are such as may be useful to manage the affairs of this life; but this life itself, like its provisions, is a transient thing; it will soon cease to exist. The good life and the best destination is only with Allāh.

QUR’ĀN: *Say: ‘‘Shall I tell you . . . and Allāh’s pleasure:* It elaborates the preceding sentence, ‘‘and Allāh is He with Whom is the best destination’’. It puts, in place of the above-mentioned transient and misleading desires, other things that are best for the man, because they shall remain for ever and are really good, without any shade of imperfection. Although these good enjoyments are similar to those evil desires, but they are free from all evil and bad effects, and they do not divert the man’s attention from sublime Divine realities. The three good enjoyments are the paradise, the pure mates and the pleasure of Allāh.

Among the blessings of the paradise are the pure mates. The verse has already mentioned the paradise. Then what was the need of mentioning the ‘‘pure mates’’ separately. It is because sexual intercourse

is the greatest physical pleasure of a human being. It was for the same reason that the preceding verse mentioned ‘‘women’’ before ‘‘sons’’ and ‘‘hoarded treasures’’.

‘‘ar-Riḍwān’’ (اَلرِّضْوَانُ) is also read as *ar-ruḍwān* (اَلرُّضْوَانُ); it means pleasure, when a reality is agreeable to one’s heart; *as-sukhṭ* (اَلسُّخْطُ = displeasure) is its opposite.

The Qur’ān repeatedly mentions the pleasure of Allāh. Allāh is pleased with a servant if he obeys His command; also He is pleased if the servant acquires such attributes and qualities which are good and praiseworthy. But in most — nay, all — places where it has been mentioned in the Qur’ān, it is related to the obedience. That is why sometimes it is described side by side with the pleasure of the servant. Allāh is pleased with His servant because of his obedience; the servant is pleased with his Master because of the good reward given to him. Allāh says: *Allāh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him* (98:8); *O tranquilled soul* (that art at rest)! *Return to thy Lord, well pleased* (with Him), *well pleasing* (to Him) (89:27 — 28); *And* (as for) *the foremost, the first of the Emigrants and the Helpers, and those who followed them in goodness, Allāh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him* (9:100).

Pleasure of Allāh has been counted here as one of those things that are better for men than the desires of this world’s life. It shows that this pleasure itself is one of the things that man should desire — or, it accompanies such things that should be desired by him. That is why it has been joined in this verse with the gardens and the pure wives. In other verses, it has been jointly mentioned with grace, forgiveness and mercy of Allāh: . . . *seeking the grace from their Lord and* (His) *pleasure* . . . (5:2); *and forgiveness from Allāh and* (His) *pleasure* . . . (57:20); . . . *mercy from Himself and* (His) *pleasure* . . . (9:21).

The verse under discussion implies a sublime reality that one may comprehend on meditating on the verses mentioned above, for example, *Allāh is well pleased with them* . . . (98:8) and: *well pleased with Him, well pleasing* (to Him) (89:28). The verses say that Allāh is well pleased with them; it is different from saying that He is well pleased with their deeds. It proves that Allāh shall never reject any

of their prayers; He shall never disappoint them in whatever they ask Him for. It leads to us to the verse: *They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet* (50:35). In short, when Allāh is pleased with a man, that man shall be granted all his wishes without any reservation.

Now we may realize the true significance of the verses. Man thinks that if he acquires the worldly objects mentioned in the preceding verse — and especially the hoarded treasures — it will give him freedom of action; he will be able to do whatever he wishes and he will get unlimited power; but he is grossly mistaken in it. Such unlimited power comes only from the pleasure of Allāh, Who has every affair in His own hands.

QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh sees the servants:* The two verses showed that Allāh has created for man in both worlds many bounties and pleasant things which he is wont to enjoy, for example, sexual pleasure, food, drink, property and things like that. These items are found in both worlds, with one difference — the pleasures of this world are available to both the believers and the non-believers; but the bounties of the next world are reserved for the believers only; non-believers will have no share in it.

A question could be asked: Why this difference? Why only the believers will be given the pleasant things of the next world? The sentence, ''Allāh sees the servants'', answers this unasked question. This difference between the believer and non-believer is based on a basic difference between their conditions, and Allāh sees them and knows the difference between them. The dividing factor is piety and fear of Allāh, which is found in the believer only. That attribute of piety and fear of Allāh has been elaborated in the next two verses: ''Those who say . . . forgiveness before dawn''. The pious believers declare that they depend on their Lord in all their affairs; and they confirm that declaration with good deeds. The unbeliever, on the other hand, thinks that he is independent of Allāh; he remains entangled in worldly desires, forgets the next world and his ultimate destination. Therefore, he shall be denied the pleasures of that world.

Now read again the verses, ''this is the provision of the life of this world; and Allāh is He with Whom is the best destination. Say: 'Shall I

tell you of what is better than these?' For those who guard (against evil) are gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and pure mates . . .'' Also, look at other verses of the same theme, for example, *Say: ''Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allāh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?'' Say: ''These are for the believers in the life of this world, purely* (theirs) *on the Resurrection Day; thus do We make the signs clear fora people who know''* (7:32). If you ponder on such verses, you will easily grasp the reality of the bounties of the paradise; also you will know how baseless is the following objection directed against them by many writers:

Objection: Look at any worldly thing; all its actions and reactions emanate from various organs and faculties which are found in its system. Allāh has equipped it with those organs and faculties to protect and preserve its existence. After all, existence is not a matter of chance, nor does it happen at random or without a purpose. Here is the man; his whole body is equipped with the most efficient and most mind-boggling systems, all geared to one aim — to ingest and digest the food he takes. The digested food replaces the burnt up cells, tissues and other parts of the body; through this ever-continuing process, man remains alive, his body recoups its losses and even grows. Likewise, he has been given the most intricate reproductory systems — male and female complementing each other in the most awe-inspiring manner. And the purpose behind it is to preserve and propagate the human species.

What has been said about the man, is equally true for the animal and the vegetables.

The nature very cunningly put delicious taste and irresistible pleasure in these actions, compelling the creatures, and especially the man and the animal, to do it again and again in pursuit of pleasure. Immersed in the pleasure of food and sexual intercourse, man is seldom aware that the nature is using him for its own goal, that is, preservation of human race. If the food and sexual intercourse were devoid of pleasure, no man would have indulged in them — even if he was told that the survival of his race depended on it. But in the present set-up man gladly endures whatever hardships come in his way and obtains those pleasures. When he gets his desire, he feels happy and even proud of his achievement. But it is the nature that

should really be proud of its planning: It wanted to keep the individual alive — and it was done through eating; and it wanted the species to survive — and this goal was attained through copulation. And what was left for the self-satisfied man? Nothing except the memory of a transient pleasure.

These worldly pleasures are ingrained in our system but for a limited and transitory purpose. There is no reason why they should be transplanted from this world to the next where that purpose cannot be attained. The pleasure of food, drink and other such things is meant to protect the body from weakness, sickness and death. The pleasure of sexual intercourse and other related things is meant for the continuity and survival of the human race. If a man is taken out of this world and given an everlasting existence which is immune from death and annihilation; a life that is free from every hardship and difficulty, and every sorrow and grief, then there is no reason why he should be encumbered with these worldly organs and faculties. Why should he be burdened with various systems of the body and a myriad of organs like stomach, kidneys, bladder, spleen, liver, etc.? After all, they were needed only in the worldly life which was transitory; what purpose would they serve in the eternal life?

Reply: Allāh has created these pleasures as well as the bounties from which they spring forth, as an embellishment of this world's life. The aim is to attract the man initially to them — and through them to the life itself. Allāh has said:

Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it . . . (18:7).

Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of this world . . . (18:46).

. . . *coveting the* (transitory) *goods of this world's life* . . . (4:94).

And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them, (of) *the splendour of this world's life, that We may thereby try them; and the sustenance* (given) *by your Lord is better and more abiding* (20:131).

Note: This verse covers all aspects of the subject under discussion.

And whatever things you have been given are only a provision of this world's life and its adornment, and whatever is with Allāh is

better and more lasting; do you not then understand? (28:60).

There are many verses of the same import. They make it 'ar that all the bounties of this world have been created to make this life pleasant — this life which is so short and finite. If there were no life, these bounties and their pleasures would not have been created. This is a fact and upto this point we totally agree with our adversaries.

Now comes the important reality which has been overlooked by the said objector. When he says that the man is given an everlasting existence in the next world, what meaning does he assign to the word ‘‘man’’? Man has no other identity except this existence which he perfects in various stages. He is a combination of a spirit and a body — the body which is made of various organs, faculties, powers and senses. Remove these organs and faculties etc., and there will remain neither any person nor his existence — nothing will survive. Negation of body and its various systems and organs is not just a negation of man’s continued existence, it is negation of the man himself.

Man, in fact, is a being who procreates, eats, drinks and copulates; he manages the things given them to, and receiving them from, others; he feels, thinks and understands; he feels happiness and is overcome by sorrow. All these actions and reactions form his personality — we may say that he is the sum total of these faculties and systems. Then Allāh transfers him from this transitory world to the everlasting abode and makes him an eternal being — either enjoying everlasting reward or undergoing abiding punishment. But Allāh does not do so by nullifying man’s entity and giving him another one; He only bestows on his present entity the quality of eternity, removing from it the defects of changes and death. Whatever bounties he is awarded, they must be similar to those he had enjoyed in this world; otherwise, he would not enjoy it at all. And what are the pleasures he is familiar with? There is nothing except sexual intercourse, food, drink, clothes, house, friends, and other such enjoyments. Of course, there will be one difference: While the pleasure of this world is transitory, that of the next will be eternal. Likewise, the punishments given to him should be similar to the hardships and afflictions of this world, with the same difference — while the calamities of this world are transitory, those of the next

will be everlasting.

In short, man in the next world will remain the same man; there too he will need and require the same things which he needed and required here. The difference between the pleasures and displeasures of this world and those of the next is that the latter will be eternal and everlasting.

This reality manifests itself in the words of Allāh, where He describes the creation of man: *And certainly We created man of an extract of clay; then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place, then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made* (in) *the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We caused it to grow into another creation; so blessed be Allāh, the best of the creators. Then after that you will most surely die. Then surely on the Day of Resurrection you shall be raised* (23:12 — 16). Note the verbs in the beginning, ''We created'', and ''We made''; the Arabic verbs are derived from *al-khalq* (اَلْخَلْقُ) which implies collection, combination and re-arrangement. Then comes the verb *''ansha'nāhū''* (اَنْشَأْنَاهُ = We caused it to grow into); it implies a change in the mode of creation. (Obviously, it refers to the relation of the soul with the body.) Lastly, comes the declaration, ''Then surely on the Day of Resurrection you shall be raised''. The sentence addresses the same person who was given a body and then was caused to grow into another creation. It is that combination of body and soul that will be raised on the Day of Resurrection. Likewise, He says: *He* (also) *said: ''Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised''* (7:25). In other words, the man's life is the earthly one, made of its joys and its sorrows. We have explained it to a certain extent under the verse: *Mankind was but one people . . .* (2:213).

Allāh says about the bounties of this world: *this is the provision of the life of this world* (3:14); and then He says: *and this world's life is nothing in the hereafter but* (only some) *provision* (13:26). The very life of this world is a provision in the hereafter; it is a means of enjoyment in the next life. It is a very unique expression; and it opens a thousand doors of knowledge for those who may ponder on it. The verse confirms the tradition of the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.):

‘‘As you live, so you shall die; and as you die, so you shall be raised.’’ To sum it up, the life of man is made up of the worldly existence together with the good or evil he may have earned. It is this very life which shall be his provision in the hereafter, where he shall reap the reward or punishment according to what he thinks to be his success and prosperity, or failure and loss. He will be awarded his pleasures and enjoyments and will thus get eternal happiness; on the other hand, if he were deprived of those pleasures and enjoyments, he would remain in eternal sorrow. And this what is meant by the bounties of the Garden and the tornment of the Fire.

Let us explain it further. Man has a felicity according to his nature, and an infelicity according to the same. The felicity and infelicity are related to his survival as an individual and as a species. This servival depends on his various physical actions, like eating, drinking, copulation etc. Allāh has made these actions attractive to him by investing them with pleasure and satisfaction. Thus, the man proceeds on the path of perfection and begins working consciously according to his senses and will. At this stage, his perfection becomes inextricably interlocked with his senses and will. He does not recognize any perfection unless he desires it and feels it, even if it is a perfection in the eyes of the nature. For example, we do not draw any pleasure from that which we do not actively feel, even if it is a natural source of pleasure, like the health, wealth and child. On the other hand, we get pleasure from what we actively feel to be pleasant, even if it is not so in reality, like a patient who believes himself to be in good health.

At this stage, these preliminary pleasures become real perfection for the man, although according to the nature they were but preliminary ones. When Allāh bestows eternity on such a man, his happiness will depend on only those pleasures which he would himself wish for and desire. And his unhappiness will emanate from that which he would not desire. Felicity of a man having perception and will emanates from that which he knows and desires; and his infelicity from that which he knows but does not desire.

The man would be happy in the hereafter only if he got the pleasures which he used to desire in the life of this world, like the food, the drink and the spouses — and even more; and this is the

paradise. And he would be unhappy if he did not get that; and this is the hell. Allāh says: *they shall have in them what they please* (16:13).

QUR'ĀN: *Those who say: ''Our Lord! surely we believe, therefore forgive us our sins and save us from the chastisement of the fire'':* The pronoun, ''those'', refers to ''those who guard (against evil)'', mentioned in the preceding verse. They call upon Allāh and say, ''Our Lord!'' By declaring His lordship, they confess their own servitude and seek His Mercy to grant them what they are asking for. ''surely we believe'': The sentence is not an attempt to lay God under their obligation, becuse it is Allāh Who lays the believers under His obligation by helping them to believe. Allāh says: . . . *rather Allāh lays you under an obligation by guiding you to the faith* . . . (49:17). Rather it is a plea to Allāh to fulfil for them the promise of forgiveness made with the believers: . . . *and believe in Him, He will forgive you of your faults* . . . (46:31). That is why the next clause begins with ''therefore'', (*therefore forgive us our sins*), showing that this prayer is based on the preceding clause. The assertive particle *''inna''* (إِنَّ = surely) emphasizes their truth, showing that they are firm in their belief.

The forgiveness of sins, *per se,* does not necessarily mean release from punishment. Saving a sinner from punishment is a grace which Allāh bestows on him who believes in Him and worships Him. It is not a right of the servant that Allāh should save him from the chastisement of the Fire, or that He should admit him into the Garden. Even the servant's belief and obedience are from the grace of Allāh; obviously they cannot give the servant any right upon Allāh. Of course, sometimes Allāh in His mercy establishes some rights for the servants on Himself; and one of those rights is the promise given to them that He would forgive their sins and save them from the chastisement of the Fire — provided they believed in Him: . . . *and believe in Him, He will forgive you of your faults and protect you from a painful punishment* (46:31).

Nevertheless, it may be inferred from some Qur'ānic verses that the protection from the punishment of the Fire is one and same with the forgiveness and the Garden. Allāh says: *O you who believe! shall I lead you to a merchandise which may deliver you from a painful*

chastisement? You shall believe in Allāh and His Apostle, and struggle hard in Allāh's way with your properties and your lives, that is better for you, did you but know. He will forgive you your faults and cause you to enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetuity; that is the mighty achievement (61:10 — 12). The last sentences (saying that the believers' faults shall be forgiven and they shall enter into gardens) explain in detail what the first sentence had said in a general way: ''shall I lead you to a merchandise which may deliver you from a painful chaystisement?'' Thus, deliverance from chastisement means forgiveness of sins and entry into the garden. It is a very subtle idea, and we shall explain it in a more appropriate place, God willing.

QUR'ĀN: *The patient, and the truthful, and the devout* (ones) *and those who spend* (benevolently) *and those who ask for forgiveness before dawn:* The five attributes refer to ''those who guard (against evil)''; these are the virtues which are essential for piety, for guarding against evil.

Patience: This virtue has been mentioned first and without any condition. It, therefore, covers all three kinds of patience: Patience (i.e., steadfastness) in obedience of *Allāh;* patience (i.e., abstaining) from the disobedience; and patience (i.e., forebearance) in face of a calamity.

Truth: The final analysis of truth means conformity of a man's exterior — his word and deed — with his inner-self. In this sense, it covers all the other virtues mentioned here, like patience and devoutness etc. Obviously, such a meaning would not fit the context. We have, therefore, to interpret it as the truth in words only. And Allāh knows better.

Devoutness: It means humility before *Allāh;* and covers all the acts of worship and obedience.

Spending (benevolently): It is giving money to him who deserves it.

As for asking for forgiveness before dawn, it makes it necessary for the servant to pray in the last hours of night in order that he may ask for forgiveness in that prayer. Traditions say that it refers to the non-obligatory prayer after midnight, and to the asking for forgiveness in

al-qunūt (اَلْقُنُوْتُ = the special invocation before bowing down in the *ṣalāt*) of *al-watr* (اَلْوَتْرُ = the last, that is, eleventh *rak'ah* of the prayer after midnight; it is performed as an independent unit, with a *qunūt* before bowing down). Allāh has pointed to it as a way that leads man to his Lord. Vide Chapters 73 and 74, where mentioning the prayer after midnight. Allāh says: *Surely this is a reminder, so whoever pleases takes to his Lord a way* (73:19; 76:29).

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh bears witness that there is no god but He, and* (so do) *the.angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining* (His creation) *with justice:* The verbal noun, *''ash-shahādah''* (اَلشَّهَادَةُ) originally meant ''to look at'', ''to see''; one got knowledge of a thing or an event by being present at the time and place of occurrence and looking at it. Then it was used for describing it to others and bearing witness to the knowledge thus gained. Thereafter, the word was concurrently used for both meanings, both being treated as its real meanings. After all, there was not much distance from acquiring a knowledge to describing it to others. Mostly one acquires knowledge of an event with one aim in view: to preserve the reality and truth — lest it be invalidated or falsified as a result of a dispute or because of someone's attempt to conceal the truth and usurp the right, or because one really forgets it. A witness protects the truth and reality. Acquiring the knowledge and bearing the testimony accordingly is called witnessing — protecting the truth.

''al-Qisṭ'' (اَلْقِسْطُ) is justice.

The preceding eight verses, beginning with, ''(As for) those who disbelieve'' and ending at, ''those who ask for forgiveness before dawn'', have shown that there is no god other than Allāh, and that nothing can avail one against Him; whatever the man relies on in this life, whatever he thinks may avail him against his Lord, it is but an embellishment and a provision — the Lord has given him that provision in order that he may use it for a better purpose — for his success in the hereafter. But that success cannot be attained except with piety and fear of Allāh. The bounties of this world are commonly enjoyed by both the believer and the unbeliever; but the bounties of the hereafter are reserved for the believers only. Those verses have described the fundamental truth; now in this verse Allāh reconfirms it bearing witness that what has

been told above is pure truth without a shadow of doubt.

Allāh bears witness that there is no god but He. As there is no god besides Allāh, nothing whatsoever can avail a man against Allāh — be it his wealth or his children or any other embellishment of this life. If any of these could avail a man against Allāh, it would have become a god itself; or at least it would be relying on some other god. But there is no god except Allāh.

He bears this witness while He stands with justice in His actions, looks after His creation with equity. He manages the affairs of the universe through a system of cause and effect. This system has been created by Him; and ultimately every thing — the cause, the effect and their mutual relationship — returns to Him. He has placed in this highway of progress countless bounties in order that the man may enjoy and use them in this world, and then get their benefit in the hereafter. It is a provision for the road; man should make its use as a temporary measure. He should not settle permanently on the roadside.

Allāh bears witness to these facts, and He is a Just Witness.

Here we should point to a very fine point:

The justice of Allāh is a witness for itself as well as for His Oneness. In other words, His justice is a self-sustaining reality and also proves that Allāh is One. When we hear a testimony, we insist that the witness must be a just one, of approved probity; he must be proceeding on the straight path of nature, and should not deviate from it — neither to the right nor to the left. In short, he should put every thing in its right place, and should do every work at its proper time and place in a proper way. Such a man is called just and his testimony shall be accepted because it should be free from lie and falsehood. The man becomes just by adhering to the path of nature. When conformity with that path and system bestows justice on a man, how can there be any doubt about the justice of that system itself. It is a pure justice — and it is the work of Allāh.

When we feel waxed on account of an event occuring in the nature, or when we find it taking place against our inclination and desire, we, in our annoyance, dispute about it and object against it. (Interestingly we depend, in that disputation too, on the same natural system.) Then on further investigation we come to understand the reason of that event, and find that our objection had no leg to stand

upon. Or may be we failed in our search and could not find any reason for it; so what have we got in our hand? Only the ignorance of the reason. But the absence of the knowledge of reason is not the same as the knowledge of the absence of reason. To make a long story short, the system found in the universe (and it is the handiwork of Allāh) is pure justice. And if there were any other god besides Allāh, the whole system could not be called all-encompassing justice; the work of each god would have been ‘‘just’’ only within the sphere of his own activity, only in his own jurisdiction. Thus, the justice of the system of creation proves the Oneness of the Creator.

Allāh bears witness — and He is the Just Witness — that there is no god but He. He testifies in clear words and says: ‘‘Allāh bears witness that there is no god but He’’. The verse contains the testimony of Allāh for His Oneness; in this respect, it resembles the verse 4:166 which says: *But Allāh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His knowledge* (also); *and Allāh is sufficient as a witness.*

The angels bear witness that there is no god but He. Allāh informs us in the verses of Meccan period, revealed long before this one, that the angels are His honoured servants, who act according to His commandment and declare His glory in His praise: *Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His commandment do they act* (21:26 — 27); . . . *and the angels declare His glory in the praise of their Lord* . . . (42:5). And their declaration of His glory includes the testimony that there is no god besides Him.

Those possessed of knowledge bear witness that there is no god but He. They look at and ponder on His signs in the universe and in their own selves; and those signs have overwhelmed their perception and taken deep root in their minds.

The foregoing discourse makes it clear that:

First: The witness, mentioned here, is the testimony in words, as the verse manifestly shows. It does not refer to bearing witness by actions — although the Divine actions too are evidence of His Oneness. There is an intricate system permeating the creation right from the smallest particle to the whole universe; and this oneness of system bears witness to the Oneness of the Creator. Nevertheless,

this verse refers to the verbal testimony only.

Second: The clause, ‘‘maintaining (His creation) with justice’’, is a circumstantial one, referring to the subject, ‘‘Allāh’’ and governed by the verb, ‘‘bear witness’’. In other words, His ‘‘maintaining (His creation) with justice’’ is not witnessed for, neither by Allāh nor by the angels or those possessed of knowledge; rather it means that Allāh, maintaining (His creation) with justice, bears witness that there is no god but He; and the angels and those possessed of knowledge bear witness to His Oneness.

This meaning is obvious from the position of this clause. ‘‘there is no god but He’’, is the reality that has been witnessed for; and the clause, ‘‘maintaining (His creation) with justice’’ has been separated from it by the words, ‘‘and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge’’. If this clause were a part of the testimony, it should have been joined to the former clause and written thus: ‘that there is no god but He, maintaining (His creation) with justice, and (so do) the angels . . .’

Some exegetes have written that the clause may be explained in both ways; but the above explanation shows that it is not so.

Someone has offered a very absurd explanation. He thinks that the testimony mentioned in this verse is not verbal, is not given in words. According to him, if the testimony were a verbal one, the belief in Oneness of God would depend on someone’s words, and not on rational reasoning. But acceptance of that word and testimony depends on the belief in God. A vicious circle !

He goes on to say: That is why some exegetes have said that the verb, ‘‘bears witness’’, has been used here in a metaphorical sense. The creation, with all its interwoven, interdependent and intricate systems, proves that the whole universe has been created by One Creator. It is as though Allāh Himself, through this practical demonstration, is speaking and testifying for His Oneness. Likewise, the angels worship Him and act according to His commandment, and the knowledgeable people look at the signs pointing to His Oneness — and their attitude and behaviour are tentamount to the witness that there is no god but Allāh.

Reply: This explanation is based on a fallacious presumption. It is true that where we can acquire a knowledge ourselves through

external senses or intellectual reasoning, we do not rely on other's reporting or testimony. The reason being that such a reporting or testimony does not create the firm knowledge which may be gained through intellectual reasoning or external senses. But if there is a report that create as firm a knowledge as the intellectual reasoning (or even firmer than that), then it will be as much reliable as that reasoning (if not more than that). For example, a *mutawātir* report is far more effective and creates a much more surer knowledge than an intellectual reasoning based on logic or analogy, although the latter too creates certainty.

Now, suppose there is a witness who, we know, cannot tell lies — because his truth and veracity has been proved by clear proofs — then his testimony would create as much certainty as a rational argument. And we know that Allāh can never utter a falsehood, because nothing can be further from His sublime presence than a defect or a falsehood. His witness about His Oneness is, therefore, a true witness. Likewise, His report, that the angels and those possessed of knowledge bear witness for His Oneness, firmly proves that they really bear this witness.[1]

Moreover, the polytheists, who ascribe to Allāh some partners like idols and other deities, only believe those idols or deities to be intercessors, the links between Allāh and His creation; Allāh quotes them as saying: *We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to Allāh* (39:3).

Likewise, those who are guilty of the hidden polytheism, that is, those who while believing in Allāh do good deeds for the sake of worldly things (e.g., to satisfy their own desire, to please some other persons, or

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[1] This reply does not meet the objection, which said: ''Acceptance of (cont. page 172) that testimony depends on the belief that this verse is a true revelation from God, which in its turn depends on the belief in God. And it is a vicious circle.'' The author too has based his reply on the assumption that ''there is a God Who is free from all defects and falsehoods and Who cannot, therefore, tell a lie''. So, the objection remains in its place, and the vicious circle is not broken. If the acceptance of this witness depends on believing — through rational arguments — that Allāh cannot tell a lie, then it is better to take this witness as a supporting argument of the Oneness of Allāh, and not as the main proof. And then it may be accepted as a verbal testimony. (*tr.*)

to gain some wealth or prestige, and so on), they too believe that these things are created and given their power by Allāh. In other words, whoever ascribes a partner to Allāh, does so with a belief that Allāh has taken that partner to Himself; no one says that the putative partner got that partnership on its own. In this background, when Allāh bears witness that He has not taken any partner to Himself, it is enough to refute the claim of those who ascribe any partner to Him. Accordingly, the verse will have the same connotation as the verse: *And they worship beside Allāh what can neither harm them nor profit them, and they say: ''These are our intercessors with Allāh.'' Say: ''Do you* (presume to) *inform Allāh of what He knows not in the heavens and the earth?'' Glory be to Him and supremely exalted is He above what they set up* (with Him) (11:18). It is a rebuttal of the claim that He has got any partner. How can it be when He Himself does not know of any such partner, neither in the heaven nor in the earth? And He knows every thing; nothing is hidden from Him. The fact is that the verse under discussion is a proposition like other informations that have come to us from His sublime presence, for example, the final clause in the verse 11:18 mentioned just above, ''Glory be to Him and supremely exalted is He above what they set up (with Him)''. But as this proposition is in fact a claim and as the speaker is not only just but also the source of every justice, it was put before the audience in the form of a testimony, for the sake of variety in style. According to this interpretation, the meaning of the verse would be as follows: Had there been any deities other than Allāh, having some say in the creation and management of the universe, in their capacity as partners with, or intercessors before Allāh, undoubtedly Allāh would have known them and testified for them; but He says that He does not know of any partner for Himself; it surely means that He has no partner at all. Also, the angels are the intermediaries who carry out His commandment in respect of creation and management. Had there been any such partner, they would have known of him and admitted his presence. But they too bear witness that there is no god except Allāh. Finally, the knowledgeable persons would have known of such a partner and noticed the hallmarks of his creation or management. But the only signs they see are those pointing to the One and only God, and therefore they too bear witness that He has no partner or colleague.

This argument is similar to the following one: If there were in a

certain country a king, other than the king who is known to us, this king would certainly have known of him; it would have been impossible for him not to know of someone supposed to be his partner. Likewise, the officials of the government would have known of him; how could they be oblivious of his existence when they were supposed to take orders from him and enforce his dicta among the subjects? And in the same way, the knowledgeable persons among the populace would have known of his presence; after all, they are supposed to live in his kingdom and obey his laws. But the king rebuts the existence of any such partner in his kingdom, and the government officials do not know of any such person, and the knowledgeable class of the subjects have not seen anything to prove his existence. All this together makes us absolutely sure that no such man exists.

QUR'ĀN: *there is no god but He; the Mighty, the Wise:* It is a sort of a parenthetical sentence, having no connection to the main argument, yet complying with the demands of the Divine sublimity. It is a set practice of the Qur'ān to declare the glory of Allāh and pay respect to Him, whenever something unworthy of His sublime name is mentioned. For example: *They say: ''Allāh has taken a son* (to Himself)!'' *Glory be to Him* (11:68). The phrase, ''Glory be to Him'', pays respect to Allāh because the preceding sentence had quoted a saying that was unworthy of Allāh's attributes. Another verse: *And the Jews say: ''The hand of Allāh is tied up!'' Their hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they say* (5:64). Now, in the verse under discussion, the first part mentioned the testimony of Allāh, the angels and those possessed of knowledge that Allāh had no partner or colleague. Therefore, it was a right of Allāh on the reporter of that testimony (who, incidentally, is Allāh Himself) as well as on the hearers to declare that He is really One, and has no partner; everyone, on hearing that testimony, should reiterate, ''there is no god but He''.

There is another verse which gives a similar lesson; it admonishes the believers who heard a lie spoken against a wife of the Prophet: *And why did you not, when you heard it, say: ''It does not beseem us that we should talk of it; glory be to Thee! this is a*

great calumny'' (24:16). It is a right of Allāh, when we hear a calumny and want to declare the innocence of the person slandered, to glorify Allāh before that.

This sentence, ''there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise'', is a sort of a praise for Allāh, to give Him His due respect; that is why it ends with the adjectives, ''the Mighty, the Wise''. In other words, it is not an offshoot of the preceding witness; otherwise, it would have ended with the adjectives showing His Oneness and Justice.

Allāh has a right that His oneness should be declared whenever the said witness is mentioned; He alone is the Mighty One, His might and power is absolute, there is no partner in His godhead to dilute His might; He alone is the Wise One, His wisdom does not allow anyone to interfere in the creation or the management of the affairs.

The above paragraphs show why the phrase, ''there is no god but He'', has been repeated, and why it has been ended with the adjectives, ''the Mighty, the Wise''. And Allāh knows better.

TRADITIONS

Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq has narrated through his chain of narrators: ''When the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) defeated the Quraysh at Badr and returned to Medina, he gathered the Jews at the market of Qīnaqā', and said: 'O Jewish people! Be on your guard against Allāh, lest comes to you similar to that which has afflicted the Quraysh at Badr; and accept Islam before descends upon you that which has descended upon them. And you know that I am a prophet, sent (by Allāh), you find it (written) in your books.' They said: 'O Muḥammad! Don't be deluded if you fought against an inexperienced people who knew nothing of the (tactics of) war and thus you got a chance to afflict them. As for us, by Allāh, if we fought against you, you will know that we are indeed the (real) people.' Then Allāh revealed the verse: *Say to those who disbelieve: 'You shall be vanquished . . .' ''* (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: The above tradition has also been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr,* qouting Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarir and al-Bayhaqī (in

his *ad-Dalā'il*), from Ibn ‘Abbās. The Shī‘ah exegete, al-Qummī, too has a nearly similar tradition in his *at-Tafsīr.* But as would have been clear from the foregoing commentary, this tradition is not in perfect harmony with the context of the verses. It seems more likely that these verses were revealed after the battle of Uḥud. And Allāh knows better.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘People do not enjoy, in this world or in the hereafter, any pleasure greater than the pleasure of women; and that is the word of Allāh: *It has been made to seem fair to to men, the love of desires of women and sons . . .’’* Then he said: ‘‘And certainly the poeple of the garden shall not savour of anything of the garden more delicious to them than the sexual intercourse — neither food nor drink.’’ (*al-Kāfī;* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: It has been inferred from the sequence of the desired things in the verse, as the women have been placed before everything else. Then it has been said that it is only a provision of the life of this world, and the pleasures of the paradise are better than that.

When the Imām said that sexual intercourse was the most delicious of all the pleasures, he was comparing it with the pleasures related to the body.[1] He was not speaking about spiritual pleasure, for example, the delight a man gets from his own existence, or the joy a friend of Allāh feels from being nearer to Him, seeing His great signs and receiving His pleasure and blessings. Rational arguments prove that the pleasure a man gets from his existence is the greatest; other proofs show that the pleasure he feels from the existence of his Lord is even greater than that; and there are numerous traditions saying that the bliss a servant enjoys from being nearer to Allāh is the greatest of all pleasures. It has been narrated in *al-Kāfī* from al-Bāqir (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘ ‘Alī ibn a1-Ḥusayn (a.s.) used to say: ‘It makes my Soul agreeable to early death and murder which beset us that Allāh has said: *Do they not see that We come into the land,*

[1] It is obvious from the last clause of the tradition where the Imām.(a.s.) compares it with the food and drink. (*tr*)

curtailing it of its sides? (13:41); and it refers to the departure of the learned people (from this world).' '' Other such traditions will be given in other relevant places.

al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the word of Allāh, *and hoarded treasures: ''al-Qinṭār* (اَلْقِنْطَارُ) is gold that could fill the hide of an ox.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The Imām said: *''al-Khaylu 'l-musawwamah* (اَلْخَيْلُ مُسَوَّمَةٌ = translated here as well-bred horses) means the horses which are put on pasture.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Whoever recites seventy times while he is in standing pasture, in his prayer of *al-watr* (اَلْوَتْرُ), 'I seek forgiveness from Allāh and return to Him', and continues to do so regularly for (at least) a year, Allāh writes him among those who ask for forgiveness before dawn, and he is bound to get forgiveness from Allāh, the High.'' (*Man lā yaḥḍuru 'l-faqīh; al-Khiṣāl*)

The author says: This meaning is given also in other traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.); and it is one of the *sunnah* of the Prophet. A similar tradition has been reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* through Ibn Jarīr from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (aṣ-Ṣādiq — a.s.) that he said: ''Whoever prays a part of the night, then asks for forgiveness at the end of the night, he will be written among those who ask for forgiveness.''

The statement of the Imām: ''and he is bound to get forgiveness from Allāh'', is based on their prayer mentioned in the preceding verse: ''*Our Lord! surely we believe, therefore, forgive us our sins . . .''* Allāh has quoted their prayer without any comment; it implies that He has granted the prayer.

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إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلإِسْلَامُ وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا ٱلْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِمَا جَاءَهُمُ ٱلْعِلْمُ بَغْياً بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ ــ ١٩ . فَإِنْ حَآجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَنِ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا ٱلْكِتَابَ وَالأُمِّيِّينَ أَأَسْلَمْتُمْ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ ٱهْتَدَوا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ ٱلْبَلَاغُ وَٱللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالعِبَادِ ــ ٢٠ . إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ ٱللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ ٱلنَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ــ ٢١ . أُولَئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي ٱلدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ــ ٢٢ . أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيباً مِنَ الْكِتَابِ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ كِتَابِ ٱللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّىٰ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ــ ٢٣ . ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلاَّ أَيَّاماً مَّعْدُودَاتٍ وَغَرَّهُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ــ ٢٤ . فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنَاهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لاَ يُظْلَمُونَ ــ ٢٥ .

Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam; and those to whom the. Book had been given did not differ but after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves; and whoever disbelieves in the signs of Allāh then surely Allāh is quick of reckoning (19). *But if they dispute with you, say: ''I have submitted myself* (entirely) *to Allāh and* (so has) *every one who follows me.'' And say to those who have been given the Book and the unlearned people: ''Do you submit yourselves?'' So if they submit then indeed they follow the right way; and if they turn back, then upon you is only the delivery of the message; and Allāh sees the servants* (20). *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among men who enjoin justice, announce to them a painful chastisement* (21). *Those are they whose works shall become null in this world as well as the hereafter, and they shall have no helpers* (22) . *Have you not considered those who are given a portion of the Book? They are invited to the Book of Allāh that it might decide between them, then a part of them turn back and they withdraw* (23). *This is because they say: ''The fire shall not touch us but for a counted number of days'', and what they have forged deceives them in the matter of their religion* (24). *Then how* (will it be) *when We shall gather them together on a day about which there is no doubt, and every soul shall be fully paid what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly?* (25).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses refer to the People of the Book. They are the last — and most important — of the three groups commented upon in this chapter. It was about the People of the Book — the Jews and the Christians — that a major part of this chapter was revealed.

QUR'ĀN: *Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam:* We have already described the literal meaning of *''al-Islām''* (اَلْاِسْلَامُ = to submit, to surrender oneself to Allāh). Apparently this is the meaning intended here, because it is followed by description of the difference of the People of the Book — the difference which they created after knowing the truth, because of envy among themselves.

The explanation of the verse, therefore, would be as follows: The religion with Allāh is only one; there is no difference or discrepancy in it; He has commanded His servants to follow only this religion; it was this religion which was described in the Books revealed to His prophets, and to which the Divine signs pointed. It is the Islam, that is, surrender to the truth, with correct belief and sincere deeds; Islam is to accept willingly all the knowledge and commandments sent down by Allāh. Admittedly, the commandments varied in quality and quantity in various laws brought by various prophets — and Allāh Himself mentions this fact in His Book — but in reality there was only one religion. The difference between various laws was in the degree of perfection, it was not because of any discrepancy or contradiction. All were one inasmuch as all called the people to surrender and submit themselves to the will of Allāh, to His commandments sent through His prophets.

It is this religion which Allāh expects His servants to follow, which He has sent down for them. It necessarily follows that man should accept all the knowledge which has been clearly explained to him, and should stop at doubtful matters — submitting himself to the will of Allāh, without trying to interpret it according to his desire and thinking.

As for the difference of the People of the Book, (the Jews and the Christians) in the matter of religion, it was not because they did not know the truth; they certainly knew it; they were aware that the religion was only one, because Allāh had revealed the Book which clearly explained that religion to them. Nevertheless, they differed among themselves because they were envious and unjust. Although they continued to believe in Allāh, their envy and injustice made them disbelieve in the signs of Allāh, in the Book of Allāh, which had clearly explained to them the reality of religion. And whoever disbelieves in the signs of Allāh then surely Allāh is quick of

reckoning; He will quickly call them to account in this world as well as in the hereafter. They shall be recompensed in this life with disgrace and ignominy, and in the hereafter with painful chastisement of the Fire.

Why do we say that the reckoning spans both lives? It is because Allāh says after two verses: ‘‘Those are they whose works shall become null and void in this world as well as the hereafter’’.

The above explanation makes two things clear:

First: The clause, ‘‘the religion with Allāh’’, refers to religion in the meaning of *sharī‘ah;* the verse says: There is only one religion ordained by Allāh, the difference between various prophets’ *sharī‘ah* being in the quality only; and the quality differed because of the capabilities of the various nations for which those rules were made.

In this verse, religion does not refer to the system of creation. In other words, it does not say that all people were created with a natural instinct to believe in God.

Second: The word *‘‘al-āyāt’’* (اَلْاٰيَاتُ = signs) refers to the verses of the Divine Books, sent to the prophets; it does not refer to the signs in the creation which lead one to the belief in one God.

The verse contains a threat to the People of the Book: They shall surely be punished for their envy and rebellion. It is similar to the threat addressed earlier to the polytheists and disbelievers: *Say to those who disbelieve: ‘‘You shall be vanquished and gathered together to hell . . . ’’* (3:11). Probably, that is the reason why the next verse joins the People of the Book and the polytheists together and says: ‘‘And say to those who have been given the Book and the unlearned people: ‘Do you submit yourselves?’ ’’ There is a threat implied by the tone of this question too.

QUR’ĀN: *But if they dispute with you, say: ‘‘I have submitted myself* (entirely) *to Allāh and* (so has) *every one who follows me’’:* Obviously, the pronoun ‘‘they’’ refers to the People of the Book. The disputation points to their arguments about the difference. They would say: ‘‘Our difference does not emanate from any envy or injustice; we have tried our best to acquire the knowledge of the realities of religion; nevertheless, in this endeavour each one’s thinking process and wisdom has led him to a different conclusion. It

does not mean that we have become arrogant or rebellious, nor that we are not submissive to Allāh. Even what you call us to, 0 Muḥammad! similarly emanates from a different process of thinking. You too have differed from us in the same way ''. Allāh demolishes such disputations in the next two sentences: ''. . . say: 'I have submitted myself (entirely) to Allāh . . .' '' and ''. . . say to those who have been given the Book and the unlearned people: 'Do you submit yourselves?' '' These sentences are not an attempt to avoid the issue; they contain the clear rebuttal of the disputations of the People of the Book.

The connotation of the verse, read in conjunction with the preceding one, is as follows:

The religion with Allāh is submission to Allāh; the Books sent by Allāh are unanimous on this point, and the untainted wisdom accepts it. Nobody can, therefore, blame you, O Muḥammad! for submitting to the will and command of Allāh. You are a Muslim. If the People of the Book dispute with you about the religion, then you should tell them clearly that you have submitted yourself entirely to Allāh and so have done all your followers. This is the real religion and no argument can be brought against this reality. Then you should ask them whether they too would submit themselves to Allāh. If they did so, then they would indeed proceed on the right path, they would accept what had been revealed to you and to those prophets who came before you; there would be no argument against them and your mutual difference would come to an end. On the other hand, if they turned back, then do not enter into any disputation or argument with them. It is a self-evident truth that religion is total surrender to Allāh, and there is no point in labouring to prove a self-evident reality. You should just convey the Divine message to them and that is all.

Allāh has joined the People of the Book and the unlearned polytheists together in this verse: ''And say to those who have been given the Book and the unlearned people: 'Do you submit yourselves?' '' It is because both believed in religion and in Allāh, although they differed because of their respective beliefs of monotheism and polytheism.

The phrase, translated here as ''I have submitted myself

(entirely) to Allāh'', literally means, I have submitted my face to Allāh. *''al-Wajh''* (اَلْوَجْهُ = face, front). Most of the senses and organs of perception are concentrated in the face; therefore, submitting one's face to Allāh signifies total submission to Allāh's will, willing obedience to His commandments.

The clause, ''and (so has) every one who follows me'', shows the excellence of the Prophet, and also enhances the rank of the followers by joining them to him (s.a.w.a.).

QUR'ĀN: *And say to those who have been given the Book and the unlearned people . . .:* ''the unlearned people'' refers to the polytheists; it shows the contrast between them and the People of the Book; also the People of the Book used to call them unlearned, as Allāh quotes them as saying: *There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way* (to reproach) (3:75). *''al-Ummiyy''* (اَلْاُمِّيُّ = one who does not read or write).

The clauses ''and if they turn back, then upon you is only the delivery of the message; and Allāh sees the servants'' signify three things:

First: Undesirability of unnecessary disputations; entering into arguments with someone who denies a self-evident truth would inevitably lead to obstinacy and obtrusiveness.

Second: The total authority concerning the people and their affairs is of Allāh; the Prophet is an Apostle and a conveyer of the Divine message, he is not a guard to watch over men. Allāh says: *You have no concern in the affair* (3:128); *You are not a watcher over them* (88:22).

Third: The clauses contain a threat to the People of the Book and the polytheists; the connotation cannot be lost to one who reads the clauses. The verses, in their theme and the threat, are similar to the verses: *Say: ''We believe in Allāh . . . and to Him do we submit''. If then they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right course, and if they turn back, then they are only in great opposition; so Allāh will suffice you against them, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing* (2:136 — 137). According to this verse if the People of the Book turn back, then it means that they are obstinate in their opposition and heedless to the truth; then it comforts the Prophet in a way that contains a threat to his adversaries. Likewise, the

verse under discussion tells the Prophet, ‘‘and if they turn back, then upon you is only the delivery of the message’’; it is a hint that the Prophet should leave them to their Lord Who sees His servants and Who would deal with them in a suitable way, and punish them as they deserve.

Some exegetes have written that the verse gives the people freedom of religious belief and that there is no compulsion in religion. But the explanation given above manifestly shows that it implies the opposite of freedom; it threatens the disbelievers with chastisements if they did not submit themselves to Allāh.

‘‘Allāh sees the servants’’: It could have been. phrased as ‘‘Allāh sees the men’’ or ‘‘Allāh sees them’’; instead Allāh chose the epithet, ‘‘the servants’’, to remind them that they are His servants and slaves; His order against them will certainly be carried out in its entirety, because they are totally dependant on Him, whether they consciously submitted to Him or not; they can never escape His judgment.

QUR’ĀN: *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh . . . and they .shall have no helpers:* The verse deals with another aspect of the subject; nevertheless, it has a threatening overtone, not unlike the last parts of the preceding verse. This verse too speaks about the People of the Book, especially the Jews.

‘‘Those who disbelieve . . . and slay the prophets . . . and slay those among men who enjoin justice.’’: The verbal form used in these sentences implies persistence and continuity. It conveys the idea that it was their ingrained habit, a characteristic trait, to disbelieve in divinely sent communications, to reject the revealed truth out of envy and arrogance, to murder the prophets — and such a slaying was undoubtedly against justice and to kill those of their compatriots who called them to justice and tried to keep them away from injustice and rebellion. And the history of the Jews confirms that these things were a part of their national character; they had murdered a multitude of their prophets and good believers who enjoined the good and forbade the evil. The Christians too followed in their footsteps and killed countless good Christians.

‘‘announce to them a painful chastisement’’; It announces that the wrath of Allāh had descended upon them. The chastisement was not confined to the hereafter only; they were to be punished in this

life too. Read for the proof the next ‘‘Those are they whose works shall become null in this world as well as the hereafter’’. In the hereafter they shall have to endure the painful chastisement of the Fire; in this world, they were punished with mass murders, dispersion, loss of lives and properties, and Allāh has inflicted them with enmity and hatred among themselves which is to continue upto the Day of Resurrection, as the Qur’ānic verses have said (e.g., 5:14).

This verse (3:22), moreover, proves two things:

First: If a man killed someone just because the latter used to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, the killer’s good deeds would become null and void, would be forfeited.

Second: On the Day of Resurrection, intercession shall not avail such a killer, because Allāh says: ‘‘and they shall have no helpers’’.

QUR’ĀN: *Have you not considered . . . and they withdraw:* It further shows how steeped the People of the Book are in their envy and rebellion. They rebel against Allāh by creating disputes and frictions in religion. When they are invited to the Book of Allāh in order that it might decide between them they do not agree to it, they turn away and withdraw from it. This tendency of theirs emanates from their self-delusion that the Fire shall not touch them but for a few days; they are deceived by their own forgery!

The words, ‘‘those who are given a portion of the Book’’, refer to the People of the Book. This changed phrasing points to a well-known historical fact: The Jews and the Christians do not have in their hands the complete Books; what they have got is only some portions of the revealed Scriptures. They have altered, changed and edited the Books so extensively that the major part of the original has been lost for ever. The last sentence too alludes to this fact: ‘‘and what they have forged deceives them in the matter of their religion’’.

The verse, in short, says — and Allāh knows better — that the Jews and the Christians turn back from the judgment of the Book of Allāh, being deceived by their own claim, and misled by what they have themselves forged; they demonstrate, by their behaviour, that they do not need the Book of Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *This is because . . . matter of their religion:* Its meaning is quite clear. Usually a man is not deceived by his own deception; then how did those people fall prey to their own forgery? It was because the deceived people had not forged it themselves; it was forged by a past generation. Then why did the Qur'ān ascribe that deception and forgery to those Jews and Christians who were contemporaries of the Prophet? It was because they were one nation — the later generations were (and are) pleased with what their ancestors had done.

Moreover, it was not improbable for the People of the Book, and especially the Jews, to be carried away by their own delusion — knowing well that it was a delusion — or to boast of their exploits in this field. Allāh has described their involvement in an even more astonishing deception: *And when they meet those who believe they say: ''We believe''; and when they are alone one with another they say: ''Do you talk to them of what Allāh has disclosed to you that they may argue with you by this before your Lord? Do you not then understand?'' What! Do they not know that Allāh knows what they conceal and what they proclaim.* (2:76 — 77)

Also, man's actions emanate for the most part from the traits ingrained in his psyche; he always returns to the things which his psychological build up has made attractive to him. When he is attracted by that pull, knowledge is left behind, and becomes ineffective. For example, the drug addicts, the chainsmokers and the people like them use those things although they know that they are extremely harmful and ruinous to their health, and they are fully aware that such things must be avoided. But the ingrained habit becomes the second nature, and the addict is irresistibly pulled to those ''pleasures'', without giving his knowledge or thinking power any chance to influence his decision.

Likewise, the People of the Book, as a result of their perennial indiscipline, had acquired the traits of arrogance, envy and rebellion, and were overcome by the irresistible urge to base desires. This had become a second nature to them. And under its influence they forged many things — the forgeries that were disastrous to their religion. And they repeated those forgeries — knowing fully well that they were lies — so often and so long that they themselves began believing in them, and the repeated falsehood replaced the truth in

their mind; they fell prey to their own devices. Psychologists know that such phenomenon does occur from time to time. The continuously repeated and diligently taught forgeries got hold of the whole nations to such an extent that they became deceived in the matters of their religion, and refused to submit themselves to Allāh and accept the truth revealed in His Book.

QUR'ĀN: *Then how* (will it be) *when . . . shall not be dealt with unjustly:* The phrase governed by the interrogative ''how'' was omitted because it could be understood from the context; it could be something like, how will it be, or, how will they fare.

The verse continues the threatening mode of the preceding verses. It shows that those, who turn back and withdraw when called to the Book of Allāh, cannot defeat the Divine judgment. The Day of Reckoning is approaching fast; how will they behave on that Day about which there is no doubt? Then they will be quite submissive, in clear contrast with their arrogance and haughtiness of this world! It was to show this contrast that Allāh used the word, ''We shall gather them together'', and did not say, We shall raise them, or, We shall make them alive.

The meaning of the verses is as follows — and Allāh knows better: When the People of the Book are invited to the Book of Allāh in order that it might decide between them, then a part of them turn back and withdraw; it is because they are deceived by what they have forged in the matter of their religion, and also because they arrogantly refuse to submit to the truth. Well, what will they do when We shall gather them together on the day about which there is no doubt, the day when the judgment will be decisively, truthfully and justly pronounced, and every soul shall be fully paid what it had earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly, because the judgments will be based on justice? As they know this fact, it is necessary for them not to turn away from the Book of Allāh, not to withdraw from it, as though they could defeat the purpose of Allāh or could overrule His decrees! Do not they know that every power belongs to Allāh, and that this life is but a trial?

TRADITIONS

Muḥammad ibn Muslim said: ‘‘I asked the Imām about the word of Allāh, *Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam.* And he said: ‘that (Islam) which contains (true) belief’ ’’. (al-‘Ayyāshī)

Ibn Shahrāshūb narrates from al-Bāqir (a.s.) about the word of Allāh: *Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam,* that he said: ‘‘Submitting to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in (his) mastership.’’

The author says: The explanation is based on the principle of the ‘‘flow’’ of the Qur’ān. And probably the preceding tradition too has the same connotation.

The same narrator reports that ‘Alī (a.s.) said: ‘‘I shall define Islam as no one has defined before me, and no one shall do after me. Islam is submission, and submission is conviction, and conviction is affirmation, and affirmation is acknowledgement, and acknowledgement is discharge (of obligation), and discharge (of obligation) is action. The believer has taken his religion from his Lord. Certainly. The belief of a believer is recognized in his deed, and the disbelief of an unbeliever is recognized in his denial. O people! (look after) your religion, (look after) your religion, because a sin in it is better than a good (deed) in other (religions); the sin (committed while believing) in this (religion) will be forgiven, and the good (deed) in other (religions) will not be accepted.’’

The author says: The words of the Imām, ‘‘I shall define Islam’’: *‘‘an-Nisbah’’* (اَلنِّسْبَةُ = literally, relation, to relate) here means to define; Chapter 112 (the Unity) has been named in some traditions as the chapter of *an-nisbah* of Allāh.

The Imām has defined all the terms with the help of their concomitants, except the first word, *‘‘al-Islām’’* (اَلْاِسْلَامُ = submission) which has been explained with its more clearly understood synonym *‘‘at-taslīm’’* (اَلتَّسْلِيْمُ = submission). We may also possibly take the word, Islam, to signify the religion brought by Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.); in that case the first phrase too (Islam is submission) would be a definition with a concomitant.

However, the Imām means to say: This religion known as Islam entails submission of man, in his person and his action, to Allāh; he surrenders his soul and all his activities to Allāh's command and will; it is called *at-taslīm* (submission); *at-taslīm* in its turn entails firm conviction and certainty about Allāh, in a way as not to allow any doubt whatsoever about Him; conviction entails affirmation of the religion's truth; and affirmation entails acknowledgement of its firmness, that is, the fact that religion is firmly rooted and unshakable; and this acknowledgement leads the believer to discharge all his obligations accordingly, and the discharge of obligations necessitates acting according to the dictates of religion.

''and the good (deed) in other (religions) will not be accepted'', that is, the doer will not be given its reward in the hereafter. Or it may mean: It will not create any good impression with Allāh either in this world or in the hereafter. As we have explained the sentence, it is not in conflict with other traditions which say that the unbelievers are rewarded for their good deeds with the good provisions of this world. Allāh has said: *So he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it* (99:7).

Abū 'Ubaydah al-Jarrāḥ said: ''I said: 'O Apostle of Allāh! which people shall suffer the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection?' He said: 'A man who killed a prophet or (murdered) a man who enjoined good and forbade evil.' Then he recited: '(those who) *slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among men who enjoin justice . . .'* Then he said: 'O Abū 'Ubaydah! the Israelites killed forty-three prophets in one hour. Then stood up one hundred and twelve persons from among the devout Israelites and enjoined those killers to do good and forbade them (to do any) evil. Thereupon, they killed all those (devout persons) by the end of the same day. And it is this (massacre) which Allāh has mentioned (in this verse).' '' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: The same explanation has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr,* through Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim, from Abū 'Ubaydah.

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr:* Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he

said: ‘‘The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) went to a group of the Jews in (their) house of *midrash,* and invited them to Allāh. al-Nu‘mān ibn ‘Amr and Ḥarth ibn Zayd asked him: ‘On which religion are you? O Muḥammad!’ He said: ‘‘On the faith and religion of Ibrāhīm.’ They said: ‘But Ibrāhīm was a Jew!’ Thereupon the Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) told them: ‘Then bring to me the Torah; it is (the judge) between you and us.’ They rejected his (proposal). Then Allāh revealed: *Have you not considered those who are given a portion of the Book? . . . deceived them in the matter of their religion.’’*

The author says: Some people have narrated that the verse, ‘‘Have you not considered . . .’’, was revealed in connection with the episode of stoning. We shall give its detail under the verse: *O People of the Book! indeed has come to you Our Apostle making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book* . . . (5:15).

However, these two traditions are from *aḥād,*[1] and are not so strong.

[1] *Aḥād,* the plural of *al-wāḥid* (اَلْوَاحِد = one). In Islamic terminlogy it is used for a tradition which is not narrated by a great enough number of narrators as to create a certainty of its truth. (*tr*)

قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَآءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ
مِمَّنْ تَشَآءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَآءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَآءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ــ ٢٦ . تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ
مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ــ ٢٧ .

Say: ''O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom! Thou givest the Kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest and takest away the Kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest, and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest; in Thine hand is the good; surely, Thou hast power over all things (26). *Thou makest the night to enter into the day and Thou makest the dat to enter into the night, and Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living, and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest, without measure''* (27).

COMMENTARY

The two verses do have a sort of connection with the preceding talk about the People of the Book, and especially the Jews. They were earlier threatened with the chastisements of this world and the hereafter. It was a part of that chastisement that Allāh deprived them of their kingdom, and they were inflicted by abasement and humiliation upto the Day of Resurrection; also they lost so many lives and their rule was shorn of sovereignty.

Apart from that, the main theme of the chapter, as was mentioned in the beginning, is to show that the creation and all its affairs are totally in the hands of Allāh; He is the Master of the Kingdom, He gives Kingdom, honour and good to whomsoever He pleases; and takes away the Kingdom, honour and good from whomsoever He pleases.

The verses are, thus, in total conformity with the theme of the chapter.

QUR'ĀN: *Say: O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom!* The verse advises the believer to seek refuge with Allāh — in Whose hand is all the good and all the power — in order that he may remain unaffected by baseless ideas of the hypocrites, the polytheists and the People of the Book, the groups who were under the illusion that they had the kingdom and honours in their hands and that in this way they were independent of Allāh! Such thoughts were their undoing; they were totally lost and ruined because of this illusion. The believer should steer clear of such ideas and should present himself with humility before Allāh Who bestows good and gives sustenance without measure to whomsoever He pleases. The meaning of *''al-milk''* (اَلْمِلْكُ = property, possession) is known to, and understood by, all; and we recognize it as a lawful concept and reality.

''Possession'' is of two kinds:

1. Real Possession: It is the ability inherent in a creature, for example, man, to dispose, manage and manipulate another thing in any way he likes. For example, a man may use or not use his eyesight, depending on his choice; he may use his hand in getting hold of a thing or letting it go; and so on. There exists between such a possessor and such a property a real, unchangeable and untransferable relationship; a relationship that makes the property dependent on the possessor for its very existence — it cannot be separated from the possessor without being destroyed. In the above example, the eye or the hand cannot be removed from the man without losing its usefulness and even its existence in the process.

In this category comes the possession and ownership, which belongs to Allāh, of this universe with all its big and small components, as well as of all its affairs. He has the right, authority

and power to do with it, and in it, as He pleases.

2. Conventional Possession: It is the possession based on man-made convention; the ability of, let us say, a man to dispose and manage a thing, as he likes — the authority based on the convention laid down by wise men to achieve the society's aims. They looked at the plane of creation and found it replete with real possession and its effects; so they invented a similar institution for the plane of civilization and laid down the system of the conventional possession for the society. Their goal was to obtain benefits from the world's provisions similar to those a real owner gets from his real possession. This relationship between a conventional owner and his property is not a real thing; it is just an abstract idea based on society's convention; and that is why such an ownership, unlike the real one, may be transferred to another person through trade, gift, inheritance etc.

''al-Mulk'' (اَلْمُلْكُ = kingdom) too is a sort of *''al-milk''* (possession) inasmuch as the king or ruler owns what the people of a country do own; he manages and disposes what the people have in their possession, without there occurring any clash between their management and his, between their will and his. It is in fact an ownership over ownership — the king's ownership being vertically above the public's; in the same way as, for example, a master owns his slave and also all that is owned by the slave.

The kingdom too, being a sort of possession, is divided into two categories: the real and the conventional.

Allāh is the absolute Owner of every thing; His is the absolute Lordship and absolute management; He is the Creator of every thing and God of every thing. He says: *That is Allāh, your Lord, the Creator of every thing; there is no god but He* (40:62); *whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His* (2:255). There are numerous verses showing that whatever is called a ''thing'' exists because of Allāh, is dependent in its quiddity and existence on Him; it cannot stand without Him. Nothing can prevent Allāh from disposing and managing a thing in any way He pleases; and as we explained earlier, it is the real possession.

And He is also the absolute King of the creation, because He is its absolute Owner. There is a system of ownership pervading the

universe — the causes own their effects; every thing owns its active faculties and powers; those faculties and powers own their activities. For example, man owns all his limbs, organs and faculties like the eyes and ears; and the eyes and ears own their faculties of sight and hearing. As mentioned above, Allāh owns every thing; therefore, He owns every owner as well as all his (or its) possessions; and this is what is called the Kingship. He is therefore the absolute King of all the creation. He has said: *to Him belongs the Kingdom, and to Him is due* (all) *praise* (64:1); . . . *with a most Powerful King* (54:55); there are numerous such verses. Needless to say, it is the real possession and kingships.

As for the conventional possession and kingship, this too actually belongs to Allāh. Allāh is the conventional Owner too, because it is He Who bestows the ownership to every thing which owns any thing. He could not do so unless He Himself did own that thing; otherwise it would have looked as if He was bestowing a thing He did not own to someone who could not own! Allāh says: *and give them of the wealth of Allāh which He has given to you* . . . (24:33). Also, He is the conventional King, because He is the Law-giver and the Ruler, Who regulates, by His order, all the things which the people own, just as the kings regulate the financial affairs of their subjects. Allāh says: *Say: ''I seek refuge in the Lord of men, the King, of men''* (114:1 — 2); *And He gives you all that you ask Him; and if you count Allāh's bounties, you will not be able to compute them* (14:34); *and spend out of what He has made you to be successors of* (57:7); *And what reason have you that you should not spend in Allāh's way? And Allāh's is the inheritance of the heavens and the earth* (57:10); *To whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allāh, the One, the Subduer* (of all) (40:16). The verses show that Allāh owned all that is in our hands before it came in our possession, and He continues to own it even when it belongs to us, and He will remain its owner (or let us say, Inheritor) when we are gone. His Kingship and ownership remains unaffected throughout.

It appears from the above that the words, ''O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom'', point to the following three themes:

First: To Allāh belongs every kingdom; He is the Owner of the Kingdom. In other words, He is the King of the kings; He gives

every king his kingdom, every ruler his rule; He says: . . . *because Allāh had given him the kingdom* (2:258); *and We have given them a grand kingdom* (4:54).

Second: The Divine name ‘‘Allāh’’, precedes the epithet, ‘‘Master of the Kingdom’’; this arrangement explains the basis of His Kingship; He is the Master of the Kingdom becuse He is Allāh, Great is His Majesty !

Third: ‘‘The Kingdom’’ here refers to its both kinds — the real and the conventional. (And Allāh knows better!) The matters mentioned in the first verse (*Thou givest the Kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest and takest away the Kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest, and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest*) refer to various aspects of the conventional kinship; while the next verse refers to the affairs of the real kingship. Allāh is, therefore, the absolute Master of the Kingdom.

QUR’ĀN: *Thou givest the Kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest and takest away the Kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest:* The statement is unrestricted and thus covers every kingdom, no matter whether it is obtained legally or illegally, nor whether it is based on justice or injustice. (We have explained this subject under the verse 2:258; . . . *because Allāh has given him the kingdom.*) The kingdom, *per se,* is one of the bounties of Allāh; it has the potential of doing good in, and improving, the human society. Man, by his very nature, loves to rule and dominate over others. A kingship, which falls into the hands of an undeserving person, is disliked and condemned, not because it is a kingship, but because it has been captured by one who has no right to it, (e.g., when someone usurps it through *coup d’etat*), or because of his bad character, injustice and oppression. This second reason is, in a way, another facet of the first.

To sum it up, if the king or the ruler is good, able and just, then the kingdom is a bounty of Allāh for him. On the other hand, if he is undeserving and undesirable, then for him it is an affliction and trial. In either case, it is attributed to Allāh, and is a means of trial, by which Allāh tests His servants — the ruler and the ruled.

We have described earlier somewhere that when the Qur’ān attaches the proviso of ‘‘Allāh’s pleasure’’, as in this verse, it does

not mean that Allāh's actions are done without a reason or without an aim. This proviso is a reiteration that Allāh's power and His will are supreme; that Allāh is not under any compulsion to do or not to do any particular work; nobody can oblige Him in any way; whatever He does, it is done according to His absolute will and power, and not because someone compels Him to do so. Nevertheless, all His actions are done and all His decrees issued for one purpose: the good and well-being of His servants.

QUR'ĀN: *and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest: ''al-'Izz''* (اَلْعِزُّ = to be hard to get; to be difficult to obtain). We say for a rare book or thing that it is *'azīzu 'l-wujūd* (عَزِيْزُالْوُجُوْدِ); a man having a high prestige in his tribe, country or nation is called '*azīzu 'l-qawm,* because it is difficult to subdue or overpower him. Then it was used for all types of difficulties; it is said "*ya'izzu 'alayya kadhā"*(يَعِزُّعَلَيَّ كَذا = it is hard for me to; it grieves me to). Allāh says: . . . *grievous to him is your falling into distress* . . . (9:128). Also, it is used for overpowering. There is a proverb: *man 'azza bazza* (مَنْ عَزَّ بَزَّ = he who vanquishes, takes the booty). Allāh says: . . . *and he has prevailed against me in discourse* (38:23). But the basic meaning in all these usages is the same.

Opposite to it is *''al-dhull''* (اَلذُّلُّ = to be easy to get orsubdue — by real or supposed overpowering). Allāh says: *And abasement and humiliation were brought down over them* (2:61); *and lower unto them the wing of humility out of compassion* (17:24); . . . *humble before the believers* . . . (5:54). The words translated as ''abasement'', ''humility'' and ''humble'' are various derivatives of *''al-dhull''.*

al-'Izzah (اَلْعِزَّةُ = exaltation; might; honour) is an inseparable attribute of the absolute Kingship of Allāh. Whoever, other than Allāh, possesses any thing he gets it is because Allāh has given him its ownership; whoever gets kingship, it is because Allāh gives him that kingdom. Therefore, real honour and exaltation belong only to Allāh; whatever honour is enjoyed by others, it is but a gift bestowed by Allāh. He says: *Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allāh* (4:139); . . . *and to Allāh belongs the might and to His Apostle and to the believers* . . . (63:8). This is the true

honour, real might. What others have got is only abasement in the guise of might, humiliation behind the mask of honour. Allāh says: *Nay! those who disbelieve are in* (self-) *exaltation and opposition* (38:2). Then to show that that self-exaltation is just an allusion, Allāh immediately reminds them: *How many did We destroy before them of the generations, then they cried while the time of escaping had passed away* (38:3).

Abasement and dishonour, being the opposite of might and honour, are governed by the opposite factors. Everything, other than Allāh, by itself is abase and without any honour — except him who is exalted by Allāh; ‘‘and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest’’.

QUR’ĀN: *in Thine hand is the good; surely Thou hast power over all things: ‘‘a1-Kahyr’’* (اَلْخَيْرُ = the good) basically connotes ‘selection’. We call a thing *‘khayr’* (good) when we compare it with another thing and choose it — thus it is *‘khayr’* (good) because it is the chosen one, the selected on. And why did we select it? Because it was more suitable for the purpose we had in mind. In other words, this thing is good because it is a means to obtain the ultimate good, that is, the purpose aimed at. The real ‘‘good’’.is that which is desired for itself. It is called good because it is chosen when compared with other things.

The word ‘‘good’’ carries a connotation of favourable comparison with other things. This. has given rise to a misunderstanding that it is an adjective of comaparative degrees, and that originally it was *akhyar* (اَخْيَرُ). But it is not so; it is not in comparative degree, although its root meaning carries a comparative value, and therefore it is often used as a substitute for ‘‘better’’, ‘‘more exalted’’ etc. We say: Zayd is *afḍal* (اَفْضَلُ = more exalted) than ‘Amr; the same meaning is conveyed when we say: Zayd is *khayrun* (خَيْرٌ) than ‘Amr. We may say: *Zayd afḍaluhumā* (زَيْدٌ اَفْضَلُهُمَا), or we may change it to *Zayd khayruhumā* (زَيْدٌ خَيْرُهُمَا) both sentences will convey the same meaning: Zayd is the better of the two. But this interchangeabilitity of the two words does not make *al-khayr* an adjective of comparative degree; otherwise, it would have been conjugated on the paradigm of comparative degree, i.e., on the

paradigm of *''aftḍal, afāḍil, fuḍlā, fuḍlayāt''* (اَفْضَلُ،اَفَاضِلُ،فُضْلٰي،فُضْلَيَاتُ). But *''khayr''* is not conjugated like that. Instead we say: *khayr, akhyār, khayrah, khayrāt* (خَيْرٌ،اَخْيَارٌ،خَيْرَةٌ،خَيْرَاتٌ) like *shaykh, ashyākh, shaykhah, shaykhāt* (شَيْخٌ،اَشْيَاخٌ،شَيْخَةٌ،شَيْخَاتٌ = old man, old men, old woman, old women). Therefore, it is a *aṣ-ṣifatu 'l-mushabbahah* (اَلصِّفَةُ الْمُشَبَّهَةُ = adjective denoting an inseparable attribute).

Moreover, *khayr* is also used in places where the context does not allow any comparison. For example, *Say: ''What is with Allāh is better* (khayrun = خَيْرٌ) *than sport* . . . (62:11). Now there is no good in the sport so that it could be said, ''better than sport''. What it actually means is: What is with Allāh is good, and the sport is not good. (Those who think that the word *al-khayr,* is in comparative degree, say that in the sentences like the above, the word looses its comparative value. Such explanations neeed no comment!) The fact is that *al-khayr* gives a connotation of selection and choosing, and generally, but not necessarily, the thing which is not selected also has some good in it.

The above discourse shows that Allāh is ''good'' absolutely and without any reservation or condition, because He it is Who is the ultimate goal and destination of every thing. Yet, the Qur'ān has never used this word as a Divine name, although it has been used as an adjective referring to Allāh: *and Allāh is better and more abiding* (20:73); *are sundry lords better or Allāh the One, the Supreme?* (12:39).

Of course, the word, *khayrun* (خَيْرٌ = better, best) has been used as the first construct of those Divine names which are in genitive case; for example: *and Allāh is the best* (khayr) *of sustainers* (62:11) ; *and He is the best of the judges* (7:87); *and He is the best of deciders* (6:57); *and He is the best of the helpers* (3:150); *and Allāh is the best of planners* (3:54); *and Thou art the best of deciders* (7:89); *and Thou art the best of the forgivers* (7:155); *and Thou art the best of inheritors* (21:89); *and Thou art the best to cause to alight* (23:29); *and Thou art the best of the merciful ones* (23:109).

The reason for this fine distinction in usage is not difficult to understand. As the word, *al-khayr,* has a connotation of selection and option, it was not used as a name of God — it would not have been proper to compare Him in a general way with others, because all are

subservient to Him. But there was no such difficulty in using the word as an adjective or as a relative description in a genitive case.

The sentence, ‘‘in Thine hand is the good’’, has a semantic value of restriction: the definite article in ‘‘the good’’ makes it cover all and every good; and the adverbial clause of place, ‘‘in Thine hand’’, coming at the beginning of the sentence, puts all the good exclusivesly into the hand of Allāh. The meaning therefore is: Every good, which anyone may ever desire, is only under Thy management and control; it is Thou Who gives it to whomsoever Thou pleasest.

The sentence gives the reason of the preceding ones, which mention His giving the kingdom and honour to whomsoever He pleases and taking them away from whomsoever He pleases. It explains the particular, that is, bestowing kingdom and honour, with the help of a general attribute, ‘‘good’’: ‘‘good’’ is an all-encompassing term, which covers other bounties too. Allāh controls every ‘‘good’’, and kingdom and honour are two of those good things; therefore, it is Allāh who bestows them to whomsoever He pleases.

The taking away of the kingdom. and abasing are ‘good’ in the same way as giving the kingdom and exalting are. It is true that they are ‘‘evil’’; but what is evil? It is absence of good. Taking away the kingdom is the same as not giving the kingdom; abasing is the same as not exalting. To say, Allāh has the power to give it, is the same as saying, He has the power to withold it. When every good emanates from Him, then every withholding of the good must necessarily emanate from Him. What we have to be careful about is that we should never attribute to Him any thing which is beneath His sublime sanctity; for example, we cannot say that the sins, errors and improprieties of the servants emanate from Him. Nevertheless, we may say that Allāh leaves the sinners to do as they wish, and that He does not help such servants. (We have explained this matter before.)

Let us look at this matter from another angle: There are good and evil in the sphere of creation, like giving the kingdom and taking it away, exalting someone and abasing him and so on. The good, at this level, is a positive reality, and there is no difficuty in attributing it to Allāh. And the evil, at this level, is just not giving the good to someone, and even here, there is no difficulty in attributing it to

Allāh; He is the only Master of every ‘‘good’’; if He gives to someone from that good, then He should be thanked; if, on the other hand, He withholds it from someone, then nobody has any right to ask Him why, or to compel Him to give it. Whatever He does, is done for the general well-being of His creatures, for the good of the system which pervades every single component of the universe.

Likewis, there are good and evil in the sphere of legislation — various kinds of obedience and disobedience. Man is responsible for these actions, inasmuch as they are done by his own choice and will. Certainly, such actions can never be attributed to other than the man himself. It is this relationship between man and his actions which makes it possible to say, this is good, or, that is bad. If man had no freedom of will and choice, none of his deeds could be termed as good or evil. And these deeds cannot be attributed to Allāh, except in the sense that He helps (in good deeds) or withholds His help (from evil ones), according to the reasons demanding such help or its withdrawal.

It shows that the good, all of it, is in the hand of Allāh, and all the affairs of the universe — gain and loss; good and evil — emanate from that good.

An exegete has written: There is a deleted by implied word in the sentence, ‘‘in Thine hand is the good’’; according to him, it actually says, in Thine hand is the good and evil. He gives the example of another verse: *and He has given you garments to preserve you from the heat* (16:81), in which ‘and cold’, is implied.

We understand tine motive of the above assertion. He wanted to keep his distance from the Mu‘tazilities. The Mu‘tazilites do not attribute an evil to Allāh, not even indirectly. Of course, their stand was wrong and we have already dealt with this topic in a previous volume. But it does not justify such strange implied additions to the speech of God; it is astonishing to see someone having the audacity to hazard such explanations in respect of the Qur’ānic verses.

QUR’ĀN: *Thou hast power over all things:* It shows why all good is in Allāh’s hand. He has absolute and exclusive power over every thing; it follows that anyone who has got any power, gets it by the authority of Allāh. If not so, then that person’s power would be

outside the purview of Allāh's power; in that case, Allāh would not have power over all things. But we know that He has absolute and all-encompassing power; and therefore, every imaginable good is in His power. Consequently, all the good, that emanates from others' hands, is, in fact, bestowed by Allāh. In short, the good, *per se,* is in His hands only. It was this exclusiveness to which the preceding sentence had referred: ''in Thine hand is the good''.

QUR'ĀN: *Thou makest the night to enter into the day and Thou makest the day to enter into the night: al-Wulūj* (اَلْوُلُوْجُ) is to enter; its transitive is *''al-īlāj''* (اَلْاِيْلَاجُ = to make enter, to insert).

Apparently, the above sentences refer to the continuously changing lengths of days and nights, throughout the year, depending on the latitude of a region and the position of the earth vis-*a-vis* the sun. In the northern hamisphere, from mid-winter to mid-summer, days become longer and longer and nights shorter and shorter — it is the entering of the day into the night. And from mid-summer to mid-winter, nights become longer and longer and days shorter and shorter — and it is the entering of the night into the day. The position in the southern hemisphere is just opposite. When the nights are longer in one hemisphere, they are shorter in the other; the same happens with the days. In this way, Allāh is always making the day to enter into the night, and the night to enter into the day.

As for the two imaginary points of the north and the south poles, and the imaginary latitude of the equator, it seems that the days and the nights remain equal throughout the year. But in reality changes occur at those points too[1] .

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[1] This explanation is correct, as far as it goes. But another explanation, given by Maurice Bucaille, seems more comprehensive.

''[The astronauts have seen] how the Sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) the half of the Earth's surface that is facing it, while the other half of the globe is in darkness. The Earth turns on its own axis and the lighting remains the same, so that an area in the form of a half-sphere makes one revolution around the Earth in twenty-four hours while the other half-sphere, that has remained in darkness, makes the same revolution in the same time. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the Qur'ān. It is easy for the

QUR'ĀN: *and Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living:* That is, Allāh brings forth a believer from the loin of an unbeliever, and an unbeliever from the loin of a believer. Allāh has named belief as life and light, and He calls disbelief as death and darkness. For example, He says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth* (6:122).

The sentences may also be explained in a general way: Allāh creates living organism, like vegetable and animal, from the earth which has no sense or feeling; and then gives death to the living things returning them to the earth. The Qur'ānic verses almost clearly say that He changes the living into dead and the dead into living. He says: . . . *then We caused it to grow into another creation; so blessed be Allāh, the best of creators. Then after that you will most surely die* (23:14 — 15). There are other verses having the same connotation.

Some scientists say: The life emanated from some germs, evolving from one germ into another, and from that into a third and so on; that it did not spring up from senseless matter. The reason for this hypothesis lay in their belief that the universe came into being by itself, it was not created[1]. But experiments show that the living germs too are overcome by death. Thus the life changes into death, establishing a correlation between the two. (We shall further explain this subject somewhere else.)

However, this verse, ''Thou makest the night . . . bringest forth the dead from the living'', describes Allāh's management of His real

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human understanding to grasp this notion nowadays because we have the idea of the Sun's (relative) immobility and the Earth's rotation. This process of perpetual coiling, including the interpenetration of one sector by another is expressed in the Qur'ān . . .'' (*The Bible, the Qur'ān and Science;* North American Publications, Indianapolis; 1979; p. 164.) (*tr.*)

[1] That is, they wanted to avoid answering the question: How did a living cell evolve from a lifeless matter? How could the matter be the source of life when it had no life itself? (*tr.*)

possession; as the preceding verse, ‘‘Thou givest the Kingdom . . . abasest whom Thou pleasest’’, shows His management of His conventional possession.

The two verses run parallel to each other: One describing four aspects of His management which stand face to face with the other four described by the other. The former mentions giving the kingdom and taking it away; the latter subtends it with the description of making the night to enter into the day and making the day to enter into the night. Then the former talks about exalting and abasing; and the latter speaks of bringing forth the living from the dead and vice versa. This juxtaposition provides a refreshing insight into the Qur’ānic eloquence.

To give a kingdom to someone is to let him impose his authority over his compatriots; thus, to a certain extent, the freedom of the people is lost into the authority of the ruler. It is not dissimilar to making the night dominate over the day; the night (comparable to subjugation) takes away certain portions of the day (comparable to the freedom of the people).

The opposite is true for taking away the kingdom *vis-a-vis* making the day to enter into the night.

To exalt someone is similar to giving him a new life; he would have remained unknown and unrecognized, if Allāh had not bestowed honour upon him. That is why it has been put parallel to bringing forth the living from the dead.

Likewise, abasing and bringing forth the dead from the living stand face to face. Honour is life; and dishonour, death.

Also, Allāh, in His Book, describes the day as having a manifest sign, and the night as having one blotted away; He says: . . . *then We have made the sign of the night blotted away and We have made the sign of the day manifest* . . . (17:12). Looking at human society from this point of view, establishment of a kingdom and its downfall are mirrors of the manifestation of the day and the effacement of the night respectively.

In the same way, He counts life as the fountain-head of knowledge and power; and death deprives man of these faculties; He says: *Dead* (are they), *not living, and they know not when they shall be raised* (16:21). And he has exclusively reserved the honour and

might to Himself, and to His Apostle and the believers: *and to Allāh belongs the might and to His Apostle and to the believers* (63:8). And it is these who, according to the Qur'ān, are alive. Consequently, might and respect is the mirror of life, and humiliation and abasement represents death. It is now clear how giving of kingdom and taking it away as well as exalting and abasing (of the former verse) run parallel to making the night to enter into the day, and making the day to enter into the night as well as bringing forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living (in the latter) respectively.

The concluding sentence of the latter verse, (*and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest, without measure*) likewise stands face to face with the concluding sentence of the former (*in Thine hand is good . . .*), as the following paragraph makes it clear.

QUR'AN: *and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest, without measure:* Apparently it gives the reason for the foregoing factors; the conjunctive, ''and'', is, therefore, for explanation; and it explains the afore-mentioned particular actions in term of a general faculty. The meaning: Allāh manages His creatures in the foregoing way because He is the Sustainer, Who gives sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure.

That is why we said earlier that it stands face to face with the concluding sentence of the former verse; because, ''in Thine hand is the good; surely, Thou has power over all things'' also explains the reason of the actions mentioned therein.

SUSTENANCE IN THE QUR'ĀN

ar-Rizq (اَلرِّزْقُ), usually translated as sustenance, maintenance, or means of livelihood, is a well-known concept. A glance at its various usages shows that the word has a connotation of bestowal by someone to someone else, for example, the sustenance given by the king to the soldiers. Originally, it was used for only the foodstuff. For example, Allāh says: *and their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father according to usage* (2:233). Mark that the clothing has not been counted as a part of the maintenance.

Thereafter, the meaning was extended to include every foodstuff, even if the giver was not known — in any case, it was a bestowal of good luck. The process of generalization continued, and now it is used for every useful thing — food or something else — which comes to someone; it includes all the paraphernalia of life, like: wealth, prestige, family, supporters, beauty, knowledge and so on. Allāh says: *Or is it that you ask them a recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is best, and He is the best of those who provide sustenance* (23:72). Also, He quotes Shu'ayb (a.s.) as saying: *O my people! have you considered if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He has given me a goodly sustenance from Himself . . .* (11:88). Here the sustenance refers to the prophethood and the Divine knowledge etc.

Allāh says: *Surely Allāh, He is the Bestower of sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong* (51:58). The context confines the bestowal of sustenance to Allāh only. The verse leads us to the following concepts:

First: Bestowal of sustenance, in reality, cannot be ascribed to any one other than Allāh. Of course, there are some verses that attribute it to others also; for example: *and Allāh is the Best of sustainers* (62:11). (There are many sustainers, but Allāh is the Best.) Also, He gives the order: *. . . and maintain them out of it, and clothe them* (4:5). But such usages do not give them any independent status; the only Sustainer is Allāh, others are just a means of conveying Allāh's gift to His servants. It is not different from the Kingdom and the Might which actually belong to Allāh, although others too get them by Allāh's bestowal and permission.

Second: Whatever good the people get and which they make use of, and derive benefit from, in their existence, is their sustenance; and it is Allāh Who bestows it to them. There is a large number of the verses of sustenance to prove this fact. In addition, there are numerous verses on the theme of creation, management, decree, possession, will, and good, which prove that all these things belong exclusively to Allāh — and giving sustenance is interwoven with these factors.

Third: Suppose a man takes advantage of a certain thing to obtain an unlawful benefit. Inasmuch as it was the cause or means of

a sin, it would not be attributed to Allāh. Allāh has clearly said that on the level of legislation, He does not sanction any sin or evil. He says: *And when they commit an indecency they say: ''We found our fathers doing this, and Allāh has enjoined it on us.'' Say: ''Surely Allāh does not enjoin indecency; do you say against Allāh what you do not know?''* (7:28). Also, He says: *Surely Allāh enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good* (to others) *and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion . . .* (16:90). It is just unimaginable that He would forbid a thing and then, at the same time, would allow it; or that He would declare something unlawful and then confine a servant's sustenance to it! And unlawful benefit is not ''sustenance'' on the level of legislation. Nevertheless, it is ''sustenance'' on the level of creation. The religious responsibility does not reach up to the level of creation — and there is nothing bad on that level. When the Qur'ān says that Allāh gives sustenance to every body, it looks at this subject from the level of creation. A Divine talk cannot be reduced to the level of the simpletons' understanding; in other words, it cannot overlook the deep Divine realities just because they are beyond the mental capacity of common man. The Holy Book contains what is a healing for the believers' hearts; nobody may fall into perdition by it except the unjust: *And We reveal of the Qur'ān that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it adds only to the perdition of the unjust* (17:82).

Moreover, there are verses showing that it was Allāh Who gave kingdom to Namrūd (Nimrod), Pharaoh and others like them, and bestowed wealth and treasures to Qārūn and his like. They got all these things not without the permission of Allāh; He gave them the kingdom and wealth as a means of trial, to test their spiritual condition, and to complete His proof against them; it was as though Allāh left them to go astray if they so wished, and gave them enough rope to hang themselves.

It should be noted here that, in the above examples, we took those cases to the level of legislation and yet found good explanations for them that would satisfy the reason and were not against the sublime Divine Justice. If such things are unobjectionable at the level of legislation, certainly there can be no objection in providing

sustenance, at the level of creation — even if it be ‘‘unlawful’’ for legislation’s point of view.

Allāh has said that every thing has been created by Him, is sent down by Him from His treasures of mercy: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure* (15:21). Further, He has said: *and whatever is with Allāh is better . . .* (28:60). These two (and other similar) verses read together prove that whatever a man gets in this life, it comes from Allāh and is good and beneficial for him. This theme may also be inferred from the verse: *Who made good every thing that He has created . . .* (32:7), read in conjunction with the verse: *That is Allāh, your Lord, the Creator of every thing; there is no god but He* (40:62).

Yet, there is no denying that some Divine gifts appear to be evil and harmful to the recipient. But its evil and harm is just relative; it may be so for this particular person, while it brings good and benefit to a great many people; in other words, that personal hardship may be good, in the wider context of the world-system. Or it could have been misused by the man himself. Allāh points to this factor when He says: *and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself* (4:79). However, we have already dealt with this subject in a previous volume.

In short, whatever good Allāh bestows on His creatures (and all that He bestows is good and beneficial), it is called sustenance, in its literal sense: it is a gift that benefits the recipient. Probably, it is this theme that the verse 20:131 points at: *and the sustenance* (given) *by your Lord is better . . .*

The above discourse shows that, for almost all practical purposes, the three concepts — sustenance, good and creation — are one and the same. Every sustenance is good and created; and every creation is a sustenance and good. Nevertheless, there is a fine difference between sustenance and good on one side and creation on the other.

Sustenance presupposes the existence of something to be sustained, to whom the sustenance would be given. Food is sustenance for the digestive system because it needs that food; the digestive system is sustenance for the man as he needs it; that man is sustenance for his parents because they benefit from him; likewise,

the existence is a sustenance for the man, *per se.* Allāh says: . . . *Who gave to everything its creation* . . . (20:50).

Likewise, good presupposes a selector who would choose what he wants from among a lot of things. Food is good for the digestive system because it needs it, and opts for it when given a choice; the digestive system is, in the same way, good for the man, and similarly the existence is good for him.

But as for creation, it does not require any actual or imaginary pre-existing thing. Food, digestive system, man, every thing is created in its own right; it by itself is the object of creation; it does not need any other object.

Every sustenace belongs to Allāh; every good belongs to Allāh. Whatever sustenance comes from Him, whatever good is given by Him, it is given gratis, not in exchange of or return for anything. Suppose you wanted to give to Allāh something as price of the sustenance; well, what could you give Him? Whatever you may think of, it already belongs to Allāh; you have no right whatsoever on any thing. It is just a mercy of Allāh that He has undertaken to give sustenance to every one, and has made it obligatory for Himself to sustain all the creatures; He says: *And there is no animal in the earth but on Allāh is the sustenance of it* (11:6); *and in the heaven is your sustenance and what you are threatened with. And by the Lord of the heavens and the earth! it is most surely the truth, just as you do speak* (51:22 — 23).

It shows that although sustenance is a right on Allāh — because He Himself has undertaken to give sustenance to everyone — yet it is in fact a free gift from Him, because no creature is in his own right entitled to get it.

The above talk makes one thing clear: Even if a man obtains his sustenance unlawfully, originally he was alloted a lawful sustenance. It is unimaginable that Allāh would undertake to give sustenance to a man, then compel him to get it through unlawful means; and then would tell him not to use it, and punish him if he disobeyed.

Let us explain it in another way: Sustenance is a Divine gift containing good; as such it is a Divine mercy for all the creatures. We have already mentioned that there are two kinds of mercy: There is a general mercy which covers all the servants, believers and

unbelievers, pious ones and sinners alike; and it is not confined to the human beings, it encompasses other creatures too. And there is a special mercy, the one that is reserved for the walkers on the path of felicity and righteousness, for example, true belief, piety and ultimately the paradise. Likewise, there are two kinds of sustenance: A general sustenance which is provided to every thing for its protection and survival; and a special sustenance which remains within the limits of legality.

The general mercy as well as the general sustenance is foreordained and measured; Allāh says: *and Who created every thing, then ordained for it a measure* (25:2). Likewise, the special mercy and the special sustenance are foreordained and measured. For example, guidance is a special mercy; and on the level of legislation it is foreordained and decreed for every man, be he a believer or an unbeliever. That is why Allāh raised the prophets and sent down the books. He says: *And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me, I do not desire from them any sustenance and I do not desire that they should feed Me. Surely Allāh, He is the Bestower of sustenance, the Lord of power, the Strong* (51:56 — 58). Also, He says: *And your Lord has commanded* (decreed) *that you shall not worship* (any) *but Him* . . . (17:23). It means that worship (which depends on guidance and is one of its concomitants) is a decreed measure — on the level of legislation. And so is the special sustenance (which is obtained lawfully), on the same level. Allāh says: *They are lost indeed who kill their children foolishly without knowledge, and forbid what Allāh has given to them, forging a lie against Allāh; they have indeed gone astray, and they are not the followers of the right course* (6:140). Also, He says: *And Allāh has made some of you excel others in the means of subsistence, so those who are made to excel do not give away their sustenance to those whom their right hands possess, so that they should be equal therein* . . . (16:71). These two verses are unconditional and general; they cover the believers as well as the unbelievers, and include the one who obtains his sustenance in lawful way as well as the one who does so unlawfully.

One thing more: As was explained in the beginning, sustenance is the gift or bestowal which the sustained benefits from. It follows that

only that much of it can be truly called sustenance which is used up by the sustained. A man has been given a lot of wealth, but he eats only a small portion of it; therefore, his sustenance, strictly speaking, is the portion he ate up; the remainder cannot be called his sustenance except in the sense that he was given it. In other words, when we say, Zayd has got ample (or little) sustenance, it does not necessarily mean that he has got a lot of (or little) wealth.

There are some other aspects of this topic, which we shall write about under the verse: *And there is no animal in the earth but on Allāh is the sustenance of it, and He knows its resting place and its depository; all* (things) *are in a manifest book* (11:6).

Now we come back to the clause under discussion, that is, ‘‘and Thou givest sustenance to whom thou pleasest, without measure’’. The sustenance is ‘‘without measure’’ because Allāh gives it to the creatures gratis, and they by themselves have got no right to it. Whatever they could offer in exchange, even their requests, invocations and thanks, in reality belongs to Allāh, they have got nothing of their own to offer in consideration of the sustenance. Therefore, there is no measure for the sustenance given by Allāh. Clearly, the clause does not imply that the given sustenance is unlimited and unmeasured. How can it be when the verses of ‘‘measure’’ clearly refute it? For example, Allāh says: *Surely We created every thing according to a measure* (54:49); *and whoever fears Allāh, He will make for him an outlet, and give him sustenance from whence he thinks not; and whoever trusts in Allāh, He is sufficient for him; surely Allāh attains His purpose; Allāh indeed has made a measure for every thing* (65:2 — 3).

Sustenance, therefore, is a free gift from Allāh, yet it is measured according to the pleasure of Allāh.

The two verses together make the following concepts clear:—
First: The possession as well as the Kingdom exclusively belongs to Allāh.

Second: Every good is in His hand, and comes from Him.

Third: Sustenance is a gift from Allāh, without any recompense or exchange.

Fourth: Kingdom, might, honour, and every single conventional good, occurring in the social framework, (like: wealth, prestige,

power, etc.) are various aspects of the sustenance, given by Allāh to His servants.

TRADITIONS

'Abdu'l-A'lā (*mawlā,* client of the Āl [tribe of] Sām) has narrated from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.). He says: ''I told him: *'Say O Allāh; Master of the Kingdom! Thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest.* Is it not that Allāh gave the kingdom to the Umayyads?' He said: 'It is not as you think. Surely Allāh Mighty and Great is He! gave the kingdom to us, and the Umayyads usurped it; it is as though a cloth belongs to a man, and another person takes it away; yet the cloth does not belong to the man who took it away.' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: al-'Ayyāshī has narrated a similar tradition through Dāwūd ibn Farqad from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.).

We have already explained that giving the kingdom is of two kinds: (1) Giving it at the level of creation: Such a kingdom means that the king enjoys an over-riding authority over the people and they are subdued by his power — it makes no difference whether his rule is based on justice or not. For example, Allāh says referring to Nimrod: . . . *because Allāh had given him the kingdom* (2:258). The effect of such a kingdom is that the king's words are obeyed, his command carried out and his will enforced. (We shall later explain what a kingdom on the level of creation really entails.) (2) Giving it at the level of legislation, that is, decreeing that he is a king whose obedience is obligatory. For example, Allāh says: *Surely Allāh has raised Ṭālūt to be a king over you* (2:247). The effect of this type of kingdom is obligation of the people to obey the king's command and confirmation of his mastership of the people. Such a kingdom is always based on justice; and is liked and praised by Allāh.

Now the kingdom the Umayyads had got was of the former type, that is, the one decreed at the level of creation, with its accompanying effect of overall authority on the people. But the

questioner was confused; and erroneously thought that it had the effect of the other type of kingdom — he assumed that the Umayyads were entitled to the obedience of the people, that they were the rightful masters of the *ummah,* and had got a lawful and praiseworthy status in the eyes of Allāh. The Imām told him that such a kingdom (on the level of legislation) did not belong to the Umayyads — it belonged to the rightful successors of the Prophet, that is, the Imāms, and only they were entitled to the unquestioning obedience of the *ummah.*

In other words, the same kingdom which in the Umayyad's hands was devoid of every virtue, would have been praiseworthy if it were in the Imāms' hands. In the Umayyds' hands it was totally condemnable, because they had usurped it from its rightful owners. Nevertheless, its bestowal would be attributed to Allāh as a plan to give them enough rope to hang themselves, as He did in the case of Nimrod and Pharaoh.

The Umayyads themselves had misunderstood the connotations of this verse, and thought that their kingdom was the sign of Divine approval of their rule, as may be seen in *Kitāb al-Irshād* (of al-Mufīd) where it mentions the events after the martyrdom of Imām al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) and his companions: al-Mufīd says: ''When the heads (of the martyrs) were put before Yazīd and among them was the head of al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), Yazīd recited:

We will split even the skull of a man we held in great respect;
But they were disobedient and oppressive.''

Again al-Mufīd says: ''Then (Yazīd) looked towards the people of his court and said: 'Verily, this (al-Ḥusayn) used to boast against me and say: ''My father is better than the father of Yazīd, and my mother is better than his mother, and my grandfather is better than his grandfather, and I am better than him.'' As for his claim that his father was better than the father of Yazīd, indeed my father disputed with his father and Allāh decreed in favour of my father against his father. And as for his saying that his mother was better than Yazīd's mother, by my life he was right; certainly Fāṭimah, daughter of the Apostle of Allāh was better than my mother. And as regards his saying that his granfather was better than my grandfather, no one believing in Allāh and the Last Day can say that he is better than

Muḥammad. And as for his saying that he was better than me, perhaps he had not read this verse: *Say: ''O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom! Thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest . . .'' ''*

And Zaynab, daughter of ʻAlī (peace be on him and her) rebutted his claims using the same explanation as aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) did in this tradition. as-Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs and others have reported her reply, in which she, *inter alia,* said: ''Do you think, O Yazīd! that — just because you cut us off from the regions of the earth and the horizons of the sky, so that we are being held like the captives — we are abased before Allāh? Or that you are exalted before Him? Or that it has happened because of your great importance with Him? So (now) you behave arrogantly and look around hilariously and cheerfully, when you find the world in your bondage and (your) affairs well in order, and when our kingdom and our authority is totally usurped by you! Take it easy! Don't be hasty!! Have you forgotten the words of Allāh: *And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement* (3:178).''

It is reported in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayān* about the words of Allāh, *and Thou bringest forth the living from the dead . . .:* ''It is said that it means: Thou bringest forth the believer from the unbeliever and Thou bringest forth the unbeliever from the believer.'' Further, it is written: ''And this meaning has been narrated from Abū Jaʻfar (al-Bāqir) and Abū ʻAbdillāh (aṣ-Ṣādiq), peace be on them.''

The author says: A nearly similar tradition has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣadūq from al-ʻAskarī (a.s.).

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated through the chain of Abū ʻUthmān an-Nahdī from Ibn Masʻūd or Salmān from the Prophet about the words, *He brings forth the living from the dead and He brings forth the dead from the living,* that he said: ''The believer from the unbeliever and the unbeliever from the believer.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

It is reported through the foregoing chain from Salmān al-Fārisī that he said: ‘‘The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘When Allāh created Adam (a.s.), He took out his offspring, then He took a handful in His right hand and said: ‘‘These are the people of the garden; and I don’t care.’’ And He took a handful in the other (hand) and came into it every bad (person); and He said: ‘‘These are the people of the Fire; and I don’t care.’’ Then He mixed one (group) with the other. Thus comes out an unbeliever from a believer, and a believer from an unbeliever; and that is (the meaning of) His words, *Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living.’ ’’* (*ibid.*)

The author says: Several exegetes have narrated this meaning from Salmān, with the chain of narrators disconnected. The tradition is one of those related to the ‘‘tiny particles’’ and the covenant; and, Allāh willing, we shall explain them in a more suitable place.

Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā narrated from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad and several of our companions, from Sahl ibn Ziyād, from Ibn Maḥbūb, from Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumālī that Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said: ‘‘The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his progeny, said in (his) last pilgrimage: ‘Verily, the Trustworthy Spirit (i.e., Gabriel) has revealed to my heart that no soul was to die until it had completed its sustenance. Therefore, be on guard against (the wrath of) Allāh, and act decently in seeking (the sustenance). Even if you feel that a sustenance is late in coming to you, it should not induce you to seek it through some thing that is a sin against Allāh; for surely Allāh has distributed the sustenance among His creation, with lawful means, and He has not distributed it with unlawful means. Therefore, whoever fears Allāh and remains patient, his sustenance comes to him from lawful means; and whoever tears apart the curtain (put by) Allāh and takes it (i.e., the sustenance) through unlawful means, his lawful sustenance is reduced (proportionately) and (also) he will be answerable for that.’ ’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

‘Alī (a.s.) said: ‘‘O son of Adam! Livelihood is of two kinds: the livelihood which you seek and the livelihood which seeks you; if you do not reach it, it will come to you. Therefore, do not impose a year’s worry on your one day’s worry. Whatever you get every day

should be enough for you for the day. If you have a whole year of your life even then Allāh, the Sublime, will give you every next day what He has destined as your share. If you do not have a year in your life then why should you worry for what is not for you. No seeker will reach your livelihood before you nor will anyone overpower you in the matter of that livelihood. Similarly, what has been destined as your share will not be delayed for you?'' (*Nahju 'l-balāghah*)

Ibn Ṭarīf narrated from Ibn 'U1wān, from Ja'far (a.s.), that his father (al-Bāqir — a.s.) said: ''The Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his progeny, said: 'Verily, the sustenance comes down from the heaven to the earth (abundantly) like the number of the rain-drops, to every soul according to what has been alloted to it. Yet, Allah is very Munificent; so you should beseech Allāh for His munificence.' '' (*Qurbu 'l-asnād*)

The author says: Numerous traditions have been narrated of the same connotation. We shall discuss, Allāh willing, in the Chapter of Hūd (ch. 11), the traditions of sustenance in detail.

AN ESSAY ON KINGDOM AND ITS PLACE IN SOCIETY

It has already been explained that possession and property are among those conventional but essential concepts which man cannot do without — it makes no difference whether he lives alone or in a society. Possession basically is a recognized relationship between the owner and the property.

Likewise, kingdom is a conventional, nevertheless essential, concept; a subjective institution which man cannot do without. But it is as a member of society, not as an individual, that man needs this institution. No sooner do the people establish a society than they start disputing with one another; everyone wants what is in the other's hands even if it means trespassing the limits and crushing other's rights under his heels. This tendency leads to chaos and conflict. The society which was established to ensure happy and peaceful life, becomes a source of misery and disorder; the medicine

turns into a poison.

This anomaly cannot be removed except by creating an overall authority which could compel each member to remain within the limits — thus curbing the reckless ambitions of the oppressor and giving new hope and vigour to the oppressed. That authority, which is called kingdom or rulership, lets everyone enjoy his due rights and keeps every member in his proper place.

Exploitation of weaker sections has been a constant feature of human history. In ancient times some strong persons imposed their will on the society and subdued their compatriots to accept them as their overlord or king. Although such kings and their officers themselves were mostly epitome of oppression and injustice, still their presence was of some benefit to the society. They, in their own interest, did not allow any section to oppress the others — because they did not want anyone to become strong enough to rise one day against their own authority. In this way peace reigned in the society; everyone was afraid of the autocratic king and no one had any opportunity or inclination to think about the general welfare of the society. If an individual ruler was less oppressive, the subjects sang his praise; if he was unjust beyond their tolerance, they complained and cried.

Sometime a king or ruler was killed or overpowered; and the subjects experienced chaos and disorder, to prevent which they made some strong and able man to take the rein of power in his hands, and he ascended the throne; and thus began the same story of oppression and injustice.

This continued for a long time. Ultimately, society was fed up with the autorcratic and dictatorial monarchy. In order to restrain the king's hands, people devised constitutions, delineating the mutual rights and duties of the ruler and the ruled, and somehow or other forced the king to agree. The autocratic monarchy thus became a constitutional one. Yet, it was a hereditary institution.

Then the public became aware of another big defect: Once a king ascended the throne, there was no way to remove him, no matter how unjust or unfit he might prove. Another defect was its hereditary nature; the first born child of a king got the kingdom, irrespective of his physical, moral and intellectual abilities. They found the answer

in republic. Now they had an elected president for a fixed period instead of a hereditary king who ruled for life.

Various nations invented various other system to restrain their rulers; and future might be holding various hitherto unimagined systems in store for us.

All these attempts throughout the world, to regulate the functions of the ruler, prove one thing, if nothing else. Humanity really needs the institution of rulership, no matter by what name it is called in a certain country at a certain time. One overriding authority must subdue all other people's individual ambitions and aims; otherwise, society will suffer from discord, conflict and disorder. That is why we said at the outset that kingdom is an essential concept of the society. And like all other such concepts, society is constantly trying to perfect it by removing from it the harmful elements.

The institution of prophethood has played the most important part in this process. When an idea spreads in the public — especially if it is in accord with the nature, and satisfied the human expectations — it becomes the strongest bond to unit the differing groups, to unify the divergent views and to turn the individuals into a well disciplined society, which no power can defy.

Prophethood since its earliest days calls the people to do justice and to abstain from injustice; it teaches them to worship Allāh and to submit only to Him; and it forbids them to follow the arrogant pharaohs and exploiting nimrods. This cry has constantly been raised generation after generation, in one nation after another, exhorting the big bosses to submit to the rule of justice, and encouraging the weaker sections to stand up for their rights. It is impossible for such a powerful factor to remain active in the society for so many centuries and not to affect the human psychology, not to mould mankind's way of thinking.

The Qur'ān often quotes revelations to this effect sent to the previous prophets, Nūḥ (a.s.) is quoted complaining before his Lord: *''My Lord! surely they have disobeyed me and followed him whose wealth and children have added to him nothing but loss. And they have planned a very great plan. And they say: 'By no means leave your gods . . . ' ''* (71:21 — 23). The same thing appears in his disputation with the big bosses of his people: *They said: ''Shall we believe in you while the*

meanest follow you?'' He said: ''And what knowledge have I of what they do? Their account is only with my Lord, if you could perceive'' (26:111 — 113). Likewise, Hūd (a.s.) admonished his people: *''Do you build on every height a monument? Vain is it that you do: And you make strong fortresses that perhaps you may abide: And when you lay hands* (on men) *you lay hands* (like) *tyrants''* (26:128 — 130). And Ṣāliḥ (a.s.) advised his people: *''Therefore, guard against* (the punishment of) *Allāh and obey me: And do not obey the bidding of the extravagant: Who make mischief in the land and do not act right''* (26:150 — 152).

In the same way Mūsā (a.s.) stood up against Pharaoh to oppose his tyranny and to defend and liberate the Israelites; the same stance was taken by Ibrāhīm (a.s.) against Nimrod; and by ʻĪsā (a.s.) and other Israelite prophets *vis-a-vis* the oppressors of their times. All of them condemned and attacked the arrogance and injustice of their kings and rulers, and called their people to throw away the yokes of tyranny and stand boldly against the exploitors and transgressors.

So far as the Qur'ān is concerned, it is no secret how it exhorts the people not to yield to the transgressors, not to surrender to the oppressors; it encourages the oppressed to stand up boldly against the oppressor to safeguard his self-respect and human dignity; and it warns the arrogant of the bitter fruits of haughtiness, of the chastisement that awaits the oppression and injustice. For example: *Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with ʻĀd,* (the people of) *Iram, possessors of many columned buildings, the like of which were not created in the cities; and* (with) *Thamūd, who hewed out the rocks in the valley; and* (with) *Pharaoh, the lord of stakes; who transgressed in the cities, so they made great mischief therein? Therefore your Lord let fall upon them the whip of chastisement. Most surely your Lord is on watch* (89:6 — 14).

The Qur'ānic comment, at the end of the story of Ṭālūt, is in itself enough to prove that the kingdom (or rulership) is essential for the mankind: *And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but Allāh is Gracious to the creatures* (2:251). We have shown in its commentary how it confirms this institution in a general way.

Many verses in the Qur'ān talk about kingdom, guardianship and obligation of obedience etc. Some of them count the kingdom as a

bounty and gift from Allāh: . . . *and We have given them a grand Kingdom* (4:54); . . . *and made you kings and gave you what He had not given to any other among the nations* (5:20); . . . *and Allāh grants His Kingdom to whom He pleases* . . . (2:247). Nevertheless, it is an honour only when it is accompanied by piety. Piety is the only basis of honour, to the exclusion of all other illusory sources of respect. Allāh says: *O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the most pious of you* . . . (49:13).

But it is only Allāh Who decides the worth of a servant's piety. Consequently, no one should use his piety as a lever to hoist himself over his compatriots. Nobody should boast about anything whatsoever: If the cause of boasting is some worldly thing, then it is obviously worthless; if it concerns the next world, then it is in the hands of Allāh. In any case, a Muslim, who is given this grace of Allāh which we call Kingdom, has nothing to boast about, nor any reason to think himself as superior to the others. All he has got for himself is an unenviable burden of responsibilities of the state. What brightens this gloomy picture is the hope that his Lord will give him great reward in the next life if he manages the affairs of the state with justice and piety.

This is the spirit which animated the whole lives of the true friends of Allāh. We shall write later on, Allāh willing, on this topic, looking at the lives of the Prophet and his purified progeny; we shall describe, with the help of the correct traditions, what they gained for themselves from their kingdoms: ''nothing''; their only interest in the kingdom and authority was to use it to crush the tyrants, to cut the root of mischief in the earth, to bring the arrogants and transgressors back within the limits of religion. And that is the only worth of the kingdom.

The Qur'ān treats the kingdom as a tool which is necessary for running the affairs of society — just as education and martial power is necessary for its intellectual and defence needs. Kingdom is an instrument of society; it is not the foundation upon which the society stands. The Qur'ān does not invite the Muslims to unite to establish an empire to shame the Byzantine and Iranian empires; it calls them to unite in Islam, and admonishes them not to differ in religion. This

unity in religion is the foundation which the Islamic society is built upon. Allāh says: *And* (know) *that this is My path, the straight one, therefore follow it; and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you away from His way* (6:153); *Say: ''O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you, that we shall not worship any but Allāh and* (that) *we shall not associate anything with Him and* (that) *some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh''; but if they turn back, then say: ''Bear witness that we are Muslims''* (3:64). Clearly, the Qur'ān calls the people to surrender to no one except Allāh; the society which it recognizes is the one that is based on religion. It demolishes all other loyalties; a Muslim is not to submit to anyone besides Allāh; he is not to bow down before any magnificent palace or grandiose castle; he is not to humiliate himself before any Ceasar or Khusraw. Consequently, the Qur'ān does not recognize the artificial boundaries which have cut the earth of Allāh into small pieces which they call countries, nor the resulting ''nationhood'' that divides the humanity into territorial segments, putting one group against the others.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON ATTRIBUTION OF KINGDOM AND OTHER ABSTRACTS CONCEPTS TO ALLĀH

The Creator, as the Essential Being, is the ultimate Cause of all that is there in the universe; the relationship between Him and the universe (the whole as well as its components) is that of the cause and effect. It is a proved axiom of philosophy that causality governs the existence only — the real existence of the effect emanates from the existence of its cause; other things, for example, quiddity, are outside the domain of the cause. Consequently, that which has no real existence, does not come within the system of the cause and effect; and as it is not the effect of any cause, it has no chain of causality reaching up to the ultimate Cause.

Problem arises about the abstract ideas and imaginary concepts, which have no real existence outside the imagination. Being devoid of real existence, they cannot be said to be caused by the ultimate

Cause, that is, Allāh. But one of those imaginary concepts, is the *sharī'ah* with its commandments and prohibitions, its rules, principles and conventions. So are the kingdom, the honour, the sustenance etc. Should not these things be attributed to Allāh? If the answer is yes, then how?

Reply: These concepts, although devoid of real existence, leave in their track some effects which are inseparable from them; and these effects have real existence. As these effects can be, and are, attributed to Allāh, the concepts from which they emanate can as easily be attributed to Him. Kingdom, for example, is an imaginary concept, which has no real existence outside our imagination; we have established this institution to achieve a real benefit. It is through this abstract idea of kingdom that we try to curb the unscrupulous offenders of the society, to rein the unrestrained designs of the transgressors, and to avenge the oppressed from the oppressor. These are real facts and they can, and are, attributed to Allāh. As these effects of kingdom are ascribed to Allāh, so can be the kingdom itself, by association.

The same applies to the honour, the rules of the *sharī'ah* and its principles etc.

In short, all such abstract ideas and concepts may be attributed to Allāh, by attributing their effects to Him, in a way that is in keeping with the sanctity of His name.

* * * * *

لاَ يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ
يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ
اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللهِ الْمَصِيرُ ــ ٢٨ . قُلْ إِنْ تُخْفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ
تُبْدُوهُ يَعْلَمْهُ اللهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ــ ٢٩ . يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَراً وَمَا
عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَداً بَعِيداً وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللهُ
نَفْسَهُ وَاللهُ رَؤُفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ــ ٣٠ . قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي
يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ــ ٣١ . قُلْ
أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ــ ٣٢ .

Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; and whoever does this, he shall have nothing (to do) *with Allāh, except* (when) *you guard yourselves against* (them) *for fear from them; and Allāh cautions you of Himself; and to Allāh is the eventual coming* (28). *Say: ''Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, Allāh knows it; and He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth; and Allāh has power over all things''* (29). *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil;* (it) *shall wish that between it and that* (evil) *there were a long duration of time; and Allāh cautions you of Himself;*

and Allāh is Compassionate to the servants (30). *Say: ''If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful''* (31). *Say: ''Obey Allāh and the Apostle''; but if they turn back, then surely Allāh does not love the unbelievers* (32).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses are not disconnected with the preceding ones, which admonished the People of the Book and the polytheists. If the word ''unbelievers'', coming at the beginning of these verses, covers the People of the Book too, then these verses forbid the believers to befriend, and fraternize with, the polytheists and the People of the Book all together; if it refers to the polytheists only, then the verses admonish the believers not to be friendly with them; instead they should join the party of Allāh, loving Him and His Apostle.

QUR'ĀN: *Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers: ''al-Awliyā' ''* (اَلْاَوْلِيَآءُ = friends), the plural of *al-walīy* (اَلْوَلِي), is derived from *al-wilāyah* (اَلْوِلَايَةُ). The root word denotes authority to manage something, that is, guardianship. Guardian of a minor, insane or idiot is called his *al-walīy,* because he has the authority to manage their affairs and property, although the property belongs to the said ward.

Then the word was used — with increasing frequency — in the context of love; if two people love each other, each feels free to look after the other's affairs. Love empowers the beloved to manage the affairs, and influence the life, of the lover.

In this verse, taking the unbelievers for friends means establishing a psychological rapport with them. Such a friendship would taint the believer's vision, and would adversely affect his thoughts and character, encouraging him to follow his unbeliever friends in his life and manners. The clause, ''rather than the believers'', points to this fact. It refers to a stage when the believer prefers the unbelievers rather than the believers as the object of his love and as the model for his life; the more he moves

nearer to his unbeliever friends, the more he distances himself from the believers.

Many verses strictly forbid the believers to take the unbelievers, and the Jews and the Christians for friends; but in every instance, there are clauses which delineate which type of friendship is forbidden. For example, this verse contains the abovementioned clause, ‘‘rather than the believers’’; the verse: *O you who believe! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends* (5:51), goes on to say: *they are friends of each other;* and the prohibition: *O you who believe! do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends* . . . (60:1), is further on explained by the words: *Allāh does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of your religion and have not driven you forth from your homes* . . . (60:8).

The adjectives used in the verse under discussion point to the reason of the prohibition. The believers should not take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers. Belief and disbelief are diametrically opposed to each other; they can never reconcile. The same mutual repulsion would permeate the whole lives of the believers *vis-a-vis* the unbelievers. Their thoughts and deeds, their spiritual journey towards Allāh, and in short their whole being would be totally different from the opposite party. Such a position is not in harmony with that of friendship; because friendship demands unity and rapport.

And when such a friendship begins and grows with complete disregard to the friendship with the believers, it first spoils the fruits of the faith, then damages its branches and finally destructs its very roots. That is why Allāh warned them in the next sentence, ‘‘and whoever does this, he shall have nothing (to do) with Allāh’’. Then comes the exception of *taqiyyah,* because *taqiyyah* is only a show of love, not its reality.

‘‘rather than the believers’’: *dūn* (دُوْن) is a proposition of place, meaning: below, under (in rank, value) ; this side of, short of; without, with the exclusion of; leaving aside. *‘‘min dūn’’* (مِنْ دُوْن) signifies, ‘beginning from a place below that of the believers’, because the believers are far above them in rank. Originally this preposition denoted nearness combined with lowness, for example, *dūnaka Zayd* (دُوْنَكَ زَيْدُ =

Zayd is near you but below; he does not measure up to you). Then it was used for 'other than', 'besides', for example, . . . *two gods besides Allāh* . . . (5:116); . . . *and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases* . . . (4:48). Also, it is used as a *nomen verbi;* in this sense, *dūnaka Zayd* would mean: adhere to Zayd. These later usages are based on some association with the original meaning, not that the word was made for them.

QUR'ĀN: *and whoever does this, he shall have nothing* (to do) *with Allāh:* ''does this'', that is, takes the unbelievers for friends in preference to the believers. This misconduct is hated so much by the Speaker that He does not like to mention it in words, and just alludes to it; people often use pronouns to refer to indecent things. Also Allāh did not say, whoever of the believer does this; it was far beneath the dignity of the believers to attribute such a misconduct to them.

The clause, ''he shall have nothing (to do) with Allāh'', literally means, he is not from Allāh in anything. Idiomatically, this expression shows that he is not of the group or party of Allāh. Allāh says: *And whoever takes Allāh and His Apostle and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allāh are they that shall be triumphant* (5:56). Also Ibrāhīm (a.s.) is quoted as saying: . . . *then whoever follows me, he is surely of me* . . . (14:36).

Anyhow, the sentence means: Whoever does this, he shall in no way remain with the party of Allāh; his thoughts and deeds will be those of the enemies of Islam.

QUR'ĀN: *except* (when) *you guard yourselves against* (them) *for fear from them: ''al-Ittiqā' ''* (اَلِاتِّقَآءُ = to seek protection because of fear); the word is sometimes used for fear, by association; probably *taqiyyah* has the same connotations.

The exception in this sentence is disjoined: To show attachment to someone because of his fear without loving him in reality is quite different from befriending him and having a rapport with him; love and fear are two opposite feelings and have opposite effects on the heart; how can they be found in one place?

The verse clearly allows *taqiyyah,* as is shown by the traditions

of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt.* Also, it is clearly proved by the verse revealed about ‘Ammār, and his parents, Yāsir and Sumayyah: *He who disbelieves in Allāh after his having believed — not he who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of faith, but he who opens* (his) *breast for disbelief — on these is the wrath of Allāh, and they shall have a grievous chastisement* (16:106).

The Qur'ān and the *sunnah* both agree that *taqiyyah* is permissible in places. Also, reason supports it. The main purpose of the religion and the Apostle is to keep the truth alive; and sometimes this purpose can be achieved by practising *taqiyyah,* by keeping good relations with the enemies of the religion, while discarding *taqiyyah* would serve no purpose at all. It is a reality which no reasonable man can deny. We shall further write about it under ‘Traditions’, and also under the verse 16:106 mentioned just now (. . . *not he who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of faith* . . .).

QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh cautions you of Himself and to Allāh is the eventual coming: ''at-Taḥdhīr''* (اَلتَّحْذِيْرُ) is the transitive of *al-ḥadhar* (اَلْحَذَرُ = to beware of a frightful thing). Allāh has warned His servants of His chastisement, as He says: . . . *surely the chastisement of your Lord is to be dreaded of* (17:57). And He has warned them of the hypocrites and the mischief of the unbelievers, as He says: . . . *they are the enemy, therefore beware of them* (63:4); . . . *and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you* . . . (5:49). But in this verse as well as in a following one He cautions them of His Own Self. The crime of befriending the unbelievers to the exclusion of the believers is so serious that no curtain or protection remains between Allāh and the criminal, there is nothing to save him from Allāh, there is no helper or intercessor to intercede on his behalf; he is left without any shield, to face directly the chastisement of Allāh. This style puts utmost emphasis to the threat, and its repetition in a following verse further intensifies it; then it has been further highlighted by the concluding clauses, ''and to Allāh is the eventual coming'' (in this verse) and ''Allāh is Compassionate to the servants'' (in the other), as we shall explain later on.

Look at this verse and the others obliging the Muslims not to take the unbelievers for friends. You will see that this sin is tentamount to

rejecting the guardianship of Allāh, going out from the band of His servants, and joining the party of His enemies — to damage the affairs of the religion. This transgression is a dry-rot that destroys the fibre of religion; it is more damaging and harmful to Islam than the open disbelief and polytheism of the unbelievers and pagans. One can easily prepare for an open enemy and can repulse his attacks on one's fortress; but it is not so easy if the enemy is inside and poses as a friend. If a Muslim establishes fraternal bonds with the enemies of Islam, his character is gradually influenced by their manners, deeds and thoughts. A time comes when disbelief replaces the belief; the Muslims slowly discard the tenets and symbols of Islam one after the other, and before they realize it, Islam loses its hold on the society. It is death without any hope of revival, perdition without any chance of resurrection.

It is ''the transgression''; and his case is directly in the hands of Allāh: *Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with 'Ād,* (the people of) *Iram, possessors of many columned buildings, the like of which were not created in the cities; and with Thamūd, who hewed out the rocks in the valley, and* (with) *Pharaoh, the lord of stakes; who transgressed in the cities, so they made great mischief therein? Therefore your Lord let fall upon them the whip of chastisement. Most surely your Lord is on watch* (89:6 — 14). The transgression leads the transgressor to a place where Allāh is on watch — and where there is no one but Allāh; and He smites the guilty with the whip of His chastisement — and there is no one to protect the transgressor from Him.

It is for the same reason that those who take the unbelievers for friends have been warned of Allāh Himself: Such a friendship is open transgression, a transgression that damages and destroys the religion of Allāh.

The same theme has been explained in the verse: *Stand fast then* (in the right path) *as you are commanded, as also he who has turned* (to Allāh) *with you, and do not transgress* (O men!), *surely He sees what you do. And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire touch you, and you have no guardians besides Allāh, then you shall not be helped* (11:112 — 113). This verse, according to the traditions, is the one which, the Prophet said, had aged him.

However, this verse and the one under discussion, clearly show that inclination towards the unjust and the unbelievers is a transgression which throws one into the Fire where he will not find any helper; it is the chastisement given by Allāh Himself, and no one can save from it.

The sentence, ‘‘and Allāh cautions you of Himself’’, shows that the threatened punishment is a firmly-decreed affair which cannot be cancelled. What the offender has been warned of is Allāh Himself; there is nothing between Allāh and the culprit; and there is no protector from Allāh; He has threatened to punish this offender, and what He has said is surely to happen. The same thing appears from the verse 11:113 quoted above: . . . *lest the Fire touch you . . . then you shall not be helped.*

‘‘and to Allāh is the eventual coming’’: You cannot escape from Him; nobody can stop you from this eventual return to Allāh. As mentioned earlier, it re-emphasizes the threat.

These verses, ‘‘Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends . . .’’, are among those which, in the form of admonition, contain a prediction of what was to happen in this *ummah* in the coming days; we shall explain it in detail, Allāh willing, in Chapter 5 (The Table).

QUR’ĀN: Say: ‘‘Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, Allāh knows it’’: The theme is the same as in the verse: . . . and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it (2:284). Nevertheless, a fine difference in style attracts our attention, The verse 2:284 talks about calling to account, and accounting is more often than not a manifest affair; therefore in this verse manifesting comes before hiding. But the verse under discussion talks about the knowledge of Allāh, and knowledge is more germane to what is hidden in the hearts; therefore this verse has reversed the order, mentioning first what is hidden in the hearts, then coming to what is manifest.

Allāh ordered His Apostle to convey this message to the offending servants; it is because He did not like to address directly those who, He knew, would surely disobey His order and would befriend the unbelievers. It shows His displeasure in the same way as

the words in the preceding verse: ‘‘and whoever does this . . .’’

QUR’ĀN: *and He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth; and Allāh has power over all things:* It has the same connotation as the verse 2:284, mentioned above.

QUR’ĀN: *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil:* Apparently, it is a part of the message which the Prophet was to convey. ‘‘On the day’’ may refer to a deleted but understood verb, ‘‘remember’’ or ‘‘describe’’ — Remember (or Describe) the day that every soul . . . Alternatively this adverb of time may qualify the preceding verb, ‘‘Allāh knows it’’ or ‘‘He knows’’, that is, Allāh shall know on that day what is in your hearts; or He will know on that day what is in the heavens and the earth. There is no difficulty in this interpretation; it is not that He would not know these things before the Day of Judgment; what the expression means is this: We, the servants of Allāh, will manifestly see the effects of His all-encompassing knowledge on that day. According to this explanation, this verse describes the manifestation of His knowledge on that day in the same way as the following verses describe manifestation of His power on that very day: (of) *the day when they shall come forth; nothing concerning them shall remain hidden to Allāh. To whom belongs the Kingdom this day? To Allāh, the Subduer* (of all) (40:16); *. . . there is no protector today* [1] *from Allāh . . .* (11:43); *. . . and 0 that those who are unjust could see, when they see the chastisement, that the power is wholly Allāh’s . . .* (2:165); *. . . and the command on that day shall be entirely Allāh’s* (82:19). Obviously, to Allāh belongs all the Kingdom, power and command, always — before and after the Day of Judgment as well as on that day. But these verses especially refer to that day in this connection, because it will be on that day that we, the servants of Allāh, will clearly see His Kingdom and rule, without any doubt about His exclusive authority and power.

Likewise, if the ver, ‘‘He knows’’, is qualified by the adverb, ‘‘that day . . .’’, it would not mean that Allāh would not know the

[1] ‘‘Today’’ in this verse refers to the day of the Deluge of Nūḥ (a.s.), not to the Day of Resurrection. (*tr.*)

hidden secrets of His servants or their good and evil deeds before the Day of Judgment.

‘‘On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done . . .’’ The word translated here as ‘‘present’’ is *muḥḍaran* (مُحْضَراً) which literally means, presented, brought in. The choice of this word, rather than *ḥāḍiran* (حَاضِراً = present), points to the fact that the good and bad deeds are existent and safe from extinction, because only such a thing may be brought in and presented which already exists (even if out of sight); Allāh will bring the deeds in on the Day of Judgment. But who would be preserving them all these days, if not Allāh? This too shows that His power, authority and Kingdom are not confined to the Day of Judgment. He says: *and your Lord is the Preserver of all things* (34:21); *and with Us is a writing that preserve* (50:4).

‘‘Tajid’’ (تَجِدُ = shall find) is derived from *al-wijdān* (اَلْوِجْدَانُ = to find); its opposite is to lose. ‘‘of good’’ and ‘‘of evil’’: ‘‘of’’ describes the thing that will be presented. ‘‘good’’ and ‘‘evil’’ have been used as common noun, to show its generality — he will find there every good however trivial and every evil however insignificant. It appears from the context that the second clause, ‘‘what it has done of evil’’ is in conjunction with the preceding one, ‘‘what it has done of good’’.

It is one of those verses which prove embodiment of deeds, as we have described in detail in a previous volume.

QUR’ĀN: (it) *shall wish that between it and that* (evil) *there were a long duration of time:* The subject of this sentence is a deleted pronoun referring to the soul. *‘‘Law’’* (لَوْ = if) is a conjunctive, as a rule introducing hypothetical conditional clauses; *‘‘law’’* followed by *‘‘anna’’* (لَوْ اَنَّ = if) introduces nominal clauses; this combination has frequently been used in the Qur’ān; therefore, no attention should be paid to the claim of a writer that this combination was not correct.

‘‘al-Amad’’ (اَلْاَمَدُ) denotes distance of time. ar-Rāghibr has said in his *Mufradātu ’l-Qur’ān: al-Amad* and *al-abad* (اَلْاَبَدُ) have nearly the same meaning; but *al-abad* denotes the eternal duration, without an end; that is why it is never restricted by a limit, it cannot be said, to this or that

al-abad. On the other hand, *al-amad* generally signifies a limited duration but with unknown limit; sometimes the limit is specified, for example, *amada kadhā* (اَمَدَ كَذَا = such and such period), as they say this or that time. The difference between *al-amad* (span of time) and *az-zamān* (اَلزَّمَانُ = time) is that *al-amad* looks at the terminus of time while *az-zamān* looks at the whole period from beginning to end. That is why some have said that *al-amad* and *al-madd* (اَلْمَدي = space of time, distance) are nearly similar in meaning.''

The wish of the evil-doer, that there should be between him and his deed a long duration of time, shows that the presence of that evil would cause him sorrow; it follows that the presence of good deed would make the good-doer happy.

He will only wish for a long duration of time between himself and his deed, and not for its complete disappearance. Why? He will see how Allāh has preserved it from the day it was done to the Day of Judgment; he will realize that it was of no avail to wish that a thing under such Divine protection should disappear; therefore, he will only wish for the next ''best'' thing: Would that it had not appeared at the most awkward time, in that most difficult situation. He will wish the same for the evil companion: *And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of the Beneficent God, We appoint for him a Satan, so he becomes his associate . . . Until when he comes to Us, he says: ''O would that between me and thee there were the distance of the East and the West'', so evil is the associate!* (43:36 — 38).

QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh cautions you of Himself; and Allāh is Compassionate to the servants:* The repeated warning emphasizes the threat beyond any doubt. Also, it may be that this warning refers to the punishment of the Day of Judgment (as that is the subject of this verse), while the first warning related to the result of that offence in this life or in both lives.

''and Allāh is Compassionate to the servants'': It reminds the servants of their relation to Allāh — they are His servants and slaves, and He is their Compassionate Master. Nevertheless, this clause makes the preceding threat doubly emphatic. Such expressions are used for warning someone in the severest term. The import of such

clause will be like this: Do not do such a thing, because I have firmly decided not to forgive such offence; I warn you before hand because I have compassion for you.

The meaning then will be as follows: Allāh is Compassionate to the servants; that is why He has warned them before hand not to go near this evil; because if they did so, they would have to undergo the punishment; and they would find no intercessor or protector to intercede on their behalf or to save them.

QUR'ĀN: *Say: ''If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you'':* When writing about the verse 2:165 (. . . *and those who believe are stronger in love of Allāh* . . .), we had explained the meaning of love, and said that in reality it relates to Allāh, and after that it may relate to others.

No doubt, Allāh in His Book invites His servants to believe in Him, to worship Him with sincere devotion, and to steer clear of polytheism. He says: *Now, surely, sincere religion is for Allāh* (alone) (39:3); *And they were not enjoined anything except that they should worship Allāh, being sincere to Him in religion* . . . (97:5); *Therefore call upon Allāh, being sincere to Him in religion, though averse be the unbelievers* (40:14). This theme is found in many other verses.

Sincerity in religion can truly be achieved only when man's heart is not attached to anything other than Allāh — be it another deity or some desired object; be it a worldly ambition or even some other worldly goal like entering the garden or protection from the Fire. When the heart cuts all links with such things and attaches itself exclusively to Allāh, then the man attains the sincerity of religion, and the love of Allāh.

Love is the only link that connects a lover to his beloved; it attracts and pulls the lover to the beloved. The lover wants to make up through the beloved the defects and imperfections that he finds in his own life. The biggest news for him is that his beloved requites his love. At this stage, both love each other; both become lovers, both become beloved.

Man loves food, and gets it to make up the deficiency which shows itself in hunger; he loves the opposite sex, to satisfy a

biological need; he loves his friend for genial companionship. A servant loves his master for his kind patronage. Look at the instances of love, read the stories of well-known lovers — you will find everywhere the truth of what we have mentioned.

When a sincere servant loves Allāh, his only ambition is to attract the love of Allāh to himself; would that Allāh should love him as he loves Allāh; would that Allāh should become his, as he has become of Allāh. This is the reality of Allāh's love.

Love, as mentioned above, is a link that joins one thing to the other. But Allāh does not count every love as true love. True love demands that the lover — in this case, the believer — should love all that is related to Allāh; he should devoutly accept all that comes from Him. On Allāh depends everything in its existence and in all its affairs; everything seeks a medium to Him; and every big and small thing ultimately returns to Him. In this background, true love of Allāh, sincerity in that love, can be achieved only through believing in the religion of monotheism, that it, Islam, and surely the religion with Allāh is Islam. It is the religion which His representatives brought and which His apostles and prophets taught. It is especially true about the religion brought by Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.); it teaches a sublime devotion, an unsurpassed sincerity; it is the natural religion which contains the last law, brought by a Law-giver with whom the chain of the prophets came to its end. All these facts may easily be inferred from the Qur'ān, if one ponders on it.

The Prophet introduced his path as the path of monotheism, the path of sincerity; as he was ordered by Allāh to say: *Say: ''This is my way: I invite* (you) *to Allāh; with clear sight* (are) *I and he who follows me; and glory be to Allāh; and I am not of the polytheists''* (12:108). Accordingly, his way was to invite people to Allāh, with clear sight, with sincerity, without ascribing any partner to Allāh. His way was the way of invitation to Allāh and of sincerity about Allāh. Anyone who wants to follow him, should proceed on the same highway.

Then Allāh said that the way of invitation and sincerity can be found only in the *sharī'ah* brought by Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.): *Then We have made you follow a sharī'ah in the affair, therefore follow it* . . . (45:18); also He said that it means total submission to Him: *But*

if they dispute with you, say: ''I have submitted myself (entirely) *to Allāh and* (so has) *everyone who follows me''*. . . (3:20); then He attributed this way to Himself and declared that it was His straight path: *And* (know) *that this is My path, the straight one, therefore follow it* (6:153). If we read all these verses together, it will be clear that Islam (i.e., the *sharī'ah* brought by the Prophet, containing fundamental beliefs, moral teachings, practical laws, and having his own sacred life as its model) is the path of sincerity, that is based on love. It is the religion of sincerity, the religion of love.

The above discourse makes clear the meaning of the verse under discussion: ''Say: 'If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you' ''. It gives the following import — and Allāh knows better: If you want to be sincere to Allāh in your servitude, truly basing it on His love, then follow this *sharī'ah;* it is based on love, and is the embodiment of sincerity and submission; it is the straight path of Allāh, whoever proceeds on it is sure to reach nearer to Allāh. If you follow me in this path, then Allāh will love you; reaching this stage you will get what you want. Your love will be requited.

This is the general import of the verse if looked in isolation. But the context gives it some particular implications too. It comes soon after the verses forbidding the believers to befriend the unbelievers. Friendship is love between the friends. Therefore, the verse exhorsts the believers to follow the Prophet if they are sincere in the claim that they love Allāh and belong to His party. Love of Allāh cannot be reconciled with following the unbelievers in their vain desires and unhealthy views; remember that friendship certainly makes a friend follow the other friend in thoughts and deeds. One who loves Allāh should not run after the worldly trinkets found with the unbelievers, and should not set his eyes on their worldly honour and wealth. If you love Allāh you should follow His Prophet in his religion, as He declares: *Then We have made you follow a sharī'ah in the affair, therefore follow it, and do not follow the low desires of those who do not know. Surely they shall not avail you in the least against Allāh; and surely the unjust are friends of each other, and Allāh is the guardian of those who guard* (against evil) (45:18 — 19). It should be noted how smoothly the verse goes from the theme of following to that of friendship, showing that both are, in fact, one and the

same.

In short, anyone claiming to love Allāh, to belong to Allāh, must follow the Prophet, in order that it may take him to the stage where Allāh requites his love and loves him.

The verse mentions only love of Allāh, and not His guardianship because guardianship is founded on love. Also, it mentions only Allāh's love, because the love of the Prophet and the believers is in reality a part of Allāh's love; it has no independent existence.

QUR'ĀN: *and forgive you your sins; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful:* Allāh's mercy is all-encompassing; His grace is without limit, and His munificence without restriction; it is not confined to any individual or group. The river of His mercy is flowing; everybody is free to take from it as much as he can. Whatever restriction there is, it is not in the river, it is in the receptacle one brings with him. The servants' ability, or disability, imposes its own limitations; Allāh has not put any limit to His mercy: *and the bounty of your. Lord is not confined* (17:20).

Sin is the impediment, holding one back from reaching nearer to Allāh, from partaking of the bounties resulting from it, like the paradise etc. If the rust of sin is removed from a man's heart, the door of Divine bliss will automatically open for him, and he will join the chosen people in the abode of Divine honour and eternal happiness. That is why Allāh added forgiveness of sins to the good news of His love. As described earlier; love attracts the lover to the beloved. When the servant loves Allāh, it moves him to come nearer with sincere monotheism and unalloyed devotion and worship. When Allāh loves a servant, He comes nearer to him and removes the curtains which hide the sublime reality. As mentioned above, there is no curtain except sin, and removing it means forgiving the sins. Once that hindrance is removed, there is no obstacle in the way; and Divine munificence will take over from there; and he can partake of the ever-lasting honour and never ending bounties as much as he likes.

To understand this reality even more clearly, ponder on the verse, *Nay! rather, what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts. Nay! most surely they shall on that day be debarred from*

their Lord (83:14 — 15), in conjunction with the verse, ‘‘Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins’’.

QUR’ĀN: *Say: ‘‘Obey Allāh and the Apostle’’:* The preceding verse invited the servants to ‘‘follow’’ the Apostle. To follow means to process behind in someone’s track. The believer follows the Apostle in the way taken by the Apostle. The way the Apostle has taken is the straight path which belongs to Allāh. It is the *sharī‘ah* ordained for the Apostle and conveyed through him to the mankind; and the servants are to obey the Apostle and adhere to his *sharī‘ah*. That is why the order to follow the Apostle was changed to his obedience. The Apostle’s path of sincerity is the sum total of his *sharī‘ah* — his orders and prohibitions, his mission and his guidance. When one follows the Apostle in his tracks, He in fact obeys Allāh and the Apostle in the *sharī‘ah*. Allāh’s name has been added with the Apostle’s, to show that the obedience of Allāh is one and the same with the obedience of the Apostle. The Apostle’s name was necessary to mention with that of Allāh because the talk is about following his tracks.

Someone has written that the sentence means: Obey Allāh in His Book and obey the Apostle in his *sunnah*. But what we have written above clearly shows the unsoundness of this explanation. It is obvious that the words, ‘‘Obey Allāh and the Apostle’’, have been revealed as explanation of the preceding words, ‘‘If you love Allāh, then follow me . . .’’ Further, this verse shows that the obedience of Allāh and obedience of the Apostle are one; that is why the word ‘‘obey’’, has not been repeated. Had there been two different things to be followed (the Book, for Allāh; the *sunnah* for the Apostle), it would have been appropriate to say, ‘Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle’, as has been said in another verse: *O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and the masters of the affair from among you* . . . (4:59). Anyhow, the verse has the same general and particular aspects as the previous one.

QUR’ĀN: *but if they turn back, then surely Allāh does not love the unbelievers:* The ending clause shows that those who disregard this order are unbelievers; the same is the import of other verses obliging the believers not to take the unbelievers as friends.

This clause too shows this verse to be an explanation of the previous one. That verse described that Allāh loves those believers who accept and obey the order to follow the Apostle. This one says that Allāh does not love those ‘‘unbelievers’’ who neglect this order to obey the Apostle.

These verses make the following things clear:

First: *Taqiyyah* is allowed in certain circumstances.

Second: The punishment for befriending the unbelievers will not be waived; the sin of disobeying this order will not be forgiven; it is a firmly decreed order.

Third: The Divinely ordained *sharī‘ah* exemplifies the sincerity towards Allāh; and that sincerity exemplifies the love of Allāh. In other words, if we analyse the religion — the sum total of Divine knowledge and faith, the ethical teachings and practical laws, with all their details — it will resolve into sincerity (a sincere servant of Allāh believes that his person, his character and his actions, all belong to Allāh); and on further analysis this sincerity resolves into the love of Allāh.

If we reverse the process and start from the other end, then the love of Allāh constitutes the main ingredient of the sincerity, and the sincerity leads to the *sharī‘ah*.

Looking from another angle, religion resolves into submission, and submission into monotheism.

Fourth: It is disbelief to take the unbelievers for friends. It is a disbelief related to the branches of religion, not to its roots. Other examples are the disbelief of the one who does not pay *zakāt,* and of the one who does not pray.

It may possibly be explained in another way. The one who befriends an unbeliever, has himself been called unbeliever, because that is the ultimate destination where such a friendship leads to. We have described this theme earlier, and shall further explain it in Chapter 5 (The Table).

TRADITIONS,

It is written in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr,* about the words of Allāh: *Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends . . .*: ‘‘Ibn Isḥāq,

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Hātim have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘al-Ḥajjāj ibn ‘Amr was an ally of Ka‘b ibn al-Ashraf and Ibn Abi ’1-Ḥaqīq and Qays ibn Zayd; and they were secretly meeting with some Helpers with a view to seduce them from their religion. (Seeing this) Rifā‘ah ibn al-Mundhir, ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr and Sa‘d ibn Khuthaymah told those Helpers to keep away from those Jews and to be wary of their secret talks, ‘‘lest they lead you away from your religion’’. But they refused (to listen). Then Allāh revealed: *Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends . . . and Allāh has power over all thing’ ’’.*

The author says: Apparently this tradition has applied the verse to that story. Otherwise, the Qur’ān uses the word ‘‘unbelievers’’, for a wider circle than the People of the Book. If any verse were revealed about that story, it would have been the one forbidding friendship with the Jews and the Christians, not these verses.

The *tafsīr, aṣ-Ṣāfī* quotes under the words: *except* (when) *you guard yourselves against* (them) . . ., from *al-Iḥtijāj,* that the Commander of the faithful (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a tradition: ‘‘and He ordered you to practise *taqiyyah* in your religion; because Allāh says: Be careful, and be careful again, not to expose yourself to perdition, and not to neglect *taqiyyah* which I have ordered you (to practise); otherwise, you will cause shedding of your blood and the blood of your brethren (as well); will expose your bounties as well as theirs to ruin; and will cause their humiliation at the hands of the enemies of the religion of Allāh, while Allāh has ordered you to exalt them.’’

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘The Apostle of Allāh used to say: ‘He has no religion who does not have *taqiyyah;’* then he used to say: ‘Allāh says: *except* (when) *you guard yourselves against them for fear from them.’’* (al-‘Ayyāshī)

al-Bāqir(a.s.) said: *‘‘taqiyyah* is (allowed) in every matter about which a man falls in predicament; and Allāh has made it lawful to him.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: There are very many traditions from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.) — probably reaching the limit of *mutawātir* —

containing the permission of *taqiyyah;* and you have already seen how the Qur'ānic verses incontestably prove it.

Sa'īd ibn Yāsar said: ''Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) told me: 'Is religion anything other than love? Verily Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *Say: ''If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you.'' ' ''* (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbār*)

The author says: This tradition has been narrated in *al-Kāfī* from al-Bāqir (a.s.); also al-Qummī and al-'Ayyāshī have narrated it in their *tafsīrs* from the same Imām through al-Hadhdhā'; again al-'Ayyāshī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from the same Imām through Burayd and from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) through Rib'ī.

These traditions support our explanation given in the Commentary.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''He who disobeyes Allāh, does not love Him.'' Then he quoted (the following poem):

You disobey Allāh and (at the same time) *you manifest His love;*
By my life! this is a strange behaviour.
If your love were true, you would have obeyed Him; Verily, the lover obeys his beloved. (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbār*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a tradition: ''And whoever likes to know that Allāh loves him, his action should be in obedience to Allāh and he should follow us. Has he not heard the talk of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, with His Prophet: *Say 'If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins . . . '''*(*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: We shall explain how the Imāms' obedience is one and the same with the obedience of the Prophet when writing about the verse: *O you who believe! obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and the masters of the affairs from among you . . .* (4:59)

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated from al-Ḥasan that he said: ''The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Whoever feels an aversion to my *sunnah,* he is not from me.' Then he recited this verse: *Say: 'If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you . . . ' ''* (*ad-Durru 'l-*

manthūr)

It has been narrated by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abū Na‘īm (in his *Ḥilyatu ’l-awliyā’*) and al-Hākim, from ‘Ā’ishah that she said: ‘‘The Apostle of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Polytheism is more undetectable than the crawling of an ant on a (smooth) rock in a dark night; and its least (grade) is that one should love something because of (its) injustice and should hate something because of (its) justice; and what is religion except loving and hating in the cause of Allāh? Allāh has said: *Say: ‘‘If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you . . . ’’ ’ ’’* (*ibid*.)

Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥabbān and al-Ḥākim have narrated through Abū Rāfi‘ from the Prophet that he said: ‘‘I should not find one of you, reclining on his couch, saying — when there comes to him one of my commands, in which I have ordered or prohibited something — ‘We do not understand (it); we shall follow (only) what we find in the Book of Allāh.’ ’’ (*ibid*.)

* * * * *

إِنَّ اللهَ اصْطَفٰى آدَمَ وَنُوحاً وَآلَ إِبْرٰاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرٰانَ عَلَى
الْعٰالَمِينَ ــ ٣٣ ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهٰا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ــ ٣٤

Surely Allāh chose Adam and Nuh and the descendants of Ibrāhīm and the descendants of ‘Īmrān above all the worlds (33), *Offspring, one of the other; and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing* (34).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

Now begins the story of ‘Īsā, son of Maryam, with all the related topics, sifting the truth from the falsehoods that cover his life and personality; the chapter further offers clear arguments against the People of the Book. The two verses serve as the joining link between the coming discourse about ‘Īsā (a.s.) and the preceding verses regarding the People of the Book.

QUR’ĀN: *Surely Allāh chose Adam and Nūḥ . . .:* It was explained under the verse 2:130 (*and most certainly We chose him in this world*) that *‘‘al-iṣṭifā’ ’’* (اَلِاصْطِفَآءُ) means to take the choicest part of a thing; to purify a thing from all impurities. It may be translated, for all practical purposes, as selection or choosing. Comparing it with various stages of *‘‘al-wilāyah’’* (اَلْوِلَايَةُ = friendship of Allāh), we find that it fits perfectly the stage of ‘‘Islam’’, that is, total surrender of the servant to the will of his Lord, being truly happy with what the

Lord decrees for him.

But that ‘‘selection’’ is not what this verse implies. It does not say, Allāh chose them from among the worlds. It says, He chose them ‘‘above all the worlds’’. ‘‘From among the worlds’’ would have implied that only they were the Muslims; that the total surrender to the will of Allāh was exclusively reserved for them. Obviously, such a connotation would be wrong. The clause used in the verse, ‘‘above all the worlds’’, has given a new connotation to the selection, and shows that they were chosen and given excellence and precedence over other people in some things exclusively given to them. To appreciate the difference between the two selections, look at the verse 3:42 which says: *And when the angels said: ‘‘O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds’’,* Clearly the first choosing is related to her own virtues without looking at anyone else, and the second implies a sense of comparison, exalting her over all other women.

First of the chosen ones was Adam (a.s.). He was the first human vicegerent of Allāh appointed for this earth, as Allāh says: *And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘‘Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent’’* . . . (2:30); was the first to open the door of repentance and Divine forgiveness, as Allāh says: *Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him* (i.e., with forgiveness) *and guided him* (20:122); and was the first of those for whom Allāh ordained the religion, as He says: *So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy* (20:123). These virtues exclusively belong to him, and enough are they for one’s excellence!

Then the verse mentions Nūḥ (a.s.). He was the first of the five *ulu ’l-‘azm* apostles who were given a Divine Book and a new *sharī‘ah,* as we explained under the verse: *Mankind was but one people, so Allāh sent the prophets* . . . (2:213). Also, he was the second father of the human race; and Allāh sent peace on him in the worlds, saying: *And We made his offspring the survivors. And We perpetuated to him* (praise) *among the later generations. Peace be on Nuh in all the worlds* (37:77 — 79).

Then Allāh mentions the descendants of Ibrāhīm and thedescendants

of ‘Imrān among the chosen ones. *‘‘al-Āl’’* (اٰلٌ) of a man is someone closely related to him. ar-Rāghib says in his *Mufradātu ’l-Qur’ān: ‘‘al-Āl:* It is said that it is an altered form of *al-ahl;* yet its diminutive, *al-uhayl* (اُلَيْهٌ) has got the *‘‘h’’* (ہ) restored; but it has the peculiarity that, unlike *al-ahl,* it is always annexed (in genitive construction) to the proper names of rational beings, and not to common nouns, places or eras. It is said: *Āl* of Zayd; but not *āl* of man, nor *āl* of this place or that period. Also they do not, for example, say, *āl* of the tailor; rather it is always annexed to a great and noble personality, for example, *āl* of the Sultan, *āl* of Allāh. As for *al-ahl,* it is annexed to all types of words; for example, they say, *ahl* of Allāh, *ahl of* the tailor; likewise they say, *ahl* of this era, *ahl* of that town etc. (On the other hand) some people say that *al-āl* actually means the name of a person; and that its diminutive is *uwayl* (اُوَيْلٌ); and it is used for someone who is very closely and personally related to a person, either by close kinship or by love and attachment.’’

Accordingly, *āl* of Ibrāhīm and *āl* of ‘Imrān mean their closely related family members and those who were exclusively attached to them. (That is why we have translated the word as ‘descendants’.)

Obviously, *āl* of Ibrāhīm should refer to all the purified ones among his descendants, for example, Isḥāq, Israel and other prophets from the house of Israel as well as Ismā‘īl and his purified descendants, chief of whom was Muḥammad (may Allāh bless him and his progeny); and those who followed them to various stages of the friendship of Allāh. But the verse then mentions *āl* of ‘Imrān, and it shows that *āl* of Ibrahim does not have such a wide connotation. The said ‘Imrān is either the father of Maryam or the father of Mūsā (a.s.), and in any case he was himself a descendant of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) and so were his descendants; by mentioning them separately, it has been made clear that the phrase *āl Ibrāhīm* (اٰلُ اِبْراهِيْمُ = the descendants of Ibrāhīm) refers to some, and not all, of his purified descendants.

Allāh has said in another place in the Qur’ān: *Or do they envy the people for what Allāh has given them of His grace? So indeed We have given to Ibrāhīm’s children* (descendants) *the Book and the wisdom, and We have given them a grand kingdom* (4:54). The

context shows that this verse describes and condemns the envy of the Israelites which they felt against Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). Other verses too support this interpretation. And it makes it clear that the phrase, ‘‘descendants of Ibrāhīm’’, does not include here the Israelites; in other words it has been used for Ibrāhīm’s descendants other than Isḥāq, Ya‘qūb and the progeny of Ya‘qūb (who are generally called the Israelites). After excluding that branch, the only descendants to whom this phrase is applicable are Ismā‘īl and his purified descendants, including the Prophet and his progeny. (Allāh willing, we shall later prove that the word, ‘‘the people’’, used in the verse 4:54, refers to the Prophet, and that undoubtedly he is one of the ‘‘descendants of Ibrāhīm’’ mentioned therein.)

Some other verses also support this connotation. For example: *Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe; and Allāh is the guardian of the believers* (3:68). *And when Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl were raising the foundations of the House: Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing; Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us* (mercifully), *surely Thou art the Oftreturning* (with mercy), *the Merciful. Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise* (2:127 — 129).

The phrase, the descendants of Ibrāhīm, therefore, refers to his offspring from the branch of Ismā‘īl.

It should be pointed out here that the verse in no way implies any exclusiveness; it simply says that certain named prophets and families were chosen and given excellence over the nations; it does not say that others were not chosen or exalted. It follows that:—

1. There is no discrepancy between this verse (which is silent about the excellence of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) himself, and of Mūsā (a.s.) and other Israelite prophets) and numerous other verses which eulogize their virtues and excellence. (The Qur’ān, contains very many such verses and there is no need to quote them here.) However, as we said, to affirm one thing does not mean to negate or reject the others.

2. Likewise, there is no conflict between this verse and those which bestow similar excellence to the Children of Israel; for example: *And certainly We gave the Book and the wisdom and the prophecy to the Children of Israel, and We gave them of the goodly things, and We made them excel the nations* (45:16).

3. The fact that two prophets and two families were exalted and given excellence over the nations, does not mean that others could not similarly be given excellence over the nations; nor that some others could not be exalted and given excellence over those already exalted. Giving excellence to one or various groups and nations only implies that they were given precedence, in some worldly or other worldly virtue, over those below them. It does not say anything on whether some others could be given excellence over them or whether some others too could be exalted over the worlds.

4. They were chosen over all the worlds. This is not in conflict with the concept that some among them were made to excel the others. We know that Allāh chose the prophets over all other people, but at the same time He gave some of them more prestige than the others. He says: *and every one* (i.e., of the prophets) *We made to excel the world* (6:87). And again He says: *and certainly We have made some of the prophets to excel others* . . . (17:55).

Now we come to the ‘‘descendants of ‘Imrān’’: Apparently the name, ‘Imrān, refers to the father of Maryam. These two verses are immediately followed by the stories of the wife of ‘Imrān and their daughter, Maryam; moreover, ‘Imrān, father of Maryam, has been repeatedly mentioned by his name in the Qur’ān, while ‘Imrān, father of Mūsā, has not been mentioned even once in a way as to make it clear that it was he who was intended. All this supports the view that here too ‘Imrān refers to the father of Maryam; and *‘‘āl ‘Imrān’’* (اٰلُ عِمْرَانُ = translated here as descendants of ‘Imrān) refers to Maryam and ‘Īsā (peace be on both of them), alone or together with the wife of ‘Imrān.

Reportedly the Christians do not agree that Maryam’s father was called ‘Imrān: but the Qur’ān is not bound to cater to their views.

QUR’ĀN: *Offspring, one from the other:* It is said that *‘‘adhdhurriyyah’’* (اَلذُّرِّيَّةُ) originally meant small children: later the

meaning was extended to cover all the offspring. It is the latter meaning that is implied in this verse. The word is in the accusative because it has the force of an explanatory conjunction.

The clause, ‘‘one from the other’’, shows that if you look at any one of the group, it begins from, and returns to, the others. In other words, the whole is made of similar parts, one part does not differ from the other in its attributes and qualifications. The clause, in the framework of its theme and context, implies that these descendants do not differ from one another in the attributes of excellence, and that it is for this reason that Allāh made them to excel over the worlds; actions of Allāh are not done haphazardly or at random — surely such a selection cannot be done recklessly, because it is the spring-head of such good thing in this world.

QUR’ĀN: *And Allāh is Hearing, Knowing:* Allāh hears their speech which shows their inner thoughts; He knows what is in their minds and hearts. This concluding sentence gives the reason why they were chosen. And the preceding clause, ‘‘Offspring, one from the other’’, explains why the whole group was considered worthy of this Divine selection. The verse implies the following connotation: Allāh made them to excel the worlds; that excellence and selection covered them all, because they were a group, each of them being similar to the others, in their spiritual sublimity, surrender of hearts and established truth of the words; Allāh, bestowed this excellence on them because He is the Hearing and Knowing, He hears what they say, and knows what is in their minds.

TRADITIONS

ar-Riḍā (a.s.) had a talk with al-Ma’mūn; during which al-Ma’mūn said: ‘‘Has Allāh given the offspring (of the Prophet — s.a.w.a.) excellence over all other people?’’ Abu ’l-Ḥasan (ar-Riḍā — a.s.) said: ‘‘Indeed Allāh has clearly described, in His decisive Book, the excellence of the (said) offspring over all the people.’’ al-Ma’mūn asked: ‘‘Where is it in the Book of Allāh?’’ ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: ‘‘In His words: *Surely Allāh chose Adam and Nūh the*

descendants of Ibrāhīm and the descendants of 'Imrān above all the worlds; offspring, one from the other . . .'' (*'Uyūnu 'l-akhbār*)

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad narrates from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) (who narrates) from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''Liar is he who thinks that He (Allāh) is finished with the (management of the) affairs, because the pleasure is of Allāh regarding His creation; He wills what He pleases and does what He pleases. Allāh has said: *offspring, one from the other, and Allāh is the Hearing, the Knowing. Its* (i.e., the offspring's) last is from its first, and its first is from its last. Therefore, if you were told that a certain thing would happen in respect of a particular offspring, and it happened about another (person) from the same (offspring), then the thing happened exactly as you were told.'' (al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: This tradition proves the explanation written earlier, of the verse, ''offspring, one from the other''.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) recited this verse and said: ''We are from them, and we are the remnant of that *al-'itrah* (اَلعِتْرَةُ = family).'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: *al-'itrah* actually means the foundation, the root, the basis which a thing relies upon. That is why it is used for the children and near relatives of preceding generations. In other words, it refers to the vertical geneology of a person.

It is because of this semantic value of the word that the Imām has taken the clause (*offspring, one from the other*) to refer to a vertical geneological line beginning with Adam, and passing through Nūḥ to the *āl* of Ibrāhīm and *āl* of 'Imrān.

It also explains why Allāh has mentioned Adam (a.s.) and Nūḥ (a.s.) with the two families; it was done to establish an unbroken chain of selection right from the beginning of the human race to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and his purified and sinless progeny.

* * * * *

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَةُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّراً فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ــ ٣٥. فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَى وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعَتْ وَلَيْسَ ٱلذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَى وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَانِ ٱلرَّجِيمِ ــ ٣٦. فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتاً حَسَناً وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقاً قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكِ هَٰذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ ٱللهِ إِنَّ ٱللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ــ ٣٧. هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ ٱلدُّعَاءِ ــ ٣٨. فَنَادَتْهُ ٱلْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي ٱلْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَى مُصَدِّقاً بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ ٱللهِ وَسَيِّداً وَحَصُوراً وَنَبِيّاً مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ــ ٣٩. قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكَ ٱللهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ ــ ٤٠. قَالَ رَبِّ ٱجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَنْ لَا تُكَلِّمَ ٱلنَّاسَ ثَلَٰثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْزاً وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ كَثِيراً وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ــ ٤١.

When the woman of 'Imrān said: ''My Lord! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service); *accept therefore from me; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing''* (35). *So when she brought her forth, she said: ''My Lord! surely I have brought it forth a female'' — and Allāh knew best what she brought forth, and the male is not like the female — ''and I have named her Maryam, and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection from the accursed Satan''* (36). *So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing, and gave her into the charge of Zakariyyā; whenever Zakariyyā entered the sanctuary to* (see) *her, he found with her food. He said: ''O Maryam! whence comes this to you?'' She said: ''It is from Allāh.'' Surely Allāh gives sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure* (37). *There did Zakariyyā pray to his Lord; he said: ''My Lord! grant me from Thee good offspring; surely Thou art the Hearer of prayer''* (38). *Then the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary: ''That Allāh gives you the good news of Yaḥyā verifying a word from Allah, and honourable and chaste and a prophet, from among the good ones''* (39) *He said: ''My Lord! How shall there be a son* (born) *to me, and old age has already come upon me, and my wife is barren?'' He said: ''Even thus does Allāh what He pleases''* (40) *He said: ''My Lord! appoint a sign for me.'' Said He: ''Your sign is that you would not speak to men for three days except by signs; and remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning''* (41).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *When the woman of 'Imrān said: ''My Lord! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted* (to Thy service): *accept therefore from me; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing'':*

When a man makes a *''an-nadhr''* (اَلنَّذْرُ = vow), he in effect binds himself to do something which hitherto was not compulsory for him. *''at-Taḥrīr''* (اَلتَّحْرِيْرُ) is to release from a bond; that is why emancipation of slave is called *''at-taḥrīr''*; the same word is used for writing, probably because writing releases the ideas from the repository of mind and memory. *''at-Taqabbul''* (اَلتَّقَبُّلُ) is to accept willingly and gladly, for example, accepting a gift, accepting a prayer and so on.

The words, ''When the woman of 'Imrān said: 'My Lord ! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service)' '', clearly show that she made this vow during her pregnancy, and that she was pregnant from 'Imrān. It also implies that 'Imrān was not alive at that time; otherwise, she could not make the vow so independently to release her child for Divine worship. The same idea is implied in the verse: . . . *and you were not with them when they cast their pens* (to decide) *which of them should have Maryam in his charge* . . . (3:44).

Obviously, when the parents release the child, it does not mean that they emancipate it from any slavery. What the said release amounts to is that the child is freed from the bonds of parental guardianship; the parents undertake not to train or use the child for their own benefit, nor to demand from it their various rights like obedience etc. Such a release liberates the child from the authority of the parents. If the child has been released for the service of Allāh, it is taken under Divine protection and guardianship, and devotes its time to the service of Allāh, that is, serving in synagogues, churches and other places reserved for Divine worship. This would continue upto the period the child would otherwise have remained under parental guardianship. Reportedly they used to release the child for the service of Allāh; the parents did not use the child in their work, or for their benefit. He was put in the synagogue, to clean it and serve in it. This continued till he reached the age of puberty; then he was free to remain therein or to go away; if he decided to continue, he stayed therein; and if he liked to go away, he did so.

The verse shows that she firmly believed the child in her womb to be a male, not a female. It is remarkable how confidently she made the vow with her Lord, in full certainty, without attaching any

proviso; she said: ‘‘My Lord! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service)’’, without saying, for example, ‘if he is a male child’. And she used the masculine form *‘‘muḥarraran’’* (مُحَرَّراً = released; translated here as, devoted) referring to what was in her womb. Of course, according to its syntactical position it may be construed as showing the state of the relative pronoun *‘‘mā’’* (مَا = what [is in my womb]), which may be used for either gender. But undoubtedly her choice of word was based on her belief that she carried a male child in her womb. Otherwise, if she had taken a vow to release whatever. was in her womb, be it a boy or a girl, she would not have shown such a dissappointment when she delivered a girl: ‘‘My Lord! surely I have brought it forth a female;’’ nor was there any reason for the Divine comment, ‘‘and the male is not like the female’’.

One thing more. Allāh quotes (without any adverse comment) her words showing her firm belief. It implies that her conviction was not without a reason; nor was it based on her keen observations which give some such indications to experienced women. After all, such things are mere conjectures; *and surely conjecture does not avail against the truth at all.* And it is a habit of the Qur’ān that whenever it quotes a false idea, it invariably always points to its falsehood. Allāh says: *Allāh knows what every female bears, and that of which the wombs fall short of completion and that in which they increase* (13:8); *Surely Allāh is He with Whom is the knowledge of the hour, and He sends down the rain and He knows what is in the wombs* (31:34). The verses clearly say that the knowledge of ‘‘what is in the wombs’’ is one of the unseen, exclusively reserved for Allāh. And Allāh says: *The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses of an apostle* (72:26 — 27). It means that others may know the unseen only through Divine revelation. In this background, when Allāh quotes her as saying something confidently about a subject exclusively reserved for Allāh, it means that her belief, (that she was pregnant with a male child) was somehow based on a Divine revelation. That is why she did not lose hope of a male child even when she found her own child a female; instead, she again said with full conviction and certainty: ‘‘and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection

from the accursed Satan''. Look at her belief that Maryam would have an offspring — obviously such a commendation was beyqnd her knowledge, if not based on revelation. ''accept therefore from me'': She did not mention object of the verb ''accept''. Possibly it could be the afore-mentioned vow, as it was a good deed; but more probably, she was beseeching Allāh to accept her released child. The wording of the next verse, ''So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance'', clearly supports the latter meaning.

QUR'ĀN: *So when she brought her forth, she said: ''My Lord! surely I have brought it forth a female'':* By putting a feminine pronoun in ''brought her forth'', the Qur'ān did away with the necessity of a longer description. What this concise sentence actually stands for is this: When she brought forth that which was in her womb and came to know that it was a female, she said: ''My Lord! I have brought it a female.'' This last sentence, although an informative, was in fact an exclamation to show her disappointment.

QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh knew best what she brought forth, and the male is not like the female:* These are parenthetic sentences, and the speaker of both is Allāh, not the woman of 'Imrān; even the second sentence is not spoken by her.

There is no doubt that the first sentence is a saying of Allāh, commenting on her sorrowful cry. The words, ''and Allāh knew best what she brought forth'', in effect convey the following idea: Allāh knew that she had delivered a female child; but He intended to fulfil through this daughter of hers all her hopes and expectations, in a far better way. Had the wife of 'Imrān know what Allāh's plans were in making her child a female, she would not have shown any sorrow and disappointment. As the later events showed, the male child she hoped for could not accomplish what Allāh intended this female child to achieve. Suppose, she were given a son, instead of the daughter she got; what could that son achieve? He, like 'Īsā, could be made a prophet; he could give eyes to the blind and heal the lepers; he could raise a few men from the dead. And this was the utmost he could do. But this female child, which Allāh has given to the wife of 'Imrān, will be a means to complete the word of Allāh; she will bring

forth a son without a father; Allāh will make her and her son together a sign for the people; that son will talk with people in his cradle; he will be a spirit and a word of Allāh; his likeness before Allāh will be like Adam; and there will be many manifest signs in giving this daughter, Maryam, to the wife of ‘Imrān and giving to Maryam a son, ‘Īsā, rather than giving a son directly to Imrān’s wife.

Now it should be clear that the words, ‘‘and the male is not like the female’’, are spoken by Allāh. Had they been uttered by the wife of ‘Imrān, she would have said, ‘and the female is not like the male’; she would not have reversed the syntactic arrangement as the Qur’ānic sentence has done. If a man hopes to get a very good thing or to be awarded a very high status, and then he gets an inferior thing or a lower rank, he regretfully says; The thing I got is not what I expected and hoped for. He would never say: The thing I hoped for is not like that which I got.

In view of the above explanation, the definite articles in ‘‘the male’’ and ‘‘the female’’, (or at least in ‘‘the female’’) refer to the particular son and daughter spoken about; and the meaning would be as follows: The male she hoped for is not like the female she was given.

Many exegetes have taken the sentence, ‘‘and the male is not like the female’’, to be a part of the speech of the woman of ‘Imrān. Then they were faced with the difficulty of explaining its apparently reversed syntactic arrangement. They have tried without success to bring about some worthwhile explanation. Any interested reader should consult their books.

QUR’ĀN: *and I have named her Maryam, and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection from the accursed Satan:* It is said that Maryam in their language means the worshipper and the servant.[1] In that case, it is easy to see why she hastened to name the child soon after delivery and mentioned the name to Allāh.

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[1] Arabic Maryam is Miryām in Hebrew. According to the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible (by John D. Davis, revised and rewritten by Henry Snyder Gehman; ed. 1944) the root-word of Miryām signifies ‘‘obstinacy, rebellion’’, that is, opposite of the ‘‘reported meaning’’ of worship and service. (*tr.*)

Apparently, when she found out that the child was not a male (who could easily be released for worship of Allāh and service of the synagogue), she hastened to give the child the name, Maryam — thus dedicating her for the said worship and service. The words, ‘‘and I have named her Maryam’’, implied that she had dedicated that female child to the worship of Allāh and released her for the synagogue’s service. The words were in effect a sort of renewed vow, and that is why Allāh accepted her offering in these words: ‘‘So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing’’.

Thereafter, she commended Maryam and her offspring to the protection of Allāh from the accursed Satan, in order that she might dedicate herself for Divine worship and remain devoted to the service of the synagogue, in a way that the name might truly represent the named.

She confidently talks with Allāh about the offspring of Maryam, without any condition or proviso. Such words cannot be spoken in presence of Allāh by someone who knows nothing of the future. What the future holds for a man is a part of the unseen and its knowledge is reserved for Allāh. However, she talks here in the same assured way as she did when she made the vow first: ‘‘My Lord! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted . . .’’ This confidence shows that she had the knowledge that she would get from ‘Imrān a son of good faith and deed; when she became pregnant and ‘Imrān died, she became absolutely sure that what she carried in her womb was the same promised son; when she delivered a daughter and became aware of her mistaken guess, she at once understood that that promise would be fulfilled through that daughter, that she would get that son from the offspring of that daughter. As soon as she realized this fact, she transferred her vow from the son she hoped for to the daughter she was given, named it Maryam (i.e., one who worships and serves), and entrusted her and her offspring to the protection of Allāh against the accursed Satan.

All these aspects of the story may be understood from meditation on the words of Allāh.

QUR’ĀN: *So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and*

made her grow up a good growing: ''al-Qubūl'' (اَلْقُبُوْلُ = acceptance), conjoined by the adjective *''ḥasan''* (حَسَن = good), gives exactly the same meaning as *''at-taqabbul''* (اَلتَّقَبُّلُ = to accept willingly and gladly). Then why did Allāh choose three words, ''with good acceptance'', in place of one, ''gladly'' or ''gracefully''? It was to show that goodness of acceptance was the main theme of the talk; and also because clear mention of ''good acceptance'' was more ennobling and more edifying.

Maryam's mother had used two sentences in her invocation: ''and I have named her Maryam and I commend her and her off spring to Thy protection . . .'' The two sentences (in answer to her call) run parallel to them. It is then reasonable to believe that the first sentence, ''So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance'' is a response to her words, ''and I have named her Maryam''; and the second sentence, ''and made her grow up a good growing'', is the fulfilment of her second plea, ''and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from the accursed Satan''. Obviously, accepting a good acceptance does not refer to accepting the vow of 'Imrān's wife and to giving her the reward in the next life for that good deed of hers; in other words, it was Maryam who was accepted, not the vow. Maryam was accepted, as she grew up to be a sincere worshipper of Allāh and was freed to serve the sanctuary. In this light, the acceptance implies that she was chosen for this purpose by Allāh. (We have already explained that this selection implies the chosen one's total surrender to Allāh.)

The words, ''and made her grow up a good growing'', mean that Allāh bestowed on her and her offspring guidance and sanctity, and gave them a purified life free from the whisperings of Satan, untouched by his misleading suggestions. That is what is called ''cleanliness'', in the language of Islam.

These two aspects, that is, good acceptance and good growing — which ultimately mean her being chosen and purified, respectively — have been referred to in a forthcoming verse: *And when the angels said: ''O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen you above the women of the worlds''* (3:42). We shall further explain this topic under that verse, Allāh willing.

The above discourse makes it clear that it was in answer to her

mother's call that Maryam was chosen and purified. Likewise, the fact that she together with her son was made a sign for the nations, was a verification of the Divine words, ''and the male is not like the female''.

QUR'ĀN: *and gave her into the charge of Zakariyyā:* Zakariyyā got her charge because his name came out in the lot that was drawn. They had disputed among themselves to get the privilege of her custody; then they agreed to decide it by a lot in which Zakariyyā's name was drawn. Allāh refers to this episode when He says: . . . *and you were not with them when they cast their pens* (to decide) *which of them should have Maryam in his charge, and you were not with them when they contended one with another* (3:44).

QUR'ĀN: *whenever Zakariyyā entered the sanctuary to* (see) *her, he found with her food . . . : ''al-Miḥrāb''* (اَلْمِحْرَابُ) means a place in mosque or house, reserved for worship. ar-Rāghib has said: *''Miḥrāb* (i.e., niche) of the mosque: It is said that it was given this name because it is the place where one fights against Satan and his desires. Others say that it is because once a man enters it, it is his duty to be *al-ḥarīb* (اَلْحَرِيْبُ = wrested away) from worldly deeds and wandering thoughts. Some others have said that originally the foremost portion of the sitting place was called *miḥrāb* of the house; when the mosques were built, their foremost part was given the same name, *miḥrāb*. Yet others say that the word *miḥrāb* was originally used for the niche of the mosque, as it is its most important portion; then the foremost part of a house was also given this name, inasmuch as it resembles the mosque's niche; and probably this (explanation) is more correct. Allāh has said: *They made for him what he pleased of fortresses and images . . . ''*

Some scholars have said that the word *''miḥrāb''* here refers to what the People of the Book call altar; and it is a closest in front of the synagogue, it has a door, to reach which one has to ascend a few steps; anyone inside remains hidden from others present in the synagogue.

The author says: In Islamic world the recess (reserved for the

leader of prayers) in a mosque owes its origin to that.

''Rizqan'' (رِزْقًا = food) in the clause, ''he found with her food'', has been used as a common noun, implying that it was an unexpected and unusual food. It has been said that he used to find with her the fruits of the winter in the summer and those of the summer in the winter.

The common noun may be interpreted differently if we look at the clause in isolation. It may be said that the food was not of unusual kind, yet the word ''food'', is used as a common noun to show that Maryam's sanctuary was never without some kind of food; whenever Zakariyyā went to see her, he always found some food with her. But such an interpretation does not agree with the context. Had the food been of the usual kind, Zakariyyā could not be satisfied by the reply that it was from Allāh and Allāh gives sustenance to whom He pleases without measure. Such a reply in that context would not remove the possibility that someone from the people of the synagogue visited her, either with good intention or bad.

Moreover, the words ''There did Zakariyyā pray to his Lord . . .'' show that Zakariyyā thought the presence of that sustenance to be a miraculous event which could only be attributed to Allāh. That is why he felt irresistible urge to call on Allāh to grant him a good offspring from Himself. It means that the sustenance was of such unusual type as to show the honour of Maryam before Allāh.

The sentence, ''He said: 'O Maryam! whence comes this . . .' '', also proves it. This sentence comes after the words ''he found with her food''; yet the two sentences are not joined by any conjunctive. It means that he did not ask the question more than once. When she gave the reply and he was convinced of her prestige in the eyes of Allāh, he felt it was the time to pray to Allāh to grant him too an unusual prayer and give him a good offspring in his old age.

QUR'ĀN: *There did Zakariyyā pray to his Lord; he said: ''My Lord! grant me from Thee good offspring . . . '':* A thing is good *aṭ-ṭayyib* (اَلطَّيِّبُ), if it is suitable for the purpose it is required for. A good land is suitable for its inhabitants in its water, atmosphere, climate and other necessities of life. Allāh says: *And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth* (abundantly) *by the permission of*

its Lord (7:58). A good life is the one whose various aspects are in harmony with each other and give satisfaction to the man concerned. By the same reason, a good perfume is called *aṭ-ṭīb* (اَلطِّيْبُ). Accordingly, a good offspring would mean a child who, in his attributes, qualities and activities, would fulfil the hopes, and satisfy the ambitions of his father. Zakariyyā (a.s.) prayed to Allāh: ‘‘My Lord! grant me from Thee good offspring.’’ It happened when he saw the grace of Allāh on Maryam and found out how great her prestige was before the Lord. He was so overwhelmed by that experience that he could not refrain from praying to Allāh to bestow on him too a similar bounty. Implied in the adjective ‘‘good’’ was a plea that the said offspring should possess a personality much like that of Maryam, and should be granted a similar prestige and honour before Allāh. He was then and there granted all that he had asked for. Allāh gave him a son, Yaḥyā — the prophet most similar to ‘Īsā (peace be on both); he was given all the qualities of perfection and excellence which ‘Īsā and his Truthful mother, Maryam, were granted. It was for this reason that Allāh named him Yaḥyā, and sent him to verify a Word from Allāh, and made him honourable and chaste as well as a prophet, from among the good ones. As will be explained later, it was the nearest that any man could resemble Maryam and her son ‘Īsā, peace be on them all.

QUR’ĀN: *Then the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary: ‘‘That Allāh gives you the good news of Yaḥyā . . . ’’:* The third and second person pronouns refer to Zakariyyā. *al-Bushrā* (اَلْبُشْرٰي), *al-ibshār* (اَلْاِبْشَارُ) and *at-tabshīr* (اَلتَّبْشِيْرُ), all have the same meaning: To give good news, to bring good tidings of what would make the recipient happy.

‘‘Allāh gives you good news of Yaḥyā’’. It shows that it was Allāh who gave him the name, Yaḥyā; some verses in Chapter 19 also indicate the same: *O Zakariyyā! surely We give you good news of a boy whose name shall be Yaḥyā* (19:7).

The name, Yaḥyā, and its bestowal from Allāh at the very beginning of the good tidings (before his birth and even conception), support what we have said above, that Zakariyyā had asked his Lord to give him a child with a prestige in Divine presence similar to that

enjoyed by Maryam. She and her son, ‘Īsā (peace be on them), were jointly a sign of Allāh, as He says: *and We made her and her son a sign for the nations* (21:91).

Allāh therefore gave Yaḥyā, to the utmost possible extent, all the qualities and attributes given to Maryam and ‘Īsā. The attributes of Maryam had fully blossomed in ‘Īsā; and Yaḥyā was made to resemble ‘Īsā as completely and perfectly as was possible. Yet ‘Īsā had precedence of Yaḥyā, because his creation and birth was firmly decreed long before the prayer of Zakariyyā for Yaḥyā was accepted. That is why ‘Īsā was given superiority over Yaḥyā, and made an *ulu 'l-‘azm* apostle, bringing a new *sharī‘ah* and a new Book. Apart from such necessary dissimilarities, Yaḥyā and ‘Īsā resembled each other to the maximum possible extent.

For a glimpse of this similarity, look at the stories of Yaḥyā and ‘Īsā as narrated in Chapter 19 (Maryam).

About Yaḥyā (a.s.): *O Zakariyyā! surely We give you good news of a boy whose name shall be Yaḥyā: We have not made before anyone his namesake . . . O Yaḥyā! take hold of the Book with strength; and We granted him wisdom while yet a child, and tenderness from Us and purity, and he was one who guarded* (against evil), *and dutiful to his parents, and he was not insolent, disobedient. And peace on him on the day he was born, and on the day he dies, and on the day he is raised to life* (19:7,12 — 15).

Now, compare it with what has immediately been said about ‘Īsā (a.s.): *So she took a curtain* (to screen herself) *from them; then We sent to her Our spirit, and there appeared to her a wellmade man. . . . He said: ‘‘I am only a messenger of your Lord: That I give you a pure boy.’’ . . . He said: ‘‘Even so; your Lord says: ‘It is easy to Me and that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us’ ’’; . . . But she pointed to him. They said: ‘‘How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?’’He said: ‘‘Surely I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet; and He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and zakāt as long as I live; and dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed; and peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life’’* (19:17 — 21, 29 — 33).

The verses of this chapter too point to this similarity of the two prophets.

Allāh named him Yaḥyā[1]; and the son of Maryam was called ‘Īsā which reportedly means *ya‘īsh* (يَعِيْشُ = he lives)[2]; Yaḥyā was sent to verify a Word from Allāh, that is, ‘Īsā, as Allāh says: . . . *a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah, ‘Īsā son of Maryam* (3:45); Yaḥyā too, just like ‘Īsā, was given wisdom and taught the Book while yet a child; he too is praised, like ‘Īsā, to be a tenderness from Allāh and purity, and to be dutiful to his parents, not insolent or disobedient; also much like ‘Īsā peace was sent to him on three junctures of his existence. Also, Allāh made Yaḥyā honourable as ‘Īsā was made worthy of regard; and he was made chaste and a prophet, from among the good ones, as ‘Īsā was. All this was in answer to the prayer of Zakariyyā, when he asked for a good offspring, to be his heir, and with whom Allāh would be well pleased. As explained earlier, he had prayed to Allāh to this effect when he was overwhelmed by what he saw of the distinction and excellence of Maryam before Allāh.

‘‘verifying a Word from Allāh’’: It shows that he was a harbinger of ‘Īsā; ‘‘Word’’ in this context refers to ‘Īsā, as the verse 3:45 (quoted above) says that Maryam was given good news of a Word from Allāh.

‘‘honourable’’: *‘‘as-Sayyid’’* (اَلسَّيِّدُ = chief, head of community); the one who manages the people’s affairs related to their lives and livelihood or concerning a socially accepted virtue; subsequently, it was used with increasing frequency, for honorable and noble, inasmuch as the above-mentioned management of affairs entails honour and excellence — emanating from his authority, wealth or other such virtues.

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[1] Yaḥyā = He lives.

[2] ‘Īsā: In Hebrew it is Yèshūa‘; it is a later form, by vowel dissimilation, of Yòshūa‘ (*Yūsha‘* يُوْشَعْ in Arabic, and Joshua in Latin), which in its turn was a contracted form of Yehòshūa‘. Its meaning: Yahwah, that is God, is salvation, or Yahwah saves. See *Dictionary of Proper Names and Places in the Bible,* published by Robert Hale, London, 1982; *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible,* published by McGraw-Hill Book Co. Inc., 1963. (*tr.*)

‘‘chaste’’: *‘‘al-Ḥuṣūr’’* (اَلْحُصُوْرُ = one who abstains from women). In the present context it signifies a man who totally abstains from women because he forsakes all the worldly desires, and leads a life of asceticism and self-denial.

QUR’ĀN: *He said: ‘‘My Lord! how shall there be a son* (born) *to me, and old age has already come upon me and my wife is barren?’’:* The question is a mirror of the awe and the wonder which overwhelmed Zakariyyā when he heard the good news; he wanted to ascertain how and when this promise would be fulfilled. In no way does this question imply that he thought it unlikely to happen, or too great a boon to come his way. How could he harbour any doubt about it when he was clearly told that Allāh would give him the son he had asked for? Moreover, he had already mentioned these two factors (which are the basis of this question) in his invocation, as Allāh quotes him as saying: *‘‘My Lord! surely my bones are weakened and my head flares with hoariness, and, my Lord! never have I been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee: and surely I fear my relatives after me; and my wife is barren; therefore grant me from Thyself an heir . . .’’* (19:4 — 5).

Furthermore, the question reflects on an interesting psychological — nay, spiritual — ecstasy experienced by Zakariyyā. No sooner did he look at Maryam and the grace of Allāh she enjoyed than he was transported to the plane of ecstasy and felt himself overwhelmed by Divine Mercy and love; while in that state, he asked from his Lord for a good child, and mentioned in that prayer the basic factors — his own old age and his wife’s barrenness — which had contributed to that sorrowful and pitiable condition. When his prayer was granted and he was given the good news of a son, it was as though he woke up from that trance; then he began expressing his joyful astonishment on such a marvellous phenomenon — Oh! Would I beget a son, in spite of my old age, even though my wife is barren! The same factors which in the past had caused him sorrow and distress, now enhanced his happiness and joy.

We may also look at this episode in the following light. Zakariyyā was assured that his prayer had been accepted; thereupon he started mentioning one snag after the other. Actually, he wanted

to ascertain as to how each hindrance would be overcome, how each snag would be removed. He liked to know all the particulars concerning that Divine Grace, in order that his enjoyment would be complete and his happiness perfect. We find the same emotions shown by Ibrāhīm when he was given a similar good tidings: *And inform them of the guests of Ibrāhīm: When they entered upon him, they said, ''Peace''. He said: ''Surely we are afraid of you.'' They said: ''Be not afraid, surely we give you the good news of a boy possessing knowledge.'' He said: ''Do you give me good news* (of a son) *when old age has come upon me? — Of what then do you give me good news!'' They said: ''We give you good news with truth; therefore be not of the despairing.'' He said: ''And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord but the erring ones?''* (15:51 — 56) When the angels told him not to despair, he made it clear that his question had not emanated from any despair; how could it be so, when despairing from the mercy of Allāh was an error, a straying, and he was not an erring or straying servant? The angels must surely know that when a master turns with mercy to a slave in a way as to bring the slave nearer to himself, to raise him in rank, and exalt him in prestige, the slave feels so exhilarated, so overjoyed, that he yearns to hear those words over and over again, repeatedly going into all its details, joyously looking at all its aspects!

One may easily see the good manners of the purified servants of Allāh, if one reflects on the words, ''and old age has already come upon me''. What Zakariyyā alluded to was the fact that he had become too old to have ability, or even desire, to perform sexual act; as for his wife, she suffered from double impediment: Old age and barrenness. The clause, ''my wife is barren'', is expressed, in 19:8, in a way as to mean, my wife had been barren. It signifies that she had not become unable to bear children because of the advanced age; that she was barren from the very beginning.

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''Even so; Allāh does what He pleases.'':* The actual replier is Allāh — either directly or through the agency of the angels who had called to Zakariyyā. But apparently the pronoun in ''He said'' refers to the angel; he was the sayer, although the saying is attributable to Allāh as it was conveyed to Zakariyyā by His

command. This interpretation is supported by the verse: *He* (i.e., the Spirit) *said: ''So shall it be; your Lord says: 'It is easy to Me, and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing.' ''* (19:9)

The above discourse shows that:

First: Zakariyyā heard that voice from the same place whence he used to hear the angel's voice before.

Second: ''Even so'' is predicate of a deleted subject; the completed subject would be something like this: The matter is even so. It emphasizes that the Divine Grace, of which he was given the good news, was certain to appear; it was a firmly decreed matter which would surely take place. This reply is similar to the one given by the spirit to Maryam: *He said. ''Even so; your Lord says: 'It is easy to Me; . . . and it is a matter which has been decreed.' ''* (19:21)

Third: ''Allāh does what He pleases'': It is a separate sentence, explaining the reason of the preceding ''Even so''.

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''My Lord! appoint a sign for me.'' Said He: ''Your sign is that you would not speak to men for three days except by signs; . . . in the evening and the morning'':* It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayān: ''ar-Ramz''* (اَلرَّمْزُ) is to make signs with the lips; sometimes it is used for gesturing with eyebrows, eyes and/or hands; but mostly it is used in the first meaning.''

al-'Ashiyy (اَلْعَشِيُّ = evening) indicates the end portion of the day; probably it is derived from *al-'ashwah* (اَلْعَشْوَةُ = dimsightedness); the evening time was given this name because it merges into the darkness of the night and thus affects the eyesight. *''al-Ibkār''* (اَلْاِبْكَارُ = early morning); originally it meant to make haste, to come early.

The verse throws light on yet another similarity between Yaḥyā and 'Īsā. Compare it with the advice which 'Īsā gave to his mother soon after his birth: *Then if you see any man, say: ''Surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent Allāh, so I shall not speak to any man today.''* (19:26)

Zakariyyā asked his Lord to appoint a sign for him. Sign is a symbol that points to another thing or idea. There is a difference of opinion regarding the purpose behind this prayer: Did he want to

ascertain, with the help of the sign, that the good news was really from Allāh; that it was an angelic (or a Divine) speech, and not a satanic voice? Or, was it to know the time when his wife would be pregnant, so that he might be sure of the conception?

The context and the framework of the story does not agree very much with the second view. Yet the exegetes are reluctant to accept the first interpretation. They are not inclined to say that Zakariyyā wanted to be sure of the Divine Origin of that message. The prophets were sinless and protected from errors and mistakes; as such they knew perfectly well the difference between the angelic inspiration and the satanic whispering; the Satan could not interfere in their affairs, nor could he confuse them in a way as to cast doubt about the Divine revelation sent to them.

This observation is correct as far as it goes. But it should be remembered that they knew that difference not by themselves, but because Allāh had given them that knowledge. If so, then what objection can be raised if Zakariyyā prayed to Allāh to appoint for him a sign to help him ascertain the Divine Origin of that news? Of course, this objection could be entertained had his prayer been rejected — had Allāh refused to appoint for him a sign as he had asked for.

The appointed sign itself — not being able to talk to the people for three days — supports (nay, proves) the first view. Utmost that the Satan can do against the prophets is to touch them with some ailments in their bodies; to put hindrance in their mission; to sabotage their efforts; to mislead the people away from the prophetic path; and to encourage and strengthen their enemies. Allāh says: *And remember Our servant Ayyūb, when he called upon his Lord: ''The Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment''* (38:41); *And We did not send before you any apostle or prophet, but when he desired, the Satan made a suggestion respecting his desire; but Allāh annuls that which the Satan casts, then does Allāh establish His communications . . .* (22:52). ''*. . . then I forgot the fish, and nothing made me forget to speak of it but the Satan . . .''* (18:63). But such touches and afflictions do not go beyond annoying or discomforting the prophet concerned. But the Satan can never get any power over the person of the prophets themselves; they are protected from it. (In previous

discussions we have proved the *'iṣmah* of the prophets.) Now we come to the present subject matter. It was the sign appointed by Allāh for Zakariyyā that he would not speak to the people for three days; he would remain tongue-tied for all kinds of speeches except for the remembrance of Allāh and His glorification. ''Said He: 'Your sign is that you would not speak to men for three days except by signs; and remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning.' '' It was a sign that affected Zakariyyā's person itself and made him tongue-tied. It was such an effect as was absolutely beyond the power of the Satan, because Zakariyyā was protected by Divine *'iṣmah.* This was, therefore, a sure sign that it was affected by Allāh, and not by the Satan. And such a sign is more in accord with the first view than the second.

Question: It will be difficult, if we take the first view, to explain the verse, ''He said: 'My Lord! how shall there be a son (born) to me, and old age has already come upon me, and my wife is barren?' He said: 'Even so; Allāh does what He pleases.' '' This verse clearly says that he spoke to his Lord and asked Him what he wanted to ask, and got an answer to his enquiry. Now, if he harboured any doubt concerning the genuineness of the voice, then why all this dialogue? And if he had no doubt, then why this demand to be given a sign?

Reply: Certainty and belief have many grades, varying in the degrees of intensity. Possibly, Zakariyyā was sure from the very beginning that it was an angelic voice by the command of the Beneficent Allāh; then he asked his Lord concerning the details of the birth of his promised son, because it was a truly awe-inspiring phenomenon, and again he heard the angel's voice answering his question and was again sure of its genuineness; then he prayed to his Lord to appoint for him a sign in order that his certainty — that it was a Divine communication — should reach the degree of tranquillity.

The clause, ''Then the angels called to him'', supports this interpretation. *an-Nidā'* (اَلنِّدَآءُ) means to call from a distance. That is why it is generally used for a shout, a loud utterance — we cannot speak from a distance except in a loud voice — although loudness is not a part of its meaning. For example, Allāh refers to the prayer of

Zakariyyā in these words: *When called he* (*nādā* = نَادي) *unto his Lord in a low voice* (*nidā'an khafiyyan* = نِدَآءً خَفِيًّا) (19:3). His prayer was termed as a call from a distance — the distance being the spiritual one between Zakariyyā's humility and modesty and the Divine sublimity, might and grandeur; otherwise, it could not be described as ''a low voice''. Anyhow, ''the angels called to him'' may be taken to mean that Zakariyyā had only heard the voices of the angels without setting his eyes on them. (And therefore.he decided to ask for a sign.)

An exegete has written: ''That Allāh gave him a sign of not speaking, means that Allāh forbade him to speak to the people for three days; he was to remain silent and spend the stipulated time in remembrance and glorification of Allāh; it does not mean that he became tongue-tied and could not speak to the people at all . . . The fact is that Zakariyyā, being a human being, wanted to know the exact time when the conception would take place, in order that he himself might feel tranquillity and could also inform his wife of the great event. That is why he asked what he asked. When his question was answered, he called upon Allāh to prescribe for him a special prayer (in order that he might hasten to show his gratitude to Allāh), which would terminate in fulfilment of his hope. In other words, the end of that period of thanks-giving would indicate that the time of conception had arrived. Thereupon, Allāh told him not to speak to the people for three days, devoting all that time in remembrance and glorification of Allāh; if there arose a need to talk with someone, he was to communicate with him in signs only. When the appointed three days passed, it would be the time to convey the good news to his wife.''

Comment: Clearly, no trace of this imaginary narrative can be found in the verses. The Qur'ān has nowhere mentioned — either directly or indirectly — any such story. The said writer has given free rein to his fancy when he says that Zakariyyā asked for a special regimen of worship in order to offer his thanks to Allāh, that the end of that worship period was to lead to the conception, that the termination of that time was a sign for the beginning of the pregnancy, that the words, ''you would not speak to men'', were an

order to him not to speak, and that he wanted to convey, at the end of the stipulated time the good news to his wife.

ANGELIC INSPIRATION AND SATANIC WHISPERING: THE SPEECH OF ALLĀH

We have repeatedly mentioned that when a word is made for a meaning, it actually looks at the main purpose behind that meaning. The words, ‘‘talk’’ and ‘‘speech’’, refer to voice, because voice conveys the idea of the speaker to the hearer. Therefore, whatever conveys that idea may be called a talk or speech. It may be a voice or a combination of several voices; in fact, it may not have any sound at all, as for example, is the case with sign language and symbols. If a siren conveys a complete idea, it may be called a speech, even though it is not uttered by mouth. Likewise, people use the word, ‘‘speech’’, for signs and symbols although no sound is involved in them.

It is for this reason that the Qur’ān uses the words, ‘‘speech’’ and ‘‘talk’’, for the ideas created in man’s mind by the Satan. Allāh narrates the claim of the Satan:

And most certainly I will . . . bid them so that they shall slit the ears of the cattle, and most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allāh’s creation . . . (4:119)

Also, He says:

Like the Satan when he says to man: ‘‘Disbelieve’’, but when he disbelieves, he says: ‘‘I am surely clear of you . . .’’ (59:16)

. . . the slinking (Satan) *who whispers into the hearts of men* . . . (114:5)

. . . the Satans from among men and jinn, some of them suggesting to others varnished falsehood to deceive (them) . . . (6:112)

And the Satan shall say . . .: ‘‘Surely Allāh promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promises then failed to keep them to you . . .’’ (14:22)

Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to abomination, and Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and

abundance; and Allāh is Ample-giving, All-knowing. He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good. (2:268 — 269)

Clearly, these misleading ideas, coming into a man's mind, have been ascribed to the Satan, and have been called his bid, order, talk, whispering, suggestion, promise and threat; all these are various modes of speech and talk, although the Satan does not utter them by mouth, nor does the man hear them by his ears.

The last quoted verse mentions the promise of Allāh — for forgiveness and abundance — face to face with the satanic threat. It implies that this promise stands for an angelic inspiration in contrast to the satanic whispering. And that inspiration has been termed as ''wisdom''. Also there are other verses pointing to this reality in various terms. For example:

. . . and (He will) *make for you a light with which you will walk . . .* (57:28)

He it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they might have more of faith added to their faith — and Allāh's are the hosts of the heaven and the earth . . . (48:4)

(We have explained this verse while writing about *as-sakīnah* [السَّكِيْنَةُ = tranquillity] under the verse: *. . . in which there is tranquillity from your lord . . .* — 2:248)

Therefore (for) *whomsoever Allāh intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam; and* (for) *whomsoever He intends that He should leave him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending into the sky; thus does Allāh lay uncleanliness on those who do not believe* (6:125).

It should be noted here that the satanic whispering has been called ''the uncleanliness of the Satan'' in the verse 8:11.

The above discourse makes it clear that the Satan and the angels ''speak'' to man by putting ideas into his mind.

Then there is a speaking reserved for Allāh, as He says: *And there is not for any man that Allāh should speak to him except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger so that he reveals by His permission what He pleases* (42:51). Apart from

sending a messenger, that is, an angel (with which we are not concerned here), Allāh speaks to man in two ways: (i) Revelation, in which there is no veil between Allāh and the person spoken to; (ii) Speaking from behind a veil or curtain.

These are, in short, various kinds of angelic inspiration and satanic whispering; and various modes of Allāh's speech.

As for the Divine Speech which is called revelation, it needs no extraneous factor for its recognition, no other distinguishing element to ascertain its authenticity. It is a direct speech, without any curtain between Allāh and the recipient of the revelation; and it is just impossible for any doubt to creep up into such a talk. But other kinds of Divine Speech need some supporting evidence, which in its turn relies on the direct revelation.

As for a distinction between the angelic and the satanic talks, the signs mentioned in the above quoted verses are sufficient to separate one from the other. The angelic inspiration accompanies expanding of breast, calls to Divine forgiveness and abundance, and encourages man to follow the religion of Allāh as expounded in the Divine Book and the prophetic *sunnah.* The satanic whispering, on the other hand, causes the breast to be strait and narrow, tempts one to follow one's desire, threatens with poverty, enjoins abomination, and finally pushes one to act in a manner opposed to the Book of Allāh and the *sunnah,* and contrary to the demands of the healthy nature.

The prophets and their close followers sometimes saw and recognized the angels and the Satan, as Allāh describes in the stories of Adam, Ibrāhīm, and Lūṭ (peace be on them). Obviously, in such cases, there was no need for any extraneous identifying factor. But in other cases when they did not see the angel (or the Satan), they, like other believers, needed some identification to ascertain that the speaker was in fact from Allāh — and that identification ultimately depended on the direct revelation from Allāh.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *When the woman of 'Imrān said. . .:* ''Verily Allāh revealed to 'Imrān: 'I am going to

give you a male (child), of sound health and blessed, who shall heal the blind and the leper and raise the dead (to life) by the permission of Allāh; and I'll appoint him an apostle to the children of Israel.' 'Imrān informed his wife, Ḥannah, of it — and she is the mother of Maryam. When Ḥannah conceived, she thought that she was carrying the same male child. But when she brought it forth, she said: *'My Lord! surely I have brought it forth a female, and the male is not like the female.'* (She said it because) a female cannot be an apostle. Allāh says: *And Allāh knew what she brought forth.* Thereafter, when Allāh gave 'Īsā to Maryam, (it was understood that) the good news and promise (which Allāh had given to 'Imrān) were in fact about that (grandson). Therefore, you should not think it strange if we say something about one of us (*Ahlu 'l-bayt*) and it appears (not in him, but) in his child or grandchild.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: A nearly similar tradition has been narrated from the same Imām in *al-Kāfī,* and from al-Bāqir (a.s.) in al-'Ayyāshī.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the same verse: ''A released child lived in the synagogue (and) did not go out. So, when (the wife of 'Imrān) delivered her, she said: *'My Lord! surely I have brought it forth a female, and the male is not like the female.'* The female has her menstruation, and (therefore she) will (have to) go out of the place of worship, while a released child does not go out of the place of worship.'' (al-'Ayyāshī)

al-Bāqir or aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''She had vowed what was in her womb to the synagogue for serving the worshippers; and the male is not like the female in service.'' Then the Imām said: ''Then she grew up; and she served them and looked after them, until she attained maturity. Then Zakariyyā told her to hide herself behind a screen (away) from the (other) worshippers.'' (*ibid*.)

The author says: As you see, the traditions support what we said in the Commentary. But evidently they take the clause, ''and the male is not like the female'', to be a part of the speech of 'Imrān's wife, not a comment from Allāh. In that case, it will be necessary to

explain why ‘‘the male’’ was mentioned before ‘‘the female’’, against the norms of grammar and eloquence; also, it will be essential to find out a reason as to why she gave her daughter the name she gave, that is, Maryam (Released;devoted) — unless it can be shown that there was no correlation between releasing her and making her an attendant of the synagogue.

The first tradition shows that ‘Imrān was a prophet who received revelations from Allāh. It is also proved by another tradition narrated by Abū Baṣīr in which he says: ‘‘I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) whether ‘Imrān was a prophet. He said: ‘Yes, he was a prophet sent (to his people) . . .’ ’’ (*Biḥāru ’l-anwār*)

That tradition also shows that the wife of ‘Imrān was called Ḥannah, as is generally believed. Some other traditions say that her name was Marthār (Martha?). However, it is not an important subject for us to labour on.

The same tradition (quoted from al-Qummī) goes on to say: ‘‘When Maryam reached the age of puberty, she entered the sanctuary and put a curtain (on the entrance) to hide herself; and no one entered therein. And Zakariyyā used to enter the sanctuary; and he used to find with her the fruits of summer in the winter and the fruits of winter in the summer; he used to say: *‘Whence comes this to you?’* And she used to reply: *‘It is from Allāh. Surely Allāh gives sustenance to whom He pleases without measure.’ ’’*

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘When Zakariyyā prayed to his Lord to give him a child and the angels called to him as they did, he desired to ascertain that the said voice was (really) from Allāh. Thereupon Allāh revealed to him that it was the sign (of its Divine Origin) that he would remain tongue-tied for three days. When he became tongue-tied and could not speak, he understood that no one, other than Allāh, could do that. And it is the (meaning of the) word of Allāh: *He said: ‘My Lord! Appoint a sign for me.’ ’’* (al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: A nearly similar tradition has been narrated by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr*. It has been made clear in the Commentary that this theme does not go against the context of the verse.

An exegete has very strongly objected to many of the themes expounded in these traditions; for example, sending the revelation to

‘Imrān, presence of the off-season fruits in Maryam’s sanctuary, request of Zakariyyā for a sign in order that he could ascertain the authenticity of the voice etc. He has said: These are the things which cannot be proved. Neither Allāh has mentioned them nor the Prophet has described them; nor can they be proved by reason or any reliable history. There are only some Israelite (and some non-Israelite) legends. Why should the Muslims go out of their way to explain the Qur’ān in terms of those unverified legends, which are anyhow too far-fetched to be acceptable?

Comment: The said exegete has made claims without offering any argument in his support. Of course, these traditions are *āḥād,* and some are even weak in their chains; also it is not incumbent, for a scholar to accept them or to use them as an argument. Yet, when we ponder on the verses of the Qur’ān, we find ourselves ready to accept those traditions (because they are consistent with the Qur’ān). It is all the more correct for the traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt,* as they do not contain any theme unacceptable to the reason.

Of course, one has to be on guard against some untenable things attributed to some early exegetes. For example, Qatādah and ‘Ikrimah are reported to have said: ‘‘The Satan came to Zakariyyā and created a doubt (in his mind) whether the good news was really from Allāh. He said (to Zakariyyā): ‘Had it been from Allāh, He would have talked to you in a low voice as you had called unto Him in a low voice.’ ’’ There are many such baseless things which cannot be accepted at all. Another such example may be seen in the Gospel according to Luke, where it says:

> And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, . . . And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. (Luke,1:19 — 20).

OTHER TRADITIONS ABOUT ''THE ONE SPOKEN TO''

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''There is no heart but it has two ears, on one of them is a guiding angel, and on the other a tempting Satan; this orders him and that restrains him the Satan enjoins him to (commit) sins, and the angel holds him back from it. And this is the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: . . . *sitting on the right and on the left. He utters not a word but there is by him a watcher at hand* (50:17 — 18).'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: There are many traditions of the same meaning, some of which will be quoted later on. In this tradition, Imām (a.s.) has applied the verse to an angel and a Satan, while other traditions apply it to the two angels who write down the good and evil deeds of a man. But the two sets of traditions are not mutually exclusive. The verse only says that there are ''watchers'' with every man who receive (i.e., note down) all his utterances, and that there are two of them, one on his right side and the other on his left. But the verse does not say whether those watchers are from only the angels or from the angels and the satans. As it is silent on this point, it may be applied to either explanation.

Zurārah said: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the apostle, the prophet and *al-muḥaddath* (اَلْمُحَدَّثُ = the one spoken to). He said: 'The apostle is the one who sees the angel (who) brings the message of his Lord to him, and tells him: ''(Allāh) orders you so-and-so.'' And the apostle is a prophet with (the added rank of) apostleship. And the prophet does not see the angel; something comes down to him — the news (comes) to his heart; and he becomes as though he be in a trance, and he sees (the vision) in his dream.' I said: 'Then how does he know that what was (shown to him) in his dream was truth?' He said: 'Allāh makes it clear to him, so that he knows that it is truth; and he does not see the angel . . .' '' (*ibid*.)

The author says: ''The apostle is a prophet . . .'' It shows that the two ranks may be combined together in one person. We have explained in detail the meaning of apostleship and prophethood in

the Commentary of the verse 2:213, ‘‘Mankind was but one people . . . ’’

‘‘He becomes as though he be in a trance’’: It explains the next sentence, ‘‘and he sees (the vision) in his dream’’. It clarifies that what is meant by ‘‘dream’’ is not the dream as known to us; it only refers to a condition in which the prophet becomes oblivious of his surroundings.

‘‘Allāh makes it clear to him’’: Allāh makes the truth known to the prophet, enabling him to differentiate between an angelic inspiration and a satanic whispering.

Burayd enquired from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (peace be on both of them), *inter alia,* in a tradition: ‘‘Then what are the apostle, the prophet and the one spoken to?’’ (The Imām) said: ‘‘The apostle is the one that the angel appears before him and talks to him; and the prophet sees (the vision) in the dream; and sometimes apostleship and prophethood are combined in one (person); and *al-muḥaddath* (اَلْمُحَدَّثُ = the one spoken to) is the one who hears the voice but does not see the form.’’ Burayd said: ‘‘I said: ‘May Allāh make your affairs good! How can the prophet know that what he saw in (his) dream was truth and that it was from the angel?’ (The Imām) said: ‘He is helped (by Allāh) in it until he knows it. Certainly Allāh ended (the series of divine) books with your Book, and the prophets with your Prophet . . .’ ’’ (*Baṣā’iru ’d-darajāt*)

The author says: It has the same connotation as the preceding tradition. The Imām has sufficiently explained the meaning of ‘‘the one spoken to’’ — it is the one who hears the voice of an unseen speaker who speaks by order of Allāh. The words, ‘‘Certainly Allāh ended the (series of divine) books . . .’’, point to this reality.

When writing on the following verses, we shall discuss in detail about ‘‘the one spoken to’’.

* * * * *

LIST OF THE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS
DEALT WITH IN THIS VOLUME

No/s of Verse/s	Subject	Nature of Discussion	Page
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No/s of Verse/s	Subject	Nature of Discussion	Page
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APPENDIX 'A'

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES

THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh	Rasūlu'llāh, Nabiyyu'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabī' I, in the Year of the Elephant. (25. 8. 570 AD)	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH (25. 5. 632 AD)	Natural	Holy Medina, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27.1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar)	15th Ramaḍān, 3 AH (1. 3. 625 AD)	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH (6. 3. 670 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Aṣghar)	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH (8. 1. 626 AH)	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (10. 10. 680 AD)	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā	Holy Karbalā' (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH (16. 12. 676 AD)	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH (28. 1. 733 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH (20. 4. 702 AD)	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH (14. 12. 765 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abd aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH (28. 10. 746 AD)	25th Rajab, 183 AH (1. 9. 799 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 148 AH – (29.12.765 AD)	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH (24. 8. 818 AD)	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs - Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH (8. 4. 811 AD)	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH (25. 11. 835 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third)	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH (27. 9. 827 AD)	3rd Rajab, 254 AH (28. 6. 868 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā), Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH (3. 12. 846 AD)	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH (1. 1. 874 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā, Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghā'ib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH (29. 7. 869 AD)	Still alive, but in occultation.	– –	– – – –

APPENDIX "B"

In this book the references of the Qur'ãnic verses have been given by writing serial number of the relevant chapter, followed by a colon (:) that is followed by the number/s of the verse/s. The names of the chapters have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The names of the chapters with their serial numbers are given here for the guidance of the readers.

To find, for instance, the verse 5:67 in the Qur'ãn, the reader should open the fifth chapter, that its, *al-Mã'idah* (اَلمَآئِدة = The Table) and then find the 67th verse.

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
1.	فاتِحَةُ الكِتاب	*Fatihatu 'l-kitãb*	The Opening of The Book
2.	البَقَرة	*al –Baqarah*	The Cow
3.	آل عِمران	*Ãl 'Imrãn*	The House of Imran
4.	النِّساء	*An-Nisã'*	Women
5.	المَائِدة	*Al-Mã'idah*	The Table
6.	الأنعام	*Al –An'ãm*	Cattle
7.	الأعراف	*Al-A'rãf*	The Battlements
8.	الأنفال	*Al-Anfãl*	The Spoils
9.	التَّوْبَة	*At-Tawbah*	Repentance
10.	يُونُس	*Yunus*	Jonah

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
11.	هُود	*Hũd*	Hood
12.	يُوسُف	*Yũsuf*	Joseph
13.	الرَّعد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder
14.	اِبراهيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham
15.	الحِجْر	*Al–Ḥijr*	El-Hijr
16.	النَّحل	*An-Naḥl*	The Bee
17.	الاِسْرآء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey
18.	الكَهْف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave
19.	مَريَم	*Maryam*	Mary
20.	طه	*Ṭã Hã*	Ta Ha
21.	الأنْبيآء	*Al-Anbiyã'*	Prophets
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage
23.	المؤمِنون	*al-Mu'minũn*	The Believers
24.	النّور	*an-Nũr*	Light
25.	الفُرقان	*al-Furqãn*	Discrimination (Salvation)
26.	الشُّعَراء	*Ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets
27.	النَّمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ant
28.	القَصَص	*Al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Stories
29.	العَنْكَبُوت	*Al-'Ankabũt*	The Spider
30.	الرُّوم	*Ar-Rũm*	The Greeks
31.	لُقْمان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman
32.	السَّجْدة	*As-Sajdah*	Prostration
33.	الأحزاب	*Al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates
34.	سَبَأ	*Saba'*	Sheba
35.	فاطِر (المَلائِكة)	*Fãṭir (or, al-Malã'ikah)*	The Originator (or The Angels)
36.	يـس	*Yã Sīn*	Ya Sin
37.	الصّـافّات	*aṣ-Ṣãffãt*	The Rangers
38.	ص	*Ṣãd*	Sad

S.No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
39.	الزُّمَر	*az-Zumar*	The Companies
40.	المُؤْمِن	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished
42.	الشُّورى	*ash-Shūrā*	Counsel
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments
44.	الدُّخان	*ad-Dukhān*	Smoke
45.	الجاثِية	*al-Jāthiyah*	Hobbling
46.	الأحقاف	*al-Aḥqāf*	The Sand-Dunes
47.	مُحَمّد(ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory
49.	الحُجُرات	*al Ḥujurāt*	Apartments
50.	ق	*Qāf*	Qaf
51.	الذّاريات	*adh-Dhāriyāt*	The Scatterers
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭūr*	The Mount
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon
55.	الرَّحمن	*ar-Raḥmān*	The All-
56.	الواقِعَة	*al-Wāqi'ah*	The Terror
57.	الحَديد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron
58.	المُجادَلة	*Al-Mujādalah*	The Disputer
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering
60.	المُمتَحَنة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman
61.	الصَّف	*aṣ-Ṣaff*	The Ranks
62.	الجُمُعة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation
63.	المُنافِقُون	*Al-Munāfiqūn*	The Hypocrites
64.	التَّغابُن	*At-Taghābun*	Mutual Fraud
65.	الطَّلاق	*aṭ-Ṭalāq*	Divorce
66,	التَّحْريم	*at-taḥrīm*	The Forbidding
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
68.	القَلَم	*Al-Qalam*	The Pen
69.	الحَاقّة	*Al-Ḥãqqah*	The Indubitable
70.	المَعارج	*Al-Ma'ãrij*	The Stairways
71.	نُوح	*Nũḥ*	Noah
72.	الجِنّ	*Al-Jinn*	The Jinn
73.	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped
74.	المُدَّثِّر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded
75.	القِيامَة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection
76.	الدَّهر (الإنسان)	*Ad-Dahr* (or, *al -Insãn)*	The Time (or, Man)
77.	المُرسَلات	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones
78.	النَّبأ	*an-Naba'*	The Tiding
79.	النّازعات	*An-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers
80.	عَبَس	*'Abas*	He Frowned
81.	التَّكْوير	*At-Takwīr*	The Darkening
82.	الإنفِطار	*Al-Infiṭãr*	The Splitting
83.	المُطَفِّفين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters
84.	الإنشِقاق	al-Inshiqãq	The Rending
85.	البُروج	*Al-Burũj*	The Constellations
86.	الطّارق	*aṭ-Ṭãriq*	The Night-star
87.	الأعلى	*Al-A'lã*	The Most High
88.	الغاشِيَة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper
89.	الفَجْر	*Al-Fajr*	The Dawn
90.	البَلَد	*Al-Balad*	The Land
91.	الشَّمْس	*Ash-Shams*	The Sun
92.	اللَّيل	*Al-Layl*	The Night
93.	الضُّحى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon
94.	الإنشِراح	*Al-Inshirãh*	The Expanding

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
95.	التِّين	*At-Tīn*	The Fig
96.	العَلَق	*Al-ʻlaq*	The Blood-clot
97.	القَدر	*al -Qadr*	Power
98.	البَيِّنَة	*al -Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign
99.	الزِّلزال	*Az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake
100.	العَاديات	*Al-ʻÃdiyãt*	The Chargers
101.	القارعَة	*al-Qãriʻah*	The Clatterer
102.	التَّكاثُر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry
103.	العَصْر	*Al-ʻAṣr*	Afternoon
104.	الهُمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter
109.	الفيل	*Al-Fīl*	The Elephant
106.	قُرَيْش	*Quraysh*	Quraish
107.	الماعُون	*Al-Mãʻũn*	Charity
108.	الكَوْثَر	*al-Kawthar*	Abũndance
109.	الكافِرون	*Al-Kãfirũn*	The Unbelievers
110.	النَّصر	*An-Naṣr*	Help
111.	تَبَّت	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab)*	Perish (or,The Flame)
112.	الإخْلاص (التَّوحيد)	*al Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd)*	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)
113.	الفَلَق	*Al-Falaq*	Daybreak
114.	النَّاس	*an-Nãs*	Men

AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Qur'ān

BY:

al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 6

Translated by:

Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

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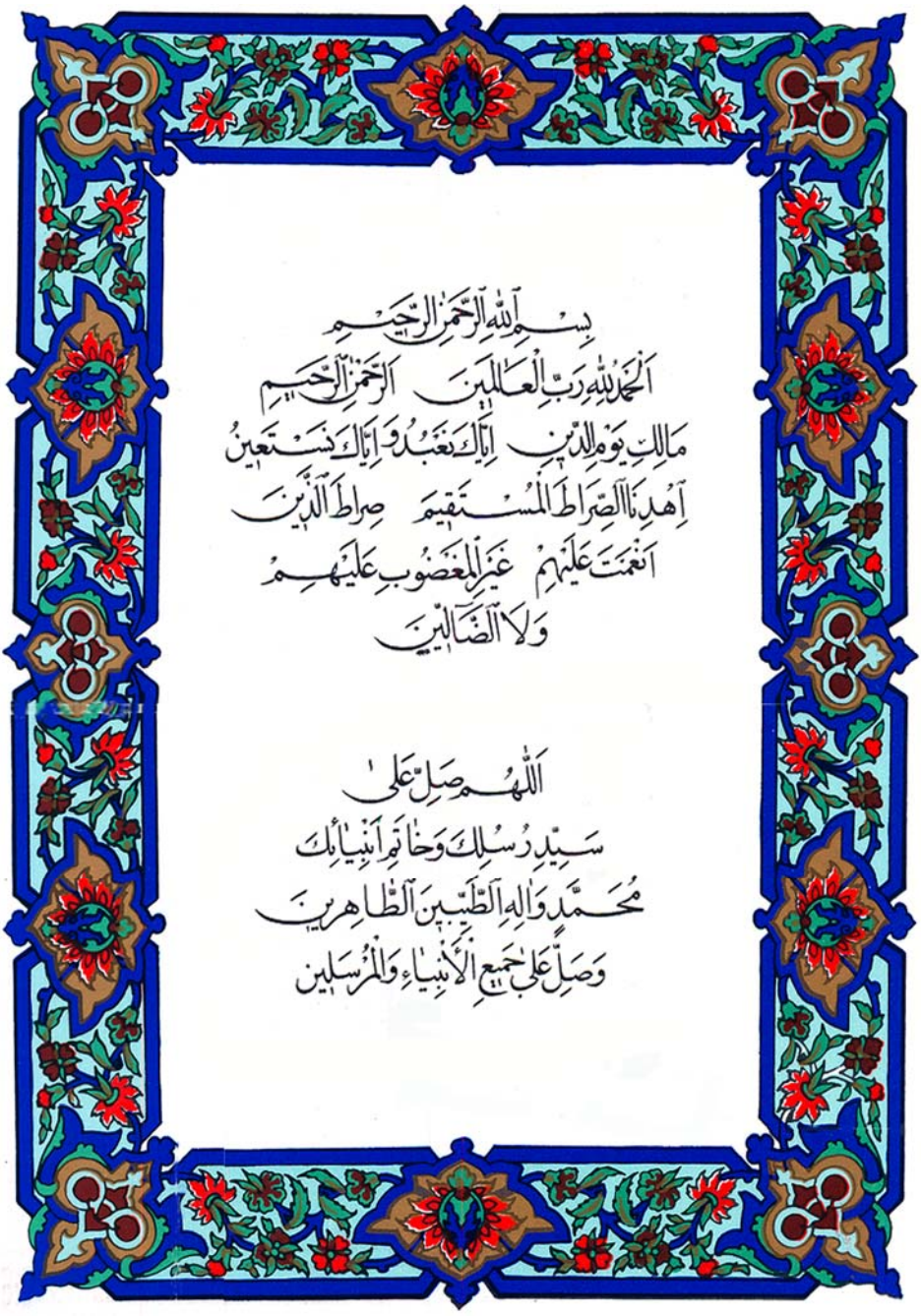
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ

اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى

سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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TRANSLITERATION

Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘ *or* ʿ
غ	gh
ف	F
ق	q

Symbol	Transliteration
ك	K
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
ة	**ah, at** (construct state)
ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
Long Vowels	
آ	ã
و	ũ
ي	ī
Short Vowels	
ـَ	a
ـُ	u
ـِ	i

تصدير

١- العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤-١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، وبعد مداولات واستشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لانّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، و كفاءته الأدبيّة في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هو الزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤- قدّمنا نشر ترجمة الجزء الثاني من (الميزان) لأنّه كان قد تهيّأ للنشر، والجزء الأوّل لم يتهيّأ بعد - لأسباب لا نريد أن نشرح أمرها هنا - فلم نر من الصّالح إرجاء نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و(الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة. و لكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكل جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

* * *

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى و نعم النّصير.

١٤٠٢/٤/٦
١٩٨٢/٢/١

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران — ايران

F O R E W O R D

1. al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (l321/1904 — 1402/1981) — may Allāh have mercy upon him — was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*.

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the fifth volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*. This volume corresponds with the

first half of the third volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allāh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mīzān:* One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * * *

We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Heiper.

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al-Mīzān

volume Six

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وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلاَئِكَـــةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ
وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَىٰ نِسَآءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ــ ٤٢ . يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي
وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ــ ٤٣ . ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلاَمَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ
لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ــ ٤٤ . إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللهَ
يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى بْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهاً فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ــ ٤٥ . وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلاً
وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ــ ٤٦ . قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي
بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكِ اللهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْراً فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ــ ٤٧ . وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَاةَ وَالإِنْجِيلَ ــ ٤٨ .
وَرَسُولاً إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنِّي
أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْراً بِإِذْنِ
اللهِ وَأُبْرِيءُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لآيَةً لَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ٤٩ . وَمُصَدِّقاً لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَاةِ وَلأُحِلَّ
لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا

اللهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ــ ٥٠ إِنَّ اللهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَـــذَا صِرَاطٌ
مُسْتَقِيمٌ ــ ٥١ . فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَى مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنصَارِي إِلَى
اللهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنصَارُ اللهِ آمَنَّا بِاللهِ وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ــ ٥٢ .
رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا بِمَا أَنزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ــ ٥٣ .
وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللهُ وَاللهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ ــ ٥٤ . إِذْ قَالَ اللهُ يَا عِيسَى
إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعِـــلُ
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ــ ٥٥ . فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
فَأُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَاباً شَدِيداً فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ــ ٥٦ .
وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ
الظَّالِمِينَ ــ ٥٧ . ذَلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ ــ ٥٨ .
إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى عِندَ اللهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ
فَيَكُونُ ــ ٥٩ . الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلاَ تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ــ ٦٠ .

And when the angels said: ''O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds (42). *O Maryam! keep to obedience to your Lord and prostrate and bow down with those who bow''* (43). *This is of the tidings of the unseen which we reveal to you; and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Maryam in his charge, and you were not with them when they contented one with another* (44). *When the angels said: ''O Maryam! surely Allāh gives you good news of a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near* (to Allāh) (45). *And he shall speak to the people when in the*

cradle and when of mature age, and (he shall be) *one of the good ones''* (46). *She said: ''My Lord! how shall there be a son* (born) *to me and man has not touched me?'' He said: ''Even so; Allāh creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it: 'Be,' and it is* (47). *And He will teach him the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Injīl* (48). *And* (make him) *a messenger to the Children of Israel: 'That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allāh's permission, and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead ones to life with Allāh's permission, and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers* (49). *And a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah, and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, therefore fear Allāh and obey me* (50). *Surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the straight path' ''* (51). *But when 'Īsā perceived unbelief on their part, he said: ''Who are my helpers to Allāh?'' The disciples said: ''We are helpers of Allāh: We believe in Allāh and be* (our) *witness that we are submitting ones* (52). *Our Lord! we believe in what Thou halt revealed and we follow the messenger; so write us down with those who bear witness''* (53). *And they planned and Allāh* (also) *planned, and Allāh is the best of planners* (54). *And when Allāh said: ''O 'Īsā! I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve, and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection; then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed* (55). *Then as to those who disbelieve, I will chastise them with severe chastisement in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have no helpers''* (56). *And as to those who believe and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards; and Allāh does not love the unjust* (57). *This we recite to you of the signs and the wise reminder* (58). *Surely the likeness of 'Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust,*

then said to him: ''Be,'' and he was (59). *The truth is from your Lord, so be not of the doubters* (60).

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COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *And when the angels said: ''O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen you and purified you:* The conjunctive, ''And'', joins it to the verse 35: *When the woman of 'Imrān said ...* Both verses therefore describe the selection of the descendants of 'Imrān mentioned in the verse 34: *Surely Allāh chose Adam...*

This verse proves that Maryam was one of ''the spoken to''; the angels talked to her and she heard their speech. It is proved also by the words of Allāh in the Chapter of Maryam: *then We sent to her Our Spirit, and there appeared to her a well-made man ... He said: ''I am only a messenger of your Lord ... ''* (19:17 — 21): We shall write, at the end of this Commentary, about ''the spoken to''.

We have earlier written explaining the Divine Words, So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing (3:37), that these sentences answer the pleas of Maryam's mother: ''and I have named her Maryam, and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection from the accursed Satan'' (3:36); also it was mentioned that the angels' words in the verse under discussion, ''O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen you ...'', show the status which Maryam had near Allāh. You may refer to that explanation for further details. Thus her choosing means that she was accepted a good acceptance for the worship of Allāh; and her purification implies that she held fast to the protection of Allāh. She was therefore a chosen one who was protected from sin. It has also been said that her purification means that she was a virgin who did not menstruate — thus she was not obliged to go out of the synagogue at any time. There is nothing wrong in this explanation although the meaning given by us is more in conformity with the context.

QUR'ĀN: *''and chosen you above the women of the worlds:* We have

already described (in the Commentary of the verse 3:33, *Surely Allāh chose Adam ... above all the worlds*) the connotation of choosing ‘‘above’’ the worlds; ‘‘above’’ shows that the chosen one was given excellence and precedence over other people in something exclusively given to him; and that it is more than mere selection which implies total surrender to the will of Allāh. The announcement that Maryam was chosen ‘‘above the women of the worlds’’ thus, means that she was given precedence over them.

Was she given precedence over them in all things? Or only in some matters? Look at the following verses:

When the angels said: ‘‘O Maryam! surely Allāh gives you good news of a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah...’’ (3:45).

And she who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her of Our Spirit and made her and her son a sign for the worlds (21:91).

And Maryam, the daughter of ‘Imrān, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into it of Our Spirit, and she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord, and she was of the obedient ones (66:12).

These verses describe the only distinction which she was given to the exclusion of all women of the worlds — and that is her miraculously conceiving and giving birth to ‘Īsā (a.s.). It shows that it was this aspect of her life in which she was given precedence over all the women. The other qualities attributed to her in these verses (her purification, her acceptance of the words of Allāh and His Books, her obedience to God and her being spoken to) were not her exclusive virtues — they are found in others too.

It is said that she was chosen above the women of her time. But the verse is unconditional and general, and as such it cannot accept any limitation put to it.

QUR’ĀN: *‘‘O Maryam! keep to obedience to your Lord and prostrate, and bow down with those who bow’’: ‘‘al-Qunūt’’* (اَلْقُنُوْتُ) means keeping to obedience with submission and humility; *as-sajdah* (اَلسَّجْدَةُ = translated here as prostration) is well-known ritual of worship; *ar-rukū‘* (اَلرُّكُوْعُ = to bow down; to be humble).

When someone calls another person, the called one looks towards the caller and listens to him. In this verse, Maryam is again called by name. It is as though the angels wanted to tell her: We have brought to you

good news and again some more; you should listen to both of the good tidings. The first concerns with the rank and status you have been given by Allāh. The second is what you are obliged to do alongside that Divine Favour; in other words, what you have got to offer to Allāh of the duties of servitude; it will show your gratitude for that rank and meet the demands of servitude. In this light, this verse, ‘‘O Maryam! keep to obedience ...’’, seems to branch out from the preceding one, ‘‘O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen you ...’’; that is, because Allāh has chosen you, purified you and chosen you over the women of the worlds, you should keep to obedience to Him and prostrate and bow down with those who bow down. Each of the three orders given in this verse may possibly have emanated from one of the three excellences mentioned in the preceding one — although their respective relationship is not clear.

QUR’ĀN: *This is of the tidings of the unseen which we reveal to you:* Allāh has counted it as a tiding of the unseen as He has done after relating the story of Yūsuf (a.s.): *This is of the tidings of the unseen* (which) *we reveal to you, and you were not with them when they resolved upon their affair, and they were devising plans* (12:102). Of course, the scriptures of the People of the Book contain stories about them, but no credence can be attached to them, because they have not remained safe from alterations, deletions and interpolations. For example, a lot of details and particulars given by the Qur’ān concerning the story of Zakariyyā are nowhere to be found in the Bible.

It is probably for this reason that Allāh goes on to say: ‘‘and you were not with them when they cast their pens...’’

Moreover, the Prophet and his people were unlettered; they had not known these stories, nor had they read them in books, as Allāh says after mentioning the story of Nūḥ: *These a, e of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you; you did not know them* — (neither) *you nor your people — before this* (11:49). But the first interpretation is more in keeping with the context of the verse.

QUR’ĀN: *and you were not with them when they cast their pens* (to decide) *which of them should have Maryam in his charge: ‘‘al-Qalam’’* (اَلْقَلَمُ = pen; plural: *al-aqlām* = اَلْاَقْلَامُ), also means arrow shaft or arrow which was used for casting lot; in this meaning it is synonymous to *as-*

sahm (اَلسَّهْمُ). Therefore, ‘‘when they cast their pens’’, means, when they cast their arrows to decide by lot which of them should have Maryam in his custody. This sentence shows that the contention mentioned in the next phrase, ‘‘and you were not with them when they contended one with another’’, refers to this same conflict which they had had about the guardianship of Maryam, and that they did not stop arguing with each other until they agreed to decide the matter by lot. They cast the lot and it came out in favour of Zakariyyā, and he took her charge, as Allāh says: *and gave her into the charge of Zakariyyā* (3:37).

According to some people, this contention and decision by lot probably occurred when Maryam was grown up and Zakariyyā had become too weak to look after her. Why did this idea occur to them? Probably it was because this contention and its settlement through lot has been mentioned after the story of Maryam’s birth and her being chosen by Allāh, and also because the guardianship of Zakariyyā has already been mentioned before. Thus, according to them, this verse refers to another guardianship.

But it is not unusual, while describing an event, to repeat, or to allude to, some of its previously mentioned aspects in order to prove a claim. A similar style has been used in the story of Yūsuf, where Allāh says at the end: *This is of the tidings of the unseen* (which) *We reveal to you, and you were not with them when they resolved upon their affair, and they were devising plans* (12:102). This points to their conspiracy which is mentioned at the begining of the story: *When they said: ‘‘Certainly Yūsuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we, ... Slay Yūsuf or cast him* (forth) *into some land ...’’ A speaker from among them said: ‘‘Do not slay Yūsuf, and cast him down into the bottom of the pit if you must do* (it), (so that) *some of the travellers may pick him up’’* (12:8 — 10).

QUR’ĀN: *When the angels said: ‘‘O Maryam! surely Allāh gives you good news of a Word:* Evidently it refers to the same event which is mentioned in the Chapter of Maryam in these words: *then We sent to her Our Spirit and there appeared to her a well-made man. She said: ‘‘Surely I fly for refuge from you to the Beneficient God, if you are pious.’’ He said: ‘‘I am only a messenger of your Lord: That I should give you a pure boy’’* (19:17 — 19). The good tiding ascribed to the angels in the verse under discussion is thus attributed here to the Spirit.

It is said that the word ‘‘angels’’ refers to Gabriel. He has been described with a plural, ‘‘angels’’, to show his great honour and high rank. People say: He went on a journey riding horses and sailing in ships — while actually he rode one horse and sailed in one ship only. Also, we say: People told him so, while in fact it was only one person who gave him the news. A similar style is seen in the story of Zakariyyā, mentioned earlier: *Then the angels called to him… He said: ‘‘Even thus; does Allāh what He pleases’’* (3:39 — 40).

Others have said that there were other angels with Gabriel and they jointly gave her the good news.

However, if you ponder on the verses which describe the angels, you will see that the angels are of various ranks; some have precedence over others, some are nearer to Allāh than others. Those who are behind are mere followers of the orders of those who are in the forefront. The actions and words of the follower are counted as the actions and the words of the leader himself. It is not different from the activities of our own powers and limbs which are counted as our own activities without there being any duality of doers. We say: My own eyes saw it, my own ears heard it; and the same idea is conveyed when we say: I saw it and heard it. We say: My hand did it; my fingers wrote it; and also we say: I did it, I wrote it. Likewise the deeds and words of the angels of higher ranks are counted as the deeds and words of those of lower rank who follow the former’s orders, and vice versa. And similarly the actions and words of all the angels — the leaders and the followers — are attributed to Allāh Himself. Look at the action of giving death: In one place, Allāh attributes it to Himself: *Allāh takes completely the souls at the time of their death* (39:42); another verse ascribes it to the angel of death: *Say: ‘‘The angel of death who is given charge of you shall take you completely’’* (32:11); and yet another one attributes it to a group of the angels: *until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him completely* (6:61).

A similar interchange is seen in the following verses: *Surely We have revealed to you* (4:163); *The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your heart* (26:193 — 194); *Say: ‘‘Whoever is the enemy of Jibrīl — for surely he revealed it to your heart …’’* (2:97); *Nay! surely it is an admonishment. So let him who pleases mind it. In honoured books, exalted, purified, in the hands of scribes, noble, virtuous* (80:11 — 16).

Now it is clear that the announcement of good news by Gabriel was precisely the annoucement by the group of the angels under his authority. And Gabriel is one of the chiefs of the angels, one of those who are nearer to Allāh, as the Divine Words show: *Most surely it is the word of an honoured messenger, the possessor of strength, having an honourable place with the Lord of the Throne, one* (to be) *obeyed, and faithful in trust* (81:19 — 21). We shall explain it further, Allāh willing, under the ch. 35.

You may have a glimpse of the above mentioned reality in the verse: *He said: ''Even so; Allāh creates what He pleases ...''* (3:47). Apparently the speaker of these words is Allāh, while in ch. 19 the same thing has been attributed to the Spirit: *He* (i.e., the Spirit) *said: ''I am only a messenger of your Lord: That I should give you a pure boy.'' She said: ''How shall I have a boy and no mortal has touched me, nor have I been unchaste?'' He said: ''Even so, your Lord says: 'It is easy to Me ... ' ''* (19:19 — 21).

That the angels and the Spirit talked with Maryam, shows that she was one of ''the spoken to''. Not only this; the earlier quoted words of ch. 19 show that in addition to hearing their speech, she even saw an angel: *then we sent to her Our Spirit, and there appeared to her a well-made man.* We shall further explain it, Allāh willing, under the Traditions.

QUR'ĀN: *''a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam:* We have fully explained the significance of the ''speech of Allāh'', under the verse: *Those apostle, we have made some of them to excel the others* (2:253).

al-Kalimah (اَلْكَلِمَةُ = word) is a collective noun, one unit of which is called *al-kalim* (اَلْكَلِمُ), as is the case with *at-tamrah* and *at-tamr* (اَلتَّمْرَةُ، اَلتَّمْرُ = date). *al-Kalimah* is used for one meaningful word as well as for a sentence (e.g., Zayd is standing); also, it is used with equal validity for a phrase or incomplete sentence (e.g., If Zayd is standing …). This explanation is according to language. As far as the terminology of the Qur'ān is concerned, as for example where it attributes a word to Allāh, it means: 'that which shows the will of Allāh'; it may be an order, e.g., the word of creation when He says to a thing, 'Be'; or it may be a word of revelation and inspiration, etc.

What is the meaning of ‘‘a Word from Allāh’’ when it is applied to ‘Īsā (a.s.)? Some people say: This title was given to ‘Īsā (a.s.) because the prophets who preceded him (or especially the prophets of Israel) had foretold his advent, giving the good news that he would be the saviour of Israel. We say in similar situations: This is my word which I had said. And it is in the same meaning that this word has been used by Allāh in connection with the advent of Mūsā (a.s.): *and the good word of your Lord was fulfilled in the Children of Israel because they bore up* (sufferings) *patiently* (7:137).

COMMENT: Although the books of the Bible may support this interpretation, the Qur’ān does not subscribe to it. According to the Qur’ān, ‘Īsā son of Maryam was a prophet who had brought *the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Aḥmad* (61:6); he was not the one whose good news was given by the others. Moreover, the phrase, ‘‘whose name is the Messiah’’, does not fit this interpretation; because according to this interpretation, ‘‘a Word from Him’’ refers to the advent of ‘Īsā, and not to ‘Īsā himself; while the phrase ‘‘whose name is the Messiah’’, says that the Messiah is the name of the word — and not the name of him in whom the word of Allāh was fulfilled.

Another interpretation: The ‘‘Word’’ refers to ‘Īsā (a.s.) because he explained the Torah giving it the meaning intended by Allāh, pointing out the interpolations and alterations made by the Jews, and clarifying the religious matters in which they had differed. Allāh quotes him as saying to the Children of Israel: … *so that I may take clear to you part of what you differ in* (43:63).

COMMENT: This interpretation justifies application of the ‘‘Word’’ to ‘Īsā (a.s.); but there is no association or proof in the Qur’ān to support it.

Third interpretation: The ‘‘Word’’ refers to the good news itself; Maryam was told that she would conceive ‘Īsā and deliver him. Accordingly, ‘‘Allāh gives you good news of a Word from Him,’’ means that Allāh gives you good news that you will give birth to ‘Īsā without the agency of man.

COMMENT: Obviously, the phrase, ‘‘whose name is the Messiah, ‘Īsā

son of Maryam'', does not fit this interpretation.

Fourth interpretation: It refers to 'Īsā (a.s.) because he was the word of creation, i.e., the Divine Command, 'Be'. No doubt every man, nay, every thing, comes into being by the creative word, 'Be'; but every man is conceived and born according to the well-known normal system: the usual course is for the male sperm to fertilize the female ovum — and it requires many main and supporting causes to materialize. That is why conception is attributed to man as its efficient cause — as every effect is attributed to its immediate cause. But conception of 'Īsā did not follow this course; many usual and gradual causes were simply missing. His existence was just by the creative word, 'Be', and no usual causes intervened. And in this way, he became the ''Word'' itself, as we see in the verse: *... and His Word which He communicated to Maryam* (4:171). It gets support from the verse 3:59, coming at the end: *Surely the likeness of 'Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, ''Be'', and he was.*

COMMENT: This is the best of the interpretations.

al-Masīḥ (اَلْمَسِيْحُ = anointed; wiped clean), 'Īsā (a.s.) was given this name because he was anointed with success and blessing. Or because he was wiped clean of sins, was purified. Or because he was anointed with holy olive-oil, with which the prophets were anointed. Or because Gabriel wiped him with his wings at his birth, so that it should be a protection from Satan. Or because he used to touch and wipe the heads of the orphans. Or because he used to wipe the eyes of the blind and they gained eye-sight. Or because whenever he touched and wiped any suffering person, he became whole. These are the reasons given by the exegetes for this name.

The fact is that this name was included in the good news given by Gabriel to Maryam, as Allāh quotes him as saying: *O Maryam! surely Allāh gives you good news of a Word from Him whose name is al-Masīḥ, 'Īsā son of Maryam.* This word is the Arabicised form of the Meshiha, which is found in the Old and the New Testaments.[1]

The Bible shows that when a king was enthroned among the Children

[1] The original Hebrew *māshiaḥ* became *mashīḥā* in Aramic; in Greek this became messiah, the form now in common use. (*tr.*)

of Israel, the priests anointed him with the holy oil, so that he might be blessed in his rule. The king was therefore called messiah. It may be inferred from it that the messiah means either the king or the blessed one.

It appears from their books that ʻĪsā (a. s.) was called the Messiah because the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament contained the prophecy of his kingdom; it was believed that there would appear in the Children of Israel a king who would deliver them from bondage. The Gospel according to Luke describes the angel's good news to Maryam in these words:

> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail thou that are highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke, 1:28 — 33)

And that was the excuse offered by the Jews for not accepting ʻĪsā's claim of prophethood. They said that the good news contained the prophecy of his kingdom and it did not materialize at any time during his life. And it was precisely to overcome this objection that the Christians interpreted the promised kingdom as the spiritual, and not the temporal one. Some Muslim exegetes too have taken the same line.

The author says: It is not unlikely that the name *al-Masīḥ* used in the good news may have meant ''the blessed''. When they anointed a king with the holy oil, it was done to bring blessings on him. This connotation may be supported by the verses: *He said: ''Surely I am a servant of Allāh, He has given me the Book and made me a prophet: and He has made me blessed wherever I may be ...''* (19:30 — 31).

ʻĪsā was originally Yashūʻ which they interpret as deliverer, saviour. Some Muslims' traditions say that it means ''he lives''. It seems more appropriate in view of the perfect similarity between ʻĪsā and Yaḥyā whose name too means ''he lives''.[1]

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[1] See the translator's note in vol. 5, p. 263, under the explanation of the verse 3:39. (*tr.*)

The name ʻĪsā is qualified with the phrase, son of Maryam, although the good news was being given to Maryam herself. It was done to emphasize the fact that he would be born without the agency of a father, and therefore would be known with this name; and that Maryam would jointly share this sign with him. Allāh says: *and made her and her son a sign for the worlds* (21:91).

QUR'ĀN: *''worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near* (to Allah): *al-Wijāhah* (اَلوجَاهَةُ = translated here as worthiness of regard) means esteem, prestige, eminence and acceptability. ʻĪsā's eminence and acceptability in this world is not a secret; and the Qur'ān confers this position to him in the hereafter too. Undoubtedly ʻĪsā (a. s.) was one of ''those who are made near''. He is near to Allāh, included in the rank of the friends of Allāh and the near angels in the verse: *The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allāh, nor do the angels who are near to Him* (4:172). Allāh has explained the importance of being made near to Him, in the ch. 56. He says: *When the great event comes to pass, ... and you shall be three sorts ... And the foremost are the foremost; these are they who are drawn near* (to Allāh) (56:1 — 11). These verses point to the reality of the nearness to Allāh: Man presses forward leaving others behind in the way that leads one back to Allāh, then he comes nearer to Allāh. Proceeding on this way is prescribed for every man, nay, everything. Allāh says: *O man! surely thou art striving to thy Lord, a hard striving, so that thou art to meet Him* (84:6). Also, He says: *now surely to Allāh do all affairs eventually come* (42:53).

There is another aspect to this reality. Nearness to Allāh is an attribute of some angels. It means that this nearness is not necessarily a thing to be acquired by one's endeavours; whatever it is a gift from Allāh. It may therefore be said that it is a rank it is a gift from Allāh. It may therefore be said that it is a rank and status which the angels get by Divine bestowal and the men by their striving.

The expression, ''worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter'' is a circumstantial phrase; and so are other words in conjunctive with it, i.e., ''and of those who are made near''; ''and he shall speak''; ''and one of the good ones''; ''and He will teach him ...''; ''and a messenger ...''

QUR'ĀN: *'And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of mature age ...'':al-Mahd* (اَلْمَهْدُ = cradle; bed or cot for infant, especially one on rockers). *al-Kahl* (اَلْكَهْلُ = one of mature age) is derived from *al-kuhūlah* (اَلْكُهُوْلَةُ = to be of mature age); it is the middle age between youth and old age, it is the time when the body is at the height of its perfection and strength. That is why it is said that middle age is when white hair mixes with black. Others say that mature age means the age of forty-three.

In any case, it was a prophecy that he would live until he reached middle age; it was another good news for Maryam.

The Gospels say that he did not live on the earth more than thirty-three years. And yet the Qur'ān clearly talks about his middle age. It is a point to be pondered upon. It is because of this that some people have said that his middle age speech would occur after his coming down from the heaven — because he was not on the earth till his middle age. Some others have claimed that according to ''historical research'' 'Īsā (a.s.) lived for about sixty-four years, contrary to what the Gospels say. But the expression, ''when in the cradle and when of mature age,'' shows that he would not reach old age — his life on this earth would end in his middle age. In other words, the verse gives us both sides of his age — the infancy and the middle age.

Usually a child is put in cradle in the beginning of its life when it is in diapers, before it starts crawling or walking — generally in its second year or even before; and it is the age when it starts talking. Therefore, for a child to speak in cradle is not an extraordinary achievement. But the verse obviously has another importance: It means that he would speak to the people, when in the cradle, a complete and thought provoking speech which men of understanding would listen to, as they listen to the talk of a middle-aged man. In other words, he would talk to them in his cradle in the same manner as he would do in his mature age. Surely such a talk from an infant is extraordinary sign, a miracle.

Apart from that, the story as given in the ch. 19, clearly shows that he had spoken to the people in the very first hour of his life, when Maryam brought him to them soon after his birth. And undoubtedly when a child talks on the day he is born, it must be a miracle. Allāh says: *And she came to her people with him, carrying him* (with her). *They said: ''O Maryam! surely you have done a strange thing. O sister of Hārūn! your*

father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman.'' But she pointed to him. They said: ''How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?'' He said: ''Surely I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet: And he has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and zakāt so *long as I live: And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed: And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life''* (19:27 — 33).

QUR'ĀN: *She said: ''My Lord! how shall there be a son* (born) *to me and man has not touched me?'':* She addressed her talk to the Lord, although it was the Spirit in the form of a well-made man who was talking to her. It was based on the earlier explained reality that the talk of the angels and Spirit is in fact the talk of Allāh. She knew that it was God who was talking to her although the talk occurred through the agency of the Spirit or the angels. That is why she expressed her perplexity to her Lord.

Also, it is possible to look at this sentence as a cry for help. In that case, it will be a sentence in parenthesis, somewhat similar to the expression: *he says: ''Send me back, my Lord, send me back''* (23:99).

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''Even so; Allāh creates what He pleases when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is:* We have described earlier the syntactic position of the word, ''Even so''. We have shown that, putting this reply by the side of the verse 19:21 (*He said: ''Even so; your Lord says: 'It is easy to Me: and that we may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us; and it is a matter which has been decreed' ''*), it may be inferred that the word, ''Even so'', is a complete sentence, implying: Even so is the matter. That is, what you have been told is a matter which has been decreed; nothing can avert it.

As for her astonishment, it could only be in place if the matter was beyond the power of Allāh, or very difficult for Him to do. So far as His power is concerned, it is unlimited, He does whatever He pleases. And as for difficulty it is imaginable only where the matter depends on preliminaries and causes — the more numerous and more formidable the causes and preliminaries, the more difficult that matter. But Allāh does not create, what He creates, with the help of the causes; ''when He has

decreed a matter, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is''.

It is thus evident that the word, ''Even so'', is a complete sentence meant to remove the perplexity of Maryam; the next sentence, ''Allāh creates what He pleases,'' aims at getting rid of the possible misunderstanding about Allāh's power; and lastly the sentence, ''when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is,'' removes the delusion of difficulty and hardship.

QUR'ĀN: *''And He will teach him the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Injīl:* The definite articles, in ''the Book'' and ''the Wisdom'', denote the genes of the Book and the Wisdom. The Book, as explained earlier refers to revelation which removes the people's differences. The Wisdom is the useful knowledge related to the belief and action. Now the Torah and the Injīl themselves were books containing Wisdom. Yet, the Spirit or the angels mentioned them separately after the Book and the Wisdom. Sometimes a particular person or thing is mentioned after description of its genes, because that thing is important enough to deserve separate mention. The definite article in ''the Book'' is not for comprehensiveness. In other words, it does not say that 'Īsā (a.s.) was taught all the book, all the revelation. Allāh says: *And when 'Īsā came with clear arguments, he said: ''I have come to you indeed with Wisdom, and so that I may make clear to you part of what you differ in; so fear Allāh and obey me''* (43:63) . Note the word, ''part of''; we have written about it earlier.

When the Qur'ān mentions the Torah, it refers to the revelation which Allāh had sent down to Mūsā (a.s.) inscribed on the tablets when he was on the Mount Sinai, as Allāh describes in the ch. 7, i.e., ''The Battlements''. As for the books presently in the hands of the Jews, they themselves admit a big vaccum and void, a large gap, in its chain of narrators between the reigns of Nebuchadnezzer, King of Babylon, and Cyrus, King of Persia. Nevertheless, the Qur'ān confirms that the Torah which was with the Jews in the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was not altogether different from the original Torah — although it had been altered and interpolated to a great extent. The Qur'ānic verses clearly show these facts.

As for the Injīl — and it means ''good news'' — the Qur'ān says that it was a single book that was revealed to 'Īsā (a.s.), it was therefore a

revelation sent especially to him. Allāh says: *and He revealed the Torah and the Injīl aforetime, a guidance for the people* (3:3 — 4). But the present Gospels attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were admittedly written and composed long after ʻĪsā (a.s.).

The Qur'ān also shows that the Law was only in the Torah; the Injīl did not bring any new *sharīʻah,* except that it abrogated some rules of the Torah. Allāh says in the verses under discussion: ''And a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah, and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you.'' Again He says: *and We gave him the Injīl in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of Torah, and a guidance and an admonition for those who guard* (against evil). *And the people of the Injīl should have judged by what Allāh revealed in it ...* (5:46 — 47). It may be inferred from this verse that there were some affirmative rules too in the Injīl.

The Qur'ān also shows that the Injīl, like the Torah, contained the good news of the advent of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Allāh says: *Those who follow the Messenger Prophet, the* ummī, *whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Injīl* (7:157).

QUR'ĀN :*''And* (make him) *a messenger to the Children of Israel:* Evidently ʻĪsā (a.s.) was sent particularly to the Children of Israel; and the verses concerning Mūsā (a.s.) imply the same thing about him. But while writing on the subject of prophethood, under the verse: *Mankind was but one people; so Allāh sent the prophets ...* (2:213); we have explained that ʻĪsā (a.s.), like Mūsā (a.s.), was one of the *ulu 'l-ʻazm* prophets, who were sent to the whole world.[1]

This problem may be solved if you look at the difference between a messenger and a prophet written there. It was mentioned that a prophet conveys to his people what is good for them in this world and the hereafter; and an apostle brings to them a special message which decides between the people with truth and finality — either providing them with eternal blissful life or bring to them destruction and perdition, as has been described in the words of Allāh: *And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly* (10:47).

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[1] See *al-Mīzān,* vol.3, p.212. (*tr.*)

In other words, a prophet is a man who is sent to explain the religion to the men, while a messenger is sent to convey a special message whose rejection brings destruction and perdition in its wake, and whose acceptance bestows eternity and bliss.[1] This idea gets strengthened if we ponder on the messages given by the messengers (like: Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Shu'ayb and others, peace of Allāh be on them) to their nations, and which are quoted in the Qur'ān.

This being the case, being a messenger to a particular nation does not necessarily mean that he was sent as prophet to them only. Possibly a messenger sent to a particular nation could have been appointed as prophet to that nation together with other people — as was the case with Mūsā and 'Īsā (a.s.).

We find in the Qur'ān evidence in support of the above views. For Example, Mūsā (a.s.) was sent to Pharaoh, as Allāh said to him: *Go to Pharaoh, surely he has exceeded all limits* (20:24); and the magicians of the Pharaoh's nation believed in Mūsā (a.s.); evidently their belief was accepted by Allāh although they too were not from the Children of Israel, as Allāh says: *they said: ''We believe in the Lord of Hārūn and Mūsā''* (20:70). Likewise, the call to the Divine Religion was addressed to the whole nation of Pharaoh: *And certainly We tried before them the people of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble messenger* (44:17).

A similar phenomenon is seen about 'Īsā (a.s.). Before the appearance of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), there had entered into the religion of 'Īsā a multitude of non-Israelites, like the Romans, the Franks, the Austrians, the Prussians and the Anglo-Saxons in the West, and the tribe of Najrān in the East. And when the Qur'ān speaks about the Christians, it does not single out the Israelite Christians. When it says something for or against them, it covers all Christians — Israelites and non-Israelites alike.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.,* p.205. (*tr.*)

[2] This argument seems inconclusive. 'Īsā (a.s.) himself said: ''I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'' (Matthew, 15:23); and when he sent his Apostles to spread the Divine Message, he expressly forbade them to go to non-Israelites: ''Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and unto the city of the Samaritans enter you not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'' (Matthew, 10:5 — 6). But St. Paul, who had never seen 'Īsā (a.s.) in his life, over-ruled the Apostles who had spent their time with 'Īsā (a.s.) and were privy to his ideas and ideals. Thus, St. Paul took Christianity to non-Israelites; and this transplantation bore out such fruits which could never be palatable to 'Īsā

QUR'ĀN: *'' 'That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allāh's permission, and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead ones to life with Allāh's permission,: ''al-Khalq''* (اَلْخَلْقُ = to create; to assemble the parts of a thing). This verse ascribes creation to someone other than Allāh; the same idea is implied by the verse: *so blessed be Allāh, the best of the creators* (23:14).

al-Akmah (اَلْاَكْمَهُ = one who is born blind). ar-Rāghib says that it is sometimes used for one who has lost his eyesight, i.e., as synonymous to blind. It is said: His eyes *kamahat* (كَمَهَتْ = lost their sight until they became white).

al-Abraṣ (اَلْاَبْرَصُ) means one having *al-barṣ* (اَلْبَرْصُ = leprosy, a well-known skin disease).

He said, ''and bring the dead ones to life'', using the plural. It proves, or at least hints, that he brought to life many dead persons. And he said, ''with Allāh's permission'', to make it clear that these miraculous signs appearing on his hands were actually attributed to Allāh, not that 'Īsā (a. s.) had any independent power to do so. He went on repeating this phrase to put utmost emphasis on this aspect.

There was a real danger of people believing him to be a god — because of these miracles. That is why he repeatedly added the proviso, ''with Allāh's permission'', after every miracle which could confuse and mislead the people, like creation of bird, and bringing the dead to life. And it was because of this very reason that he ended his talk saying: *Surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the straight path.*

The verse, ''that I create for you ...'', apparently means that these miracles had actually happened on his hands; it was not just a talk, nor just a challenge. Had he wanted only to tell them that he had got that power — just to complete his argument against them — he would have added some proviso like, ''if you ask for it'', or ''if you so desire''.

Moreover, the talk that Allāh will have on the Day of Resurrection

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(a.s.) himself.

Clearly, we cannot bring in evidence an action of St. Paul (or more precisely, the fruit of that action) which was diametrically opposed to a clear instruction of 'Īsā (a.s.). (*tr.*)

with ʻĪsā clearly shows that these miracles had actually happened: *When Allāh will say: ''O ʻĪsā son of Maryam! remember My favour on you and on your mother ... and when you created out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission, and you healed the blind and the leper by* My *permission; and when you brought forth the dead ones by My permission ... ''* (5:110).

Some people have said: Utmost that can be proved from these verses is that Allāh had given him this power, and that he mentioned that power when he argued with the people. Thus, he completed his proof against them, because he would have shown those miracles, if they had asked for them. But it does not prove that all or some of these miracles did actually happen.

COMMENT: The explanation given by us and the Divine Speech on the Day of Resurrection make it abundantly clear that all these miracles did actually take place, and that it is absolutely wrong to cast any doubt on them.

QUR'ĀN: *''and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses ...:* This is news of the unseen which is reserved for Allāh and his messengers who knew it by Divine Revelation. It is another miracle, an information of the unseen which was beyond any doubt or confusion — man, after all, cannot have any doubt about what he has eaten or has stored in his house.

This miracle does not have the proviso, ''by permission of Allāh'', although no miracle can take place without Allāh's permission. Allāh Himself says: *and it was not meet for a messenger that he should bring a sign except with Allāh's permission* (40:78). The reason of this omission lies in the verb ''inform''. ʻĪsā (a.s.) was to give them those informations; it would be a speech emanating from ʻĪsā (a.s.). In other words, it was ʻĪsā's action, and as such was not worthy of being attributed to Allāh, in contrast to the preceding two signs, i.e., creation and bringing the dead to life, which are really the actions of Allāh and cannot be attributed to anyone else except by His permission.

Moreover, these two signs were not like giving those informations. They had more potentiality of leading people astray, when compared to

his informing them of what they ate and what they kept in store. Simple minded people can very easily accept the Godhead of a creator of birds and resurrector of dead, rather than the divinity of one who gives them the news of the unseen. Common people do not think that the knowledge of the unseen is exclusively reserved for Allāh; they think that it is not so difficult an art and may be attained to by any magician through training and practice. That is why ʻĪsā (a.s.) found it necessary, when talking to them, to put the condition of Allāh's permission, on the two signs, and not on this last one. The same is the case of healing; it was sufficient just to mention, as he did in the beginning, that it was ''a sign from your Lord''; and especially when he was talking with the people who claimed to be believers. That is why he ended his talk with the words, *most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers,* i.e., if you are truthful in your claim that you are a believer.

QUR'ĀN: *'' 'And a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah, and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you:* It is in conjunction with ''and a messenger to the Children of Israel''. Of course, this phrase is in the first person (i.e., spoken by ʻĪsā, a.s.) while the former is in the third person (i.e., spoken by the Spirit); but it makes no difference because the former, i.e., ''and a messenger ...'', has been immediately explained by ʻĪsā (a.s.) in the following words: ''That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord ...''; and this has changed the mode from the third to the first person — and this makes the conjunction perfect.

He came as a verifier of the Torah; he verified the Torah which was revealed before him and which he was taught by Allāh, as the preceding verse says. In other words, he verified the original Torah which was given to Mūsā (a.s.). This phrase, therefore, does not show that he verified the Torah which was with the Jews in his time, nor does it imply that the Torah of his days was unaltered. The same applies to the verification of the Torah by our Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

QUR'ĀN: *'' 'and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you:* Allāh had forbidden them some of the good things, as He says: *Wherefore for the iniquity of those who are Jews did We disallow to them the good things which had been made lawful for them ...*

(4:160).

This talk shows that ‘Īsā (a.s.) had endorsed the laws of the Torah with exception of some tough rules prescribed for them in the Torah, which he abrogated. That is why it is said that the Injīl does not contain a new *sharī‘ah.*

The phrase, ‘‘and that I may allow you ...’’, is in conjunction with, the phrase, ‘‘with a sign from your Lord’’; the preposition, *li* (ل = that), describes the purpose; the sentence therefore means: I have come to you for the purpose of abrogating some of the hard rules imposed on you in the Torah.

QUR’ĀN: *‘‘ ‘and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord ...*: Apparently, this is to make it clear that the following phrases, ‘‘therefore fear Allāh and obey me’’, are based on his bringing a sign from Allāh, and not on his allowing some of the forbidden things. It is to remove this possible misunderstanding that the phrase, ‘‘and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord’’, has been repeated.

QUR’ĀN: *‘‘ ‘Surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him ...’ ’’:* ‘Īsā (a.s.) said it in order to cut off the excuse of those who were to believe in his divinity — either because he (a.s.) had detected such tendency in them or because he was informed through revelation of these future happenings. It was a sincere attempt to remove all chances of misunderstandings, as he had done when he added the proviso, ‘‘with Allāh’s permission’’, while talking about creating a bird and bringing the dead ones to life. But it appears from his talk on the Day of Judgment as quoted by the Qur’ān in the verse 5:117 (*I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: That worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord ...*), that he had said it in pursuance of the order of Allāh and His revelation.

QUR’ĀN: *But when ‘Īsā perceived unbelief on their part, he said: ‘‘Who are my helpers to Allāh?’’:* The narration leaves unsaid his life story from his conception to the early days of his mission, because its important milestones had already been mentioned in the good news given to Maryam. That is why this verse picks up the thread of narration from the point when ‘Īsā (a.s.), after announcing his mission and showing the

aforesaid miracles, faced resistance from his people. It describes how he selected his disciples, how his people planned against him, and how Allāh defeated their conspiracy by purifying him, taking him away to Himself and making him to ascend to Him. And thus the story ends.

The narrative throws light on those aspects only which were immediately needed for clarifying the subject matter to the Christians of Najrān, whose delegation was then at Medina for discussion and argument. That is why many other points of the story, mentioned in the Chapters of: 'The Women,' 'The Table,' 'The Prophets,' 'The Embellishment' and 'The Ranks,' have been omitted in this one. The use of the word, perception or sense, in connection with unbelief — although disbelief is a matter pertaining to heart — implies that their disbelief was so transparent that it could be perceived by external senses. It could alternatively mean that when they, because of their disbelief, planned to harm and kill him, he sensed it and in this way perceived their disbelief. The verse therefore means: When 'Īsā perceived, i.e., felt, sensed and noticed the unbelief of the Children of Israel — whose name was mentioned in the good news given to Maryam — he said: ''Who are my helpers to Allāh?'' He asked this question as he wanted to distinguish and set apart a selected group of his people who would be solely dedicated to truth; they would strengthen the power of religion and form the nucleus around which the structure of religion would be built — they would be the centre from which the Divine Religion would spread. We find this phenomenon in every physical, social and other powers: When a party begins its activities, it finds it necessary to take for itself a core of dedicated cadre, on which it gets its strength. Otherwise, it could not pursue its activity and would become useless. In Islamic history, the same phenomenon is seen in the pledges of allegiance of the mountain pass and the tree. The Messenger of Allāh's aim in the two pledges was to concentrate the full strength of Islam, reinforcing its power, in order that the Divine Mission could spread and succeed.

Thus 'Īsā (a.s.) became sure that his mission was not succeeding in the Children of Israel — in a major part of them — and that they were not ready to believe in him no matter what he did. He was afraid that if they succeeded in destroying his life, the mission would fail and the difficulties would increase. Therefore, he wanted to make arrangements as a safeguard against that eventuality. He sought help of a selected

group in proceeding towards Allāh. The disciples answered his call and thus were distinguished from among the whole nation by their belief. It paved the way to distinguish belief from disbelief, by making the faith victorious over faithlessness, spreading his mission and establishing proofs. Allāh says: *O you who believe! be helpers of Allāh, as 'Īsā son of Maryam said to* (his) *disciples: ''Who are my helpers to Allāh?'' The disciples said: ''We are helpers of Allāh.'' So a party of the Children of Israel believed and another disbelieved; then we aided those who believed against their enemy, and they became uppermost* (61:14).

'Īsā (a.s.) qualified his question, ''Who are my helpers'', with the phrase, ''to Allāh''. He did so to awaken their longing and arouse their eagerness to proceed towards Allāh, to be near Him. And this was the real reason for asking this question. The same was the idea behind the question, *Who is it that will lend to Allāh, a goodly loan ...* (2:245). It is the preposition ''to'', in ''my helpers to Allāh'', which implies the meaning of going or proceeding, etc. A similar connotation is found in the declaration of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) as quoted in the Qur'ān: *Surely I go to my Lord: He will guide me* (37:99).

Some commentators have said that ''to'' in the above sentence means ''with''; the question according to them means: Who are my helpers with Allāh? But there is no evidence to support this explanation. Moreover, it is against the manners of the Qur'ān to count Allāh in line with others. The Qur'ān cannot count others as the helpers when it counts Allāh as the Helper. Nor is it in conformity with the manners of 'Īsā (a.s.) which shines so brightly everywhere in his narrative in the Qur'ān. Furthermore, the reply of the disciples too does not support this interpretation. In case this meaning were correct, the disciples should have said: 'We are your helpers with Allāh.' (Think over it).

QUR'ĀN: *The disciples said: ''We are helpers of Allāh: We believe in Allāh and be* (our) *witness that we are submitting ones:* A man's *''al-ḥawāriyy''* (اَلْحَوَارِيُّ) is the one exclusively attached to him. It is reportedly derived from *al-ḥawr* (اَلْحَوْرُ = intense whiteness; marked contrast between the white of the corona and the black of the iris). The Qur'ān has not used this word except for the close companions of 'Īsā (a.s.).

The sentence: ''We believe in Allāh'', is a sort of explanation of their

former declaration, ‘‘We are helpers of Allāh’’. This too supports the above exegesis that ‘Īsā’s phrase, ‘‘my helpers to Allāh’’, implies proceeding on the way leading to Allāh, because true belief is the prescribed way.

Was it their first entry into the circle of faith? Obviously not. The wordings used in verse 61:14 (...*‘Īsā son of Maryam said to* [his] *disciples: ‘‘Who are my helpers to Allāh?’’ The disciples said: ‘‘We are helpers of Allāh.’’ So a party of the Children of Israel believed* ...), show that it was a belief after belief. And there is nothing strange in it, as we have already explained that the *īmān* and *islām* are of various ranks, one upon the other.

Going a step further, look at the verse: *And when I revealed to the disciples, saying, ‘‘Believe in Me and My messenger,’’ they said: ‘‘We believe and be our witness that we are the submitting ones’’* (5:111). It clearly shows that this reply of theirs was based on a revelation from Allāh; in other words, they were prophets. Therefore, the belief referred to in their reply was a belief after belief.

Proceeding further, we find them saying: ... *and be our witness that we are submitting ones. Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the messenger; so write us down with those who bear witness.* The *islām* or submission to which they have referred, is unconditional surrender and submission to all that Allāh demands from them and desires for them. This too implies that it was not the initial belief, but a belief after belief, because such submission is not found except in the sincere believers; it is not within the reach of those who merely bear witness to the Oneness of God and the prophethood of the Prophet. We have earlier explained in detail that every stage of *īmān* is preceded by a relevant stage of *islām.* Their words: ‘‘We believe in Allāh and be (our) witness that we are submitting ones,’’ also point to this very fact: They used the verb for belief (implying a new occurrence) and adjective for submission (implying a sort of permanence). The first stage of *islām* is submission and generally bearing witness to the basic of religion. This is followed by a heartfelt belief in the above testimony in principle. Then comes the second stage of *islām* and that is the sincere submission to the meaning of the said belief. When this stage comes, all possibilities are removed of anger or annoyance with what Allāh and His messenger has ordered. In other words, the believer puts in practice the

tenets of religion. It is followed by the second stage of *īmān.* This is the stage when deeds become sincere and the attributes of servitude are deeply ingrained in all actions and activities. This is followed by the third stage of *islām* which means surrender to the love of Allāh and to His will; such a Muslim does not love anything except because of Allāh and does not want anything except for Allāh; then nothing happens on his hands except that which Allāh loves and desires, and the man's own love and desire are completely forgotten. It is followed by the third stage of *īmān,* when this servile submission permeates all his actions and deeds.

Keep in view this short description of the stages of *islām* and *īmān.* Then ponder on the call of 'Īsā (a.s.) as he said: ''therefore fear Allāh and obey me. Surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the straight path''. Note that he (a.s.) first told them to fear Allāh and obey himself. And he gave the reason of that order, in these words, ''Surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord''. That is, Allāh is your Lord, O people of my nation, and He is also the Lord of His messenger whom He has sent to you. Therefore, it is obligatory for you to fear Him by believing in Him, and to obey me by following me. In short, you are obliged to worship and serve Him with piety and His fear, obeying His messenger, i.e., with belief and following. This much is clearly understood from his words. That is why the fear of Allāh and obedience of the prophet have been changed to the phrase, ''therefore worship Him''; He effected this change to make it clear that this order and this affair is attributed to Allāh, and that attribution becomes crystal clear in the worship. Then he said that this worship is a straight path — it is a way that leads the walker to Allāh.

After issuing that call, he perceived their disbelief, and he felt that there was no ground for hoping that their general public would accept true faith. Therefore, he said: ''Who are my helpers to Allāh?'' He was seeking helpers for proceeding on this straight path to which he had invited the people. That is the path of servitude — the piety and obedience. The disciples answered his call accepting the same thing he had asked for. They said: ''We are helpers of Allāh.'' Then they proceeded to explain it in these words: ''We believe in Allāh and be (our) witness that we are submitting ones.'' The submission here refers to their obedience and following. It was for this reason that when they humbly and beseechingly spoke to their Lord, telling Him what they had

promised ʻĪsā (a.s.), they changed the word, submission, to the following; and expanded the circle of belief to cover all that was revealed by Allāh. They said: *''Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the messenger.''*

It means that they believed in all that Allāh had revealed, and in what He had taught ʻĪsā son of Maryam of the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Injīl, and they followed the messenger in this matter. You will appreciate that it is among the highest ranks of belief, not its lower ones.

The disciples did not say: We believe in Allāh and we are submitting ones. Instead they asked ʻĪsā (a.s.) to be their witness regarding their submission and following. They did so in order that they should have a proof when they spoke to their Lord and said: *''Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the messenger.''* It was as though they said: Our Lord! This is our condition and Thy messenger is our witness for it.

QUR'ĀN: *''Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the messenger; so write us down with those who bear witness'':* It is direct quotation of what the disciples said — without using an introductory phrase, like, 'They said.' This dramatic style of the Qur'ān (as we have mentioned somewhere) puts the audience in a position where they seem to hear the words directly from the speakers — not through a narrator. They asked their Lord to write them down with those who bear witness. And they based this prayer on their *islām* and *īmān* both. A messenger conveys his message when he explains what Allāh has revealed to him — both in words and in practice. He teaches the tenets of religion and himself acts upon them. Those who shall bear witness that the messenger conveyed the Divine Message to his people shall do so by learning the message from the messenger and following him in the *sharīʻah.* In this way, it will be seen that the messenger himself practises what he tells others to do — he does not ignore it nor does he transgress it.

Apparently, this witnessing refers to their testimony that the messenger had truly conveyed the message, as Allāh says in the verse: *Most certainly then We will question those to whom* (the messengers) *were sent, and most certainly We will question the messengers* (7:6). As

for the witnessing mentioned in the verse 5:83 (*And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize; they say: ''Our Lord! we believe, so write us down with the witnesses.*''), it refers to bearing witness for the truth of the messengership not for conveying the message. And Allāh knows better.

Another possible explanation: They had asked the messenger to be witness for their *islām;* thereafter they prayed to Allāh to write them down with those who bear witness. Probably they wanted Allāh to write them among those who shall bear witness for deeds, as appears from the prayer of Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl (a.s.) quoted in the Qur'ān: *''Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion ...* (2:128). Refer for details to what we have written under that verse.

QUR'ĀN: *And they planned and Allāh* (also) *planned, and Allāh is the best of planners:* The planners were the Children of Israel, as appears from the preceding verse, ''But when 'Īsā perceived unbelief on their part ...'' We have explained under the verse 2:26 (*... but He does not cause to err by it* [any] *except the transgressors*) what planning means when it is attributed to Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *And when Allāh said: ''O 'Īsā! I am going to take you away completely: ''at-Tawaffī''* (اَلتَّوَفِّي) is to take something completely. It is for this reason that it is also used for death, because at the time of death Allāh takes man's soul away from his body. See, for example, the following verses:

> *... Our messengers take him completely* (6:61), i.e., cause him to die.
>
> *And they say: ''What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new creation?'' ... Say: ''The angel of death who is given charge of you shall take you completely* (i.e., cause you to die), *then to your Lord you shall be brought back''* (32:10 — 11).
>
> *Allāh takes completely the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep, then He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of death and sends the others back till an appointed term ...* (39:42).
>
> Pondering on the last two verses you will see that the Qur'ān has not

used *at-tawaffī* in the meaning of death, rather the word gives the idea of taking and preserving. In other words, when *at-tawaffī* is used for death, it is not because it means death; rather it is used to emphasize the connotation of taking and preserving, to show and establish that man's soul does not perish, is not destroyed by death — contrary to what ignorant people think; Allāh keeps and preserves it until comes the time to return it to its body for resurrection. At other places where this sense is not involved, Allāh uses the word *al-mawt*(اَلْمَوْتُ = death), and not *at-tawaffī*. For example:

> *And Muḥammad is no more than a messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?* (3:144).
>
> *... it shall not be finished with them entirely so that they should die ...* (35:36).

There are a lot of other verses of this type, not excepting some verses in 'Īsā's story itself: For example, there are, 'Īsā's words about himself: *And peace be on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life* (19:33); and Allāh's words about him: *And there is not one of the people of the Book but most certainly shall believe in him before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection he* ('Īsā) *shall be a witness against them* (4:159).

It all shows that *at-tawaffī* does not necessarily mean death.

This interpretation is also supported by the words of Allāh refuting the claim of the Jews: *And their saying: ''Surely we killed the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, the messenger of Allāh;'' and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so* (like 'Īsā); *and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture; and they killed him not for sure. Rather, Allāh took him up to Himself; and Allāh is Mighty, Wise. And there is not one of the people of the Book but most certainly shall believe in him before his death and on the Day of Resurrection he* ('Īsā) *shall be a witness against them* (4:157 — 159). The Jews claimed that they had killed the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, and likewise the Christians think that the Jews had killed 'Īsā son of Maryam by crucifixion, and that after he was crucified Allāh raised him up from his grave to the heaven, as the Gospels say. But the Qur'ānic verses, as you see, unequivocally refute the story of killing and crucifixion both.

It is apparent from the Divine Words, *And there is not one of the people of the Book ...,* that ʻĪsā (a.s.) is alive near Allāh and that he will not die until all the people of the Book shall believe in him. Keeping all these factors in view, the word *at-tawaffī,* used in the verse under discussion, would only mean that Allāh was to take him away completely from among the Jews. Yet the verse does not say so clearly; it is only its apparent connotation. (We shall write in detail on this subject at the end of the fourth Chapter, 'The Women'.)

QUR'ĀN: *'and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve: ''ar-Rafʻ ''* (اَلرَّفْعُ = to raise, to cause to ascend) is opposite of *al-waḍʻ* (اَلْوَضْعُ = to put down); *aṭ-ṭahārah* (اَلطَّهَارَةُ = cleanliness, purity) is opposite of *al-qadhārah* (اَلْقَذَارَةُ = dirtiness, impurity). We have already explained the meaning of cleanliness. The phrase, ''cause you to ascend'', is qualified by the word, ''unto Me''; and it implies that the ascension was spiritual, rather than physical; because Allāh has no place like the physical spaces in which a body or things related to body arrive, stay or settle down, and from which they depart or to which they come nearer. Accordingly, this phrase will have the same connotation as the words at the end of this very verse have: *then to Me shall be your return.* This interpretation will be strengthened if *at-tawaffī* is taken to mean ''to cause to die''; because in that case, ''to cause to ascend to Me'' would imply raising his rank and taking him nearer to Allāh. Its meaning will, then, be similar to the verse 3:169, wherein Allāh says about those who are martyred in His way: *they are alive near their Lord;* and the verse 19:57, where He says about Idrīs (a.s.): *And We raised him to a high station.*

Another interpretation: The ascension refers to his being raised alive with his body and soul together to the heaven; because the apparent meaning of the Qur'ānic verses suggest that the heaven — i.e. the physical one — is the place of nearness to Allāh, the venue from which the Divine favours and blessings are sent down, and where the honoured angels live. Probably, we shall discuss the meaning of *as-samā'* (اَلسَّمَآءُ = sky, heaven) somewhere else, Allāh willing.

Purification from the unbelievers, as it is preceded by ascension to Allāh, implies spiritual, rather than physical purification. Accordingly, it means that Allāh would keep him away from the unbelievers, protect him

from mingling with them, and remove him from their society — the society that is polluted by their unbelief and rejection of truth.

QUR'ĀN: *''and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection:* In this verse Allāh gives a promise that He will surely make the followers of 'Īsā (a.s.) prevail over his adversaries who disbelieved in his prophethood, and that this predominance will continue upto the Day of Resurrection. This verse distinguishes the superior group from the inferior one, saying that the superior ones are those who follow 'Īsā (a.s.) and the opposite group is that of the unbelievers — without mentioning that they were from the Children of Israel, or that they were the Jews who professed to follow the *sharī'ah* of Mūsā (a.s.) or pointing to them in. any other way.

Of course, looking at the fact that his adversaries have been defined as unbelievers, it appears that ''those who follow you'' refers to the following in the way of truth, a following that is approved by Allāh and which He is pleased with. Accordingly, his followers would be those Christians who did not deviate from his straight path before Islam came to abrogate 'Īsā's religion; and after the advent of Islam it is the Muslims who are his followers — because only these two groups are his followers in the path of truth. If so, then the promised superiority would mean their superiority in their arguments and proofs, not their material domination or their rule over his adversaries. The meaning thus will be as follows: The proof of your followers, i.e., the above mentioned Christians and the Muslims, shall be victorious over the proof of those who disbelieve in you, i.e., the Jews, upto the Day of Resurrection.

The above was the explanation given and chosen by the exegetes. But I think that the verse does not support this interpretation either explicitly or implicitly. Evidently the whole sentence, ''I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve, and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection,'' is news of what was to happen in the future: His being taken away, his ascension to Allāh, his purification from disbelievers and the domination of his followers over unbelievers — all was to happen sometimes after Allāh had given him this news. Moreover, the words, ''and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve,'' contain a promise and a good tiding, and good tiding always

refer to some future event. And it is known that the proof of the ‘Īsā’s followers is nothing but the proof of ‘Īsā himself. These are the very proofs which were mentioned in the good news given to Maryam. And those proofs had certainly gained ascendancy over those of the unbelievers, both when ‘Īsā (a.s.) was present before his ascension, as well as after his ascension. It may rather be said that before his ascension those proofs were more decisive and more convincing in face of his adversaries’ claims than they were after his ascension. This being the case, what is the meaning of a promise that his followers’ proofs would overcome those of his adversaries — in future? Again, why should this dominance be limited ‘‘to the Day of Resurrection’’ only? If a proof is victorious and convincing it should remain so for all times, without any limitation of time or day. Moreover, victory of a true proof over false ones will be even more manifest on the Day of Resurrection, as the Qur’ān informs us in connection of that Day’s happenings.

A suggestion: Perhaps predominance of proof means that it would be more popular, more widely accepted — people would heed more to it, would accept it more readily; in this way their number would increase, and their power be more formidable.

COMMENT: Does it mean that his true followers would prevail over the disbelievers, would rule over them and overwhelm them with their power? But the fact is otherwise. It is no use saying that it may be a good news which would come true in distant future in the last days of the world, because the wordings of the verse do not allow such delay.

Or does it mean predominance in number? That is, his followers — the followers of truth after ‘Īsā (a.s.) — would be more numerous than the followers of falsehood? But reality belies it. The followers of falsity have always been in majority, and the people of truth always in minority, right from the time of ‘Īsā (a.s.) upto these days of ours — a long period of two millennia. Moreover, the wordings of the verse do not support this interpretation either. Look at the context; the verse gives ‘Īsā (a.s.) the good news that Allāh’s displeasure was to descend on the Jews, that they were to be overwhelmed by Divine Anger. In this background, the predominance of his followers conforms more with his followers’ hold and dominance over his adversaries — either through convincing proofs

or through rule and domination. But in no way does it point to the majority in number.

Let us have a fresh look at this verse: It distinguishes the two groups with two verbs: ‘‘those who follow you’’, and ‘‘those who disbelieve’’. The verb shows that an action has taken or will take place within the framework of a time — past, present or future. The implication would differ if these phrases were changed to adjectives: ‘‘followers’’ and ‘‘disbelievers’’; because adjectives show a more or less permanent attribute which transcends time limits, the said attribute is found in its related thing or person at all times. Suppose there is a group of people who do something good or bad, and the rest of the nation is pleased with it, even the coming generations agree with what their ancestors did, then this much ideological identity and psychological identification are enough to ascribe that action or thing to the whole nation. For example, the Qur’ān admonishes the Jews and condemns them because of their ancestors’ actions like hurting and slaying the prophets, their arrogance in face of the commands of Allāh and His messengers, their alterations and interpolations in the Book of Allāh and many other things like that.

In view of the above-mentioned two principles, ‘‘those who disbelieve’’ may be interpreted as the whole Jewish nation; and ‘‘those who follow you’’ may mean all the Christians because their early fathers had believed in and followed ‘Īsā (a.s.) — and it was a correct belief and true following — although Allāh was not pleased with those among them who believed in the trinity before Islam, nor was He pleased with the whole nation when they continued to follow ‘Īsa (a.s.) even after the advent of Islam.

The sentence therefore means that Allāh was to make the Christians — whose ancestors had truly followed ‘Īsā (a.s.) — dominant over the Jews because they had disbelieved in ‘Īsā (a.s.) and had planned and conspired against him.

The aim is to show that Allāh’s wrath has descended on the Jews, and His severe chastisement has engulfed their nation. (We have explained above that the early Christians had truly followed ‘Īsā [a.s.]; and therefore the whole Christian nation may be included in the phrase, ‘‘those who follow you’’.)

Going further, we find the phraseology changed. Instead of saying ‘‘those who follow you’’, Allāh says: ‘‘And as to those who believe and

do good deeds ...'' This too supports our interpretions that ''those who follow you'' covers all the Christians, irrespective of their present belief and behaviour. It does not mean only the Muslims and those Christians who had correct belief and had truly followed 'Īsā (a.s.) — in short it is not confined to those who will be saved in the hereafter. Otherwise, Allāh would have continued the earlier mode of expression and said: And as to those who follow you, He will pay them fully their rewards.

Another interpretation: ''those who follow you'' covers all the Christians and all the Muslims; and the verse foretells that upto the Day of Resurrection the Jews would always remain under the domination of those who believe that it is obligatory to follow 'Īsā (a.s.) — and the basis of the explanation is the same as above. And it is the best of the interpretations written for this verse.

QUR'ĀN: *''then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed:* This talk is addressed jointly to 'Īsā (a.s.) and those who followed him and those who disbelieved in him. It gives their ultimate result on the Day of Resurrection. And with this verse the story of 'Īsā (a.s.) comes to its end — from the time Maryam got the good news to the end of his earthly life.

QUR'ĀN: *''Then as to those who disbelieve, I will chastise them with severe chastisement in this world and the hereafter, ...'':* Apparently, it branches out from the phrase, ''so I will decide between you''; it gives detail of that preceding general statement, describing the Divine Judgment on the Day of Resurrection — severe chastisement for the Jews who disbelieve, and full reward for the believers.

But the phrase ''in this world'' shows that the verse branches out from two preceding sentences: ''and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve ...''; ''Then to Me shall be your return ...'' Thus, the verse says that as a result of that ''making'' and that ''returning'', the disbelievers shall be severely punished in this world on the hands of those whom Allāh has made dominant above them, and in the hereafter with the Fire, *and they shall have no helpers.*

It is another proof to show that in the preceding verse, making dominant means domination through power and rule, not through proofs.

The sentence ''and they shall have no helpers'' proves that they will

not be able to avail of any intercession which could protect them from the chastisement. It is a firm decree which cannot change.

QUR'ĀN: *And as to those who believe and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards ...:* It is an attractive promise of good reward for those who followed 'Īsā (a.s.). But, as mentioned above, the phrase ''those who follow you'' could be applied to the whole nation even when only a few of them actually followed him. Application of a name is one thing and actually having that attribute personally is something else. Good result and lovely reward is given only to him who actually has that attribute — not to him who is merely included in nomenclature. Allāh says: *Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve* (2:62).

This then is the reward of those who believed and did good deeds from among those who followed 'Īsā (a.s.); Allāh will pay them fully their reward. The other group from those followers shall get no reward. Allāh has pointed to this fact at the end of the verse: *and Allāh does not love the unjust.*

It is now clear why this verse — a verse of mercy and paradise — has ended with the phrase ''and Allāh does not love the unjust''. Otherwise, such verses usually end with Divine Names of mercy and forgiveness, or on praise of those for whom the verse is revealed. For example :

And Allāh has promised good to all; and Allāh is aware of what you do (57:10).

If you lend to Allāh a goodly loan, He will double it for you and forgive you; and Allāh is grateful, forbearing (64:17).

... and whoever believes in Allāh and does good, He will remove from him his evil and cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein for ever; that is the great achievement (64:9).

Then as to those who believed and did good, their Lord will make them enter into His mercy; that is the manifest achievement (45:30).

We may go on quoting such examples from the Qur'ān. However, it is now clear that the phrase ''and Allāh does not love the unjust'' describes the other group from among those who claim to follow 'Īsā (a.s.) but are not true believers, nor do they do good deeds.

QUR'ĀN: *This we recite to you of the signs and the wise reminder.* It indicates the end of the story. The ''wise reminder'' is the Qur'ān; it reminds one of Allāh and is firm and wise in its verses and descriptions; falsehood cannot enter it, nor can non-serious talk pollute it.

QUR'ĀN: *Surely the likeness of 'Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: ''Be,'' and he was:* It is the summary of the necessary points described in detail in preceding verses. Such summing up after detailed description — especially in arguments and discussions — is a beauty of style. The verses were revealed for arguments with the delegation of the Christians of Najrān. It was proper to sum up the basic point of 'Īsā's creation — after giving the story in detail — to show that the particular circumstances of his birth do not prove anything except that he was a created man like Adam (peace be on them both). Therefore, it is not permissible to say about him more than that which is said about Adam (a.s.) — that is, he was a man whom Allāh created without the agency of a father.

The verse therefore means: The condition of 'Īsā (a.s.) in the eyes of Allāh — as Allāh knows how He had created 'Īsā — is only that the manner of his creation resembles that of Adam's creation. How was Adam created? Allāh gathered various portions of earth and said to him, ''Be'', and he became a human being without any father.

This verse actually contains two independent proofs, either is sufficient to refute the idea of 'Īsā's divinity.

First: 'Īsā is a creature created by Allāh — as Allāh knows, and He is never confused in His knowledge. He created him a man, albeit without a father. And such a person is a servant of Allāh, not a god.

Second: 'Īsā's creation is not greater than that of Adam. If 'Īsā's unusual creation may in any way justify the belief in his godhead, then Adam's creation will justify the same belief. But no Christian says that Adam was god. Therefore, they should not have such belief about 'Īsā (a.s.). After all, both cases are the same.

The verse shows that 'Īsā's creation, like that of Adam, was physical and of this world, although it happened against the usual manner of conception, because usually a child is conceived through the agency of a father.

Apparently, *fa-yakūn* (فَيَكُونُ = lit: and he is) is used here to describe a past event — that is why we have translated it as ‘‘and he was’’.

The phrase, ‘‘then said to him, ‘Be’, and he was’’, shows instant, not gradual creation, but we know that both Adam and ‘Īsā had undergone a gradual process of creation. The fact is that there is no contradiction in these two aspects — because condition changes with the change of context. All things, whether they come into being gradually or instantly, are created by Allāh, brought into being by His command, i.e., by the word, ‘‘Be’’, as He says: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, ‘‘Be’’, and it is* (36:82). Many of these things, come into existence gradually — when they are seen in the framework of their gradual causes. But when they are seen in relation to Allāh, then there is no graduality in their existence, no gap between the command, ‘‘Be’’, and their ‘‘being’’; Allāh says: *And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye* (54:50). We shall explain it in detail in a more appropriate place, Allāh willing.

The main idea behind the statement, ‘‘then said to him, ‘Be’, and he was’’, is as follows: Allāh is not dependent on causes when He creates a thing. Things which He intends to create have equal relation with Him. If they were related to Him through causes, their conditions could have differed one with another, some would have looked possible, others impossible; one would have been easy, the other difficult; one nearer, another far away — all depending on the conditions of the relevant causes. But Allāh does not need any cause to bring about an effect; whatever He intends, He says to it, ‘‘Be’’, and it comes into being.

QUR’ĀN: *The truth is from your Lord, so be not of the doubters:* It emphasizes the meaning of the preceding verse which was itself emphasized by the use of the particle ‘‘surely’’. It serves the same purpose as the verse, ‘‘This We recite to you of the signs and the wise reminder’’, revealed at the end of the detailed story. It was to set the Prophet’s mind at rest that he was on truth, and to strengthen him in the argument.

The sentence, ‘‘The truth is from your Lord’’, is one of the finest expressions of the Qur’ān. It uses the preposition, ‘‘from’’, which shows beginning point. The truth starts from your Lord. If you were to change it to some other particle, e.g., ‘‘with’’, saying, the truth is with your Lord, it

would give a hint of polytheism; and would actually show God as helpless, in need of that truth.

The true maxims and the propositions showing real and unalterable facts are self-evident and impossible to change; for example, four is an even number; one is half of two; and so on. Man finds out these self-evident truths from the really existing things; and existence — all of it — is from Allāh. Therefore, the truth — all of it — is from Him. That is why Allāh is not questioned concerning what He does and men are questioned. An action of a creature, if it is correct and right, accompanies the truth, but the action of Allāh is existence itself, and therefore, truth itself.

TRADITIONS

The Imām (a.s.) said[1] about the words of Allāh, *O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds:* ‘‘(Allāh) chose her twice: As for the first, He chose her, i.e., selected her; and as for the second, she conceived without a husband; in this way, He made her excel over the women of the worlds.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said about this verse: ‘‘It means that He selected you for the progeny of the prophets, and purified you from unchastity, and chose you for the birth of ‘Īsā (a.s.) without a husband.’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

The author says: The saying of the Imām, ‘‘He selected you for the progeny of the prophets’’, means that He selected you to be a good offspring worthy of being related to the prophets The phrase, ‘‘and purified you from unchastity’’, means that He gave you protection from unchastity; this is the best explanation of the Qur’ānic words, because she had given birth to ‘Īsā (a.s.) without a husband. Thus, the tradition describes some concomitants of her selection and purification.

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[1] This is the Commentary of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī himself and not the saying of the Imām, (See al-Qummī, *at-Tafsīr,* an-Najaf al-Ashraf, ed., vol. 1, p. 102). (*ed.*)

The two traditions are not in conflict with each other, as may be seen manifestly. And we have explained that the verse implies this meaning.

It has been narrated by Aḥmad, at-Tirmidhī (and he said that it is correct), Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Ḥabbān, and al-Ḥākim from Anas, that he said: ''Verily the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Sufficient are in excellence from among the women of the worlds, Maryam bint 'Īmrān, and Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, and Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and Āsiyah wife of Pharaoh!'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

as-Suyūṭī has said that Ibn Abī Shaybah has narrated it from al-Ḥasan without connecting the chain of narrators with the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

al-Ḥākim has narrated from Ibn 'Abbās (and has said that it is correct), that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'The most excellent of the women of the worlds are Khadījah, and Fāṭimah, and Maryam, and Āsiyah wife of Pharaoh.' '' (*ibid.*)

Ibn Marduwayh narrates from al-Ḥasan that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Verily, Allāh chose four (women) over the women of the worlds: Āsiyah bint Muzāḥim, and Maryam bint 'Īmrān, and Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, and Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).' ''(*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Fāṭimah (may Allāh be pleased with her!) that she said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to me: ''You are the chief of the women of the people of the Garden, (and) not Maryam, The Virgin.'' (*ibid.*)

Ibn 'Asākir has narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'The chief of the women of the people of the Garden are Maryam bint 'Īmrān, then Fāṭimah, then Khadījah, then Āsiyah wife of Pharaoh.' '' (*ibid.*)

Ibn 'Asākir has narrated through the chain of Muqātil from aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk from Ibn 'Abbās from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: ''Four women are the chiefs of the worlds: Maryam bint 'Īmrān, and Āsiyah bint Muzāḥim, and Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, and Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.); and the most excellent of them in the world is Fāṭimah.'' (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah narrates from 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Fāṭimah is the chief of

the women of the worlds after Maryam bint ‘Īmrān, and Āsiyah wife of the Pharaoh, and Khadījah bint Khuwaylid.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chains from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) drew four lines, then said: ‘The best of the women of the Garden are Maryam bint ‘Īmrān, and Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, and Fāṭimāh bint Muḥammad, and Āsiyah bint Muzāḥim, wife of the Pharaoh.’ ’’ (*al-Khiṣāl*)

Also, he narrates through his chains from Abu ’1-Ḥasan al-Awwal (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Verily Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, has selected four from among the women: Maryam, and Āsiyah, and Khadījah, and Fāṭimah ...’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of nearly the same meaning, narrated by both sects. The fact that these four are the chiefs of the women does not preclude the difference in excellence as amongst themselves, as may be seen in the sixth tradition quoted from *ad-Durru’l-manthūr,* as well as other traditions. And a similar discourse was written under the verse: *Surely Allāh chose Adam and Nūḥ ...* (3:33).

A point to ponder: The verse talks about selection and choosing, while the above traditions describe their supremacy.

There is a difference between selection and supremacy; the latter being a degree of the former’s perfection.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allāh: *... when they cast their pens* (to decide) *which of them should have Maryam in his charge:* ‘‘They were drawing the lot about her, when she was orphaned of her father.’’ (al-‘Ayyāshī)

The Imām (a.s.) said about the verse: *And when the angels said. ‘O Maryam! surely Allāh has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds’:* ‘‘(Allāh) chose her twice: As for the first, He chose her, i.e., selected her, and as for the second, she conceived without a husband; in this way He made her excel over the women of the worlds.

‘‘... Then Allāh said to His Prophet: ‘This is of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you, (O Muḥammad!) and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Maryam in his charge, and you were not with them when they contended

one with another.' When she was born the family of 'Īmrān contended one with another about her; everyone said: 'We shall have her in our charge.' So they went out and cast lot among themselves with the arrows, and the arrow of Zakariyyā came out (in the draw) ...'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: The Commentary written above supports this and the preceding tradition. There are numerous traditions giving the details regarding the good news given to Maryam, birth of 'Īsā (a.s.), his mission and his miracles. But the general outline of his story, given in these verses is enough for the purpose of exegesis. That is why we have not written them here except the important ones.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *and I inform you of what you eat ...:* '' 'Īsā (a.s.) used to say to the Children of Israel: 'I am the messenger of Allāh to you, and I create for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allāh's permission, and I heal the blind and the leper; ' (*al-Akmah* means blind). They said: 'We do not think that what you do is anything but sorcery. Show us therefore a sign by which we may know that you are truthful.' He said: 'Do you think that you would know I was truthful if I informed you of what you eat and what you store in your houses, i.e., what you had eaten before you came out of your houses and what you had stored at night?' They said: 'Yes.' So he used to tell them: 'You ate this and this.' Some of them confirmed his words and became believers, and other rejected it. And there was for them a sign in it, if they were believers.'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: The style of the verse when describing the latter two signs differs from that used for the former ones, as we had pointed out in the Commentary. And this difference supports the theme of this tradition.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said explaining the verse, *And a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah, and that I may allow you ...*: ''There was (a distance of) four hundred years between Dāwūd and 'Īsā; and it was the *sharī'ah* of 'Īsā that he was sent with monotheism and sincerity, and with

what (Allāh) had enjoined on Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm and Mūsā; and He revealed to him Injīl; and took from him the covenant that was taken from (all other) prophets; and He ordained for him in the Book establishing the prayer with religion, and enjoining good, and forbidding evil, and prohibiting unlawful, and allowing lawful; and revealed to him in Injīl the sermons and the parables, and the panel code which did not have retaliation; it contained neither (detailed) rules of panel code nor the shares of inheritance; and He revealed to him alleviation of what was (ordained) for Mūsā in the Torah. And this is (the meaning of) the words Allāh quoting what ʻĪsā said to the Children of Israel: *and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you.* And ʻĪsā ordered those who were with him, from among those who followed him of the believers, to believe in the *sharīʻah* of the Torah and the Injīl.'' (al-ʻAyyāshī)

The author says: This tradition is narrated in *Qiṣaṣu 'l-anbiyā',* in detail, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), and there it says that there was a distance of four hundred and eighty years between Dāwūd and ʻĪsā (a.s.). But neither of these dates conforms with the history of the People of the Book.

ar-Riḍā' (a.s.) was asked: ''Why the disciples were called *al-ḥawāriyyūn?''* (اَلْحَوَارِيُّونَ = companions, disciples; the root word denotes ''intense whiteness''). He said: ''According to (other) people, they were named *al-ḥawāriyyūn,* because they were washer-men, they cleansed the dirt from clothes by washing; and it is a name derived from *al-ḥawr* (اَلْحَوْرُ = to bleach, to whiten). But according to us, they were given this name because they were pure in their ownselves and cleansed others from filth of sins by sermon and reminder.'' (*ʻUyūnu 'l-akhbār*)

The same Imām said that they were twelve men, and the most excellent and most learned of them was Luke.[1] (*at-Tawḥīd*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a tradition: ''Allāh sent ʻĪsā son of Maryam; and entrusted to him light, knowledge and wisdom; and (gave him) all knowledge of the previous prophets, and added Injīl to it. And He sent him to Baytu'l-Maqdis, to the Children of Israel, (he came)

[1] Apparently, this phrase is an interpolation by one of the narrators, because Luke was not among the twelve disciples. (*tr.*)

calling them to his Book and his wisdom, and to the belief in Allāh and His messenger. But most of them insisted on exceeding (the limits) and disbelieving. When they did not believe (in him), he prayed to his Lord, and adjured on Him (to punish them). So (Allāh) transformed (some) satans from among them, in order to show them a sign, so that they might take lesson from it.

‘‘But it did not increase in them except (their) transgression and disbelief. Then (‘Īsā) came to Baytu’l-Maqdis, and continued calling them to, and awakening their interest in, that which is with Allāh, for thiry-three years, until the Jews got up in his pursuit. And they claimed that they tortured him and buried him in the earth alive. And some of them claimed that they killed and crucified him. But Allāh was not to give them power over him; but it only appeared to them so; and they were not able to torture and kill him or to kill and crucify him, because if they could do so it would have been a refutation of the words of Allāh; but Allāh caused him to ascend after taking him away completely.’’ (*Kamālu ’d-dīn*)

The author says: The words of the Imām: ‘‘Allāh transformed (some) satans from among them,’’ means that He transformed a group of evil persons from among them. ‘‘And continued calling them ... for thirty-three years’’; perhaps it refers to his span of life, as it is well-known that he lived on this earth for thirty-three years. ‘Īsā (a.s.) talked to them from his cradle upto his mature age, and he was prophet from his early childhood, as the Qur’ān quotes him saying in the verses: *But she pointed to him. They said: ‘‘How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?’’ He said: ‘‘Surely I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet* (19:29 — 30).

‘‘... it would have been a refutation of the words of Allāh; but Allāh caused him to ascend after taking him away completely’’. It is a paraphrase of the Qur’ānic words: *Rather Allāh took him up to Himself* (4:158); and, *‘‘I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me. ’’* As this verse mentions taking him away before causing him to ascend, the tradition infers that the events happened in the same sequence.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘ ‘Īsā (a.s.) made a promise to his companions,

the night when Allāh took him up to Himself. So they gathered near him in the evening, and they were twelve men; and he made them enter into a house. Then he came to them from a fountain that was in the corner of the house, shaking off water from his hair. Then he said: 'Verily Allāh has revealed to me that He is going to take me up just now to Himself and purify me from the Jews. Now who among you (agrees) that my features be put on him, in order that he is killed and crucified (in my place) and he shall be with me in my rank?' A young man among them said: 'I, O Spirit of Allāh!' He said: 'So you are that.' Then 'Īsā said to them: 'Why! surely there is one of you who will reject me twelve times before it is morning.' One of them asked: 'Am I that? O prophet of Allāh!' 'Īsā said to him: 'Do you feel it in your heart? Then be you that.' Thereafter 'Īsā told them: 'Why! surely you will divide after me in three groups: two groups, forging lie against Allāh, (shall be) in the Fire; and one group following Sham'ūn [1], being true to Allāh, (shall be) in the Garden.' Then Allāh caused 'Īsā to ascend to Him from the corner of the house while they were looking at him.''

Then the Imām (a.s.) said: ''The Jews came searching for 'Īsā the same night. And they caught the man about whom 'Īsā had said: 'Surely there is one of you who will reject me twelve times before it is morning'; and they took the young man who had been given the features of 'Īsā and he was killed and crucified. And he for whom 'Īsā had said that he would reject him twelve times before it was morning, did (indeed) reject him.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: The traditions of nearly the same meaning have been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and others. Some people have said that the man who was made to look like 'Īsā was the same person who had guided the Jews so that they could arrest and kill him. There are some other views regarding those details. But the Qur'ān is silent on this subject; and we shall write on it in detail under the verse: ... *and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so* ... (4:157).

ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: ''There never was, in the eyes of the people, any

[1] Simon the Peter, in English. (*tr.*)

uncertainty concerning the affairs of any prophet or Proof of Allāh except the affair of ‘Īsā alone; because he was taken up from the earth alive, and he was given death between the heaven and the earth, then he was taken up to the heaven. And this is (the meaning of) the words of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *And when Allāh said: ‘O ‘Īsā! I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you’;* and (also) Allāh says quoting the words of ‘Īsā (which he will say) on the Day of Resurrection: *‘and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst take me* (away) *completely, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things* (5:117).’ ’’ (*‘Uyūnu ’l-akhbār*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘ ‘Īsā son of Maryam was taken up with a woollen outer garment, spun by Maryam, and woven by Maryam, and sewn by Maryam. But when he reached the heaven, he was addressed: ‘O ‘Īsā! Lay down your worldly embellishment.’ ’’ (al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: We shall explain the meaning of the above quoted two traditions, Allāh willing, at the end of the Chapter 4, ‘‘The Women.’’

It is written in *ad-Durru’l-manthūr* about the verse: *Surely the likeness of ‘Īsā is with Allāh ...:* ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Qatādah that he said: ‘‘We have been told that as-Sayyid and al-‘Āqib, the two chiefs and bishops of the people of Najrān, met the Prophet of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and asked him about ‘Īsā, and said to him: ‘Every human being has a father. Then why is it that ‘Īsā (a.s.) had no father?’ Then Allāh revealed this verse about him: *Surely the likeness of ‘Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam ...’’*

The author says: The traditions of nearly the same meaning have been narrated from as-Suddī, ‘Ikrimah and others; al-Qummī also has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr,* that the verse was revealed on the same occasion.

SOME OTHER TRADITIONS ABOUT *AL-MUḤADDATH*

Zurārah said: ‘‘I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the messenger, the prophet and *al-muḥaddath* (اَلْمُحَدَّثُ = the one spoken to). He said: ‘The messenger is the one who sees the angel (who) brings the message of his Lord to him, and tells him: ‘‘(Allāh) orders you so-and-so.’’ And the messenger is a prophet with (the added rank of) messengership. And the prophet does not see the angel, something comes down to him — the news (comes) to his heart; and he becomes as though he be in a trance, and he sees (the vision) in his dream.’ I said: ‘Then how does he know that what he saw in his dream was truth?’ He said: ‘Allāh makes it clear to him, so that he knows that it is truth; and he does not see the angel. And *al-Muḥaddath* is the one who hears the voice and does not see (the speaker) in person.’ ’’ (*Baṣā’iru ‘d-darajāt*)

The Author says: It has been narrated from the same Imām in *al-Kāfī* also.

The original word of the Imām at the end of the tradition is *shāhidan* (شَاهِداً = translated here as ‘‘in person’’); it literally means ‘‘at present’’; also it may be a conditional phrase related to the subject; in other words, it may mean, ‘‘he does not see manifestly’’.

Burayd enquired from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (peace be on both of them), *inter alia,* in a tradition: ‘‘Then what is a messenger, a prophet and ‘the one spoken to’?’’ He (the Imām) said: ‘‘A messenger is one to whom the angel appears and speaks; and a prophet is one who sees in his dream; and possibly the messengership and the prophethood is combined in a single person. The *muḥaddath* is the one who hears the voice of the angel but does not see his person.’’ Burayd said: ‘‘I said: ‘May Allāh make things right for you! How can he know that what has he seen in his dream is the truth and that it is from the angel?’ He (the Imām) said: ‘He is directed in the right way until he knows it (with certainty). Allāh has surely set a seal on the (divine) books with your Book, and on the prophets with your prophet.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn Muslim said: ‘‘I mentioned *al-Muḥaddath* in the presence of Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.). He said: ‘Verily he hears the voice but does not see his person.’ I said: ‘May Allāh make things right for you!

How does he know that it is the speech of the angel?' He said: 'He is given tranquillity and dignity so that he knows that it is the angel (speaking).' '' (*ibid.*)

Abū Baṣīr narrates from the same Imām that he said: '' 'Alī was the *muḥaddath,* and Salmān was the *muḥaddath.*'' Abū Baṣīr says: ''I said: 'Then what is the sign of the *muḥaddath*?' He said: 'The angel comes to him and scratches his heart (i.e., communicates to him) so-and-so.' '' (*ibid.*)

Ḥumrān ibn A'yan said: ''Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said to me that 'Alī was the *muḥaddath.* (When I told this to) our Companions, (they) said: 'You did nothing when you did not ask him who used to speak to him?' Then it happened that I (again) met Abū Ja'far; and I said to him: 'Did not you inform me that 'Alī was spoken to?' He said: 'Surely.' I said: 'Who used to speak to him?' He said: 'An angel.' I said: 'Then I may say that he was a prophet or a messenger?' He said: 'No. But you should say that his likeness was the likeness of the Companion of Sulaymān and the Companion of Mūsā; and his likeness was the likeness of Dhū 'l-Qarnayn. Why! Have not you heard that 'Alī was asked about Dhu 'l-Qarnayn whether he was a prophet?' He said: 'No. But he was a servant who loved Allāh, so (Allāh) loved him; and he was sincere towards Allāh, so (Allāh) gave him good advice (i.e., guided him). So this also is like that.' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions narrated from the Imāms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* about the meaning of 'the one spoken to' found in *Baṣā'iru 'd-darajāt, al-Kāfī, Kanzu 'l-fawā'id, al-Ikhtiṣāṣ* and other books. This topic is found in the Sunnī traditions too.

As for the distinction given by these traditions, between a prophet, a messenger and 'the one spoken to', we have described the difference between a messenger and a prophet. Also it has been explained that through revelation Allāh speaks to His servant, and it creates by itself firm and certain knowledge, and this knowledge does not require any other proof. Among all Divine messeges, revelation has the same position as the self-evident truths have in human knowledge — man does not need any proof or logical deduction to know that it is truth.

As for the dream, you must have noted that the traditions explain it in another way; it is not the vision which one sees normally in sleep; rather

it denotes something like a trance, in which the external senses of the prophet are suspended, and then he observes what Allāh wants him to see — in the same way as we observe the things in our wakening. Then Allāh strengthens his conviction by bestowing on him the certainty that what he has seen is from Allāh and not a Satanic manipulation.

As for being spoken to, it denotes hearing the voice of an angel. But he hears it by his heart, not by the ears, nor is it something like ideas or imaginations occurring in the mind, because idea or imagination is not called 'hearing the voice' — except as a far-fetched allegory. That is why the traditions describe it as hearing the voice and also as communicating to the heart; and yet name it as speech and talk. In short, the *muḥaddath* hears the voice of the angel and listen to it with his 'hearing, power' just as we hear and listen to normal talks and voices heard in this material world; but no other person can share in that talk or hear that voice, and therefore it is called a matter of heart.

As for his firm knowledge that what he heard was an angel's talk and not a Satanic whispering, it happens by the help of Allāh, as is explained in the above-quoted tradition of Muḥammad ibn Muslim: ''He is given tranquillity and dignity so that he knows that it is the angel (speaking).'' The Satanic whispering — surely a falsehood — may come in either of the two ways: It may appear in a form which the believer knows to be false, and then he naturally will know that it cannot be the talk of an angel because angels do not disobey Allāh and do not go against His command. Or, it may appear wearing a mask of truth and fact — hoping to bring in its wake falsehood and lie. In such case, the Divine Light, which always leads the believer, exposes its reality. Allāh says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people ...* (6:122).

Apart from that, whispering and evil suggestions always create restlessness in soul and turmoil in heart, contrary to the remembrance of Allāh and His speech which create gravity, and tranquillity. Allāh says: *It is only the Satan that frightens his friends* (3:175); *now surely by Allāh's remembrance are the hearts set at rest* (13:28); *Surely those who are pious, when a visitation from the Satan afflicts them they become mindful, then to ! they see* (7:201).

When therefore the heart of the *muḥaddath* is blessed with tranquillity and dignity at the time when he hears the message, it

conclusively proves that the message is from Allāh. Conversely, restlessness and anxiety would show that it was a Satanic whispering, which brings precipitation, anxiety, anguish, etc., in its wake.

The traditions say that the *muḥaddath* hears the voice of the angel and does not see him. It looks at the reality of being spoken to, and gives its academic definition. But it does not mean that the *muḥaddath* cannot see the angel. A man becomes *al-muḥaddath* (اَلْمُحَدَّثُ = the one spoken to), as soon as he hears an angel's voice, it is not necessary for him to see the angel. And if the *muḥaddath* sees the angel, it is not because he is spoken to; it is an added excellence. Many verses clearly show that some of those spoken to had seen the angels when they spoke to them.
For example:

Maryam: *then We sent to her Our Spirit, and there appeared to her a well-made man. She said: ''Surely I fly for refuge from you to the Beneficient Allāh, if you are pious.'' He said: ''I am only a messenger of your Lord: That I should give you a pure boy''* (19:17 — 19).

Wife of Ibrāhīm: *And certainly Our messengers came to Ibrāhīm with good news. They said: ''Peace,'' ''Peace,'' said he ... And his wife was standing* (by), *so she laughed; then We gave her the good news of Isḥāq and after Isḥāq of* (a son's son) *Ya'qūb. She said: ''O woe to me! shall I bear a son* (now) *when I am an* (extremely) *old* (woman) *and this my husband an* (extremely) *old* (man)? *Most surely this is an amazing thing.'' They said: ''Do you wonder at the decree of Allāh? The mercy of Allāh and His blessings be on you, O people of the house surely He is Praised, Glorious''* (11:69 — 73).

However, the above traditions may have got another explanation: The statement that the *muḥaddath* does not see the angel, may mean that he does not see the reality of the angels, although he might see them in the form which they assume when appearing before him. After all, the above-quoted verses only show that Maryam and the wife of Ibrāhīm had seen the angels in human form — the assumed form.

Someone has suggested a third interpretation: The statement means that the angel does not bring to him any revelation of the *Sharī'ah;* he does not appear before him with a legislative order; and this distinction is meant to protect the dignity of the messengers and the prophets.

But it is a far-fetched interpretation.

* * * * *

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِمَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا
نَدْعُ أَبْنَآءَنَا وَأَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ
فَنَجْعَلْ لَّعْنَتَ اللهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ــ ٦١ . إِنَّ هَـٰذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ
وَمَا مِنْ إِلَـٰهٍ إِلَّا اللهُ وَإِنَّ اللهَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ــ ٦٢ . فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ــ ٦٣ .

But whoever disputes with you in this after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: ''Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves, then let us pray earnestly and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars'' (61). *Most surely this is the true story, and there is no god but Allāh; and most surely Allāh is the Mighty, the Wise* (62). *But if they turn back then surely Allāh knows the mischief makers* (63).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *But whoever disputes with you in this after what has come to you of knowledge: ''Fa''* (فَ = translated here as ''But'') shows that the offer of *al-mubāhalah* (اَلْمُبَاهَلَةُ = earnest imprecation) branches out from the Divine teaching explained above so clearly and convincingly about ʻĪsā son of Maryam (a.s.), and ended so emphatically with the words, *The truth is from your Lord, so be not of the doubters* (60). ''in this'': The pronoun ''this'' refers either to ʻĪsā or to the ''truth'' mentioned in the

preceding verse.

The preceding verses were Divine Revelation in which there could be no doubt at all. Apart from that, they contained a clear logical proof, that is, the verse: *Surely the likeness of ʻĪsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam ...* (59). Thus, the knowledge emanating from these verses is two-fold: one, because it is a Divine Speech: two, because of its rational proof. That is why this knowledge was not reserved for the Prophet only; others too could understand it. Even if someone did not believe it to be a Divine Revelation, he could not entertain any doubt about the truth of the subject discussed, because it contained rational argument which unbiased mind was bound to accept. Perhaps that is why Allāh said: ‘‘after what has come to you of knowledge’’; and did not say, after what We have explained to them.

Another point: By reminding the Prophet of the Divine Knowledge, Allāh wanted to assure him that he would overwhelm his adversaries by Allāh’s permission and that Allāh would surely be on his side supporting him in that dispute.

QUR’ĀN: *then say: ‘‘Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves:* The first person plural pronoun in ‘‘let us call’’ has a different import from the plural pronouns in ‘‘our sons’’ ‘‘our women’’ and ‘‘our selves’’. The former refers to the both parties of the argument, that is, the advocates of Islam and those of Christianity; while the latter refer to the side of Islam only. Accordingly, the meaning would be as follows: Let us both call the sons, the women and the ‘selves’; we should call our sons, our women and our ‘selves’, and you should call your sons, your women and your ‘selves’. The verse thus has shortened a long sentence in a meaningful and pleasant way.

al-Mubāhalah (اَلْمُبَاهَلَةْ) and *al-mulāʻanah* (اَلْمُلَاعِنَةْ) both have the same meaning: to curse each other. The actual parties of the argument were the Messenger of Allāh on one side, and the Christians men on the other. But in the challenge for the imprecation, the call was extended to the sons and women, as it would show more convincingly that the claimant is perfectly sure of the truth of his claim, that he is absolutely right. Allāh has put in man the love of his children and family, to such an extent that he puts himself in jeopardy to save them, plunges into perilous

situations to keep them safe. And precisely for this reason, sons have been mentioned before women, because man loves his sons more than his women.

An exegete has said: ‘‘The verse means, let us call your sons, your women and your selves; and let you call our sons, our women and our selves.’’ But the explanation given by us above shows how absurd this meaning is. This meaning does not leave any justification for including the sons and the women in the earnest imprecation.

The detailed description of the invitees is a further proof that the caller (i.e., the Prophet) has absolute confidence in the truth of his claim. The import of the call is as follows: Let my whole group and your whole group enter into earnest imprecation, so that both groups pray earnestly to Allāh and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars. In this way, the Divine curse and chastisement shall cover the sons, women and selves of the liars, and the enemies of truth shall be annihilated completely, they shall be rooted out without leaving any trace.

Consequently, the truth of this speech does not depend on numerousness of the sons, the women or the ‘selves’. The main brunt of the challenge is that one party — that which is on wrong — should perish together with all its near and dear ones — male and female, old and young. The exegetes unanimously say — and traditions and history support them — that when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) came out for the imprecation, the only persons whom he brought with him were: ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (peace be on them all!). Therefore, the only participants, on the side of Islam, were two ‘selves’, two sons and one woman — and yet the Prophet did fully comply with the Divine Command.

Moreover, the meaning of a word in a verse is one thing, and it is quite another matter as for whom, or on how many people, could that word be applied in practice. We find numerous examples in the Qur’ān where an order, a promise or a threat has been mentioned using plural words, but the circumstances of its revelation show that it was revealed for one person only. For example: (As for) *those of you who put away their wives by likening their backs to the backs of their mothers, they are not their mothers* (58:2); *And* (as for) *those who put away their wives by likening their backs to the backs of their mothers then would recall what they said ...* (58:3); *Allāh has certainly heard the saying of those who*

said: ''Surely Allāh is poor and we are rich'' (3:181); *And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say: ''Whatever can be spared''* (2:219). There are a lot of verses which were revealed with plural words, although the events for which they were revealed concerned one person only.

QUR'ĀN: *''then let us pray earnestly and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars'': ''al-Ibtihāl''* (اَلْاِبْتِهَالُ) is derived from *al bahlah* (اَلْبَهْلَةُ) also pronounced *al-buhlah* (اَلْبُهْلَةُ = curse). This is its basic meaning; then it was commonly used for earnest prayer.

The words, ''and bring about the curse of Allāh'', are a sort of explanation for the preceding verb, ''then let us pray earnestly.'' The verse said, ''and bring about the curse of Allāh''; it did not say, and ask from Allāh to curse. It was an indication that that prayer would surely be granted because at that juncture it was the only way to distinguish the truth from the falsehood.

The word, ''the liars'', does not refer to all the liars found anywhere in the world, nor does it mean the genes of the liars. It refers to a particular group — that party of the argument (between the Prophet and the Christians) which was wrong in its claim. The Prophet was saying that Allāh is One, there is no god besides Him, and that 'Īsā was His servant and messenger; while the Christians said that 'Īsā was God, and son of God, and that God had three persons.

This observation leads us to another reality. All those who came out for the proposed imprecation were equal partners in their respective claim. Had the claim and the resulting imprecation been between the Prophet only and the Christians, one party (i.e., the Prophet) would demand singular words, and the other, plural. In such cases, it is necessary to use an expression which would cover singular and plural both. For example, the sentence under discussion could have been written like this: and bring about the curse of Allāh on whosoever is lying. But it says: ''... on the liars.'' It proves that indeed there were liars (in plural) in one party of the argument, either on the side of the Prophet or on the Christians' side. Consequently, all those who came out for the imprecation would be partners in the claim — because lie presupposes a claim. Therefore, those who were present on the side of the Prophet for the imprecation — i.e., 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn — were partners in the claim of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his

Mission. It is one of the most excellent virtues which were given exclusively to these family-members of the Prophet (peace be on them all!). Another exclusive excellence: Allāh gave them the names of 'selves', women and sons of the Prophet to the exclusion of all the men, women and children of the *ummah.*

Question: You have mentioned above that the Qur'ān uses, more often than not, plural words for singular; and even this verse says ''our women'' while it was only one lady, i.e., Fāṭimah (a.s.), who participated in the imprecation. Then why should the plural, ''the liars'', be not explained in the same way?

Reply: There is a vast difference between the two. There is a situation which may happen again and again, and there is another which is not expected to repeat itself. In the former situation, it is perfectly all right to use a plural in place of a singular, so that the rule or comment would cover even those who would be doing the same thing in future. But in the latter situation it is not allowed to use plural in place of singular, because the event is not to repeat itself and no one else is expected to be included in that order or comment, etc. Look for example at the following verses:

> *And when you said to him to whom Allāh had shown favour and to whom you had shown favour: Keep your wife to yourself and fear Allāh ...* (33:37).
>
> *The tongue of him whom they are inclined to blame* (for it) *is barbarous and this is clear Arabic tongue* (16:103).
>
> *O Prophet! surely We have made lawful to you your wives whom you have given their dowries, ... and a believing woman if she gave hereself to the Prophet, if the Prophet desired to marry her — specially for you, not for the* (rest of) *believers; ...* (33:50).

And the order for calling to the imprecation could not be extended beyond that particular situation, that is, the imprecation between the Prophet and the Christians. Therefore, when Allāh uses a plural, there should be more than two in both parties which were called; otherwise, the use of the plural ''the liars'' would be out of place.

Question: All the Christians who had come in the delegation of the Najrān were a party to a claim — the claim that 'Īsā was God, and the

son of God, and one of the three persons of God. There was no discord among them in this matter, nor was there any difference in this claim between their men and women. Likewise, the claim on the side of the Prophet — that Allāh is One, there is no god but He; and ʻĪsā son of Maryam was His servant and His messenger — was upheld by all the believers; it was not confined to any one of them — not even the Prophet. Therefore, it is out of place to say that those who were brought by the Prophet for the imprecation had any superiority or excellence over the rest of the believers. In fact, the Prophet had brought them just as examples of the sons, women and selves mentioned in the verse.

Moreover, claim and mission are two different things. Those who participated in the imprecation were party to the claim. How is it that you have made them partners in the Mission too?

Reply: Had the Prophet brought them just as samples, it was necessary for him to bring at least two other men, three women and three sons — to comply with the demand of the plurals. Yet, he did not do so. It proves that only those who came with him were worthy of being called his sons, his women and his selves — to the exclusion of all the others. Only on accepting this fact, we can say that he obeyed the Divine Order given in this verse. In other words, he could not find any one worthy of being included in these categories, except the one man, one woman and two sons whom he brought with him. There was no one else whom he could include in compliance with the plural words of the verse. In these circumstance, he fully complied with the order, although he could not bring three persons in any category.

Moreover, if you ponder on the events, you will see that the only aim of the Christians of Najrān in coming to Medina was to confront the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and to argue with him about ʻĪsā son of Maryam. It was the Messenger of Allāh who was claiming that ʻĪsā was a servant of Allāh and His messenger. It was he who called others to believe in this claim, saying that it was based on Divine Revelation — the revelation which, he said, was sent to him. As for the rest of the believers, the Christians had nothing to do with them; nor did they argue with them. That is why Allāh has used singular verbs and pronouns in the beginning of this verse, when referring to the Prophet: ‘‘But whoever disputes with you (literally:thee) in this after what has come to you (lit.:thee) of knowledge, then say (lit.:say thou)...’’ The same is the case

of the verse: *But if they dispute with you* (lit.:thee), *say* (lit.:say thou): *''I have submitted myself* (entirely) *to Allāh and* (so has) *every one who follows me''* (3:20).

The above explanation shows that the Messenger of Allāh (blessings of Allāh be on him and his progeny!) had not brought those personalities as samples or examples of other believers — because the believers, *per se,* had no part in that disputation or imprecation; and there was no reason why they should be offered as targets for the curse and punishment which were to come to one of the two parties (the Christians and their adversary, i.e., the Prophet). The Prophet himself was a party of that argument and it was his obligation to offer himself as the target of the calamity which could come to him in case his claim was (God forbid!) wrong. Now, there was no reason why he should bring ʻAlī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) with him, if his claim were not dependent on them also, as it was on his own self. He had come with them for imprecation because they were the only sons, woman and self on whom his claim depended. Surely he had not brought them as samples or examples. It is now crystal clear that these personalities were his partners in his claim; the claim depended on them as it did on him.

Furthermore, the Christians had come to argue with the Prophet not just because he believed that ʻĪsā son of Maryam was the servant and messenger of Allāh. They had taken upon themselves to come upto Medina because, in addition to claiming those things about ʻĪsā, he had called and invited them to believe likewise. This call, this mission, was the main reason why they had come in delegation for argument. Consequently, when the Prophet came to the appointed place of imprecation, bringing with him the four personalities, it was because of that claim and that call together. Thus these personalities were his partners in his mission, as they had been his partners in his claim.

Question: We accept that the Prophet came with them because they were a part of him; and this attribute was not found in others, it was their exclusive excellence. But it appears — and normal practice confirms it — that when a man brings his near and dear ones, his women and children, in dangerous and frightening places, it shows that he is fully confident of his and their safety and comfort. His bringing them for imprecation proves only that he was absolutely sure of his truth — it does

not show anything else. It is quite irrelevant to say that his action proves that they were his partners in the mission.

Reply: It is true that the beginning of the verse does not show more than that which has been mentioned above. But the end of the verse, that is, ''on the liars'', shows that there were surely liars (in plural) in one of the two sides of the argument and imprecation. Such expression could only be used if there were several people in each group, all making some claim — be it true or false. Therefore, those who were brought there by the Prophet were indeed his partners, both in the claim and in the mission, as was explained above. It is thus proved that those who were present there with the Prophet — all of them — were parties to the claim and the mission, together with the Prophet, and were his partners in it.

Question: It follows, from what you have said, that they were his partners in the prophethood.

Reply: Not at all. We have explained earlier where we have discussed ''Prophethood'' [1] that the Call and Propagation are not one and the same with the prophethood, although they are among its conditions and concomitants, and are parts of the divinely-bestowed responsibilities which a prophet takes upon himself. Likewise, we have made it clear in the discourse about the *Imāmah* [2] that they are not identical with *Imāmah* either, although they are in a way among its concomitants.

QUR'ĀN: *Most surely this is the true story, and there is no god but Allāh:* The demonstrative pronoun ''this'' refers to the earlier mentioned stories of 'Īsā (a.s.). There is a fine literary transposition in the sentence. What it says is as follows: Most surely the stories We have told you concerning 'Īsā are the truth — not that which is told by the Christians.

There is multiple emphasis in this sentence: *Innā* (اِنَّ = surely), and *la* (لَ = surely) followed by an additional pronoun *huwa* (هُوَ = this) are all combined together to put utmost emphasis on this statement. It was done to cheer the Prophet and to encourage him and strengthen his heart for the coming imprecation, by augmenting his certainty and insight, and fortifying his confidence in the revelation which Allāh had sent to him. It

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[1] Vide vol. 3 (Engl. transl.), under the verse 2:213. (*Author's note*)

[2] Vide vol. 2 (Engl. transl.), under the verse 2:124. (*Author's note*)

is further strengthened by additional emphasis contained in the next sentence which describes an accompanying reality: ‘‘and there is no god but Allāh’’. This fact once again shows that the preceding stories are truth.

QUR’ĀN: *and most surely Allāh is the Mighty, the Wise:* The conjunctive ‘‘and’’ joins it to the first sentence of the verse. The same modes of emphasis have again been used here. It aims at further comforting the Prophet and strengthening his heart. It says that Allāh is Mighty: He has power to help the side of the truth. And He is Wise: He cannot neglect or forget this aid, because ignorance or oblivion cannot reach Him. He is not like those false deities whom the enemies of the truth have taken for themselves besides Him.

This explanation shows why these two Divine Names were chosen for concluding this verse. The sentence contains an exclusiveness: Only Allāh is the Mighty and the Wise.

QUR’ĀN: *But if they turn back then surely Allāh knows the mischief makers:* What should be the actual aim of any argument or imprecation? The manifestation of the truth. If so, then it is unthinkable for a seeker of truth to turn back from it. If the Christians really wanted the truth to be manifested — and they knew that Allāh was the Guardian of truth and that He would never allow it to be, destroyed or invalidated — they would not turn back from the proposed imprecation. And if they did, it would show that their aim by all this argumentation and disputation was not the manifestation of truth; they only wanted apparent victory, preservation of the status they had and beliefs they followed, and continuation of the customs and traditions with which they were familiar. Their only goal was that which their desire, lust and greed had made to seem fair to them — and it was not the good life which conforms with truth and happiness; it was but a semblance of life. In other words, they did not want reform and improvement; they wanted to make mischief in the world by corrupting the good life. Their turning back would mean that they were mischief-makers.

The sentence uses a metaphorical device of putting the cause in place of the effect; it mentions their mischief-making instead of saying that they do not want the truth to be manifested.

The second part of the sentence refers to the Divine Attribute of

knowledge, andi it has been emphasized with addition of *inna* (surely), as it says: ‘‘then surely Allāh knows’’. It was to show that mischief-making and thwarting the manifestation of truth was ingrained in their psyche, and Allāh knows that as a result of that deep rooted trait they will surely turn back from the imprecation. And so they did and by doing so proved the truth of the Divine Words.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘When the Christians of Najrān came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) as a delegation — and their leaders were al-Ahtam, al-‘Āqib, and as-Sayyid — and (the time of) their prayer came, they began to ring hand-bells and prayed. The Companions of the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! This in your Mosque?’ He said: ‘Let them be!’ When they finished (their prayer) they came near the Messenger of Allāh and said: ‘To what do you call (us)?’ He said: ‘To bearing the witness that there is no god except Allāh, and that I am the Messenger of Allāh, and that ‘Īsā was a servant created (by Allāh), he used to eat, drink and relieve himself.’ They said: ‘Then who was his father?’ Thereupon came the revelation to the Messenger of Allāh saying: ‘Say to them, ‘‘What do you say about Adam? Was he a servant created (by Allāh) who used to eat, drink, relieve himself and cohabit?’’ ’ The Prophet put this question to them and they replied: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Then who was his father?’ and they became speechless. Then Allāh sent down (the verse): *Surely the likeness of ‘Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust ...*; and the verse: *But whoever disputes with you in this after what has come to you of knowledge ... and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars.*

‘‘Then the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘(If you do not agree with what I say) then enter into earnest imprecation with me; thus if I am truthful the curse will be sent down on you and if I am a liar it will be sent down on me.’ The said: ‘You have done justice.’

‘‘So they made an appointment for the imprecation. When they returned to the place they were staying, their leaders as-Sayyid, al-‘Āqib and al-Ahtam, said: ‘If he comes for the imprecation against us with his nation (i.e., people unrelated to him), we shall enter into imprecation

against him, because then he is not a prophet. But if he enters into imprecation against us with only the people of his House, we shall not enter into imprecation against him, because he will not put the People of his House forward unless he is truthful.'

‘‘When the morning came, they came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) — and there were with him the Leader of the Faithful (‘Alī), Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (a.s.). The Christians said: ‘Who are these?’ They were told: ‘This is his cousin, *al-waṣiy* (اَلْوَصِيُّ = executor of will) and son-in-law, and this is his daughter Fāṭimah, and these are his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.’ So they were frightened and said to the Messenger of Allāh: ‘We shall pay you whatever you are pleased with, but excuse us from the imprecation.’ Thereupon the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) made agreement with them on (the condition of) *al-jizyah* (اَلْجِزْيَةُ = tax); and they went away.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* alQummī)

ar-Rayyān ibn aṣ-Ṣalt narrates a talk of ar-Riḍā (a.s.) with al-Ma’mūn and the scholars about the difference between the Prophet’s progeny and the rest of the *ummah* and the former’s superiority over the latter, in which he, *inter alia,* says: ‘‘The scholars said: ‘Has Allāh explained (this) selection in His Book?’ ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: ‘He has explained the selection manifestly in twelve places — apart from the hidden (references).’ Then he described those places of the Qur’ān, during which he said: ‘As for the third (verse, it was) when Allāh distinguished His purified creatures and ordered His Prophet to earnestly pray with them for His curse on the liars, in the verse of imprecation. So Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, said: *But whoever disputes with you in this after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: ‘‘Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves.’’ ’* The scholars said: ‘our selves means the Prophet himself.’ Abu ’l-Ḥasan (ar-Riḍā) said: ‘You are mistaken. He only meant ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. And one of the proofs to show it is the saying of the Prophet (himself): ‘‘Banū Walī‘ah should give up (their mischief); otherwise, I will surely send to them a man like my own self’’ — referring to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. And He meant al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn with ‘‘sons’’, and meant Fāṭimah with ‘‘women’’. So this is an exclusive virtue in which no one can precede them, and an excellence in which no man can reach them, and an honour in which no creature can overtake them, because He made ‘Alī’s person like his (Prophet’s) own self (person)...’ ’’

(*‘Uyūnu ’l-akhbār*)

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain from al-Imām Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (peace be on both of them!), that he had a talk with (Hārūn) ar-Rashīd, during which ar-Rashīd said to him: ‘‘How is it that you say, ‘We are the offspring of the Prophet’, while the Prophet did not leave any offspring? And progeny is through male, not through female; and you are the children of the daughter and her child is not (her father’s) progeny.’’ The Imām said: ‘‘I said to him: ‘I ask you by the right of kinship and that of the grave (i.e., of the Prophet) and of him who is therein, that you should excuse me from (replying to) this question.’ He said: ‘You shall tell me of your proof for it, O son of ‘Alī, and you, O Mūsā! are their leader and their present Imām — thus I have been informed — and I am not going to excuse you from any question I put to you until you bring me a proof from the Book of Allāh; because you claim, O children of ‘Alī! that nothing of it (the Book) comes out from you — not even an *alīf* or a *wāw* — but you know its interpretation; and you advance the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, as your proof; *We have not neglected anything in the Book* [6:38], and you are not in need of the opinion of scholars and their analogy.’

‘‘Then I said: ‘Do you permit me to reply?’ He said: ‘Let me have.’ I said (reciting the Qur’ānic verse): ‘I seek refuge of Allāh from the cursed Satan. In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. ... and of his (Ibrāhīm’s) offspring, Dāwūd and Sulaymān and Ayyūb and Yūsuf and Mūsā and Hārūn; and thus do We reward those who do good; and Zakariyyā and Yaḥyā and ‘Īsā and Ilyās; every one was of the good ones (6:84 — 5). Who was the father of ‘Īsā? O Leader of the Faithful!’ He said: ‘He had no father.’ Then I said: ‘Yet He (Allāh) has joined him with the progenies of the Prophets through Maryam; and in the same way Allāh, the High, has joined us with the progenies of the Prophet through our mother, Fāṭimah.’ (Then I said): ‘Should I tell you more? O Leader of the Faithful!’ he said: ‘Let me have.’ I said: ‘(It is) the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *But whoever disputes with you in this after what has come to you of know-ledge, then say: ‘‘Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves, then let us pray earnestly and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars.’’* And nobody has ever claimed that the Prophet — on the occasion of the imprecation with the Christians — made anyone enter

under the drape except ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. So (this) was the interpretation of His Word: ‘‘our sons’’ meant al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; and ‘‘our women’’, Fāṭimah; and ‘‘our selves’’, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

al-Ma’mūn had asked ar-Riḍā (a.s.) several questions, one of which was as follows:

al-Ma’mūn said: ‘‘What is the proof for the caliphate of your grandfather, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib?’’

(The Imām) said: ‘‘The verse of *our selves.*’’

He (al-Ma’mūn) said: ‘‘If there were not *our women.*’’

He (the Imām) said: ‘‘If there were not *our sons.*’’

The author says: The Imām argued on the strength of the word, *our selves.* He meant that Allāh had made ‘Alī (a.s.) like the person of the Prophet. (And who could have more right to succeed the Prophet than his own person?). al-Ma’mūn said: ‘‘If there were not *our women.*’’ He wanted to say that the reference to ‘‘women’’ indicates that the word ‘‘our selves’’ means ‘‘our men’’, and as such it would not show any excellence. The Imām replied: ‘‘If there were not *our sons.*’’ That is, if ‘‘our selves’’ referred to the men, then why should the sons be mentioned separately? They would have been included in ‘‘our men’’.

Ḥarīz narrates from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘The Leader of the Faithful (‘Alī, a.s.) was asked about his excellent virtues. He mentioned some of them. Then they said to him: ‘Tell us (some) more.’ So he said: ‘Verily two Bishops of the Christians of Najrān came to the Messenger of Allāh, and talked (with him) on the subject of ‘Īsā (a.s.). Thereupon Allāh revealed the verse: *Surely the likeness of ‘Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam...* Then the Messenger of Allāh entered (the house), .and held the hands of ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Fāṭimah; then he came out, and raised his palms to the heaven and separated his fingers one from another; and called them (the Christians) to the imprecation.’ ’’ (Abū ‘Abdillāh, a.s.) then said: ‘‘And Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) has said: ‘And that is the way of imprecation; one intertwines his hand in one’s (adversay’s) hand raising them to the heaven.’ ’’ Thereupon when the two Bishops saw him, one of them said to his companion: ‘‘By God! If he is a prophet, we shall surely perish; and if he is not a prophet his

(own) people would save us (from the trouble of confronting him).'' So they gave up (the imprecation) and went back.' '' (al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: This or nearly the same meaning has been narrated in other traditions through the Shī'ī chains. All of them unanimously say that those who were brought by the Prophet for the imprecation were 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn only.

ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭūsī has narrated it in his *al-Amālī*, through his chains from 'Āmir ibn Sa'd from his father; and also through his chains from 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān ibn Kathīr from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.); and also through his chains from Sālim ibn Abi 'l Ja'd, raising it to Abū Dharr; and also through his chains from Rabī'ah ibn Nājid from 'Alī (a.s.).

al-Mufīd has narrated it in his *al-Ikhtiṣāṣ,* through his chains from Muḥammad ibn az-Zibriqān from Mūsā ibn Ja'far (a.s.); and also from Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadir from his father from his grandfather.

al-'Ayyāshī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd al-Urdunnī from Mūsā ibn Muḥammad ibn ar-Riḍā (a.s.) from his brother; and also from Abū Ja'far al-Aḥwal from aṣ-Sādiq (a.s.); and also from al-Mundhir from 'Alī (a.s.); and also through his chains from 'Āmir ibn Sa'd.

al-Furāt has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* several traditions to this effect, which separately reach to Abū Ja'far (a.s.), Abū Rāfi', ash-Sha'bī, 'Alī (a.s.), and Shahr ibn Ḥawshab and several other traditions to the same effect have been narrated in *Rawḍatu 'l-wā'iẓīn, I'lāmu 'l-warā, al-Kharā'ij* and other books.

It has been narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of ath-Tha'labī [1] from Mujāhid and al-Kalbī: ''When the Prophet called the Christians for the imprecation, they said: 'Let us return and think over it.' When they were alone, they asked al-'Āqib — and he was a man of good judgment among them: 'O 'Abdu '1-Masīḥ! What is your opnion?' He said: 'By Allāh! You are well-aware, O ye Christians! that Muḥammad is a prophet, sent by Allāh, and that he has brought to you the decisive word about your Companion ('Īsā, a.s.). By Allāh! whenever a nation has entered into imprecation with a prophet, their elders have perished and their youngsters have died.

[1] The author now gives references from the Sunnī books. (*tr.*)

And if you do it, we shall surely perish; but, if you turn down, for the love of your religion and (want) to remain on what you have at present, then make peace with the man and go back to your towns.'

''So they came to the Messenger of Allāh; and he had come out in the morning carrying al-Ḥusayn in his lap, holding the hand of al-Ḥasan, with Fāṭimah walking behind him and 'Alī was behind her; and he was saying: 'When I pray, you say ''Amen'' '. Then the Bishop of Najrān said: 'O ye Christians! Surely I see the faces that if they ask Allāh to remove a mountain from its place, He would surely remove it. Therefore, do not do imprecation, otherwise you will perish, and there will not remain any Christian on the face of the earth, upto the Day of Resurrection.'

''Then they said: 'O Abu '1-Qāsim! We have decided that we should not enter into imprecation against you; and that we leave you on your religion and we remain on our religion.' He said: 'Well, if you refuse imprecation, then accept Islam — you will have (the rights) which (other) Muslims have, and on you shall be (the duties) which are on them.' But they refused. So (the Prophet) said: 'Then I shall fight you.' They said: 'We do not have strength to figh against the Arabs. But we shall make peace with you that you will not fight against us or frighten us; nor will you turn us away from our religion, on the condition that we shall pay to you every year two thousand robes — one thousand in Ṣafar and one thousand in Rajab — and thirty coats of mail, (of) common (quality), made of iron.' So the Prophet made agreement with them on these conditions. And he said, 'By Him in Whose hand is my soul ! Surely destruction had almost descended on the people of Najrān.' And if they had entered into imprecation they would have been transformed into monkeys and pigs, and there would have erupted in the valley a conflagration of fire engulfing them all; and surely Allāh would have annihilated Najrān and its inhabitants — even the birds on tree tops; and the year would not have ended for all the Christians but they would have perished.''

The author says: The event, nearly in similar words, has also been narrated in *Kitābu 'l-Maghāzī* from Ibn Isḥāq. Also al-Mālikī has narrated it in his *al-Fuṣūlu 'l-muhimmah* from many exegetes; and al-Ḥammūyī has narrated nearly similar tradition from Ibn Jurayḥ.

The agreement contains the phrase, ‘‘one thousand in Ṣafar;’’ it means al-Muḥarram of Islamic calender, which was the first month of the year in Arabia. In pre-Islamic days it was called ‘‘Ṣafar’’ — the first two months were called *Ṣafar al-Awwal* and *Ṣafar ath-Thānī.* Arabs in the days of ignorance used to postpone *Ṣafar al-Awwal.* Then Islam confirmed the sacredness of the *Ṣafar al-Awwal;* so it was called, ‘‘the sacred (اَلْمُحَرَّمُ = al-Muḥarram), month of Allāh;’’ then it became known as al-Muḥarram.

‘Āmir son of Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqās narrates from his father that he said: ‘‘Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān ordered Sa‘d telling him, ‘What prevents you from abusing Abū Turāb (‘Alī, a.s.)?’ He said, ‘As for this matter, as long as I remember three things which the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said (about ‘Alī) I will never abuse him; if even one of them were for me, it would have been dearer to me than red livestocks.’ I heard the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying, when he left him (‘Alī) as his Deputy (when going) for one of his battles. ‘Alī said to him, ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Are you leaving me behind with women and children?’ Thereupon, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to him: ‘Are you not pleased that you should have the same position with me that Hārūn had with Mūsā — except that there is no prophet after me?’ And I heard him saying on the day of Khaybar: ‘Most surely tomorrow I will give the standard (of army) to a man who loves Allāh and His Messenger, and whom Allāh and His Messenger do love.’ (Sa‘d) said: ‘So we held our heads high (hoping to catch the eye of the Prophet). But he said: ‘Call ‘Alī to me.’ So he was brought (before him), sore-eyed; and (the Prophet) put (his) saliva in his eyes (and he was cured); and gave the standard to him. And Allāh conquered (Khaybar) on his hand. And when this verse was revealed: ... *then say: ‘‘Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves, then let us pray earnestly ... ’’,* the Messenger of Allāh called ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and said: ‘O Allāh! These are the People of my House.’ ’’(*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim)

The author says: This tradition has been narrated by at-Tirmidhī in his *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ,* Abu ’l-Mu’ayyad al-Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad in his *Kitāb Faḍā’il ‘Alī,* Abū Nu‘aym in his *Ḥilyatu ’l-awliyā’* (from the same

narrator as above), and al-Ḥammūyī in his *Farā'idu 's-simṭayn.*

Abū Nu'aym narrates through his chains from 'Āmir ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ from his father that he said: ''When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) called 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and said: 'O Allāh! These are the People of my House.'' (*Ḥilyatu 'l-awliyā'*)

Also he narrates in the same book through his chains from ash-Sha'bī from Jābir that he said: ''al-'āqib and aṭ-Ṭayyib came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and he invited them to Islam. They said: 'We are (already) Muslims, O Muḥammad! He said: 'You tell a lie. If you wish, I would tell you what prevents you from (accepting) Islam.' They said: 'Then let us have.' He said: 'The love of the cross, drinking liquor, and eating the flesh of pig.' Jābir further said: ''Then the Prophet invited them to imprecation, and they promised him to come to him in the morning. When the morning came, the Messenger of Allāh held the hands of 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Fāṭimah. Then he sent (someone) to them. But they refused to accept his call (for imprecation) ; instead they acknowledged to him (his sovereignty). Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'By Him Who has sent me with truth! Had they done (the imprecation) the valley would have rained fire on them.' '' Jābir said: ''About them was revealed the verse: ... *let us call our sons and your sons* ... Jābir further said *''our selves* refers to the Messenger of Allāh and 'Alī; and *our sons* to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; and *our women* to Fāṭimah.''

The author says: This tradition has been narrated by Ibn al-Maghāzilī in his *al-Manāqib* through his chains from the same ash-Sha'bī from Jābir; by al-Ḥammūyī in his *Farā'idu 's-simṭayn,* through his chains from the same narrator; by al-Māliki in his *al-Fuṣūlu 'l-muhimmah* from the same; by Abū Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭāyalisī from the same; and by as-Suyūṭī in his *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from al-Ḥākim (who has said that this tradition is correct), and from Ibn Marduwayh as well as Abū Nu'aym (in his *Dalā'ilu 'l-khayrāt*) — all from Jābir.

Abū Nu'aym has narrated in his *Dalā'ilu 'l-khayrāt* through the chain of al-Kalbī from Abū Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''Verily a

delegation of the Christians of Najrān came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and there were fourteen persons of their nobles. Among them were as-Sayyid (and he was the leader) and al-‘Āqib, the second in rank and a man of good judgment among them.’’ (Then he has described the event as given above.) (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

al-Bayhaqī has narrated in his *Dalā’ilu ’n-Nubuwwah* through the chain of Salmah ibn ‘Abd Yashū‘ from his father from his grandfather that he said : ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) wrote to the people of Najrān, before the (chapter of) Ṭā Sīn Sulaymān [1] was revealed: ‘In the name of Allāh, the God of Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq and Ya‘qūb. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh to the Bishop of Najrān and the people of Najrān. If you accept Islam, then I extol before you Allāh, the God of Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq and Ya‘qūb. Now after (the praise of Allāh), I call you to the worship of Allāh leaving aside the worship of the servants (of Allāh), and I invite you to (come under) the guardianship of Allāh instead of the guardianship of the servants. But if you refuse (it), then (you should pay) the head-tax; and if you refuse (even this), then I declare war against you. And peace (be on you).’

When the Bishop read the letter, he was shocked and extremely terrified. So he sent (someone) to call a man of Najrān Shuraḥbīl ibn Wadā‘ah by name; and gave him the letter of the Prophet and he read it. Then the Bishop said to him: ‘What is your opinion?’ Shuraḥbīl said: ‘You surely know the promise which Allāh made to Ibrāhīm about the prophethood in the progeny of Ismā‘īl. Therefore, how can one be sure that it is not this very man? I would not give any opnion regarding the prophethood. If it were an opinion about a worldly matter, I would have advised you about it and made efforts on your behalf.’ Then the Bishop called the people of Najrān one after another, but all said as Shuraḥbīl had said. Thereupon, they decided to send Shuraḥbīl ibn Wadā‘ah, ‘Abdullāh ibn Shuraḥbīl and Jabbār ibn Fayḍ, so that they might bring them the (correct) news of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)

‘‘So the delegation proceeded until they came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). And he asked them (questions) and they asked him, and this questioning between him and them continued, until they said to him:

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[1] i.e., the 27th Chapter, the Ant. The author has proved, while writing the traditions under the next verse, that this particular tradition is false. (*tr.*)

‘What do you say about ‘Īsā son of Maryam?’ The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Today, I do not have anything about him; therefore you stay (here), in order that I may tell you tomorrow morning what is to be said about ‘Īsā.’ Then Allāh sent down this verse: *Surely the likeness of ‘Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust ... and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars.*

‘‘But they refused to agree to that (truth). Thus, when the next morning came after the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had given them that information, he proceeded for the imprecation to a place thick with trees that belonged to him, carrying al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and Fāṭimah was walking behind him; and he had many wives those days (but did not take any of them with him). And Shuraḥbīl said to his two companions: ‘Surely, I see a (serious) matter coming (to us). If this man is a prophet sent (by Allāh) and we ventured to imprecate against him, there would not remain on the face of the earth any hair or claw of us (i.e., any cattle or bird belonging to us), but it will perish.’ They said to him: ‘What is your view?’ He said: ‘My opinion is that we should leave the judgment to him, because I see (in him) a man who will never exceed the proper limits in his decision.’ They said: ‘You may do as you like in this matter.’ Thereupon, Shuraḥbīl met the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘I have thought (of one thing) better than the imprecation against you.’ He said: ‘And what is it?’ He said: ‘(We give you the authority) to decide (between us) this day upto the night and from the night to the (next) morning. Whatever you will decide will be binding on us.’

‘‘So the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) returned without doing imprecation, and made agreement with them on the head-tax.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from ‘Ilbā’ ibn Aḥmar al-Yashkurī that he said: ‘‘When the verse was revealed: *... then say: ‘Let us call our sons and your sons ...’,* the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) sent (someone) to (call) ‘Alī, Fāṭimah and their sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; and invited the Jews to enter into imprecation against them. Then a young Jew said: ‘Woe unto you! Are you not familiar with (the story) of your brothers who were yesterday transformed into monkeys and pigs? Do not enter into (this) imprecation.’ So they desisted (from it).’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: This tradition supports the view that the pronoun

‘‘this’’ in the opening sentence, *disputes with you in this,* refers to ‘‘truth’’ in the preceding verse, *The truth is from your Lord.* In this way, the order of imprecation would cover other matters too, besides the controversy about ‘Īsā son of Maryam. In that case, it would be another story [1] after the events which took place with the delegation of Najrān as narrated in numerous traditions which supports each other, and a large portion of which has been quoted above.

Ibn Ṭāwūs has written in *Sa‘du ’s-su‘ud:* ‘‘I saw in the book *Mā nazala mina ’l-Qur’āni fi ’n-Nabiyyi wa Ahli baytih* (by Muḥammad ibn al-‘Abbās ibn Marwān) that he has narrated the tradition of the imprecation through fifty-one chains from the Companions and others; and some of them are: al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (peace be on them both), ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqās, Bakr ibn Sammāl, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, ‘Abdu ’r-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, Abū Rāfi‘ (slave of the Prophet), Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh, al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib and Anas ibn Mālik.’’

Likewise (Ibn Shahrāshūb) has narrated this tradition in *al-Manāqib,* from a number of narrators and exegetes. as-Suyūṭī has done the same in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr.*

A very strange thing has been written by an exegete who said:

‘‘The traditions unanimously say that the Prophet selected ‘Alī, Fāṭimah and their two sons for the imprecation; and they apply the word *our women* to Fāṭimah, and *our selves* to ‘Alī only. The source of these traditions are the Shī‘ahs, and their motive in this respect is well-known. They have tried as much as they could to propagate such traditions until it has spread among a vast number of the Sunnīs too.

‘‘But those who forged these traditions did not succeed in properly fitting their interpretation on the verse. When an Arab says, ‘our women’ he never means his daughter — especially when he has wives too. Such thing is not known in their language. Even more far-fetched is the claim that ‘our selves’ means ‘Alī. Moreover, the delegation of Najrān — concerning whom the verse is said to be revealed — had not come to Medina with their women and children.

‘‘The only thing which the verse shows is that the Prophet was

[1] This tradition is not supported by other traditions or history. (*tr.*)

ordered to call the People of the Book (who were disputing with him about ‘Īsā) to gather all — men, women and children — together; and he was to gather the believers — men, women and children — together, in order that they might earnestly pray to Allāh to curse the party which was in the wrong regarding its claim about ‘Īsā (a.s.).

‘‘Such thing would prove that the Prophet had strong conviction of the truth of his claim and had utmost confidence in it. And likewise, the desistence of those who were challenged to imprecation — the Christians or other People of the Book — would show that they had no confidence in their own claim and were disputing not for the purpose of ascertaining the truth; their belief was shakey and they had no clear proofs. How can a believer in Allāh agree to gather such a group — consisting of the truthful ones and the liars — in one place to fix their attention to Allāh asking for His curse, to pray to remove the liars from His mercy? Can anyone be more daring than such a person? Can anything be more mocking to the Divine Power and Majesty than this?

‘‘The Prophet and the believers had full confidence in the truth of what they believed about ‘Īsā (a.s.). It may be understood from the words of Allāh, *after what has come to you of knowledge;* because knowledge in matters of belief means certainty only.

‘‘The words of Allāh, *let us call our sons and your sons ...,* may be interpreted in either of the two ways:

‘‘First: Each group should call the other; you should call our sons and we should call your sons and likewise about the other two categories of women and selves.

‘‘Second: Each group should call his family. We, the Muslims, should call our sons, women and ourselves, and you should do likewise with your family.

‘‘There is no difficulty in either case in calling the ‘selves’. The difficulty arises when this phrase is restricted to one person, as the Shī‘ahs and their followers do.’’

COMMENT: This is such a non-sense that no knowledgeable person would ever like to write it in academic books; and perhaps someone might venture to say that we have wrongly attributed it to such a renowned man! Yet, we have quoted it in full to show how low a man can sink in misapprehension and jaundiced views because of his bias and

prejudice. He goes on demolishing what he had earlier built, and reconfirms what he had rejected before, without caring or even knowing what he was doing. Also, we wanted evil to be known to all, so that they could protect themselves from it.

We may comment on this talk in two ways:

1. To show that the verse proves utmost excellence and superiority of ʻAlī (a.s.). But it is a subject more appropriate for the books of theology, and is not so much related to our subject, that is, explanation of the meanings of the Qur'ānic verses.

2. To review what the above exegete has written about the meaning of the verse of imprecation and concerning the traditions showing what had happened between the Prophet and the Christians of Najrān. This comes within the purview of exegesis, and we shall deal with it here.

You have already seen what the verse means. And the numerous traditions (which support each other), quoted by us, perfectly fit the meaning of the verse. If you ponder on what we have written earlier, you will see where and how his innovated ''proof'' has gone wrong, and at what points his blinkered vision has made him stumble. Here are some details:

He says: ''The source of these traditions are the Shīʻahs, and their motive in this respect is well-known. They have tried as much as they could to propagate such traditions until it has spread among a vast number of the Sunnīs too.'' This he says after admitting that the traditions are unanimous! Would that I knew which traditions he speaks about. Does he mean the abovementioned traditions which support and strengthen each other, which the scholars of traditions have unanimously accepted and narrated? They are not one, two or three; they are countless in number. The traditionalists have quoted them with one voice; the compilers of traditions have written them in their books, including Muslim and at-Tirmidhī in their collections of 'correct' traditions; and the historians have confirmed them by describing the events in a similar way. The exegetes of the Qur'ān have unanimously quoted and copied them, without expressing any doubt or levelling any objection against them — and there are among them stalwarts of traditions and history, like aṭ-Ṭabarī, Abu 'l-Fidā', Ibn Kathīr and as-Suyūṭī etc.

And who were those Shīʻahs who were the source of this story? Does

he mean those companions who narrated it in the first place? Like Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqās, Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and others? Or the disciples of the companions who took this tradition from them and conveyed it to others? Like Abū Ṣāliḥ, al-Kalbī, as-Suddī, ash-Sha‘bī and others? Does he want to say that those companions and their disciples became Shī‘ahs — just because they narrated a tradition which he does not like? It is these companions and disciples — together with other like them — who are the final links in the chains of the narrators of the Prophet’s traditions. Discard them, and you will be left neither with any tradition nor any biography of the Prophet. How can a Muslim — nay, even a non-Muslim researcher — aspire to know the details of the Prophet’s message, if he rejects the traditions? How can he know the teachings and laws brought by the Messenger of Allāh? The Qur’ān clearly upholds the authority of the sayings and actions of the Prophet; and declares that the religion is based on his life. Reject the authority of the traditions and you have lost the Qur’ān as well; there will remain no trace of the Divine Book, nor will there be any fruit of this revelation.

Or perhaps he thinks that the Shī‘ahs have interpolated and surreptitiously inserted these traditions in the books of traditions and history? But then the problem, instead of going away, would rather increase and be more overwhelming: the tradition will lose its authority and the *sharī‘ah* will be nullified.

He says: ‘‘They apply the word *our women* to Fāṭimah and *our selves* to ‘Alī.’’ Probably he wants to say that according to the Shī‘ahs, the words *our women* and *our selves* literally mean only Fāṭimah and ‘Alī respectively. Perhaps he got the idea from an earlier quoted tradition in which Jābir said: *‘‘Our selves* refers to the Messenger of Allāh and ‘Alī; ... and *our women* to Fāṭimah.’’ But obviously he has not understood its meaning. he traditions do not say so. They only mean that because the Prophet when acting on the verse, did not bring (any other person for imprecation) except ‘Alī and Fāṭimah, it made it clear that she was the only one worthy of being included in the category *our women,* as he was the only one qualified for the category *our selves;* and likewise al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn were the only two for the category *our sons.* The words: sons, women and selves taken together meant the family. Therefore, these four were the family of the Messenger of Allāh and his closest relatives, as we have seen in some traditions that he (s.a.w.a.) said after

coming with them at the appointed place: ‘‘O Allāh! These are the people of my house.’’ The sentence implies: I did not find anyone whom I could call, except these four.

That this is the correct explanation may be seen in the wording of some traditions which say: *‘‘our selves* refers to the Messenger of Allāh and ‘Alī.’’ It clearly shows that the tradition aims at describing who had come under which category — not at explaining the literal meaning of the words.

He says: ‘‘But those who forged these traditions did not succeed in properly fitting their interpretation on the verse. When an Arab says *our women* he never means his daughter — especially when he has got wives too. Such thing is not known in their language. Even more far-fetched is the claim that *our selves* means ‘Alī.’’

First he has given an imaginary meaning to the traditions, then he uses it as an excuse to discard all those narrations — in spite of their numerousness, in spite of their great number. Then he discredits its narrators and all those who have accepted them by accusing them of the crime of Shī‘ism! Had he been a true seeker of knowledge, he should have studied the books of exegesis, and remembered the vast multitude of the masters of eloquence and authorities of rhetorics, since they have quoted and written these traditions in their books of exegesis and other subjects without any hesitation, without any objection.

Look at the author of *Tafsīru 'l-Kashshāf.* He is a recognized authority on Arabic language, grammer and literature. He has often pronounced judgment on various recitations of the Qur’ān, showing why a certain recitation was not in keeping with the norms of language or usage. And see what he has to say about this verse: ‘‘And this verse contains a proof — unsurpassed in strength — of the excellence of the people of the mantle, peace be on them. And there is in it a clear proof of the truth of the prophethood of the Prophet, because nobody — either a supporter or an antagonist — has ever narrated that they (the Christians) answered that call (for imprecation).’’

How come that those giants of rhetorics and champions of literature could not realize that these traditions — in spite of their vast multitude and their repeated narrations in the books of traditions — accuse the Qur’ān of using incorrect expression by employing a plural (women) for one woman only?

Not, by my life! This exegete is in fact confused; he does not know the difference between the literal meaning of a word and its application. Obviously, his thinking goes like this: ‘‘Allāh said to His Prophet, *But whoever disputes with you in this after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: ‘Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves ...’* Now if we admit that the disputers at that time were the delegates of Najrān numbering according to some traditions, fourteen men; and that there were no women or children with them; and if after that we admit that when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) went for the imprecation, he had with him only: ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, then the phrase, *whoever disputes with you,* would literally mean the delegation of Najrān; *our women* would mean one woman; *our selves* would mean one ‘self’; and *your sons* and *your women* would become words without meaning because there were neither women nor sons in that delegation!’’

I wonder why he forgot to add that it would also mean use of *our sons* (a plural, meaning at least three sons) for only two sons, because it is more repugnant than the use of plural for singular. Since post-classical period, people have been using plural in place of singular — although such use is not found in the classical Arabic, except when done as a mark of respect. But the use of plural for dual is an unheard of thing — it has no justification at all.

However, it was this trend of thought which led him to discard all these traditions, saying that they were forged. But he has completely misunderstood the talk.

The fact is that an eloquent talk conforms with the situation which it is related to, and throws light on what in a given context is important to explain. Sometimes the talk is between two strangers, neither knowing the other’s life condition. Then they use normal expressions which are applied in general talk. Suppose two groups are facing each other; one of them wants the other to know that their conflict is deep-rooted, and that the whole tribe — men and women, elders and youngsters — shall continue the fight till the last. In such a situation, he will say: We shall fight you with our men, women and children. Now this sentence is based on the assumption that normally and naturally a tribe does have women and children. The statement aims at making it clear to the enemy that the speaker’s tribe is one in its determination to fight against their adversary.

On the other hand, if he were to say, 'We shall fight against you with our men, a woman and two sons', it would be a superflous detail, uncalled for in this context — unless there be some good reason for it in a particular situation.

But when the talk is between friends who know each other's family, then it may be couched in general terms. For example, one may say while inviting the other to his home: We are at your service — we ourselves as well as our women and children. Or, he may wish to be more specific and say: All of us will be at your service — the men, the daughter and the two children.

In short, normal way of expression is one thing and its application on real facts is another matter. Sometimes they may coincide, at other times they may be different. If a man speaks in normal and general terms and then it appears that the real situation is different, he is not accused of telling a lie.

This verse is based on the same principal. Accordingly the words, ... *then say: ''Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves ... '',* means as follows: Tell them that you are coming with your closest relatives who are your partners in your claim and knowledge, and invite them to come with their closest relatives. Thus, the verse proceeds in the normal way assuming that the Messenger of Allāh had in his family men, women and sons, and the Christian delegates had likewise men, women and sons in their families; it was a challenge couched in general and usual terms. But when the time came to act on that challenge, it was found that the Prophet did not have any men, women and sons except one man, one woman and two sons, while his adversaries had no woman or son with them — there were only men in their group. But this difference in implementation did not falsify the challenge. That is why when the Prophet came out with one man, one woman and two sons, the Christians did not accuse him of lying or of not fulfilling the conditions; nor did they cover their refusal by saying that the Prophet had told them to bring their women and sons which they did not have with them at that time and therefore they were unable to enter into imprecation. Also, it was because of this that those who heard this story never imagined that it was a forgery.

The above explanation also shows the absurdity of his assertion

where he says: ‘‘Moreover, the delegation of Najrān — concerning whom the verse is said to be revealed — had not come to Medina with their women and children.’’

He says: ‘‘The only thing which the verse shows is that the Prophet was ordered to call the People of the Book (who were disputing with him about ‘Īsā) to gather all — men, women and children — together; and he was to gather the believers — men, women and children — together; in order that they might earnestly pray to Allāh to curse the party which was in the wrong in its claim about ‘Īsā ... How can a beliver in Allāh agree to gather such a group — consisting of the truthful ones and the liars — in one place to fix their attention to Allāh asking for His curse, to pray to remove the liars from His mercy? Can anyone be more daring than such a person? Can anything be more mocking to the Divine Power and Majesty than this?’’

In short, the verse invites both parties to gather together with their ‘‘selves’’, their women and their sons in one place and then to earnestly pray for Allāh’s curse on the liars. Now let us find out what is the meaning of this gathering which he talks about.

Was it a call to gather together all the believers and all the Christians? But the believers at that time [1] included all, or almost all, Arabs of the tribes of Rabī‘ah and Muḍar residing from Yemen and Hijāz to Iraq and beyond. And the Christians included those in Najrān (then forming a part of Yemen), Syria and the regions around the Mediterranean sea; the Romans and the Franks, as well as the people of the Britain, Austria and other places.

Such a vast multitude of people, scattered from the East to the West, must have exceeded millions upon millions, counting men, women and children all together. There can be no doubt whatsoever in the mind of a sane person that it was almost impossible for all of them to gather in one place. Normal ways and means reject such a proposition altogether. If the Qur’ān had offered this proposal then it had asked for an impossible. It would mean that the Prophet was offering a conditional proof for the authencity of his claim — and the condition, on which it depended, was

[1] It was the 9th year after Hijrah according to some historians, and the 10th according to others. But both timings are open to question, as we shall describe when writing the ‘‘Traditions’’ related to the next verses. (*Author’s Note*)

an impossible one! It would have given an excuse — a valid excuse — to the Christians not to accept his call of imprecation; in fact it would have been more damaging to his claim, rather than weakening their case.

Or, does he mean that it was a call to gather from both groups only those who were present thereby — the believers of Medina and nearby places, and the Christians of Najrān and the places in its vicinity? This alternative — although less absurd than the preceding one — was no less impossible. Who was capable that day of gathering all the residents of Medina and Najrān and their neighbouring places, not leaving a single woman and child out, in one place for the intended imprecation? Such proposal would have been an admission that the truth was impossible to prove, because the proof depended on an impossible condition.

Or, was it a call covering only those who were actively engaged in the disputation and arguments? That is, the Prophet and the believers around him, and the delegation of the Christians of Najrān. But then his own objection would boomerang: ‘‘Moreover, the delegation of Najrān — concerning whom the verse is said to be revealed — had not come to Medina with their women and children.’’ So the problem would not go away.

Further he says: ‘‘The Prophet and the believers had full confidence in the truth of what they believed about ‘Īsā (a.s.). It may be understood from the words of Allāh, *after what has come to you of knowledge;* because knowledge in matters of belief means certainty only.’’

It is true that the knowledge, as used in this verse, means certainty. But would that I knew where does it say that the believers were sure of the truth of their belief concerning ‘Īsā? The verse does not speak about anyone except the Prophet in singular pronouns: *But whoever disputes with you* (lit. thee) *in this after what has come to you* (lit. thee) *of knowledge, then say* (lit. say thou). And there was no reason why the verse should have addressed anyone except the Prophet alone; the Christians’ delegation had only one aim before their eyes — to dispute and argue with the Prophet. It was not their intention to meet the believers; they had not argued at all with the believers, nor had the believers spoken to them.

If the verse shows at all that anyone other than the Prophet had attained knowledge and certainty, it does so about those whom the Prophet had brought with himself for imprecation, as we have inferred

from the words, *and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars.*

On the other hand, the Qur'ān shows that not all the believers had attained knowledge and certainty. For example:

And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating others (with Him) (12:106). Here Allāh announces their polytheism. How can polytheism co-exist with certainty?

And when the hypocrites and those in whose heart was a disease began to say: ''Allāh and His Messenger did not promise us (victory) *but only to deceive''* (33:12).

And those who believe say: ''Why has not a chapter been revealed?'' But when a decisive chapter is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein you see those in whose hearts is a disease look to you with the look of one fainting because of death. Woe to them then! ... Those it is whom Allāh has cursed so He has made them deaf and blinded their eyes (47:20 — 23).

The fact is that certainty was attained by only a few of the followers of the Prophet who had got clear sight. Allāh says:

But if they dispute with you, say: ''I have submitted myself (entirely) *to Allāh and* (so has) *every one who follows me''* (3:20).

Say: ''This is my way, I invite (you) *unto Allāh; with clear sight* (which) *land he who follows me* (possess) (12:108).

He says: ''The words of Allāh, *let us call our sons and your sons ...*, may be interpreted in either of the two ways: First: Each group should call the others; you should call our sons and we should call your sons; and likewise about the other two categories of women and selves.''

You have already seen in the Commentary that this interpretation (which he gives as his first choice) is totally absurd and not in conformity with the wordings of the verse. So far as the call for imprecation was concerned, it would have sufficed to say: Come, let us earnestly pray and bring about the curse of Allāh on the liars. Why then were the remaining phrases added: *Let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our 'selves' and your 'selves'?* These phrases were meant to bind each party to bring for the imprecation its dearest and precious-most things, that is, the sons, the women and the selves. This challenge could be meaningful only if each party was to bring its own sons, women and selves. It would lose its meaning completely if it was interpreted as he says: You should call our sons, women and selves and

we should call your sons, women and selves.

Moreover, common sense rejects this interpretation. Why should the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) give the Christians power and authority over their sons and women? Because only after getting that power and authority could each party call the other's sons and women and bring them at the place of imprecation. Surely the aim could be achieved in a better way if each party called its own sons and women.

Further, as we have shown above, this interpretation makes it necessary to add in the verse the idea of giving someone the power and authority over others. But how and on what ground can we do so? The truth is that this interpretation is absolutely wrong. Only the other interpretation is correct — that each party was to call its own family members.

He says: ''There is no difficulty in either case in calling the 'selves'. The difficulty arises when this phrase is restricted to one person, as the Shī'ahs and their followers do.''

The difficulty, to which he refers, arises from the following objection: How can a man call himself? But this objection has nothing to do with either interpretation. It has been levelled against the explanation that *our selves* means the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) himself. Reportedly during one religious discussion, one group said that *our selves* referred to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), not to 'Alī. The opposite party said that it would imply that he called himself, which is manifestly wrong. (See the second tradition, quoted from '*Uyūnu 'l-akhbār*.)

It will be seen from the above that his claim that ''the difficulty arises from the Shī'ahs' interpretation'', is absolutely wrong. The Shī'ahs say that the word, *our selves,* means the men from the family of the Prophet; and when the order was implemented, it was applied to the Messenger of Allāh and 'Alī (blessings and peace be on them!). And there could be no difficulty in their calling one another.

Accordingly, no objection can be directed at the Shī'ahs, even according to the interpretation which he ascribes to them, that *our selves* means 'All. What difficulty could there be if the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was to call 'Alī (a.s.)?

His disciple [1] has written in *al-Manār,* after mentioning some traditions: ‘‘Ibn ‘Asākir has narrated from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad from his father in explanation of the verse, *then say: ‘Come let us call our sons and your sons ...* ’ ‘Then (the Prophet) brought Abū Bakr and his son, ‘Umar and his son, and ‘Uthmān and his son.’ ’’ Then he comments: ‘‘Apparently the verse speaks about a group of the believers.’’ Thereafter he has copied the abovequoted writing of his teacher, and then has opined as follows: ‘‘As you see the verse orders women to participate with men in national struggles and religious wars. It is based on the principle of equality between men and women even in public affairs — except where an exception has been made. (Then he goes on elaborating the same points.)

COMMENT: As for the tradition which he has quoted, it is an isolated and peculiar one and goes against all the other traditions on this subject; and needless to say that the other traditions are so numerous and so well known. That is why the exegetes have not mentioned it. Moreover, it contains statements which do not tally with the facts: It supposes that all the people mentioned therein had sons, but surely not all of them had sons at that time.

He says: ‘‘Apparently the verse speaks about a group of the believers.’’ Probably, he wants to infer from the tradition (quoted by him) that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had brought there all the believers and their children; thus the words that the Prophet, ‘‘brought Abū Bakr and his son ...’’ would indirectly imply that he brought all the believers. In this way he wants to support the interpretation of his teacher, discussed above. But you see how isolated, shunned and discarded this tradition is; and how defective is its text. Apart from that it does not give the meaning he infers from it.

Now look at the principle adduced by him that women should participate in the public affairs just as men do. If his reasoning is accepted then it would also prove that small children too should participate in those affairs with their elders. This one point alone is enough to show the falsity of his observation.

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[1] i.e., Rashīd Riḍā, author of *Tafsīr al-Manār.* (*tr.*)

We have talked at length on the subject of the women's participation, under the verses of divorce in the second volume [1]; and we shall be writing some more in a relevant place there is no need to make such inferences as he has done from this verse.

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[1] Vide vol. 4 (Engl. transl.), pp. 61 — 83. (*tr.*)

قُلْ يٰا أَهْلَ الْكِتٰابِ تَعٰالَوْا إِلىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوٰاءٍ بَيْنَنٰا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللّٰهَ وَلاٰ نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئاً وَلاٰ يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنٰا بَعْضاً أَرْبٰاباً مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنّٰا مُسْلِمُونَ ــ ٦٤ . يٰا أَهْلَ الْكِتٰابِ لِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِي إِبْرٰاهِيمَ وَمٰا أُنْزِلَتِ التَّوْرٰاةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلاٰ تَعْقِلُونَ ــ ٦٥ . هٰا أَنْتُمْ هٰؤُلاٰءِ حٰاجَجْتُمْ فِيمٰا لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِيمٰا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لاٰ تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ٦٦ . مٰا كٰانَ إِبْرٰاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلاٰ نَصْرٰانِيًّا وَلٰكِنْ كٰانَ حَنِيفاً مُسْلِماً وَمٰا كٰانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ــ ٦٧ . إِنَّ أَوْلَى النّٰاسِ بِإِبْرٰاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهٰذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ٦٨ . وَدَّتْ طٰائِفَةٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتٰابِ لَوْ يُضِلُّونَكُمْ وَمٰا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمٰا يَشْعُرُونَ ــ ٦٩ . يٰا أَهْلَ الْكِتٰابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيٰاتِ اللّٰهِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ــ ٧٠ . يٰا أَهْلَ الْكِتٰابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبٰاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ــ ٧١ . وَقٰالَتْ طٰائِفَةٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتٰابِ آمِنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَجْهَ النَّهٰارِ وَاكْفُرُوا آخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ــ ٧٢ . وَلاٰ تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدىٰ هُدَى اللّٰهِ أَنْ يُؤْتىٰ أَحَدٌ مِثْلَ مٰا أُوتِيتُمْ أَوْ يُحَآجُّوكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشٰاءُ

وَاللهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ــ ٧٣ . يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَآءُ وَاللهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ
الْعَظِيمِ ــ ٧٤ . وَمِنْ أَهلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنْهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنْهُ بِدِينَارٍ لاَ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِماً
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللهِ
الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ــ ٧٥ . بَلَى مَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَى فَإِنَّ اللهَ
يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ــ ٧٦ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً
أُولَئِكَ لاَ خَلاَقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلاَ يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللهُ وَلاَ يَنظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَلاَ يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ــ ٧٧ . وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقاً
يَلْوُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللهِ
الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ــ ٧٨ .

Say: ''O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you, that we shall not worship any but Allāh and (that) *we shall not associate anything with Him, and* (that) *some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh''; but if they turn back, then say: ''Bear witness that we are Muslims* (Submitting ones)'' (64). *O People of the Book! why do you dispute about Ibrāhīm, when the Torah and the Injīl were not revealed till after him? Do you not then understand?* (65). *Behold! you are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allāh knows while you do not know* (66). *Ibrāhīm was not a Jew nor a Christian but he was* (an) *upright (man), a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists* (67). *Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe; and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers* (68). *A party of the People of the Book desire that they should lead you astray,and they lead not astray but themselves,*

and they do not perceive (69). *O People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in the communications of Allāh while you witness* (them)? (70). *O People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with the falsehood and hide the truth while you know?* (71). *And a party of the People of the Book say. ''Avow belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe* (in) *the first part of the day, and disbelieve* (at) *the end of it, perhaps they go back on their religion* (72). *And do not believe but in him who follows your religion.'' Say: ''Surely the guidance is the guidance of Allāh — that one may be given* (by Him) *the like of what you were given; or they would contend with you by an argument before your Lord.'' Say: ''Surely grace is in the hand of Allāh, He gives it to whom He pleases; and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing* (73). *He specially chooses for His mercy whom He pleases; and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace''* (74). *And among the People of the Book there are some such that if you entrust one* (of them) *with a heap of wealth, he shall pay it back to you; and among them there are some such that if you entrust one* (of them) *with a dīnār he shall not pay it back to you except that you remain standing over him; this is because they say: ''There is not upon us in, the matter of the unlearned people any way* (to reproach) ;'' *and they tell a lie against Allāh while they know* (75). *Yea, whoever fulfils his promise and guards* (against evil) *— then surely Allāh loves those who guard* (against evil) (76). (As for) *those who take a small price for the covenant of Allāh and their* (own) *oaths — surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allāh will not speak to them, nor will He look upon them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement* (77). *Most surely there is a party amongst those who distort the Book with their tongues that you may consider it to be* (a part) *of the Book, while it is not* (a part) *of the Book, and they say, ''It is from Allāh,'' while it is not from Allāh; and they tell a lie against Allāh whilst they know* (78).

COMMENTARY

Now begins the second phase of the exposition of the People of the Book, particularly the Christians, and some related matters.

The preceding verses described the condition of the People of the Book generally, beginning with the verse 3:19 (*Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam ...*), taking a turn at the verse 3:23 (*Have you not considered those who are given a portion of the Book?*). Then it focused its attention on the Christians beginning with the verse 3:33 (*Surely Allāh chose Adam and Nūḥ ...*), guiding the believers earlier, in the verse 3:28, not to take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers (*Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers ...*). This was the first phase.

Now, the same subjects are explained in other words in a different style. First, it comments on the People of the Book in general. Apart from the verses under discussion, it throws light on various other relevant matters in other places; for example: *Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you disbelieve in the signs of Allāh? ...''* (3:98); *Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you hinder him who believes from the way of Allāh? ...''* (3:99). Secondly, it exposes the condition of the Christians and their belief concerning ʻIsā (a.s.): *It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him the Book, and the wisdom and prophethood, then he should say to men: ''Be my servants ...''* (3:79). Then the talk turns to the matters related to the believers calling them to submission and unity and warning them of befriending the unbelievers and being intimate with them in preference to the believers. All these things are explained in numerous verses in various places.

QUR'ĀN: *Say: ''O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you:* This call is addressed to all the People of the Book in general. The invitation to ''come to a word'' really means to unite on the meaning of the word by acting upon it. The call to the word is based on the idiom found in Arabic and other languages, as for example, they say: The nation is united on this word. It implies the meanings of belief, acknowledgment, recognition and propagation. The verse therefore means: Come let us adhere to this word, co-operating with one another in its propagation and acting on its demands.

as-Sawā' (اَلسَّوَآءُ) is a *maṣdar,* although it is commonly used as an adjective to denote a thing both sides of which are equal. ''common between us and you'' means that you and we both are equally bound to acknowledge it and to act on it. Obviously, the use of this adjective for ''word'' is metaphorical. What is actually equal is its acknowledgment and the resulting action. Again action is related to the import of the word, not the word itself. Moreover, the call for unity about the word in itself has metaphorical connotation. In this way, this sentence has many fine points of rhetorics: Calling to unite on a meaning, then using the ''word'' for the meaning and then ascribing the adjective ''common'' to the ''word''.

Also, it has been said that the ''common word'' refers to that which the Qur'ān, the Torah and the Injīl commonly invite to with one voice — and that is the belief of monotheism. If this suggestion is correct then the next words, ''that we shall not worship any but Allāh ...'', would serve as the correct explanation of the word common between the Muslims and the People of the Book; it would invite the latter to leave aside their own interpretation of the Oneness of God — the interpretation used to fit this pristine ''word'' on their own desire; for example, their belief that God was incarnated, took a son, was one but had three persons; their worship of their rabbis, priests and bishops. The meaning in that case would be as follows: Come to a word common between us and you, and that is the belief in One God; and if we unite on it then we would have to discard and reject all that is associated with Allāh, and would not take others for lords besides Him.

But the ending of the verse, ''but if they turn back, then say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims (Submitting ones)' '', supports the first meaning given by us. In short, the verse calls to this word that "we shall not worship any but Allāh ...'', as it is the demand of Islam, the total submission, which is the religion with Allāh. Although submission is also a concomitant of the belief in the Oneness of God, the verse calls the People of the Book not to the theoretical, but practical, monotheism; that is, to discard worshipping anyone but Allāh. (Think over it).

QUR'ĀN: ''*that we shall not worship any but Allāh and* (that) *we shall not associate anything with Him, and* (that) *some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh'':* It is the explanation of ''the common

word'', and it is what submission to Allāh demands. The words, ''we shall not worship any but Allāh'', reject the worship of any other than Allāh; it is not their aim to prove or affirm the worship of Allāh. We have already mentioned in the explanation of the ''creed'' — There is no god except Allāh — that the phrase, ''except Allāh'', is not an exception but *al-badal* (اَلْبَدَلُ = appositional substantive standing for another substantive) of ''god''; consequently, the sentence aims at rejecting partners for Allāh, not at affirming the existence of Allāh [1]. According to the Qur'ān, existence of Allāh and His being the Truth needs no proof, it is a self-evident reality.

This sentence calls them not to associate anyone to Allāh in worship. But it does not nullify the other types of polytheism emanating from the belief that Allāh had a son or the idea of trinity and things like that. That is why the call continues: ''and (that) we shall not associate anything with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh.'' The fact is that merely saying that a worship is meant for Allāh does not make it the worship of Allāh, unless it is done with pure and sincere faith, unless the heart is purged of all beliefs and superstitions springing from polytheism. Otherwise, the worship would be for a god who had a partner. And a worship devoted to one of the alleged partners in godhead — even if it is done for him exclusively — would still be a product of polytheism. Why? because such a worship, by its very definition is a share devoted to one of the two or more partners; as such it acknowledges the right of the other partner or partners, and is therefore the worship of those partners too.

On the other hand, the Prophet calls them, by order of Allāh, to the pure monotheism, ''that we shall not worship any but Allāh and (that) we shall not associate anything with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh.'' It is this call which combines in itself all the aims and objectives of prophethood; it is this which the prophets taught their men, and which they propagated in the human society.

We have described (while explaining the verse 2:213, *Mankind was but one people*) that prophethood is a God-inspired awakening, a true advancement, the purpose of which is to spread the word of religion. The

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* (Engl. transl.), vol. 2, 2:163. (*tr.*)

religion, in its reality, is equilibrium in the society's march of life; and a well-balanced society creates well-balanced individual in life. In this way, each and everyone is accorded his due position which the nature has meant him to have. Thus, the society gets the freedom and the felicity of natural perfectness based on justice and equity; and likewise the individual gets complete freedom to enjoy the life in all its aspects, as he thinks fit and as he likes — except when it is likely to harm the society's life. And all these freedoms and enjoyments are conditional to servitude and submission to Allāh, subservient to the unseen authority and power.

We may summarize the prophets' message in these words: They want human species — individually and collectively — to march forward according to the dictate of their nature which adheres to the belief of monotheism. That belief in its turn demands that man should base all his individual and social actions and activities on submission to Allāh, and that he should spread justice and equity. In other words, all should be given equal rights in life, and all should have equal freedom of good intention and good deed.

This goal cannot be achieved until and unless the roots of conflict and unlawful transgression are completely destroyed; so that no strong person exploits or enslaves a weak man, no one dominates another, and no powerless person serves the interests of someone powerful. There is no god but Allāh; there is no Lord except Allāh; and there is no rule for anyone except Allāh.

This is what this verse says: ''that we shall not worship any but Allāh and (that) we shall not associate anything with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh. There are many verses of the same connotation. For example, Allāh quotes Yūsuf (a.s.) as saying: *O my two mates of the prison! are sundry lords better or Allāh, the One, the Supreme? You do not worship besides Him but names which you have named, you and your fathers; Allāh has not sent down any authority for them; judgment is only Allāh's; He has commanded that you shall not worship aught but Him; this is the right religion* (12:39 — 40). Also, Allāh says: *They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allāh, and* (also) *the Messiah son of Maryam, and they were not enjoined but that they should worship one God only, there is no god but He* (9:31).

And the same is the importance of many admonitions addressed to

their peoples by the prophets like: Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm, Shu‘ayb, Mūsā and ‘Īsā (peace be on them all). For example:

Nūḥ: *My Lord! surely they have disobeyed me and followed him whose wealth and children have added to him nothing but loss* (71:21).

Hūd: *Do you build on every height a monument? Vain is it that you do. And you make strong fortresses that perhaps you may abide. And when you lay hands* (on men) *you lay hands* (like) *tyrants* (26:128 — 130).

Ṣāliḥ: *And do not obey the bidding of the extravagant ones* (26:151).

Ibrāhīm: *When he said to his father and his people: ‘‘What are these images to whose worship you cleave?’’ They said: ‘‘We found our fathers worshipping them.’’ He said: ‘‘Certainly you have been,* (both) *you and your fathers, in manifest error’’* (21:52 — 54).

And Allāh said to Mūsā and Hārūn: *Go both to Pharaoh, surely he has become inordinate: ... So go you both to him and say: ‘‘Surely we are two messengers of your Lord; therefore send the Children of Israel with us and do not torment them ...’’* (20:43 — 47).

And lastly ‘Īsā said to his people: ‘‘*... and so that I may make clear to you part of what you differ in; so fear Allāh and obey me’’* (43:63).

The natural religion is that which negates transgression and mischief, and eradicates injustice and unlawful dominations — the unjust dominations which destroy the foundation of happiness and uproot the basis of truth and reality. It was this fact which the Prophet alluded to when he said in the last pilgrimage (and al-Mas‘ūdī has mentioned it in his *Murūju ’dh-dhahab,* in the events of the year 10 of Hijrah): ‘‘Indeed the time has come full circle to its (original) form (as it was) the day when Allāh created the heavens and the earth.’’ Perhaps he (s.a.w.a.) meant that the men have come back to the rule of nature because the Islamic character had become firmly rooted among them.

The sentence, ‘‘that we shall not worship any but Allāh ...’’, not only covers all the aims and objectives of prophethood, but also explains the reason of this commandment.

‘‘that we shall not worsdhip any but Allāh’’: Godhead is that which everything worships, is bewildered about and loved — in every way. God is the origin and fountainhead of every perfection in all the things; in spite of their magnitude in number, they are related to one another and all

are one in that each component looks to God for its needs; He is the source of every perfection desired by these things. This reality leads us to the Oneness of God. As the created things are interrelated, the Creator can be no more than one. He is the Owner in Whose Hand is the management of everything. Therefore, it is obligatory to worship Allāh, because He is the One and Only God, there is no partner or colleague to Him. And it is obligatory not to ascribe any partner to Him in worship. In other words, this universe with all that it contains cannot submit except to One Creator. These creatures are joined in a uniform system, they are united in their existence: naturally there cannot be more than one Lord for them, because there is not more than one Creator for them.

‘‘and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh’’: Human beings, in spite of their great number, are parts of one reality, that is, human species and humanity. All those merits and abilities which the hand of creation has put in them in equal measure demand that they must have equal rights in life, and must be accorded equal treatment in all those matters. On the other hand, there are differences in the conditions of the individuals and in their ability to procure and acquire some advantages and prerogatives of life; they are the gifts of general humanity which are bestowed to some particular individuals or groups here and there; such prerogatives also should be allowed to the mankind — but only in the way it demands. For example, sexual intercourse, pregnancy and medical treatment, all are the affairs of the humanity in general; yet sexual intercourse is the prerogative of an adult human being, male or female, while pregnancy is exclusively reserved for the female; and medical treatment is accorded only to a sick person.

In short, the members of the human society are components of a single reality — the components being similar to each other. No one has a right to impose his will on another, until and unless he takes on himself a similar burden on behalf of the other. And this is what co-operation in acquisition of life’s advantages means. But if the society or individual surrenders to an individual, if the whole or a part of the humanity submits to another part; raising him from the level of equality to that of superiority, giving him domination and arbitrary powers, making him an autocratic despot — he rules as he likes, is obeyed in whatever he says, and is taken as a lord whose will has to be complied with — then it negates the nature and destroys the foundation of humanity.

Moreover, Lordship exclusively belongs to Allāh, there is no lord but He. Thus, if a man puts himself under the authority of another man like himself, allowing that master to do with his follower whatever he wants, then it means that the said master has been taken as a lord besides Allāh. It is such a proposition which can never be accepted by him who has surrendered himself to Allāh.

It is now clear that the words of Allāh, ‘‘and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh’’, throw light on two realities: One, the human beings are parts of a single reality, the parts being similar to each other. Two, Lordship is the exclusive prerogative of Godhead.

QUR’ĀN: *but if they turn back, then say: ‘‘Bear witness that we are Muslims* (Submitting ones)’’: It is a call to them to witness that the Prophet and his followers are on a religion which Allāh is pleased with, and it is Islam. Allāh says: *Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam* (3:19). This declaration will cut their argument and dispute, because no proof prevails against the truth and the people of the truth.

This sentence points to the fact that monotheism in worship is a concomitant to Islam.

QUR’ĀN: *O People of the Book! why do you dispute about Ibrāhīm, when the Torah and the Injīl were not revealed till after him? Do you not then understand?:* Apparently it is governed by the imparative verb, ‘‘say’’, placed in the preceding verse; and so are the verses 70 — 71, coming after four verses. Thus, it will be an order to the Prophet to say these things to the People of the Book. On the other hand, the verse coming after two verses (*Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe ...*), gives an association which shows that the verse under discussion too may be a direct talk of Allāh, and not of the Prophet (by Allāh’s Command).

The People of the Book disputed among themselves about Ibrāhīm (a.s.). Probably it was, in the beginning, an argument by which each group wanted to show its veracity. The Jews might be saying: Ibrāhīm, whom Allah has praised so much, was from us; a claim which the Christians might have countered by saying: Ibrāhīm was on truth, and the truth has been manifested by the advent of ‘Īsā. Then the arguments might have degenerated into bigotry and obstinacy. Then the Jews

claimed that Ibrāhīm was a Jew; and the Christians, that he was a Christian. However, it is a known fact that Judaism and Christianity came on the scene after the revelation of the Torah and the Injīl respectively; and these Books were revealed long after Ibrāhīm (a.s.). How could it be possible for him to be a Jew (a follower of the religion brought by Mūsā, a.s.)? Or a Christian (a follower of the *sharī'ah* of 'Īsā, a.s.)? All that can be said about Ibrāhīm (a.s.) is this: He was on truth, sincerely adhering to right, away from wrong, submitting himself to Allāh. These verses, therefore, have a connotation similar to the verse: *Or do you say that Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl and Isḥāq and Ya'qūb and the tribes were Jews or Christians? Are you better knowing or Allāh? And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allāh?* (2:140).

QUR'ĀN: *Behold! you are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge; why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allāh knows while you do not know:* The verse affirms that they possessed a knowledge in respect of the disputation which they indulged in; and negates another knowledge and ascribes it to Allāh. The exegetes have variously explained the knowledge which they had, and that which they did not. According to them it may mean as follows: 'You had disputed about Ibrāhīm and you had some knowledge about him, for example, that he existed at a certain time and was a prophet. Why then do you dispute about a matter of which you have no knowledge at all — claiming that he was a Jew or a Christian? The fact is that Allāh knows while you do not know.' Alternatively, the knowledge that has been affirmed may refer to the little knowledge they had about 'Īsā. The verse thus says: 'You have disputed about 'Īsā while you had some knowledge about him and his affairs. Why do you then dispute about a subject of which you have no knowledge, claiming that Ibrāhīm was a Jew or a Christian?'

The above two explanations, given by the exegetes, do not conform with the apparent context of the verse. The first is wrong because the People of the Book had never contended with each other about the existence or prophethood of Ibrāhīm (a.s.). The second, because neither party was on right concerning their disputation about 'Īsā (a.s.). Both were mistaken in their respective beliefs, making erroneous claims about him. How then can their disputation about 'Īsā be called a disputation of

which they had knowledge? In any case, the verse says that they disputed about something of which they had knowledge and also about that of which they had no knowledge. The question arises as to what was the disputation about which they had had knowledge? Moreover, it apparently shows that both disputes were among the People of the Book themselves. It does not refer to any argument between them and the Muslims; otherwise, the Muslims would obviously have been in wrong in that matter of which the People of the Book had knowledge.

The appropriate explanation would be as follows — and Allāh knows better:

It is well known that there was a never ending dispute between the Jews and the Christians which covered all the subjects in which they differed. The main point of contention was the 'Īsā's prophethood and the claims made by the Christians concerning his status — that he was God and son of God, and the belief of trinity. The Christians disputed with the Jews about his being a prophet sent by God — and the Christians had its knowledge. The Jews disputed with the Christians and refuted his godhead, his sonship and the trinity — and they talked with knowledge about it. These were the disputations about which they had got knowledge. As for the disputation about that of which they had no knowledge, it was their contention that Ibrāhīm was a Jew or a Christian.

When the Qur'ān says that they had no knowledge of this matter, it does not mean that they were unaware of the fact that the Torah and the Injīl were revealed after Ibrāhīm — as it was an obvious thing. Nor that they were oblivious of the fact that a preceding man cannot be a follower of one coming after him, because the admonition at the end of the preceding verse (*Do you not then understand?*) does not leave room for this suggestion; it shows that it is such an obvious thing that a mere hint is enough to focus attention on it. They knew that Ibrāhīm preceded the Torah and the Injīl, but they were oblivious of its logical corollary that he therefore could not be a Jew or a Christian, that he would be on the Divine Religion, that is, submission to Allāh.

The Jews also said: There cannot be more than one true religion and that is the Judaism. Thus, Ibrahim would inevitably be a Jew. The same argument was used by the Christians to Christianize Ibrāhīm. The error they committed in this argument sprang from ignorance, not obliviousness. The fact is that the religion of Allāh is one — and that is

Islam, the submission to Allāh. It is one, progressing towards perfection, with passage of time and in keeping with mankind's progress — as humanity advances to perfection. The Judaism and the Christianity are two branches of the perfection of Islam — the root religion. The prophets (peace be on them all !) were the builders of that building, each of them had a hand in it, laying down the foundation and raising such a lofty edifice. No doubt, Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was the founder of Islam — i.e., submission to Allāh — and it was the basic and true religion; then the true religion appeared with the name of Judaism and then Christianity; these were two of the branches of its perfection, two of the stages of its completion. What the Jews and the Christians did not know was that these propositions do not make Ibrāhīm a Jew or a Christian. He would remain, as before, an upright Muslim; his name would be always linked with that of Islam, the religion which he himself had founded. That Islam is the root of Judaism and Christianity; but it is neither Judaism nor Christianity. The root is not attributed to its branches; it is the branch that should be related to the root.

To say that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was a Muslim and not a Jew or a Christian does not imply a claim that he was the follower of the Prophet of Islam, acting according to the Qur'ānic *sharī'ah.* Nobody should rush to say that as Ibrāhīm (a.s.) had preceded the revelation of the Torah and the Injīl and therefore could not be counted as a Jew or a Christian, so had he preceded the revelation of the Qur'ān and the advent of Islam, therefore, in a completely identical manner, he should not be called a Muslim.

As a matter of fact, the use of 'Islam' for the Qur'ānic *sharī'ah* is a terminology which came up after the revelation of the Qur'ān, when the fame of the religion brought by Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), had spread far and wide. The Islam which is attributed to Ibrāhīm means submission to Allāh, humbling oneself before His Lordship. The two uses are different, and consequently there is no room for any objection whatsoever.

The People of the Book were unaware of the true meaning of the basic religion; they did not know that it was a reality which had various levels, and which had evolved, passing through stages, to the summit of its perfection. It was this ignorance of theirs to which Allāh refers when He says: ''And Allāh knows while you do not know. Ibrāhīm was not a Jew nor a Christian ...'' This meaning is also supported by the next verse: ''Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed

him and this Prophet and those who believe;'' as well as the verses 84 — 85 coming later: *Say: ''We believe in Allāh and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl and Isḥāq and Ya'qūb and the tribes, and what was given to Mūsā and 'Īsā and to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.'' And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers.* (We shall explain it in its place.)

QUR'ĀN: *Ibrāhīm was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was* (an) *upright* (man), *a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists:* This verse has been explained above. Some exegetes have explained it as follows: The Jews and the Christians claimed that Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was one of them, on their religion. Likewise, the idol-worshipping Arabs claimed that they were the followers of *ad-dīn al-ḥanīf* (اَلدِّيْنُ اَلْحَنِيفُ = the upright religion) the religion of Ibrāhīm (a.s.); even the People of the Book came to call them *al-ḥunafā'* (اَلْحُنَفَآءُ) and thus *al-ḥanīfiyyah* (اَلْحَنِيْفِيَّةُ = uprightness; religion of Ibrāhīm) was misconstrued to mean idol-worship. When Allāh praised Ibrāhīm (a.s.) by saying that ''he was (حَنِيْفاً = *ḥanīfan*) upright'', it was necessary to explain the word, so that people should not take it in the sense of idol-worship. That is why Allāh added the words, ''a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists;'' he followed the religion which Allāh is pleased with, and that is Islam, submission to Allāh, and he was not a polytheist like the Arabs of the days of Ignorance.

QUR'ĀN: *Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe; and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers:* This verse gives the reason behind the foregoing talk, and explains the reality of the subject matter. The meaning is as follows (and Allāh knows better).

If we look at relationship between this great Prophet, Ibrāhīm, and those who came after him, obviously he cannot be counted as a follower of later generations; rather, we have to decide who is nearest of all to him. Only he can be nearest of all to a prophet — coming with *a sharī'ah* and a Book — who follows the truth like him and accepts the religion which he brought. According to this criterion, the nearest to Ibrāhīm

(a.s.) is this Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and those who believe. They are on the Islam for which Allāh had chosen Ibrāhīm. Likewise, those who were his followers were nearest to him — not those who disbelieve in the communications of Allāh and confound the truth with falsehood.

The words, ‘‘those who followed him,’’ are an allusion against the People of the Book, indirectly telling the Jews and the Christians that they were not the nearest to Ibrāhīm because they did not follow him in submitting to Allāh.

The phrase, ‘‘and this Prophet and those who believe,’’ distinguishing the Prophet and his followers from the followers of Ibrāhīm (a.s.); this was done to show the exalted position of the Prophet; he was too great to be called someone’s follower. The same consideration is reflected in other verses; for example, *These are they whom Allāh guided, therefore follow their guidance* (6:90). Note that Allāh did not say, ‘therefore follow them’.

The sentence, ‘‘and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers’’, complete this reasoning and explanation. Ibrāhīm was a *waliyy* (اَلوَلِيُّ = friend) of Allāh, and his *al-wilāyah* (اَلوِلَايَةُ = friendship, guardianship) was a part of Allāh’s guardianship; and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers, not of the others who disbelieve in His Signs and confuse the right with wrong, the truth with falsehood.

QUR’ĀN: *A party of the People of the Book desire that they should lead you astray, and they lead not astray but themselves, and they do not perceive: ‘‘aṭ-Ṭā’ifah’’* (اَلطَّآئِفَةُ = party; lit.: rover, walker about). The people, and especially Arabs, used to live — in the beginning — a nomadic life; their tribes and clans used to wander around with their cattles looking for water and pasture, from season to season; they travelled in groups as a safety measure against attack and assassination. They were then called ‘‘a wandering party’’; gradually the noun, ‘party’ was dropped, and the adjective *aṭ-ṭā’ifah* (wanderer, rover, walker about) took its place.

How is it that the People of the Book lead not astray but themselves? The first and foremost human virtue is inclination towards truth and its acceptance. A desire to divert the people away from the truth, to turn them towards falsity (being a psychological trait) is a depravity of soul — and how evil this depravity is! It is a sin, a crime, a transgression

against truth; and what is there after the truth but lie and error? Thus, when they desire to lead the believers astray (when those believers are on truth), they in fact lead themselves astray although they do not perceive it.

And even if they got hold of a believer and led him astray by planting some doubts in his heart, they would be leading themselves astray before him. Man does not do anything — good or bad — but for himself. Allāh says: *Whoever does good, it is for his own self, and whoever does evil, it is against it* (45:46). As for those who go astray because of someone's misguidance, it is not so much a result of that deceiver's influence, as the misdeed and wrong choice of the straying person himself — by permission of Allāh. The Qur'ān says: *Whoever disbelieves, he shall be responsible for his disbelief, and whoever does good, they prepare* (good) *for their own souls* (30:44); *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults). *And you cannot escape in the earth, and you shall not have a guardian or a helper besides Allāh* (42:30 — 31). Some details about the effects and characteristics of human actions have been given in the second volume (Arabic text), under the verse: *... these it is whose deeds are forfeited in this world and the hereafter* (2:217).[1]

This explanation is among those Qur'ānic realities which spring from *at-tawḥīd* (اَلتَّوْحِيْدُ = monotheism) of action, and that active belief in its turn is based on the realities of Lordship and Kingdom. Only in this way, we can explain the exclusiveness found in the words of Allāh: ''and they lead not astray but themselves, and they do not perceive.'' As for the explanation given by others, they do not help in understanding this exclusiveness; that is why we have not mentioned them here at all.

QUR'ĀN: *O People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve in the communications of Allāh while you witness* (them)?: It has already been explained that disbelieving in communications of Allāh is not the same as disbelieving in Allāh Himself. Disbelief in Allāh entails open rejection of montheism, as the idol-worshippers and atheists do; while disbelief in communications means rejection of the Divine Knowledge after it is clarified and explained. The People of the Book do believe that the

[1] See *al-Mīzān* (Engl. transl.), vol. 3, pp. 245 — 274. (*tr.*)

universe has One God. What they disbelieve in are described in the books revealed to them and to others, like the prophethood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) , the fact that ‘Īsā was the servant and the messenger of Allāh, that Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor a Christian, that the hand of Allāh is open, that Allāh is Self-sufficient and other such things. The People of the Book, in Qur’ānic language, are disbelievers in communications of Allāh, not in Allāh Himself. Of course, there is the verse which goes against it: *Fight those who do not believe in Allāh, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Messenger have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, from among those who were given the Book, until they pay the jizyah* (tributory tax) *with their hands while they are in a state of subjection* (9:29). It clearly says that those People of the Book did not believe in Allāh, i.e., they disbelieved in Allāh. But it goes on mentioning their non-prohibition of prohibited things and their deviation from the religion of truth; and it shows that when the verse attributes disbelief to them it really uses a concomitant to allude to the related characteristic. In other words, when they disbelieve in communications of Allāh, it follows that they do not believe even in Allāh and the latter day although they may not realize it. But it does not speak about open and direct disbelief in Allāh.

‘‘while you witness (them)’’: *‘ash-Shahādah’’* (اَلشَّهَادَةُ = presence; knowledge through external senses; witness). It shows that their disbelief in communications refers to their rejection of the Prophet; they did not accept that the Prophet was the promised Prophet whose advent was foretold in the Torah and Injīl although they clearly saw that the signs and descriptions mentioned therein perfectly fitted on the Prophet.

Somebody has said that the word, ‘‘communications’’, is general and comprehensive; it covers all the communications and there is no reason why it should be restricted to the signs of the Prophet; the word therefore refers to their rejection of all the true signs and communications.

COMMENT: The explanation given by us clearly shows the invalidity of this interpretation.

QUR’ĀN: *O People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with the falsehood and hide the truth while you know?:‘‘al-Labs’’* (اَللَّبْسُ = to create doubt; to confuse; to confound). Why do you manifest the truth in

the form of falsehood? The words, ‘‘while you know’’, show or at least allude, that the confusion and the hiding refers to their confounding and hiding the religious knowledge and realities; and not to the verses of scriptures; that is, it does not speak about the verses which they had altered, hidden or misinterpreted.

These two verses, beginning with, ‘‘O People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve ...’’ and ending with, ‘‘while you know?’’, complete the talk which began with the words, ‘‘A party of the People of the Book desire ...’’ The whole community has been admonished for the wrong-doings of some of its members, because they were all united in race, tribe and character, and all accepted what some of them were doing. Such usage is commonly found in the Qur’ān.

QUR’ĀN: *And a party of the People of the Book say: ‘‘Avow belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe* (in) *the first part of the day, and disbelieve* (at) *the end of it, perhaps they go back* (on their religion) : *‘‘Wajha ’n-nahār’’* (وَجْهُ النَّهَار = lit. face of the day) means the first part of the day, because it has been used in contrast with ‘‘the end of it’’; also the face of a thing is what it appears to others with, and as far as the day is concerned, it is its early part. The context of this saying shows that something was revealed to the Prophet in the early hours of the day which conformed with tenets of the People of the Book, and another revelation came at the end of the day which was against their belief. And this prompted them to say these words.

Therefore, the clause, ‘‘that which has been revealed to those who believe’’, refers to a particular Qur’ānic revelation which agreed with the belief and practice of the People of the Book. The words, ‘‘the first part of the day ’’, are an adverbial phrase of time, and it is related not to ‘‘Avow belief’’, but to ‘‘has been revealed’’ because it is nearer. The words, ‘‘and disbelieve (at) the end of it,’’ mean: disbelieve in that which has been revealed (to those who believe) at the end of the day; it is an allegorical expression putting the adverbial phrase of time in place of the thing which happened at that time; a similar device has been used in the verse where it says: *Nay,* (it was) *planning of night and day* (34:33).

Accordingly, it supports what has been narrated from the Imāms of the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.), relating the circumstances in which this verse was revealed. This idea was propagated by the Jews at the time when the

qiblah was changed. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had prayed the morning prayer towards Baytu ’l-Maqdis which was the *qiblah* of the Jews. Then the *qiblah* was changed towards the Ka‘bah in the noon prayer. Then a group of the Jews said: Believe in that which was revealed to those who believe in the early hours of the day, that is, praying towards Baytu ’l-Maqdis, and disbelieve in that which has been revealed at the end of it, that is, facing towards the Ka‘bah. This explanation is further supported by their assertion which has been quoted in the next verse: ‘‘And do not believe but in him who follows your religion;’’ that is, do not trust anyone who does not follow your religion and does not believe in it, lest you disclose to him some of your secrets and the good tidings which were revealed to you about the promised Prophet — one of the signs foretold of the Prophet was that he would change the *qiblah* towards the Ka‘bah.

Another interpretation: Some exegetes have said that the phrase, ‘‘the first part of the day’’ is related to the verb ‘‘Avow belief’’; and, ‘‘the end of it,’’ is an adverbial phrase, (in which ‘‘in’’ is deleted and understood) and it is related to the verb ‘‘disbelieve’’. Accordingly, the meaning would be as follows: Some of them should pretend to believe in the Qur’ān and attach themselves with the Muslims; then they should renounce Islam at the end of the day saying that they had believed in the morning because they were deceived by apparent signs of truth of Islam but they had to renounce it by the end of the day because they had seen many things which proved its falsity; and because the good tidings of the prophethood and signs of veracity which they were told by the previous prophets did not fit on this Prophet. This was a devious plan to deceive the believers, so that the believers would be overwhelmed by doubts about their religion, and weakened in their conviction; in this way their power would break down and their mission fail.

This meaning in itself is not far-fatched, and especially from the Jews who had left no stone unturned to defeat Islam, to extinguish its light by any possible means. But the wording of the verse does not fit this interpretation. We shall write some related things under the traditions, Allāh willing.

Someone has explained it as follows: Avow belief in their praying towards the Ka‘bah in the first part of the day and disbelieve in it at the end of the day; perhaps they would go back on their religion.

A fourth explanation: Pretend to believe in the first part of the day by agreeing that the signs of the promised prophet were present in the Prophet; and disbelieve at the end of it saying that those attributes did not fit on him; this would put doubts in the believers' minds and perhaps they would renounce their religion. There is no proof for these two interpretations; and whatever the meaning, there is no ambiguity in the verse.

QUR'ĀN: *And do not believe but in him who follows your religion:* The contex shows that this too is the saying of the People of the Book, completing their talk which started with the words, ''Avow belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe.'' And likewise the words, ''that one may be given (by Him) the like of what you were given; or they would contend with you by an argument before your Lord,'' are continuation of their speech. And therefore the sentence, ''Say: 'Surely the guidance is the guidance of Allāh,' '' is a parenthetical sentence in reply of their talk beginning with, ''Avow belief,'' and ending with, ''who follows your religion.'' The change of style supports this view. Similarly the words, ''Say: 'Surely grace is in the the hand of Allāh ...,' '' are in reply of their talk, ''that one may be given (by Him) the like of what you were given.'' In this way, all the segments of this talk are inter-woven and the meanings of the two preceding verses inter-related with one another. Also, the two verses stand face to face with the verses describing the Jews' obstinacy, disputation and deception.

The meaning therefore is as follows, and Allāh knows better:

A party of the People of the Book, that is, the Jews, said one to another: Attest the truth of the Prophet and the believers regarding their prayer towards Baytu '1-Maqdis in the first part of the day and do not accept their truth when they prayed towards Ka'bah in the afternoon. Do not trust others when you talk with them, lest they inform the believers that the changing of *qiblah* to the Ka'bah was foretold as a sign of the truth of the Promised Prophet. For, if you accepted the affair of the Ka'bah and disclosed what you knew about it (that it was a sign of the Prophet's truth), then you would have to face two dangers: (1) The believers would get a *qiblah* of their own, like that of yours; it would destroy your supremacy and neutralize your precedence in the matter of *qiblah;* (2) the believers would contend with you before your Lord

establishing a proof against you that although you knew about the new *qiblah* and were witnesses of its truth, you did not accept the Islam.

Allāh replied to their talk — that they should believe what was revealed in the early part of the day and disbelieve what happened at the end of it, and their admonition to one another to hide the matter of *qiblah* so that the believers would not know the truth — that the guidance which the believers needed was the true guidance and it was the guidance of Allāh, and not yours. The believers do not need your guidance; you may follow the believers' guidance if you like and reject it if you so desire; you may proclaim the truth if you wish, and hide it if you want.

Then Allāh replies to their fear that one might be given by Allāh the like of what they were given.

He says that the grace is in the hand of Allāh, He gives it to whom He pleases. It is not in the Jews' hands so that they could reserve it for their own selves, blocking the way to the others. Allāh has made no comment on their conspiracy to hide the truth so that the believers would be unable to argue with them before their Lord; it was such a conspicuously fallacious presumption that needed no reply. The same disdainful silence is maintained in another verse exposing the same fallacy: *And when they meet those who believe they say: ''We believe,'' and when they are alone one with another, they say: ''Do you talk to them of what Allāh has disclosed to you that they may argue with you by this before your Lord? Do you not then understand?'' What! Do they not know that Allāh knows what they conceal and what they proclaim?* (2:76 — 77). The exclamatory ''What!'' in the sentence, ''What! Do they not know'', shows that it is not a reply to the Jews; it is just an indication that their talk goes against correct understanding, for they know that their hiding or proclaiming makes no difference in Allāh's knowledge.

It will be seen from the above explanation that the words, ''And do not believe'', mean 'do not trust anyone', 'do not expect anyone to keep your secret'. It has the same connotation as the verse: *and believes the believers* (9:61). The words, ''him who follows your religion,'' mean 'the Jews'. Their aim was to prevent the disclosure of what they knew regarding the truth of the change of *qiblah* to the Ka'bah. Their knowledge of this truth was also referred to in the verses: *turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque ... and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord; ... Those whom*

we have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons; and a party of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it) (2:144 — 146).

The exegetes have written various explanations for these verses. One of them says that the whole verse, ‘‘And do not believe ... Ample-giving, Knowing’’, is a direct speech of Allāh, not a quotation of the Jews’ talk; and the second person plural pronouns — ‘‘And do not believe’’, ‘‘What you were given’’, ‘‘they would contend with you’’, ‘‘before your Lord’’ — are all addressed to the believers; while the second person singular pronoun in ‘‘Say’’ refers to the Prophet. Some others agree with this explanation with one difference: They say that the second person plural pronouns in the above mentioned words are addressed to the Jews, and the speech admonishes and rebukes them. Still others have said that the words, ‘‘And do not believe but in him who follows your religion’’, are the quotation of the Jews’ talk; while the words, ‘‘Say: ‘Surely the guidance is the guidance of Allāh — that one may be given (by Him) ...’ ’’, are spoken by Allāh in reply to what the Jews had said. Likewise, there is a difference about the meaning of ‘‘grace’’ whether it means religion, worldly blessings, dominance or something else.

These interpretations, in spite of their bewildering number, are far removed from the connotation given by the context, as we have already shown. That is why we have not spent much time on them.

QUR’ĀN: *Say: ‘‘Surely grace is in the hand of Allāh, He gives it to whom He pleases; and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing’’:‘‘al-Faḍl’’* (اَلْفَضْلُ = surplus; that which is in excess). This word is used in commendatory sense, while *al-fuḍūl* (اَلْفُضُولُ) is used as a derogatory term. ar-Rāghib says: Every voluntary gratis benefaction is called *al-faḍl;* as Allāh says: *and ask Allāh of His grace* (4:32); *this is Allāh’s grace* (5:54); *and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace* (2:105); *Say: ‘‘In the grace of Allāh’’* (10:58); *and were it not for the grace of Allāh* (4:83).

Accordingly the sentence, ‘‘Say: ‘Surely grace is in the hand of Allāh’ ’’, is a sort of abbreviated syllogism from which the first premise has been omitted. The full deductive syllogism shall be as follows: Say: This revelation and Divine bestowal (which you are trying to reserve for yourself by pretending to believe and disbelieve and admonishing each other to hide the truth) is not a thing which we mortals can impose on

Allāh, it is really a grace. Grace is in the hand of Allāh (to Whom belong the Kingdom and the Command). Therefore, He has the power to give it to whom He pleases. And Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing.

This verse does not leave any room for the Jews to reserve the Divine Grace for themselves (despite their mistaken belief reflected in their words and deeds). Why should some people enjoy the grace of Allāh to the deprivation of others (as the Jews wanted to do with religion and *qiblah*)? One may imagine only three ways for it.

1. Either the grace of Allāh would fall under the influence of someone else, who then would manipulate the Divine Will, diverting it to one side, preventing it from going in another direction. But the fact is otherwise. Because ‘‘Surely grace is in the hand of Allāh, He gives it to whom He pleases.’’

2. Or, the bounty is in short supply, is insufficient to reach all the aspirants. In that case it would need some outside factor to choose a few and reject the others. But the fact is otherwise. Because Allāh is Ample-giving; All-powerful, Whose grace knows no limit.

3. Or, it could be that the grace — even if it was unlimited and in the hand of Allāh — could not reach a certain group because that group was hidden from Allāh, was unknown to Him. Thus the privileged group plans devious ways to hide the other groups and keep them concealed from Allāh, in order to deprive them of the Divine Grace. But the fact is otherwise. Because Allāh is All-knowing; ignorance cannot reach Him; nothing can be hidden from Him.

QUR’ĀN: *He specially chooses for His mercy whom He pleases; and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace: As* the grace is in the hand of Allāh, He gives it to whom He pleases; and as He is Ample-giving, Knowing, it is in His power to choose some of the servants for some of His favours. It is for Him to manage His property as He likes. The fact, that His grace and His bestowal of bounties are unrestricted, or that nobody can put any restraint on Him, does not make it necessary for Him to bestow His grace on each and every person indiscriminately. Otherwise, it would again be a restraint on His absolute power. It is His prerogative to specially choose for His grace whomever He pleases.

The verse ends on the sentence, ‘‘and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace’’. In a way it explains the reason of all that has been mentioned

above. The grace is mighty. Consequently it must be in His hand to give it to whom He pleases. Also, Allāh should be Ample-giving in His grace, knowing the condition of His servants, well aware of which type of grace would be more suitable to a given person. And therefore it should be His prerogative to specially choose for His grace whomever He pleases.

In the sentence, ''He specially chooses for His mercy whom He pleases,'' the word, ''grace'' has been replaced by ''mercy''. It shows that the grace, being a free gift, a discretional bounty, is a branch of mercy. Allāh says: *And My mercy encompasses all things* (7:156); *and were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure* (24:21); *Say: ''If you control the treasures of the mercy of Lord, then you would withhold* (them) *from fear of spending''* (17:100).

QUR'ĀN: *And among the People of the Book there are some such that if you entrust one* (of them) *with a heap of wealth, he shall pay it back to you; and among them are some such that if you entrust one* (of them) *with a dīnār he shall not pay it back to you except that you remain standing over him, this is because they say: ''There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way* (to reproach)'': The verse points to the glaring differences seen in the characters of various People of the Book, for example, in keeping the trust and fulfilling the agreements. Their dishonesty and breach of trust is in itself a national disgrace; this characteristic has permeated their society as a well accepted feature. Unfortunately, it is based on their ideology which is reflected in the statement: ''There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way (to reproach).'' They called themselves the People of the Book, and called others gentiles, unlearned people. The above quoted statement means that no gentile (non-Israelite) can have any way against an Israelite. Even more disturbing was their claim that that behaviour was approved by religion. It is to this aspect that the next sentence refers: ''and they tell a lie against Allāh while they know ...''

They believed — as they do even today that they were the chosen people; Divine Grace was their exclusive property; others had no share in Allāh's favour; Allāh had given them Prophethood, the Book and the Kingdom; therefore they had precedence and excellence over all races, and had a right to subjugate the others. This misconception gave rise to

various misunderstandings. For example, they came to believe that the sociological and financial rights and obligations (like prohibition of interest, of devouring others' property and usurping people's rights) were applicable within their own circle only. A Jew should not devour another Jew's property unjustly; an Israelite should not usurp the rights of his own people. In short, only the People of the Book had got a way to reproach against the People of the Book. As for the gentiles, the non-Israelites, they had no way of reproach against the People of the Book. The Jews thought they could deal with non-Israelites anyway they liked; they could do with others whatever they wanted. In their eyes the gentiles were no better than animals and .they dealt with them as they did with animals.

Of course, the conception was not found in the books that are said to be revealed, like the Torah, etc. They had taken this idea from their rabbis and blindly followed them. Moreover, the religion of Mūsā was meant for the Children of Israel only; others were neither invited nor allowed to enter it. Thus it became a racial religion. This gave rise to a belief that this excellence and Divine Grace was something based on race for which the Children of Israel were exclusively chosen. Being born of Israel parents was the essence of dignity, the root of excellence, the basis of supremacy. The one who was related to Israel had absolute precedence over all others. When such arrogant spirit governs the structure of a nation, it incites them to create mischief on the earth, and to annihilate the essence of humanity found in a society.

Of course, sometimes it becomes necessary in a human society to deprive some individuals or groups of some common rights. But what should be the criterion for such deprivation? A healthy society believes that whoever tries to negate others' rights or to damage or destroy the society itself, should be deprived of his own rights. From Islamic point of view the only criterion of rights is acceptance of Islam or coming under the protection of Islamic State. One who is neither a Muslim nor a *dhimmī* (اَلذِّمِّي = one under the protection of Islamic State), has no right in the life. This criterion conforms with the dictate of nature; and you have seen that the human society also recognizes such test in a general way.

Now, we come back to the verse under discussion, ''among the People of the Book.'' Apparently, it should have been 'among them'.

Why was the noun used in place of the pronoun? It was done to remove a possible misunderstanding: the preceding two verses had spoken about: ‘‘A party of the People of the Book’’; if these verses had said, ‘among them’, it could give an impression that it was speaking about a group of the previously mentioned, ‘‘A party of the People of the Book’’. You will see that after removing this possible cause of misunderstanding, the next verse uses pronoun when it says: ‘‘Most surely there is a party amongst those who distort the Book with their tongues.’’

Also, mentioning of the attribute — i.e., their being the People of the Book — points to a sort of reason. That is, such words and deeds — their saying that there is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way to reproach, and their swallowing the people’s wealth in this way — would not have looked so strange if they had been uttered by unlearned people, who did not know anything about prophethood and revelation. But these were the People of the Book; they had the Book which contained the God’s Commandments; and they knew very well that the Book did not give them any such latitude, nor did it allow them to take other people’s wealth and property just because they were gentiles, non-Israelites. Such statements and deeds were more strange and more disgraceful because they were uttered and done by the People of the Book. Therefore, they deserved more severe condemnation and rebuke.

‘‘al-Qinṭār’’ (اَلْقِنْطَارُ = 100 raṭl; figuratively used for huge amounts); *‘‘ad-dīnār’’* (اَلدِّيْنَارُ = a coin). Apart from their rhetorical beauties [1], their parallel setting in the context of trustworthiness shows that these words have been used for great and small amounts respectively. The verse means that there are some among them who faithfully keep the amount entrusted to them, no matter how great and valuable it may be; while there are others among them who would embezzle it even if it is a trivial and worthless thing.

The second person singular pronoun in the phrase, ‘‘if you entrust one (of them) with a heap of wealth, he shall pay it back to you’’, does not refer to any particular person; it is a sort of indefinite pronoun showing general applicability of the statement. In other words, the sentence means: If someone — anyone — gives him something in trust he shall pay it back to him, no matter how great the amount may be.

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[1] Like rhyme and similarity of paradigm. (*tr.*)

''illā mā dumta 'alayhi qā'iman'' (إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَآئِماً): It is said that *''mā''* (مَا) has changed the verb into *al-maṣdar* (اَلْمَصْدَرُ = infinitive verb) ; and the sentence means, ''except that you remain standing over him''. The word, ''standing'', points to urgency and insistence; when the claimant remains standing on his feet without sitting, it shows his impatience and inability to wait. Someone has said that *''mā''* is an adverb of time; but it makes no sense.

''this is because they say: 'There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way (to reproach)' '': Apparently, the context shows that the pronoun, ''this'', refers to the whole description written before, that is, the fact that some of them keep their trust even if it is a huge amount, and others do not pay it back even if it is a small thing; this difference has arisen from their belief that there is on them no way to reproach in the matter of the unlearned people. This idea has created among them a great disparity in ethical and spiritual standard although they know that Allāh has not ordained any such thing in His Book, nor is He pleased with such practices of theirs.

Alternatively, it may be referring to the second group only, which is mentioned by the sentence: ''and among them there are some such that if you entrust one (of them) with a dīnār he shall not pay it back to you.'' In this case, the first (i.e., trustworthy) group may have been mentioned here just to give the complete picture, to fulfil the demand of justice. Consequently, the plural pronouns in, ''they say'', and, ''they know'', may refer to, ''the People of of the Book'', or to, ''some such that if you entrust one (of them) with a dīnār''. In the latter case, the first person pronoun in, ''upon us'', may refer to all, ''the People of the Book'', or to a certain group of them. The translation will differ in each case, but all the possibilites are correct and credible. (Think it over.)

QUR'ĀN: *and they tell a lie against Allāh while they know:* It refutes their claim that there was not upon them any way to reproach in the matter of the unlearned people. Also, it proves that they used to justify their behaviour on religious grounds, claiming that it was a Divine Revelation, as we have mentioned earlier.

QUR'ĀN: *Yea, whoever fulfils his promise and guards* (against evil) — *then surely Allāh loves those who guard* (against evil): It answers their

argument and affirms what they wanted to negate with their statement that there was no way to reproach upon them regarding the non-Israelites. Fulfilment of promise means acting on it and guarding against its breach. *''at-Tawfiyah''* (اَلتَّوْفِيَةُ = to give completely); *''al-istīfā' ''* (اَلْاِسْتِيْفَاءُ = to take completely).

The promise refers to the covenant which Allāh had taken from His servants that they would believe in Him and worship Him. This meaning is supported by the next verse which says: ''(as for) those who take a small price for the covenant of Allāh and their (own) oaths.'' Or, it may mean all promises in general, including the covenant of Allāh.

The sentence, ''then surely Allāh loves those who guard (against evil),'' is a syllogism from which a premise has been omitted for brevity. Its completed form would be as follows: then surely Allāh loves him, because he guards against evil, and Allāh loves those who guard against evil. The idea is that Allāh bestows honour and dignity on His pious servants by loving them, and not by giving them licence to deceive, exploit and oppress His other servants.

The verse indicates that the divinely bestowed dignity is not so easily obtainable; it is not a common — place thing which could be attained by just verbal expression of belonging, or which may be used for racial or national supremacy by crafty and wily persons. The important condition for attainment of Divine Dignity is piety and fulfilment of the covenant made with Allāh. When these conditions are fulfilled the said dignity is achieved. That dignity means Allāh's love, friendship and guardianship, which are not given except to His pious servants. It results in Divine help and happy life, which in its turn brings them prosperity and betters their condition in this world, and raises their rank in the hereafter.

This is the meaning of dignity which Allāh bestows. It does not give rise to imposition of a certain race or nation on the shoulders of His servants, good and bad alike, giving the supposed ''master race'' freedom to do whatever they want and to say whatever they like. Thus, one day they would claim, ''there is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way (to reproach)''; saying next day that they were the friends of Allāh to the exclusion of the other people [1] ; and yet

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[1] *Say: ''O you who are Jews, if you think that you are the friends of Allāh to the exclusion of other people ... ''* (Qur'ān, 62:6). (*Author's note*)

another day, that they were the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones [1] . Thus, it leads them to create mischief in the earth and to destroy the tilth and the stock.

QUR'ĀN: (As for) *those who take a small price for covenant of Allāh and their* (own) *oaths:* It explains the reason of the preceding statement. The Divine Dignity is exclusively reserved for those who fulfil the covenant of Allāh and guard against evil — are pious; because the others — those who take a small price for the covenant of Allāh and their own oaths — have no honour, no dignity at all.

The fact is that whoever breaks the covenant of Allāh and forsakes piety — not guarding himself against evil — does so just for the enjoyment of the vanities of this world, giving preference to immediate desires over everlasting happiness. He exchanges the covenant of Allāh and the piety with a few worldly trinkets. That is why it has been likened to a trade deal: Covenant of Allāh is the item sold; and insignificant worldly provision, its small price. *''al-Ishtirā' ''* (اَلِاشْتِرَآءُ = to sell); ''they take a small price for the covenant of Allāh and their (own) oaths'', that is, they exchange the covenant and oaths for provisions of this world.

QUR'ĀN: *Surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allāh will not speak to them ... they shall have a painful chastisement: ''al-Khalāq''* (اَلْخَلَاقُ = portion, share); *''at-tazkiyah''* (اَلتَّزْكِيَةُ = to make grow, good growing; to purify). The descriptions of this group stand face to face with the attributes of the first group (*Yea, whoever fulfils his promise and guards* [against evil] ...); and the consequences of their behaviour are all negative. Keeping it in view, we find that:

First: The verse points to them with the demonstrative pronoun, *ulā'ika* (أُولٰئِكَ = those, they), which is used for a distant object. It shows that they are far removed from nearness to Allāh. Conversely, the pious ones who fulfil their covenant are brought nearer to Allāh because He loves them.

Second: When Allāh loves someone, he is given a portion in the hereafter; Allāh will speak to him and look upon him on the Day of

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[1] *And the Jews and the Christians say: ''We are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones''* (Qur'ān, 5:18). (*Author's note*)

Resurrection, will purify him and forgive him, that is, will remove chastisement from him. Allāh has mentioned three traits for those who break the covenant of Allāh and their own oaths.

First: They shall have no portion in the hereafter. *''al-Ākhirah''* (اَلْاٰخِرَةُ = the hereafter); it stands for *ad-dāru 'l-ākhirah* (اَلدَّارُالْاٰخِرَةُ = the abode in the hereafter; the everlasting abode); it is used for life after death. In the same way, *ad-dunyā* (اَلدُّنْيَا = the world) stands for *ad-dāru'd-dunyā* (اَلدَّارُالدُّنْيَا = worldly abode), which is used for the life before death.

They shall have no portion in the hereafter, because they themselves had preferred this world's share. It shows that ''a small price'' refers to this world. Of course, we have explained it above as the worldly provision; it was done because Allāh has used adjective ''small'' for it and the same adjective has been used for the worldly provision in the verse: *Say. ''The provision of this world is small''* (4:77). In other word, the provision of the world is the world (itself).

Second: Allāh will not speak to them, nor will he look upon them on the Day of Resurrection. It stands *vis-a-vis* the love which Allāh has for His pious servants; in love, the lover wants to enjoy nearness with the beloved, by looking at him and talking to him when they are together. As Allāh does not love this group, He will not speak to them nor look upon them on the Day of Resurrection, the day when they will be brought in His presence. The verse first mentions not speaking and then not looking upon; the description is in descending order; speaking shows more intimacy than looking upon; it is as though the verse wants to say: Allāh shall not confer upon them any honour, neither great nor small.

Third: Allāh will not purify them and they shall have a painful chastisement: The statements are unrestricted and unconditional. It implies that they shall remain unpurified and in chastisement both in this world and in the hereafter.

QUR'ĀN: Most surely there is a party amongst them who distort the Book with their tongues that you may consider it to be (a part) of the Book; ''al-Layy'' (اَللَّيُّ = to spin, to entwine); when used with the head or tongue as its object, it means inclining, bending or tilting it. Allāh says: they turn back their heads (63:5); distorting (the word) with their tongues (4:46). Apparently, it means that they recite the lies which they have

invented against Allāh in the same tone and style which they use for the Book, in order to confuse the people, making them believe that it was a part of the Book while it is not so.

The word ‘‘Book’’ has been repeated thrice in this sentence, in order to remove all possible ambiguity. The first ‘‘Book’’ refers to that which they wrote with their own hands and attributed to Allāh; the second refers to the ‘‘Book’’ which was revealed by Allāh; the third refers to the same Divine Revelation but the word was repeated to remove ambiguity and to indicate that the ‘‘Book’’, being the Book of Allāh, was too high and sublime to contain such forgeries — it is because the word ‘‘Book’’ has a connotation that points to sublimity.

The same was the cause of repeating the Divine Name, Allāh, in the sentence, ‘‘and they say, it is from Allāh, while it is not from Allāh’’. It means it is not from Allāh Who is the true God and Who does not say except truth, as He Himself says: *and the truth do I speak* (38:84).

The verse ends with the words, ‘‘and they tell a lie against Allāh whilst they know’’: It is refutation after refutation of their ascribing their forgeries to Divine Revelation. They were confusing the people by their distorted recitation; Allāh refuted it and said, ‘‘while it is not (a part) of the Book’’. Then they used to say, ‘‘it is from Allāh’’; Allāh refuted them first by saying, ‘‘while it is not from Allāh’’; and then by declaring that ‘‘they tell a lie against Allāh’’. This repeated denial points to two new factors: (1) Telling lies is their ingrained habit and persistent trait. (2) It is not because of any confusion or ignorance that they have told such lies; they know that it is a lie and yet they say it.

TRADITIONS

as-Suyūṭī writes in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* under the verse: *Say: ‘‘O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you ... ’’:* ‘‘Ibn Jarīr has narrated through his chains from as-Suddī that he said: ‘Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) called them — that is, the delegation of the Christians of Najrān — and said: ‘‘O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you ...’’ ’ ’’

The author says: The same book quotes another tradition of the same meaning through Ibn Jarīr from Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far ibn az-

Zubayr. The tradition apparently means that this verse was revealed about the Christians of Najrān. We have written a tradition in the beginning of the chapter [1], that its early part (upto eighty odd verses), was revealed about the Christians of Najrān; and this verse is included in that number.

Some traditions say that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) invited the Jews of Medina to a common word, until they accepted to pay *jizyah.* However, it is not in conflict with its revelation about the delegation of Najrān.

al-Bukhārī narrates through his chains from Ibn ‘Abbās from Abū Sufyān a long *ḥadīth* in which he, *inter alia,* mentions the letter sent by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) to Heraclius, the Roman emperor. Abū Sufyān says: ‘‘Then he (i.e., Heraclius) asked for the letter of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and read it; and it was written therein: ‘In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh to Heraclius, the emperor of Rome. Peace be on him who follows guidance. After this, I invite you to Islam. Accept Islam, and you will be saved (in the hereafter). Accept Islam and Allāh will give you double reward. But if you turn back, then the sin of your people also will be on your shoulders. *‘O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you, that we shall not worship any but Allāh and* (that) *we shall not associate anything with Him, and* (that) *some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh’; but if they turn back, then say: ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims* (Submitting ones) ...’ ’’ (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ,* al-Bukhārī)

The author says: It has also been narrated by Muslim in his *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ;* and by as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from an-Nasā’ī, ‘Abdu’r-Razzāq and Ibn Abī Ḥātim, all from Ibn ‘Abbās.

And it has been said that also the letter sent by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) to Muqawqis, the Chief of the Copts, contained these very words of Allāh, *‘‘O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you ...*’’ There is a Cufic writing reputedly the original letter of the Prophet, its text conforming with his letter to Heraclius; and

[1] See *al-Mīzān* (Engl. transi.), vol. 5, p. 21. (*tr.*)

its photos are easily available throughout the Muslims world [1].

However, the historians say that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) wrote the letters which he sent through various envoys to many kings and rulers (like: Heraclius, Kisrā and an-Najāshī) in the sixth year of hijrah. It proves that this verse was revealed in the sixth year or even earlier. On the other hand, the historians (like: aṭ-Ṭabarī, Ibnu 'l-Athīr and al-Maqrīzī) have written that the delegation of the Christians of Najrān had come to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in the tenth year of hijrah, while others (like: Abu 'l-Fidā' in *al-Bidāyah wa 'n-nihāyah* and al-Ḥalabī in *as-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah*) say that it was in the ninth year. If so, then the verse would have been revealed in the ninth of tenth year of hijrah. Sometimes, it is said that it was revealed in the early years of hijrah as the traditions written hereafter will show. Others say that it was revealed twice, as al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar has reported.

Nevertheless, the verses of the chapter are connected with each other in a single context, as we had pointed out in the beginning of the chapter; and it supports the view that the verse was revealed long before the ninth year. Consequently, the delegation must have come in the sixth year of hijrah or even earlier.

It is difficult to believe that the Prophet would write letters to rulers of Rome, Egypt and Fārs and ignore the people of Najrān who were nearer.

There is a point to note in the above quoted tradition. The letter begins with the formula, *''In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful ''*. Keeping it in view, we may know the worth of the tradition copied earlier (in the story of Najrān's delegation), from al-Bayhaqī's *Dalā'ilu 'n-nubuwwah.* He narrates: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) wrote to the people of Najrān, before the (chapter of) 'Ṭāsīn Sulaymān' (i.e., the Ant) was revealed: 'In the name of Allāh, the God of Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq and Ya'qūb. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh to the Bishop of Najrān and the people of Najrān. If you accept Islam, then I

[1] The first such letter discovered was that sent to Muqawqis. Its photo was published in the *al-Hilāl* of November, 1904. It is now in Istanbul (Turkey). A third letter sent to the co-rulers of Oman, 'Abd and Jayfar, sons of Julandā, was discovered not very long ago. (*tr.*)

extol before you Allāh, the God of Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq and Ya‘qūb. After that I call you to the worship of Allāh leaving aside the worship of the servants (of Allāh), and I invite you to (come under) the guardianship of Allāh instead of the guardianship of the servants. But if you refuse (it), then (you should pay) the head-tax; and if you refuse (even this), then I declare war against you. And peace (be on you).’ ’’

Now, the chapter of the Ant is a Meccan one; and its textual evidence almost clearly proves that it was revealed before hijrah; how can that period be juxtaposed with the event of Najrān? Apart from that, the purported letter contains some other things which cannot be explained, like the demand of *jizyah* and ultimatum of war and other such things. And Allāh knows better.

aṭ-Ṭabarānī narrates from Ibn ‘Abbās: ‘‘Verily the letter of the Messenger of Allāh to the unbelievers was: *‘come to a word common between us and you ...’ ’’* (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

It is written in the same book about the words of Allāh, *O People of the Book! why do you dispute about Ibrāhīm ...:* ‘‘Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Dalā’ilu ’n-nubuwwah*) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘The Christians of Najrān and rabbis of the Jews came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and disputed with one another near him. The rabbis said: ‘‘Ibrāhīm was but a Jew’’; and the Christains said: ‘‘Ibrāhīm was but a Christian’’. Thereupon, Allāh revealed about them: *O People of the Book! why do you dispute about Ibrāhīm, when the Torah and the Injīl were not revealed till after him?... and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers.* Then Abū Rāfi‘ al-Quraẓī (a Jew from Banū Qurayẓah) said: ‘‘Do you demand from us, O Muḥammad! that we should worship you as the Christians worship ‘Īsā son of Maryam?’’ And one of the Najrānites said: ‘‘Is it what you wish, O Muḥammad?’’ And the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘I seek protection of Allāh that I should worship other than Allāh or enjoin worship of other than Him. Not for this He has sent me or enjoined me.’’ Then Allāh revealed concerning their talk: *It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him the Book and Judgment and Prophethood, then he should say to men: ‘‘Be my servants rather than Allāh’s’’; but rather* (he would say): *‘‘Be worshippers of the Lord because of your teaching the Book and your reading* (it yourselves).’’ *Or that he should enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords; What! would He enjoin you*

with unbelief after you are Muslims? (3:79 — 80). Thereafter Allāh mentioned the covenant He had made with them and their forefathers that they should believe in the Prophet when he came to them, and to their acceptance of this fact; so He said: *And when Allāh made a covenant through the prophets: ''Certainly what I have given you of the Book and Wisdom — then an Apostle comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must aid him.'' He said: ''Do you affirm and accept My compact in this* (matter)?'' *They said: ''We do affirm.'' He said: ''Then bear witness, and I* (too) *am of the bearers of witness with you''*(3:81). (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: According to the text and context of the verses (*It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him the Book and Judgment and Prophethood* ...) are applicable on 'Īsā son of Maryam (a.s.) more meaningfully and in an easier way than on the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), as we shall explain when writing on these verses. Perhaps what the tradition says concerning the revelation of these verses about the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) is just an inference of Ibn 'Abbās. Moreover, when the Qur'ān deals with such talks, it invariably always brings it in the form of question and answer or as a quotation with its refutation.

al-Kalbī has narrated the story of the hijrah to Abyssinia through Abū Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās; and it has also been narrated by Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq from Ibn Shahāb through his chains, that he said: ''When Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib with a group of the Companions of the Prophet migrated to Abyssinia and settled there; and the Prophet migrated to Medina and there happened in Badr what happened, the Quraysh assembled in *Dāru'n-Nadwah* (the Town Hall) and said to each other: 'You may avenge those who have been killed at Badr with those Companions of Muḥammad who are with an-Najāshī (Negus). Collect some money and send it as a present to an-Najāshī; perhaps he would hand over your tribesmen to you; and there should go two of your wise men as your envoys to him.'

''They sent 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ and 'Umārah ibn Abī Mu'ayt [1] with

[1] The right name of this person is 'Umārah ibn 'Uqbah ibn Abī Mu'ayṭ. But the real person who accompanied 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ to Abyssinia, in the first

presents (of) skins, etc. They sailed the sea and arrived at Abyssinia. When they came to an-Najāshī, they prostrated before him and greeted him; and said: 'Our people are sincere and thankful to you, and they love your courtiers. They have sent us to you to warn you against these people who have come to you for, they follow an imposter who has stood up, claiming to be a Messenger of Allāh; and none of us has followed him except a few simpletons. And we made life difficult for them and compelled them to take shelter in a narrow mountain valley of our land, with nobody visiting them, until hunger and thirst (nearly) destroyed them. When the situation became too tough for him, he sent his cousin to you, in order to create mischief here — in your religion, kingdom and subjects. Therefore, beware of them and hand them over to us; it will save you the trouble of dealing with them.' Also, they said: 'And it is a sign (of their mischief) that when they come here they will not prostrate before you, nor will they greet you in the way the people greet you; (it is because of their) disliking your religion and customs.'

''Then an-Najāshī called them (i.e., the Muslims). When they came, Ja'far called at the door: 'The party of Allāh ask permission to come before you.' an-Najāshī said: 'Tell this caller to repeat his words.' Ja'far did, and an-Najāshī said: 'Yes; let them enter with safety of Allāh and His protection.' 'Amr looked at his colleague and said: 'Do you not hear how they jabbered about the party of Allāh and how the King responded to them?' And they were displeased with it.

''Then (the Muslims) entered and did not prostrate before him. 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ said: 'Do you not see that they deem themselves too great to prostrate before you?' an-Najāshī said to them: 'What prevents you from prostrating before me and greeting me in the way all those do who come to me from furthest regions?' They replied: 'We do *sajdah* (prostration) to Allāh Who created you and gave (this) kingdom to you. Of course, we were using the customary greeting when we were idolaters; then Allāh raised among us a truthful Prophet, and he taught us the greeting which Allāh is pleased with, and that is, ''Peace'', the greeting of the people of the Garden.' an-Najāshī knew that it was true and that it was in the Torah

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journey, was 'Umārah ibn al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī, the brother of Khālid ibn al-Walīd; and in the next journey 'Amr was accompanied by 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Rabī'ah ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī. (*ed.*)

and Injīl. Then he said: ‘Who among you had called, ‘‘The party of Allāh asks permission to come before you?’’ ’ Ja‘far said: ‘I’ Then he (Ja‘far) said: ‘You are a king from the People of the Book, and it is not proper to talk much before you, nor to do any injustice. I would like to answer on behalf of my Companions; therefore, order these two people that one of them should speak and the other should just listen; and you should listen to our talk.’ ‘Amr said to Ja‘far: ‘Speak.’ Ja‘far said to an-Najāshī: ‘Ask these two people whether we are slaves or free people. If we are slaves (and) have fled from our masters, then you should return us to them.’ an-Najāshī said: ‘Are they slaves or free people?’ He (‘Amr) said: ‘Nay; (they are) free and noble people.’ an-Najāshī said: ‘They are saved from slavery.’ Ja‘far said: ‘Ask them if we have shed any blood unjustly, so that they want its requital from us?’ ‘Amr said: ‘No; not a single drop.’ Ja‘far said: Ask them, if we have taken other people’s property without right, so that we have to repay it?’ an-Najāshī said: ‘Even if it is a heap of money I shall repay it.’ ‘Amr said: ‘No; not even a small amount.’ an-Najāshī said: ‘Then what do you want from them?’ (‘Amr) said: ‘We and they were together on one religion, the religion of our forefathers; and they have left it and followed another religion. Therefore, our people have sent us so that you may hand them over to us.’ an-Najāshī said: ‘What was the religion you followed and what is that which they have now accepted?’ Ja‘far said: ‘As for the religion we followed before, it was the religion of the Satan; we disbelieved in Allāh and worshipped the stone. And as for the religion to which we have turned, it is the religion of Allāh, the Islam; it has been brought to us from Allāh by a Messenger, coming with a Book like the Book of the son of Maryam and conforming to it.’ an-Najāshī said: ‘O Ja‘far! you have spoken a very great thing.’

‘‘Then an-Najāshī ordered the gong to be rung. It was done and every priest and monk gathered near him. When all were assembled, an-Najāshī said: ‘I adjure you by Allāh Who revealed the Injīl to ‘Īsā, do you find (any news of) a prophet messenger between ‘Īsā and the Day of Resurrection?’ They said: ‘By God! Yes. He has given us the good news of him and said: ‘‘Whoever shall believe in him shall believe in me, and whoever shall disbelieve in him shall disbelieve in me.’’ ’ an-Najāshī said to Ja‘far: ‘What does this man say to you? What does he enjoin you to do? And what does he forbid you from?’ (Ja‘far) said: ‘He recites to us the Book of Allāh and enjoins us to do good and forbids us the evil; he

enjoins us to be good to our neighbours and relatives and to the orphans, (and) tells us that we should worship Allāh, the One, (Who) has no partner.' (an-Najāshī) said to him: 'Recite to me from what he recites to you.' Then (Ja'far) recited to him the Chapters of 'The Spider' and 'The Greeks'. The eyes of an-Najāshī and his Companions overflowed with tears, and they said: 'Recite to us some more from this good talk.' Then Ja'far recited to them the Chapter of 'The Cave'. (At this stage) 'Amr, intending to incite (the anger of) an-Najāshī against them, said: 'These people abuse 'Īsā and his mother.' an-Najāshī said (to Ja'far): 'Well, what do you say about 'Īsā and his mother?' Then he (Ja'far) recited the Chapter of 'Maryam'. When he came to the story of Maryam and 'Īsā, an-Najāshī raised his tooth-stick just a small bit (enough to disturb one's eyes) and said: 'By God! The Messiah did not say more then what you have said.' Then he said turning towards Ja'far and his Companions: 'Go, you are free in my land; you are safe from ill-treatment, and it will be a crime to give you any trouble.' Again, he said: 'Be of good cheer; do not be afraid; there is no downfall today for the party of Ibrāhīm.' 'Amr said: 'O an-Najāshī! and who are the party of Ibrāhīm?' (an-Najāshī) said: 'This group and their companion (i.e., the Prophet) whence they have come here, and those who follow them.' The polytheists denied it and claimed (themselves to be on) the religion of Ibrāhīm. Then an-Najāshī gave back to 'Amr and his companion the presents they had brought (to him), and said: 'Surely your present is just a bribe; you take it back because God gave this kingdom to me and He did not take any bribe from me.' Ja'far said: 'Then we returned (from the court), and we were under the best protection.' And Allāh revealed to the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) (who was in Medina) the verse about their dispute about Ibrāhīm: *Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him and this prophet and those who believe; and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers.''* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Khāzin)

The author says: This story has been narrated with other chains, and also from the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.). We have copied it here in spite of its length, and although it has nothing to do with the circumstances in which the verses under discussion were revealed, because it contains important information about the trials of the first migrants among the Muslims.

It has been narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *Ibrāhīm was not a Jew nor a Christian,* that he said: ‘‘The Leader of the Faithful, said: ‘Neither a Jew praying to the West nor a Christian praying to the East; but he was an upright Muslim on the religion of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).’ ’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: We have explained in the Commentary the meaning of his being on the religion of Muḥammad, blessing of Allāh be on them and their progenies! This tradition looks at the direction of prayer when the *qiblah* was changed to the Ka‘bah (and the Ka‘bah is almost to the south of Medina). The Jews and the Christians denied its validity; and felt themselves obliged to turn towards the west (where Baytu ’l-Maqdis is situated), or the east (to which the Christian face). This has been counted as a deviation of these two groups from the middle course. This aspect is supported by wordings of the verse: *And thus We have made you a medium nation* (2:143). However, it is just an interesting and fine literary inference, and nothing more.

Explaining this verse, aṣ-Sādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘Pure, sincere, totally free from idol-worship.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The Leader of the Faithful said explaining the verse: *Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed ...*: ‘‘Surely the nearest of the people to the prophets is he who practises most faithfully what they have brought.’’ Then he recited this verse and said: ‘‘Surely the friend of Muḥammad is he who obeys Allāh, even if his relationship is far from him; and surely the enemy of Muḥammad is he who disobeys Allāh, even if he has a near relationship with him.’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘They are the Imāms and their followers.’’ (*al-Kāfī; at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

‘Umar ibn Udhaynah narrates from the same Imām that he said: ‘‘You, by Allāh, are from the progeny of Muḥammad.’’ I said: ‘‘From themselves? May I be your ransom!’’ He said: ‘‘Yes, by Allāh, from their own selves.’’ He said it three times; then he looked at me and I looked at him and he said: ‘‘O ‘Umar! surely Allāh says in His Book: *Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm ... ’’* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī; *at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

There is a tradition narrated from al-Bāqir (a.s.) that he said about

this verse: *And a party of the People of the Book say: ''Avow belief ...'':* ''Verily, when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) came to Medina he was praying towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis, (and) the people (i.e., the Jews) were pleased with it. When Allāh turned him from Baytu 'l-Maqdis towards His Sacred House, the Jews were annoyed. And the change of *qiblah* had happened in the noon prayer. So they said: 'Muḥammad prayed the morning prayer facing towards our *qiblah;* therefore, believe in that which was revealed to Muḥammad in the first part of the day; and disbelieve the latter part'; they meant (disbelieve in) the *qiblah* when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) faced towards the Sacred Mosque.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: As you see, the tradition takes the adverbial phrase, (in) *the first part of the day,* as related to the verb, *was revealed;* and not to the verb, *Avow belief.* And we have explained it in the Commentary.

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated through al-'Awfī from Ibn 'Abbās, that he said about the verse: *And a party of the People of the Book say: ''Avow belief ...'':* ''A party of the Jews said: 'Avow belief when you meet the Companions of Muḥammad in the first part of the day; and when it is the end of it then pray (according to) your own prayer; perhaps they, that is, the believers, would say: ''These are the People of the Book and they are more knowledgeable than us.'' Perhaps they would then turn away from their religion.' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated in the same book from as-Suddī and Mujāhid also.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about the verse 2:27: ''It has been revealed about the covenant: (As for) *those who take a small price for the covenant of Allāh and their own oaths — surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allāh will not speak to them, nor will He look upon them on the Day of Resurrection nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement.* And 'portion' means share. So he who shall have no share in the hereafter, with what will he enter the Garden?'' (*al-Kāfī*)

ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭūsī narrates through his chains from 'Adiyy ibn 'Adiyy from his father that he said: ''Imra'u 'l-Qays and a man from

Ḥaḍramawt brought their dispute concerning a land to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). (The Prophet) said: 'Do you have a proof?' He said: 'No.' (The Prophet) said: 'Then (it will be decided) by his (i.e., the opposite party's) oath.' He said: 'Then, by Allāh, he will take away my land.' (The Prophet) said: 'If he takes your land by his (false) oath, he shall be among those that Allāh will not look upon him on the Day of Resurrection nor will He purify him and he shall have a painful chastisement.' (Hearing this) the man was frightened and gave the land back to him.'' (*al-Amālī,* ash-Shaykh)

The author says: As you see, the tradition does not show that the verse was revealed about this event. Several traditions have been narrated through the Sunnī chains that it was revealed about this event. But those traditions give conflicting reports. Some like the above, say, that the dispute was between Imra'u 'l-Qays and a man from Ḥaḍramawt; others say that the conflict was between al-Ash'ath ibn al-Qays and a Jew concerning a land; yet, another tradition says that it was revealed about an unbeliever, who had offered in the market a merchandise for sale, and in order to deceive a Muslim customer, swore by Allāh that he was offered for it a price which in reality he was not offered. Then the verse was revealed.

You have seen in the Commentary that obviously the verse explains the reason of the preceding verse. In this background utmost that is possible is to take these traditions as an application of the verse on that happening ; but they cannot be accepted as an account of the circumstances in which the verse was revealed.

* * * * *

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ
لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَاداً لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّينَ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ـ ٧٩ . وَلاَ يَأْمُرَكُمْ
أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلاَئِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَاباً أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ ـ ٨٠ .

It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him the Book and the Judgment and Prophethood, then he should say to men: ''Be my servants rather than Allāh's;'' but rather (he would say): *''Be worshippers of the Lord because of your teaching the Book and your reading* (it yourselves)'' (79). *Or that he should enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords; what! would he enjoin you with unbelief after you are Muslims* (Submitting Ones)? (80).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses come after those related to the affairs of ʻĪsā (a.s.); it implies that it is the second stage of the argument exonerating ʻĪsā from the responsibility of what the Christians believe about him. We may summarize the whole argument as follows:

ʻĪsā (a.s.) was not as you think about him. Neither was he Lord nor had he claimed Lordship for himself. (1) He was not Lord, because he was a mortal creature; was conceived in his mother's womb who gave

birth to him and brought him up in a cradle. Of course, just like Adam (a.s.), he had no father, thus his likeness was with Allāh as the likeness of Adam. (2) Nor had he claimed to be Lord, because he was a prophet, and was given the Book, the Judgment and Prophethood; and a prophet, having that status, cannot transgress the limit of servitude, nor can he divest himself of submission to Allāh.

How can a prophet tell people: Take me as your Lord, be my servants rather than Allāh's? Or, how can he allow it for any other creature of Allāh? A prophet would never enjoin men to take the angels or the prophets for lords. He would not give to any servant of Allāh more than his due, nor would he deny prophethood of any prophet of Allāh divesting him of his status and dignity.

QUR'ĀN: It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him the Book and the Judgment and Prophethood, then he should say to men: ''Be my servants rather than Allāh's'': ''al-Bashar'' (اَلْبَشَرُ = man) is synonymous with ''al-insān'' (اَلْاِنْسَانُ); it is used for singular as well as plural; one man is al-bashar and also a group of men is al-bashar.and also a group of men is *al-bashar.*

Mā kāna li basharin (مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ = it is not meet for a man); *li* (ل) in *li-basharin* (لِبَشَرٍ) denotes ownership; that is, it does not belong to him; it is not meet for him; he has no right to it. The same expression has been used in some other places; for example, *It does not beseem us that we should talk of it* (24:16); *And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should act unfaithfully* (3:161).

The clause, ''that Allāh should give him the Book and the Judgment and Prophethood'', is the subject of *kāna* (كَانَ = was; is). It prepares the ground for the next statement; ''then he should say to men; 'Be my servants rather than Allāh's.' '' Apparently, the sentence could be shortened by omitting the introductory clause, ''that Allāh should give him the Book ...''; yet, it was inserted to give a new connotation to the phrase, ''It is not meet for a man''. Let us see what happens if the sentence is rewritten, omitting the introductory clause; then the verse would run as follows: It is not meet for a man that he should say to men. The meaning then would be as follows: He was not given that right, although possibly he could say so if he transgressed the limit and became insolent. But there is no room for such inference in the sentence as it now

stands. The verse in the present form means as follows: When Allāh gives a man knowledge and gnosis of reality, and brings him up with Divine Care, that man can never transgress the boundary of servitude; nor does he feel free to interfere in what does not belong to him, or to dispose what he has no right to; as Allāh describes the declaration of ʻĪsā (a.s.), in the verse: *And when Allāh will say: ''O ʻĪsā son of Maryam! did you say to men, 'take me and my mother for two gods besides Allāh' '', he will say: ''Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to* (say) '' (5:116).

The verse says, ''that Allāh should give him ...'', instead of saying: a man whom Allāh gave the Book and the Judgment and Prophethood. The reason for it is clear from the above explanation. The latter wording points only to the basic legislative prohibition of such transgression. On the other hand, the present construction, ''that Allāh should give him ....'', shows that such behaviour is definitely impossible. The Divine Guidance and upbringing cannot fail to attain its goal, as Allāh says: *These are they whom We gave the Book and the Judgment and the Prophethood, therefore if these* (i.e., the tribesmen of the Messenger of Allāh, s.a.w.a.) *disbelieve in it, We have* (already) *entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it* (6:89).

In short, the verse says that it is not possible for a man to join these Divine Favours with calling the men to his own worship. It is not possible when he is given a Book, the Judgment and Prophethood that he should say to men: Be my servants rather than Allāh's. In this context the verse resembles to a certain extent the verses: *The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allāh, nor do the angels who are near to Him ... and as for those who disdain and are proud, He will chastise them with a painful chastisement. And they shall not find for themselves besides Allāh a guardian or a helper* (4:172 — 173). The implication is that the Messiah and the angels who are near to Allāh are too high in prestige and too great in status to disdain the worship of Allāh; because disdaining His worship brings painful chastisement on the culprit; and far be it from Allāh to chastise His honoured prophets or the near angels.

Objection: The verse uses the word, *thumma* (ثُمَّ = then) in the phrase, ''then he should say to men''; this conjunctive denotes some

delay; and the delay does not conform with the joining you have mentioned.

Reply: What we have said about joining the Divine Favours with calling men to disbelief gives the gist of the matter. Togatherness and combination can happen with simultaneous things as well as with two things appearing consecutively — that too is a sort of combination.

''Be my servants rather than Allāh's'': *al-'Ibād* (اَلْعِبَادُ) like *al-'abīd* (اَلْعَبِيْدُ) is plural of *al-'abd* (اَلْعَبْدُ = slave; servant); the difference between the two plurals is in usage; *al-'ibād* is mostly used in relation to Allāh, for example, *'ibādu'llāh* (عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ = slaves/servants of Allāh); while *al 'abīd* is generally used when related to man; they say, *'abīdu 'n-nās* (عَبِيْدُ النَّاس = slaves/servants of men), and not *'ibādu 'n-nās* (عِبَادُ النَّاس)

The proviso, ''rather than Allāh's'', has been added after the words, ''my servants'', as a matter of necessity. Allāh does not accept any worship unless it is purely for His own person. Allāh says: *Now, surely, sincere religion* (obedience) *is for Allāh* (alone); *and* (as for) *those who take guardians besides Him,* (saying), *''We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to Allāh'', surely Allāh will judge between them in that in which they differ; surely Allāh does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful* (39:3). Thus, Allāh has rejected outright the worship of those who join worship of others with His worship, even if the others are worshipped merely as interceders and intermediaries, and only with intention of reaching near Allāh through them.

Moreover, the reality of worship does not come into existence until some independence is admitted for the worshipped even in polytheism. The partner, *per se,* has some independence; while in reality it is only to Allāh that absolute Lordship and Godhead belongs. Therefore, His Lordship cannot be complete, nor can His worship be correct except with negation of independence from every other thing in every possible way. The worship of someone else is worship of other than Allāh, even if Allāh is worshipped with him.

QUR'ĀN: *but rather* (he would say): *''Be worshippers of the Lord because of your teaching the Book and your reading* (it yourselves)'': *''ar-Rabbānī''* (اَلرَّبَّانِيُّ = translated here as worshippers of the Lord) is derived from *ar-Rabb* (اَلرَّبُّ = the Lord), to which *''a''* and *''n''* (اَنْ) have been added for augmentation of meaning; as for example, they use:

al-liḥyānī (اَللِّحْيانِيُّ) for one having a luxuriant beard. Thus *ar-rabbānī* means the one having special relationship with the Lord, and spending his life in His servitude and worship. *Bi* (بِ) in *bi-mā* (بِمَا) is causative, and means ‘‘because’’; while *mā* (مَا) is for *al-maṣdar* (اَلْمَصْدَرُ) and has changed the past tenses into infinitive verbs; that is why we have translated it in the following way: ‘‘but rather (he would say): ‘Be worshippers of the Lord because of your teaching the Book and your reading (it yourselves) ’ ’’

ad-Dirāsah (اَلدِّرَاسَةُ = to study) is more specific than *at-ta‘allum* (اَلتَّعَلُّمُ = to learn; to study), as the former is generally used for studying from book by reading and reciting. ar-Rāghib says: *‘‘Darasa ’d-dār* (دَرَسَ الدَّارُ = vestiges of the house remained); it implies that the house itself was obliterated; and for this reason *ad-durūs* (اَلدُّرُوْسُ) is translated as obliteration. Likewise, *darasa ’l-kitāb* (دَرَسَ الْكِتَابُ) (or, *darasa ’l-‘ilm* = دَرَسَ الْعِلْمُ) means, he got trace of book (or, knowledge) memorizing it; he grasped its meaning. As it is attained by regular recitation, such recitation is called memorization. Allāh says: *and they have read what is in it* (7:169); *because of your teaching the Book and reading; And We have not given them any books which they read* (44:44).’’

The theme is that a man having such a high status will call you only to attainment of faith and to believe in the teachings of the Book which you learn and teach — the Book that contains the fundamental Divine Knowledge; he will enjoin you to acquire noble character and good traits found in the Book; and to practise and do good deeds to which you call the people. He will do so, in order that you attach yourselves exclusively to your Lord, and thus become divine scholars.

Bi-mā kuntum (بِمَا كُنْتُمْ = lit., because you were), being a past tense, shows that the action had already taken place; that the audience was already teaching and reading the Book. It gives a hint that, possibly, it is an allusion to the Christians, who said that ‘Īsā had told them that he was the son of God and His Word (with all the differences in the meaning of sonship). The fact is that the Children of Israel had been given a revealed Book which they taught and read; then they differed in it — a difference that was accompanied by textual changes and alterations. ‘Īsā (a.s.) was sent only to explain to them a part of what they differed in and to allow them part of that which was forbidden them; in short, to call them to fulfil their obligations concerning the learning and teaching — that they

should attach themselves exclusively to their Lord in reading and teaching His Book.

Although the verse may somehow be applied to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) — because his mission covered the People of the Book too, who used to teach and read the Book of Allāh — but ʻĪsā (a.s.) was before the Prophet and the verse applies to him in a more befitting manner; also because he was sent exclusively to the Children of Israel, unlike the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).

So far as other *ulu 'l-ʻazm* prophets (who came with a Book), i.e., Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm and Mūsā are concerned, the verse obviously cannot be applied to them.

QUR'ĀN: *Or that he should enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lord:* The verb *''aw ya'murakum''* (اَوْيَأْمُرَكُمْ = or that he should enjoin you), because of the vowel *''a''* after *ya'mur* (according to the well-known and common recital), is in conjunction with ''he should say''.

A group of the People of the Book had taken the angels for lords. For instance, the Sabaeans worshipped the angels and attributed that custom to the authority of religion. Likewise the Arabs, while claiming to follow the religion of Ibrāhīm (a.s.), said that the angels were Allāh's daughters.

As for taking the prophets for lords, the Jews, for instance, said that ʻUzayr was the son of Allāh — as the Qur'ān quotes them — although Mūsā (a.s.) had not allowed it to them, nor was there in the Torah anything other than monotheism. Had Mūsā (a.s.) allowed it to them he would be enjoining it — far be it from him!

The style of the verse, ''then he should say to men: 'Be my servants rather than Allāh's' '', differs in two ways from that of the next verse, ''Or that he should enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords'': (1) The subject matter in the former is worship of other than Allāh, and in the latter it is taking them for lords. (2) The enjoined people in the former are described in third person, ''men'', while the latter addresses them directly in second person. Let us look at both changes:

First: The former verse adversely alludes to the Christians concerning their worship of ʻĪsā. As is known, they believe in his godhead openly, saying that he had invited them to his own worship. Thus they have

clearly ascribed this call to ʻĪsā that he said to them: ʻBe my servants'. On the other hand, taking the angels and the prophets for lords (in the meaning used in the case of others than ʻĪsā) is opposed to the belief of monotheism only by implication, not clearly. That is why the latter verse uses the word, ''lords'', instead of gods.

Second: Both expressions (*'Be my servants'; that he should enjoin you*) deal with a subject which was relevant to the audience of these verses, that is, the People of the Book and the Arabs. The first verse has used the word, ''should say''; and ''saying'' implies a face to face talk. But the people present at the time of the Prophet were not present at the material time, that is, when ʻĪsā was supposed to say it. It is for this reason that the verse says, ''he should say to men'', instead of saying, he should say to you. On the other hand, the second verse uses the word ''enjoin''; enjoining does not necessarily require face to face talk; it may be done even when the enjoined one is absent. An order given to, or a matter connected with, the ancestors is applied to the later generations if the latter identify themselves with the former. As for ''saying'' — because it employs transmission of voice — it denotes oral conversation and presence of the audience (except when it is used simply in the meaning of instruction).

It is therefore evident that basically these verses require second person plurals (as in, *or that he should enjoin you* ...); but exception was made in the first verse owing to special reasons.

QUR'ĀN: *What! would he enjoin you with unbelief after you are Muslims* (Submitting Ones)?: Apparently, the question is directed to all who followed a prophet like the People of the Book, or claimed to do so like the Arabs of the days of Ignorance who believed that they were on the religion of Ibrāhīm. The talk is based on a hypothetical proposition and the meaning is as follows: If it is true that you do follow this man who was given the Book, the Judgment and Prophethood, then you have already submitted to Allāh, acquiring the characteristics of Islam; then how will it be possible for that prophet to enjoin you with disbelief, diverting you from the very path to which he had guided you by the order of Allāh?

It is clear from the above explanation that in this verse, Islam refers to the religion of monotheism; the religion which Allāh sent all the

prophets with. This view is supported by other verses preceding and following this verse, in which the word, ‘‘Islam’’, has been used in this very meaning: *Surely the religion with Allāh is Islam* (3:19); *Is it then other than Allāh's religion that they seek* (to follow) ... *And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers* (3:83 — 85).

An exegete has said that the two verses under discussion refer to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). His view is based on a tradition (quoted earlier) describing the circumstances of its revelation which says that Abū Rāfi‘ al-Quraẓī and a Najrānite Christian said to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.): ‘‘Do you want us to worship you? O Muḥammad!’’ Then Allāh revealed: ‘It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him ... after you are Muslims?’ Then the said exegete has argued by the last phrase, ‘after you are Muslims’; ‘‘because Islam is the religion brought by Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).’’

COMMENT: He has confused the Islam of Qur’ānic terminology (the religion of monotheism which was preached by all the prophets) with the Islam of the Muslims’ terminology — a term which came into use after the time of revelation. (We have explained it earlier).

CONCLUSION

(Having Seven Chapters)

1. The Story of ‘Īsā and his Mother in the Qur’ān

Maryam, daughter of ‘Imrān, was the mother of the Messiah. When her mother was pregnant with her, she made a vow that she would release what was in her womb to be devoted to the service of the Temple. She believed that she was pregnant with a male child; but when she brought it forth and came to know that it was a female, she was disappointed and dejected. Then she named her Maryam, that is, servant. Her father, ‘Imrān, had died before she was born; so the mother brought her to the Temple for handing her over to the priests — Zakariyyā was one of them.

They contended one with another to get the privilege of her custody; then they agreed to decide it by lot, in which Zakariyyā's name was drawn; and he became her guardian. When she reached the age of puberty, Zakariyyā made for her a partition to protect her from men's eyes. She used to worship Allāh therein and nobody entered that sanctuary except Zakariyyā. Whenever Zakariyyā entered the sanctuary to see her, he found with her food. He said: ''O Maryam! whence comes this to you?'' She said: ''It is from Allāh, and surely Allāh gives sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure.''

Maryam was a truthful woman, and was sinless by Allāh's protection; purified, chosen and spoken to; the angels spoke to her and purified her. She was obedient to the Lord and a sign of Allāh for the worlds. Vide 3:35 — 44; 19:16; 21:91; 66:12.

Then Allāh sent to her His Spirit when she had hidden herself behind a curtain, and he appeared to her as a well-made man. He said to her that he was a messenger of her Lord so that he should give her, by permission of Allāh, a pure boy without a father. He also gave her good news of the manifest miracles which were to happen on the hand of her son; and informed her that Allāh would surely strengthen him by the Holy Spirit, and would teach him the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah and the Injīl. He also told her that her son would be a messenger to the Children of Israel and would have clear signs. After informing her of the boy's status and story, he breathed into her the Spirit and she became pregnant with 'Īsā (a.s.), as a woman conceives her child. Vide 3:33 — 50.

Then she withdrew herself with him to a remote place. And the throes of childbirth compelled her to betake herself to the trunk of a palm-tree. She said: ''Oh, would that I had died before this, and had been a thing quite forgotten!'' Then (the child) called out to her from beneath her: ''Grieve not; surely your Lord has made a stream to flow beneath you: And shake towards you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates: So eat and drink and refresh the eye. Then if you see any man, say: 'Surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficient God, so I shall not speak to any man today.' '' And she came to her people with him, carrying him (with her). Vide 19:20 — 27. His conception, birth, talk and all related affairs were similar to those of other men.

When her people saw her in such a condition, they were enraged, and blamed and taunted her — as was natural in case of an unmarried woman

conceiving and bringing forth a child. They said: ‘‘O Maryam, surely you have done a strange thing. O sister of Hārūn! your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman.’’ But she pointed to him. They said: ‘‘How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?’’ He said: ‘‘Surely I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet: And he has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and *zakāt* so long as I live: And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed: And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life.’’ Vide 19:27 — 33.

This talk of ‘Īsā (a.s.) was a sort of prologue which pointed to his future mission — that he would rise against oppression and injustice, revive and reform the *sharī‘ah* of Mūsā (a.s.), renovate what was obliterated from the revealed knowledge and make clear to them what they had differed in.

‘Īsā (a.s.) grew up and became a young man. He and his mother used to eat and drink in normal way with all the necessary concomitants and accidents of human life upto the end.

Then ‘Īsā (a.s.) was made a messenger to the Children of Israel. He stood up calling them to the religion of monotheism and told them: ‘‘I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird, with Allāh’s permission, and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life, with Allāh’s permission, and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Most surely there is a sign in this for you. Surely Allāh is my Lord and your Lord, therefore, worship Him only.’’

He called them to his new *sharī‘ah,* which verified the Law of Mūsā (a.s.); but he abrogated some parts of it, allowing them somethings which were forbidden in the Torah as a punishment to the Jews. ‘Īsā (a.s.) used to say: ‘‘Surely I have come to you with wisdom, so that I may make clear to you a part of what you differ in. O Children of Israel! surely I am the messenger of Allāh to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Aḥmad.’’

He showed the miracles which he had mentioned, e.g., creation of bird, raising the dead to life, healing the blind and leper, and giving the

news of the unseen — all by Allāh's permission.

He continued like that calling them to monotheism and his new *sharī'ah* until he was convinced that they would not believe in him. Seeing their insolence, enmity and hatred, and the arrogance of their priests and rabbis, he turned away from them and selected his apostles (from the small band that had believed in him) to be his helpers to Allāh.

Then the Jews rose against him with the intention to kill him. But Allāh took him away completely and raised him. The Jews were put in confusion: some thought that they had killed him, others that they had crucified him; but in fact it was made to appear to them like that. Vide 3:45 — 58; 4:157 — 158; 5:110 — 111; 43:63 — 65; 61:6 — 14.

This is in short the story of 'Īsā (son of Maryam) and his mother as given in the Qur'ān.

2. Position of 'Īsā Before Allāh and in His Own Eyes

'Īsā (a.s.) was a servant of Allāh and a prophet (vide 19:30); a messenger to the Children of Israel (vide 3:49); was one of the five *ulu 'l-'azm* prophets, bringing a new *sharī'ah* and a Book, i.e., Injīl (vide 5:46; 33:7; 42:13); Allāh named him the Messiah, 'Īsā (vide 3:45); he was the Word of Allāh and a Spirit from Him (vide 4:171); an Imām (vide 33:7); one of the witnesses of deeds (vide 4:159; 5:117); he brought the good news of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) (vide 61:6); was worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter, and one of those who are made near to Allāh (vide 3:45); was one of the chosen progenies (vide 3:33); one of the selected and righteous ones (vide 6:85 — 87); was made blessed wherever he might be, and purified; was a sign to the people, a mercy from Allāh, and dutiful to his mother; greeted himself with peace (vide 19:19 — 33); and was among those whom Allāh taught the Book and the Wisdom (vide 3:48).

These twenty-two characteristics, from the stations of *al-wilāyah* (اَلوِلايَةْ = friendship and guardianship of Allāh), give the gist of the attributes which Allāh has used to praise this honoured prophet and to raise his rank. These may be divided in two categories: (1) The acquired ones, like servitude, righteousness and nearness to Allāh; (2) Those bestowed by Allāh as His special grace. We have explained each characteristic in relevant places of this book according to our

understanding. Anyone, wanting more details should look it up in those volumes.

3. What ‘Īsā Said, and What was Said About Him?

The Qur’ān says that ‘Īsā (a.s.) was Allāh’s servant and messenger; and that he did not claim for himself what the Christians ascribe to him, nor did he tell them anything other than conveying the Divine Message. Allāh says: *And when Allāh will say: ‘‘O ‘Īsā son of Maryam! did you say to men, ‘Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allāh’ ’’, he will say: ‘‘Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to* (say); *if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind; surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things. I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: That worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord, and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst take me* (away) *completely, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things. If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.’’ Allāh will say: ‘‘This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones’’* (5:116 — 119).

This wonderful reply contains the essence of servitude and shows outstanding manner; it is a mirror of ‘Īsā’s attitude and behaviour towards his Lord; it shows how he looked at himself in relation to his Creator and what he thought of the people and their deeds. He says that he looked at himself just as a servant of his Lord, who had nothing to do other than obeying the Lord; he does not proceed except when directed to, and does not stop unless told to. And he was not ordered except to call people to the worship of Allāh and he did not tell them except what he was enjoined with: *That worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord.*

And so far as his relationship with his people is concerned he shall be the witness for their deeds, and that is that; it is none of his business what Allāh does with them and about them — whether He forgives them or chastises them.

Question: If so, then how would you justify what you had written in

the topic of intercession that ʻĪsā shall be among the intercessors on the Day of Resurrection, he shall intercede and his intercession will be honoured and accepted?

Answer: The Qur'ān says expressly — or almost expressly — that he is an intercessor. Allāh says: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (43:86); *and on the Day of Resurrection he* (ʻĪsā) *shall be a witness against them* (4:159); *and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Injīl* (5:110). And we have already written extensively on the subject of intercession.

This intercession is something quite different from the atonement which the Christians believe in. The theory of atonement invalidates the system of reward and punishment, and consequently negates the absolute sovereignty of Allāh — as we shall explain later on. It is the idea of atonement which the above-mentioned talk of ʻĪsā (a.s.) refutes. But this verse has nothing to do with intercession — it neither confirms it nor rejects it. Had it wanted to confirm it — in spite of its inconsistency [1] with context — it should have said: If Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Forgiving, the Merciful. And if it wanted to refute it, it should not have mentioned his being a witness for the people. We shall describe in detail this topic later on, Allāh willing.

Looking at what the people said about ʻĪsā (a.s.), we find that they were divided after him into various sects, and disintegrated to perhaps more than seventy denominations. This number looks at fundamental and major divisions only, because minor differences are too numerous to count.

Nevertheless, the Qur'ān concerns itself only with what they say about ʻĪsā (a.s.) and his mother, because it affects the foundation of monotheism which is the only goal to which the Qur'ān calls and the natural straight religion leads. The Book of Allāh is not concerned with other relatively minor points, e.g., the problem of alteration of the Book and that of atonement.

The beliefs which the Qur'ān ascribes to them (or quotes them) are as follows:

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[1] Because the situation demands self-abasement, not relaxedness. (*Author's note*)

1. *and the Christians say: ''The Messiah is the son of Allāh''* (9:30); *And they say: ''The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son''* (21:26);
2. *Certainly they disbelieve who say: ''Surely Allāh, is the Messiah, son of Maryam''* (5:72);
3. *Certainly they disbelieve who say: ''Surely Allāh is the third of the three''* (5:73);
4. *and say not, Three* (4:171).

Apparently these verses contain different phrases, describe different beliefs. (That is why some people [1] apply various verses to various sects, for example, the Melkites [2] who believe in real sonship; the Nestorians [1]

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[1] Like ash-Shahristāni in his *al-Milal wa 'n-niḥal*. (*Author's Note*)

The author has taken these descriptions from ash-Shahristāni (vide *al-Milal wa 'n-niḥal* [Egypt, 1381 A.H. = 1961 C.E.] vol. 1, pp. 220 — 228). But ash-Shahristāni's information is superfluous and apparently based on hear-say; and his comments on Christianity remind one of his flight of fancy regarding Shī'ite faith and its various imaginary branches.

The fact is that almost all the splits in the early Christian Church were centred around the nature and substance of the Christ. It is not the place to go into historical details. Suffice it to say that gradually four groups had come into being about the nature of Jesus Christ:

a. *Homoousians* who believe that the Son was *of one substance* with the Father; they are called the Orthodox;

b. *Homoeans* who believed that the Son was *like* the Father; they are called the Arians;

c. *Homoiousians* who believed that the Son was *of like substance* with the Father; they are called the Semi-Arians;

d. *Anomoeans* who believed that the Son was *unlike* the Father; they are called Ultra-Arians.

Ulimately the Orthodox (*Homoousians*) prevailed. They say that the Son was of one substance with the Father, and that the Incarnate Christ was a single Person of a doubt nature — Divine and human — at one God and man.

All the sects are united on the ''sonship'', although they differ in its interpretation. That is why the Qur'ān rejects sonship — and the resulting trinity — to refute the Christians' belief in general. (*tr.*)

[2] Melkites (or Melchites) were those Christians of Syria and Egypt who, refusing the doctrine of Monophysitism (for its meaning see note no.2 p.152), and accepting the definition of faith of the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.), remained in communion with the Imperial See of Constantinople; hence their

who explain descendence and sonship as radiance of light on a transparent body like crystal; and the Jacobites [2] who explain it in the terms of change and transformation, that is, the God was transformed into flesh and blood.)

But evidently the Qur'ān does not look at the peculiarities of their diverse sects. It is concerned only with one belief which is common between all of them — that 'Īsā is the son of God and of one substance with God, with the resulting belief of trinity — although they differ very much in its explanation (which has led to extreme conflicts and discords). That this explanation is correct is supported by the fact that the Qur'ān brings one and the same argument to refute the views of all of them.

It may be explained as follows:

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name that means ''Emperor's men''. (ash-Shahristāni thinks that Malka was some individual who started this sect!) They like other Orthodox Christains, believe that the Logo (Word) of God being conjoined with the man Jesus — together called the Christ — was begotten in a non-literal sense by God. They do not believe in physical human-like sonship. Today there are about a million Melkites, most of them belonging to the Patriarchate of Antioch, whose head-quarters are at Damascus. (*tr.*)

[1] Nestorians: Followers of Nestorius (*cir.* 380 — 451 C.E.), who was the Patriarch of Constantinople (428 — 431 C.E.). He believed that there were two separate Persons in the Incarnate Christ — that the physical nature of Jesus was separate from his divine one, as opposed to the orthodox doctrine. According to him, it was Jesus the man, who was born of the Virgin Mary. Consequently, he rejected the term, *Theotokos,* (lit., God-bearer; usually translated as ''Mother of God''), that was used to refer to Maryam. For this heresy he was anathematized by the Council of Ephesus (431 C.F.). (ash-Shahristāni says that Nestorius lived during the reign of al-Ma'mūn — 813 — 833 C. E. !) (*tr.*)

[2] Jacobites: The body of the Syrian Monophysites who rejected the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.) on the Person of the Christ. Monophysitism was the doctrine that in the Person of the Incarnate Christ there was but a single, that is, Divine, nature, as opposed to the orthodox belief of a single person of double nature. They were named after Jacob Baradaeus through whom they became the national Church of Syria. They flourished in spite of recurring Imperial persecutions, which led them to welcome the Muslim army when it attacked Syria. Although there were many converts to Islam (*cir.* 640 C.F.), the Jacobite Church continued. The Mongol invasions in 13th and 14th centuries caused their real decline. (*tr.*)

The present Torah and Gospels all together clearly mention the Oneness of Allāh; on the other hand the Gospel clearly mentions the sonship declaring that the Son is the Father and none else.

They do not interpret the postulated sonship in the terms of distinction, honour and excellence, although many verses of the Gospels clearly give this meaning. For example:

‘‘But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’’ (*Matt*., 5:44 — 48) [1]

‘‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’’ (*Matt*., 5:16)

‘‘Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.’’ (*Matt*., 6:1)

‘‘After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.’’ (*Matt*., 6:9)

‘‘For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.’’ (*Matt*., 6:14)

‘‘Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.’’ (*Luke*, 6:36)

Also he said to Mary Magdalene: ‘‘go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.’’ (*John*, 20:17)

These and other similar sentences of the Gospels refer to Allāh as the Father of ‘Īsā as well as of others, all in the sense of distinction and honour.

There are some sayings in the Gospels which allude to the union of

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[1] The quotations of the Old and New Testaments, here and elsewhere, are from King James version, because the Arabic version (printed in 1811 C.E.) used by the author, conforms to it. (*tr.*)

the Son with the Father. For example:

‘‘These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.’’ (*John*, 17:1)

Then he went on praying for his disciples and finally said: ‘‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gayest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.’’ (*John*, 17:20 — 23)

However, there are other verses which apparently cannot be explained in the terms of distinction and excellence. For example:

‘‘Thomas saith unto him (i.e., Jesus), Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.’’ (*John*, 5:11)

‘‘For I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.’’ (*John,* 8:42)

‘‘I and my Father are one.’’ (*John,* 10:30)

‘‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing [1] them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’’ (*Matt*., 28:19)

‘‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things

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[1] Baptism is a Christian sacrament of initiation into Church by immersing in water or sprinkling water on the head. (*Author’s note*)

were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was light of men.'' (*John,* 1:1 — 4)

These and similar other statements of the Gospels have led the Christians to the belief of trinity in unity. The belief of trinity is an attempt to reconcile the belief that the Christ is the Son of God with the belief in one God which the Christ himself had taught. For example, *Mark,* 12:29 quotes him as saying: ''The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.''

The believers in the trinity say (although it does not impart any intelligible meaning): God is one substance with three Persons. The word Person denotes an attribute with which a thing appears to others; and the attribute is none other than the thing itself. The three Persons are: The Person of existence, the Person of knowledge, i.e. the Word, and the Person of life, i.e. the Spirit.

These three Persons are the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The first is the Person of existence; the second, the Person of knowledge (the Word); and the third, the Person of life. The Son who is the Word and the Person of knowledge descended from his Father (i.e. the Person of existence) accompanied by the Holy Ghost (i.e. the Person of Life) that gives light to all things.

Then they differ among themselves in explanation of this vague statement; and ever-occurring conflicts have divided them to more than seventy sects and denominations. We shall mention some of them to the extent that is necessary in the framework of this book.

Think over the above description; then look at what the Qur'ān ascribes to the Christians, or quotes them as saying: and the Christians say, ''The Messiah is the son of Allāh'' (9:30); Certainly they disbelieve who say: ''Surely Allāh, He is the Messiah, son of Maryam'' (5:72); Certainly they disbelieve who say: ''Surely Allāh is the third (Person) of the three'' (5:73); and say not, ''three''; Desist (4:171). Then you will realize that all these statements point to a single idea, i.e. the trinity in unity which is the common factor of all the sects which sprang up in the Christianity (as we have said above).

Why did the Qur'ān concentrate on this common factor? It was because the same objections apply to all their beliefs regarding 'Īsā (a.s.) — in spite of their diversity and numerousness. The arguments put by the Qur'ān are applicable to all their interpretations with equal force, as will

be explained later.

4. Argument of the Qur'ān against the Belief of the Trinity

Coming to the belief of trinity, the Qur'ān refutes it in two ways:

First: The general method, i.e. showing that it is impossible for Allāh to take a son for Himself, no matter whether the presumed son be 'Īsā or someone else.

Second: The particular method, i.e. describing that 'Īsā son of Maryam was neither a son of God nor God; that he was but a servant created by Allāh.

First Method: What is the quiddity of sonship and birth? What do these words really mean? A living material thing (like man, animal or vegetable) separates from itself a portion of its own matter, then gradually develops it until it becomes another individual of the same species similar to its parent; the offspring has the same characteristics and traits as the parent body had. An animal separates semen from its body, or a plant removes a seed from itself, then it preserves and grows the semen or seed gradually until it becomes another animal or plant similar to its parent. This is what sonship and birth mean. It is no secret that such a thing is impossible for Allāh:

First: Because it needs a physical material body; and Allāh is far above matter and its concomitants without which matter cannot exist like motion, time, space and other such things.

Second: To Allāh belongs absolute Divinity and Lordship; consequently, He has absolute authority over, and total management of, all things in His hand. Every thing is in need of Him to bring it into existence, and depends on Him for its continuity. It is just impossible to imagine a thing similar to Allāh in ''species'' — a thing having the identity, attributes and characteristics similar to those of Allāh and independent of Him.

Third: If Allāh could beget or give birth to a son, it would entail graduality of action for Allāh. In other words,He would be governed by the laws of matter and movement; and it is contradiction in term, because whatever takes place by His Will comes into being at once without delay, without graduality.

The above explanations are inferred from the words of Allāh: *And*

they say: ''Allāh has taken to Himself a son.'' Glory be to Him; rather, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His, all are obedient to Him. The Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, ''Be'', and it is (2:116 — 117).

As we have explained above, the words, *Glory be to Him,* are a complete proof; the clause, *whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him, is* another proof; and the verse, *The Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, ''Be'', and it is,* is a third proof. [1]

It is also possible to take the clause, *The Originator of the heavens and the earth,* as an allegorical expression in which the attribute of the object has been transferred to the subject. In other words, the clause may denote that the heavens and the earth are original in their creation and design; Allāh has created them without any previous model. Therefore, He cannot beget anyone, otherwise it would be a creation on His own model. (After all, the Christians believe that the Son is one with the Father.) In that case this clause would be an independent proof by itself.

The Christians generally use the sentence, 'the Messiah is the Son of God', in a somewhat allegorical sense, and not in its literal meaning. They expand the meaning of sonship. Probably, it means separation of a thing from another of similar quiddity without physical and material division and without graduality. This interpretation may remove the problems of body, materiality and graduality. Yet, the problem of similarity will remain unsolved.

The problem of similarity may be described thus: Evidently, to believe in God the Father and God the Son is to believe in number, in real plurality, even if we suppose that the Father and the Son are one in ''species'' or quiddity. A human father and his son are one because both have the same quiddity, both belong to the homosapien species; but they are in fact more than one because they are two individual human beings. Now, if we suppose that God is one, then all other things (including the Son) would be ''no-God''; they would be owned by God and dependent on Him; consequently the putative son would not be a God like Him. On the other hand, if we suppose a son similar to God, free of, not dependent

[1] The three proofs point to the above-mentioned three arguments respectively. (*tr.*)

on, Him, then it would invalidate and negate the Oneness of God.

This exposition is found in the following words of Allāh: *and say not, ''Three''. Desist, it is better for you; Allāh is only one God; far be it from His glory that He should have a son; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; and Allāh is sufficient for a Protector* (4:171).

Second Method: ʻĪsā son of Maryam could not be a son of God sharing Godhead with Him, because he was a human being having all the concomitants of humanity.

The Messiah (a.s.) was conceived by Maryam and grew up in her womb; then she brought him forth as women give birth to their children, and brought him up, as a child is brought up by his mother. He grew up proceeding through normal stages: from infancy to childhood, from youth to the middle age. All this time, his condition was like any other normal human being in march of life. He was governed by all normal accidents and conditions undergone by other men. He was hungry and satiated; felt joy and sorrow; was pleased and displeased; affected by delight and pain, comfort and discomfort; he ate and drank, slept and woke up, was tired and rested etc.

This was the condition of ʻĪsā (a.s.) when he was among the people. Doubtlessly a person having such characteristics is just a mortal man like any other member of his species. As such he, like all other human beings, was a creature made by Allāh. Now, let us look at the miracles and supernatural things that happened on his hand, like giving life to dead bodies, creating the birds and healing the blind and leper. Also, there are extraordinary signs related to his birth, that is, his conception without father. All these things are supernatural, against the normal custom which people are familiar with; yet they are unfamiliar because of their rarity, not because they are impossible. There was Adam who by evidence of the heavenly Books was created from dust and had no father. And here are the prophets, for example: Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm and Mūsā (peace be upon them) on whose hand so many miraculous signs had appeared (which are mentioned in revealed scriptures). But nobody thinks that those miracles negated their humanity or proved their divinity.

This method has been used in the verses: *Certainly they disbelieve who say: ''Surely Allāh is the third* (Person) *of the three''; and there is no god but the One God, ... The Messiah, son of Maryam is but an*

apostle; apostles before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman, they both used to eat food. See how We make the signs clear to them, then behold how they are turned away (5:73 — 75).

Eating food has been specially selected for mention in preference to other activities, beause it rather more forcefully proves his materiality and shows his neediness and wants, which cannot be combined with Godhead. Obviously, a person who by his nature feels hunger and thirst and satisfies it with a morsel of food and a cup of water, is nothing but an embodiment of poverty and need — a need that cannot be removed without help of some extraneous agent. How can such a man be God? What is the meaning of such divinity? A man surrounded by needs, depending for their fulfilment on something outside his own being, is deficient in himself, and managed by some other than himself. He cannot be self-sufficient god; rather he shall be a creature who is looked after by the Lord the Lord Who has His creatures' affairs in His Own Hand. The verse 5:17 may possibly be explained in this light: *Certainly they disbelieve who say: ''Surely Allāh He is the Messiah, son of Maryam''. Say: ''Who then could control any thing as against Allāh when He wished to destroy the Messiah son of Maryam and his mother and all those on the earth?''And Allāh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them; He creates what He pleases; and Allāh has power over all things.*

The same is the case with the verse (coming after 5:75 quoted above) addressing the Christians: *Say: ''Do you worship besides Allāh that which does not control for you any harm, or any profit?'' And Allāh — He is the Hearing, the Knowing* (5:76).

The basis and theme of such arguments is this: 'Īsā (a.s.), as is seen from his condition and affairs, lived according to, and was governed by, the natural law which permeates a man's life. He had all the attributes, did all the deeds, and underwent all the conditions which a human being does; like eating, drinking, fulfilling all other human needs, showing all characteristics of the human race. Also this material involvement, these physical attributes were real; not an illusion or imagination. 'Īsā (a.s.), was a real man who had those natural attributes, conditions and actions. The Gospels contain many verses in which he calls himself man and son of man; are full of the stories of his eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, travelling, tiring, speaking and many such things which cannot be

explained away, nor can they be interpreted otherwise. This being the case, the position of the Messiah would be the same as that of other human beings; he did not own or control any affair of the others, and he could be destroyed like others.

The same is the implication of his prayers and invocations; no doubt that he worshipped Allāh, his intention being to reach nearer to Allāh, with humbleness and humility to the sublimity and majesty of Allāh; certainly it was not for the purpose of teaching others how to pray or for any other such aim.

The verse 4:172 arguing against ʻĪsā's supposed divinity points to his prayer. Allāh says: The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allāh, nor do the angels who are near to Him, and whoever disdains His worship and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself. ʻĪsā's service and worship is the first and foremost proof that he was not God and that he had no share in Godhead which is reserved for the One other than him. How can a man put himself in the position of servitude to himself? How can he be the slave of himself? How can a thing be self-sufficient in the same framework in which it is dependent on someone else? The answer is clear: In no way.

Likewise, the worship of the angels clearly shows that they are not Allāh's daughters. Nor is the Holy Ghost a God, because they all are worshippers of Allāh and obedient to Him. Allāh says: *And they say: ''The Beneficient God has taken to Himself a son.'' Glory be to Him. Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves, and for fear of Him they tremble* (21:26 — 28).

Moreover, the Gospels contain verses showing that the Spirit or Ghost is obedient to Allāh and His messengers, following their commands, acting on their orders. There is no sense in saying that a thing orders itself or obeys itself, or that it accepts and acts on the orders of its own creatures (i.e., messengers).

In the same way as ʻĪsā's worship of Allāh proves that ʻĪsā was not Allāh, his call to the people to worship Allāh proves it; as the verse points to it: *Certainly they disbelieve who say: ''Surely Allāh, He is the Messiah, son of Maryam ''; and the Messiah said: ''O Children of*

Israel! worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord, surely whoever associates (others) *with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust''* (5:72). The method of argument used in this verse is self-evident.

Although the Gospels do not contain such comprehensive sentence as, *''worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord'',* they are full of his sayings calling people to Allāh and to His worship; he repeatedly declares that Allāh is his Lord in Whose Hand is the management of his affairs; he openly says that Allāh is the Lord of the people; and never invites them to his own worship — in spite of his reported saying: ''I and my Father are one'' (*John,* 10:30). If we accept that it is a correct reporting, then, all things taken together, it must mean: my obedience is Allāh's obedience; thus, it shall have the same connotation as the verse of the Qur'ān: *Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh* (4:80).

5. 'Īsā is An Intercessor, not A Redeemer

The Christians believe that Jesus Christ atoned for their sins with his blood; and that is why they call him the Redeemer, the Saviour. They explain this belief as follows:

''Adam disobeyed Allāh by partaking of the forbidden tree; it was a sin which remained with Adam, and it is inherited by his progeny who come into this world burdened with that original sin; and the recompense of sin is punishment in the next world, the eternal perdition, the everlasting ruin — which cannot be warded off. And Allāh is Merciful and Just — both at the same time.

''This situation created a knotty problem which defied all solutions: If Allāh were to punish Adam and his progeny for their sin, it would have been against the mercy for which He had created them; and if He were to forgive them, it would have been against His Justice. Justice demands that a sinner should be punished for his sins and errors, just as a good-doer and obedient person should be rewarded for his good deeds. [1]

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[1] That is what most of the Christians believe. But some of them, like Bishop Mār Isḥāq, say that there is no difficulty if one refrains from inflicting a threatened punishment. In other words, it is all right not to fulfil a threat, although one is not allowed to break a promise of reward. (*Author's Note*)

Bishop Mār Isḥāq's view has been taken from ash-Shahristāni's *al-Milal wa 'n-niḥal*, pp. 223 — 224. (*tr.*)

‘‘This problem remained unsolved until Allāh solved it through Christ. Christ — the Son of God who was Himself God — entered the womb of a descendant of Adam, that is, the Virgin Maryam, and was born from her as a human being is born. In this way, he was a complete man, because he was a son of man; and at the same time, was a complete God, because he was the Son of God.

‘‘And the Son of God, being God Himself, was sinless and protected from every sin and error.

‘‘He lived among his people for sometime, mixing and dealing with them; he joined them in eating and drinking, talked and walked with them and befriended them. Thereafter he surrendered to his enemies enabling them to kill him the worst killing — killing by crucifixion, because one who is crucified is, according to the Divine Scriptures, cursed by God.

‘‘He took upon Himself the Divine curse and crucifixion, with all the condemnations, sufferings and chastisement which it entails. In this way he redeemed the people through his sacrifice, in order that they might be saved from the chastisement of the hereafter and the eternal perdition. Thus, he is the atonement for the sins of the believers, nay, for the sins of the whole world.’’ [1] This is what the Christians believe.

The Christians have made this theory (i.e., the crucifixion and atonement) the foundation of their religion. It is the Alpha and Omega of their call and mission — in the same manner as the Qur’ān has founded the Islam and its mission on monotheism; as Allāh says addressing His Messenger (s.a.w.a.): *Say: ‘‘This is my way: I invite* (you) *unto Allāh: with clear sight* (are) *I and he who follows me; and glory be to Allāh; and I am not of the polytheists’’* (12:108).

It is the Christians’ belief in spite of the fact that Christ (as the Gospels clearly say, and we have mentioned earlier) used to admonish them first of all to believe in one God and to love Him.

The Muslims as well as many non-Muslims have shown the Christians the defects and invalidities of the above-mentioned belief of

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[1] ‘‘My litle children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ — the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.’’ (I John, 2:1 — 2) (*Author’s Note*)

Christianity. Countless books and booklets have been written and numerous pamphlets and articles published, showing that this theory is not only contrary to logic and reason, but is also contradictory to the Books of the Old and the New Testaments. What we are concerned with here — and what comes within the purview of this book of ours — is to show how this idea is opposed to the basic Qur'ānic teachings, and to explain the difference between intercession (as confirmed by the Qur'ān) and atonement (as claimed by the Christians).

Moreover, the Qur'ān clearly says that it talks with the people explaining the things in such a way as to bring it to the level of their understanding, to make it easier for them to grasp its realities. It explains what helps them to distinguish the truth from the falsehood, so that they may accept that and reject this. It enables him to differentiate between virtue and evil, between beneficial and harmful, so that he may take the one and leave the other. The fact that the Qur'ān keeps in view the level of the healthy reason and understanding is abundantly clear to all who study the Divine Book.

Now let us have a critical look at the above mentioned Christian theory of atonement:

First: They say that Adam committed a sin by eating from the forbidden tree. But the Qur'ān refutes this idea in two ways:

1. The said prohibition was not like a binding order given by a master to his slave; it was only an advisory counsel aiming at the good of the person so advised — in order that he may live more comfortably. Such an advice does not bring any judicial reward or punishment whether one acts upon it or ignores it. It is not different from the order or prohibition of an advisor to the one who seeks his advice, or the directions given by a physician to his patient. What happens in such situations is this. If the person concerned acts upon the advice, he achieves what is good and beneficial to him in this life; and if he neglects such advice, he may come to harm in this world. When Adam ate from the forbidden tree, the only harm he suffered was his removal from the Garden, and thus he lost the comfort and happiness he had been enjoying there. But there was no question at all of any punishment of hereafter, because he had not disobeyed any compulsory legislative order which could have resulted in ''punishment''. (For detail, see the Commentary of the verses 2:35 —

39).[1]

2. Adam (a.s.) was a prophet: The Qur'ān clearly says that the prophets were sinless; they were protected by Allāh from committing sins and transgressing the ''orders'' of Allāh. Logical reasons support this belief and the Qur'ān proves it. (See our discourse on the sinlessness of the prophets given in the Commentary of the verse 2:2l3).[2]

Second: They say that the said sin remained with Adam. But the Qur'ān rejects this idea when it says: *Then his* (Adam's) *Lord chose him, so He turned to him* (with mercy) *and guided* (him) (20:122); *Then Adam received* (some) *words from his Lord, so He turned to -hiim mercifully; surely He is Oft-returning* (to mercy), *the Merciful* (2:37). The reason also supports, nay, proves it. Retribution of sin is a frightening and formidable thing which the reason — or the master — thinks necessary for him who disobeys the command or shows obstinancy; it is from fear of punishment that legislations and laws are obeyed. Had there been no reward and punishment, the mastership could not be enforced and no order or prohibition would be obeyed. The master has the right and power to punish the sinners for their sins as well as to give rewards to the obedient ones for their obedience. Likewise, it lies within his power to excercise his discretion in a way he thinks fit, within the jurisdiction of his mastership. He has every right to pass over and overlook the disobedience and mistakes of wrong-doers by forgiving and pardoning them their sins and wrongs. This power of forgiveness is a part of management and rule as much as is the authority to mete out punishment. There is no doubt in any mind that forgiveness and pardon, in certain cases, is good and commendable when the forgiver has full power to punish; even today reasonable persons practise it and put it into effect. In this background, there is no reason why a wrong done by a man should remain attached to him forever. Otherwise, forgiveness and pardon would have no meaning at all. One forgives and pardons for erasing a mistake, for nullifying the effect of a sin; and if we say that the mistake and sin remains attached and cannot be removed, then forgiveness and pardon are meaningless. Moreover, the Divine Revelation is full of descriptions of forgiveness and pardon; also the Old and New Testaments speak of it.

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Engl. transl.], voL 1, pp.l78 — 213. (*pub.*)

[2] *ibid.,* vol.3, pp.195 — 204. (*pub.*)

Not only that, even the afore-mentioned ‘‘Christian dogma’’ speaks about it. In short, the claim that a certain sin or mistake had been attached to a man, which could not be erased or forgiven even after repentance and expression of sorrow, even after returning to the Lord with sincerity, is a thing which no reason would accept, nor would any straight thinking person agree with.

Third: They say that the sin of Adam has remained attached not only to him but even to his progeny upto the Day of Resurrection. It means that the punishment of a crime of one person was extended to the others too who had no hand in that sin. In other words, a slave commits a sin and the master widens the circle of punishment to include even those who were in no way connected with that sin! (We are not speaking about a situation where someone had committed a sin and his descendants were pleased with his action; because in that case all would be counted as sinners.) What the Christians say puts the burden of sin on those who had nothing to do with that supposed sin. And the Qur’ān rejects it when it says: *That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another: and that there is not for man* (aught) *except what he strives for* (53:38 — 39). Sound reason supports this dictum, because it is an evil to penalize someone for a sin he has not committed. (Vide the discourse on the ‘‘Deeds’’, under the verses 2:216 — 218.) [1]

Fourth: Their argument is based on a misconception that every mistake and sin — without any exception — throws the man into eternal perdition. In other words, sins do not differ in size and magnitude — all are great and capital. But the Qur’ān teaches us that the sins and errors are of various categories: some are great, others small; some may be forgiven, others like polytheism shall not be forgiven except after repentance. Allāh says: *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins and cause you to enter an honourable* (place of) *entering* (4:31); *Surely Allāh does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases* (4:48). Thus Allāh has taught us that some of the forbidden things, that is, sins and mistakes, are great, and others are, by implication, small; some are not forgivable while others are forgiven. In any case, sins vary in their seriousness, and not

[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Engl. transl.], vol. 3, pp. 239 — 278. (*tr.*)

every sin puts the sinner in eternal perdition or everburning fire.

Reason also refuses to lump all sins together, to put all mistakes in one category. A slap on face is different from murder; a lustful eye and fornication are not one; and so on. Never in the long human history have people treated all sins and errors alike. Sane persons in every age have prescribed different punishments for different crimes. How can it be possible to bracket all sins together without any discrimination, when there is so clear difference among them? In view of this accepted difference, only a few of them may cause eternal perdition, never-ending chastisement (for example) associating others whit Allāh, as the Qur'ān has said: Obviously going against the prohibition of partaking of a tree cannot be put in the category of disbelief in Allāh or polytheism or things like that. Thus there is no reason why it should cause an eternal punishment. (Vide the above-mentioned discourse on Deeds).

Fifth: Let us look at what they have said about the problem of the conflict between the Divine attributes of mercy and justice; how a plan was devised to overcome that difficulty; and how Christ came down and then ascended to heaven to effect that scheme — with all the ramifications they have mentioned.

Ponder on this statement and its concomitants, and see what type of god they believe in. Here you will find a Creator God Who is the beginning and the end of this created universe and all its components. But all His actions emanate from a will and a knowledge which are found in Him; and His will depends on an academic preference — in the same way as a man opts for a course of action after weighing its pros and cons according to his knowledge. Likewise, God ponders on the positive and negative sides of a thing and then decides whether to do it or not. Sometimes He makes a wrong choice and repents for it [1] ; at other times He meditates upon a problem without finding its correct solution; often He remains unaware of many affairs. In short, in their eyes, God in His attributes and actions is not different from a man. Whatever He does, He does it after thinking and meditating over it, directing His endeavours to the advantages of that action. His decision is thus governed and controlled by some extraneous factors, that is, the said advantages. He

[1] ''And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.'' (Gen., 6:6). (*Author's Note*)

may find His way to the correct decision; also He may take a wrong decision; there may be error, misunderstanding or forgetfulness in the course He has taken. Sometimes He knows, at other times He does not; often He overpowers, and frequently is Himself overpowered. His power, like His knowledge, is limited. When all this is believed about Him, then it should be equally possible for Him to be subjected to all the conditions which prevail in a human being who decides to do a work after pondering on its pros and cons: God will thus experience joy and grief, vainglory and shame, happiness and sorrow — and things like that. Needless to say that such a being would be a physical and material one, governed by the laws of movement, change and gradual completion. A thing having these attributes must be a transient being, a created thing; it cannot be the Self-existing God Who is the Creator of all things.

If you study the Old and New Testaments, you will know that all that we have said above is true; and that they believe in a god who has a body and has all the attributes found in a body, and especially in a man.

As for the Qur'ān, it declares the Lord's glory in all these matters, showing that He is far above such myths and superstitions, as it says: *Glory be to Allāh* (for freedom) *from what they describe* (37:159). We have many incontestable rational proofs to show that Allāh is One in Whom all the attributes of perfection are united. His are the existence without any hint of inexistence, absolute power without any shade of weakness, all-encompassing knowledge without any taint of ignorance, absolute life without any possibility of death or destruction. This being the case, there can never come any change in His existence, power, knowledge or life.

Consequently, He cannot be a body or a thing related to body, because body and the things connected to it are surrounded by change and alteration, subdued by incorporeality, neediness and shortcomings. As He is not a body, nor related to body, He is not subjected to varying circumstances or changing conditions; He is far above forgetfulness or obliviousness, mistake or repentance, undecidedness or uncertainty, reaction or despondency, weakness or defeat — and things like that. We have fully explained the rational arguments (related) to these topics in this book in relevant places; those who want a thorough study should look for them under relevant verses.

A discerning reader may easily judge between the two beliefs: Here is

the Qur'ān, declaring the glory of the Lord of the universe; it affirms for Him every attribute of perfection, and asserts His freedom from every imperfection; and declares that He is too great to be comprehended by our understanding — beset as it is by limitations and imperfections. And there are the Old and New Testaments describing God in terms which can only be found in the Greek, Indian and Chinese mythologies of the ancient times; and ascribing to Him such things which primitive man imagined and which his superstition led him to believe.

Sixth: They say that Allāh sent His Son, Christ, and told him to enter into the womb of a woman — in order that he could be born a man while he was a god. It is the same unintelligible theory which has been strongly refuted by the Qur'ān; there is no need to repeat here the earlier-explained Qur'ānic arguments against it.

Also the reason does not support this theory. First look at the attributes which are essential for the Self-existing Being. His existence is eternal, without beginning or end; there can be no change in Him; His existence knows no limit; He encompasses everything, but Himself is above the limits of time, space and their concomitants. Then think over the creation of man from the time he was a sperm to the stage when it is a foetus in a womb — no matter which interpretation you accept for this human birth of god: that of the Melchites, or the Nestorians, or the Jacobites or some other groups. In the end you will have to admit that there is no relationship between a thing that has a physical body with all its accidents and concomitants and a Being that has neither a body nor any of its concomitants or accidents (like time, space, movement etc.). How can one even think of unity between the two in any way?

The fact is that this theory does not agree with self-evident rational propositions. That is why St. Paul and other leaders of Christianity hold philosophy in contempt and spurn and disdain rational arguments. St. Paul writes: ''For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ... For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified.'' (Epistle of Paul, ch. 1) [1]

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[1] I Corinthians, 1:19 — 23. (*tr.*)

We find a lot of pronouncements — in similar vein — in his as well as in others' writings. This line was adopted only for propagation of their ideas and missionary activities. Anyone pondering on these epistles and books and studying the way they address the people may easily understand the motive behind it.

The above discourse also exposes the flaw in their statement that: ''God is sinless and protected from sins and errors.'' The God they have imagined is not safe from errors at all; He errs in His perceptions and He errs in His actions. Of course, He does not disobey anyone because none is superior to Him. That is why the question of sin and disobedience does not arise at all, so far as God is concerned. Consequently, it is irrelevant, nay, unimaginable, to say that He is ''protected from sins''.

Seventh: They say that God became man and then lived with his people as a man lives in society until he surrendered to his enemies.

It means that the Self-existent God may acquire for Himself some properties especially reserved for transient and incorporeal creatures — only then He can be God and man all at the same time. If so, then He can also become any of His other creatures; He may acquire for Himself the reality of any of the species created by Him. One day He may appear as a man, the next day as a horse; sometimes as a bird, at other times as an insect, and so on. He may even acquire more than one reality at a time, that is, He may come to this world as a combination of several species, for example, He may appear as perfect man and perfect horse and perfect insect, all at the same time.

Likewise, He may do any action done by His creatures — because He may appear as a certain species and then would do the actions reserved for that species. Going a step further, it would be possible for Him to do two opposite things together like justice and injustice, or to acquire opposite attributes for Himself, for example, knowledge and ignorance, power and lack of power, life and death, want and freedom from want. Glory be to Allāh Who is far above such absurdities! (This snag is different from the one explained in the Sixth Objection.)

Eighth: They say that he suffered until he was crucified and took upon himself the curse, because a crucified person is cursed. What do they really mean when they say that he took the curse upon himself? What is the meaning of curse? In common usage and language curse means removal from Divine Mercy and Honour. Does that supposed

curse imply the same meaning? Or is it something else? If it has the same meaning which is known to the language and common usage, then how can God remove Himself from His own mercy? Or, how can anyone else remove Him away from His own mercy? What is mercy? It is a positive bestowal, a grant of favours and bounties, a bequeathal of especialities of existence. When one is cursed — taken away from Divine Mercy — it results in poverty, disgrace or effects like that — in this world or the next or in both. This being the case, what is the sense of saying that God was effected by curse? Choose any meaning for curse, it cannot apply to God — the God Who is Self-sufficient and fulfils the needs of everything.

The Qur'ānic teaching is diametrically opposed to this truly amazing theory of the New Testament. Allāh says: *O men! you are the ones who stand in need of Allāh, and Allāh is He Who is Self-sufficient, the Praised One* (35:15). Also the names and attributes of Allāh mentioned in the Qur'ān make it clear that it is impossible for any type of need or want, shortcoming or defect, loss or extinction, evil or abomination, disgrace or stigma to reach the sublime majesty of Allāh.

Poser: God suffered disgrace and took the curse upon Himself only because He became one with man. Otherwise, He in His own Self is too high to be affected by such things.

Reply: Did God, by becoming one with man, take upon Himself that curse and those sufferings in real sense of the word? Or, was it all just a metaphor, only an allegory? If it was in real sense, our objection stands. And if it was only in a metaphorical sense, then the original ''problem'' would remain unsolved; the birth of Christ would not solve the conflict between Divine Mercy and Divine Justice. If it was not God — but somone else — who suffered all those indignities and curse — the so-called scheme of atonement would remain unfulfilled. Obviously, the said plan was based on the idea that God Himself should be the ransom for human beings.

Ninth: They say that 'Īsā atoned for the sins of the believers, nay, for the sins of the whole world. This talk shows that they do not understand the real meaning of sin and error, nor do they comprehend how the sins bring the next world's punishment, or how that punishment is affected. Also, they have not grasped the relationship between sins and errors on

one side and Divine Legislation on the other, nor do they know the stand of the *sharī'ah* about it. But the Qur'ān clearly describes all these things and teaches us these realities — as we have explained in the Commentaries of verses 2:26 (*Surely Allāh is not ashamed to set forth any parable ...*) and 2:213 (*Mankind was but one nation...*). We have described there that the orders and laws (which might be the subject of disobedience) and the sins and errors all are mentally posited things based on subjective consideration. They have been made for the protection of society's welfare; and the punishment of its disobedience is the unpleasant result which has been prescribed with a single aim in view — to discourage and prevent a responsible man from indulging into sin, from disobeying the law. This is the view of the sages who have laid the foundation of human society.

But the Qur'ānic teaching leads us to a still higher level in this respect (and the rational reasoning supports it, as we have explained). It says that when a man obeys the *sharī'ah* prescribed for him by Allāh, his psyche acquires some noble and praiseworthy inner traits; and if he disobeys the said *sharī'ah,* he acquires unworthy, hideous and evil traits. It is these deeply ingrained traits and characteristics which prepare for him the rewards or punishments of the next life, respectively. That reward and punishment is represented by the Paradise and the Hell, respectively — and their respective reality is nearness to Allāh or distance from Him. Thus the merit and demerit of deeds are based on things which actually exist and have a system. Unlike our social laws they are not based on any imaginary thing emanating from subjective consideration.

Also it is not a secret that the Divine Legislation perfects and completes the Divine Creation. It brings the creative guidance to its final destination. In other words, Allāh brings every thing to the perfections of its existence, to the final goal of its being. And among the perfections of human existence are a good social system in this world, and a happy, bounteous life in the hereafter. The way to that perfection is religion which enacts and promulgates laws for society's reform and development, and contains directions for reaching nearer to Allāh (and these directives are called acts of worship). When a man follows the laws of religion, his life and livelihood are improved, and his soul becomes ready to receive Allāh's bounties; and he is qualified — in his self and in

his actions — for the Divine Honour in the hereafter. All of this emanates from the light put in his heart, and the purity that is found in his self. This in short is the reality.

Man gets nearer to Allāh or goes far away from Him. This nearness and distance are the foundations of his eternal happiness and unhappiness, respectively — and also for his social development (or otherwise) in this life. And religion is the only factor that brings about his nearness and distance. All these are real things, not based on imaginary assumptions or subjective considerations.

Now suppose that one putative sin of Adam — his partaking of the forbidden tree — brought eternal perdition on him, and not only on him, but on all his descendants also; and that there was no remedy for it, no relief from that ruination — except atonement through Christ. Then what was the use of sending religion — any religion — before Christ? And what was the use of ordaining it with Christ? And what is the use of promulgating it after Christ?

Let us put it this way: Eternal perdition and punishment in hereafter was a firmly-decreed fate of man — because of the said sin; it could not be removed or averted from him either through good deeds or through repentance; the only effective remedy was the atonement through Christ's suffering and crucifixion. Then why did Allāh promulgate the laws, revealed the books, and sent the prophets and messengers? What was the sense behind all this exercise? Were not all those promises and threats, all those good tidings and warnings devoid of truth? What could all those endeavours avail mankind when the whole species was doomed to perdition, and when eternal punishment was their firmly-decreed fate?

Also, suppose there were people who perfected themselves by sincerely following the previous *sharī'ah* (and there were countless prophets and also men of God in previous *ummah* who were like that, for example, the honoured prophets Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and others); they lived perfectly and died before the time of atonement. Now what would you say about them? Did they end their life in infelicity and perdition? Or in felicity and happiness? What did they face when they met death and went to the next world? Did death bring them to chastisement and ruination? Or to Divine bounties and happy life?

Moreover, Christ clearly says that he was sent only to save the sinners and wrong-doers, and that good-doers and righteous have no need

of such help.[1]

Frankly speaking, no valid reason can be given for promulgating the Divine Laws, for ordaining the religious values — before the supposed atonement was affected through Christ; it was but a vain, senseless and aimless exercise. Nor can any good and correct reason be advanced for this ''strange'' action of God. The only thing that can be said is this:

God knew very well that, unless the problem of Adam's sin was solved, no law promulgated by Him would do any good. Yet He went on promulgating those laws just to be on safe side, hoping that one of these days He would get a chance to solve this problem and then He would be able to harvest the fruits of those legislation! Thus He legislated the laws and promulgated them through the prophets — hiding the truth from the prophets and their people alike. He did not tell them that there was a big problem which — if it remained unsolved — would nullify all the efforts of the whole group of the prophets and the believers, and which would render all the laws ineffective and useless. On the contrary, He pretended that the legislations and the prophetic missions were very serious, very important and very real things.

Thus God deceived the people, and deceived Himself too. He deceived the people by promising that their safety and happiness was guaranteed if they faithfully followed the *sharī'ah.* And He deceived Himself because, once the atonement was affected, legislation of the *sharī'ah* would become irrelevant, without having any effect on the people's felicity — in the same way as it was without any effect as long as the problem of Adam's sin was not solved. This was the case before affectation of the said atonement.

Coming to the time when atonement was affected, and to the later days, ineffectiveness and futility of the *sharī'ah,* of prophetic mission and of Divine Guidance is much more self-evident. What is the use or benefit of believing in divinely-sent realities and doing good deeds now that the problem of the original sin has been solved, and the atonement has brought forgiveness and mercy to all men, believers and unbelievers,

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[1] ''But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'' (Luke, 5:30 — 32) (*Author's Note*)

righteous and unrighteous, all alike, without any difference between the most impeccable righteous one and the most incorrigible impious one: Both were to suffer eternal perdition when the original sin was not redeemed and both are to share in the Divine Mercy now that it has been redeemed through the said atonement. (Remember that no good deed could remove that stigma, if there were no atonement.)

Objection: The atonement would benefit only those who believe in Christ. Therefore, the prophetic mission did have its use and benefit, as Christ has said in the Gospel.[1]

Reply: First of all, it contradicts the saying of St. John referred to earlier. Secondly, it destroys all the edifice built so far, because nobody — right from Adam to the Last Day — would enter the sanctuary of safety and deliverance except a very small group, that is, those who believe in Christ and the Holy Ghost; and not even all the Christians but only a certain group among all those widely differing denominations — all other denominations would be thrown into eternal perdition. I wish I knew what would happen to the honoured prophets (who came) before Christ, and to the believers of their *ummah !* What would be the status of their mission, of the books they brought and of the wisdom they taught? Was it true? Or just a lie? The Gospels verify the Torah and its mission, and there is no mention at all of the Ghost and the atonement in the Torah. Does the Gospel verify a true book? Or does it verify a pack of lies?

Poser: As we know, the previously revealed books give the good tidings of Christ. This was a sort of a general call by them towards Christ, although they did not give any detail about his coming and atoning the sin. God was always telling His prophets about the advent of Christ in order that they might believe in him and be happy with what he would do.

Reply: First: To make such claims for the prophets before Mūsā is to shoot in the dark, to venture into *terra incognita.* Moreover, if there was

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[1] ‘‘Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.’’ (Luke, 12:8 — 9) (*Author’s Note*)

any good news, it was not an invitation to believe in, and follow, him. Secondly, that good tiding does not solve the problem of futility of the *sharī'ah*; if Christ delivered all those who believed in him, then was it not useless and futile to invite people to follow the laws of the *sharī'ah* and to practise good ethics and morality? Even Christ exhorted people to follow the rules of religion and be of good conduct; and the Gospels are full of his sermons to this effect. Thirdly, the basic problem still remains. They had talked about the original sin and the unfulfilment of the Divine Purpose, and that purpose is still unfulfilled. God had created mankind to bestow His mercy on all of them, to cover all of them with His favour and bounties, felicity and happiness. But what is the result? Almost all of them — with the exception of a small group — are going to be punished, suffering under the wrath of God, thrown into eternal perdition.

These are just a few of the rational reasons showing the absurdity and invalidity of this theory. The Qur'ān too supports these reasons. Allāh says: *Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal) (20:50). He has made it clear that everything is guided to its goal and to what its existence demands. The guidance is of two kinds: creative and legislative. It is the established way of Allāh to bestow every relevant guidance on everything, and it includes the religious guidance bestowed on man.

Then Allāh says — and it is the first religious guidance given to Adam and those who were sent down with him from the Garden: *We said: ''Get down you therefrom all together; if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve, And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in and belie our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide''* (2:38 — 39). It gives in a nut-shell what various laws were to promulgate in detail upto the Day of Resurrection; it contains legislation as well as promise and threat — all in clear terms without ambiguity. Again He says: *... and the truth do I speak* (38:84); *The word is not changed with Me, nor am I in the least unjust to the servants* (50:29). Allāh declares that He has no hesitation or misgiving about what He decides, He does not break what He has joined; whatever He decides, He enforces; and what He says, He enacts; His action does not deviate from the line He has prescribed for it. He does not waver or hesitate when He wills; nor is it befitting to His knowledge that He should intend a thing

and then some demerit should appear in that course of action which He did not know before and thus He should decide not to do it. Nor can anyone else hinder His plan: It is not that He should will a thing, deciding to do it and then some rational defect should prevent Him from doing it, or some snag should appear in its execution and He should abandon the plan — because all such things, if they ever happened, would show helplessness of God. Allāh says: *and Allāh is predominant over His affairs* (12:21); *surely Allāh attains His purpose* (65:3); and Mūsā is reported as saying: *The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a book: errs not my Lord, nor does He forget* (20:52); and Allāh says about the Day of Judgment: *This day every soul shall be rewarded for what it has earned; no injustice* (shall be done) *this day; surely Allāh is quick in reckoning* (40:17).

These and similar other verses clearly show that Allāh, after creating His creatures, has not neglected to look after their affairs, nor is He ignorant of what they would do, nor is He sorry for what He has done. As He is constantly looking after their welfare, He has ordained for them His laws — a serious and important legislation which He has ordained not because He is afraid of something or expects to gain something through it. He shall reward every doer for his action — if good, then good; and if evil, then evil. In all these affairs nobody can overpower Him, nor can anyone impose his will on Him — because He has no partner or colleague. There will be neither any ransom nor any redemption to save anyone; nor can anyone intercede for someone without Allāh's permission. Because all such propositions are against His absolute ownership which He has over His creatures.

Tenth: Let us look at the story of atonement. What is atonement or ransom? A man — or a thing related to him — is involved in some crimes or sin, as a result of which he faces the possibilities of harm or destruction of life or valuable property; and therefore he offers something less important in order to save his life or the more valuable property. A man taken prisoner redeems himself with offer of some money; crimes are redeemed with money paid as fine. The thing given for this purpose is called ransom, fine or redemption. Atonement, in short, is a deal which transfers the right of the claimant from the person so redeemed to the thing given in ransom or redemption — and thus the redeemed one is saved from captivity or from the evil consequences of the crime he had

committed.

This description shows that atonement and redemption is simply unimaginable in the matters related to Allāh. The Divine Authority — unlike human authority which is merely an abstracted idea, a subjective consideration — is the real authority which cannot be changed or transferred. Things, in their species and with their effects, actions and reactions, have been created by Allāh and continue to exist because of Him. It is a reality, a fact; and reality and fact cannot change into non-reality, non-fact. Such a proposition cannot be imagined — let alone its ever coming into being. Allāh's ownership, authority and rights are not like those of us human beings. We are bound with social norms and laws. Our social rights, authority and ownership are merely subjective considerations, abstracted ideas based on our imaginations; their status and worth is in our own hands; we may establish a right today and abolish it tomorrow — as our interest and outlook change concerning our life and livelihood. For details see Commentaries of the verses 1:4 (*the Master of the Day of Judgment*) [1], and 3:26 (*Say: 'O Allāh, Master of the Kingdom ... '*) [2].

Allāh has specifically refuted the idea of atonement in the following verse: *So today ransom shall not be accepted from you nor from those who disbelieved; your abode is the fire* (57:15). And as explained earlier, the same is the import of the words of the Messiah quoted by Allāh in the Qur'ān: *And when Allāh will say: ''O 'Īsā son of Maryam! did you say to men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allāh' '', he will say: ''Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to* (say); *... I did not say to them save that what Thou didst enjoin me with: 'That worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord', and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst take me* (away) *completely, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things. If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are The servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise''* (5:116 — 118). His words: *''and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them ... '',* have the following import: 'I had nothing to do with them except what Thou hadst entrusted me to do, that

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Engl. transl.], vol. 1, pp. 29 — 31. (*pub.*)

[2] *ibid*., vol. 5, pp. 193 — 202. (*pub.*)

is, conveying Thy message to them and being a witness over them — as long as I was among them; whether Thou shouldst chastise them or shouldst forgive them, entirely depends on Thy discretion; I have nothing to do with it. I do not have any authority on Thy will, with which I could save them from Thy chastisement or sentence them to punishment.'

It clearly refutes the idea of ransom and atonement. Had there been any ransoming or redeeming, it would have been wrong for him to wash his hands of the fate of his *ummah,* telling Allāh that it was His (Allāh's) discretion whether to punish them or forgive them, and that he ('Īsā — a.s.) had nothing to do with it.

Of similar connotation are the following verses:

And be on your guard against the Day when one soul shall not avail another in the least, neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped (2:48).

... before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession ... (2:254).

The day on which you will turn back retreating; there shall be no saviour for you from Allāh ... (40:33).

Obviously, the ''compensation'' (in the first verse), the ''bargaining'' (of the second) and the ''saviour'' (of the third) all apply to the idea of atonement and redemption; the verses in refuting these things refute the belief of atonement.

Of course, the Qur'ān accepts the Messiah as one of the intercessors — but not as an atonement. We have explained about ''Intercession'' under the verse 2:48 (*And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another...*)[1]. We have explained there that intercession shows the nearness of the intercessor and his good standing with the master, without there being any transfer of authority from the master to the intercessors; without affecting in any way the ownership or power of the master; without nullifying or abrogating the master's commandment which the sinner had disobeyed; and without negating the system of recompense, reward and punishment. Intercession is but a sort of prayer and request by the intercessor that the master — in this case, the Lord — should manage the affairs of His creature with mercy. The

[1] *ibid.,* vol.1, pp.221 — 265. (*pub.*)

intercessor accepts the Master's right to punish the sinner (because he had sinned and the law of recompense makes him liable to punishment), but asks the Master to exercise His power of forgiveness — because He has the right to forgive as He has the right to punish.

The intercessor thus requests the Master to exercise His right of pardon and forgiveness, when the sinner has become liable for punishment, without in any way affecting the Master's ownership or authority. But atonement is something else; it is a deal, a bargain, which transfers the Master's authority from the sinner to the ransom given in his place, and removes the sinner from the Master's power as soon as the Master accepts the ransom in his place.

That the Messiah is ari- intercessor is proved by the following verse: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (43:86). It clearly says that the people excepted would have the authority to intercede. 'Īsā (a.s.) is among those whom they call besides Allāh. But he has the authority of intercession because he is included in the exception: Allāh confirms in the Qur'ān that He had taught him ('Īsā) the Book and the Wisdom, and that he ('Īsā) shall be among the witnesses on the Day of Judgment. Allāh says: *And He will teach him the Book and the Wisdom* (3:48), and quotes him as saying: *and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them* (5:117). He also says: *and on the Day of Resurrection he shall be a witness against them* (4:159).

All these verses read together prove that 'Īsā (a.s.) is one of the intercessors. We have described it in detail under the following verse: *And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least ...* (2:48).

6. The Origin of These Beliefs

The Qur'ān rejects the idea that these theories and beliefs were started or propagated by 'Īsā (a.s.). The fact is that the Christians blindly followed their leaders, leaving all affairs in their hands; and the leaders transplanted the myths of ancient idolators into Christianity. Allāh says: *And the Jews say: '' 'Uzayr is the son of Allāh''; and the Christians say: ''The Messiah is the son of Allāh''; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may Allāh*

destroy them; how they are turned away! They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allāh, and (also) *the Messiah son of Maryam, and they were not en-joined but that they should worship one God only, there is no god but He; far from His Glory be what they set up* (with Him) (9:30 — 31).

Who are the unbelievers whom Allāh refers to when He says: *they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before?* Surely it does not refer to the idolaters of pre-Islamic Arabia, who said that the angels were the daughters of God. Because the People of the Book believed God to have a son long before they came into contact with the Arabs — and especially so the Jews; while the words, *who disblieved before,* apparently refer to the unbelievers who were before the Jews and the Christians. Moreover, the Arabs themselves were not the originators of idol-worship — it was brought to them from abroad.[1]

Moreover, the idolaters of Rome, Greece, Egypt, Syria and India were nearer to the People of the Book (who lived in Palestine and its neighbourhood), and it was easier for the Jews and the Christians to adopt those people's beliefs and rituals, and the influencing factors were more conducive to it.

Therefore the unbelievers of earlier times (whose ideas concerning sonship of God, the People of the Book imitated) referred to by the

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[1] It is said that the first man to place idols in the Ka'bah and to call the people to their worship was 'Amr ibn Luḥayy, a contemporary of Shāpūr Dhu'l-Aktāf. He became the chief of his people in Mecca and took over the management of the House. Then he journeyed to the Syrian city, al-Balqā', and found the people there worshipping idols. He enquired about it. They said: ''These are the Lords, we have made them in the images of the celestial deities and human sages; we seek help from them and we get help; we pray to them for rain and we get rain.'' 'Amr requested them to give him one of the idols; they gave him the Hubal. He brought it to Mecca and putting it on the Ka'bah, he invited the Meccans to worship it. He also had with him Asāf and Nā'ilah in the image of a couple; he called people to them too in order to come nearer to Allāh through them. This has been written by ash-Shahristānī in his *al-Milal wa 'n-niḥal,* as well as by others. It is very interesting to see that the Qur'ān uses names of some idols of Arabia in the story of Nūḥ (a.s.), where it quotes his complaint against his people: *And they say: ''By no means leave your gods, nor leave Wadd, nor Suwā'; nor Yaghūth, and Ya'ūq and Nasr''* (71:23). (*Author's Note*)

Qur'ān were the ancient idolaters of India and China, as well as those of Rome, Greece and North Africa. The history shows close resemblance of such Jewish and Christians beliefs with the myths of those nations — like sonship, fathership, trinity, as well as the stories of crucifixion and atonement etc. These are the historical facts to which the Qur'ān has drawn our attention.

Similarly, the following verse points to this historical fact: *Say: ''O People of the Book! be not unduly immoderate in your religion, and do not follow the low desires of the people who went astray before and led many astray and went astray from the right path''* (5:77). This verse shows that their immoderation in religion, their excessive love of some creatures which led them to raise them to godhead, had come to them from some previous nations who had gone astray before them, and in whose footsteps the Jews and the Christians were following.

The phrase: *the people who went astray before,* does not refer to their scholars or monks. The phrase is unrestricted and unconditional; it does not say, 'the people among you'. or 'led many among you astray'. Nor does it point to the Arabs of the days of ignorance — as we have explained earlier.

Moreover, it describes those people as having led many people astray; in other words, they were leaders of falsehood, whose words were listened to and whose directions were followed. Arabs did not have such a position in those days; they were just a small group of unlettered people, and did not have any knowledge, civilization and development in which — or because of which — other people could follow them. But the case of Iran, Rome and India etc., was different; they were highly civilized and developed nations.

Clearly the verse points to the idol-worshippers of China, India and the western countries, as we have explained.

7. Which Book the People of the Book Belong to? What is Its Condition?

Although traditions count the Zoroastrians among the People of the Book (and it means they must have had a special Book of their own, or should have belonged to one of the Books mentioned by the Qur'ān, for example, the Book of Nūḥ, the Scriptures of Ibrāhīm, Torah of Mūsā,

Injīl of ‘Īsā and Zabūr of Dāwūd), but the Qur’ān does not make any reference to them, nor does it mention any book of theirs; the Avastha which they have is not mentioned in the Qur’ān at all, and they do not acknowledge any of the other Books.

When the Qur’ān uses the term, *the People of the Book,* it means the Jews and the Christians, because of the Books which Allāh had revealed to them.

The Jewish Scripture contains 35[1] Books: five are together called the Torah of Mūsā[2] ; twelve are called the Kings[3] ; then there are the Books of Job and Psalms of Dāwūd; then come three Books of Sulaymān[4] ; and lastly seventeen Books called the Prophets[5] .

The Qur’ān has not mentioned any of them except the Torah of Mūsā and the Zabūr of Dāwūd.

The Christians’ Scriptures are as follows: The four Gospels (of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John); the Acts of the Apostles, and several Epistles[6], and lastly the Revelation of John.

The Qur’ān does not mention any of these Christians’ Books. But it says that there was a Divine Book revealed to ‘Īsā son of Maryam, which was named Injīl; it was a single Book, not many. Although the Christians do not know it, nor do they acknowledge its existence, there are sentences in the writings of their leaders which contain admission that ‘Īsā did have a Book, Injīl by name[7] .

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[1] The Hebrew Old Testament contains 39 Books, as the list given by the author himself shows. Roman Catholic Church follows the Greek O. T. which includes some more books and passages. (*tr.*)

[2] Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. (*Author’s Note*)

[3] Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. (*Author’s Note*)

[4] Proverbs, Ecclesiastics and Song of Solomon. (*Author’s Note*)

[5] Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. (*Author’s Note*)

[6] There are fourteen Epistles of Paul, one of James, two of Peter, three of John and one of Jude. (*Author’s Note*)

[7] Paul writes to Gelatians: ‘‘I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of

Nevertheless, the Qur'ān gives a hint that a portion of genuine Torah is still preserved in the Scriptures of the Jews, as is a part of genuine Injīl still extant in the Scriptures of the Christians. Allāh says: *And how do they make you a judge and they have the Torah wherein is Allāh's judgment?* (5:43); *And of those who say: ''We are Christians'', We did take their covenant, but they forgot a portion of what they were admonished with ...* (5:14). Both verses clearly imply what we have said.

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY FROM HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW [1]

1. The History of the Present Torah:

The Israelites were descendants of Israel, that is, Ya'qūb. In the

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Christ.'' (Gal., 1:6 — 7)

an-Najjār has given in his *Quṣaṣu 'l-anbiyā',* this and similar other quotations from the Epistles of Paul to prove that there was there a book — other than the four Gospels — which was called the Injil of the Messiah. (*Author's Note*)

[1] The author in this section has given a lot of references from the Christian and western writers. He had to rely on Arabic translations of the English or other languages, given in *Tafsīr al-Manār* (ed., Rashīd Riḍā, Egypt, 4th ed., 1380/1961, vol. 6, pp.31 — 36 and 88 — 92), and some other books and Encyclopaedias. I tried to get hold of original sources, so that in my translation I could include those quotations in their original wordings — it would have been odd to retranslate into English an English passage through its Arabic rendering. Unfortunately oriental authors generally do not give the original spellings of the names of western writers or their work, nor do they put vowels on them to help in pronunciation. To compound the difficulty, there were some printing mistakes in *al-Manār* which were faithfully copied in *al-Mīzān.* For example, *Anacaly psis* of Higgins appears as الانگلوساکسن (al-Anglo-Saxon) in Arabic, and Monier Williams has become Morifore Lims!

After spending more than a month in various sections of the British Library, London, I was able to get many sources — and then it transpired that a large portion of quotations given in *al-Manār* was not taken directly from the original books, but from *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions* (by Doane, Thomas William).

There are still some names which I could not ascertain. While writing such a name in English I have given first the Arabic rendering, then its English transliteration followed by question mark within brackets [?]. I shall be obliged if any reader could help me in finding their correct spellings. (*tr.*)

beginning they lived a nomadic tribal life; then the Pharaohs brought them to Egypt, where they treated them as captive slaves. This continued until Allāh delivered them through Mūsā from the Pharaoh and his deeds.

During Mūsā's time they followed the line of their Leader, that is, Mūsā (a.s.), and thereafter Yūsha' (a.s.) (Joshua). For sometime thereafter their affairs were in the hands of the judges like Ehud and Gideon etc. Then began the era of the Kings; the first of the Kings was Saul (Plat of the Qur'ān); and then came Dāwūd and Sulaymān (a.s.).

After Sulaymān the Kingdom was divided[1], and their power weakened. Still there came on throne more than thirty Kings like Rehoboam, Abijam, Jeroboam, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and others.

The division continued to sap the nation's strength until they were vanquished by the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, who subdued Jerusalem, that is, Baytu'l-Maqdis around 600 B.C. Later the Jews revolted; so he sent his army which besieged them, and on reconquering the city, ransacked it, plundering the King's treasures as well as those of the Temple. The Babylonians gathered the Jews and took about ten thousand souls — wealthy people, strong youths and artisans — in captivity to Babylonia, leaving only weak persons and beggars in Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah (the last Israelite King) to govern them as his vassal.

Ten years passed, Zedekiah gathered some strength and established some contact with the Pharaoh of the time. Then he revolted against Nebuchadnezzar. This enraged the latter who himself led his army against the Jews and besieged their towns. They fortified themselves and the siege continued for about one and a half year; the besieged population faced famine and epidemic. Still the siege continued until Nebuchadnezzer conquered all the forts in the year 586 B.C.; he massacred the Jews, turned their towns into ruins, demolished the Temple and destroyed every religious symbol. When he left, the Temple was only a mound of dust and rubble; and the Torah and the Ark in which it was kept were irretrievably lost.

The things continued like that for about fifty years. The Jews were captives in Babylonia; their Book (Torah) was lost and there was

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[1] There appeared two Kingdoms, Judah in the south and Israel in the north. (*tr.*)

nowhere any trace of it; their Temple was a ruin, their towns middens of rubble.

Then Cyrus, the Persian King, appeared on the scene. He vanquished Babylonians, conquered Babylonia and stayed there for a short time. He released the Israelite captives, and appointed Ezra as their leader; Ezra was authorized by him to rewrite the Torah for them, rebuild their Temple and re-establish their original rites and rituals. Ezra led the Israelites back to Jerusalem in 457 B.C.[1] . Thereafter he compiled and edited the books attributed to Mūsā — and it is what is known today as the Torah.[2]

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[1] Modern scholars think that it happened in 397 B.C. (*tr.*)

[2] Vide *Qāmūsu 'l-Kitābi 'l-Muqaddas* (Dictionary of the Bible) by هاکس Mr. Hawks [?], and other books of history. (*Author's Note*)

Translator's Note: The first five books of Old Testament, commonly known as the Torah, are also called Pentateuch. In the 18th Century, some Christian scholars started what is now known as the ''Higher Criticism''. Their views are now accepted by a great part of Christiandom. They have proved that it contains writings of unknown number of people right upto 1000 years after the death of Mūsā. I append below the time table and sequence of its editing (in short) as given by Rev. W.K.L. Clarke, in his *Concise Bible Cemmentary* (S.P.C.K., London, 1952): He says that by the end of the 19th Century, it was generally recognized ''that there are four main sources in the Pentateuch, to be assigned to the 9th, 8th, 7th and 5th or 4th Centuries (B.C.) respectively.''

''The first look at the Pentateuch shows three characteristics styles illustrated by Genesis:1, Genesis:2 and Deuteronomy, and the documents marked by these styles were first to be noticed.''

''The obviously early source begins in Gen. 2:4. This source is called 'J', after the J of Jehovah (pronounced Jahweh). 'J' is generally thought to have been put into written form about 850 B.C.

''Another source is 'D', so-called from the book of Deuteronomy, which was the book of law discovered in Josiah's reign. The third source is called Priestly document, P for short. A large part of P is believed to have been composed in Babylonia and brought to Jerusalem by Ezra in 397 B.C. How much of P was omitted in final compilation of Pentateuch we have no means of knowing. There was a subordinate source, known as the Code of Holiness, H for short. Opinions differ whether it was written before 586 B.C. or after the fall of Jerusalem. It is found in Lev. 17:28.

''Now comes the fourth source. After taking P, D and J from the Pentateuch a considerable amount of material remains, parallel to J, but in Genesis using

If you think over these events you will see that the chain of the narrators of today's Torah is broken, and not connected upto Mūsā (a.s.) — except through a single person, that is, Ezra. But first of all, we do not know who Ezra was; secondly, we do not know how much he knew of the Torah or how deep his knowledge was; thirdly, we do not know how honest and trustworthy he was; fourthly, we do not know from where he collected what he compiled as the books of the Torah; and lastly, we do not know with which authentic source he compared his collection to correct the mistakes which might have crept into the text.

This unfortunate episode has given rise to another disturbing theory. Some western scholars now deny the existence of Mūsā (a.s.) and the events related to him. They say that he is a mythical being who never existed. (The same theories have been advanced about 'Īsā son of Maryam. But we the Muslims cannot entertain such ideas, because the Qur'ān in very clear terms confirms his existence (peace be on him).

2. The Story of 'Īsa and the Gospel:

Elohim for God and not Yahweh. This non-P Elohim matter begins in Gen. 20:1 — 17 ... Altogether E is more mature religiously and is thought to have reached written from about 750 (B.C.).''

How were these four main sources compiled to form the Pentateuch?

''The first step was to combine J and E. This must have been done after the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. The two were combined in a document which is called JE.

''Then in 621 Deuteronomy was discovered, or at least a large part of it. The next stage was to put JE, and D together. This will have taken place during the exile ... A perceptible amount of editing of JE took place.

''P was written in Babylonia and brought to Jerusalem by Ezra in 397 B.C. Later, editors used it as a framework and incorporated JED, thus producing the Pentateuch ... in about 300 B.C.''

Rev. Clarke sums it up in these words: ''Probably a multitude of persons have combined to give us Genesis (etc.), covering in their lives a span of 1000 years.''

Even that minority of the Christian scholars which still holds fast to the theory of ''Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch has to admit that it must have been rewritten by the subsequent generations to modernize the language. This concession has to be given because ''it is hardly probable that the Hebrew of Moses' day was like that of Biblical Hebrew.'' See the *Westminister Dictionary of Bible,* under ''Pentateuch''.

The Jews pay particular attention to their history. They have recorded main events through which they have passed. Nevertheless, if you hunt through their books and literature you will not come across any mention of ʻĪsā son of Maryam. Jewish literature throws no light on his birth or mission, nor does it say anything about his character of life story. It is silent about the miracles appearing on his hand; and does not say how his life on the earth was ended — did he die a natural death? Was he killed or crucified? Or, was there something else? Why this silence? Why had his affairs remained hidden from them? Or, why did they keep it hidden?

The Qur'ān mentions that the Jews had falsely accused Maryam and calumniated her regarding the birth of ʻĪsā, and that they claimed to have killed ʻĪsā. Allāh says: *And for their unbelief and for their having uttered against Maryam a grievous calumny. And their saying: ''Surely we killed the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, the messenger of Allāh''; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so* (like ʻĪsā); *and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they killed him not for sure* (4:156 — 157).

Was this claim of theirs based on some oral tradition which was never put to writing? Every nation does have such folklores — some facts, some myths — which should not be taken seriously unless they are based on correct, reliable sources.

Or, was it that they heard the Christians talking about the Messiah and his birth and mission; and taking the story from them they accused Maryam of indecency and claimed to having killed the Messiah? No definite answers can be found to these questions. As far as the Qur'ān is concerned, it clearly ascribes to them only the claim of killing, not of crucifying; then it says that they are in confusion and there is a difference of opinion among them about the whole matter.

As for the Christians, the story of the Messiah is based on their Scriptures, that is, the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; as well as the Acts of the Apostles (by Luke) and several Epistles of Paul, Peter, Jacob, John and Jude. Authenticity of all depends on genuineness of the four Gospels; therefore let us have a look at them.

The Gospel of Matthew: It is the first and earliest of the Gospels so far as compilation and publication is concerned. Some say that it was written

in 38 C.E.; others that it was compiled between 50 and 60 C. E.[1] In any case, it was written after the Messiah.

The ancient and modern Christian scholars are of the opinion that it was originally written in Hebrew; and then translated into Greek and other languages. But the original Hebrew version is lost; and as for the translation, its condition (correctness, etc.) cannot be verified, nor is it known who had translated it [2].

The Gospel of Marks: Marks was a disciple of St. Peter; he was not one of the twelve disciples of the Christ. It is often said that he wrote his Gospel on Peter's orders, and that he did not believe in divinity of the Christ [3]. Accordingly some people say that he had written his Gospel for the tribes and villagers, and that was why he introduced Christ as a messenger of Allāh who brought and conveyed the *sharī'ah* of Allāh[4]. He wrote this Book in 61 C.E.

The Gospel of Luke: Luke was neither one of the disciples nor had he seen Christ. He learnt Christianity from Paul. Paul was a Jew who hated the Christians and Christianity; he oppressed those who believed in Christ and used to hinder their activities and disturb their affairs. Then all of a sudden he came to them and claimed that he had been seized by an epileptic fit in course of which Christ appeared to him, and admonished him for his bad treatment of the Christians; according to his claim, he believed in Christ in the same trance and Christ in the same vision

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[1] هاکس Hawks [?], *Dictionary of Bible,* under ''Matthew''. (*Author's Note*) This Book is referred to hereafter as *Dic. of Bib.* (*tr.*)

[2] Vide *Mīzānu 'l-ḥaqq; Dic. of Bib.,* too admits it with some reluctance. (*Author's Note*)

[3] 'Abdu '1-Wahhāb an-Najjār, *Qaṣaṣu 'l-anbiyā'*, [p.400, 2nd ed., Cairo, n.d.], quoting from بطرس قرماج Baṭrus Qarmāj [?] *Marūju 'l-akhbār fi tarājimi 'l-abrār* [Beirut, 1880]. (*Author's Note*)

[4] As described in the *Dic. of Bib.* It says: ''Although the early fathers unanimously say that St. Mark had written his Gospel in Rome and that it was published after the deaths of Sts. Peter and Paul, but this is not very credible, because it appears from his Gospel that he had written it for the tribes and villagers, not for the (civilized) people leaving in cities — and especially Rome.'' Ponder on this statement. (*Author's Note*)

appointed him as his apostle to propagate the Christ's Gospel.

It was St. Paul who laid the foundation of Christianity, as it is today[1]. He taught that mere believing in the Christ was enough for salvation; there was no need of acting on it. Accordingly, he allowed them to eat pork and dead animals; and forbade circumcision and a lot of the *sharī'ah* of the Torah[2] . This was in spite of the fact that Injīl was revealed just as a verifier of the Torah, and had made lawful only a few things which were forbidden in Torah. 'Īsā (a.s.) had come to re-establish the *sharī'ah* of Torah, and to bring the deviators and transgressors back to it; he had not come to abrogate the *sharī'ah* or to base the eternal felicity on a belief devoid of action.

Luke wrote his Gospel after that of Marks, and it was after the deaths of Sts. Peter and Paul. Some people have firmly opined that the Gospel of Luke is not a revelation like other Gospels, as may be understood from his Prologue[3] .

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[1] Vide *Dic. of Bib.,* under the heading ''Paul''. (*Author's Note*)

[2] See the *Acts of the Apostles,* and the *Epistles* of St. Paul. (*Author's Note*)

[3] Luke begins his Gospel with these words:

''Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word. It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus.'' (Luke, 1:1 — 3)

It clearly shows that it is a book based on human understanding, not on revelation. This view has also been attributed to كدل Mr. Cadell [?] in the booklet, *Revelation.* St. Jerome has said that some early Fathers had doubts about the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke, and that they were missing from the version of the Marcionites*. Eichhorn** declares in his book (p.95) that verses 43 to 47 of the 2nd chapter of the Luke's Gospel are an interpolation. Also he says on p. 61 of his book: ''Fictitious narratives have been mixed up in description of miracles mentioned by Luke; and the writer has included them as poetic exaggeration. But it is difficult at this point of time to separate truth from falsehood.'' And an-Najjār quotes in *Qaṣaṣu 'l-anbiyā'* (p. 401) the saying of كلي مي شيس Mr. Clemesious [?] that: Matthew and Mark differ in their narration; and when they identify, their report would be given preference over that of Luke.(*Author's Note*)

* Marcionites, followers of Marcion (d. *cir.* 160), who rejected the Law and believed in Gospel of Love only. He rejected the Old Testament, and believed

The Gospel of John: Many Christians say that the John who wrote it was John son of Zebedee, the fisher, one of the twelve disciples, and the one whom the Christ loved[1].

They say that as Cerinthus[2] and Ebionites[3] and their followers thought that the Christ was nothing more than a created human being whose existence did not precede his mother's existence, the bishops of Asia and others visited John in 96 C.E. and urged him to write what others had not written in their Gospels so that he could particularly describe the divinity of the Christ. John had to comply with their request and wrote this Gospel[4].

There is a difference of opinion when it was written: Some say, in 65 C.E., some say, in 96 C.E., and others say, in 98 C.E.

Another group says that it was not written by John the disciple: Some say that it is the work of a student of Alexanderia[5]; others say that this

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that the twelve Apostles and the Evangelists were blind to this reality. and only St. Paul understood it. For them the only Canonical Scriptures were ten of the fourteen Epistles of Paul. (*tr.*)

** Eichhorn, Johann Gottfried (1752 — 1827) was Biblical scholars and orientalist. He was among the first to make comparison between the Biblical Books and other Semitic languages; and one of the earliest critics who laid foundation of the High Criticism of the Bible. (*tr.*)

[1] Vide *Dic. of Bib.,* under John. (*Author's Note*)

[2] Cerinthus, who flourished around 100 C.E., was a Gnostic ''heretic''. Among other things, he taught that Jesus began his earthly life as a mere man; at his baptism 'the Christ', a ''higher divine power'', descended on him, only to depart from him again before the crucifixion. He seems to have had connections both with the Ebionites and Alexandrine Gnosticism. (*tr.*)

[3] Ebionites, literally 'poor men', were a sect of Jewish Christians which flourished in the early centuries of the Christian era. Apparently, two of their principle tenets were: (i) belief in humanity of the Person of Christ, to the effect, for example, that Jesus was the human son of Joseph and Mary, and that the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove lighted on him at his baptism; and (ii) emphasis on the binding character of the Mosaic Law. (*tr.*)

[4] an-Najjār, *Qaṣaṣu 'l-anbiyā',* quoting Jirjīs Zuwayn al-Futūḥī of Lebnon. (*Author's Note*)

[5] an-Najjār, op. cit., quoting from the *Catholic Herald,* 1844, vol.7, p. 205 quoting استادلن Ostadelane [?]; also *Dic. of Bib.* points to it, under 'John'.

Gospel as well as the Epistles of John were authored in the beginning of the 2nd Century by an unknown person who attributed them to John so that the writings might gain credence in people's eyes[1] ; yet others think that the Gospel of John originally contained twenty chapters and after his death the Church of Ephesus added the twenty-first[2] .

This is then the condition of the four Gospels. What is certain is that all these narrations depend on seven persons: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul and Jude; and they rely on the four Gospels, which in their turn rely on the earliest one, that is, the Gospel of Matthew. And we have already seen that it is a translation whose original is lost; nobody knows who had translated it. What was the theme and teaching of the original? Did it teach messengership of Christ? Or, his divinity?[3]

(*Author's Note*)

[1] It is the view of Bretschneider, as an-Najjār has written in his *Qaṣaṣu 'l-anbiyā',* quoting from *al-Fārūq*.,vol. 1. (*Author's Note*)

Bretschneider, Karl Gottlieb (1776 — 1848) had written a treatise on the Gospel of John in 1820. (*tr.*)

[2] *ibid.* (*Author's Note*)

[3] Traditionally, the Gospel of Matthew is held to be the oldest of the four. But modern scholars commonly hold that it is Mark which is the oldest. There occurs a large amount of common subject matter in the three Synoptic Gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark and Luke) and often similar phrasing in more than one Gospel. That this parrallelism, of varying degree of closeness, must be accounted for by their literary interdependence is nowadays almost universally held by scholars. There is also wide, but less complete, agreement (1) that Mark is the earliest of the three Gospels and was used as a framework by both Matthew and Luke; (2) that the non-Marcan material common to Matthew and Luke is derived from a single lost source known to critics as 'Q' (from German 'Quelle' = source); and (3) that the authors of Matthew and Luke used further sources for the matter peculiar to them. In view of the fact that Matthew drew extensively on Mark, which he expanded with the aid of 'Q', the early tradition that the Gospel was written in Hebrew is untenable. The chief objection to its ascription to St. Matthew is the unlikelihood that an Apostle, who was an eye-witness of the events, would have taken as his principal source of the work of St. Mark, whose material is in any case secondhand. Vide *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* 2nd ed., 1974 (OUP). See laso the *Concise Bible Commentary* (by Rev. W. K. L. Clark; pub. by S. P. C. K., London, 1952) and the *Westminister Dictionary of Bible.*

It is not only the Gospel of Matthew whose author is unknown; the Gospel

The present Gospels show that there had appeared among the Children of Israel a man named ‘Īsā son of Yūsuf, the carpenter; he began calling towards Allāh; he claimed that he was a son of God, born without agency of a human father, and that his Father had sent him to atone for the sin of the people through being killed by crucifixion; that he gave life to the dead, healed the blind and the lepers, and restored the possessed to health by removing devil from them; that there were twelve disciples with him, one of them being Matthew the Evangelist; he blessed them and sent them to propagate his religion ...

This is the gist of the Christianity and its mission — in spite of its having been spread to every corner of the world. It all boils down to a report by one person whose name and particulars are unknown, whose identity and character is shrouded in abscurity.

This curious weakness just in the initial stage has compelled some independent minds of Europe to claim that Christ, ‘Īsā son of Maryam, is a mythical being, invented by some religious movements for or against the government of the time. This view has been strengthened by another mythical character which it resembles in every detail, and that is the character of Krishna: The idol-worshippers of India believe that Krishna was the son of God, who descended to earth from his divine abode, and atoned for the people by being crucified in order to deliver them from their sins and mistakes. It is the same belief which the Christians have about Christ ‘Īsā. (Details are given below.)

Other scholars have found it necessary to say that there were in fact two Christs, one uncrucified, the other crucified, who came more than five centuries after the former.

The Christians Era (which at the time of writing is 1956 C.E.) does not correspond with any of the above-mentioned two dates. The former (uncrucified) Christ had preceded it by more than two hundred and fifty years (and lived for sixty years), while the latter (crucified) Christ came more than two hundred and ninety years after the beginning of the said Era (and lived for about thirty-three years)[1].

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of John suffers the same fate. Many scholars believe that its author was some disciple and follower of the Apostle John the son of Zebedee. ‘‘His name is either unknown to us, or more likely, was John the Presbyter, or Elder.’’ (*tr.*)

[1] This subject has been described in detail by the scholar Behrūz, in a book he recently wrote on the Prophetic foretellings. I hope to quote some parts of it

However, difference of the Christians Era with the actual birth-date of Christ is a fact which is not denied even by the Christians — and it is a historical disjunction[1] .

Moreover, there are some other matters which give rise to doubts and mistrust. They have written that during the first two centuries many more Gospels, including the four now used, were written — their number exceeded a hundred. Then the Church banned all of them except the four which were canonized because they corresponded with the views of the Church[2].

Among the discarded ones was the *Gospel of Barnabas,* a copy of which was found years ago, and which has been translated into Arabic and Persian. The story of Christ, ʻĪsā son of Maryam, as given in this

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at the end of the Commentary of Chapter Four ‘‘The Women’’. What is certain (and with which we are concerned here) is the incorrectness of the Christians Era. (*Author's Note*)

[1] Vide the *Die. of Bib.,* under Christ. (*Author's Note*)

[2] Celsus, the 2nd Century's philosopher, admonished the Christians, in his book, *Logos Alethes* (True Word) for their manipulations of the Gospels — that they erase by tomorrow what they had written yesterday. [He wrote this book about 176 — 180 C.E. It was the first notable polemic against Christianity. The book itself has perished, but fragments of high interest occur as quotations in Origen's *Contra Celsum.*]* In 384, Pope Damasus ordered a new Latin translation of the Old and New Testaments to be prepared for the Church — the Emperor Theodosius had tired of the polemics and controversies raging among the bishops. That translation, called Vulgate, was completed; it covered only the four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The editors wrote: ‘‘After comparing various old Greek copies, we edited them, that is, we discarded what was contradictory, and left the remaining parts as they were.’’ That version was confirmed by the Trent Council held in 1546, that is, some eleven centuries later. In 1590, Pope Sixtus V declared it to contain errors and mistakes, and ordered a new version to be published. Pope Clement VIII found fault with the second version too, and ordered in 1592 publication of a new revised version — which is used by the Catholic Church today. (*Tafsīr al-Jawāhir,* 2nd ed., vol. 2, p.121) (*Author's Note*)

* **Note:** The material given within the brackets, here and elsewhere in the text or within the Author's Notes, has been added by the Translator for deeper understanding or greater clarity. (*tr.*)

Gospel, generally corresponds with that given in the Qur'ān[1].

Strangely enough, even the non-Jewish historical records are silent about what the Gospels present as the Christ's mission — sonship, atonement and other related matters. The famous American historian, Hendrick Willem Van Loon has given in his book, *Story of Mankind,* a letter of a Roman physician, Aesculapius Cultellus, which he wrote in 62 A. D. to his nephew, Gladius Ensa, who was a soldier in Syria[2].

In that letter, he says:

A few days ago I was called in to prescribe for a sick man named Paul. He appeared to be a Roman citizen of Jewish parentage, well educated and of agreeable manners ...

A friend of mine ... tells me that he heard something about him in Ephesus where he was preaching sermons about a strange new god. I asked my patient if this were true ... Paul answered me that the kingdom of which he had spoken was not of this world and he added many strange utterances which I did not understand ...

His personality made a great impression upon me and I was sorry to hear that he was killed on the Ostian Road a few days ago. Therefore I am writing this letter to you. When next you visit Jerusalem, I want you to find out something about my friend Paul and the strange Jewish

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[1] This Gospel in Italian had been discovered sometime ago. Dr. Khalīl Sa'ādah of Egypt translated it into Arabic, and the well-known scholar Sardār Kābūli, into Persian in Iran. (*Author's Note*)

The said manuscript was found in the Imperial Library, Vienna. Lonsdale and Laura Ragg edited the Italian text and translated it into English which was published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1907. It was from that version that the above-mentioned Arabic version was prepared. Strange as it may seem, now only two copies of the 1907 edition are known to exist, one in the British Library, London, and the other in the Library of Congress, Washington. Within the last two decades Begum Aisha Bawany Waqf, Karachi, has printed it several times and distributed it widely throughout the Muslim World.

Understandably, the Christians, including the translators (Lonsdale and Laura Ragg) themselves claim that the Vienna manuscript is spurious, not genuine. Their arguments deserve careful consideration. (*tr.*)

[2] It appears, in the book, under the heading: ''The Story of Joshua of Nazareth, whom the Greeks called Jesus.'' I have copied Verbatim a part of the physician's letter which the author of *al-Mīzān* has given only a gist of it. (*tr.*)

prophet, who seems to have been his teacher.... I would like to know the truth about all these romours ...

Six weeks later, Gladius Ensa, the nephew, [a captain of the VII Gallic Infantry], answered as follows:

[I received your letter and I have obeyed your order. Two weeks ago our brigade was sent to Jarusalem ...]

I have talked with most of the older men in this city but few have been able to give me any definite information.[1]

A few days ago a peddler came to the camp. I bought some of his olive and I asked him whether he had ever heard of the famous Messiah who was killed when he was young. He said that he remembered it very clearly.... He gave me the address of one Joseph, who had been a personal friend of the Messiah and told me that I had better go and see him if I wanted to know more.

This morning I went to call on Joseph. He was quite an old man. He had been a fisherman on one of the freshwater lakes. His memory was clear, and from him at last I got a fairly difinite account of what had happened during the troublesome days before I was born.

Tiberius, our great and glorious emperor, was on the throne, and an officer of the name of Pontius Pilatus was governor of Judaea and Samaria ... In the year 783 or 784 (Joseph had forgotten when) Pilatus was called to Jerusalem on account of a riot. A certain young man (the son of a carpenter of Nazareth) was said to be planning a revolution against the Roman government. Strangely enough our own intelligence officers, who are usually well informed, appear to have heard nothing about it, and when they investigated the matter they reported that the carpenter was an excellent citizen and that there was no reason to proceed against him. But the old-fashioned leaders of the Jewish faith, according to Joseph, were much upset. They greatly disliked his popularity with the masses of the poorer Hebrews. The ‘‘Nazarene’’ (so they told Pilatus) had publicly claimed that a Greek or a Roman or even a Palestinian, who tried to live a decent and honourable life, was quite as good as a Jew who spent his days in studying the ancient laws of Moses. Pilatus does not seem to have been impressed by this argument, but when

[1] This, when it was 62 C.E., and they were older men! Strange, isn’t it? (*Author’s Comment*)

the crowds around the temple threatened to lynch Jesus, and kill all his followers, he decided to take the carpenter into custody to save his life.

He does not appear to have understood the real nature of the quarrel. Whenever he asked the Jewish priests to explain their grievances, they shouted ‘‘heresy’’ and ‘‘treason’’ and got terribly excited. Finally, so Joseph told me, Pilatus sent for Joshua (that was the name of the Nazarene, but the Greeks who live in this part of the world always refer to him as Jesus) to examine him personally. He talked to him for several hours. He asked him about the ‘‘dangerous doctrines’’ which he was said to have preached on the shores of the sea of Galilee. But Jesus answered that he never referred to politics. He was not so much interested in the bodies of men as in Man’s soul. He wanted all people to regard their neighbours as their brothers and to love one single God, who was the father of all living beings.

Pilatus, who seems to have been well versed in the doctrines of the Stoics and the other Greek philosophers, does not appear to have discovered anything seditious in the talk of Jesus. According to my informant he made another attempt to save the life of the kindly prophet. He kept putting the execution off. Meanwhile the Jewish people, lashed into fury by their priests, got frantic with rage. There had been many riots in Jerusalem before this and there were only a few Roman soldiers within calling distance. Reports were being sent to the Roman authorities in Caesarea that Pilatus had ‘‘fallen a victim to the teachings of the Nazarene’’. Petitions were being circulated all through the city to have Pilatus recalled, because he was an enemy of the Emperor. You know that our governors have strict instructions to avoid an open break with their foreign subjects. To save the country from civil war, Pilatus finally sacrificed his prisoner, Joshua, who behaved with great dignity and who forgave all those who hated him. He was crucified amidst the howls and the laughter of the Jerusalem mob.

That is what Joseph told me, with tears running down his old cheeks. I gave him a gold piece when I left him, but he refused it and asked me to hand it to one poorer than himself. I also asked him about your friend Paul. He had known him slightly. He seems to have been a tent maker, who gave up his profession that he might preach the words of a loving and forgiving God, Who was so very different from that Jehovah of whom the Jewish priests are telling us all the time. Afterwards, Paul

appears to have travelled much in Asia Minor and in Greece, telling the slaves that they were children of one loving Father and that happiness awaits all, both rich and poor, who have tried to live honest lives and have done good to those who were suffering and miserable ... [1]

This is the main theme of this letter as far as the subject of our present discussion is concerned.

On pondering on this letter one may easily understand which direction Christianity had taken — among the Israelites — soon after ʻĪsā (a.s.). Clearly it was a prophetic mission of a messenger sent by Allāh — not a claim of divinity calling people to believe that God had taken a human form and descended to the earth to deliver mankind by offering an atonement for their sins.

Then some disciples of ʻĪsā and/or those claiming connection with him, like Paul, and the disciples of disciples journeyed — after the said crucifixion — to various regions of the world, like India, Africa, Rome, etc., and spread the message of Christianity. But soon after that, in the wake of those missionary activities, they differed among themselves about the basic teachings of the new religion. Was Christ a God? Was belief in Christ enough for salvation without any need of following the Mosaic Law? Was the religion of the Gospel an independent one which had abrogated the Mosaic Law? Or, was it a part of the Mosaic religion sent merely to perfect it? In this way they divided into various sects and groups.[2]

We should keep in mind the fact that all the nations where Christianity was propagated in the beginning — like Rome and India, etc. — were at that time idol-worshippers, the Sabaeans, the Hindus or the Buddhists, etc. Also there was some mystic influence on one side and the hold of Brahmanic philosophy on the other. All these systems and religions believed to a great extent in incarnation and appearance of gods and deities in human form. Also the beliefs of trinity in unity, coming down of a deity in human body, and its suffering and being crucified [3] to

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[1] Van Loon, Hendrick Willem: *The Story of Mankind,* London, 1922, pp. 119 — 123. (*tr.*)

[2] It is mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Epistles* of Paul; also it is admitted by the Christians themselves. (*Author's Note*)

[3] Killing by crucifixion is one of the oldest methods. They used to crucify the hardest criminals who had committed very heinous crimes, because crucifixion

atone sins of mankind was very much prevalent among ancient idol-worshippers of India, China, Egypt, Chaledonia, Assyria and Iran. The same was the situation among ancient western idolators like Romans, Scandinavians and others — as may be seen in the books written about ancient religions and beliefs.

Doane writes in his *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions:*

‘‘If we return to India we shall find that one of the most prominent features in the Indian theology is the doctrine of a divine triad, governing all things. This triad is called *Tri-murti* — from the Sanscrit (*sic*.) word *tri* (three) and *murti* (form) — and consists of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. It is an inseparable unity, though three in form.’’ [1]

Then he goes on to explain that Brahma is the Father; Vishnu, the Son; and Siva, the Holy Spirit.[2]

Then he writes [in the footnote] about Vishnu, the Son that he is ‘‘the Lord and Saviour Chrishna[3]. The Supreme Spirit, in order to preserve the world, produced Vishnu. Vishnu came upon earth, for this purpose, in the

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was the most torturous way of killing and left the blackest stigma on the name of the one so executed. The cross was made by joining two wooden logs which formed angles with each other [like T, t or X] as we see the crosses nowadays; it was done in a way that a man could be placed on it. The criminal was attached to it with outstretched hands and arms; his palms were fixed on the horizontal piece with nails, and the legs nailed to the upright post — sometimes they were tied to it and not nailed. Then the cross was erected vertically in the earth, leaving a space of about a yard between the earth and the victim’s feet. He was left on the cross for a day or more; then his legs were broken and he was killed on the cross, or was brought down from the cross and then killed. The victim, before being put on cross, was tortured, whipped or mutilated. It was an indeliable disgrace for a family or clan if one of them was crucified. (*Author’s Note*)

[1] Doane, Thomas William: *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions; being a comparison of the Old and New Testament myths and miracles with those of heathen nations of antiquity, considering also their origin and meaning;* New York, 1883, p. 369. (*tr.*)

[2] *ibid.* (*tr.*)

[3] The author of *al-Mīzān,* like many others, opines that the word ‘Crishna’ has been taken in European languages as Christ, to mean the Anointed Saviour. (*tr.*)

form of Chrishna. He was believed to be an incarnation of the Supreme Being, one of the persons of their holy and mysterious trinity, to use their language, 'The Lord and Saviour — three persons and one god.' '' [1]

He writes that like the Christians, the Hindus too use the dove for the emblem of the third person of their trinity.[2]

[Doane further writes:]

''Mr. Faber, in his *Origin of Heathen Idolatry,* says: 'Among the Hindoos, we have the Triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; so, among the votaries of Buddha, we find the self-triplicated Buddha declared to be the same as the Hindoo Trimurti. Among the Buddhist sect of the Jainists (*sic.*), we have the triple jiva, in whom the Trimurti is similarly declared to be incarnated.' '' [3]

[Doane further quotes from the same book of Mr. Faber:]

''Among the Chinese, who worship Buddha under the name of *Fo,* we find this God mysteriously multiplied into *three persons* ... '' [4]

Doane now turns to Egypt:

''The priests of Memphis, in Egypt, explained this mystery to the novice, by intimating that the premier (first) *monad* created the *dyad,* who engendered the *triad,* and that it is this *triad* which shines through nature.

''Thulis, a great monarch, who at one time reigned over all Egypt, and who was in the habit of consulting the oracle of Serapis, is said to have addressed the oracle in these words:

'' 'Tell me if ever there was before one greater than I, or will ever be one greater than me?'

''The oracle answered thus:

'' 'First *God,* afterward the *Word,* and with them the *Holy Spirit,* all these are of the same nature, and make but *one* whole, of which the power is eternal. Go away quickly, *mortal,* thou who hast but an uncertain life.' '' [5]

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[1] *ibid.* p.370. (*tr.*)

[2] *ibid.,* footnote no. 4. (*tr.*)

[3] *ibid.,* p. 371. (*tr.*)

[4] *ibid.,* p.372. (*tr.*)

[5] *ibid.,* p.373, quoting from Higgins, Godfrey: *Anacalypsis: An Enquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions;* London, vol. 2, p. 14. (*tr.*)

Doane quotes Bonwick:

‘‘Some persons are prepared to admit that the most astonishing development of the old religion of Egypt was in relation to the *Logos* or Divine *Word,* by whom all things were made, and who, though from God, was God.’’[1]

It should be noted that these are the very words with which the Gospel of St. John begins.[2]

Doane quotes from Higgins *Anacalypsis* that: *‘‘Mithras,* the Mediator, and Saviour of the Persians, was called the *Logos.’’* [3]

Doane has proved that the ancient pagans used to believe in one god with three persons. He has extensively shown that the pagan belief of trinity in unity was prevalent among the Greeks, Romans, Finns, Scandinavians, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Phoenicians.[4]

[On the question of atonement], he writes:

‘‘The idea of expiation by the sacrifice of a *god* was to be found among the Hindoos even in *Vedic* times.’’[5]

Then giving the references, he, *inter alia,* writes.

‘‘Crishna, the virgin-born, ‘‘the Divine Vishnu himself’[6], ‘he who is without beginning, middle or end’[7], being moved ‘to relieve the earth of her load’[8], came upon earth and redeemed man by his *suffering* — to *save*

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[1] *ibid.,* quoting Bonwick, James: *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought;* London, 1878; p.402. (*tr.*)

[2] Doane says on p.375: ‘‘The celebrated passage: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,’ is a fragment of some Pagan treatise on the Platonic philosophy, evidently written by Irenaeus.’’ And he writes a footnote on it: ‘‘The first that we know of this Gospel [i.e., John] for certain is during the time of Irenaeus, the great, Christian forger.’’ (*tr.*)

[3] *ibid.,* p.373, footnote no. 5, quoting Higgins: *Anacalypsis,* vol. 2, p. 102. (*tr.*)

[4] *ibid.* Vide his chapter, ‘‘The Trinity’’, pp. 368 — 383, where he mentions some other ancient nations too, having such beliefs. (*tr.*)

[5] *ibid.,* p.181.

[6] *Vishnu Purana, A System of Hindoo Mythology and Tradition,* translated by H.H. Wilson; London, 1840; p. 440. (*tr.*)

[7] *ibid.* (*tr.*)

[8] *ibid.* (*tr.*)

him.''[1]

''In the earlier copies of Moor's, *Hindu Pantheon,* is to be seen representations of Chrishna (as *Wittoba*) with marks of holes in both feet, and in others, of holes in the hands. [In Figures 4 and 5 of Plate II (Moor's work) the figures have *nail-holes in both feet.* Figure 6 has a *round hole in the side*;] to his collar or shirt hangs the emblem of a *heart* (which we often see in pictures of Christ Jesus) ... Instead of the *crown of thorns* usually put on the head of the Christians Saviour, it [Figure 7] has the turreted coronet of the Ephesian Diana ...''[2]

Doane quotes Huc that among the Hindus, *''the idea of redemption by a divine incarnation,* who came into the world for the express purpose of redeeming mankind, was 'general and popular.' ''[3]

'' 'A sense of original corruption,' says Professor Monier Williams, 'seems to be felt by all classes of Hindoos, as indicated by the following prayer used after the *Gayatri* by some Vaishnavas.

'' ' ''I am sinful, I commit sin, my nature is sinful, *I am conceived in sin.* Save me, O thou lotus-eyed Heri (Saviour), the remover of sin.'' ' ''[4]

Rev. Geo. W. Cox remarks on two opposite conceptions of Krishna's character, in one of which he is described ''as a selfsacrificing and unselfish hero'', who is, ''filled with divine wisdom and love, who offers up a sacrifice which he alone can make.'' [5]

''P. Andrada la Crozius, one of the first Europeans who went to Nepal and Thibet (*sic.*), in speaking of the god whom they worshipped there — *Indra* — tells us that they said *he spilt his blood for the salvation of the human race,* and that he was pierced through the body with nails. He further says that, although they do not say he suffered the penalty of

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[1] Doane, op. cit. p. 184.

[2] *ibid.,* p.185, quoting Edward Moor: *Plates Illustrating the Hindu Pantheon;* London, 1816; and Higgins: *Anacalypsis*, vol. 2. (*tr.*)

[3] *ibid.,* quoting M. l'Abbe Huc: *Travels* (*Christianity in China, Tartary and Thibet*); London, 1857, vol. 1, pp. 326 — 327. (*tr.*)

[4] *ibid.,* quoting Monier Williams: *Hinduism,* London, 1877, p. 214. (*tr.*)

[5] Cox, George William, *The Mythology of the Aryan Nations;* London, 1870, vol. 2, p. 132. (*tr.*)

the cross, yet they find, nevertheless, figures of it in their books.'' [1]

''The monk Georgius, in his *Tibetinum Alphabetum* (p. 203), has given plates of a *crucified god,* who was worshipped in Nepal ... He calls it the god *Indra.''* [Figure 9 of these plates] shows a cross having arms of equal length fixed much high on the stem; Thus the head portion is shorter and the body portion longer — no one would think that it represented a man except for the image of face on it.[2]

What the Buddhists narrate about Buddha fits even more perfectly on what the Christians believe about Jesus Christ. The Buddhists call Buddha, the Messiah, the Only Begotten, the Saviour of the World, the God who sacrificed his life to wash away the offences of mankind, and thereby to make them partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven[3].

This subject has been explained by many orientalists, like Bell[4] , Huc, Muller[5] , and others[6] .

This was a sample of the belief of deities taking human form, and of crucifixion and atonement as it was found in ancient religions prevalent in the nations among which Christianity was propagated in the very beginning. The new religion very much attracted the people in all these places where the Christian missionaries went. And the reason was clear: The Christian Fathers took the fundamentals of Christianity and remoulded them in the moulds of idolatry, and in this way got the people attracted to their call and made it easier to them to accept their teachings.

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[1] Doane, op. cit., pp. 187 — 188, quoting Higgins: op. cit., p.118. (*tr.*)

[2] *ibid*., p. 187. (*tr.*)

[3] *ibid*., pp.188 — 189. (*tr.*)

[4] John Bell, *New Pantheon, or Historical Dictionary of Gods, Demi-Gods, Heroes and Fabulous Personages of Antiquity* ... in two volumes, London, 1790. (*tr.*)

[5] Max Muller, *A History of Ancient Sancrit Literature, so far as it illustrates the Primitive Religion of the Brahmins;* London, 1860. (*tr.*)

[6] Vide chapter XX (The Crucifixion of Christ Jesus) of the Doane's Book. (*tr.*)

The author of *al-Mīzān* writes: ''The reader will find these quotations in *Tafsīr al-Manār* (vol. *6,* under the Chapter of 'The Women'), various encyclopaedias and the book, *al-'Aqā'idu 'l-wathaniyyah fi 'd-diyānati 'n-Naṣrāniyyah,* and others.'' The last named book is authored by Muhammad Ṭāhir Āfandī. (*tr.*)

This view is strengthened when we see how Paul and others disparage the wisdom and philosophy of the philosophers, and how they look down with disdain at rational argument, declaring that the Lord God prefers the foolishness of the fools to the wisdom of the wise.

The fact is that they presented their teaching to the schools of logic and philosophy, and the intellectuals rejected it saying that there was no way of even understanding it — let alone accepting it. To overcome this difficulty, they started talking of revelation, apocalypse and vision; and claimed that they were filled of the Holy Ghost. In this, they followed the life of the ignorant mystics who claim that their way is beyond the reach of reason and intellect. Thereafter, their missionaries went to various cities and regions (as described in the *Acts of Apostles* and the history books) and propagated the Christianity. Wherever they went, the masses welcomed them. The main reason of their success — and especially within the Roman Empire — was the simmering discontent and disgruntling despair which had spread everywhere because of the never-ending oppression and injustice; the ruling class treated the masses as their slaves and serfs; there was a yawning gap between the lives of the rulers and the ruled, an unbridgeable chasm between the high and the low classes; the extravagant life-style of the rich was sustained by the sweat and blood of the poor and slaves. In this social structure, the Christian missionaries called the people to brotherhood, love, equality and good neighbourliness; they exhorted them to discard this world and its transient painful life and to concentrate on the pure and happy life that was in heaven. It was this theme which the ruling classes — the kings and emperors — found advantageous to themselves, and they thought that it was in their interest to turn a blind eye to the missionaries' activities; as a general rule, this tacit understanding saved the new group from punishment, torture and banishment.

Their number kept increasing, and so did their power. A great multitude embraced Christianity within and outside the Roman Empire; it reached upto Africa and even India. Invariably opening of a church heralded the closure or destruction of a temple. With number and power, their attitude changed. Not only that they disregarded the resistance of the pagan leaders (as they went on undermining idol-worship), they even refused obeisance to the rulers and emperors. Their refusal to obey imperial decrees in this respect resulted in their punishment,

imprisonment and even murder. Many were tortured and killed; others imprisoned or banished.

This continued until the Emperor Constantine came on throne. He accepted Christianity and recognized it as the State religion. Churches were built in Rome and throughout the empire. It was in the second half of the fourth century of Christian Era. [1]

From then on the Church of Rome became the centre of Christianity. Bishops and missionaries were sent to all regions and countries within the Roman Empire. Countless churches, monastries and seminaries (to teach Christianity) were built.

There is an important point which the reader should ponder on: All their talks and discussions begin on some evangelical postulates, like the theme of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the scheme of crucifixion and atonement, and similar other principles. They base their talks on these ideas as though they were self-evident truths — and then go on building their edifice on them. They do not realize that it is their first and basic weakness. No matter how strong and lofty a structure may be, it cannot make up for the weakness of the foundation. And the foundation on which they have built their edifice — the three-in-one theology and the crucifixion and atonement — is simply incomprehensible.

Many Christian scholars agree that it is an idea that cannot be understood. Still they say that it is a religious tenet, therefore, it must be believed without asking for reason — after all, there are many things in religion which the reason says are impossible.

But it is one of the invalid ideas which spring from that invalid base. How can there be an impossible principle in the religion of truth? As far as we are concerned, it is through reason and understanding that we accept a religion and discern its truth and validity. How can a true belief contain something which reason invalidates? Is it not a contradiction in term?

Of course, religion accepts validity of miracles — the things which are possible in reason but impracticable; but an idea impossible in reason

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[1] It happened in the first (not the second) half of the fourth century. Constantine I (the Great) established Christianity as State religion in 324; Nicaean Council was held in 325; his new capital at Byzantium was inaugurated in 330 (hence Byzantine Empire) which was renamed Constantinople (City of Constantine); he died in 337. (*tr.*)

can never happen.

However, the above-mentioned way of ''argument'' led their thinkers and scholars into conflicts, discords and disagreements in the very early days when the students gathered to learn Christianity at Alexanderia, Rome and other places.

The church increased its watchdog role to preserve the unity of creed. Whenever a differing view was expressed or new idea raised its head, the church called a council of the bishops and presbyters to convince the party concerned to leave their ideas and beliefs; and if they persisted they were anathematized, banished or even killed.

The first such council was held in Nicea, to counter the views of Arius[1], who said that the Son was not like the Father, that only God was eternal while Christ was a created being.

The bishops, and presbyters assembled at Constantinople, in presence of the Emperor Constantine; they were three hundred and thirteen in number. They adopted the following creed:

We believe in one God, the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, who because of us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnated from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father and will come again with glory to judge

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[1] Arius was Presbyter of Bancalis. A follower of Origen, he believed that Christ was a created being, not of the substance of God but created from ''nothing''; he had a beginning and was thus not eternal. Although he was defeated at the Nicene Council (held in 325), subsequent Councils held at Arles, Milan and Sirmium (held in 353, 355 and 357, respectively) upheld his views. But it was again defeated in the Contantinople Council held in 381. Christian scholars say that Arians' 'temporary triumph' ''had been made possible by imperial interference.'' But so was the case with the ''original Nicene success'' and its later victories. (See Williston Walker, *A History of Christian Church,* Edinburgh, 1970, pp. 107 — 117.) (*tr.*)

living and dead, of whose Kingdom there will be no end;

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is together worshipped and together glorified, Who spoke through the prophets; in one holy Catholic and apostolic church. We confess one baptism to the remission of sins; we look forward to the resurrection of the dead[1], and the life of the world to come [2]. Amen !

That was the first Council; after that numerous Councils were held to anathematize newly appearing schisms, like the Nestorians, Jacobites, الاليانية Ilyanites [?], اليليارسية Yalyarsites[3] [?], Macedonians [1], Noetus [2] ,

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[1] people have commented on the last sentence that it affirms physical resurrection, while the Christians believe in spiritual resurrection only as the Gospel shows.

But I think that the Gospel only indicates the absence of physical worldly enjoyments in the next world; it does not say that man will be resurrected in spirit only without his body. It rather says that man in the resurrection will become like angels, and there will be no sexual enjoyment among them. On the other hand, the Bible shows that even God and angels have bodies, let alone the man after resurrection. (*Author's Note*)

[2] The author has taken these details from ash-Shahristānī's *al-Milal wa 'n-niḥal.* ash-Shahristānī is confused when he says that the ''first Council held at Nicea'' assembled ''at Constantinople''. The Nicene Council had assembled in 325 at Nicea, and another Council was held at Constantinople in 381 C. E. The actual Nicene Creed is now only a matter of surmise. Probably it ended with the sentence, 'And in the Holy Spirit'. However, the Constantinople Council reconfirmed and enlarged it. That is why scholars refer to it as, ''the so-called Nicene Creed'', and sometimes with its technically correct name, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. But in spite of all that, its first appearance was at the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.); it was signed on 25/10/451, in presence of the Emperor Marcian. (See J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds,* Longman, London, 3rd ed., 1972, pp. 296 — 297; and *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Church,* 2nd ed., O.U.P., 1977).

In ash-Shahristānī's book, the number of participants of the first Council is given as 318 and not 313. (*tr.*)

[3] The author has taken these names from ash-Shahristani. I could not find the names, الاليانية and اليليارسية in the books 1 referred to ash-Shahristānī, however, it gives the following details:

a). **Ilyanites:** A sub-sect of the Jacobites, found in Syria, Yemen, and Armenia. They believed that 'Īsā was not a body in reality; all the

Sabellians[3], Paulianists[4], (or Paulicians)[5] , and many others.

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sufferings, killing and crucifixion happened only on an illusion (or illusory being).

b). **Yalyarsites:** They believed that people, on arriving at the heaven, would enjoy eating, drinking and sexual relations for a thousand years; thereafter, they would proceed to the bounties promised by Arius. (*tr.*)

[1] **Macedonians:** Named after Macedonius (died c. 362), Bishop of Constantinople. He strongly supported the semi-Arian cause in Council of Seleucia (359). From end of the fourth century, he is regarded as the founder of Pneumatomachi who are called Macedonians after him. They denied the full God-head of the Holy Ghost. See *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Church;* also W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church,* p. 118. (*tr.*)

[2] **Noetus:** In Arabic text this name is mentioned in the last. I have put it before the Sabellians, etc., as it would facilitate understanding. Noetus, probably of Smyrna, taught in his native region in 180 to 200 ‘‘that Christ was the Father Himself, and the Father Himself was born and suffered and died’’. His views were called Modalistic Monarchianism. (W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, p.69). Another name for that belief was Patripassion doctrine; Noetus also rejected Logo doctrine. (*The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Church*). (*tr.*)

[3] **Sabellians:** Sabellianism is an alternative title for the Modalistic Monarchianism. Named after Sabbellus, who was teaching in Rome *cir.* 215. His theology was essentially that of Noetus, but much more carefully wrought out, especially in that it gave a definite place to the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Son. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all one and the same. They are three names of one God, Who manifests Himself in different ways according to circumstances. (W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church,* p. 69). (*tr.*)

[4] **Paulianists:** Followers of Paul of Samosata; he became Bishop of Antioch *cir*. 260. He taught a form of Dynamic Monarchianism in which God-head was a closely knit trinity of Father, Wisdom and Word, and until creation formed a single hypostasis. He was a precursor of Nestorius, holding that from Incarnation the Word rested upon the human Jesus as one person upon another, and that the Incarnated Christ differed only in degree from the prophets. (*The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Church*). (*tr.*)

[5] **Paulicians:** A sect of the Byzantine Empire. Their name may have been derived from St. Paul, or more probably from Paul of Samosata. Endlessly persecuted, many of them assisted the Muslims in their wars against the empire and adopted Islam. Apparently they ceased to exist as an independent sect in the

The church was ever vigilant in guarding what in its eyes was the true faith. The missionary work continued in full force, until by the end of fifth century all European governments (except Russia) were parts of Christendom: France, England, Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, etc., were all converted to Christianity by 496 C.E.

The Church continued to progress becoming stronger day by day. On the other hand, the Barbarians of the North were attacking the Roman Empire every now and then. The wars and internal strifes and unrest weakened the Empire — until a time came when the people of Rome together with the victorious tribes decided to hand over the affairs of the State to the Church. Now the Pope of the time, Gregory the Great [1], had in his hand the reins of the temporal as well as the spiritual powers. It was in 590 C.E.

Consequently, the Church of Rome acquired absolute power over the Christians world. But by that time the Roman Empire had divided in two parts: the Western Roman Empire with its capital at Rome and the Eastern Roman (i.e. Byzantine) Empire with its capital at Constantinople. The Byzantine Emperors claimed for themselves the headship of Church within their domain, without accepting the authority of the Church of Rome. This led to the division of Christianity between the Catholics — the followers of the Church of Rome and the Orthodox, i.e., others.

The things continued in this manner, until the Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople, and Palaeologus, the last Byzantine Emperor and Head of the Eastern (i.e. Orthoxod) Church, was killed in the Cathedral, Hagia Sophia[2] .

The Tzars of Russia now claimed the headship of the Church — as a legacy of the Byzantine Emperors to whom they were related by marriage. (Russia had been Christian since the tenth century.) The Russian Emperors thus became he Heads of the (Orthodox) Church in their land, independent of the (Catholic) Church of Rome. It was in 1454

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twelfth century. (*ibid.*) (*tr.*)

[1] Gregory I (590 — 604) established the temporal power of the Papacy in that period of unrest in Itlay. However, it was Pope Innocent III who during his Papacy (1198 — 1216) made several European Kings and Emperors to pay homage to him, accepting him as their overlord. (*tr.*)

[2] Constantine XIII palaeologus (1394 — 1453) was killed on 29th May, 1453. (*tr.*)

C. E.

The things continued in this way for about five centuries, until the last Tzar, Nicholas, was killed, with all his family, in 1918, by the Communists. Thus the Church of Rome almost returned to the condition that prevailed before the division.

Meanwhile, during the Middle Ages when the Vatican had reached the highest point of its glory and the Popes controlled every aspect of the people's lives, a lot of good Christians revolted against the Vatican in order to free themselves from the shackles which the Church had put on them.

One group refused to follow the Church of Rome or to obey the Popes, but they continued to accept the religion as interpreted by the Councils and agreed upon by their scholars. They are called the [Greek] Orthodox. Another group discarded the Roman Church altogether; they neither accept the said Church's interpretation of religion nor do they recognized the Pope's authority in any religious matter. They are the Protestants.

In this way, the Christians world is mainly divided into three sects: the Catholics who follow the Vatican and its teachings; the Orthodox, who accept the Catholic teachings but do not recognize the authority of the Vatican. As described above, this group resulted from the division of the Church [on the line of the Western and Eastern empires] and especially after the transfer of the Patriarchate from Constantinople to Moscow; and the Protestants, who recognize neither the authority of Vatican nor its teachings — they became independent in the fifteenth century of the Christian Era.

This is, in a nut-shell, the history of the Christian Church of the last two millenniums. Those who know the main theme of our book, will understand why we have written here this short account of their history. Our aim was three-fold:

First: To provide to a research scholar an insight into various changes taking place in the religion of the Christians; and to make them aware as to how alien ideas have been implanted in their beliefs and rituals; how pagan superstitions and idolatrous thoughts have crept into Christianity — by hereditary influences, or social give and take, or wilful adoption, or just because old habits die-hard.

Second: The power of the Church — and especially the Church of

Rome — gradually increased until it reached its zenith in the Middle Ages; the Popes had taken both temporal and spiritual powers in their hands, and the kings and emperors in Europe had to submit to the Papal decrees, and pay homage to the Popes. The Popes put on throne whomsoever they wished and removed whoever they wished [1].

It is narrated that the Pope once ordered the German emperor to stand barefoot on the door of the Papal Palace for three days (in the winter) — for expiation of some mistakes which he beseeched the Pope to forgive[2].

On another occasion, the Pope kicked with his foot the crown of a king who had approached him kneeling down to seek Papal pardon[3].

Those church leaders had described the Muslims to their followers in a way that the Christians were bound to regard Islam as a religion of idol-worshippers. You will see it in the slogans and poems which were written to incite and arouse the Christians against the Muslims during the Crusades which raged between the two powers for long years.

The Christians were led to believe[4] that the Muslims worshipped idols; that they believed in three gods: (1) Māhom (who is also called افوميد Afomed [?] and Mahounde), he is the first among gods and he is Muḥammad; (2) Apoline who is the second; and (3) Tervagān who is the third. Others added two more to this list: مارتوان to Māratwān [?] and Jupiter; but their rank was below the first three. They said that Muḥammad's religion was based on his claim of divinity — that he claimed to be god. Sometimes the ''information'' was added that Muḥammad had taken for himself an idol made of gold.

Richard composed poems to incite the Franks against the Muslims, in which he, *inter alia,* says: ''Arise and dislodge Mahound and Tervagan and throw them into fire, so that you may get near your God.''

Roland described Mahom, the ''god of Muslims'', in a poem, in which he says: ''It is made of gold and silver; if you see it, you will know that no artisan can even imagine a more beautiful face, let alone make it; big in size, admirable in workmanship, majesty radiating from its

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1 *al-Futūḥātu 'l-Islāmiyyah*. (*Author's Note*)

2 *ibid*. (*Author's Note*)

3 *ibid*. (*Author's Note*)

4 This and the following descriptions have been taken from هنري دوكاستري Cte Henry de Castries; *ad-Diyānatu 'l-Islāmiyyah,* ch.l. (*Author's Note*)

features, Māhom is made of gold and silver, its brilliant splendour dazzles the eyes to blindness; it has been placed on an elephant which is the finest work of art; its stomach is hollow, and an onlooker may find lustrous light glowing from it (because) it is set with precious brilliant gems, (it is transparent, and) its inside may be seen from outside; its fine workmanship is matchless.

‘‘The gods of Muslims used to inspire them at times of trouble and turmoil. The Muslims were once defeated in a battle; so their commander sent someone to call their god who was in Mecca (i.e., Muḥammad, s.a.w.a.). An ‘eye-witness’ says that the god (i.e., Muḥammad, s.a.w.a.) came to them; a huge mob of his followers surrounded him; they were beating drums, playing lutes and blowing pipes and bagpipes made of silver; singing and dancing around him they brought him to the battleground, they were full of joy and happiness, making merry. His deputy was waiting for him; when he arrived (the deputy) stood up and began worshipping him with humbleness and humility.’’

Richard explains the revelation sent by the god, Māhom, in this manner: ‘‘The sorcerers captured a genie and put it in the stomach of that idol. That genie used to thunder and hammer inside and then speak to the Muslims, who listened to him with rapt attention.’’

Such droll flippancies are found in a lot of their books written during, or about, the Crusades. Our readers will, no doubt, be astounded and scandalized to read such accounts of their pure religion — may be some would even doubt the authenticity of these quotations. After all, they have ascribed such things to Islam that no one has ever seen in his life, nor has any Muslim imagined them or even dreamt of them[1].

Third: A deep thinker may easily recognize the changes that have occurred in the Christianity during the past twenty centuries. The idolatrous beliefs crept imperceptibly into Christianity: first it was excessive reverence for Christ; then his message was cast into the mould of trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), which was further developed in the theory of crucifixion and atonement, which in its turn gave rise to the belief that law and its obedience was not needed at all, the faith was

[1] Many such astonishing ‘‘revelations’’ have been quoted by Norman Daniel in his, *Islam and the West. The Making of an Image,* Edinburgh University Press, 1960. (tr.)

sufficient for salvation.

At first it appeared in religious garb; the Church insisted on some religious rites like prayer, fast and baptism. But opposite trends continued to grow and various ideas raised their heads, until the Protestantism appeared on the scene; the political turmoil and unrest gave way to formal secular laws based on the principle of freedom in the matters which were not covered by those laws. In this way, the teachings of religion became weaker and weaker, and continued to give ground to anti-religion forces, until moral values and virtuous conduct could not stand the onslaught of materialism which ‘‘the unrestricted freedom’’ had let loose on humanity.

Then appeared socialism and communism, based on Dialectic Materialism; belief in God and adherence to moral virtues and religious rites and deeds were discarded. Spiritual humanism was succeeded by materialistic animality composed of only two instincts: greed to gain for oneself whatever one desires and impulse to crush down whoever comes in one’s way. Today the world is speeding to that animalistic goal, to its doom.

Various new religious revival movements that have lately appeared everywhere are but political games invented and played by political groups, who want to attain their goals through them. We know that politics, as a profession, now knocks at every door and uses every conceiveable device to realize its aims.

According to Dr. Joseph Sittler, of Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, the underlying weakness of the current U. S. religious revival is that it seeks to give divine sanction to the cultural values modern man lives by. ‘We make God say amen to what we believe, instead of saying amen to God.’ The greatest danger, he feels, is that this pious self-flattery may immunize Americans against any desire to join in a genuine relgious revival if one should arise[1].

According to Dr. Georges Florovsky, the ‘foremost U. S. spokesman for Russian Orthodoxy’, Christian teaching, which reaches most Americans through sentimental literature, consoles them instead of

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[1] *The Life* (New York edition), John Knox Jessup, in the article, *The World, the Flesh and the Devil,* 26th December, 1955, p. 143. (*tr.*)

awakening them through deeply felt or 'witnessed' experience[1].

Whence the caravan of religion started from, and where has it arrived? The message began in the name of revival of religion (i.e., belief), morality (i.e., virtuous character) and the *sharī'ah* (good deeds); and ended up by repudiating and abolishing all of it, replacing it with animalistic enjoyment.

This has happened because of the first deviation affected by St. Paul the Apostle and his disciples. We are living in a civilization that admittedly threatens mankind with extinction. Some people say that Christ is the leader and standard-bearer of the modern civilization. But it would be nearer to truth to call it the Paulian civilization.

TRADITIONS

al-Qummī narrates about the verse: *It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him the Book and the Wisdom and Prophethood, then he should say to men, ''Be my servants rather than Allāh's''.* ''Surely 'Īsā did not say to men: 'I have created you, therefore you should be my servants rather than Allāh's', rather he said to them: 'Be worshippers of the Lord', that is, having true knowledge.'' (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: The context and associations given in the Commentary support this explanation. ''Surely 'Īsā did not say to men: 'I have created you.' '' It is a sort of a proof to show that he had not said it. Had he told them to worship him, it would have been necessary to tell them that he was their creator; but he had not said it, nor had he created them.

The same exegete narrates about the verse: *Or that he should enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for lords.* ''There were people who worshipped the angels; the Christians thought 'Īsā was the Lord; and the Jews said that 'Uzayr was the Son of God. Allāh therefore said that no prophet would enjoin you that you should take the angels and the prophets for Lords.'' (*ibid.*)

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[1] *ibid*. (*tr.*)

The author says: It has been explained in the Commentary.

It is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Dalā'ilu 'n-Nubuwwah*) from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘When the Jewish scholars and Christians of Najrān gathered near the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and he invited them to Islam, Abū Rāfi‘ al-Quraẓī said: ‘Do you wish, O Muḥammad, that we should worship you as the Christians worship ‘Īsā son of Maryam?’ Thereupon a Christian of Najrān said: ‘Well, do you want this from us, O Muḥammad?’ The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘I seek refuge in Allāh that we should worship other than Allāh, or that we should enjoin worship of someone else; He has neither sent me with it nor has He enjoined me this.’
Therefore, Allāh,
revealed the verses (because of their question): *It is not meet for a man ... after you are Muslims* (submitting ones)?’’ (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

It is reported in the same book: ‘‘ ‘Abd ibn Hamid has narrated from al-Ḥasan that he said: ‘I have been told that a man said: ‘‘O Messenger of Allāh! We greet you (exatly) as we greet each other. Should not we prostrate before you?’’ He said: ‘‘No. But you should honour your Prophet, and recognize the right of the ones having that right; because prostration should not be done for anyone other than Allāh.’’ Then Allāh revealed the verses: *It is not meet for a man ... after you are Muslims* (submitting ones)?’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: Also other events have been narrated concerning revelation of these verses. Obviously, all of them are based on academic inferences: and we have discussed in detail about them. Also, it is possible for various reasons to combine in relation to one verse. And Allāh knows better.

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وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ
الشَّاهِدِينَ — ٨١ . فَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ — ٨٢ .
أَفَغَيْرَ دِينِ اللهِ يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا
وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ — ٨٣ . قُلْ آمَنَّا بِاللهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا
أُنْزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ
مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
مُسْلِمُونَ — ٨٤ . وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ
فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ — ٨٥ .

And when Allāh made a covenant with the prophets: ''Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom — then a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must aid him.'' He said: ''Do you affirm and accept My *compact in this* (matter)*?'' They said: ''We do affirm.'' He said: ''Then bear witness, and I* (too) *am of the bearers of witness with you''* (81). *Whoever therefore turns back after this, these it is that are the transgressors* (82). *Is it then other than Allāh's religion that they seek* (to follow), *and to Him*

submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him shall they be returned? (83). *Say: ''We believe in Allāh and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl and Isḥāq and Ya'qūb and the tribes, and what was given to Mūsā and 'Īsā and to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit''* (84). *And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers* (85).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses are not disjointed from the preceding ones; they have been revealed in the same context. Earlier, Allāh had described that the People of the Book transgressed the limits by indulging in alteration of the Books they were given, creating doubts and confusion among the people, making differences between the prophets, and rejecting the signs of the truth of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); then He showed how impossible it was for a prophet like Mūsā or 'Īsā (peace be on them both) to tell the people to take him or some other prophets or the angels as their lords — as the Christians openly claimed and the Jews implied.

Now He puts more emphasis on the impossibility of such an idea. How can any prophet give such an order to his people, when Allāh has made covenant with the prophets that they must believe in and help every prophet no matter whether he preceded them or came after them? They were to fulfil that promise by confirming the truth of the preceding prophets and giving good news of those who were to come after them — as 'Īsā (a.s.) verified the prophethood of Mūsā (a.s.) and his laws, and foretold the advent of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). Likewise, Allāh made a covenant with them that they should make a similar covenant with their people, and made them witnesses over them; and then declared that it was the Islam — submission — which dominates all those who are in the heavens and in the earth.

Then Allāh enjoins His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to adhere to that covenant:

he is to believe in Allāh and all that was sent to His prophets — without making any distinction between them, and to surrender to Allāh. He was to enter into the covenant on his own behalf, and also on behalf of his *ummah.* That is why it is said that the covenant was made with him directly, and with his *ummah* through him, as we shall explain later.

QUR'ĀN: *And when Allāh made a covenant with the prophets: ''Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom — then a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must aid him'':* The verse speaks of a covenant that was made. *''Mīthāqa'n-nabīyyīn''* (مِيْثَاقَ النَّبِيِّنَ = translated here as ''covenant with the prophets''), literally means 'covenant of the prophets'. This covenant was taken for the prophets (as the clause, *''then a Messenger comes to you ... you must aid him'',* points to), as well as ''with the prophets'' (as the clauses, *He said: ''Do you affirm ... '',* and, *Say: ''We believe in Allāh ... '',* show). The covenant was therefore made for the prophets and with the prophets — although it was made with the prophets' people too, through the prophets.

The phrase, ''covenant of the prophets'', may therefore refer to the covenant made ''with'' them and to that ''for'' them, while in fact it is the same covenant looked at from different angles. In other words, ''the prophets'', may refer to those prophets ''for'' whom the covenant was made, and`also to those ''with'' whom it was made. However, the import of the preceding two verses (*It is not meet for a man ... after you are Muslims*) which were revealed in the same context, gives rather more weight to the idea that, ''the prophets'', refers to those ''with'' whom the covenant was made. Looking in this context the verses have the following connotation: 'It was not possible for the prophets, after Allāh gives them the Book, the Wisdom and Prophethood, to call the people to take someone other than Allāh as their lord or to worship him. How can it be possible while Allāh has made covenant with them to believe in, and help, other prophets of Allāh — who enjoin their peoples to believe in one God.' It is for this reason that this verse begins with mention of the covenant — focusing our attention to it.

''lamā ātaytukum min kitābin wa ḥikmah'' (لَمَا اٰتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَ حِكْمَةٍ = Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom): *'lamā'* (with the

vowel *'a'* after *'l'*, and without putting emphasis on *'m'*) is in accordance with the well-known recital (of all the reciters except Ḥamzah). Accordingly *'mā'* (مَا) is relative pronoun meaning, ''what'' or ''whatsoever''; *''ataytukum''* (اٰتَيْتُكُمْ = I have given you) is its *''aṣ-ṣilah''* (اَلصِّلَةُ = antecedent). Its another recital is *''ātaynākum''* (اٰتَيْنَكُمْ = We have given you). The objective pronoun that should come here is omitted because the phrase ''of Book and Wisdom'', points to it. The whole phrase is the subject, and, ''you must believe in him, and you must aid him'', the predicate. *'la'*, in *'lamā',* denotes beginning of the sentence, while in *''latu'minunna bihi''* (لَتُؤمِنَنَّ بِهٖ = you must believe in him) it is for emphasis and oath. The whole sentence describes the covenant that was made, which would be as follows: 'That which I have given you of Book and Wisdom, then a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you should believe in that Messenger and aid him without fail.'

There is another syntactical possibility: *'ma'* in *'lamā'* may be a conditional pronoun, meaning ''when''; and ''you must believe in him'', its answer. The meaning, in this case, would be like this: 'When I have given you of Book and Wisdom and then a Messenger comes to you ... you must believe in him, and you must aid him.' This explanation is rather more appropriate (because it is more common to add *'la'* of oath on the ''answer'' of a conditional sentence), and the meaning in this case is cleareer; also it is more usual to put conditional clauses in covenants.

A reciter has recited *'limā'* using the vowel *'i'* (instead of *'a'*) for *'l'*. In that case *'li'* would denote reason, and *'limā ātaytukum'* would mean 'because of that which I have given you'. But the first recital has more weight.

The second person plural pronoun ''you'' in ''have given you'' and ''comes to you'', apparently refers to ''the prophets''. But the speech, *Do you affirm and accept my compact in this?,* indicates that it includes the people of the prophets too; that is, the talk is directed to the prophets only but the order (i.e., covenant) covers their people too. The people are as much obliged to believe in and help the coming Messenger as are the prophets themselves.

The conjuctive ''then'' in the clause ''then a Messenger comes to you'', obviously shows a delay in time; in other words, it was incumbent on a preceding prophet to believe in and help a prophet who would come

after him. On the other hand, the verse 3:84 (*Say: ''We believe in Allāh and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Ibrāhīm ...''*) , implies that the covenant was made with each of the preceding and the following prophets for the other — the following prophets too were required to believe in and help the preceding ones. But it is only an inference; the words are silent about this matter — as we shall explain later, Allāh willing.

There are two third person singular pronouns in the clauses, ''you must believe in him, and you must aid him''. Both may refer to the ''Messenger'' who was to come later; there is no difficulty in the idea of one prophet believing in another; as Allāh says: *The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and* (so do) *the believers; everyone of them believes in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers* (2:285). Nevertheless, it appears from the verse: *Say: ''We believe in Allāh and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Ibrāhīm ... '',* that the first pronoun refers to the Book and the Wisdom that was revealed, and the second one to the Messenger.

The meaning therefore would be as follows: 'You must believe in what I have given you of the Book and the Wisdom, and you must aid the Messenger who comes to you verifying that which is with you.'

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''Do you affirm and accept my compact in this* (matter)?'' *They said: ''We do affirm'':* The question was put for confirmation. *''al-Iqrār''* (اَلْاِقْرَارُ = affirmation; acknowledgement); *''al-iṣr''* (اَلْاِصْرُ = compact, covenant), it is the object of the verb, ''accept''. Literally, the clause means, 'and take my compact in this'. The prophets were to take or make God's covenant; obviously there should be a second party there to enter into covenant with them, and it could be none except their own *ummah.* The verse therefore means: 'Do you affirm this covenant and have you made this compact of mine with your people? They said: ''We do affirm.''

An exegete has said: Taking God's compact means that the prophets accepted that covenant for themselves. If so, then, ''(Do you) take my compact in this (matter)'', would be an explicative apposition of the preceding clause, ''Do you affirm?'' This explanation is stengthened by their response, as they only said, ''We do affirm'', without saying

anything about taking the compact. Accordingly, the covenant would be restricted to the prophets; their *ummah* would not be included in it. On the other hand, the next directive, *Then bear witness,* goes against this explanation; obviously one bears witness for or against other than oneself. Also, the next directive (*Say: ''We believe in Allāh ... ''*) uses plural pronoun, *We*, and not, *I*, apparently, it is a declaration of faith by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) for himself and on behalf of his *ummah.* Therefore, ''taking of compat'' would mean making the compact with the *ummah.* Although, it may be said that it is these two sentences, *Then bear witness,* and, *We believe in Allāh,* which prove the participation of the *ummah* with the prophets in this compact, while, ''take my compact in this'', is not related to this matter.

QUR'ĀN: *He said: ''Then bear witness, and I* (too) *am of the bearers of witness with you'';* Obviously, the witness, as explained above, is borne for or against someone else; therefore, it is concerned both with the prophets and their people. As mentioned above, also the next directive, (*Say: ''We believe in Allāh''*), proves it. And the context too supports this meaning: The verses were revealed to reprove the People of the Book for their rejecting the message of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and for ascribing falsehoods to 'Īsā, Mūsā and some other prophets (peace be on them all); and it is in this background that they have been rebuked: *Is it then other than Allāh's religion that they seek* (to follow)?

Some exegetes have said that the order, ''Then bear witness'', refers to the prophets bearing witness for one another; others have written that this order was given to the angels who were to bear witness, and that it is not concerned with the prophets.

COMMENT: These two meanings, although possibly correct in themselves, cannot be inferred from the verse without an association; and you have seen that the association goes against it.

One of the fine points in this verse deserves special attention. Read the words, *Allāh made a covenant with the prophets,* in conjunction with the clause, *then a Messenger comes to you.* You will see that the covenant was made with the prophets for the Messenger. And we have described in the Commentary of the verse 2:213 (*Mankind was but one people ...*) that messengership is more particular than prophethood, that

every messenger is a prophet but not every prophet is a messenger. The verse therefore obviously means that the covenant was made with the rank of prophethood for the rank of messengership — but not vice versa.

Keeping this connotation in view, we may question the comprehensiveness of the explanation given by an exegete that the covenant was made with the prophets that they would believe in each other and would tell one another to believe in each other — the religion is one which all the prophets invite to.

The meaning in fact should be as follows: Allāh made a covenant with the prophets and their people that if Allāh gave them Book and Wisdom and then a messenger came to them, verifying that which was with them, they would surely believe in what he would bring to them and help him; a later coming prophet would help a preceding (or contemporary) messenger by affirming his truth, and a preceding prophet would foretell the coming of a later messenger and enjoin his *ummah* to believe in him (the coming messenger), affirm his truth and help him in his cause. This covenant thus implies and affirms the Oneness of Divine Religion.

Another exegete has explained the verse as follows: ‘‘Allāh made a covenant with the prophets that they would affirm the truth of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and give their people the good tidings of his advent.’’ This meaning is correct in itself; but it cannot be discerned from the wording of the verse. Of course, we may infer it from the context, as we have explained earlier: The verse is among the ones that argue against the People of the Book, admonishing and rebuking them for their tendency of altering the Books, hiding the signs foretold of the Holy Prophet of Islam, transgressing the limit and turning away from the clear truth.

QUR’ĀN: *Whoever therefore turns back after this, these it is that are the transgressors:* It puts emphasis on the above-mentioned covenant. The meaning is clear.

QUR’ĀN: *Is it then other than Allāh’s religion that they seek* (to follow), *and to Him submits ... ?:* The question arises from the preceding verses. Well, Allāh’s religion is one; it was about that religion that the covenant was made with the prophets and their people; it was incumbent upon the

preceding prophets and their people to foretell the advent of the Messenger who was to follow and they had to believe in his message and help him. Well, is it not strange — in this background — the way the People of the Book are behaving? What do they want when they deny your truth? They show the desire to follow the religion. If so, then do they seek a religion other than Islam which is the only Divine Religion? There can be no other explanation why they do not accept your truth, why they do not hold fast to the religion of Islam. Undoubtedly, it was incumbent upon them to accept and follow Islam, because it is.the religion which is based on nature — a religion should not go against nature. Do they need a proof? Then see how all those inhabitants of the heavens and the earth (who have been endowed with sense and intelligence) submit to Allāh — on the level of creation — then let them also submit to him on the level of legislation.

QUR'ĀN: *and to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly:* This is the Islam — submission — that encompasses all who are in the heavens and the earth, including the People of the Book, who it says, are not Muslims. The word used here is *''aslama''* (اَسْلَمَ = he submitted), in past tense, which shows that the action has already taken place; in other words, they have already submitted to Allāh.

Obviously, it can only refer to their submission in creative affairs — they cannot go against His decree in matters of creation. It does not refer to Islam in the sense of religion, or in the meaning of belief and worship. The words, ''willingly or unwillingly'', support, nay, prove this explanation.

Keeping the above explanation in view, it appears that the words, ''to Him submits'', gives a proof, a reason, without mentioning, for the sake of brevity, its result and conclusion. The complete talk would be as follows: 'Do they seek to follow a religion other than Islam? But it is the religion of Allāh; whoever is in the heavens and the earth submits to Him and obeys His order. If these People of the Book would accept it, their submission would be done willingly; if they disliked what Allāh has decreed for them and tried to seek something else, the Divine Decree would nevertheless be enforced, however they might dislike it.'

It appears from it that the conjunctive *'wa'* (وَ = or) in, ''willingly or

unwillingly'', denotes division. The alternatives point to their willing acceptance of what Allāh has decreed for them of the things they like; and their resentment of Divine Decrees in matters they dislike, for example, death, poverty and sickness, etc.

QUR'ĀN: *and to Him shall they be returned:* It is another reason why they must seek Islam as religion. They are bound to return to Allāh, their true Lord; they would not be able to hide from Allāh or to go to what their disbelief and polytheism leads them to rely on.

QUR'ĀN: *Say: ''We believe in Allāh and what has been revealed to us:* Allāh enjoins the Prophet to adhere to the covenant which was made with him and the others. He should declare as follows, for himself and on behalf of the believers from his *ummah:* ''We believe in Allāh and what has been revealed ...''

It is a proof, as we have said above, that the covenant was made with the prophets and their people together.

QUR'ĀN: *and what was revealed to Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl ... and to Him do we submit'':* All those mentioned here were prophets from the progeny of Ibrāhīm. The verse implies that the word, ''the tribes'', refers to the prophets from the progeny of Ya'qūb — from the Children of Israel — like Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Yūnus, Ayyūb and others. Then comes the phrase, ''the prophets from their Lord''; it makes the declaration comprehensive, as it covers Adam, Nūḥ and all the others. Then a reference is made to the whole group, saying, ''we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit.''

QUR'ĀN: *And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam ... shall be one of the losers:* It negates and nullifies all that is outside the purview of the said covenant. It further emphasises the obligation of following the terms of the covenant.

TRADITION

The Leader of the faithful ('Alī, a.s.) said: ''Verily, Allāh made

covenant with the prophets (who came) before our Prophet that they should inform their people of his advent and his characteristics, give them his good news and enjoin them to affirm his truth.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh be pleased with him) that he said: ''Allāh did not send any prophet — Adam and those who came after him — without making a covenant with him about Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.): If he (Muḥammad, s.a.w.a.) was sent when that prophet was alive, he must believe in him and help him; and He enjoined him to make a (similar) covenant with his people.'' Then the Imām recited the verse, *And when Allāh made a covenant with the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom ... ''* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: These two traditions explain the verse keeping both the words and the context in view, as we have written above.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) explained this verse as follows: ''When Allāh made a covenant with the people of the prophets — (with) every *ummah* — for affirming the truth of its prophet and following what they (the prophets) would bring to them; but (the people) did not fulfil it (i.e., the covenant) and neglected much of their laws and altered (it) to a great extent.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān; al-Jawāmi'*)

The author says: The above tradition applies the verse to a particular situation; it therefore does not conflict with the explanation given in the Commentary that the verse refers to a covenant made with the prophets together with their people.

The Leader of the faithful (a.s.) said explaining the words: *He said: ''Do you affirm ... '':* ''He (Allāh) said: 'Do you affirm? And have you made this compact with your people?' They (i.e., the prophets and their people) said: 'We do affirm what Thou hast enjoined us to affirm.' Allāh said: 'Then bear witness over your people in this respect, and I too am one of the bearers of witness with you, over you and your people.' '' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

Ibn Jarīr narrates from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that he said about the words, *Then bear witness ...:* ''Allāh said: 'Then bear witness over your people in this respect; and I too am one of the bearers of witness with

you, over you and them. Then whoever turns away from you, O Muḥammad, after this covenant taken from all the people, these it is that are the transgressors, they are the disobedient ones, (steeped) in disbelief.' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: Its explanation has been given earlier.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''(Allāh) said to them (when they were) in (the state of) particle: 'Do you affirm and accept my compact in this matter?' They said: 'We do affirm.' Then Allāh said to the angels: 'Then bear witness.' '' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: The wording of the verse is not in conflict with this explanation, although, as we have said earlier, it is not inferred from its apparent meanings.

It is written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* concerning the verse, *And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam ...:* ''Aḥmad and aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in his *al-Mu'jamu 'l-awṣaṭ*) have narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said: 'The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''The deeds shall come on the Day of Resurrection. So the prayer will come and say, 'O Lord, I am prayer,' and He will say, 'Surely you are on good.' And the alms will come and say, 'O Lord I am alms,' and He will say, 'Surely you are on good.' Then the fast will come and say, 'I am fast,' and He will say, 'Surely you are on good.' Then the deeds will come (one after another) and Allāh will go on saying, 'Surely you are on good.; (until Islam will come and Allāh will say:) 'With thee shall I take today and with thee shall I give.' Allāh says in His Book: *And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers'' '.''*

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about this verse: ''It (i.e., Islam) means their believing in the Oneness of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great.'' (*at-Tawḥīd; at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: The belief in monotheism requires that the servant should accept, and submit to, whatever Allāh wants him to do. It therefore implies the same thing which has been written in the

Commentary. If on the other hand it is explained just as ‘‘not ascribing anyone or anything to Allāh’’, then the willingness and unwillingness (mentioned in a preceding verse) would imply voluntary and compulsory guidances.

There are several other traditions narrated by al-‘Ayyāshī and al-Qummī (in their books) and others, in explanation of the verse, *And when Allāh made a covenant with the prophets ...* In those traditions the words, *you must believe in him, and you must aid him,* have been explained as follows: You must believe in the Messenger of Allāh and you must aid the Leader of the faithful — blessings and peace be on them. Obviously, these tradtions refer the former pronoun, *him,* to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the later, *him,* to the Leader of the faithful (‘Alī, a.s.), without there being any proof or association for it in the wording of the verse.

Nevertheless, a tradition given by al-‘Ayyāshī may solve this problem. He narrates from Salām ibn al-Mustanīr, from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said:

‘‘They have taken for themselves a name, that Allāh named no one with it except ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib — and there has not come its interpretation yet.’’ I said: ‘‘May I be your ransom ! When will its interpretation come?’’ He said: ‘‘When it comes, Allāh shall gather before Him the prophets and the believers, so that they should help him. And it is the words of Allāh, *And when Allāh made a covenant with the prophets ... and I* (too) *am of the bearers of witness with you.’’*

This tradition solves the problem. The problem arises if we take those traditions as an exegesis or explantion of the verse [but this tradition shows that they do not purport to give the exegesis; they aim at pointing at its interpretation]. And we have described earlier that interpretation is not meaning of the word, nor a thing related to word. Vide for detail the discourse under the following verse: *He it is Who sent down to thee the Book ...*[1] (3:7).

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[1] See *al-Mīzān* (Engl. Transl.), vol. 5, pp. 26 — 129. (*tr.*)

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللهُ قَوْماً كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ
حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللهُ لاَ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ــ ٨٦ . أُولَئِكَ
جَزَاؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللهِ وَالْمَلاَئِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ــ ٨٧ . خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا لاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ــ ٨٨ . إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا
مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ــ ٨٩ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ ازْدَادُوا كُفْراً لَنْ تُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الضَّالُّونَ ــ ٩٠ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْ
أَحَدِهِمْ مِلْءُ الأَرْضِ ذَهَباً وَلَوِ افْتَدَى بِهِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ــ ٩١ .

How shall Allāh guide a people who disbelieved after their believing, and they have borne witness that the Messenger was true and clear arguments had come to them? And Allāh does not guide the unjust people (86). (As for) *these, their reward is that upon them is the curse of Allāh and the angels and of men, all together* (87). *Abiding in it; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be respited* (88); *Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (89). *Surely those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in unblief, their repentance shall never be accepted, and these are they that have gone astray* (90). *Surely, those who disbelieve and die while they are unbelievers, the*

earth full of gold shall not be accepted from one of them, though he should offer to ransom himself with it; these it is who shall have a painful chastisement, and they shall have no helpers (91).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses may possibly be connected to the preceding ones dealing with the People of the Book; but apparently they are separate and revealed in another context.

QUR'ĀN: *How shall Allāh guide a people ... Allāh does not guide the unjust people:* The question shows improbability of the situation; that it is impossible for them to get guidance. The verse ends with the sentence, ''and Allāh does not guide the unjust people''. We have explained somewhere earlier that in such sentences the adjective explains the reason, that is, Allāh does not guide them because they are unjust, and as long as they persist in injustice they will not get Divine Guidance. Of course, they could not be debarred from that guidance if they repented and returned to Allāh.

The clause, ''and they have borne witness that the Messenger was true'': If the verse refers to the People of the Book, then the bearing of witness would refer to their realization that the signs foretold of the awaited prophet perfectly fitted on the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); and the next clause, ''and clear argument had come to them'', would refer to that reality. If, on the other hand, it refers to those who apostatized after professing Islam, then the ''witness'' refers to their affirmation of the truth of the Prophet — not only a ritual affirmation resulting from ignorance or tribal influence, but the one based on clear understanding, as the clause, ''and clear arguments had come to them'', indicates.

In any case, as the verse contains the clause, ''and they have borne witness that the Messenger was true'', it shows that the disbelief refers to their rejection of Faith after the truth was made clear to them, after the proof was completed against them. They had disbelieved only because they hated the truth, because they haughtily wrangled with the believers

and transgressed the limit unjustly. It is this injustice which does not let its people find their way to safety and deliverance.

There is another syntactic explanation given for the clause, ‘‘and they have borne witness’’. It has been said that it is in conjunction with the word *‘īmānihim’* (اِيْمَانِهِمْ = their belief) and it means, ‘who disbelieved after they had believed and after they had borne witness.’ Yet another explanation: The conjunctive, ‘‘and’’, in the clause, ‘‘and they have borne witness’’, has a circumstantial connotation, and the sentence means, ‘while they have borne witness’. In this case it would be a circumstantial clause.

QUR’ĀN: (As for) *these, their reward ... nor shall they be respited:* We have earlier explained how all the curse returns to such people. For detail see the Commentary of the following verse: *... these it is whom Allāh does curse, and those who curse do curse them* (too) (2:159) [1]

QUR’ĀN: *Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful: ‘‘Aṣlaḥū’’* (اَصْلَحُوا = amended, changed to better); it points to sincerity of repentance; that they repent with true heart, by which the impurity of disbelief is removed and their soul is purified by true belief. This word does not refer to doing good deeds; of course, good deeds follow the sincere repentance and are inseparable from it, yet they are not a part of repentance. The clause, ‘‘then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful’’, puts the reason to point to its unspoken result. Its connotation is as follows: then Allāh forgives them and has mercy on them, because Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

QUR’ĀN: *Surely those who disbelieve after their believing ... are they that have gone astray. Surely those who disbelieve and die ... they shall have no helpers:* The two verses together explain the reason of the verse in the beginning, ‘‘How shall Allāh guide a people who disbelieved after their believing.’’ It applies a general rule to a particular case. A man, who disbelieves after truth has been made manifest to him and proof completed against him, and who then does not sincerely return to Allāh, can belong to one of the two categories: Either he is an apostate who

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[1] See *al-Mīzān* (Engl. transl.), vol. 2, pp. 254 — 261.

disbelieves after believing, then increases in unbelief and goes on transgressing without ever thinking of amending his ways; Allāh shall not guide such a person nor will He accept his insincere repentance, because he does not turn to God with sincerity; he is totally lost, and there is no hope at all of his returning to the right path. Or, he is an unbeliever who dies in his disbelief, in his aversion to truth, without ever repenting; Allāh shall not guide him in the hereafter to the Garden, because he himself never tried to return to his Lord; and there is no substitude for this returning to Lord, for repentance. He therefore will have nothing to offer as ransom, nor will any intercessor or helper intercede on his behalf or help him.

In this context, look at the sentence, ‘‘and these are they that have gone astray ’’. In Arabic it is a ‘‘nominal sentence’’, because its predicate is a *nomen agentis, ‘aḍ-ḍāllūn’* (اَلضَّآلُّوْنَ = lit: strayers); such a sentence indicates permanence. Then there is the demonstrative pronoun *‘ulā’ika’* (أُولئِكَ = lit: those) which is used for distant objects; and it shows that they are removed far from mercy of Allāh. Thus there are three modes of emphasis which have been combined here: addition of a separate personal pronoun, ‘‘they’’, use of a noun (*nomen agentis*) for predicate; and the definite article *‘al’* (اَلْ = the) before the said predicate — all these together prove that they are hardened wrong-doers and transgressors for whom there is no hope of guidance.

Likewise, the last sentence, ‘‘and they shall have no helpers’’, proves that they will not get benefit of intercession — it is the intercessors who shall be the helpers on the Day of Resurrection. We have earlier explained that the use of plural, e.g., *intercessors,* in the verse 26:101 (*So we have no intercessors*) proves that there shall be intercessors on the Day of Judgment but the unbelievers shall not be able to avail themselves of their intercession. (See the details in the discourse of ‘‘Intercession’’ under the verse 2:48 [1] .) The same is the import of the plural, ‘‘helpers’’, in this place.

The second verse says that no ransom shall be accepted from them, nor will they get any helper. It is because these things are substitutes, which are used when the original thing is not available. They lost their chance of repentance in this life and there is nothing that can be a

[1] See *al-Mīzān* (Engl. transl.), vol. 1, pp. 226 — 265. (*tr.*)

substitute of repentance in the hereafter.

It also shows that the clause, ‘‘and die while they are unbelievers’’, implies that they died without repentance. As such, there is no conflict between this apparently exclusive statement and the following verse which says: *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says. ‘‘Surely now I repent ’’; nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement* (4:18). In this verse, *when death comes,* means, when the death approaches and man sees the signs of the next world and his ties with this world are cut off. Obviously at this point of time the door of repentance is closed on him.

‘al-Mil’ ’ (اَلمِلْءُ = a quantity that fills a pot); *‘mil’u ’l-arḍi dhahaban’* (مِلْءُ الاَرْضِ ذَهَباً = a quantity of gold that would fill the earth); in this phrase, the earth is taken for a pot that is filled by gold. It is an imaginative *‘al-isti‘ārah bi ’l-kināyah,* (اَلاِسْتِعَارَةُ بِالْكِنَايَةِ = extended metaphor).

TRADITIONS

It is reported in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* about the verses, *How shall Allāh guide a people ...:* ‘‘It is said that the verses were revealed about a man from the Anṣār, al-Ḥārith ibn Suwayd ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit by name; he had treacherously killed al-Mujadhdhar ibn Dhiyād al-Balawī, fled (from Medina), renounced Islam and reached Mecca. Thereafter he felt remorse and sent a message to his people to ask the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) whether he would be allowed to repent. They asked (the Messenger of Allāh); so the verses were revealed: *How shall Allāh guide a people who disbelieved after their believing ... Except those who repent after that and amend ...* A man from his clan took these verses to him. (Hearing them) he said: ‘I surely know that you are truthful, and the Messenger of Allāh is truer than you, and Allāh is the most truthful of the three.’ So he returned to Medina, repented and his Islam was good. It is reported from Mujāhid and as-Suddī; and the same is narrated from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.).’’

Ibn Isḥāq and Ibn al-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘Verily al-Ḥārith ibn Suwayd killed al-Mujadhdhar ibn Dhiyād and

Qays ibn Zayd (from Banū Ḍubay'ah) during the Battle of Uḥud, and then went over to Quraysh, and remained at Mecca. Thereafter he sent message to his brother, al-Julās, expressing his desire of repentance, so that he could return to his people. Thereupon, Allāh sent these verses about him: *How shall Allāh guide a people ...*'' (Then the story continues as above.) (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This story has been narrated through other chains, and there are many differences among them: For example, 'Ikrimah says that it was revealed about Abū 'Āmir ar-Rāhib, al-Ḥārith ibn Suwayd ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit and Waḥwaḥ ibn al-Aslat (among twelve persons) who had renounced Islam and went over to Quraysh. Later they wrote to their families whether their repentance would be accepted. Then these verses were revealed.

Another example is found in *Majma'u 'l-bayān,* that the verse, *Surely those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in unbelief ...*, was revealed about the eleven companions of al-Ḥārith ibn Suwayd. When al-Ḥārith returned (to Medina), they said: 'We shall remain in Mecca in our disbelief as long as we wished; later on if and when we wanted to return (to Medina) we would return, and there would come for us too what had been revealed about al-Ḥārith.' When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) conquered Mecca, some of them re-entered into Islam and their repentance was accepted. And it was revealed about those of them who had died in disbelief, *Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are unbelievers ...* (This report has been attributed to some exegetes.)

There is a third view that it was revealed about the People of the Book. Others say that the verse, *Surely those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in unbelief ...*, was revealed particularly for the Jews, because at first they believed (in Mūsā), then disbelieved in 'Īsā, then increased in unbelief by rejecting Muḥammad (blessings of Allāh be on him and his progeny and the two prophets).

There are other explanations given by other people.

If you ponder on these views, explanations and traditions, you will realize that all are based on personal opinions of the ancient exegetes —

as some later ones have remarked. As for the tradition attributed to aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), it is *al-mursalah* and weak. Moreover, it is possible for a verse to have more than one cause for its revelation; and Allāh knows better.

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لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ــ ٩٢ . كُلُّ ٱلطَّعَامِ كَانَ حِلاًّ لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا
مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَاةُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَاةِ
فَاتْلُوهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ــ ٩٣ . فَمَنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللهِ الْكَذِبَ مِنْ
بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّالِمُونَ ــ ٩٤ . قُلْ صَدَقَ ٱللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا
مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفاً وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ــ ٩٥ .

Never shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) *out of what you love; and whatever thing you spend, Allāh surely knows it* (92). *All food was lawful to the Children of Israel — except that which Israel had forbidden to himself — before the Torah was revealed. Say: ''Bring then the Torah and read it, if you are truthful''* (93). *Then whoever fabricates a lie against Allāh after this, these it is that are the unjust* (94). *Say: ''Allāh has spoken the truth; therefore follow the religion of Ibrāhīm, the upright one; and he was not one of the polytheists''* (95).

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COMMENTARY

The connection of the first verse with the preceding ones is not clear; possibly it was not revealed with the remaining verses (which are clearly

connected to each other). We had encountered a similar difficulty in deciding the revelation date of the verse: *Say:''O People of the Book! come to a word common between us and you ...''* (3:64).

Someone has tried to show its relation with the other verses. He says: The verse like the rest of the talk is addressed to the Children of Israel. Previously they were admonished and rebuked because they loved this world, and preferred wealth and riches to the Divine Religion. Now it says to them: You tell a lie when you claim a special relationship with Allāh and His prophets, and when you say that you are pious and righteous ones. See what the truth is; you love your good property and sit on it refusing to spend from it in Allāh's way. You only spend from undesirable things which you do not care about. But man can never attain to righteousness unless he spends out of what he loves, that is, from good properties; and if you spend out of it Allāh shall preserve it for you and give you its reward in the hereafter.

That is the gist of what he has written; but, as you see, it is stretching the point too far.

As for the rest of the verses, their connection with the preceding one is quite clear.

QUR'ĀN: *Never shall you attain to righteousness until you spend* (benevolently) *out of what you love:''an-Nayl''* (اَلنَّيْلُ = to reach, to attain); *'al-birr'* (اَلبِرُّ) means comprehensive good-doing. ar-Rāghib says: '' *'al-bar-r'* (اَلبَرُّ = land) is opposite of *'al-baḥr'* (اَلبَحْرُ = sea); it led to the idea of spaciousness, and from that is derived *'al-barr'* = spaciousness (or comprehensiveness) in good-doing.''

''Good-doing'' is used in an unrestricted sense. It covers the action of heart (like true belief and pure intention) as well as the action of body (like worship of Allāh and spending in His way). (We have used the word ''righteousness'' in translation to convey this comprehensive goodness.) And it is this very sense in which this word has been used in the following verse: *It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is the one who believes in Allāh and the Last Day, the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for* (the emancipation of) *the captives, and keeps up prayer and pays the zakāt;*

and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflicts (2:177).

Reading this verse in conjunction with the one under discussion, one may clearly understand that spending wealth out of love for Allāh is an essential part of righteousness; and making righteousness dependent on this spending shows the utmost importance attached to it particularly. It is because man by nature has too much attachment with the wealth he has gathered; he thinks that it is a part of his being, if it goes then a portion of his life is gone. There is no such difficulty in other acts of worship and good deeds where nothing seems to be lost.

It is not difficult, in view of the above discourse, to see the weakness of an exegete's explanation that 'righteousness is spending from what you love.' Perhaps he thought that the verse is framed in the style of the sentence, 'You cannot get rid of hunger until you eat!' The verse 2:177 is enough to show inaptness of this explanation.

The same verse (2:177) also makes it clear that *'al-birr'* has been used in its literal sense, that is, comprehensiveness in good-doing, because it explains it by enumerating all-encompassing good of faith and deed. And it shows the inappropriateness of an explanation that *'al-birr'* means bounty and favour of Allāh; or of someone else's interpretation that it means the Garden.

QUR'ĀN: *and whatever thing you spend, Allāh surely knows it:* It strengthens and gladdens the spenders' hearts. They should know that what they have spent from their cherished wealth and property is not wasted, has not gone unnoticed, because Allāh Who has enjoined them to do so, knows their spending and what they spend.

QUR'ĀN: *All food was lawful to the Children of Israel — except that which Israel had forbidden to himself — before the Torah was revealed:''aṭ-Ṭa'ām''* (اَلطَّعَامُ = whatever is eaten); the people of Ḥijāz [in whose language the Qur'ān was revealed] use this word particularly for wheat, and it is this meaning they understand when the word is used without any association. *'al-Ḥill'* (اَلْحِلُّ = lawfulness) is opposite of *'al-ḥurmah* (اَلْحُرْمَةُ = unlawfulness, prohibition); probably it is derived from *'al-ḥall'* (اَلْحَلُّ = to open) which is opposite of '*al-'aqd'* or *'al-'aql'* (اَلْعَقْدُ , اَلْعَقْلُ = to tie, to bind) — thus lawfulness has a connotation of openness,

unrestrictedness. Israel was (the acquired name of) the Prophet Ya'qūb; he got this name because he endeavoured hard in the way of Allāh; the People of the Book say that it means 'one who vanquished God and prevailed against Him'. The Torah says that he wrestled with God in a place called Peniel and vanquished Him [130]. But the Qur'ān rejects it and the reason says that such thing is impossible.

The clause, ''except that which Israel had forbidden to himself,'' is exception from the above-mentioned ''food''. The next clause, ''before the Torah was revealed'', is related to the verb ''was lawful''; it means: Allāh had not forbidden any food to the Children of Israel before the Torah was revealed, except that which Israel had forbidden for himself.

The following sentence, ''Say: 'Bring them the Torah and read it, if you are truthful,' '' indicates that the Jews were not admitting that every food was lawful to them before the Torah was revealed. They had to say so because they did not accept that Divine Laws could be abrogated. (We have described it under the verse 2:106 [131], *Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it*.) No wonder, they disputed the words of Allāh where He says: *Wherefore for the iniquity of those who are Jews did We disallow to them the good things which had been made lawful to them* (4:160).

Likewise, the last verse, *Say: 'Allāh has spoken the truth; therefore follow the religion of Ibrāhīm ... '',* indicates that they were trying to create doubts in the minds of the Muslims through these denials. They did not admit that every food was lawful to them before the revelation of the Torah; nor that many lawful things were forbidden to them because of their iniquity; and through these denials they disputed the claim of the Messenger of Allāh (which was based on Divine Revelation) that his religion was that of Ibrāhīm, and that it was the natural religion free from excess and shortcoming. The Jews said: ''How can it be true, when Ibrāhīm was a Jew in religion, on the *sharī'ah* of Torah? How could religion of Ibrāhīm allow what was forbidden in the Torah, when abrogation is not allowed?''

It is clear now that the verse intends to answer the questions which the Jews had put about, and by which they had tried to confuse the

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130 See Genesis 32:24 — 30. (*tr.*)

131 See *al-Mīzān* (Engl. transl.), vol. 2, pp. 42 — 52. (*pub.*)

Muslims. Obviously, they had not put these questions directly to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), but to the believers during their social contacts. This inference is supported by the fact that the Qur'ān has not mentioned here their objection or question at all, unlike many occasions where it has quoted their sayings before replying. For example, *And the Jews say: ''The hand of Allāh is tied up''* (5:64); *And they say: ''Fire shall not touch us but for a few days''* (2:80); *And they say: ''Our hearts are covered''* (2:88); there are several such verses.

Moreover, the verses 3:99 — 100, coming soon after this talk clearly show that the Jews were trying to mislead the believers through such insidious propaganda: *Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you hinder him who believes from the way of Allāh? ... '' O you who believe! if you obey a party from among those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back as unbelievers after you have believed.*

In short, the Jews objected as follows: How can your Prophet be true as he accepts validity of abrogation? He says that God had disallowed many lawful things to the Jews because of their iniquity. But it entails abrogation of a previously ordained law, which is not acceptable in case of Allāh. What is unlawful will remain unlawful forever; it is not possible for a Divine Law to change.

Allāh directed His Prophet to answer them as follows: The Torah says that every food was lawful to the Children of Israel before the revelation of the Torah. Therefore bring the Torah and read it if you are truthful in your claim. (*All food was lawful ... if you are truthful*.) But if you refuse to do so, then you must admit that you have fabricated a lie against Allāh and that you are unjust. (*Then whoever fabricates a lie against Allāh after this, these it is that are the unjust*.) It will prove to you that I am truthful in my mission. You should therefore follow my religion which is the religion of Ibrāhīm, the upright one; (*Say: 'Allāh has spoken the truth; therefore follow the religion of Ibrāhīm, the upright one; and he was not one of the polytheists.''*)

The exegetes have variously explained these verses — each in his own way. But all have said that the verses aim to refute the objection of the Jews concerning abrogation — as we have said above.

The strangest explanation (given by one of them) is as follows:

''The verse replies to a Jewish objection regarding abrogation. It appears that the Jews had said: 'O Muḥammad! If you are, as you claim,

on the religion of Ibrāhīm and the succeeding prophets, then how is it that you have allowed, for example, camel meat that was forbidden to him and them? And now that you have made lawful what was unlawful to them, you should not claim that you affirm their truth and are on their religion; nor should you especially mention Ibrāhīm.'

''The reply runs as follows: 'Every food was lawful to all people including the Children of Israel. But the Children of Israel had forbidden some things to themselves by indulging into sins and evils, as Allāh says: *Wherefore for the iniquity of those who are Jews did We disallow to them the good things which had been made lawful for them ...'* (4:160). Therefore, the word, 'Israel' , refers to the whole nation, to all the Children of Israel, not to Israel (Ya'qūb) alone. And such usage in tribes' names is common. The clause, 'Israel had forbidden to himself' , actually means that the Children of Israel indulged in injustice and committed sins, as a result of which Allāh forbade it to them. The clause, 'before the Torah was revealed', qualifies the preceding verb, 'Israel had forbidden to himself'; that is, what the Israelites had forbidden to themselves before the revelation of the Torah. If we take, 'Israel', to mean Ya'qūb alone, then this clause (*before the Torah was revealed*) would be superfluous, because everybody knows that Ya'qūb had preceded the revelation of the Torah.''

This is the gist of what he has written. Someone else has given the same explanation with one difference. He writes: ''The clause, 'that which Israel had forbidden to himself', means that the Children of Israel had themselves forbidden those things to themselves, making laws of their own, without any revelation from God; in the same way as the Arabs of pre-Islamic days were doing and which Allāh has mentioned in the Qur'ān.''

Both exegetes have strained the words to an intolerable limit, which no knowledgeable person would agree with. They have diverted the whole talk from its proper line. Actually, they were misled in this way because they thought that the clause, ''before the Torah was revealed'', was related to the clause, ''Israel had forbidden'' — while in fact it qualifies the words in the beginning, ''All food was lawful''; and the exception clause, ''except that which Israel had forbidden to himself'', is just a parenthetical clause.

Consequently, there is no reason why ''Israel'' should be interpreted

as ‘‘the Children of Israel’’, as they have done, thinking that without it the verse could not be explained!

Now we come to the usage of tribes’ names. It is true that the Arabs say, Bakr, Taghlib, Nizār and ‘Adnān, when they actually mean, the children of Bakr, the children of Taghlib, the children of Nizār and the children of ‘Adnān, respectively. But we have never seen them — at the time when the Qur’ān was revealed — using ‘‘Israel’’ for ‘‘the Children of Israel’’. Nor has the Qur’ān used this word in that sense anywehere else; although it has mentioned ‘‘the Children of Israel’’ in about forty places, including this very verse: ‘‘All food was lawful to the Children of Israel — except that which Israel had forbidden to himself.’’

Let us ask them one thing: What is the difference (according to their explanation) between the two clauses? The Qur’ān refers to them first as ‘‘the Children of Israel’’ and then immediately after that as ‘‘Israel’’. Why this change if both words mean the same? If their explanation is correct, then was it not necessary to use the same word in both places, lest there be any confusion? And confusion was bound to occur; because, from the point of view of these two writers, the whole lot of the exegetes was miled into thinking that Israel refers to Ya‘qūb, not to his children!

The best proof to show that the name ‘‘Israel’’ refers to Ya‘qūb alone, is the singular masculine pronoun, ‘‘to himself’’, used for ‘‘Israel’’. Had ‘‘Israel’’ stood for ‘‘the tribe of Israel’’ or ‘‘the Children of Israel’’, it was essential to say ‘‘to itself’’ or ‘‘to themselves’’.

QUR’ĀN: *Say: ‘‘Bring then the Torah and read it, if you are truthful’’:* So that it may be seen who is right, I or you. Allāh guides His Prophet to reply them in this way.

QUR’ĀN: *Then whoever fabricates a lie against Allāh after this, these it is that are the unjust:* Apparently it is Allāh’s talk addressed to His Prophet; accordingly, the aim is to strengthen and gladden the Prophet’s heart, by declaring that it is his enemies, the Jews, who are the unjust, because they fabricate lies against Allāh. It is an indirect adverse allusion to the Jews.

There is another syntactical possibility: It may be a continuation of the reply given to the Jews by the Prophet, although the second person singular pronoun used in the demonstrative pronoun *‘dhālika’* (ذٰلِكَ =

this) does not fit this explanation. However, according to this explanation too, the sentence would be just veiled aside, giving the vanquished adversary a chance to save his face — because it does not clearly say that the Jews are the unjust ones. Putting the matter in general terms gives the enemy an opportunity to surrender gracefully.

It is the same style that has been used in the following verse which says: *And most surely we or you are on a right way or in manifest error* (34:24).

The demonstrative pronoun, ‘‘this’’, in ‘‘after this’’ points to the explanation and proof offered to the Jews.

Why has this proviso, ‘‘after this’’, been added here? Is not he, who fabricates a lie against Allāh, unjust in all circumstances? The fact is that he cannot be called unjust until proof has been clearly explained to him — as some scholars have said. However, the sentence, ‘‘these it is that are the unjust’’, is an exclusive one, and it implies that such fabricators cannot be but unjust.

QUR’ĀN: *Say: ‘‘Allāh has spoken the truth; therefore follow the religion of Ibrāhīm ... ’’:* As the truth is on my side (in what 1 have told you and called you to), you should follow my religion; also you should admit that camel meat, for example, is a good thing made lawful by Allāh, and that Allāh had forbidden it to you as a punishment for your injustice and transgression — as He has said.

The clause, ‘‘therefore follow the religion of Ibrāhīm’’, is a sort of indirect invitation to follow the Prophet’s religion. It was not mentioned directly because: first, the Jews affirmed the truth of Ibrāhīm’s religion; secondly, the present wording shows that the religion to which they are invited is the upright and natural one — after all, nature does not prevent man from eating good sustenance given by Allāh, including meat.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘Whenever Israel ate camel meat, he felt throbbings of pain in his sides. Therefore, he forbade camel meat to himself. And it was (long) before the revelation of the Torah. When the Torah was revealed, (Mūsā) neither forbade it, nor ate it.’’ (*al-Kāfī; at-*

Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: An almost similar tradition is narrated through the Sunnī chains. The verbs in the clause, *neither for bade it nor ate it,* refer to Mūsā (a.s.) whose name, although not mentioned, is clearly understood. The verb, *‘lam ya’kulhu’* (لَمْ يَأْكُلْهُ = did not eat it) may alternatively be read from the paradigm *‘at-taf‘īl’* as *‘lam yu’akkilhu’* (لَمْ يُؤَكِّلْهُ = did not feed it, i.e., did not tell them to eat it). The dictionary, *Tāju ’l-‘arūs,* says that the verb *‘al-akl’* (اَلْاَكْلُ = to eat) when conjugated on the paradigms of *‘at-taf‘īl* (اَلتَّفْعِيْلُ) and *‘al-mufā‘alah’* (اَلْمُفَاعَلَةُ), has the same meaning. It means that *‘at-ta’kīl’* (اَلتَّأْكِيْلُ = to feed) and *‘al-mu’ākalah’* (اَلْمُؤَاكَلَةُ = to eat together) have the same connotation.

* * * * *

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكاً وَهُدًى
لِلْعَالَمِينَ ــ ٩٦ . فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ
آمِناً وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلاً وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
فَإِنَّ اللهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ــ ٩٧ .

Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakkah, blessed and a guidance for the worlds (96). *In it are clear signs, the standing place of Ibrāhīm; and whoever enters it shall be secure; and for the sake of Allāh, pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men,* (upon) *every one who can afford the journey to it, and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allāh is Self-sufficient* (independent) *of the worlds* (97).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The two verses are in reply to another objection which the Jews were putting to the believers, because of the ‘‘abrogation’’. Their target, this time, was the change of *qiblah* from Baytu ’1-Maqdis to the Ka‘bah. We have explained under the verse 2:144 (... *turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque* ...) that the change of *qiblah* was a very important matter which had profound effect, materially as well as spiritually, on the People of the Book, especially the Jews; apart from the fact that it offended their views about abrogation. That is why they vehemently objected to it and

contentions and conflicts between them and the Muslims continued for a long time after the change of *qiblah.*

It may be inferred from the verses that they had combined two elements in their objection: their aversion to abrogation, and a denial that the new direction of *qiblah* had anything to do with Ibrāhīm. How could the Ka'bah be considered the *qiblah* of Ibrāhīm, when Allāh had appointed Baytu 'l-Maqdis as *qiblah?* This new rule entails abrogation of Ibrāhīm's law — admittedly the true religion — when we know that abrogation is impossible and void.

The verse deals with it as follows: The Ka'bah was appointed as the House of worship long before other houses like Baytu 'l-Maqdis were built. Undoubtedly it was Ibrāhīm who built it and dedicated it for Divine Worship; there are many clear signs, like the standing place of Ibrāhīm, which prove this fact. Baytu 'l-Maqdis, on the other hand, was built by Sulaymān [1] who came centuries after Ibrāhīm.

QUR'ĀN: *Most surely the first house ... for the worlds:* Meaning of house is well-known; that the Ka'bah was appointed for men, means that it was dedicated in order that people should worship Allāh in that place. It was a means of Divine Worship, helping men and making it easier for them to pray to Allāh, by journey to, or facing towards it; and in various ways turning their attention to Him. All this may be inferred from the phrase ''blessed and a guidance for the worlds''. Also the expression ''one at Bakkah'' hints at it. The word *''bakkah''* (بَكَّةَ) means gathering of people, and its use here points to the fact that there is always a large gathering of people therein who are engaged in circumambulation, prayer and other rites of worship.

The wording however does not show that the Ka'bah was the first House built on the earth or appointed for the benefit of men.

Bakkah — refers to the land on which the Ka'bah stands; it has been given this name because there is always a huge gathering of people there. There are also other explanations: (1) Bakkah is Mecca, the letter *'m'* (م) has been changed to *'b'* (ب), as it has been done in *'lāzim'* (لَازِمْ) and *'lāzib'* (لَازِبْ) or *'rātim'* (رَاتِمْ) and *'rātib'* (رَاتِبْ) etc.; (2) It is a name of the Meccan Sanctuary; or (3) of the Sacred Mosque; or (4) of the area of

[1] It was founded by Dāwūd and completed by Sulaymān. (*tr.*)

circumambulation.

''al-Mubārakah'' (اَلْمُبَارَكَةُ) is on the paradigm of *al-mufā'alah* (اَلْمُفَاعَلَةُ) from the root word *al-barakah* (اَلْبَرَكَةُ = abundant good); it has been translated here as 'blessed'; it means bestowal of abundant good on the House, making it blessed. Abundant good covers good of both worlds; but in this verse it has been put face to face with the phrase ''a guidance for the worlds'' and it indicates that the blessing refers to worldly good. The best of such blessings are abundance of sustenance in Mecca, and deep yearning of people to go there for pilgrimage, to present themselves there and to keep it in highest regard. In other words, it would show the fulfilment of Ibrāhīm's prayer:

> *O our Lord! surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley, uncultivable, near Thy Sacred House, our Lord! that they may establish prayers; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful* (14:37).

The Ka'bah is a guidance, as it shows the people the way to their happiness in the hereafter, leads them to nobility and Divine Nearness; because, Allāh has designated it for worship, and has prescribed various prayers, acts of worship and rituals to be performed there; also, it has remained the longed for destination of believers and a place of worship for worshippers.

The Qur'ān shows that it was in Ibrāhīm's time — after he had completed the construction of the Ka'bah — that pilgrimage was prescribed for the first time: Allāh says: *And We enjoined Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl* (saying): *Purify* (you two) *My House for those who make circuit and those who abide* (in it for devotion) *and those who bow down* (and) *those who prostrate themselves* (2:125). And He had enjoined Ibrāhīm as follows: *And proclaim among men the Ḥajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path* (22:27). This verse clearly says that this call, this cry, would surely be answered with general acceptance by the people from near and afar, from various clans and tribes.

Also the Qur'ān proves that this divinely-initiated ''symbol'' was firmly established and quite well-known in the days of Shu'ayb (a.s.). Allāh quotes him as saying to Mūsā (a.s.): *I desire to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you should serve me for*

eight years (lit.: pilgrimages); *but if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will* (28:27). He used the word ‘‘pilgrimages’’ for ‘‘years’’. There can be only one explanation for it: the years were counted in terms of pilgrimage, as it happened every year.

Also there are many points in Ibrāhīm’s invocation which show that the House all the time served as a worship centre, was a symbol of guidance. (For detail see ch. 14 — Ibrāhīm).

The Arabs even in the days of ignorance, held the House in reverence and performed its pilgrimage, rightly believing it to be a part of Ibrāhīm’s *sharī‘ah.* History says that other nations too accorded respect to it. This in itself is a sort of guidance because it fixes man’s mind on remembrance of Allāh. So far as the period after the advent of Islam is concerned, Ka‘bah’s guidance needs no elaboration. Its fame encompasses the East and the West. The Ka‘bah is always present in people’s minds and hearts. The Muslims turn to it every where and at all times: during worship and prayer, while standing or sitting, for slaughtering animals and in a number of other religious affairs.

In this way, the House is a guidance (with all stages of guiding), be it just attention of mind or complete surrender to Allāh — the stage which may be attained only by the purified servants of Allāh — from among those who are free of sin and error.

Moreover, it guides the Muslim’s world to their worldly blessings, because it unifies their goal, unites the *ummah* and opens for them avenues of benefit and profit. Also it is a guidance for the others, because it makes them appreciate the fruits of this unity and they realize how beneficial it is to unite all separate forces together.

It appears from the above that:

First: The Ka‘bah is a guidance to the happiness of this world and the next; and it encompasses all the stages of guidance. In short, the guidance is general and unconditional.

Second: It is a guidance for the whole world, not for a particular world or special group like the progeny of Ibrāhīm, or the Arabs, or the Muslims. It is because of unrestrictedness of the guidance.

QUR’ĀN: *In it are clear signs, the standing place of Ibrāhīm:* The ‘‘signs’’ are qualified by the adjective ‘‘clear’’, it particularizes the signs to a certain extent. Yet the ambiguity, the vagueness remains. But the

context demands that the distinctions and special qualities of the House be clearly shown, in order that the audience may know why it has got precedence over all other houses of worship. It requires definitive description of its distinctions, free from ambiguous expression or vague depiction. Looking from this angle, it becomes clear that the next phrases and clauses have been put there as classifications of the ''clear signs''. What are the clear signs? They are the standing place of Ibrāhīm, its being a sanctuary and place of safety, and obligatoriness of its pilgrimage for those who can afford.

But it does not mean that the three clauses are in *'' 'aṭfu 'l-bayān''* (عَطْفُ الْبَيَانْ = explicative apposition) to the phrase ''clear signs'' or serve as its *''al-badal''* (اَلْبَدَلُ = substitute). Otherwise it would require reconstruction of all the sentences. For example, it will have to be rewritten as follows: ''These signs are the standing place of Ibrāhīm, and safety for those who enter it, and its pilgrimage for him who may afford the journey.'' Thus we will have to reduce a whole sentence (*whoever enters it shall be secure*) to a single word ''security'' (it makes no difference whether we take that sentence as an imperative or a declarative one), and to change the imperative sentence (*and for the sake of Allāh, pilgrimage to the House is incumbent ...*) into a declarative one and then setting it in conjunction with the preceding sentence; and this too will have to be reduced to a single word. Alternatively we will have to add *'an'* (اَنْ) of *maṣdar* before both sentences. But the context does not agree with all these alterations.

The fact is that the three sentences are independent; each has a certain connotation — either declarative or imperative — and all three together describe the clear signs. It is as we say: Zayd is a noble man; he is the son of a great father; his house is always open to guests; and we should follow in his footsteps. [Thus the three independent sentences explain the nobility of Zayd.]

QUR'ĀN: *the standing place of Ibrāhīm:* It is a subject with its predicate omitted; the complete sentence would be, ''There is in it the standing place of Ibrāhīm.'' It is the stone that has the imprint of the feet of Ibrāhīm. It is reported that the stone is fixed in the place now called *''Maqāmu Ibrāhīm''* (مَقَامُ اِبْرَاهِيْمُ = standing place of Ibrāhīm) on the

periphery of the circumambulation area [1], facing *''al-Multazam''* (اَلْمُلْتَزَمُ = the Ka'bah's wall between its door and the Black Stone). It is this stone that Abū Ṭālib, the uncle of the Prophet, refers to in his well-known poem:

And the footprints of Ibrāhīm in the stone identify,
With his (i.e., Muḥammad's) *feet — when they are bare.*

Sometimes this phrase gives the idea that there is in the House — or the House itself — the place where Ibrāhīm stood or stayed for Divine Worship.

Another syntactical possibility: We may say that the implied sentence is as follows, 'In it are clear signs, and they are the standing place of Ibrāhīm, and security and pilgrimage'; but the last words (i.e. 'and security and pilgrimage') have been omitted for brevity because the next sentences allude to them. The next sentences, (*and whoever enters it ..., and for the sake of Allāh pilgrimage ...*) give imperative connotation, but are constructed as declarative ones.

This verse, therefore, shows one of the wonderful Qur'ānic styles: It uses a talk (which has its own theme) — to serve another purpose — it is placed in such a way as to point to the other meaning too. Thus one sentence serves two purposes without sacrificing either connotation. For example, sometimes it puts direct quotation in an indirect narration: ... *everyone of them believes in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers: We make no difference between any of His messengers* (2:285). Two examples are found in the verse 2:258 (*Did you not see him who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord ...*) and also 2:259 (*Or like him who passed by a town, and it had fallen down upon its roofs ...*); and we have pointed to this in the Commentary of the second verse. Other examples are seen in 26:88 — 89 (*The day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allāh with a heart submissive*); and also 2:177 (*It is not righteousness that you turn your faces ... , but righteousness is the one who ...*) wherein *righteousness* has been used for ''righteous''; the same modality is seen in 2:171 (*And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears not more than a call and a cry*). This modality is used in most of

[1] Now it is enclosed in a hemispherical glass through which the imprints may be seen. (*tr.*)

the Qur'anic parables.

The modality used in this verse, *In it are clear signs ... independent of the worlds,* which frequently switches from declarative to imperative mood and back, is the same as that employed in the verses: *And remember Our servants Ayyūb, when he called upon his Lord: The Satan has afflicted me with weariness and torment. Stamp your foot, here is a cool washing place and a drink. And We gave him his family and the like of them with them, as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder to those possessed of understanding. And take in your hand a bundle of rushes and beat her with it and do not break your oath; surely We found him patient; most excellent the servant! Surely he was frequent in returning* (to Allāh) (38:41 — 44).

However, the explanation given above is totally different from that given by some people who speak in term of explicative apposition, and which we have rejected earlier. If one thinks it necessary to treat it as an explicative apposition, then it is far better to treat only one phrase ''the Standing Place of Ibrāhīm'', in this way; and treat the next two sentences as independent ones, which by their meanings point to other two explicative appositions which are deleted for brevity — as we have done. The completed sentence then would be as follows: In it are clear signs, the Standing Place of Ibrāhīm, and the security of the visitor, and the pilgrimage of one who can afford it.

There is no doubt whatsoever that each of the above-mentioned things is a clear sign that leads to Allāh and reminds one of His majesty. What is a sign? It is a thing that points to something else. And there is no sign that may lead to Allāh, may remind His servants of His majesty, greater and clearer in people's eyes than the Standing Place of Ibrāhīm, the sanctuary that provides security to the one who enters it, and the worship and rites which are performed by millions of people year after year and which the alternations of days and nights cannot set aside.

It should be made clear that it is not necessary for a ''sign'' to be a super-natural thing that should contradict the normal system of nature; neither miraculousness is a part of this word's meaning, nor its use in the Qur'ān is confined to this sense. Allāh says: *Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it* (2:106). No doubt, abrogated laws of the *sharī'ah* are included in the meaning of the word, ''signs'', here. Also He says: *Do you build on every height a*

monument (lit. sign)? *Vain is it that you do* (26:128). There are many such verses in the Qur'ān.

Now you may see how untenable is the position of those who say that only the Standing Place of Ibrāhīm is a ''clear sign'', and that the security and the pilgrimage are not related in any way to the ''clear signs''.

The same is the position of those who insist that the phrase ''clear signs'' refers to various special characteristics of the Ka'bah. (We do not think it necessary to quote them here; whoever so desires, should refer to some detailed books of exegesis.) Such an explanation takes it for granted that ''signs'' means miraculous and super-natural things; but as we have explained just now, there is no evidence to prove it.

The fact is that the sentence ''Whoever enters it shall be secure'', points to a legislative law, not to any creative characteristic. Apparently it is a declarative sentence which refers to a law that was in force since long and had made the House a place of security. This may be inferred from the invocation of Ibrāhīm quoted in the ch.14 (Ibrāhīm) and ch. 2 (The COW). This right of sanctuary was recognized even by the Arabs of pre-Islamic time, and its origin may be traced to Ibrāhīm's days.

Some exegetes have said: The sentence declares that violence and upheaval, turmoil and turbulence cannot happen in, or reach, the sanctuary. But experience refutes this explanation; we know how many battles and wars were fought in that area; how much distance and violence had occurred there — and especially before this verse was revealed. Also the verse 29:67 (*Do they not see that We have made a sacred territory secure, while men are carried off by force from around them?*) does not show any creative security inherent in the nature of Ka'bah. It only points to the fact that safety and security surrounded the sacred area, because people respected the sanctity of the House and accorded it full honour as it was established by the *sharī'ah* of Ibrāhīm; thus ultimately it depends on Divine Legislation, on the law ordained by Allāh.

This view is further supported by the invocations of Ibrāhīm as he implored Allāh: *My Lord! make this city secure* (14:35); *My Lord! make it a secure town* (2:126). He prayed to Allāh to make Mecca a secure town, and Allāh answered his prayer by promulgating a law to that effect and implanting acceptance of this law in people's hearts so that they

could continue respecting this sanctuary generation after generation.

QUR'ĀN: *and for the sake of Allāh, pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men,* (upon) *every one who can afford the journey to it: ''al-Ḥijj''* (اَلْحِجُّ), which has also been recited *'al-ḥajj'* (اَلْحَجُّ), literally means, to intend, to aim; then it was reserved for intention of, or repairing to, the House in a particular manner laid down by the *sharī'ah; 'sabīlan'* (سَبِيْلاً = lit.: way; translated here as, the journey) is *'at-tamyīz'* (اَلتَّمْيِيْزُ = accusative of specification) related to the verb ''can afford''.

The verse approvingly describes the institution of *'ḥajj'* as a law that was ordained for the *sharī'ah* of Ibrāhīm; as Allāh describes in the verse 22:27, where He mentions His order to Ibrāhīm: *And proclaim among men the hall; they will come to you ...* It appears from the above, that the modality of the sentence ''and for the sake of Allāh ...'' is the same as that of the preceding one ''and whoever enters it shall be secure''. Each is a declarative sentence which approvingly describes a previously ordained law. Alternatively it is possible to treat both as imperative sentences meant to reconfirm the two Ibrāhīmic laws. But the context obviously supports the first explanation.

QUR'ĀN: *and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allāh is Self-sufficient* (independent) *of the worlds.* Disbelief, in this verse, means disbelieving in a law, in a branch of religion; like the disbelief resulting from neglect of prayer or *zakāt.* The word in this context means neglecting the important law of *ḥajj.* In this clause, the effect has been used to describe the reason; in other words it says, 'Whoever neglects *ḥajj* becomes a disbeliever.' On the other hand, the clause ''Allāh is Self-sufficient'' puts the reason in place of effect; that is, he will not cause any harm to Allāh because Allāh is Self-sufficient. The full sentence, therefore, means as follows: Whoever neglects *ḥajj* becomes a disbeliever, but he, by his disbelief, cannot harm Allāh in any way because Allāh is Self-sufficient and independent of the worlds.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Shahrāshūb narrates from the Leader of the Faithful ('Alī, a.s.)

about the words of Allāh, *Most surely the first house appointed for men ...*, as follows: ‘‘A man asked him whether it was the first house (built). He said: ‘No. Surely there were houses (built) before it, but it is the first House appointed for men, blessed, in which there is guidance, mercy and blessing. And it was Ibrāhīm who first built it; then an Arabian group from the (tribe of) Jurhum built it, then it was demolished, so the al-‘Amāliqah rebuilt it; again it fell down and then the Quraysh rebuilt it.’ ’’

Ibnu ’l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated through the chain of ash-Sha‘bī, from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, that he said, explaining this verse: ‘‘There were houses before that; but it was the first House made for the worship of Allāh.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has also narrated a similar tradition through Ibn Jarīr from Maṭar (ibn Ṭuhmān). And there are numerous traditions of the same theme.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘The land on which the House stands is Bakkah; and the town is Mecca.’’ (*‘Ilalu ’sh-sharāyi‘*)

The same book quotes the same Imām as saying: ‘‘Bakkah was named Bakkah because people are crowded therein.’’

The author says: *‘‘Yabakkūn’’* (يَبَكُّونَ = they are crowded).

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘Mecca is called Bakkah because men and women are crowded therein; a woman prays in front of you, and on your right, and on your left, and with you, and there is no harm in it (at that place); but surely it is disliked in all other towns.’’ (*ibid.*)

The same Imām said: ‘‘When Allāh intended to create the earth, He ordered the winds and they agitated the face of water until it produced waves (and) then brought up foam (and froth); so (all of) it became one foam. Then Allāh gathered it in the place of the House (i.e., where the House now stands) and made it a mountain of foam; thereafter He spread out the earth from beneath it. And this is the (meaning of the) words of Allāh: *Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakkah, blessed.* Thus the first plot created of the earth is the Ka‘bah; then the earth was expanded from it.’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions saying that the earth was expanded and extended from beneath the Ka‘bah. There is nothing against the Qur’ān in these traditions. Nor is there any rational reason to refute it — except the ancient philosophers’ theory that the earth was an eternal indivisible element; but that theory has so manifestly been proved wrong that it needs no further exposition.

This narrative explains how and why the Ka‘bah was the first House (i.e., piece of land) of the earth — from traditions’ point of view. But so far as the obvious meaning of the verse is concerned, it supports the first two traditions.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked what were the clear signs mentioned in the verse: *In it are clear signs.* He said: ‘‘The Standing Place of Ibrāhīm — where he stood upon the stone and his feet left their prints in it, and the Black Stone, and the House of Ismā‘īl.’’ (*al-Kāfī; at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning. Perhaps the Imām (a.s.) mentioned them as examples, although some of them are not mentioned in the verse.

‘Abdu ’ṣ-Ṣamad said: ‘‘Abū Ja‘far [al-Manṣūr] wanted to buy from (some) Meccans their houses in order to extend the (Sacred) Mosque; but they refused. Then he induced them; they still resisted. So he was frustrated. Then he came to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) and said to him: ‘I requested these people (to sell to us) some of their houses and compounds, so that we could extend the Mosque; but they have refused; and it has put me into utmost grief.’ Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ‘Why does it grieve you and your proof against them is (very) clear?’ He said: ‘And what should I argue against them with?’ (The Imām) said: ‘With the Book of Allāh.’ He said: ‘In which place (is it explained)?’ (The Imām) said: ‘The words of Allāh: *Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakkah.* And Allāh has informed you (in this verse) that the first House appointed for the men is the one that is at Bakkah. Now if they had taken the possession (of the land) before the House (was built) then their plots would belong to them; but if the House was there before them, then it (the Ka‘bah) owns its plot.’ Abū Ja‘far then called them and argued with them accordingly. Thereupon they said: ‘Do whatever you

want.' '' (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn an-Nu'mān says: ''When al-Mahdī built (i.e., extended) the Sacred Mosque, there remained there one house (because of which) the Mosque could not be made square. He asked for it from its owners; but they refused. He asked jurists about it, and all of them told him that he should not include in the Sacred Mosque anything taken by force. Then 'Alī ibn Yaqṭīn said: 'O leader of the faithful! I am writing (a letter) to Mūsā ibn Ja'far (peace be on them both), so that I may tell you what the proper ruling is in this matter.' So he wrote to the Governor of Medina to ask Mūsā ibn Ja'far (peace be on them both) about the house which we wanted to include in the Sacred Mosque but its owners refused (to sell it) — how this problem could be solved? (The Governor) told Abu 'l-Ḥasan (Mūsā ibn Ja'far — peace be on them both) about it. Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) said: 'Is it necessary to give its reply?' He said: '(Yes), it is a matter that is necessary.' Then (the Imām) said to him: 'Write down: ''In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful, if the Ka'bah had settled down with the people, then the people have more rights on its courtyard; but if the people have settled down around the Ka'bah, then the Ka'bah has more right over its courtyard.'' ' When the letter reached al-Mahdī, he took it and kissed it, then he ordered to demolish the (said) house. The house owners then came to Abu '1-Ḥasan (a.s.) and requested him to write a letter to al-Mahdī regarding the price of the house. He wrote to him to give them something, so he made them happy.'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: The two traditions contain a very fine point of argument. It was Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr who began the extension of the Sacred Mosque which was completed during al-Mahdī's reign.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *and for the sake of Allāh, pilgrimage to the House is incumbent ...:* ''(Allāh) means by it the *ḥajj* and the *'umrah* both, because both are obligatory.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: al-'Ayyāshī too has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr*. This tradition takes the word *'ḥijj'* in its literal sense, i.e., to proceed to.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has explained the word, *and whoever disbelieves,* as ''whoever neglects''. (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: ash-Shaykh has narrated this tradition in *at-Tahdhīb.* We have explained it earlier that disbelief, like belief, has many grades; and that the word, as used in this verse, means disbelieving in — i.e., not complying with — a commandment of the *sharī'ah.*

'Alī ibn Ja'far narrates from his brother Mūsā (a.s.), a tradition in which he, *inter alia,* says: ''I said: 'Then whoever among us does not go for *ḥajj*, is an unbeliever?' (The Imām) said: 'No. But whoever says that it is not so (i.e., it is not obligatory) becomes an unbeliever.' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: There are many traditions of the same theme. Disbelief, as explained in this tradition, means rejection and refutation, and the verse could mean it. Thus disbelief has been used here in its literal meaning, i.e., hiding the truth; and it may refer to various grades of disbelief according to various situations.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE KA'BAH

It is *mutawātir* and definitely known that it was Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl (a.s.) who built the Ka'bah. The residents around it at that time were his son, Ismā'īl, and the tribe of Jurhum (originally from Yemen). It is an almost square building whose sides face the cardinal points of the compass; the winds, no matter how strong, lose their force when they strike it — without doing it any harm.

The construction of Ibrāhīm stood intact, until it was rebuilt by al-'Amāliqah, and later by the tribe of Jurhum (or vice versa), as has been described in the earlier narrated tradition of the Leader of the Faithful ('Alī, a.s.).

When the management of the Ka'bah came into the hands of Quṣayy ibn Kilāb — an ancestor of the Prophet — in the second century before *hijrah*, he demolished and rebuilt it on firm foundation, putting a roof of doom palm timber and date-palm trunk on it. He also built *'Dāru 'n-Nadwah'* (دَارُالنَّدْوَةُ = Council House) on one side. It was the place from where he ruled and where he held counsel with his colleagues. Then he

divided various sides of the Ka‘bah among different clans of the Quraysh and each clan built their houses at the side allotted to them; and they opened their doors towards the Ka‘bah.

Five years before the. start of the Prophet’s mission, there came a flood which destroyed the Ka‘bah’s building. The Quraysh divided among themselves the various responsibilities connected with its reconstruction. They hired a Roman mason to build it and an Egyptian carpenter to help him with the woodwork. When the time came to fix the Black Stone, a dispute erupted as to which clan should be accorded the honour of putting the Black Stone in its place. Then they agreed to leave the decision to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), who at that time was thirty-five years old — because they had full faith in his deep wisdom and sound judgment. He got his robe, and putting the Stone on it, told all the clans to hold the sides of the robe and raise it together. When the Stone reached the required height (on the eastern corner), he took it in his hands and fixed it in its proper place.

But the Quraysh found their funds exhausted. So they reduced the size on one side — as it is today; thus a part of the original foundation was left out, and that is the portion known as *‘Ḥijr Ismā‘īl’* (حِجْرُ اِسْمَاعِيْلُ = the Enclosure of Ismā‘īl).

The building remained in that condition until ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr established his rule over Ḥijāz during the reign of Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah. Ḥusayn ibn Numayr, the commander of Yazīd’s army, besieged him at Mecca and struck the Ka‘bah with catapult. The Ka‘bah was demolished, the *‘al-Kiswah’* (اَلْكِسْوَةُ = covering of the Ka‘bah) and some roof timbers were burnt down. The siege was lifted when news came of Yazīd’s death. Ibn az-Zubayr decided to demolish the Ka‘bah completely and rebuild it on its original foundation. He got good mortar from Yemen and constructed the new building. Ḥijr Ismā‘īl was re-included in the Ka‘bah; the door was fixed at the level of the ground; another door was fixed on the opposite side, so that people might enter from one door and go out from the other. He fixed the height of the House at twenty-seven arms. When the building was ready, he covered the whole building with musk and perfume inside out, and put silken Kiswah on it. The construction was completed on 17th *Rajab,* 64 A.H.

When ‘Abdu ’1-Malik ibn Marwān came to power in Damascus, he sent his commander, Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, who defeated Ibn az-Zubayr and

killed him. Entering the Sacred Mosque, he saw what Ibn az-Zubayr had done regarding the Ka‘bah. He wrote to ‘Abdu ’1-Malik about it who ordered him to return it to its previous shape. Ḥajjāj, therefore, demolished six and a half arms from the northern side and rebuilt it according to the plan of the Quraysh; he raised the eastern door and closed the western one; he also filled the inside with the stones that could not be re-used (thus raising the inside floor to the new level of the door).

When the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān ascended the throne in 960 A.H., he changed the roof of the Ka‘bah. Sultan Aḥmad (who came to power in 1021 A.H.) made some other repairs and alterations. Then came the great flood of 1039 A.H. which demolished parts of its northern, eastern and western walls. Therefore, the Ottoman Sultan Murād IV got it repaired. And the same building continues till this day and it is the year 1375 by lunar hijri calendar, and 1338 according to the solar one.

The Shape of the Ka‘bah: The Ka‘bah is nearly square in shape, built with hard dark bluish-grey stones. It now rises to sixteen metres; but was much lower at the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as may be inferred from the fact that, on the day of conquest of Mecca, the Prophet raised ‘Alī (a.s.) on his shoulders so that ‘Alī could remove and break the idols that were placed on the roof of the Ka‘bah.

The wall [the northern one that faces the Enclosure of Ismā‘īl and] over which is placed the water trough and the one on its opposite side [the southern one] are ten metres and ten centimetres long; while the [eastern] wall which has the door and the one opposite to it are twelve metres long. The door is placed at a height of two metres from the ground level. The Black Stone is fixed in the [east-south] corner, so that if one wants to enter the door, the Stone would be on his left. This Stone is one and a half metres above the ground level, that is, above the level of the circumambulation area. The Black Stone is a hard rock of irregular oval shape, black with some reddish tint; it has red dots and yellow wavy lines which appeared when some broken pieces were soldered and joined. It has a diameter of about thirty centimetres.

The Ka‘bah’s corners, since ancient days, are called *‘‘al-arkān’’* (اَلْاَرْكَانُ ; pl. of *‘‘ar-rukn’’* اَلرُّكْنُ = pillar); the northern one is called, the Iraqī *rukn;* the western, the Syrian; the southern, the Yemenite; and the eastern (wherein the Black Stone is fixed), is named the Black. The area

between the door and the Black Stone is called *''al-Multazam''* (اَلْمُلْتَزَمُ = lit.: the place where one clings to) because when one circumambulates one adheres to it for invocation and prayer.

The trough fixed over the northern wall, which is called the Trough of Mercy, was an innovation of al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf; in 954 A.H. Sultan Sulaymān changed that with a silver one; that too was replaced by Sultan Aḥmad in 1021 A.H. with another one of enamelled silver with golden designs. In 1273 A.H. Sultan ‘Abdu ’1-Majīd replaced it with another one made of gold, and it is the present one.

Facing the northern wall is a wall — half circle in shape. It is called, al-Ḥaṭīm. It is like a bow whose two ends face the northern [Iraqī] and the western [Syrian] *rukns;* there is a gap of two metres and three centimetres between the ends of the bow and the said *rukns.* The wall, al-Ḥaṭīm, is one metre high and one and a half metres wide. It is panelled with carved marble. The distance between the centre of al-Ḥaṭīm and the centre of the northern wall of the Ka‘bah is eight metres and forty-four centimetres. The area covered by al-Ḥaṭīm and the northern wall is known as Ḥijr Ismā‘īl [Enclosure of Ismā‘īl]. About three metres of this space was included in the Ka‘bah built by Ibrāhīm (a.s.); and the remaining area was the pen for sheep of Hājirah and her son. It is said that Hājirah and Ismā‘īl are buried in the same Enclosure.

The changes and alterations that were done inside the Ka‘bah, and the rituals and *sunnah* rites connected with the House are not so necessary to be described here.

The Covering of the Ka‘bah: We have described, in the chapter of ‘The Cow’, in the traditions relating the story of Hājirah and Ismā‘īl and their settlement at Mecca, that Hājirah hang her mantle as a curtain on the door of the Ka‘bah when its construction was completed.

As for the covering of the House itself, it is said that the first to cover it was the Tubba‘ [1] Abū Bakr As‘ad, who hang on it the sheets embroidered with silver threads. His successors followed this custom. Then people started covering it with sheets of various kinds — putting one upon the other. Whenever a covering looked old, a new one was put over it. This continued until Quṣayy came on the scene. He imposed a tax

[1] Tubba‘ — was the title of the Kings of Yemen. (*tr.*)

on the Arabs for putting a new covering every year. This system continued in his descendants. Abū Rabī‘ah ibn al-Mughīrah used to put a covering one year and all the clans of Quraysh did so the next year.

The Prophet covered the House with Yemenite sheets. This custom continued. When the ‘Abbāside caliph al-Mahdī went for pilgrimage, the attendants of the House complained to him about the coverings that had accumulated on the roof of the Ka‘bah. They said there was a danger of the roof collapsing down because of that load. The King ordered that all the old covernings should be removed and that every year a new covering should replace the old one — and that custom is followed uptil now.

The Ka‘bah is draped from inside too. The first to do so was the mother of ‘Abbās, son of ‘Abdu ’l-Muṭṭalib — she had done so because of a vow she had taken regarding her son — ‘Abbās.

Prestige of the Ka‘bah: The Ka‘bah was held in high esteem by various nations. The Hindus respected it, believing that the spirit of Siva, the third person of their Trimurty, entered into the Black Stone, when he was accompanied by his wife visited Ḥijāz.

The Sabaeans of Persia and Chaledonia counted it as one of their seven holy sanctuaries [1]. Many of them said that it was the House of the Saturn — because it was the most ancient, and the longest in existence.

The Persians too respected the Ka‘bah, believing that the spirit of Hormoz was present therein; they sometimes went for its pilgrimage.

The Jews honoured it and worshipped God there according to the religion of Ibrāhīm. There were many pictures and images in the Ka‘bah, including those of Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl which had divining arrows in their hands. Also there were pictures of the virgin Mary and Christ — which indicates that the Christians too respected the Ka‘bah like the Jews.

The Arabs held it in the highest esteem; they believed that it was the House of Allāh, and came to its pilgrimage from every place. They believed the Ka‘bah to be built by Ibrāhīm and the *ḥajj* to be a part of his religion which had come to them as his legacy.

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[1] The seven sanctuaries were: (1) The Ka‘bah; (2) Mars — on the summit of a mountain in Iṣfahān; (3) *‘‘Mandūsān’’*? (مندوسان) in India; (4) Naw Bahār in Balkh; (5) House of Ghamdān in San‘ā; (6) Kawsān in Farghānā, Khurāsān; and (7) a House in Upper China. (*Author’s Note*)

Trusteeship of the Ka‘bah: The trusteeship was in the hands of Ismā‘īl; and after him it remained in his descendants. Then the Jurhumites became more powerful and took over the trusteeship. They in their turn were vanquished after several wars by the ‘Amāliqah, who were a part of Banū Karkar. The ‘Amāliqah resided at the lower section of Mecca while the Jurhumites had settled in its upper section. They had their own Kings.

Later on, the Jurhumites defeated the ‘Amāliqah and regained the trusteeship, which remained with them for about three hundred years. They extended the area of the House and increased its height.

Gradually the Ismā‘īlites grew in number and gained power; and they found the place too congested and over-populated. Then they fought the Jurhumites, defeated and expelled them from Mecca. The leader of the Ismā‘īlites at that time was ‘Amr ibn Laḥiyy, the chief of the clan of Khuzā‘ah. He became over-lord of Mecca and took over the trusteeship of the Ka‘bah. It was he who put idols in the Ka‘bah and called people to worship them. The first idol he put there was Hubal which he had brought from Syria; then he brought others. Gradually there were a lot of idols, and idol-worship spread among the Arabs; the upright religion of Ibrāhīm was discarded.

Shaḥnah ibn Khalaf al-Jurhumī refers to this episode, when he addresses ‘Amr ibn Laḥiyy in the following ode:

O ‘Amr! you have invented various gods;
At Mecca — idols around the House.
And there was for the House One Lord from ever;
But you have made for it several lords (which are now worshipped) *by the people.*
Surely you should know that Allāh is in no hurry;
Soon He will choose for (His) *House stewards other than you.*

The trusteeship remained in the clan of Khuzā‘ah upto the time of Ḥalīl al-Khuzā‘ī. He nominated his daughter (who was married to Quṣayy ibn Kilāb) to succeed him, and gave the right of opening and closing the door to a man from his clan, Abū Ghabshān al-Khuzā‘ī by name. Abū Ghabshān sold his right to Quṣayy ibn Kilāb for a camel and

a skinful of liquor. The proverb, ‘‘More loss incurring than the deal of Abū Ghabshān’’, alludes to this sale.

The trusteeship was thus transferred to the Quraysh. Quṣayy rebuilt the House, as we have mentioned above. The things continued as they were, until the Prophet conquered Mecca, and entering the Ka‘bah ordered the pictures to be effaced, and the idols to be thrown down and broken.

The Standing Place of Ibrāhīm — the stone with the imprints of Ibrāhīm’s feet — was at first put in a kneading trough near the Ka‘bah; then it was buried in the place where it is at present. It has a dome on four pillars where the people offer their prayers after the circumambulation.

There are a lot of details of various aspects of the Ka‘bah and other religious buildings attached to it. We have described here only the things which are necessary for understanding the verses of *ḥajj* and the Ka‘bah.

One of the especialities of this House — which Allāh has blessed and made a guidance — is that no Muslim group has ever disagreed about it or its prestige, honour and respect.

* * * * *

قُلْ يٰا أَهْلَ الْكِتٰابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيٰاتِ اللهِ وَاللهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلىٰ
مٰا تَعْمَلُونَ ــ ٩٨ . قُلْ يٰا أَهْلَ الْكِتٰابِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللهِ
مَنْ آمَنَ تَبْغُونَهٰا عِوَجاً وَأَنْتُمْ شُهَدٰاءُ وَمٰا اللهُ بِغٰافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ــ
٩٩ . يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تُطِيعُوا فَرِيقاً مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتٰابَ
يَرُدُّوكُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمٰانِكُمْ كٰافِرِينَ ــ ١٠٠ . وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلىٰ
عَلَيْكُمْ آيٰاتُ اللهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ وَمَنْ يَعْتَصِمْ بِاللهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلىٰ
صِرٰاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ــ ١٠١ .

Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you disbelieve in the communications of Allāh? and Allāh is a witness of what you do'' (98). *Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you hinder him who believes from the way of Allāh? You seek* (to make) *it crooked, while you are witnesses, and Allāh is not heedless of what you do''* (99). *O you who believe! if you obey a party from among those who were given the Book, they will turn you back as unbelievers after you have believed* (100). *But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom the communcations of Allāh are recited, and among you is His Messenger? And whoever holds fast to Allāh, he indeed is guided to the straight path* (101).

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COMMENTARY

The verses as is evident from themetic continuity, indicate that the People of the Book (a group of them — i. e., the Jews — or a group of the Jews) disbelieved in the Divine Revelation, and hindered the believers from the way of Allāh by trying to show that it was a crooked and unright way, and presenting to them the actually crooked misleading way as the way of Allāh. They did so by creating doubts in the believers' minds, in order that the believers would see the truth as falsehood and the falsehood (to which they invited them) as truth. The preceding verses had pointed to the Jews' deviations, for example, their denial of the fact that all food was lawful to them before the revelation of the Torah, and their rejection of the abrogation of the previous *qiblah,* that is, Baytu 'l-Maqdis.

These verses therefore put the finishing touches to the preceding ones which had described the lawfulness of all food before the Torah and declared that the Ka'bah was the first House appointed for the men. Now these verses admonish the Jews because they were constantly trying to create doubts and mislead the believers; also the verses warn the believers against following the advice of those unbelievers, because if they listened to their call, they would themselves become unbelievers; then they exhort and encourage them to hold fast to Allāh so that they would be guided to the path of true faith and their guidance would continue for ever.

It has been narrated by Zayd ibn Aslam (as as-Suyūṭī has reportedly [1] written in *Lubābu 'n-nuqūl*) as follows:

''Shāsh ibn Qays, a Jew, saw some people of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj engaged in (friendly) talk, and he was incensed by what he saw of their friendship and unity after their (hereditary) enmity. Therefore, he ordered a young Jew (who was with him) to sit with them and remind them of the Battle of Bu'āth. He did and they started boasting and quarelling with each other. The argument continued until two men — Aws ibn Quraẓī from the Aws and Jabbār ibn Sakhr from the Khazraj — jumped up and abused each other; the two groups were enraged and stood against each other for fighting. The news reached the Messenger of

[1] Vide *Tafsīru 'l-Manār*, vol. 4, Commentary of this verse. (*Author's Note*)

Allāh (s.a.w.a.); he came and admonished them and established peace between them. They heeded his call and obeyed. Then Allāh revealed about Aws and Jabbār: *'O you who believe! if you obey a party from among those who were given the Book ...';* and about Shāsh ibn Qays: *'Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you hinder him who believes from the way of Allāh?'' ' ''*

This tradition is abridged from the one narrated (by as-Suyūṭī) in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* in detailed form from Zayd ibn Aslam; he has narrated nearly similar traditions from Ibn ʻAbbās and others.

However, these verses obviously fit more properly on the explanation given by us than on this tradition. Moreover, they speak about disbelief and belief, and also about testimony of the Jews, recitation of the revealed verses to the believers, and things like that; and all these matters are more revelant to the explanation given by us. It is also supported by the words of Allāh: *Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on their part,* (even) *after the truth has become manifest to them ...* (2:109). Therefore, the fact is, as we have said, that these verses are a sort of prologue to the preceding ones.

QUR'ĀN: *Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you disbelieve in the communications of Allāh and ... '':* The continuation of the context indicates that ''the communications'' refers to the lawfulness of food before the revelation of the Torah and to the Kaʻbah being the *qiblah* in Islam.

QUR'ĀN: Say: ''O People of the Book! why do you hinder him who believes from the way of Allāh? You seek (to make) it crooked,: ''aṣ-Ṣadd'' (اَلصَّدُّ = to hinder; to divert); ''you seek it,'' that is, you want this way to be crooked; '' 'iwajan'' (عِوَجاً = crooked, perverted); it refers to the fact that they wanted the way of Allāh to be deviated, not straight.

QUR'ĀN: *''while you are witnesses, and ... '':* You know very well that all food was lawful before the revelation of the Torah, and that one of the signs of the promised prophet was that he would change the *qiblah* to the Kaʻbah. The Jews have been counted as witnesses in this verse, while the preceding verse declared Allāh to be a witness of their activities and

disbelief. The implication of this fine juxtaposition cannot be lost on a man of literary taste. They are witnesses of the truth of what they deny; and Allāh is a witness of their denial and disbelief. As ‘‘witnessing’’ was ascribe to them in this verse, the ending clause of the preceding verse (*And Allāh is a witness of what you do*) was changed here to: ‘‘and Allāh is not heedless of what you do’’. The implication is that they are witnesses for the truth of the Prophet’s claim while Allāh is a witness for everyone and everything.

QUR’ĀN: *O you who believe! If you obey a party from among those who were given the Book, ... and among you is His Messenger? ...:* As mentioned earlier, ‘‘a party’’, refers to the Jews or a Jewish group. ‘‘while it is you to whom the communications of Allāh are recited, and among you is His Messenger’’: It is possible and easy for you to hold fast to the truth (which has been sent and explained to you) if you just listen to the verses recited to you and then meditate on them; then if you encounter any difficulty because of faulty meditation, you may to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) for clarification; you may refer to the Messenger even before meditating on the verses to explain it to you: he is present among you, it is not difficult for you to approach him because he is neither hidden nor far away from you; you may easily find the reality by referring to him, then you may clear the doubts which the Jews try to create in your minds. To hold fast to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the Divine Communications is to hold fast to Allāh; ‘‘And whoever holds fast to Allāh, he indeed is guided to the straight path.’’

The disbelief, mentioned in the clause, ‘‘But how can you disbelieve’’, refers to disbelieving after believing; the clause, ‘‘while it is you to whom the communications of Allāh are recited,’’ points to the possibility of holding fast to the communications of Allāh and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in order to protect oneself from disbelief; the clause, ‘‘And whoever holds fast to Allāh,’’ is a sort of the major premise of a syllogism, [the full form of which has been given above]. The guidance to the straight path means being guided to the firmly-rooted true belief; it is the path that does not deviate nor does it fail to reach the destination; it keeps all those who proceed on it in proper line without letting them deviate hither or thither lest they go astray.

The Arabic word translated here as, ‘‘is guided’’, is a past tense in

passive voice; it implies that they have been guided without realizing who has guided them.

The verse shows that the Book of Allāh and the verbal and practical guidance given by the Messsenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) are sufficient to guide a man to every truth and reality in which he could possibly go astray.

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يا أيُّها الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللهَ حَقَّ تُقاتِهِ وَلا تَمُوتُنَّ إلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ــ ١٠٢ . وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللهِ جَمِيعاً وَلا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إذْ كُنْتُمْ أعْداءً فَألَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إخْواناً وَكُنْتُمْ عَلى شَفا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْها كَذلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمْ آياتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ــ ١٠٣ . وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ــ ١٠٤ . وَلا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِما جاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّناتُ وَأُولئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذابٌ عَظِيمٌ ــ ١٠٥ . يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أكَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إيمانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذابَ بِما كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ــ ١٠٦ . وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللهِ هُمْ فِيها خالِدُونَ ــ ١٠٧ . تِلْكَ آياتُ اللهِ نَتْلُوها عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَما اللهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْماً لِلْعالَمِينَ ــ ١٠٨ . وَلِلهِ ما فِي السَّمْواتِ وَما فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإلَى اللهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ــ ١٠٩ . كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أهْلُ الْكِتابِ لَكانَ خَيْراً لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفاسِقُونَ ــ ١١٠ .

O you who believe! fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslims (102). *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided and remember the bounty of Allāh on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He delivered you from it; thus does Allāh make clear to you His signs that you may follow the right way* (103). *And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful* (104). *And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear evidences had come to them, and these it is that shall have a grievous chastisement* (105). *On the day when* (some) *faces shall become bright and* (some) *faces shall turn black; then as to those whose faces will have turned black: Did you disbelieve after your believing? Taste therefore the chastisement for what you were disbelieving* (106). *And as to those whose faces shall have become bright, they shall be in Allāh's mercy; in it they shall abide* (107). *These are communications of Allāh which We recite to you with truth, and Allāh does not desire any injustice to the creatures* (108). *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's; and to Allāh all things are returned* (109). *You are the best nation raised up for the* (benefit of) *men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and you believe in Allāh; and if the People of the Book had believed it would have been better for them; of them* (some) *are believers and most of them are transgressors* (110).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses conclude the speech addressed to the believers, warning them of the People of the Book and their machinations. It reminds them that they have got a life-line which if they hold fast to they shall not

perish, shall not go astray and shall not fall into pits of perdition. It is a speech branching from the preceding talk. However the previous context, that is, exposition of the behaviour of the People of the Book, has not been concluded yet, as may be seen from the verses coming after these: *They shall by no means harm you but with a slight distress.*

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him,:* We have explained that *''at-taqwā''* (اَلتَّقْوي = to be on guard; fear; piety) when related to Allāh, means to be on guard against His punishment, to fear His chastisement. Allāh says: *then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel* (2:24). One may guard oneself from the Divine Wrath by behaving according to Allāh's pleasure. In other words, it is doing what He has enjoined one to do, and abstaining from what He has forbidden; being grateful for His favours and patient when He puts one in adverse conditions. The last two attributes are actually two facets of gratefulness — because gratefulness is to put a thing in its proper place. In short, fear of Allāh means that man should obey (and not disobey) Him, and should submit to Him in all that He bestows or withholds.

But the verse talks of *at-taqwā* as it rightfully should be done, that is, a piety that is not tainted by the least wrong. Such piety is the pure servitude which is never marred by an iota of obliviousness or heedlessness; it is obedience without disobedience, gratitude without ingratitude, remembrance without forgetfulness; it is the true Islam, that is, the highest grade of Islam. Accordingly, the words, *and do not die unless you are Muslims,* would mean: Continue on this condition of ideal *at-taqwā* until you die.

This verse gives a different ideal than the words: *Therefore fear Allāh as much as you can* (64:16). This command enjoins man not to leave fear of Allāh in anything as much as he can. But ability differs from man to man according to people's strength, understanding and will. There is no doubt that the ideal piety is not within easy reach of a majority of men. There are, in this spiritual journey, many stations, locations and danger points which cannot be spotted except by those who know. Also there are many delicate points and subtle differences which cannot be recognized except by those who have been purified. There is many a stage of piety which a common man would say, was beyond human ability; he really

believes it to be far above the human strength — while the truly pious people have long past that stage and are now progressing towards even more difficult goal, through much more harder terrains.

The verse, *Therefore fear Allāh as much as you can,* has been so worded that different minds would interpret it in different ways, according to one's perceived strength and ability. This will provide a means to proceed to the real goal which is given in the verse under discussion: ''fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslims.'' They will then understand that the main purpose is for them to take to the path of the ideal piety and to progress towards that lofty station. In this respect, it is not different from being guided to the Straight Path: Although all men are invited to it, only the true believers, the pure monotheists, get to that path.

The two verses (*fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him; fear Allāh as much as you can*) then give the following connotation: All people are called and invited to the ideal piety; then they are told to proceed to that goal as much as they can, everyone according to his own ability and strength. In this way, all will come on the path of piety; but they will be in different stages and various stations according to their own understanding and ambition, coupled with the Divine help and support, that is, bestowed on deserving servants. (This is what one understands after pondering on the two verses.)

It is clear from the above explanation that the two verses are neither different from each other in meaning nor identical; rather, the first verse (*fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him*) points to the ultimate goal, while the second (*fear Allāh as much as you can*) shows the way.

QUR'ĀN: *and do not die unless you are Muslims:* Death is a creative affair that is beyond the circle of our will and power. An order or a prohibition concerning this or similar things shall be a creative order or prohibition, as Allāh says: *Then Allāh said to them, Die* (2:243); *... is only that He says to it, 'Be', and it is* (36:82).

But sometimes an affair beyond our control is joined to one within our control, and then the combined phrase comes within our power, control and authority. At this stage, it may become a subject of legislative order or prohibition, as Allāh says: *therefore you should not be of the doubters* (2:147); *and be not with the unbelievers* (11:42); *and be with*

the true ones (9:119), and many similar verses. Obviously, ‘‘to be’’ is an intransitive creative affair upon which man has no control or power; but when it is joined with an action within his power, like doubting, disbelieving and holding fast to the true ones, it comes within our power; and then it may become subject of legislative order and prohibition.

In short, the prohibition that they should not die unless they are Muslims is a legislative one because the said proviso has made it a voluntary action; and it implies that man should hold fast to Islam in all conditions and at all times, until death comes to him in one of those conditions. Thus he would die on Islam.

QUR’ĀN: *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided:* Allāh has said before to the believers: *But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom the communications of Allāh are recited and among you is His Messenger; and whoever holds fast to Allāh, he indeed is guided to the straight path* (3:101). It had shown that holding fast to the communications of Allāh and to His Messenger (the Book of Allāh and the *sunnah* of the Prophet) is to hold fast to Allāh; and whoever holds fast to Allāh is safe and secure and his guidance is guaranteed; also holding fast to the Prophet is holding fast to the Book, because it is the Book itself that enjoins us to do so: *and whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep it back* (59:7).

Now the verse under discussion has changed the phraseology; instead of telling us to hold fast to Allāh, it enjoins to hold fast to the cord of Allāh. It shows that the cord of Allāh is the Book revealed by Allāh; it is the cord that joins the creature to his Lord, that connects the heavens to the earth. You may also say that the Divine Cord is the Qur’ān and the Prophet because the end result of all is the same.

The Qur’ān invites only to the ideal piety and firm Islam. Yet the aim of this verse is different from the preceding verse that had enjoined ideal piety and the death on Islam, inasmuch as that verse was concerned with guidance of the individual, while this looks at the good of the society. The words ‘‘all together’’ and ‘‘be not divided’’ point to this fact. The verse therefore orders the Muslim society to hold fast to the Book and the *sunnah,* as they had earlier enjoined the individual to do so.

QUR'ĀN: *and remember the bounty of Allāh on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren;:* The clause ''when you were'' explains the bounty of Allāh, and the next clause, *and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He delivered you from it*, is in conjuction with it.

The order to remember this Divine bounty and favour is based on the established Qur'ānic system: it builds its education on explanation of its reasons and causes; and invites to the good and the guidance through proper door; it does not demand blind following from its adherents. Far be it from the Divine Teaching to guide the people to eternal happiness — that is useful knowledge and good deed — and then to tell them to wander in the darkness of ignorance and blind following.

But the reader is warned here not to confuse the subject matter. Allāh teaches men the reality of their happiness and then shows them its proper way and reason, in order that they would understand the mutual relationship between the realities and know that all emanate from the fountain-head of monotheism. It continues side by side with men's obligation to totally submit to Allāh because He is Allāh, the Lord of the universe, and to hold fast to His cord because it is the cord of Allāh Who is the Lord of the universe. The last two verses (*These are communications of Allāh which we recite to you ...*) point to this fact.

In short, Allāh has ordered them not to accept any word, nor to obey any order, except after knowing its reason. At the same time He has told them to surrender totally to Him, giving for its reason the fact that He is Allāh Who owns them totally and unconditionally, they have got nothing except that which Allāh has willed for them and done for them; also He has ordered them to unconditionally obey what His Messenger has brought to them, giving for its reason the fact that he is His Messenger who conveys to them only that which he has been entrusted by Allāh to do; then Allāh explains to them the realities of knowledge and describes the ways of happiness, giving them a comprehensive reason in order that they could understand the inter-relation of the spiritual knowledge and the ways of happiness, and thus arrive at the root of monotheistic belief; it provides them with a Divine Training which enables them to think what is correct and speak what is true. Thus they would be alive with knowledge, free from blind following. Result: If they would understand the reason of any established religious reality (or any related thing) they

would accept it; and if they did not understand they would not reject it outright; instead they would try to understand it by research and meditation without rejecting, or objecting to, it — because it is an established reality.

But it does not mean that one should not accept anything — even from Allāh and His Messenger — without asking for its reason. Such a proposition would be the height of folly, as it would imply that Allāh wants His creatures to demand for proof after the proof is given to them: His lordship and His ownership is the basic reason and argument that makes it incumbent on everyone to submit to Him and obey His command. Likewise, the messengership of His Messenger is the solid reason and proof to prove that whatever he says has come from Allāh. Otherwise, we would have to say that Allāh has no authority in that which He manages by His authority. Is it but a contradiction in terms? In short, the Islamic way and the prophetic method calls only to knowledge, and not to blind following as these so-called critics — who are nothing if not blind followers themselves — claim.

Perhaps that is why Allāh has called it a favour (*the bounty of Allāh on you*). It indicates the reason as to why We enjoin you to unite together: you have already experienced the bitterness of enmity and sweet taste of love and brotherhood; you have seen that you were on the brink of the pit of fire and Allāh has saved you; We point this reason to you not because We have to support our sayings with some proof (obviously, Our saying is true whether We point to its reason or not), but only to let you know that it is a favour of Us on you, in order that you may appreciate that in this unity — like everything else We enjoin on you — lies your felicity, comfort and success.

Allāh has given here two proofs, one of which (... *you were enemies*...) is obviously based on their experience, while the other (... *you were on the brink of a pit of fire*...) is based on rational explanation.

The clause ‘‘so by His favour you became brethren’’ reminds the Muslims a second time of the Divine Favour mentioned in the preceding clause ‘‘and remember the bounty of Allāh on you’’. The bounty and favour refers to their unity; hence the brotherhood too (which results from this bounty) refers to the same love and unitedness. The brotherhood, as used here, is therefore a claimed reality.

Also possibly it may be a reference to the brotherhood that has been

legislated as between the believers, vide the verse: *The believers are but brethren* (49:10); this legislated brotherhood creates very important mutual rights and duties between one believer and the other.

QUR'ĀN: *and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He delivered you from it:: ''Shafā ḥufratin''* (شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ = brink or edge of a pit where one is in danger of falling down); ''fire'' may be of the hereafter or of this world. If former, then it would refer to the fact that previously they were unbelievers and about to fall down in the hell the moment they died — and death is nearer to man than is the iris of eye from its white — then Allāh saved them from it through the true faith. And if the aim is to point to their evil society which they were living in before they accepted Islam and became brethren, and the fire refers to their wars and conflicts — and it is a commonly used metaphor — then the meaning would be as follows:

A society built on disunited hearts and divergent minds cannot proceed under one leader or in one direction; it is bound to turn into a disorientated and deranged collection of people — each one pulling it to his side, as it suits his own wishes and desires. Such a society would be a cauldron of dissension and strife, always pushing its members to ever-new conflicts, embroiling them in wars and fights, and threatening them with decline and extinction. It is the fire that neither allows one to endure nor does it leave one alone, raging in the pit of ignorance from which no inmate could hope to escape.

The immediate audience of this verse, were the Muslims who before the vesrse was revealed, had accepted Islam after their disbelief. They had spent all their pre-Islamic lives in constant threat of battle and war. There was no security, no peace, no law and order. They did not understand what constituted public safety — the concept that covers the society in all its aspects like property, honour and life, etc.

When they joined hands to hold fast to the cord of Allāh, perceived the signs of happiness and felicity, and tasted the sweetness of Divine Bounties, they understood by this experience the truth and reality of what Allāh reminds them of His pleasant favours and the resulting wholesome felicity. In this background, this speech was bound to win their hearts — as well as of the others — most effectively and in all totality.

That is why the call to unite has been based on their own experience

and observation instead of just philosophical presumptions. One picture is worth a thousand words. And it is because of the same reason that the next warning (*And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear evidences had come to them ...*) points to the condition of those who had preceded them. The believers have seen and heard what happened to those nations — how they declined and fell — because of their disunitedness and internal strife; the believers should learn lessons from them; they should not walk on the same path, should not proceed in the same direction.

Then Allāh draws their attention to the special nature of this speech and says: *thus does Allāh make clear to you His signs that you may follow the right way.*

QUR'ĀN: *And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful.:* Experience shows that the knowledge a man acquires in his life (and he acquires and preserves for himself only that which may be of some use to him) is soon forgotten if not repeatedly remembered, if not frequently put in practice and acted upon — it makes no difference how that knowledge was acquired and preserved. Also there is no doubt that action, in all its aspects, turns on the pivot of knowledge; its strength or weakness, its efficiency or deficiency all depends on the stength or weakness, efficiency or deficiency of knowledge. Allāh has given a likeness of knowledge and action in the following verse: *And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth* (abundantly) *by the permission of its Lord, and* (as for) *that which is bad* (its herbage) *comes forth but scantily; thus do We repeat the communications fora people who give thanks* (7:58).

Undoubtedly, there is an interaction between knowledge and action. Knowledge is the strongest motive of action, and action is the greatest teacher that imparts knowledge.

This reality binds a good society (that which has got useful knowledge and virtuous action) to preserve and keep intact their knowledge and culture; and obliges them to bring a deviator back to the right path, to make sure that nobody goes astray leaving the known way of righteousness for the unforgiving desert of evil — they must protect him from falling into the pit of sin and error by forbidding him to go near it.

This is the call to educate the society members; the obligation of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. It is this important obligation to which Allāh refers when He says: ‘‘... who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong’’.

The Arabic words translated here as ‘‘right’’ and ‘‘wrong’’ (*enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong*) are *‘al-ma‘rūf’* (اَلْمَعْرُوْفُ) and *‘al-munkar’* (اَلْمُنْكَرُ) which literally mean ‘‘known’’ and ‘‘unknown’’ respectively. Ponder on the explanation given above and you will understand why Allāh has used these expressions. The verse under discussion is based on the preceding one, *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divide ...* A society which follows this guidance must be the ideal society. It would only be the right and the good which they would recognize, which would be ‘‘known’’ to them; and only the wrong and the evil which they would not recognize, which would be ‘‘unknown’’ to them. If this fine point is not kept in mind, then the only possible explanation would be that the right and the wrong were respectively known and unknown in the eyes of religion — but not in actual practice of the society.

The clause ‘‘And from among you there should be a party’’: It has been said that ‘‘from among’’ indicates portion, obliging only a party among the Muslim *ummah* to enjoin the good and forbid the evil and call to the truth. Others have said that the particle *‘min’* (مِنْ = from among) has here an explanatory connotation; that the sentence means as follows: If you unite together you will become a party who invite to good, enjoin the right and forbid the evil. In other words it is as we say: ‘I should find in you a friend’, which actually means: ‘Be my friend’. Apparently, the said explanatoriness of ‘‘from among’’ means that the whole Muslim *ummah* is obligated to call to the good.

Actually, the controversy whether ‘‘from among’’ is for division or explanation is quite irrelevant. Calling to good, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong are things which, even when obligatory, cannot be obligatory except on a few; because once the goal is achieved it would not be necessary for others to do so. Even if we were to say that the whole *ummah* invited to good, enjoined the right and forbade the wrong, it would only mean that there were some people in the *ummah* who did so. Thus the responsibility lies on only a selected group in any case. If the verse is addressed to a group of the *ummah,* the matter is clear; but if

it is addressed to the whole nation, that is because of that particular group. In other words, initially the responsibility lies on everybody's shoulders, but when some perform the duty, they get its reward and the others are then exempted from the obligation. That is why the verse ends with the clause ''and these [i.e., those who perform this duty] it is that shall be successful''

It appears from the above that ''from among'' indicates here a portion; it is this meaning that is generally understood from such combinations in common conversation, and it is not right to go for another meaning without a good reason.

The three — inviting to good, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong — are profoundly extensive subjects which require deep exegetic discourse, and we shall write about it, Allāh willing, in proper places; also we shall deal there with its academic psychological and social aspects.

QUR'ĀN: *And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear evidences had come to them, and....* Probably the clause, ''after clear evidences had come to them'', is an adverbial phrase related to the verb, ''disagreed'', only. If so, then the ''disagreement'' would refer to difference of belief while the ''division'' to their physical separation and dissociation. Division has been mentioned first, because it is the prelude to divergence of belief. As long as the members of a community remain in contact with each other, there continues a harmony in their ideas and ideals, and their constant meetings — and the inevitable interaction — welds their beliefs into a single entity, protecting them from ideological differences. If on the other hand, they lose contact and become separated the process of mutual action and reaction comes to a standstill; their views and ideas start developing independently, each going his own way, and it does not take each group very long to develop its own views, ideals, theories and beliefs. It is in this way that ideological disagreements are born and unity of nations is shattered. It is as though Allāh was warning the Muslims not to be like those who began their journey to disaster by separating from each other, losing mutual contacts and remaining aloof from the community, and ended by having different beliefs and divergent ideas.

Allāh has mentioned in various places that this disagreement and

difference springs from revolt and envy; for example: *And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves* (2:213).

Of course, it is inevitable for ideas and opinions to differ, because knowledge and understandings differ from individual to individual; but at the same time it is essential for a society to remove that difference and bring back the deviators to the fold of unity. It is possible to remove the differences through various means; and if the *ummah* neglected this duty, it would in itself be a revolt which would throw them into perdition.

The Qur'ān has given utmost importance to unity and forcefully warned the Muslims against disunity. Why? Because it knew which path this *ummah* would take; they would differ, disagree and disunite not only as the previous people did, but even more. A peculiarity of the Qur'ānic style has already been mentioned in several places: When it emphatically warns against some pitfall, it serves as a prophecy that the Muslim *ummah* was going to fall into it, nevertheless; the more forceful the admonition, the more likely the people were to violate it. This difference and disunity was foretold by the Prophet as well as by the Qur'ān; he said that difference would creep into his *ummah,* then it would raise its head in the form of divergent sects; also he prophesied that the *ummah* would become divided as the Jews and the Christians were before. Some of those prophecies will be given under ''Traditions''.

History testifies to the truth of this prophesy. No sooner was the Prophet gone than the people scattered in all directions; they were divided into several sects, each accusing others of apostasy. This has been going on since the days of the Companions to this time of ours. Every attempt at uniting two sects, results in the creation of a third.

Experience and analytical study of Islamic literature and history prove that the fount-head of this difference were the hypocrites. Read the Qur'ān and you will see how forcefully it speaks against them and condemns them; how seriously it denounces their schemes; and how dangerous it takes their plans to be. Ponder on what Allāh has said about them in the Chapters of: The Cow, The Repentance, The Confederates, and The Hypocrites, etc., and you will be stunned. This was their condition and behaviour during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), when the revelations were regularly coming from Allāh. But as soon as the Prophet departed, the hypocrites were immediately forgotten;

we find no mention of them in the Muslim literature; it was as though they vanished the moment the Prophet died!

(It was) *as though there never was any intimate friend between*
al-Ḥujūn and aṣ-Ṣafā,
Or there never conversed at night any talker at Mecca.

Soon the people found themselves scattered to the four winds and sectarian differences cut them asunder. Despotic and tyrannical governments succeeded in subjugating them, and their felicity of life was transformed into infelicity of error and straying. And we seek help from Allāh. We hope, by the grace of Allāh, to write on this subject in detail in the Chapter of The Repentance.

QUR'ĀN: *On the day when* (some) *faces shall become bright and* (some) *faces shall turn black;... they shall abide.:* As the talk centres around ungratefulness which, like treachery and breach of trust, causes shame and bashfulness, Allāh has selected here a chastisement of the hereafter that is analogous to it, that is, blackness of face which metaphorically denotes shamefacedness, abashment and disgrace. It is implied, or rather clearly shown, by the words of Allāh: ''then as for those whose faces will have turned black: Did you disbelieve after your believing?''

For the same reason, those who are grateful for this Divine Favour, shall be given a reward that will be appropirate for thankfulness, and that is brightness of face, which is metaphorically used for contentment and delight.

QUR'ĀN: *These are communications of Allāh which We recite to you with truth,:* The clause, ''with truth'' is related to the verb, ''We recite'', that is, the recitation is the recital of truth, it is not false, nor is it form Satanic whisperings. Alternatively, it may be related to ''communications'' giving it an adjectival meaning, that is, true communications. Or it may be related to a deleted word. In any case, the verse means as folows: These verses which describe what Allāh will do with two groups — the ungrateful and the grateful — are accompanied by and based on truth, there is no falsehood or injustice in them. This meaning is more appropriate because the verse ends on the words: *and Allāh does not desire any injustice ...*

QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh does not desire any injstice to the creatures:* The word ''injustice'', is a common noun used in a negative context, implies comprehensiveness, that is, every type of injustice is negated. Likewise ''the creatures'' being a plural with definite article ''the'' denotes comprehensiveness. Therefore, the meaning will be as follows: Allāh does not desire any injustice — of whatevery type it may be — to any of His creatures or a group of creatures.

It is a fact that difference and conflict among the people is such a bad thing that its evil consequences adversely affect all the creatures, the whole mankind.

QUR'ĀN: *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's; and to Allāh all things are returned.:* After the declaration that Allāh desires no injustice whatsoever, this verse gives its reason to remove any possible misunderstanding to the contrary. Allāh owns everything in all its aspects; He has right and authority to manage it in any way He likes. There is nothing outside His ownership. Had there been anything outside His ownership, only then He would do any injustice or exceed the limit by managing or usurping that ''unowned'' thing. Moreover, man inclines to injustice when he has a need which cannot be fulfilled except by manipulation of something he does not own. But Allāh is Self-sufficient to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. (This argument has been given by an exegete, but it is not in conformity with apparent meaning of the verse. This reply is based on the Self-sufficiency of Allāh, and not on His ownership, while the verse mentions the latter, not the former.) However, the Divine Ownership offers irrefutable proof that Allāh is not unjust.

Then comes another proof: Everything and every affair, whatsoever it may be, returns to Allāh. If anyone other than Allāh would have had any authority on any thing. or affair, only then Allāh would have been committing injustice if He would have removed it from that other's authority and manipulated it according to His own will. This proof is pointed at in the concluding statement: ''and to Allāh all things are returned''.

The two proofs, as you see, are complementary. One is based on the premise that everything belongs to Allāh, and the other on the principle

that no affair belongs to anyone other than Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *You are the best nation raised up for the* (benefit of) *men; ...:* The word translated as ''raised up'' is *''ukhrijat''* (أُخْرِجَتْ = lit. taken out); it has a connotation of introduction. Taking out also implies incidence, bringing forth and creation. Allāh says: *And Who brought forth herbage* (87:4). The verse is addressed to the believers; therefore, the word ''men'' should mean general public, the humanity at large. Someone has said that the verb, *'kuntum'* (كُنْتُمْ = lit.: you were), is here devoid of time factor and means 'you are'. The word *'ummah'* (أُمَّة = nation, group), is used for a party as well as for individual — when they have the same goal which they aim to reach; it is derived from *'al-amm'* (اَلَمُّ = to intend, to aim). The clause, ''and you believe in Allāh'', has been placed after mentioning the enjoining the right and forbidding the evil; it is like mentioning the whole thing or the root after describing some components or branches. According to the above explanation, the verse means as follows: O Muslims! you are the best group which Allāh has brought out for the mankind by guiding it; because you are united, you believe in Allāh, and perform the twin duties of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. Obviously, this honoured title has been given to the whole *ummah* only because some of them have attained to the true belief and do fulfil the obligations of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. This is in short what some exegetes have written about it.

But obviously the word *'kuntum'* (كُنْتُمْ = you were), is not devoid of time factor; it is a past tense and refers to the believer's condition in the early days of Islam. It speaks about those who were foremost among the Emigrants and the Helpers; the belief here refers to their positive response to the call of holding fast to the cord of Allāh without being divided; this belief is opposite of the disbelief in that call — the disbelief that is mentioned in the words: *Did you disbelieve after your believing?* The same is the import of the belief as related to the People of the Book in this verse, ''and if the People of the Book had believed.'' In short the meaning will be as follows:

O Muslims! you were — when you were brought forth first of all and appeared for the people — the best group that was ever formed, because at that time you enjoined good and forbade evil, and holding fast by the cord of Allāh you became united and unified like one body and one soul;

and if the People of the Book too were like that it would have been better for them, but they are divided and disunited — some of them are believers while most of them are transgressors.

Many times in these verses the talk switches from third to the second person, and from plural to the singular number, and vice versa. Also there are clauses where noun has been used instead of pronoun, for example, the Divine Name ‘‘Allāh’’ has been repeated several times. The reasons for these changes are not difficult to find after meditation.

TRADITIONS

Abū Baṣīr says: ‘‘I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him,* and he said: ‘He should be obeyed, and not disobeyed; remembered, and not forgotten; and thanked, and not shown ingratitude.’ ’’ (*Ma‘āni ’l-akhbār; at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

al-Ḥākim and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated through another chain from Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: *‘Fear Allāh as He should be feared;* (it means) that He should be obeyed and not disobeyed, and remembered, and not forgotten.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

al-Khaṭīb narrates from Anas that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘No servant fears Allāh with the fear which is due to Him until he knows that what has befallen him could not miss him, and what has missed him could not reach him.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: We have explained in the Commentary how the meaning given in the first two traditions could be inferred from the verse. As for the third one, it gives a concomitant of the Qur’ānic meaning, and it is clear.

Ibn Shahrāshūb quotes from *at-Tafsīr* of Wakī‘ that ‘Abd Khayr said: ‘‘I asked ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *O you who believe! fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him,* (and) he said: ‘By Allāh, no one acted upon it except the House of the Messenger of Allāh; we remembered Him, so we do not forget Him; and we thanked Him, so

we are never ungrateful to Him; and we obeyed Him, so we never disobeyed Him. When this verse was revealed, the Companions said: ‘‘We are unable to do it.’’ Then Allāh revealed, *Therefore fear Allāh as much as you can.’’ ’ ’’* Wakī‘ said: ‘‘that is, as much as you are able to do.’’ (*al-Burhān* [*fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān*], al-Bahrānī)

Abū Baṣīr said: ‘‘I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him.* He said: ‘(It is) abrogated.’ I said: ‘And which (verse) abrogated it? He said: ‘The words of Allāh, *Therefore fear Allāh as much as you can.’ ’’* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Ayyāshī)

The author says: It may be inferred from the tradition of Wakī‘ that ‘‘abrogation’’ (as mentioned in the tradition of al-‘Ayyāshī) refers to various stages of piety and fear of Allāh. But it does not mean abrogation in the sense of cancellation (as some exegetes have said) because it is against the apparent meaning of the Qur’ān.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) explained the clause, *unless you are Muslims,* in these words: ‘‘unless you are submissive.’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

as-Suyūṭī writes under the words of Allāh: *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh ...:* ‘‘Ibn Abī Shaybah and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that he said: ‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘The Book of Allāh, it is the cord of Allāh (which is) outstretched from the heaven to the earth.’’ ’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah narrates from Abū Shurayḥ al-Khuzā‘ī that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Surely this Qur’ān is a rope, one end of which is in the hand of Allāh, and the other end is in your hands; therefore hold fast to it; because you shall never slip nor will you ever go astray after (holding fast to) it.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

as-Sajjād (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a *ḥadīth:* ‘‘And the cord of Allāh — it is the Qur’ān.’’ (*Ma‘āni ’l-akhbār*)

The author says: There are other traditions on this theme, narrated by both sects.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘The progeny of Muḥammad, they are the cord

of Allāh which He has ordered (the believers) to hold fast to; so He has said: *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided.*'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning; they are supported by what has been written in the Commentary; also other traditions given below, support it.

aṭ-Ṭabarānī has narrated from Zayd ibn Arqam that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), said: 'Surely, I am to depart from you; and surely you are to come to me near the *'ḥawḍ'* (اَلْحَوْضُ = reservoir, i.e., of *'al-Kawthar'* = اَلْكَوْثَرُ). Therefore be careful how you follow me about the two weighty things.' He was asked: 'And what are the two weighty things? O Messenger of Allāh!' He said: 'The greater one is the Book of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, (it is) a rope one end of which is in the hand of Allāh and (another) end is in your hands; therefore hold fast to it, you shall never slip up nor will you ever go astray. And the smaller one is my progeny. And surely they will never separate from each other until they reach me near the waterreservoir; and I have asked for them this (especiality) from my Lord; therefore do not precede them lest you be destroyed; and do not (try to) teach them because they are more knowledgeable than you .' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: The tradition of the ''Two Weighty Things'' is among the *mutawātir* ones, which has been narrated unanimously by both the Sunnīs and the Shī'ahs. We have mentioned in the beginning of the chapter that some scholars of traditions have narrated it from thirty-five different narrators — males and females — and a multitude of narrators and scholars have narrated it from those original narrators.

Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Anas that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'The Children of Israel became divided into seventy-one sects, and surely my *ummah* will soon be divided into seventy-three sects — all of them shall be in the fire except one.' They said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! and who is this one?' He said: 'The party.' Then he recited: *And hold fast to the cord of Allāh all together.*' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: This too is one of the famous traditions. The Shī‘ahs have narrated it in a different way, as may be seen in *al-Khiṣāl, Ma‘āni ’l-akhbār, al-Iḥtijāj, al-Amālī,* the *Kitāb* of Sulaym ibn Qays and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī. We quote it here from the first-named book. aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chains from Sulaymān ibn Mihrān who narrates from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad (peace be on them both) who narrates, through his forefathers, from the Leader of the Faithful (peace be on them all) that he said: ‘‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying: ‘Verily, the *ummah* of Mūsā became divided after him, into seventy-one sects, one of them (was) saved, and seventy (were thrown) into the fire. And the *ummah* of ‘Īsā became divided after him, into seventy-two sects, one of them (was) saved, while seventy-one (were thrown) into the fire. And surely my *ummah* will soon.be divided after me, into seventy-three sects, one of them (will be) saved, and seventy-two (will be thrown) into the fire.’’

The author says: It conforms with the next tradition.

Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and al-Ḥākim (who has confirmed correctness of this *ḥadīth*) have all narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘The Jews were divided into seventy-one sects; and the Christians were divided into seventy-two sects; and my *ummah* will be divided into seventy-three sects.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: This theme is found in other traditions narrated through other chains from Mu‘āwiyah and others.

al-Ḥākim has narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘There will happen in any *ummah* all that happened in the Children of Israel in a completely identical manner, so much so that if there were among them someone who had openly had incestuous relation with his mother, there would be someone like that in my *ummah* too. Verily the Children of Israel were divided into seventy-one sects, and my *ummah will* become divided into seventy-three sects — all of them (will go) into the fire except one.’ He was asked: ‘Which

one?' He said: 'That on which are I and my Companions today.' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated in *Jāmi'u 'l-uṣūl* (by Ibnu 'l-Athīr) from at-Tirmidhī, on the authority of the son of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ from the Prophet.

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated through his chains from Ghiyāth ibn Ibrāhīm, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) (through his forefathers, peace be on them all) that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'All that happened in the previous nations will surely happen in this *ummah* in a completely identical manner and exactly alike way.'' (*Kamālu 'd-dīn*)

The Prophet said: ''Most surely you will follow the customs of those who were before you, in a completely identical manner and exactly alike way; you will not deviate from their path; you will imitate them faithfully (in every conceivable manner), span to span, hand to hand and arm to arm; so much so that if someone in previous nations had entered an iguana's den, you will surely enter it.'' They said: ''Do you mean the Jews and the Christians? O Messenger of Allāh!'' He said: ''Who (else) do I mean? Surely you will unravel the rope of Islam strand by strand; the first thing you will destroy of your religion shall be trustworthiness, and the last of it (to go, shall be) the prayer.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author of *Jāmi'u 'l-uṣūl* has narrated on the authority of the correct books — also at-Tirmidhī has narrated it — from the Prophet that he said: ''By Him in Whose hand my soul is, most surely you will follow the custom of those who were before you.'' And Razīn has added the words: ''in a completely identical manner and exactly similar way; so much so that if there were among them one who had cohabited with his mother, someone among you too would do so. But I do not know whether you would worship calf or not.''

The author says: This too is a famous tradition. The Sunnīs have narrated it in their correct and other books, while the Shī'ahs have recorded it in their collections of traditions.

Anas said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Surely there will arrive at the Reservoir a group of my Companions, until when they shall be removed (from there) they shall tremble before me. So I shall

say: O Lord! my Companions.' Then it will be said: 'You do not know what they did do after you.' '' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Bukhāri; *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim)

Abū Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said. ''There will arrive near me on the Day of Resurrection a group of my Companions (or according to another report: of my *ummah*), and they will be evicted from the Reservoir. Then I will say: 'O Lord! my Companions.' And (Allāh) will say: 'You have no knowledge of what they did do after you; they became apostates, going backwards (to their previous disbelief).' Then they will be avicted.'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: This tradition also is very well-known; both the Sunnīs and the Shī'ahs have recorded it in their correct books and collections, on the authority of many Companions, like Ibn Mas'ūd, Anas, Sahl ibn Sā'id, Abū Hurayrah, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, 'Ā'ishah, Umm Salmah, Asmā' bint Abī Bakr, and others, and also from some Imams of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

These traditions, numerous and varied as they are, confirm what we have inferred from the verses; and the historical events and strifes confirm these traditions.

al-Ḥākim has narrated (and confirmed its correctness) that Ibn 'Umar said: ''Verily the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Whoever went out of community about a hand-span, he surely removed the collar of Islam from his neck — until he returns. And whoever died without having a leader of community over him, then surely his death shall be a death of ignorance (i.e., disbelief).' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: The theme of this *ḥadīth* too is well-known. Both the Sunnīs and the Shī'ahs have narrated from the Prophet that he said: ''Whoever died without knowing the Imām of his time, he died the death of ignorance (i.e., disbelief).''

It is recorded in the *Sunans* of at-Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd that the Prophet said: ''There shall always be a group of my *ummah* on truth.'' (*Jāmi'u 'l-uṣūl*)

The Leader of the Faithful ('Alī, a.s.) said about the words of Allāh: *Did you disbelieve after your believing?:* ''They are the people of

innovations and heretic tendencies and wrong views from this *ummah.''* (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

Abū 'Amr az-Zubayrī narrates from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *You are the best nation raised up for the* (benefit of) *men ...,* that he said: ''(Allāh) means the *ummah* (group, nation) for which the prayer of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) was granted; and they are the people Allāh raised (His Messenger) among them, and from them and to them; and they are the medium nation, and they are the best nation that has been raised up for the people.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān; at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: We have explained this tradition under the Commentary of the following verse: *... and* (raise) *from our offspring a group submitting Thee* (2:128).

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said about the verse: *You are the best nation raised up for the* (benefit of) *men ...:* ''The People of the House of the Prophet.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Aḥmad has narrated through good chains from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said : ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'I have been given that which no prophet was given: I have been helped with awe, and I have been given keys of the earth, and I have been named Aḥmad, and the earth has been made a means of cleansing for me, and my *ummah* has been made the best nation.'' (*ibid.*)

* * * * *

لَنْ يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى وَإِنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ يُوَلُّوكُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنْصَرُونَ ــ ١١١ . ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا ثُقِفُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِنَ اللهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ــ ١١٢ . لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ــ ١١٣ . يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ــ ١١٤ . وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ــ ١١٥ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ــ ١١٦ . مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَوٰةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللهُ وَلٰكِنْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ــ ١١٧ . يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي

صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ــ ١١٨ .
هَا أَنْتُمْ أُولَاءِ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا
لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ
مُوتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ــ ١١٩ . إِنْ تَمْسَسْكُمْ
حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا
لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئاً إِنَّ اللهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ــ ١٢٠ .

They shall by no means harm you but with a slight distress; and if they fight you they shall turn (their) *backs to you, then they shall not be helped* (111). *Abasement is brought down upon them wherever they are found, except under a protection from Allāh and a protection from men, and they have become settled in wrath from Allāh, and humiliation is stamped upon therm; this is because they used to disbelieve in the signs of Allāh and slew the prophets unjustly; this is because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limits* (112). *They are not all alike; of the People of the Book there is an upright party; they recite Allāh's communications in the night-time and they prostrate* (to Him) (113). *They believe in Allāh and the last day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and they strive with one another in hastening to good deeds, and those are among the good* (114). *And whatever good they do, they shall not be denied it, and Allāh knows the pious ones* (115). (As for) *those who disbelieve, surely neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allāh; and these are the inmates of the fire; therein they shall abide* (116). *The likeness of what they spend in this life of the world is as the likeness of a wind in which is intense cold* (that) *smites the tilth of a people who have done injustice to their souls and destroys it; and Allāh does no injustice to them, but they are doing injustice to themselves* (117). *O you who believe! do not take for intimate friends from among others than your own people; they do not fall short of*

inflicting loss upon you; they love what distresses you; vehement hatred has already appeared from out of their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater still; indeed, We have made the signs clear to you, if you would understand (118). *Lo! you are they who will love them while they do not love you, and you believe in the Book* (in) *the whole of it; and when they meet you they say: ''We believe,'' and when they are alone, they bite the ends of their fingers in rage against you. Say: ''Die in your rage;'' surely Allāh knows what is in the breasts* (119). *If a good befall you, it grieves them, and if an evil afflicts you, they rejoice at it; and if you are patient and guard yourselves, their scheme will not injure you in any way; surely Allāh comprehends what they do* (120).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses, as you see, now revert to the original theme, describing the behaviour of the People of the Book — and particularly the Jews — exposing their disbelief in the Divine Revelation, their going astray and their hindering the believers from the way of Allāh; the preceding ten verses were a talk within talk, a parenthetical speech. The verses are thus connected with the foregoing discourse.

QUR'ĀN: *They shall by no means harm you ... they shall not be helped: ''al-Adhā''* (اَلْاَذٰي = slight distress) denotes a harm suffered by a creature, either to his soul or body or to those related to him, be it of this world or of the hereafter — as ar-Rāghib has said in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān.*

QUR'ĀN: Abasement is brought down upon them wherever they are found, except under a protection from Allāh and a protection from men;: ''adh-Dhillah'' (اَلذِّلَّةُ = abasement) denotes here species of abasement; *'adh-dhull'* (اَلذُّلُّ) is the humiliation imposed by someone else; *'adh-dhill'* (اَلذِّلُّ) is that which results from one's own obstinacy — as ar-Rāghib has written. However, its general import is the condition of

humiliation and degradation. Its opposite *'al-'izz'* (اَلْعِزُّ) means honour, strength and pride.

The word *'thuqifū'* (ثُقِفُوا) means ''are found''; *'al-ḥabl'* (اَلْحَبْلُ) literally means rope or cord which provides protection to one who holds fast to it; it is metaphorically used to everything that provides a kind of safety, security and protection, e.g., a covenant, guarantee or amnesty. The meaning is as follows — and Allāh knows better: Abasement is stamped on them as a design is stamped on a coin, or it encompasses them as a tent encompasses a man. Anyhow, they are either branded with, or overwhelmed by abasement and humiliation — except when they get a protection or guarantee from Allāh and a protection or guarantee from men.

The word ''protection'' is repeated when referring to Allāh and then to men, because the connotation differs from one place to the other. Protection given by Allāh is His decree and command, either creative or legislative; and that provided by men is their decision and action.

Abasement is stamped on them; it means that Allāh has ordained a law affirming their abasement. This meaning is supported by the proviso ''wherever they are found''. Obviously, it means that wherever the believers find them and subjugate them; this proviso is obviously more appropriate to legislative abasement, one of whose effects is the imposition of *jizyah.*

The meaning of the verse therefore is as follows:

They are abased and humiliated, according to the law of Islamic *sharī'ah,* except when they come under the protection of an Islamic State, or somehow get protection from people.

One of the exegetes has said that the clause ''Abasement is brought down upon them'' is not a legislative order; it is rather a statement of fact describing what they had suffered by the Divine decree and measure — because when Islam came, the Jews were paying *jizyah* to the fire-worshippers of Persia, and some of them were subjects of the Christians.

COMMENT: This meaning could be correct; and the end portion of the verse might even support this view, because it apparently explains the reason of their being branded with abasement and humiliation in terms of

their misdeeds, e.g., their disbelief in the signs of Allāh, their slaying the prophets and their continuous transgression. But then we would have to apply this verse exclusively to the Jews — and there is apparently nothing in the verse to suggest such exclusiveness. We shall write some more on this subejct under the following verse: *and We have put enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Ressurection* (5:64).

QUR'ĀN: *and they have become settled in wrath from Allāh, and humiliation is stamped upon them;: ''Bā'ū''* (بَاءُوا = they settled in; they returned with); *'al-maskanah'* (اَلْمَسْكَنَةُ) translated here as humiliation, literally means extreme poverty. Apparently it is used when a man finds no way of escape from a threatening poverty or need. Accordingly the end of the verse conforms with its beginning.

QUR'ĀN: *this is because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limits:* They disobeyed, and, even before that, they were habitually and continuously transgressing the limits.

QUR'ĀN: *They are not all alike; ... and Allāh knows the pious ones: ''as-Sawā' ''* (اَلسَّوَآءُ = literally, to be equal) is a *maṣdar* which is used in the meaning of adjective, that is, equal, alike. The People of the Book are not all alike in their behaviour, nor in the rules applying to them; there is among them an upright group whose attributes the verse describes. Obviously, the phrase ''of the People of the Book there is ...'' shows the reason as to why the People of the Book are not all alike.

Various meanings have been given for the word *'qā'imah'* (قَآئِمَةٌ = literally, standing; translated here as upright): It is said that it means 'firm in obeying the command of Allāh', or 'just', or 'proceeding on straight path'. The fact is that the word is of a general nature which could be interpreted in any of the above meanings. But the mention of the Book and of their good deeds makes it certain that it has been used here in the meaning of being standing or firm in belief and obedience.

'Ānā' ' (اَنَآء) is plural of *'inan'* (اِنًي) or *'anan'* (اَنًي) or reportedly *'anū'* (اُنُو), all of which mean ''time''.

'al-Musāra'ah' (اَلْمُسَارَعَةُ = to vie with one another in hastening); it is on paradigm of *'al-mufā'alah'* (اَلْمُفَاعَلَةُ) from the root verb *'as-sur'ah'* (اَلسُّرْعَةُ = to be fast, to make haste). It is explained in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*

as follows: ‘‘The difference between *as-sur‘ah* and *‘al-‘ajalah’* (اَلْعَجَلَةُ) is as follows: *as-Sur‘ah* is to go ahead in a matter in which going ahead is allowed; it is a praiseworthy trait, and its opposite is *‘al-ibṭā’* (اَلْاِبْطَآءُ = to be late) which is a disliked action. And *al-‘ajalah* is to go ahead in a matter in which one should not go ahead; it is a disliked trend, and its opposite is *‘al-anāh’* (اَلْاَنَاةُ = deliberateness) which is a good trait.

Apparently, *as-sur‘ah* is an attribute of movement, while *al-‘ajalah* shows an attribute of the one who moves.

‘al-Khayrāt’ (اَلْخَيْرَاتُ) means good deeds in general — be it worship, or spending in the way of Allāh, or justice or looking after the needs of needy persons. It is a plural with prefix *‘al’* (اَلْ) which denotes comprehensiveness. It is mostly used for monetary good deeds, as its singular *‘al-khayr’* (اَلْخَيْرُ = good) is mostly used for wealth and property.

In these verses, Allāh has enumerated most of the basic good attributes, i.e., belief, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and hastening towards good deeds; then He has praised them that they are among the good people. It means that they are the people of the straight path, and among the companions of the prophets, the truthful ones and the martyrs. Read, for proof, the following verses: *Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray* (1:6 — 7); in conjuction with: *And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthfuls and the martyrs and the good ones; and excellent are these as companions* (4:69).

It has been said that the verses under discussion refer to ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām and his companions.

QUR’ĀN: *And whatever good they do, they shall not be denied it: ‘‘Lan yukfarūh’’* (لَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ = they shall never be denied it); the root word is *‘al-kufrān’* (اَلْكُفْرَانُ = ungratefulness) which is opposite of *‘ash-shukr’* (اَلشُّكْرُ = gratefulness). Allāh will reward them for whatever good they do, they will receive its recompense from Allāh, He will not let it be lost; He says: *and whoever on his own accord does good, then surely Allāh is Grateful, Knowing* (2:158). Also He says: *and whatever good thing you spend, it is to your own good; ... and whatever good thing you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged* (2:272).

QUR'ĀN: (As for) *those who disbelieve, surely neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them ...:* The continuation of context apparently shows that the phrase ''those who disbelieve'' refers to the other groups of the People of the Book which did not respond to the call of the Prophet; those were the people who used to hatch conspiracies against Islam and had left no stone unturned in extinguishing the light of the truth.

Some people have said that this verse refers to the idol-worshippers; according to them, it paves the way for the story of the Battle of Uḥud which comes after a few verses. But this explanation does not take into account the next statements, that is, *and you believe in the Book* (in) *the whole of it, and when they meet you they say: ''We believe''...* Obviously it describes the Jews' behaviour with the Muslims, not that of the idol-worshippers. It proves that the context is the same; it has not changed yet.

An exegete has tried to combine both explanations by applying the verse under discussion to the idolaters and the next one to the Jews. But it is a mistake.

QUR'ĀN: *The likeness of what they spend ...: ''aṣ-Ṣirr''* (اَلصِّرُّ = intense cold). What they spend has been qualified with the proviso ''in this life of the world'' to indicate that they are completely cut off from the life of the hereafter; whatever they spend is related only to this life. The smitten tilth is qualified by the phrase ''of a people who have done injustice to their souls'' this proviso perfectly meshes with the coming statement, ''and Allāh does no injustice to them''.

The verse means that whatever they spend in this life (in order to better their conditions and achieve their evil goals) brings nothing to them except infelicity and unhappiness; it destroys what they ardently desire and which they think would bring happiness to them. It is like an intensely cold wind that smites the farm produce of an unjust people; it is because they had done injustice to their own selves — after all, an evil deed can bring only evil results.

QUR'ĀN: O you who believe! do not take for intimate friends from among others than your own people; ...: Intimate friend has been called 'al-biṭānah' (اَلْبِطَانَةُ = inner lining of a garment) — i.e., opposite of *'aẓ-ẓihārah'* (اَلظِّهَارَةُ = outer side of a garment) — because such a friend

knows the inner thoughts and secrets of man; ‘‘they do not fall short,’’ i.e., they leave no stone unturned; *‘khabālan’* (خَبَالاً = harm, mischief); insanity is called *‘al-khabl’* (اَلْخَبْلُ) because it harms or destroys understanding; ‘‘they love what distresses you’’: ‘‘what’’ in this sentence is for *maṣdar*, and it means: they love your distress, your grievous harm; ‘‘vehement hatred has already appeared from out of their mouths’’: it means that their enmity and hatred is very obvious from their way of talking, from slips of their tongues; it is a fine metaphor; the verse does not describe what they have kept hidden in their hearts, it just says: ‘‘and what their breasts conceal is greater still’’; this apparent vagueness indicates that the hatred hidden in their hearts is so varied and so great that it is beyond description — this vagueness puts even greater stress on the word ‘‘greater’’.

QUR’ĀN: *Lo! you are they who will love them while they do not love you,... Allāh knows what is in the breasts:* Apparently *‘ūlā’i’* (اُولاَء = they, these) is demonstrative pronoun, and *‘hā’* (هَا = lo!) is exclamatory particle, and between the two has been inserted the pronoun ‘‘you’’; the meaning thus will be, ‘you these’, as we say ‘Zayd this did so’, or ‘Hindah this did so’.

The article *‘al’* (اَلْ = the) in ‘‘the Book’’ denotes genes, i.e., you believe in all the Books which have been revealed by Allāh — your Book as well as their Books — while they do not believe in your Book.

The clause ‘‘and when they meet you they say: ‘We believe,’ ’’ shows that they are hypocrites; ‘‘and when they are alone, they bite the ends of their fingers in rage against you’’: *‘al-‘aḍḍ’* (اَلْعَضُّ = to bite forcefully); *‘al-anāmil’* (اَلْاَنَامِلُ) is plural of *‘al-unmulah,* (اَلْاُنْمُلَة = fingertip); *‘al-ghayẓ’* (اَلْغَيْظُ = rage, wrath, anger); to bite fingertips against something proverbially expresses one’s anger or sorrow on that thing.

The clause ‘‘Say: ‘Die in your rage,’ ’’ is a curse against them in the form of command. It connects the foregoing sentences to the next one ‘‘surely Allāh knows what is in the breasts’’. The meaning together will be as follows: ‘‘O Allāh ! cause them to die in their rage; surely Thou knowest what is in the breasts, that is, what is in their hearts or souls.’’

QUR’ĀN: *If a good befalls you, it grieves them ...: ‘‘al-Masā’ah’’*

(اَلْمَسَآئَةُ = to grieve) is opposite of *'as-surūr'* (اَلسُّرُوْرُ = to make happy; happiness). The verse shows that the believers may protect hemselves only if they have patience and piety.

* * * * *

LIST OF THE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

DEALT WITH IN THIS VOLUME

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APPENDIX 'A'

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES

THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh	Rasūlu'llāh, Nabiyyu'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabī' I, in the Year of the Elephant. (25. 8. 570 AD)	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH (25. 5. 632 AD)	Natural	Holy Medina, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27.1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar)	15th Ramaḍān, 3 AH (1. 3. 625 AD)	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH (6. 3. 670 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Aṣghar)	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH (8. 1. 626 AH)	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (10. 10. 680 AD)	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā	Holy Karbalā" (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH (16. 12. 676 AD)	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH (28. 1. 733 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH (20. 4. 702 AD)	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH (14. 12. 765 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abd aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH (28. 10. 746 AD)	25th Rajab, 183 AH (1. 9. 799 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 148 AH – (29.12.765 AD)	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH (24. 8. 818 AD)	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs - Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH (8. 4. 811 AD)	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH (25. 11. 835 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third)	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH (27. 9. 827 AD)	3rd Rajab, 254 AH (28. 6. 868 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā), Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH (3. 12. 846 AD)	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH (1. 1. 874 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā, Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghā'ib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH (29. 7. 869 AD)	Still alive, but in occultation.	– –	– – – –

APPENDIX "B"

In this book the references of the Qur'ãnic verses have been given by writing serial number of the relevant chapter, followed by a colon (:) that is followed by the number/s of the verse/s. The names of the chapters have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The names of the chapters with their serial numbers are given here for the guidance of the readers.

To find, for instance, the verse 5:67 in the Qur'ãn, the reader should open the fifth chapter, that its, *al-Mã'idah* (اَلمَآئِدة = The Table) and then find the 67th verse.

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
1.	فاتِحَةُ الكِتاب	*Fatihatu 'l-kitãb*	The Opening of The Book
2.	البَقَرة	*al –Baqarah*	The Cow
3.	آل عِمران	*Ãl 'Imrãn*	The House of Imran
4.	النِّساء	*An-Nisã'*	Women
5.	المَائِدة	*Al-Mã'idah*	The Table
6.	الأنعام	*Al –An'ãm*	Cattle
7.	الأعراف	*Al-A'rãf*	The Battlements
8.	الأنفال	*Al-Anfãl*	The Spoils
9.	التَّوْبَة	*At-Tawbah*	Repentance
10.	يُونُس	*Yunus*	Jonah

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
11.	هُود	*Hũd*	Hood
12.	يُوسُف	*Yũsuf*	Joseph
13.	الرَّعد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder
14.	اِبراهيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham
15.	الحِجْر	*Al–Ḥijr*	El-Hijr
16.	النَّحل	*An-Naḥl*	The Bee
17.	الاِسْرآء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey
18.	الكَهْف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave
19.	مَريَم	*Maryam*	Mary
20.	طه	*Ṭã Hã*	Ta Ha
21.	الأنْبيآء	*Al-Anbiyã'*	Prophets
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage
23.	المؤمِنون	*al-Mu'minũn*	The Believers
24.	النّور	*an-Nũr*	Light
25.	الفُرقان	*al-Furqãn*	Discrimination (Salvation)
26.	الشُّعَراء	*Ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets
27.	النَّمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ant
28.	القَصَص	*Al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Stories
29.	العَنْكَبُوت	*Al-'Ankabũt*	The Spider
30.	الرُّوم	*Ar-Rũm*	The Greeks
31.	لُقْمان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman
32.	السَّجْدة	*As-Sajdah*	Prostration
33.	الأحزاب	*Al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates
34.	سَبَأ	*Saba'*	Sheba
35.	فاطِر (المَلائِكة)	*Fãṭir (or, al-Malã'ikah)*	The Originator (or The Angels)
36.	يـس	*Yã Sīn*	Ya Sin
37.	الصّـافّات	*aṣ-Ṣãffãt*	The Rangers
38.	ص	*Ṣãd*	Sad

S.No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
39.	الزُّمَر	*az-Zumar*	The Companies
40.	المُؤْمِن	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished
42.	الشُّورى	*ash-Shũrã*	Counsel
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments
44.	الدُّخان	*ad-Dukhãn*	Smoke
45.	الجاثِية	*al-Jãthiyah*	Hobbling
46.	الأحقاف	*al-Aḥqãf*	The Sand-Dunes
47.	مُحَمّد(ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory
49.	الحُجُرات	*al Ḥujurãt*	Apartments
50.	ق	*Qãf*	Qaf
51.	الذّاريات	*adh-Dhãriyãt*	The Scatterers
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭũr*	The Mount
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon
55.	الرَّحمن	*ar-Raḥmãn*	The All-
56.	الواقِعَة	*al-Wãqi'ah*	The Terror
57.	الحَديد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron
58.	المُجادَلة	*Al-Mujãdalah*	The Disputer
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering
60.	المُمتَحَنة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman
61.	الصَّف	*aṣ-Ṣaff*	The Ranks
62.	الجُمُعة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation
63.	المُنافِقُون	*Al-Munãfiqũn*	The Hypocrites
64.	التَّغابُن	*At-Taghãbun*	Mutual Fraud
65.	الطَّلاق	*aṭ-Ṭalãq*	Divorce
66,	التَّحْريم	*at-taḥrīm*	The Forbidding
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
68.	القَلَم	*Al-Qalam*	The Pen
69.	الحَاقّة	*Al-Ḥãqqah*	The Indubitable
70.	المَعارج	*Al-Ma'ãrij*	The Stairways
71.	نُوح	*Nũḥ*	Noah
72.	الجِنّ	*Al-Jinn*	The Jinn
73.	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped
74.	المُدَّثِّر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded
75.	القِيامَة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection
76.	الدَّهر (الإنسان)	*Ad-Dahr* (or, *al -Insãn)*	The Time (or, Man)
77.	المُرسَلات	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones
78.	النَّبأ	*an-Naba'*	The Tiding
79.	النّازعات	*An-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers
80.	عَبَس	*'Abas*	He Frowned
81.	التَّكْوير	*At-Takwīr*	The Darkening
82.	الإنفِطار	*Al-Infiṭãr*	The Splitting
83.	المُطَفِّفين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters
84.	الإنشِقاق	al-Inshiqãq	The Rending
85.	البُروج	*Al-Burũj*	The Constellations
86.	الطّارق	*aṭ-Ṭãriq*	The Night-star
87.	الأعلى	*Al-A'lã*	The Most High
88.	الغاشِيَة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper
89.	الفَجْر	*Al-Fajr*	The Dawn
90.	البَلَد	*Al-Balad*	The Land
91.	الشَّمْس	*Ash-Shams*	The Sun
92.	اللَّيل	*Al-Layl*	The Night
93.	الضُّحى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon
94.	الإنشِراح	*Al-Inshirãh*	The Expanding

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
95.	التِّين	*At-Tīn*	The Fig
96.	العَلَق	*Al-ʻlaq*	The Blood-clot
97.	القَدر	*al -Qadr*	Power
98.	البَيِّنَة	*al -Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign
99.	الزِّلزال	*Az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake
100.	العَاديات	*Al-ʻÃdiyãt*	The Chargers
101.	القارِعَة	*al-Qãriʻah*	The Clatterer
102.	التَّكاثُر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry
103.	العَصْر	*Al-ʻAṣr*	Afternoon
104.	الهُمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter
109.	الفيل	*Al-Fīl*	The Elephant
106.	قُرَيْش	*Quraysh*	Quraish
107.	الماعُون	*Al-Mãʻũn*	Charity
108.	الكَوْثَر	*al-Kawthar*	Abũndance
109.	الكافِرون	*Al-Kãfirũn*	The Unbelievers
110.	النَّصر	*An-Naṣr*	Help
111.	تَبَّت	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab)*	Perish (or,The Flame)
112.	الإخْلاص (التَّوحيد)	*al Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd)*	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)
113.	الفَلَق	*Al-Falaq*	Daybreak
114.	النَّاس	*an-Nãs*	Men

AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Qur'ān

BY:

al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 7

Translated by:
Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

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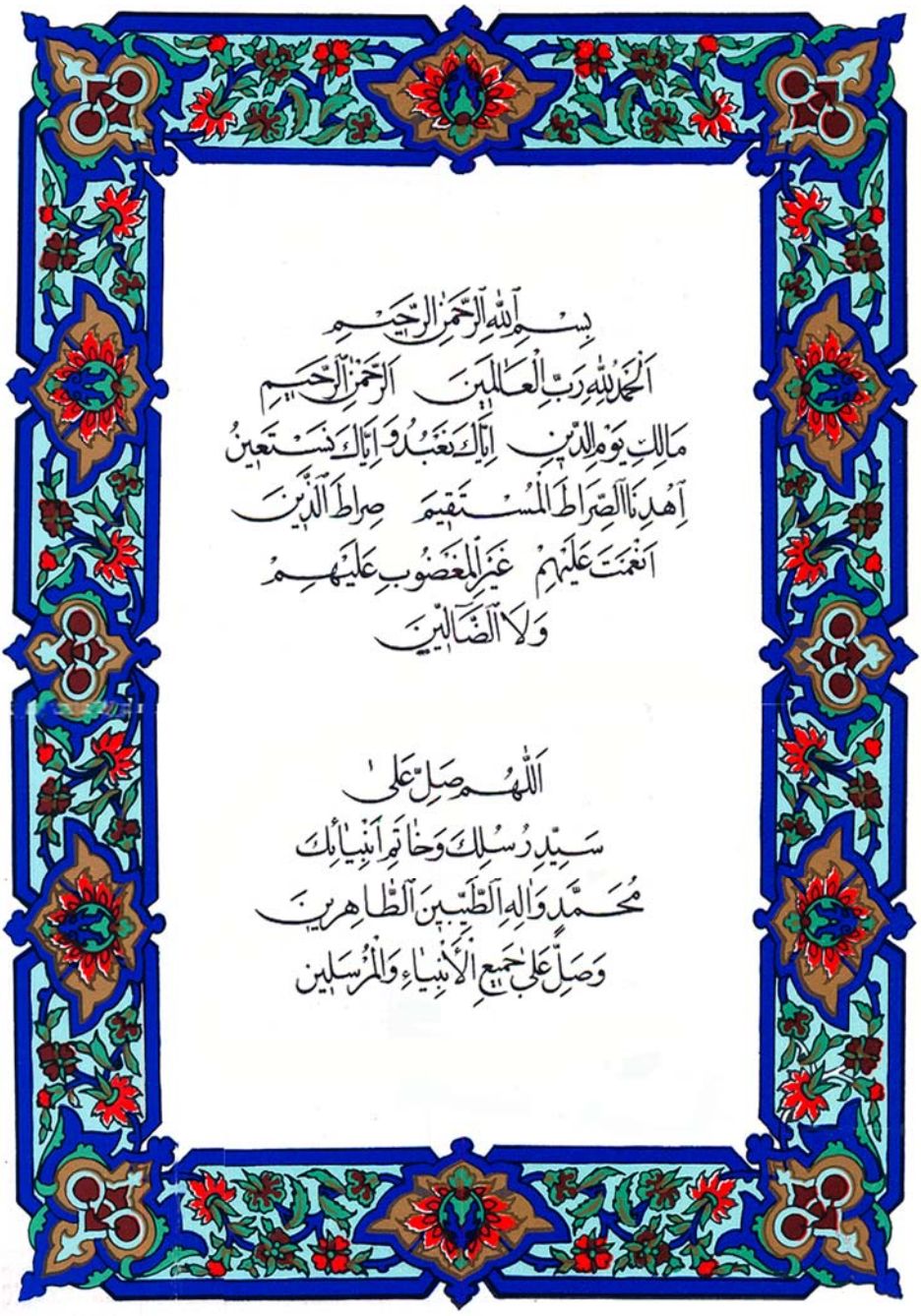
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou host blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ

اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى

سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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TRANSLITERATION

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	ك	k
ب	b	ل	l
ت	t	م	m
ث	th	ن	n
ج	j	ه	h
ح	ḥ	و	w
خ	kh	ي	y
د	d	ة	ah, at
ذ	dh		(construct state)
ر	r	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	z		
س	s		
ش	sh		**Long Vowels**
ص	ṣ	آ	ã
ض	ḍ	و	ũ
ط	ṭ	ي	ī
ظ	ẓ		
ع	‘ or ʿ		**Short Vowels**
غ	gh	ـَ	a
ف	f	ـُ	u
ق	q	ـِ	i

تصدير

١- العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤-١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، وبعد مداولات واستشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لأنّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، وكفاءته الأدبيّة في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هوالزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤- قدّمنا نشر ترجمة الجزء السابع من (الميزان) لأنّه كان قد تهيّأ للنشر، والجزء الأوّل لم يتهيّأ بعد - لأسباب لا نريد أن نشرح أمرها هنا - فلم نر من الصّالح إرجاء نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و(الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة. و لكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكل جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

* * *

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى و نعم النّصير.

١٤١٠/١٢/١٨
١٩٩٠/٧/١١

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران — ايران

FOREWORD

1. al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) — may Allāh have mercy upon him — was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān.*

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabātabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because.we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the seventh volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān.* This volume corresponds with the first half of the third volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allāh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mīzān:* One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * * *

We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Heipr.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(*Board of Writing, Translation and Publication*)

18/12/1410
11/7/1990
Tehran IRAN.

al-Mīzān

Volume Seven

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

* * *

وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ــ ١٢١ . إِذْ هَمَّتْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ــ ١٢٢ . وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ــ ١٢٣ . إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمِدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنْزَلِينَ ــ ١٢٤ . بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُمْ مِنْ فَوْرِهِمْ هَٰذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ــ ١٢٥ . وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُمْ بِهِ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ــ ١٢٦ . لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ــ ١٢٧ . لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ــ ١٢٨ . وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ــ ١٢٩ .

And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family to lodge the believers in encampments for war; and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing (121). *When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice, and Allāh was the guardian of them both, and in Allāh should the believers trust*

(122). *And Allāh did certainly assist you at Badr when you were weak; fear Allāh then, that you may give thanks* (123). *When you said to the believers. ''Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you with three thousand of the angels sent down?* (124). *Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard* (against evil), *and they come upon you in a headlong manner, your Lord will assist you with five thousand of the havoc-making angels''* (125). *And Allāh did not make it but as good news for you, and that your hearts might be at ease thereby, and help is only from Allāh, the Mighty, the Wise* (126). *That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them so that they should return disappointed of attaining what they desired* (127). *You have no concern in the affair whether He turns to them* (mercifully) *or chastises them, for surely they are unjust* (128). *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's; He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (129).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

Now the discourse turns back to what the chapter had begun with: Warning the believers of the serious situation they were in; reminding them of Allāh's favours bestowed on them, that is, true belief, divine help and the fact that Allāh is sufficient for them; teaching them what would lead them to their noble goal; and guiding them to what would make them happy in this life and the hereafter.

It describes the battle of Uḥud. There are some verses referring to the battle of Badr, but they are like supplement inserted here for cross-reference, and as we shall explain later, they are not meant as main topic here.

QUR'ĀN: *And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family to lodge the believers in encampments for war:*''When'' in Arabic is adverb of time related to a deleted verb e.g. ''Remember'' or similar verbs; *''ghadawta''* (غَدَوْتَ) translated here as *''you did go forth early in*

the morning'' is derived from *al-ghadw* (اَلْغَدْوُ = to come out early in the morning); *at-tabw'ah* (اَلتَّبْوِئَةُ) means to prepare a place for someone, or to put him in a place; *maā'id* (مَقَاعِدُ) is plural [of مَقْعَد = seat; translated here as encampment). *Ahl* (اَهْل) of a man, according to ar-Rāghib, are those who are joined to him in geneology or house or other such things like religion, town or handicraft. Thus *ahl* of a man refers to his wife and all those who are in his house, like wife, child, servant, etc.; also it denotes all who are related to him like his family or clan; residents of a town or followers of a religion are called *ahl* of that town or religion; artisans and masters of a handicraft are called *ahl* of that art or handicraft. The word *''ahl''* is used for masculine and feminine both; also for singular and plural alike. Its use is exclusively reserved for human beings; *ahl* of a thing are the people related to it exclusively.

''Ahl'' of the Messenger of Allāh are therefore the people exclusively related to him. Here it refers to a group — not to a single person. It may be understood from the expression, *''you did go forth early in the morning from your family '',* because it may be said, ''You went forth from your relatives and your group''; but it cannot be said, ''You went forth from your wife'' or ''from your mother''. An exegete mistakenly has thought that *ahl* refers to singular only, and therefore has had to say that there was some word deleted (but understood) from the verse; according to him the verse means, ''did go forth ... from *the house of* your family'' . But as you have seen nothing in this verse demands such interpretation.

The preceding and following verses are addressed to the believers as a group. But the verses under discussion turn from plural to singular; they are addressed not to the believers but to the Messenger of Allāh alone. Apparently this diversion has some connection with the shade of displeasure found in the verses dealing with this battle; there is an undercurrent of reproach, censure and stricture running throughout for what the Muslims had done [in the battle of Uḥud] where they had shown cowardice and lack of will-power and courage. Therefore, whenever a topic comes which exclusively concerns the Prophet, Allāh ignores and disregards the believers and speaks to the Prophet alone. Thus Allāh says: *And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family; When you said to the believers: ''Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you ...*''; *You have no concern in the affair; Say: ''Surely*

the affair is wholly (in the hands) *of Allāh''* [3:154]; *Thus it is due to the mercy from Allāh that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hardhearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you* [3:159]; *And reckon not those who are killed in Allāh's way as dead* [3:169].

In all the above verses plural verbs and pronouns have been changed to singular. It seems as though the speaker is not in a mood to continue the preceding style [of speaking to the whole community] because he is very much annoyed and displeased with them.

It is unlike some other verses coming in between where effectiveness and sharpness of admonition depended on direct talk with the believers and therefore the plural was used. For example: *And Muḥammad is no more than a messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heals?* [3:144]; *When you ran off precipitately and did not turn towards any one, and the Messenger was calling you from your rear* [3:153].

Also it is unlike another intervening verse, that is: *Certainly Allāh conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His communications* [3:164]. Here Allāh describes His favour on the believers of sending the Prophet to them; and it could be effective and more impressive only if it was supposed as if the Prophet himself were not present there. Ponder on all these verses and you will appreciate the relevance of what we have written.

The verse under discussion means as follows: O Prophet, remember when you did go forth early in the morning from your family in order that you should place the believers in their sectors for war; and Allāh is Hearing (He had heard what was said there) and Knowing (He had known what was hidden in their hearts). The expression, *''you did go forth early in the morning from your family''*, indicates that the battle-ground was nearer to the Prophet's house. It clearly shows that the two verses refer to the battle of Uḥud, and in this way they are related to other verses which would follow later and which describe the battle of Uḥud. All these verses fit the events which had taken place in Uḥud.

This shows the weakness of the claim that these two verses were revealed about the battle of Badr, or, as someone else said, about the battle of the Confederates. And it is obvious [from the context].

QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing:* He is Hearing, He had heard what was spoken there; and Knowing, He knew what was hidden in their hearts. It indicates that some Muslims had spoken there some [undesirable] things, and there were other things which they had not disclosed to others.

Apparently the next clause, *''When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice''*, is related to these two attributes, [i.e., Allāh heard and knew the conspiracy and intention of the two parties when they had determined to show cowardice.]

QUR'ĀN: *When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice, and Allāh was the guardian of them both: ''al-Hamm''* (اَلْهَمُّ = what you determine in your heart; intention); *al-fashl* (اَلْفَشْلُ = weakness with cowardice).

''and Allāh was the guardian of them both'': This is a circumstantial clause, related to the verb, *''had determined''*. It is meant as an admonition and reproof, as is the concluding sentence, *''and in Allāh should the believers trust''*. The connotation is as follows: The two parties had determined to show cowardice although Allāh was their guardian — and a believer should not show weakness and cowardice when he believes that Allāh is his guardian and when he is supposed to entrust all his affairs to Allāh, and whoever trusts in Allāh then He is sufficient for him.

This explanation shows the weakness of an interpretation offered by an exegete who says: This intention of the two parties was merely a thought, a notion, not a determination, because Allāh has praised them and said that He was their guardian. Had it been a firm determination and intention, they should have been blamed rather than praised.

But I do not understand what he means when he says that it was merely a thought, a notion. Does he mean merely a passing thought, a knowledge what cowardice means? If so, then everyone present there knew the meaning of cowardice, and it makes no sense to mention it in this context; nor is it called ''determination'' in Arabic language. Or, does he mean knowledge of cowardice coupled with some intention; a notion with determination to act upon it? [If so, then it was not merely a thought or a notion.] Also, the verse shows that the condition of the two parties was obvious to the others; had it been merely a passing thought

without showing any effect on their behaviour, others would not have known that they had determined to show weakness and cowardice. Moreover, the reminder that Allāh was their guardian and that the believers must put their trust in Allāh, dove-tails with firm determination, not with a passing thought. And in any case, we have explained that in the present context, the clause, *''and Allāh was the guardian of them both''*, is not intended as a praise, it is a reproof, an admonition.

Perhaps this misunderstanding has sprung up from a tradition attributed to Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh al-Anṣārī, in which he says: ''(This verse) was revealed about us; and I would not prefer if it were not revealed, because Allāh has said, *and Allāh was the guardian of them both.''* The said exegete probably thought that Jabir had taken the clause as a praise.

Even if the said tradition be accepted as correct, Jābir's theme is different from what that exegete has thought. Jābir means that Allāh then accepted their belief and confirmed that they were believers, because He counted Himself as their guardian, and Allāh is the guardian of those who believe, and as for the unbelievers their guardians are the rebels. Jābir does not mean that this clause implies any praise, when it has been put in this contact of clear reprimand and censure.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh did certainly assist you at Badr when you were weak; fear Allāh then, that you may give thanks:* The context obviously shows that this verse has been revealed here as a supporting evidence to emphasize the stricture, to complete the reproof. If so, then this too would be a circumstantial clause, like the preceding one, *''and Allāh was the guardian of them both.''* Its connotation then would be as follows: You should not have determined to show cowardice while Allāh had certainly assisted you at Badr when you were weak. On the other hand, it might be an independent sentence revealed here to remind them of the wonderful assistance provided to them at Badr, when Allāh had sent down the angels to help them when they were weak.

Allāh mentions here the help sent by Him to them at Badr, and compares their present condition with that; and it is known that whoever becomes strong, does so only with Allāh's help and His assistance, because man, *per se,* has nothing except neediness and weakness. That is why Allāh says: *''when you were weak''.*

It many be understood from the above that the statement, *''when you were weak'',* does not disagree with such other divine words as, *and to Allāh belongs the might and to His Messenger and to the believers* [63:8], because the believers' might springs from the might of Allāh, as He says: *Then surely all might is for Allāh* [4:139]; and it proceeds from the divine help given to the believers, as Allāh says: *And certainly We sent before you messengers to their people, so they came to them with clear arguments, then We gave the punishment to those who were guilty; and helping the believers is ever incumbent upon Us* [30:47]. In this situation if we look at the condition of the believers, *per se,* they have got nothing except weakness.

Apart from that, if we look at the believers' condition in Badr, we shall have to admit that they were certainly weaker in comparison to the strength, might and *elan* the polytheists had had. And there is no difficulty in ascribing a relative weakness to otherwise mighty ones. Allāh has ascribed it to a people whom He has praised very extensively, when He says: ... *then soon Allāh will bring a people that He shall love them and they shall love Him, humble* (*adhillah*, اَذِلَّةٍ = lit: weak) *before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers* ... [5:54].

QUR'ĀN: When you said to the believers: ''Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you ... *''al-Imdād''* (اَلْاِمْدَادُ) is derived from *al-madd*(اَلْمَدُّ) and signifies giving *al-madad* (اَلْمَدَدُ = help) continuously.

QUR'ĀN: *''Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard* (against evil), *and they come upon you in a headlong manner ... '': ''Balā''* (بَلٰي = Yea) is used for affirmation; *al-fawr* and *al-fawrān* (اَلْفَوْرُ،اَلْفَوْرَانُ) means to boil; they say, *fāra 'l-qidr* (فَارَالْقِدْرُ = the cooking-pot boiled up) ; then the word was used to denote hurry and haste. Thus the phrase, *min fawrihim hādha* (مِنْ فَوْرِهِمْ هٰذَا = translated here as, *in a headlong manner*) means, 'at once'; 'immediately'.

Obviously, the promise refers to the battle of Badr. It is a conditional promise, and the conditions are given in these clauses, *''if you remain patient and are on your guard and they come upon you in a headlong manner''.*

An exegete has written that it is a promise to send down the angels if they came upon the believers (not ''immediately'', i.e. not on the day of

Badr, but) after the immediate time, i.e. after the battle of Badr. Another one has written that it is a promise to send down the angels in all the battles after the Badr, like Uḥud, Ḥunayn and the Confederates. But the wording of the verse does not agree with it.

As for Uḥud, there is obviously nothing in the verses that might allude to coming of the angels on that day. So far as the battles of the Confederates and Ḥunayn are concerned, the Qur'ān, of course, says [in other places] that the angels were sent on those days: It says about the battle of the Confederates: ... *when there came down upon you hosts, so We sent against them a strong wind and hosts that you saw not* ... [33:9]. And it says about the day of Ḥunayn: ... *and on the day of Ḥunayn ... and sent down hosts which you did not see* ... [9:25 — 26]. Nevertheless, the wording of the verse under discussions, *''Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard* (against evil) *and they come upon you in a headlong manner'',* does not show any general promise.

There is no conflict between this verse which speaks of three thousand angels being sent down at Badr, and the statement of the chapter of *al-Anfāl,* which says: ... *so He answered you: ''I will assist you with a thousand of angels following* (after others)'' [8:9]. The word, *''following'',* indicates that they would follow others — the *''others''* referring to the remaining two thousand who would complete the number promised in this verse.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh did not make it but as good news for you, ... and help is only form Allāh, the Mighty, the Wise:* The pronoun *''it''* refers to the help. *'Ind* (عِنْد = near) is an adverb of place, indicating presence. Initially it was used for nearness and presence in place; obviously it was reserved for physical things. Then its circle widened and it was used for nearness in time. Finally it was used for general, and even spiritual, nearness. The Qur'ān has used it in various connotations.

The theme of the statement, *''and help is only from Allāh, the Mighty, the Wise'',* when seen in conjunction with the preceding words, *''And Allāh did not make it but as good news for you, and that your hearts might be at ease thereby'',* implies that the phrase, *min 'indi 'llāh* (مِنْ عِنْدِاللهِ = lit: from near Allāh) refers to that ''station'' of Lordship which every affair and every order emanates from; and without which nothing can suffice, nor can any cause be independent of it. The meaning

therefore is as follows: The helper angels have in fact no concern with the promised help; they are merely apparent causes — they bring to you good news and satisfaction of heart. The reality of help is from Allāh, nothing can suffice from Him; He is Allāh, the final destination of every thing; the Mighty Who cannot be subdued, the Wise Who is not unaware of any thing.

QUR'ĀN: *That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them ... and chastises whom He pleases; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful: ''That''* is related to the verb, *''And Allāh did certainly assist you at Badr''.* [He assisted you so that He may cut off ...]. 'Cutting off a portion' metaphorically means decreasing their number and debilitating them with slaying and imprisoning, as had happened at Badr where seventy idolworshippers were killed and seventy arrested. *al-Kabt* (اَلْكَبْتُ = to abase, to exasperate).

The clause, *''You have no concern in the affair''*, is a parenthetic one. It emphasizes the proposition that the authority of cutting off a portion from, or abasing them, is entirely in the hand of Allāh; the Prophet has no concern in this matter — that they should praise and acclaim him if they vanquished and defeated their enemy, and should blame him and remonstrate with him if things went against them; they should not be infirm and grieving, as they had done on the day of Uḥud — as Allāh has narrated.

The next clause, *''whether He turns to them* (mercifully) *or chastises them''*, is in conjunction with the preceding, *''That He may cut off ...''*, and the sentence is continuing. The next verse, *''And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's''*, is explicative clause describing why the matter of repentance and forgiveness rests exclusively in the hand of Allāh. The meaning is as follows: The sound arrangement [at Badr] were made by Allāh in order that He might cut off a portion of the polytheists through slaughter and imprisonment, or abase them and disappoint them of attaining what they had desired, or that He might turn to them mercifully or chastise them. As for the cutting off a portion of them and abasing them, it is because all affairs are in His hands, you have no concern in it, (so they should neither praise nor blame you in this affair); and as for repentance and forgiveness, it is because Allāh is the Owner of everything, He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom

He pleases. Even then, His forgiveness and mercy surpasses His chastisement and anger, because He is Forgiving, Merciful.

We have treated the sentence, *''And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's''*, as explaining the reason for the preceding two clauses (*whether He turns to them* [mercifully] *or chastises them*), because the concluding clauses specifically explain this matter: *''He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases.''*

The exegetes have described other ways to show the connection of the words, *''That He may cut off a portion ...'',* and the significance of conjunction in the words, *''whether He turns to them or chastises them''*; also, they have given other justifications for the words, *''You have no concern in the affair'',* and for the sentence, *''And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's''.* We have ignored them as there was no use of commenting upon them, because they go against the apparent meanings and the context of the verses. Anyone wanting to see them should consult other bigger commentaries.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The cause of the battle of Uḥud was as follows: When the Quraysh returned from Badr to Mecca — and it had befallen to them from slaughter and imprisonment what had befallen, because seventy of them were killed and seventy imprisoned — Abū Sufyān said: 'O people of Quraysh! Do not let your women weep on your dead, because if tear is shed it would remove the grief and (lessen) the hatred of Muḥammad.' And when they fought the Messenger of Allāh on the day of Uhud, they allowed their women to weep and lament; and they proceeded from Mecca with three thousand horse and two thousand foot and brought their women with them.

''When the news reached the Messenger of Allāh, he gathered his companions and exhorted them to fight. 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! Do not go out of Medina, so that we fight in its alleys; thus even a weak man, a woman, a slave-boy and a slave-girl would fight on the entrances of the lanes and on the roofs; because never did any people (who attacked us) defeat us when we were within our fortresses and homes; and never did we go out to meet an enemy of ours but they vanquished us.'

‘‘Then Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh and others from the tribe of Aws stood up and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Never did anyone from the Arabs have any ambition against us while we were polytheist worshipping idols; how can they then be emboldened against us and you are among us? No: (we shall not rest) until we go out to them and fight them; whoever then among us will be killed shall be a martyr, and whoever among us is saved will have fought in the way of Allāh.’

‘‘So, the Messenger of Allāh accepted his advice and came out with a group of his companions, fixing their places at the battle-ground; as Allāh says: *And when you did go forth early in the morning from your family* ... But ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl and a group of Khazraj who followed his opinion, held back from [the Prophet].

‘‘The Quraysh appeared at Uḥud. The Messenger of Allāh had positioned his companions — they were seven hundred men — and lodged ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr with fifty archers at the mouth of the mountain-pass; [the Prophet] was worried that the [enemy] might ambush from that side. Therefore, he said to ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr and his companions: ‘If you see that we have defeated them until we have pushed them inside Mecca, you should not leave this place; and if you see that they have overcome us until they have pushed us into Medina, you should not leave [here], but stick to your posts.

‘‘Abū Sufyān hid khālid ibn Walīd with two hundred horse with this [very idea of] ambush, and said to him: ‘When you see that we [two forces] have mixed together, you come over to them from this mountain-pass, so that you will be [attacking them from] behind them.’

‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) mobilized his companions; and gave the standard to the Commander of the faithful (‘Alī - a.s.). The Helpers attacked the polytheists of the Quraysh, and [the enemy] suffered an ignominious defeat. The companions of the Messenger of Allāh laid hold of the masses of the [Quraysh]. Khālid ibn Walīd came with his two hundred horse over ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr; but they confronted them with arrows, and Khālid retreated. The group of ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr saw the companions of the Messenger of Allāh looting the masses of the enemy; they said to ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr: ‘Our companions are taking away (all) the booty; should we remain without any booty?’ ‘Abdullāh told them: ‘Fear Allāh, because the Messenger of Allāh had indeed directed us not to leave our post.’ But they did not listen to him, and began slinking

away one by one, until they left their station unattended, and ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr was left there with (only) twelve men.

‘‘The standard of the Quraysh was in the hand of Ṭalḥah ibn Abī Ṭalḥah al-‘Abdī (from Banū ‘Abdu ’d-Dār); ‘Alī (a.s.) killed him; then Abū Sa‘īd ibn Abī Ṭalḥah took the standard and ‘Alī killed him. The standard fell down. Then Musāfi‘ ibn Abī Ṭalḥah took it but ‘Alī killed him too — until he killed nine people from Banū ‘Abdu ’d-Dār. Finally their standard was taken up by a black-slave of theirs, Ṣawāb by name. ‘Alī reached him and cut off his right hand; he took the standard in his left hand; ‘Alī struck at it and cut it off too, but he embraced it to his chest with his two amputated hands. Then he turned towards Abū Sufyān and said: ‘Have I absolved Banū ‘Abdu ’d-Dār from blame?’ Then ‘Alī struck at his head and killed him. The standard fell down; then Ghamrah bint ‘Alqamah al-Kināniyyah took and raised it.

‘‘Khālid ibn Walīd came down to ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr — and his companions had fled leaving him with a few persons. [Khālid] killed [all of] them at the mouth of the pass, and then attacked the Muslims from behind. Quraysh were fleeing away when they saw their standard raised again, and they gathered around it, and the companions of the Messenger of Allāh suffered utter defeat. They started climbing the mountains helter-skelter.

‘‘When the Messenger of Allāh saw the rout, he removed the helmet from his head and called (them, saying): ‘Come to me; I am the Messenger of Allāh; come to me; where are you running away from Allāh and His Apostle?’ Hind bint ‘Utbah was in the middle of the (Quraysh’s) army; whenever any Qurayshite fled, she offered him a kohl-stick and a kohl-container, telling him: ‘You are but a woman, better use this kohl.’

‘‘Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abdi ’l-Muṭṭalib was attacking the enemy. When they saw him, they fled; none stood against him. Hind had promised Waḥshī that if he killed Muḥammad or ‘Alī or Ḥamzah, she would give him so-and-so much. (Waḥshī was an Ethiopian slave of Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im.) Waḥshī said: ‘As for Muḥammad, I was unable (to harm) him; and as for ‘Alī, I found him on his guard, always looking (all around him), so there was no hope of getting at him; therefore, I decided to ambush Ḥamzah. I saw him knocking the people down, destroying them. Then he passed by me, stepped on an undercut bank of a stream and fell down; I took my

spear, shook it (taking aim) and threw it to him; it pierced his waist and came out between his legs (pubic region); then I went to him, ripped his stomach open, took out his liver and brought it to Hind; I said to her, ‘‘This is Ḥamzah’s liver.’’ She put it into her mouth trying to chew it. But Allāh made it in her mouth like a knee-cap, so she took it out and threw it.’ (The Messenger of Allāh [s.a.w.a.] said: ‘Allāh sent an angel who took it and returned it to its place.’) Waḥshī said: ‘Then I came (back) to him, and I cut his genitals, removed his ears and amputated his hands and legs.’

‘‘There remained no one with the Messenger of Allāh except Abū Dujānah Simāk ibn Kharashah and ‘Alī. Whenever any group attacked the Messenger of Allāh, ‘Alī faced them and repulsed them; (it continued) until his sword was broken; then the Messenger of Allāh gave him his sword, Dhu ’l-Fiqār. The Messenger of Allāh retired to a side of Uḥud and stood there; and ‘Alī continued fighting them so (valiantly) that he had got seventy wounds on his head, face, body, belly and legs — as narrated by ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm in his *at-Tafsīr*. Thereupon, Jibrīl said: ‘Verily, this is indeed the support, O Muḥammad!’ Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) replied; ‘Surely he is from me and I am from him.’ Jibrīl said: ‘And I am from you two.’ ’’

Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh looked at Jibrīl (sitting) on a golden chair between the heaven and the earth, and he was saying: ‘There is no sword except Dhul ’1-Fiqār, and there is no hero except ‘Alī.’ ’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

al-Qummī narrates: ‘‘There (also) remained with the Messenger of Allāh Nasībah bint Ka‘b al-Māziniyyah — and she used to go with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in his battles to treat the wounded — and her son was with her. He wanted to retreat and go back (to Medina); but she attacked him and said: ‘O my son, where are you fleeing from Allāh and His Messenger?’ Thus she made him come back. Then a man attacked and killed him,. Thereupon, she took her son’s sword and attacked that man, and striking at his thigh she killed him. The Messenger of Allāh said (to her): ‘May Allāh bless you, O Nasībah.’ She was protecting the Messenger of Allāh with her chest and breasts until she was extensively wounded.

‘‘Ibn Qamī’ah attacked the Messenger of Allāh; and he had said: ‘Show me Muḥammad. May I be damned if he gets away (from me).’

Then he hit [the Messenger of Allāh] on his shoulder and cried: ‘I have killed Muḥammad, by al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā.’ ’’ (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: There are some other traditions about the events of Uḥud, some of them disagree with this one in some details. For example:

a) This tradition gives the number of the polytheists as five thousand, while most of the traditions say three thousand.

b) It says that it was ‘Alī (a.s.) who killed all the nine standard-bearers of the enemy. Other traditions support it; and Ibnu ’1-Athīr has narrated it in his history, *al-nil,* from Abū Rāfi‘. But another group of narrations attributes slaying of some of them to some others. But meditation on these events supports what the present tradition says.

c) It says that it was Hind who made a covenant with Waḥshī regarding the murder of Ḥamzah. Some Sunnī narrations say that it was not Hind but Waḥshī’s master, Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im, who had entrusted this task to Waḥshī, promising to emancipate him on his slaying Ḥamzah. But the fact that Waḥshī had taken Ḥamzah’s liver, not to Jubayr, but to Hind, supports the present tradition.

d) This tradition says that all Muslims had fled away, except ‘Alī and Abū Dujānah. It is agreed upon by almost all traditions. But some other narrations add some more names, and if you add all the names it would appear that there had remained about thirty persons with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). But those traditions cancel each other. If you ponder on the events and the circumstantial evidence, the truth will become clear to you. You should not forget that these stories and traditions are a sort of witness for various tendencies — for and against — and have passed through many bright and dark strata before reaching us.

e) This tradition says that Allāh sent an angel who returned Ḥamzah’s liver to its place. This statement is not found in most of the traditions. A different version is found in some other narrations. For example, (the author of) *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr,* narrates from Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad and Ibn al-Mundhir from Ibn Mas‘ūd, *inter alia,* in a *ḥadīth* that he said: ‘‘Then Abū Sufyān said: ‘There was some mutilation of the people [i.e: of Muslim martyrs], although it was not done by the majority of us. Neither I ordered it nor forbade it; neither I liked it nor disliked it; neither it pleased me nor displeased me.’ ’’ [Ibn Mas‘ūd] said:

‘‘Then they looked, and there was Ḥamzah with his belly ripped open. Hind took his liver and chewed it, but she could not eat it. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) asked: ‘Did she eat any part of it?’ They said: ‘No.’ [The Messenger of Allāh] said: ‘Allāh could not allow any part of Ḥamzah to enter the Fire.’ ’’

Traditions, both ours and others’, say that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was seriously wounded that day; there was skull fracture in his forehead, and his incisors were broken and middle incisor damaged ...

Ibn Isḥāq, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir narrate from Ibn Shahāb, Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥayyān, ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Amr ibn Qatādah and al-Ḥaṣīn ibn ‘Abdi ’r-Raḥmān ibn ‘Amr ibn Sa‘d ibn Mu‘ādh and others — all have narrated some of the events of the battle of Uḥud: They have said: ‘‘When Quraysh suffered on the day of Badr, and the scattered remnants of their army reached Mecca, and Abū Sufyān too returned with his trade-caravan, then ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Rabī‘ah, ‘Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl and Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah together with some other Qurayshites (whose fathers, sons and/or brothers were killed in Badr), went to him. They talked with Abū Sufyān and all those who had any trade-goods in that caravan and suggested [as follows]: ‘O people of Quraysh, surely Muḥammad has aggrieved you and killed your best personalities. Therefore, help us with this wealth to fight against him, in order that we may take revenge of our casualties from him.’ They did so. Then the Quraysh resolved to fight the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and came out with the flower of their army. They also took their women with them for their protection and also in order that they would not flee (from the battle-ground). Abū Sufyān came out at the head of the army. They proceeded until they came down at ‘Aynayn — a mountain in the depth of as-Sanjah on a canal in the valley adjoining Medina.

‘‘When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims heard about the polytheists that they had come down where they did, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘I have seen (in dream) a cow slaughtered, and saw the tip of my sword jagged, and saw that I had put my hand in an invulnerable coat of mail, and I interpreted it (to mean) Medina. Therefore, if you think (it advisable), you should stay inside Medina and leave them where they have come down; then if they stayed (there) they would be staying in the worst place, and if they entered [our

City] we should fight them in it.'

''The Quraysh occupied their position at Uḥud on Wednesday, and stayed there on Thursday and Friday. The Messenger of Allāh proceeded after praying the Friday-prayer and reached the mountain-pass of the Uḥud. The two [forces] met on Saturday, 15th Shawwal, the third year [of hijrah].

''Abdullāh ibn Ubayy agreed with the opinion of the Messenger of Allāh that they should not go out to meet the enemy; and the Messenger of Allāh disliked going out of Medina. But some Muslims — some from among those whom Allāh later honoured with martyrdom in Uḥud, and some others who had missed the battle of Badr and were not present on that occasion — said: 'O Messenger of Allāh, come out with us against our enemies, so that they should not think that we were afraid of them or felt weaker.' 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy said: 'O Messenger of Allāh, stay inside Medina and do not go out to meet them. Because, by God, we never went out of it to meet an enemy of us but he bested us, and never did an enemy enter Medina to fight us but we vanquished them. Therefore, let them be, O Messenger of Allāh; then if they stayed they would stay with difficulty; and if they entered [the City] even the women, children and men would fight them with stones from above [the roofs]; and if they returned, they would return disappointed as they had come.'

''But the people were still urging the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) [to proceed out of Medina] — these were the people who wanted to fight against the enemy. [This continued] until the Messenger of Allāh entered [his house] and wore his cuirasses — and it was on Friday after the prayer — then he came out to [the companions]. In the meantime the people regretted [their persistence] and said [to the Prophet]: 'We have compelled the Messenger of Allāh and it was not good of us. Thereore you may sit back if you wish.' The Messenger of Allāh said: 'It is not proper for a prophet — once he has put on his cuirasses — to remove them without waging the war.'

''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) came out with one thousand of his companions. When they were proceeding between Medina and Uḥud, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy went back with one-third of the people, [leaving the Prophet]. The Messenger of Allāh proceeded on. When he was passing through the story-field of Banū Ḥārithah, a horse whisked its tail which caught the sword-tip [of the rider] and pulled it out. The Messenger of

Allāh (who liked good omens but did not believe in bad ones) said to the owner of the sword: ‘Gather your sword, because I find that swords will surely be drawn today.’ The Messenger of Allāh went on until he came down at the mountain-pass of the Uḥud from the run of the valley to the mountain. He kept Uḥud at his back, and took position for the battle — and there were seven hundred persons with him.

‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) gave the command of the archers — and they were fifty in number — to ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr, and said to him: ‘Protect us from the mountain [side] by arrow, so that they do not come to us from our behind; you stay at your place, no matter the battle goes against us or for us; [because] we shall be attacked from your side.’ The Messenger of Allāh was wearing two coats of mail.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Jarīr narrates from as-Suddī in a *ḥadīth, enter alia:* ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) proceeded to Uḥud with one thousand men. He had promised them victory if they would remain patient. Then ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy returned back with three hundred persons. Abū Jābir as-Salamī persued them to call them back; but they thwarted his efforts and said to him: ‘We do not know how to fight; and if you listen to us you too should come back [to Medina] with us.’ ’’ (*ibid*.)

as-Suddī said about the words: *When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice:* ‘‘They were Banū Salmah and Banū Ḥārithah who wanted to return when ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy went back, but Allāh protected them; and the Messenger of Allāh remained with seven hundred men.’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: These were two clans from among the Helpers: Banū Salmah from the Khazraj and Banū Ḥārithah from the Aws.

Ibn Abī Isḥāq, as-Suddī, al-Wāqidī, Ibn Jarīr and others have narrated: ‘‘The polytheists reached Uḥud on Wednesday in Shawwāl, 3 A.H., and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) proceeded to meet them on Friday; and the battle took place on Saturday, 15th Shawwāl. The incisors of the Messenger of Allāh were broken and his face was wounded. Then the Emigrants and the Helpers returned after fleeing away; and seventy of the Muslims were martyred. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) stood firm accompanied by those who had remained with

him until he removed [the enemies]. The polytheists had mutilated a group [of martyrs], but Ḥamzah was mutilated worst of all.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: There is a great number of traditions about the events of Uḥud. We have narrated, and shall narrate later, only a few of them, on which depends understanding of the verses revealed on this subject. These verses throw light on its various aspects:

Some deal with the cowardice of those who retreated or disagreed with each other or wanted to return to Medina cowardly.

Others admonish and censure those who had fled leaving the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in the thick of the battle — although Allāh had forbidden them to do so.

Still others praise those who were martyred before the others had fled, and those who bravely stood firm and did not leave the Prophet, and continued to fight till their last breath.

Lastly, there are verses extolling those who steadfastly continued to fight till the end of the battle but were not martyred.

* * * * *

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاَ تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافاً مُضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ــ ١٣٠ . وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ــ ١٣١ . وَأَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ــ ١٣٢ . وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ــ ١٣٣ . الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ــ ١٣٤ . وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ــ ١٣٥ . أُولَئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ــ ١٣٦ . قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ــ ١٣٧ . هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ــ ١٣٨ .

O you who believe! do not devour interest making it double and redouble, and fear Allāh, that you may be successful (130). *And guard yourselves against the fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers* (131). *And obey Allāh and the Messenger, that you may be shown mercy* (132). *And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is* (as) *the*

heavens and the earth; it is prepared for the pious ones (133). *Those who spend* (benevolently) *in ease as well as in straitness, and those who restrain* (their) *anger and forgive men; and Allāh loves the doers of good* (to others) (134). *And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults — and who forgives the faults but Allāh? — and* (who) *do not knowingly persist in what they have done* (135). (As for), *these — their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and excellent is the reward of those who act* (righteously) (136). *Indeed there have been examples before you; therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters* (137). *This is a clear statement for men, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones* (138).

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COMMENTARY

The verses call to the good and restrain from the vice and evil. Yet they are not without some connection with the preceding and following verses dealing with the battle of Uḥud. They describe some undesirable conditions and reprehensible traits which were found in the believers at that time and which Allāh was not pleased with. It were such things which had made them vulnerable to weakness and infirmity and led them to disobedience of Allāh and His Messenger. The verses thus focus on the events of Uḥud from another angle.

Also, the verses guide the believers as to how they can protect themselves from these devastating entanglements and ruinous obstacles; they invite them to piety, fear of Allāh and trust in Him and exhort them to be firm in obedience of the Allāh's Messenger. These nine verses therefore contain exhortation and warning: they awaken in the believers longing to hasten towards good, that is, spending in the way of Allāh in ease as well as in straitness, restraining their anger and forgiving the people's faults; all is joined together under the heading of spreading good in the society, patience in face of grievance and injury, and refraining from repaying evil with evil. It is the only way of preserving the society

and making it strong and energetic. Refraining from interest is a very important concomitant of this spending benevolently and doing good to others. That is why the verses begin with it; it paves the way for exhortation to good-doing and spending. We have already explained — under the verses of spending and interest in the chapter of The Cow — that spending in all its aspects is the cornerstone of society; it is the virtue that vitalizes the human society with the spirit of unity; it channels its scattered resources to achieve happiness and felicity in this life, and strengthens it to ward off every pernicious perversion. Interest is diametrically opposed to benevolent spending in this respect.

Allāh exhorts them to these virtues. Then He encourages them to return to their Lord again and again even if they have committed sins and errors; they should not lose hope of His mercy even if they have done something which is not liked by Him; they must repent and seek pardon from Him repeatedly without indolence or negligence.

By doing good to others and returning to Allāh in time and again, they would proceed on the straight path of happy life; they will never go astray nor will they stop at any dangerous point.

This Qur'ānic description is the best way for guiding man to perfect himself when he finds some defects in his life; the finest means of curing spiritual ailments which sometimes creep into otherwise good souls and threaten man with downfall and ruin.

QUR'ĀNIC TEACHING: HOW IT JOINS KNOWLEDGE WITH PRACTICE

The Qur'ān uses a special method for its divine teachings. During the whole period of twenty-three years when it was revealed, it demonstrated all the basic principles through practical primary elements. When the audience put it in practice, the resulting picture was used as the primary element for teaching the next higher principle. At this stage, if there were any defects in the result of the first practical test, they were corrected and the good components were reused; the bad elements were condemned and the good and correct ones praised and their doer was promised success and accorded appreciation. The Mighty Book of God is a Book of knowledge and practice — it is not a book of theories and hypotheses,

nor a mysterious tome to be accepted blindly.

This Divine Book is like a teacher. The teacher puts before his students academic principles without giving them too much detail in the beginning; then he tells them to act upon it [doing practical tests, or solving mathematical problems]; then he checks what they have done and analyses its correct and wrong procedures; he explains to them where they have gone wrong, where they have strayed from the right path, admonishing them [to be careful in future] and threatening [to punish them if the same mistake happened again]; he praises where they have used right procedure and arrived at correct result; he promises them of reward and appreciates their diligence. Then he tells them to do it again. He goes on training them until they reach the point of perfection and their efforts are always crowned with success.

What we have just said, is among the Qur'ānic realities which may be seen by anyone who meditates on the initial stages of Qur'ānic teachings. Take the subject of *jihād,* for example. First it describes the basic principles of *jihād: Fighting is enjoined on you ...* [2:216]. It enjoins the believers to fight in the way of Allāh; then it comments on the events of Badr and throws light on its various aspects giving them further guidance; then it takes up the story of Uḥud, then of another battle, and so on. Likewise, Allāh tells the stories of previous prophets and their peoples, and after showing the truth behind them, turns them into lessons to be learnt, and code of life to be followed. There are some verses within these sets which are based on the same principle. For example: *''therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters''* [3:137]; *And how many a prophet has fought with whom were myriads of godly men ...* [3:146].

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! Do not devour interest ... that you may be shown mercy:* We have explained how ''devouring'' is used for ''taking''. The phrase, *''making it double and redouble''*, points to overriding characteristic of interests; interest, *per se,* multiplies and increases the lender's wealth many-fold — by depleting debtor's money adding it to the creditor's capital.

The sentence, *''And guard yourselves against the fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers''*, indicates that the interesttaker is unbeliever, as has been explained under the verses of interest in the

chapter of The Cow: *And Allāh does not love any ungrateful sinner* [2:276].

QUR'ĀN: *And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden ...* ''*al-Musāra'ah''* (اَلْمُسَارَعَةُ = to rush, to make haste); it is commendable in good deeds and reprehensible in bad ones.

The Qur'ān, in most of the places, joins forgiveness with the Garden. It is because the Garden is a place of purity and cleanliness; the impurities of sins and filth of vices cannot enter it, nor can a person tarnished by them — except after forgiveness and removal of that filth.

The forgiveness and the Garden — described in this verse — run parallel to what is mentioned in the following two verses. The forgiveness corresponds with the verse, *''And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls ...''*; and the Garden stands face to face with the verse, *''Those who spend* (benevolently) *in ease as well as in straitness ...''*

The clause, *''and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is* (as) *the heavens and the earth''*: *''al-'Arḍ''* (اَلْعَرْضُ = lit: width) denotes here spaciousness, extensiveness; it is a common usage; the expression metaphorically implies that it is spacious to the utmost, or to an extent that human imagination cannot reach it. Also, it has another meaning which we shall explain under the ''Traditions''.

The clause, *''it is prepared for the pious ones''*, paves the way for description of the characteristics of the pious ones which is given in the coming verses. The main idea is to describe those characteristics of the believers which are relevant to the present situation, i.e., after the battle of Uḥud (when they had displayed, and suffered from, weakness and disobedience), because they were expected to participate in other similar battles and undergo similar situations, where they would be in great need of unity, harmony and solidarity.

QUR'ĀN: Those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness, and those who restrain (their) anger, and forgive men; and Allāh loves the doers of good (to others): as-Sarrā' and aḍ-ḍarrā' (اَلسَّرَّآءُ وَ اَلضَّرَّآءُ = that which pleases man or displeases him) i.e., ease and difficulty. al-Kaẓm (اَلْكَظْم) literally means to tie the mouth of water-skin after filling it; then it was metaphorically extended to a man filled with

anger or sorrow who restrains or suppresses his emotions. *al-Ghayẓ* (اَلْغَيْظُ = translated here as ‘‘anger’’) denotes stirring of feeling of revenge, when one faces many unpleasant things; it is different from *al-ghaḍab* (اَلْغَضَبُ = generally translated as ‘‘wrath’’) which refers to the intention of revenge or punishement. That is why we say ‘‘Allāh afflicted them with His wrath’’, but do not say, ‘‘Allāh was angry with them’’.

The sentence, *‘‘and Allāh loves the doers of good* (to others)’’, indicates that the preceding characteristics define ‘‘the doers of good’’, i.e., to other people. As for doing good in relation to Allāh is concerned, it is defined in the following verse: *... and as good news for the doers of good. Surely those who say, Our Lord is Allāh, then they continue on the right way, they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. These are the dwellers of the Garden, abiding therein: a reward for what they did* [46:12 — 14].

The doing of good, mentioned in the verse under discussion, is delineated by the preceding words, *‘‘Those who spend* (benevolently) *in ease as well as in straitness ...’’*; these good characteristics have no value in the eyes of Allāh if they were not done ‘‘for Him’’, as has been described in many preceding verses, e.g.: *The likeness of what they spend in this life of the world is as the likeness of wind ...* [3:117].

The above reality may also be inferred from ch. 29, vr. 69: *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our way; and Allāh is most surely with the doers of good.* One may be said to be striving hard only if one does something against one’s desires and natural instincts. It may happen only when a man firmly believes in matters which demand such sacrifice and steadfastness in face of natural desires and longings. It requires firm faith and true belief — they must say, Our Lord is Allāh, and then continue steadfastly on it — and demands relevant action, i.e., they must strengthen this belief by striving in sincere worship of Allāh, spending benevolently in His way and living in the society with good conduct and irreproachable behaviour. It appears from it that doing good, means performing all actions in proper way by remaining firm and steadfast in the divine faith, in the belief in Allāh.

QUR’ĀN: *And those who when they commit an indecency ... and excellent is the reward of those who act* (righteously): *‘‘al-Fāḥishah’’* (اَلْفَاحِشَةُ = indecent, shameful action); it is generally used for fornication.

As the word, *az-ẓulm* (اَلظُّلْمُ = injustice) has been used parallel to indecency, it should denote all other big or small sins. Alternatively, if ‘‘indecency’’ is taken to mean big sins, then ‘‘injustice’’ would mean small sins only. The clause, *‘‘remember Allāh and ask forgiveness for their faults’’*, indicates that the plea for forgiveness should emanate from remembrance of Allāh — it should not be just a verbal repetition, based on habit. The sentence, *‘‘and who forgives the faults but Allāh?’’*, encourages man to return to Allāh, and reminds him to take refuge, and seek shelter, in Him. The proviso, *‘‘and* (who) *do not knowingly persist in what they have done ’’*, is an essential part of asking forgiveness from Allāh. Persistence in sins distorts the psyche to such an extent that remembrance of Allāh does not bring any benefit to it; such behaviour shows that the person concerned gives no importance to divine command, dishonours the sanctity of religion and behaves arrogantly against Allāh; in such a situation neither servitude can survive nor remembrance can be of any use. For the same reason was added another proviso, i.e., *‘‘knowingly’’.* This phrase indicates that ‘‘injustice’’ (in the preceding clause) includes small sins too; persistence in sins — whether big or small — shows disregard to the divine command, indifference towards His authority. The phrase, *‘‘what they have done’’*, therefore covers big as well as small sins, and refers to the indecency and injustice mentioned in the beginning of the verse: but small sin is not included in indecency, therefore it is injustice to one’s soul indeed.

Their great reward is described in the next verse, ‘‘(As for) *these — their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens ...* ’’ It is the same things which the believers are exhorted to hasten to: *‘‘And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden ...’’* Looking at this beginning and end, it may be seen clearly that they have been enjoined to hasten to spending benevolently, restraining their anger, forgiving the people and asking forgiveness for their faults.

QUR’ĀN: *Indeed there have been examples before you; therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters: ‘‘as-Sunan’’* (اَلسُّنَنُ) is plural of *as-sunnah* (اَلسُّنَّةُ = the way or tradition followed by the society). The believers have been told to travel in the earth, in order that they could learn lessons from archeological remains of ancient people and bygone generations. They should ponder about those pharaohs and

nimrods, those kings and emperors — where did all of them go to? Their towering palaces, their accumulated treasures, their gilded thrones and their fully-equipped armies — nothing could avail them in the least; now they are just a few names to serve as examples and lesson for those who meditate, and as tourist attraction for the carefree and oblivious persons.

As for protecting their monuments, preserving their statues and endeavouring to find out how great they were in their times and how magnificent their splendour was in that era, it is a matter which the Qur'ān does not care about. It is nothing but idolatry in a new disguise. We shall explain this topic, God willing, in a separate discourse in which we shall analyse the meaning of idolatry.

QUR'ĀN: *This is a clear statement ... for the pious ones:* The classification looks at the degrees of its effect. It is just a clear statement, a faithfully transmitted message for some people, while for others it is an admonition and guidance.

TRADITIONS

The Prophet was asked about the words, *a Garden, the extensiveness of which is* (as) *the heavens and the earth.* ''If the extensiveness of the Garden is as the heavens and the earth, then where will the Fire be?'' He (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Glory be to Allāh ! When the day comes, where does the night go?'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated in, *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr,* from at-Tanūkhī that [the Byzantine Emperor] Heraclius had written to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) a letter in which, *inter alia,* he had asked about this verse, and the Prophet had replied it as described above. He has also narrated through another chain from Abū Hurayrah that someone asked the Prophet this question and he replied as above.

The above reply has been interpreted as follows: The Fire is in the Knowledge of Allāh as night remains in the Knowledge of Allāh when day comes.

COMMENT: If it means that the Fire is not away from the Divine

Knowledge, then it does not solve the problem, because the question was about the place of the Fire, not about the Knowledge of Allāh. If, on the other hand, it means that possibly there could be another place for the Fire beyond the heavens and the earth, then it might be tenable, but then the comparison of the Garden and the Fire with day and night would be out of place — because the night does not go out of the heavens and the earth when the day comes. Obviously this interpretation does not offer an acceptable explanation of the *ḥadīth*.

I believe that the tradition points to another theme: The hereafter (with all its felicity and infelicity) is similar to this world with all its happiness and sorrow. Likewise, the man in the hereafter will be the same man who was in this world — as appears from the Qur'ān and traditions. Nevertheless, the system governing the hereafter will be different from the ones permeating this world. The hereafter is the place of eternity and infinity, while this world is transitory and evanescent. That is why man would eat and drink, marry and enjoy all comforts of the Garden but would not undergo the consequences attendant to those enjoyments in this world. In the same way, man would burn in the fire of the Hell and suffer pain and agony in food and drink, abode and companions, yet would not be affected by it in the way he would have been in this life. In the hereafter, he would live eternal life without being affected by middle or old age or becoming senile or decrepit. It is because these effects and concomitants are products of the system of this world; they are not essential parts of every system — they would not be found in the next world's system. It is this world, not the hereafter, which is the place of conflict and struggle, contrast and contradiction.

Now ponder on our own observation of the events. When we look at current happenings, we cannot see the previous events; if we see the night, then the day is absent from us. But nothing is absent from Allāh; past, present and future — all is present before Allāh, and there is no contrast or contradiction between them on that level. It means that the day and the night and their concomitant events contradict and cancel each other when they are governed by material system and movement. But when the same day and night and their concomitants are put under another system, there remains no contrast and contradiction among them. It may be inferred from the words of Allāh: *Have you not considered* (the work of) *your Lord, how He extends the shade? And if He had pleased*

He would certainly have made it stationary; then We have made the sun an indication of it, Then We take it to Ourselves, taking little by little [25:45 — 46].

If it is possible in contradictory things like day and night, it may equally be possible for the heavens and the earth to house the Garden equal in size to themselves and then accomodate another thing like the Hell of the same size; it will be possible, not under this worldly system, but according to the system prevailing in the hereafter. There may be found similar expressions in traditions. For example: ‘‘Verily grave is an orchard from the orchards of the Garden, or a pit from the pits of the Fire.’’ Or, ‘‘The grave of a believer is widened for him to the extent of his sight.’’

In the same way should be explained these words of the Prophet. Otherwise, if it is taken to mean that Allāh is not oblivious of the night when He knows the day, it would not dovetail with the question. Likewise, if it were to mean that the night exists somewhere else when the day comes, it would invite another objection: The night cannot co-exist with the day at any place; and if we look at its reality then the night is a conic shade of the earth resulting from the sunlight — the light and shade rotating around the earth. Thus the day and the night are continuously revolving around the earth — without one merging into, or cancelling, the other.

There are other traditions of similar style. For example, it has been narrated about the Qur’ānic words: *That Allāh may separate the impure from the pure* ... [8:37]: ‘‘When the sun sets, where does this light, spread on the earth, go?’’ We shall explain it later on.

It has been narrated in, *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr,* about the words: *and those who restrain* (their) *anger and forgive men:* al-Bayhaqī has narrated from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) that a slavegirl was pouring water on him in preparation for prayer. The pitcher fell from her hand on his face contusing it. He raised his head (looking) at her. She said: ‘‘Verily Allāh says: *‘and those who restrain* (their) *anger.*’ ’’ He said: ‘‘I have restrained my anger.’’ She recited: ‘‘*and forgive men.*’’ He said: ‘‘Allāh has forgiven you.’’ She recited: ‘‘*and Allāh loves doers of good* (to others).’’ He said: ‘‘Go, you are free.’’

The author says: It is narrated also from the Shī‘ī chains. The tradition obviously shows that the Imām (a.s.) interprets ‘‘good-doing’’ as something more than the preceding two virtues, and in fact it is so in its general terms, although the above virtues are concomitants of good-doing, and possibly they may be used for defining the ‘‘good-doing’’.

There are very numerous traditions on good manners and virtuous conduct, e.e., spending benevolently, restraining anger and forgiving faults, narrated from the Prophet and the Imāms of the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.); we shall quote them later in a more appropriate place.

It is narrated from ‘Abdu ’r-Raḥmān ibn Ghanm ad-Dawsī that the verse, *And those who when they commit an indecency ...*, was revealed about Bahlul, the grave-digger. He used to dig graves [to steal shrouds]. Once he dug the grave of a girl from the Anṣār, took out her body and removed her shroud. She was beautiful and of fair complexion; so the Satan tempted him and he committed fornication with her. Then he felt remorse and came to the Prophet, but he turned him out. Then the people dissociated from him; and he too secluded himself from others, spending his time in worship and repentance in some mountains of Medina — until Allāh accepted his repentance and revealed this verse about him. (*al-Majālis,* aṣ-Ṣadūq)

The author says: It is a detailed tradition which we have abridged here. If it is a correct *ḥadīth,* then it would be a separate cause for the verse’s revelation apart from the general reason which covers all the verses of the story of Uḥud.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said concerning the words, *and* (who) *do not knowingly persist in what they have done:* ‘‘Persistence is that a sinner commits a sin and does not ask Allāh for forgiveness nor does he make up his mind to repent — so that is persistence.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

Aḥmad has narrated from the Prophet that he said: ‘‘Iblīs said: ‘O Lord, by Thy Honour! I shall not cease leading children of Adam astray as long as their souls shall remain within their bodies.’ Allāh then said: ‘By My Honour! I shall go on forgiving them as long as they ask Me for forgiveness.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘There is no small (sin) with persistence, and there is no big (sin) after seeking (Allāh’s) forgiveness.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The same Imām (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a *ḥadīth:* ‘‘... and there is in the Book of Allāh a deliverance from ruin, an insight from blindness, and a healing for what is in the breasts; (found) in what Allāh has enjoined you to seek (His) forgiveness and to repent. Allāh says: *‘And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allāh and ask forgiveness for their faults — and who forgives the faults but Allāh? — and* (who) *do not knowingly persist in what they have done.’* And He says: *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allāh, he shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful’* [4:110]. *So* this is what Allāh has enjoined about asking (His) forgiveness, and has put with it the condition of repentance and refraining from what Allāh has forbidden. (It is) because He says: *‘To Him do ascend the good words and the good deed lifts them up’* [35:10]. This verse implies that the plea of forgiveness is not lifted up to Allāh except by good deed and repentance.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: The Imām (a.s.) has inferred abstinence from sin and not repeating it after repentance from the word, *do not knowingly persist;* likewise the fact, that repentance and plea of forgiveness require good deed afterwards, has been inferred from the generality of ‘‘good words’’ in the verse, *To Him do ascend the good words.*

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘When the verse, *And those who when they commit an indecency* ..., was revealed, Iblīs ascended a mountain in Mecca, Thawr by name, and screamed very loudly to his afreets. They all gathered near him and said: ‘O our leader, why have you called us?’ He said: ‘This verse has been revealed; now who would deal with it?’ An afreet from among the ratans stood up and said: ‘I will see to it with such and such means.’ (The Iblīs) said: ‘You cannot do it.’ Then another (afreet) stood up and said something similar (to the first one) and (Iblīs) said: ‘You are not for it.’ Then the Whispering Slinking (satan) said: ‘I shall deal with it. [Iblīs] said: ‘By what means?’ He said: ‘I shall promise them and tempt them until they would commit a sin; and when they have committed it, I would make them oblivious of asking for forgiveness.’ [Iblīs] said: ‘You are [fit] for it.’ Then he entrusted this task to him upto

the Day of Resurrection.'' (*al-Majālis,* aṣ-Ṣadūq)

The author says: This tradition has also been narrated through Sunnī chains.

* * * * *

وَلاَ تَهِنُوا وَلاَ تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنتُمُ الأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ١٣٩ .
إِنْ يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الأَيَّامُ نُداوِلُها
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَداءَ وَاللهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ
الظَّالِمِينَ ــ ١٤٠ . وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ ــ
١٤١ . أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللهُ الَّذِينَ جاهَدُوا
مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ــ ١٤٢ . وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ــ ١٤٣ . وَما مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ
قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ ماتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلى أَعْقابِكُمْ
وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلى عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللهَ شَيْئاً وَسَيَجْزِي اللهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ــ
١٤٤ . وَما كانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللهِ كِتاباً مُؤَجَّلاً وَمَنْ
يُرِدْ ثَوابَ الدُّنْيا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْها وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوابَ الآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْها
وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ ــ ١٤٥ . وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ قاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُّونَ

كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا
اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ــ ١٤٦ . وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ
قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى
الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ــ ١٤٧ . فَآتَاهُمُ اللهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ
الْآخِرَةِ وَاللهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ــ ١٤٨ .

And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers (139). *If a wound has afflicted you* (at Uḥud), *a wound like it has also afflicted the* (unbelieving) *people; and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allāh may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you, and Allāh loves not the unjust* (140). *And that Allāh may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers* (141). *Do you think that you will enter the Garden while Allāh has not yet known those who strive hard from among you, and* (He has not) *known the patient?* (142). *And certainly you desired death before you met it; so indeed you have seen it* (even) *while you look* (at it) (143). *And Muḥammad is no more than a messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allāh in the least; and Allāh will reward the grateful* (144). *And it is not fora soul to die but with the permission of Allāh* (according to) *the term that is fixed; and whoever desires the reward of this world, We shall give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We shall give him of it; and We will reward the grateful* (145). *And how many a prophet has fought with whom were myriads of Godly men; so they did not lose heart on account of what befell them in Allāh's way, nor did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves; and Allāh loves the patient* (146). *And their saying was no other than that they said: ''Our Lord! forgive us our faults and our extravagance in our affair, and make firm our*

feet and help us against the unbelieving people'' (147). *So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and an excellent reward of the hereafter and Allāh loves those who do good* (to others) (148).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses, as you see, complete the talk which had begun with the words, *O you who believe! ...* [3:130], while those verses with their orders and prohibitions had paved the way for these which contain the main purpose including command, prohibition, praise and stricture.

QUR'ĀN: *And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers: ''al-Wahn''* (اَلْوَهْنُ), according to ar-Rāghib, is infirmity and weakness in body or character. Here it refers to their weakness of will-power, carelessness in establishing the religion and lack of courage in face of its enemies. *al-Ḥuzn* (اَلْحُزْنُ = grief) is opposite of *al-farḥ* (اَلْفَرْحُ = joy, happiness); it afflicts a man when he loses a favourite possession, or something which he thinks belongs to him.

The words, *''and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers. If a wound has afflicted you* (at Uḥud), *a wound like it has also afflicted the* (unbelieving) *people''*, indicate that the believers had felt infirmity and grief because they had seen themselves afflicted by wounds and found the unbelievers gaining upper hand. Although the polytheists could not get total victory over the believers, nor the battle ultimately ended with the believers' decisive defeat, yet what had afflicted them was really hard and painful — martyrdom of seventy of their brave warriors. Add to it the humilitation that they had been overwhelmed on their own ground. All these factors together had caused extreme dejection and pessimism. The clause, *''and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers''* (which stands as the reason of these two prohibitions), shows that the prohibition was related to actual infirmity and grief, not to some expected behaviour in future.

The promise, *''you shall have the upper hand''*, is general and unrestricted, but it is followed by the proviso, *''if you are believers''*. It

therefore gives the following meaning: You should not be weak in your will-power, nor should you grieve for the lost victory, if you are true believers. It is because belief is bound to give you upper hand over your enemies — belief is accompanied by piety and patience, and these two are the basis of victory and triumph. As for the wound which has afflicted you in this battle, you are not alone in it; the unbelievers too had suffered similar casualties. If you think it over, they have not gained over you in any way. Therefore, you should not feel depressed or grieved.

The address had started with the words, *O you who believe*; yet their gaining upper hand has been made conditional on their being believers. It implies that although the masses were not devoid of faith and belief, they had not adhered to the concomitants and requirements of that belief, like patience and piety; otherwise it would have brought out the desired effects.

This phenomenon is found in every group which is composed of people having different grades of belief; while there are some true believers, there are some of weak faith and yet others of sick hearts. This type of talk creates enthusiasm in believing souls, admonishes and revives the weak ones and censures and reprimands the hearts ailing with hypocrisy.

QUR'ĀN: *If a wound has afflicted you* (at Uḥud), *a wound like it has also afflicted the* (unbelieving) *people: ''al-Qarḥ''* (اَلْقَرْحُ) is used for effect of an external wound, while *al-qurḥ* (اَلْقُرْحُ) denotes the effect of an internal wound like pimple or pustule. This difference has been given by ar-Rāghib. The word metaphorically refers to all the calamities that had befallen the Muslims on the day of Uḥud; it looks at the whole Muslim community as a single body which had received a wound inflicted by the enemy — the wound referring to the martrydom of the martyrs and injuries of the injured, and the tragedy that victory slipped through their fingers.

The sentence, *''If a wound had afflicted you ... and destroy the unbelievers''*, gives the reason of the command, *''And be not infirm, and be not grieving''*; as does the sentence, *''and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers''*

The difference between the two sets of reasons is as follows: The sentence, *''and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers''*,

corrects their misconception. They had become disheartened and pessimistic because they thought that the polytheists had gained upper hand. Allāh points out to them that it is they, not the polytheists, who have got the essential prerequisite of victory 'if they are believers'; and Allāh had already declared: *and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us* [30:47].

The second reason describes the condition of the two parties — the believers and the polytheists — or explains the underlying rationale, that is, the invarying Divine practice to turn the fortunes among men.

QUR'ĀN: *and We bring these days to men by turns: ''al-Yawm''* (اَلْيَوْمُ = day) is a considerable span of time that is necessary for an occurrence — thus its duration would differ from occurrence to occurrence. Generally it is used for the period between sunrise and sunset. Often it is used for kingdom, reign, power, etc., putting the time in place of the thing covered by it. They say, 'day of this group', 'day of such and such dynasty', i.e., their precedence and rule over others; sometimes it denotes the period itself. It is this connotation which is meant in this verse. *al-Mudāwalah* (اَلْمُدَاوَلَةُ = taking of a thing by many people one after another).

The sentence thus means: It is an invariable practice of Allāh that He rotates these days among men by turns; these are not restricted to any one group nor prevented from another people; this system is based on common benefits only a part of which may be comprehended by your minds.

QUR'ĀN: *and that Allāh may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you ... eradicate the unbelievers:* The conjunction *''and''* joins it to a deleted clause; it was deleted to imply that human understanding cannot comprehend all of its aspects, it may know only a few features of it. What the believers would benefit from is mentioned in these two verses: *''that Allāh may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you; ... that Allāh may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers.''*

As for the words, *''that Allāh may know those who believe''*, they imply manifestation of their belief after its being hidden. Allāh's knowledge of events and things is the same as their existence. The things are known to Allāh by their very existence. His knowledge is not like

ours — because our knowledge and perception come through a form abstracted from the thing concerned. To say that Allāh wills to know a thing, is the same as saying that Allāh wills to bring it into being. In the verse under discussion, Allāh says, *''that Allāh may know those who believe''*; the clause shows that there were believers already in existence; therefore, it would mean that He wished to make their belief manifest. As every thing in this world is governed by the system of cause and effect, it was necessary that some things should happen which would make the belief of the believers manifest after it was hidden. (Try to understand it.)

It is followed by the clause, *''and take witnesses from among you''* *ash-Shuhadā'* (اَلشُّهَدَآءُ) refers to the witnesses of deeds. The Qur'ān has never used this word for ''martyrs''. Its use in the meaning of ''those who are killed while fighting in the way of Allāh'' is a later usage, as we had explained under the verse, *And thus We have made you a medium nation that you may be witnesses for the people* ... [2:143]. Moreover, the word *''take''* which has been used here, is not very appropriate for the martyrs of the battlefield; it is not said' 'Allāh has taken Zayd as a martyr in His way'. But it is said: 'Allāh has taken Ibrāhīm as a friend'; or 'Allāh has taken Mūsā as one spoken to; or 'Allāh has taken the Prophet as a witness for giving evidence for his *ummah* on the Day of Resurrection'.

Significantly, Allāh has said, *''and take witnesses from among you''*, instead of saying, take you as witnesses. Although verse 143 of the chapter of The Cow escribes witnessing to the *ummah* (*And thus We have made you a medium nation that you may be witnesses for the people ...*), but as we explained under that verse, it is a metaphorical use, ascribing to the whole; nation what in fact belongs to a particular group of the nation — it is not the whole *ummah* but only a few of them who will bear witness for the nation. This interpretation may possibly be supported by the ending clause, *''and Allāh loves not the unjust.''*

Then comes the verse, *''And that Allāh may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers. ''at-Tamḥīṣ''* (اَلتَّمْحِيصُ = to purge) denotes purifying something from extraneous pollutions. *al-Maḥq* (اَلْمَحْقُ = to eradicate, to efface) signifies gradual depletion of a thing, eradicating it bit by bit. The said purification is one of the benefits of rotating the days among the people. It is separate from the above-mentioned benefit that Allāh may know the believers. Distinguishing a believer from an

unbeliever is one thing, and purifying his belief from pollutions of disbelief, hypocricy and immorality is another. That is why it has been put side by side with eradication of the unbelievers. Allāh removes the ingradients of disbelief from a believer's character little by little until nothing remains there but the belief, pure and unsullied; and likewise He eradicates ingradients of disbelief, polytheism and deceit from the unbeliever bit by bit, until all is destroyed.

These are some of the reasons why Allāh brings the days to men by turn, and why power does not remain confined to a particular group forever; and all affairs belong exclusively to Allāh, He does whatever He pleases; and He does not do except that which is most suitable and most beneficial [to His creatures]; as He says: *thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth* [13:17]. Also, He has said shortly before the verses under discussion: *That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them so that they should return disappointed of attaining what they desired. You have no concern in the affair whether He turns to them* (mercifully) *or chastises them, for surely they are unjust* [3:127 — 8]. Allāh has denied here that His Prophet had any authority in the affair, reserving that power exclusively to Himself ; He decides about His creatures as He pleases.

Look at the matters described in these verses: The days rotate among the people; it is done for the purpose of test and trial, in order that believers may be separated from unbelievers; believers may be purged and purified and unbelievers obliterated gradually. Add to it the declaration that the Prophet had no authority in this matter. All this together shows that a majority of the believers was under the impression that their being on the true religion was the complete cause of their victory — wherever they happened to fight. They thought that just because they were on truth, they must overpower the falsehood, no matter what their own condition; to them belonged all affairs, and they could not be deprived of it. They were further encouraged in this miscalculation when angels were sent to help them in Badr and they found themselves quite unexpectedly victorious over unbelievers.

But that was a misunderstanding which could nullify the system of test and purification; and that in its turn would negate the underlying rationale of command and prohibition, reward and punishment. That

would lead to destruction of the foundation of religion. After all, divine religion is a religion of nature, it is not based on nullification of the customary procedure or of divine practice permeating the universe — the system that victory and defeat result from their normal causes.

After explaining that the days rotate among the people for their test and trial, Allāh now begins admonishing them for this serious misunderstanding of theirs, and explaining the real position to them.

QUR'ĀN: *Do you think that you will enter the Garden ... while you look* (at it): The misconception that they would enter the Garden without being tested, was an inseparable concomitant of the previously mentioned misunderstanding. They thought that because they were on truth and truth is not overwhelmed, they would always be victorious; that they would never be defeated, would never be vanquished. Obviously, if it were true, then every one who believed in the Prophet and entered into the believers' society, would find' felicity in this world through victory and booty, and felicity in the hereafter in the form of forgiveness and the Garden. Then there would be no difference between the felicity in the hereafter in the form of forgiveness and the Garden. Then there would be no difference between the appearance of belief and its reality, no distinction between various ranks [of belief and piety]; the belief of a fighter and that of a patient fighter would be of the same value; a man who intended to do a good deed and actually did it when its time came, would be equal to him who intended but turned on his heels when faced with it.

Accordingly, the words, *''Do you think that you will enter ...''*, have metaphorically put the effect in place of the cause. The complete meaning therefore is as follows: You thought that power is reserved for you; you would not be put to test, rather you would enter the Garden without going through a trial to separate the deserving from underse.rving, to distinguish believers of highter ranks from those of lower grades.

The next verse demonstrates that that thinking was wrong. The words, *''And certainly you desired death before you met it, so indeed you have seen it* (even) *while you look* (at it)*''*, show that they had desired death before arriving at the battlefield; but when the desired death came to them and they looked at it, they did not come forward to get what they

longed for; instead they showed cowardice and fled away. How can it be possible for them to enter into the Garden merely because of that expressed desire without being tested, without any procedure of purification? Was it not necessary to test them [to separate the truth from the falsehood]?

It shows that there is a deleted clause near the end of the verse. The complete sentence would be as follows: So indeed you have seen it, yet you did not come forward to get it even while you looked at it. Another possible interpretation: You just looked at the death, i.e. without doing any thing to meet it. Thus ‘‘looking’’ would metaphorically imply not grappling with the death. It is a reproach and censure.

TEST AND ITS REALITY

There is no doubt that the Qur’ān exclusively reserves the guidance to Allāh. But according to the Qur’ān, it is not limited to the voluntary guidance leading to the felicity, and happiness of this world or the hereafter. Allāh says: ... *Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal) [20:50]. Everything is guided by Allāh — those endowed with cognizance and understanding as well as the others. Also, the verse has left the guidance unrestricted so far as the goal and destination is concerned. Also, He says: ... *Who created, then made complete, and Who made* (things) *according to a measure, then guided* (them to their goal) [87:2 — 3]. These verses too are unrestricted like the former.

Obviously, this [general] guidance is other than the special guidance which is used as opposite of misleading, leading astray. This special guidance has in several cases been negated, giving way to error and straying, but the general guidance cannot be negated or erased from any creature. Allāh says: *and Allāh does not guide the unjust people* [62:5]; *and Allāh does not guide the transgressing people* [61:5].

Also, it is obvious that this general guidance is separate from that guidance which merely points the way to the believer and the unbeliever alike. As Allāh says: *Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful* [76:3]. *And as to Thamūd, We showed them the right way, but they chose error above guidance* [41:17]. The guidance, mentioned in these two and similar other verses, is reserved for those

who have understanding and cognizance, while that mentioned in [20:50 and 87:2 — 3] *''then guided it''*, and, *''Who made* (things) *according to measure, then guided''*, is comprehensive and general in its subject as well as the goal.

Moreover, the latter verse bases the guidance on measuring; but the particular [voluntary] guidance does not mesh with measurement, i.e. preparation of causes in order to guide a thing to the goal of its creation. Although the voluntary guidance, being a part of the general system of this world, is also covered by divine measure, but here we are not looking at it from that angle.

However, this general guidance means that Allāh guides every thing to the perfection of its existence, and conveys it to the goal of its creation. It is because of this guidance that every thing longs for, and resorts to, its basic requirements, like growth and development, completion and perfection, movements and action, etc. (This topic needs further explantion; God willing, we shall write on it later on.)

The divine words prove that the things are driven to their destinations and goals by a general divine guidance; nothing is outside this guidance. Allāh has made it incumbent on Himself and He does not break His promise. He says: *Surely on Us is the guidance, and most surely Ours is the hereafter and the former* [92:12 — 13]. Added to the previously mentioned two verses, this verse too, in its generality, covers collective guidance for the societies as well as the individual guidance.

It is a right of the things on Allāh that He should guide them, creatively, to their destined perfection, and legislatively to their appointed perfection. You have seen in the discourse of the Prophethood, how legislation becomes a part of creation, and how it is encompassed by divine decree and measure. Human species has an existence which demands for its completion a series of voluntary actions; and those actions in their turn spring from ideological beliefs and practical cognizance. It is therefore necessary for man to live under some laws and rules, no matter whether those laws are good or bad, right or wrong. Accordingly, it was necessary for the Creator to prepare for him a series of orders and prohibitions (i.e. the *Sharī'ah*), and another chain of collective events and individual happenings. These events, inter-acting with those laws, shall bring man's potentials to fruition, turn his abilities into accomplishments. On reaching this stage, he shall be either happy or

unhappy — the hidden secrets of his existence will be open. When this happens, then those events and that *sharī'ah* will be called for test or trial.

Whoever does not heed the divine call and thus becomes liable to infelicity, the word of punishment is proved true against him — if he continues in that condition. All the things that happen to him — which are covered by divine commandment and prohibition — and which bring his potential to accomplishment, add more to his infelicity and unhappiness, even if he considers himself pleased with his current condition and feels happy with himself. This apparent happiness is just a divine plan [to let him sink deeper into error]. Ultimately he will find his infelicity and unhappiness in the very thing which, he thought, was the source of his felicity and happiness; his failure will spring from what he mistook for his achievement. Allāh says: *And they planned and Allāh* (also) *planned, and Allāh is the best of planners* [3:54]; *... and the evil plan does not beset any save the authors of it ...* [35:43]; *... that they may plan therein; and they do not plan but against their own souls, and they do not perceive* [6:123]; *... We draw them near* (to destruction) *by degrees from whence they know not. And I grant them respite; surely* My *scheme is effective* [7:182 — 183]. The conceited man, in his ignorance of divine schemes, brags of his disobedience and recalcitrance thinking that he has succeeded in going ahead against the divine commands — while in fact his every step fulfils the divine plan against him. Allāh says: *Or do they who work evil think that they will escape Us? Evil is it that they judge* [29:4]. The most wonderful word on this subject is found in the verse 42 of ch. 13: *... but all planning is Allāh's ...*

All this planning, disobedience, injustice and transgression that these people indulge in against their religious responsibilities; all the events and happenings which they are faced with, and which serve to expose their hidden intentions, are all just a divine plan, a respite and a reprieve. They had a right on Allāh that He should guide them to the end of their affairs — and He has done it; and Allāh is predominant on His affairs.

When the same things are ascribed to the Satan, then [the terminology changes, and] various types of disbelief and disobedience are called Satanic misguidance; temptation towards them becomes Satanic call, his whispering, and his misleading inspiration; the events leading to that transgression are called Satanic embellishment and are

regarded as his instruments, tools and traps. We shall describe it in the seventh chapter, God willing.

As for the believer in whose heart the belief is firmly rooted, whatever acts of obedience and worship are done by him and likewise the events occuring in his life that lead to those good deeds — they, in a way, deserved to be called divine help, Allāh's guardianship and His especial guidance. Allāh says: ... *and Allāh aids with His aid whom He pleases* ... [3:13]; ... *and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers* [3:68]; *Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of darkness into the light* ... [2:257]; ... *their Lord will guide them by their faith* ... [10:9]; *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people* ... [6:122]. These terms are used when these affairs are attributed to Allāh. If they are ascribed to the angels, then they are called angelic helping and strengthening. Allāh says: ... *these they are in whose hearts He has impressed faith and whom He has strengthened with a spirit for Him* [58:22].

One thing more: The general guidance begins with the first moment of a thing's creation and accompanies it to the last point of its existence — as long as it is proceeding on its return journey to Allāh. Likewise, it is being pushed on by the divine measure continuously, as is shown by the words, *And Who made* (things) *according to a measure then guided* (them to their goal) [87:3]. It is divine measures which cover the causes that govern a thing's existence, and it is the same measures which launch a thing progressively from one condition to the next and so on. Thus the measures constantly push the things forward.

As the measures drive them from behind, the appointed term (the last point of a thing's existence) pulls them from the front, as the divine words show: *We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them two, save with truth and* (for) *an appointed term; and those who disbelieve turn aside from what they are warned of* [46:3]. This verse ties the things with their final stage, i.e. the appointed terms. When one of the two related things dominates the other, then its relationship with the weaker partner is called attraction; and as the appointed terms are decisive and unalterable, they obviously pull and attract the things from the front.

Accordingly, every thing is encompassed by divine forces: There is a force to push it, another to pull it, and a third to accompany it and bring it

up. These are the basic forces confirmed by the Qur'ān, apart from other forces which protect, watch over and accompany it like angels, satans and things like that.

Sometimes we arrange a thing's affairs in such a way as to ascertain whether it is fit for a certain purpose. It is called test or trial. Sometimes you do not know whether it is fit for the said purpose or not. At other times you know it but you want its hidden ability to be known to all. In both cases you oblige it to undergo certain relevant procedures — in order that by accepting or rejecting them, it may expose its hidden characteristics. This procedure is called test, trial or examination. This same meaning fits the divine managements. Allāh obliges rational creatures (like man) to follow the rules of the *sharī'ah,* and involves him into various happenings and events. All these [creative and legislative] impositions demonstrate the man's real worth, *vis-a-vis,* the purpose to which he is invited through religious call. And they are therefore called 'divine tests'.

But there is a difference between our test and the divine one. We generally do not know the hidden reality of the things; therefore when we conduct an examination, our real aim is to discern its hitherto unknown reality. But it is impossible for Allāh not to know, and with Him are the keys of the unseen. Therefore, when He examines us, His aim is to train us by calling us to good result and felicity. He, by such test and trial, demonstrates to one and all the reality of the person so examined, in order that it may be known to all what should be his destination, whether he should be sent to the place of good reward or to the abode of chastisement.

That is why Allāh has named such arrangements of His — legislating the *sharī'ah* and assigning visitation and tribulation — as test and examination. In some verses He has described the general rule: *Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* (as to) *which of them is best in deed* [18:7]; *Surely We have created man from a small drop of intermingled life-germ; We mean to try him, so We have made him hearing, seeing* [76:2]; *... and We try you by evil and good by way of probation ...* [21:35]. Some other verses give specific details. For example: *And as for man, when his Lord tries him, then treats him with honour and makes him lead an easy life, he says: ''My Lord has honoured me.'' But when He tries him* (differently),

then straitens to him his means of subsistence, he says: ''My Lord has disgraced me'' [89:15 — 16]; *Your possessions and your children are only a trial ...* [64:15]; *... but that He may try some of you by means of others ...* [47:4]; *... thus did We try them because they transgressed* [7:163]; *… and that He may test the believers by a gracious trial ...* [8:17]; *Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and not be tried? And certainly We tried those before them, so Allāh will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars* [29: 2 — 3]. Even for a prophet like Ibrāhīm, He says: *And when his Lord tried Ibrāhīm with certain words ...* [2:124]. He says regarding the sacrifice story of Ismā'īl: *Most surely this is a manifest trial* [37:106]; and says to Mūsā: *... and We tried you with* (a severe) *trying ...* [20:40]. There are many verses of this connotation.

As you see, these verses prove that test and trial bestrides every thing related to man. It includes his existence and its various aspects like hearing, sight and life; the extraneous things that are somehow connected to him, like children, spouses, family, friends, possessions and prestige; and the things which he makes use of in one way or the other. The same is the case with their opposites, like death and all the troubles, hardships and misfortunes affecting a man. In short, the verses count every thing, affair and situation of the world, related in any way to man, as a test and trial pre-scribed by Allāh for him.

The verses also prove the generality of test as about the examinees. Each and every man has to undergo the test — be he a believer or unbeliever, a good man or bad, a prophet or someone else. It is an all-encompassing system and law, and none is exempted from it.

It appears from the above that the test is an established divine system, a practical procedure based on another creative system, i.e., the general divine guidance — as far as it is related to those creatures who are held responsible for their actions like man — together with the measure and the appointed term which precedes and follows it, respectively.

It shows that this system is not abrogateable, because its abrogation would be tantamount to undermining the creation itself — which is impossible. This reality is implied by the verses which say that the creation is with truth and that Resurrection is truth. Allāh says: *We did not create heavens and the earth and what is between them two, save with truth and* (for) *an appointed term* [46:3]; *What! did you then think*

that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us? [23:115]; *And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know* [44:38 — 39]; *Whoever be hoping to meet Allāh, the term appointed by Allāh will then surely come* [29:5]. There are many other verses of the same theme; and they prove that the creation is with the truth; it was not created in vain or without an aim, a goal. As all things are proceeding towards their destinations with truly appointed terms, pushed forward by true measures, and accompanied by true guidance, a general collision is bound to occur; and especially the persons held responsible for their actions are bound to be put to test; the test would involve them in such affairs which would bring their potentials — perfection and defect; happiness and unhappiness — into the realm of reality. This is what is called test and examination — so far as the man is obliged to follow the dictates of religion is concerned. (Try to understand it.)

The above discourse also clarifies the meanings of eradication and purge. When a believer undergoes test and trial, it separates his hidden virtues from vices; also when a group labours under difficulties, it sets the believers apart from the hypocrites — those in whose hearts there is a disease. Both these situations are called purge, that is, purification, distinction.

Likewise, when an unbeliever or a hypocrite — with apparently good characteristics and enviable conditions — is regularly put under the divine tests, it gradually brings out his hidden evil and vice; and whenever a bad charateristic comes to surface, it removes and obliterates an apparent virtue. This is what the Qur'ān calls eradication, i.e., gradual obliteration of his shallow virtues. As Allāh says: *... and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allāh may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you; and Allāh loves not the unjust. And that Allāh may purge those who believe, and eradicate the unbelievers* [3:140 — 141].

The unbelievers also face another type of eradication: Allāh informs us that the world is relentlessly driven towards the good of human beings when the religion will be purely for Allāh. The Qur'ān says: *... and the* (good) *end is for guarding* (against evil) [20:132]; *... that the earth shall inherit it My righteous servants* [21:105].

QUR'ĀN: *And Muḥammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allāh in the least; and Allāh will reward the grateful:* Death is passing away, end of the body's life. Slaying or killing denotes death arising from extraneous cause — intentional or otherwise. When the words, 'death' and 'killing', are used separately, the 'death' signifies a general meaning which includes killing too; but when they are used side by side, then 'death' means natural death as opposed to killing. Turning back upon one's heels means returning. ar-Rāghib has said: ''They say, He turned back upon his heels, when he returns; 'he turns back upon his heels' is synonymous to 'it turns on its hooves'; also it is like the [Qur'ānic] words: *so they returned retracing their footsteps* [18:64], or the idiom, 'he went back to his origin'.''

Turning back on one's heels is dependent on the conditional clause, *''if then he dies or is killed''*; it implies their apostasy — going out of religion — not merely retreating from the fight; because fleeing from battle-ground has no connection with death or martyrdom of the Prophet, while there is a clear relation between his death or martyrdom and people's renouncement of Islam for disbelief. Moreover, it was not only in Uḥud that they had fled away from the battlefield; they had done so in some other battles too like, Ḥunayn, Khaybar, etc.; but Allāh did not address them in such a severe tone, nor did He use such expression for their retreat. For example, He says regarding the battle of Ḥunayn: ... *and on the day of Ḥunayn, when your great numbers made you vain, but they availed you nothing and the earth became strait to you notwithstanding its spaciousness, then you turned back retreating* [9:25]. Therefore, it is clear that 'turning back upon your heels' in this verse means 'returning to your previous disbelief'.

The meaning of the verse — in its context of censure and stricture — is as follows: Muḥammad is but a messenger of God, like other messengers sent earlier by Him; his task is to convey the message of His Lord; he has no authority in the affairs; all the affairs are in the hand of Allāh, and the religion is His religion; it will continue with Allāh's authority — because Allāh is to preserve it. Why should then your belief depend on Muḥammad's life? Why should you behave as if your religion

would not survive the Prophet? Why do you give rise to the assumption that if Muḥammad were to die or be killed you would run away from Allāh's religion, would return back on your heels to your previous disbelief? Will you go back to misguidance after finding the guidance?

This context provides a very strong proof that when the fighting became fierce on the day of Uḥud, the Muslims thought that the Prophet was killed, and they fled away from the battle-field. It confirms the reports of the traditions and history. For example, Ibn Hishām narrates in his *as-Sīrah* that Anas ibn an-Naḍr (uncle of Anas ibn Mālik) reached where 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydillāh had gathered with other persons of the Emmigrants and the Helpers — and they had given themselves up. He asked: ''What is holding you back?'' They said: ''The Messenger of Allāh has been killed.'' He said: ''Then what will you do with life after him? Die on what the Messenger of Allāh has died on.'' Then he faced the (unbelieving) people, and fought them until he was martyred.

This retreat, this surrender, this giving themselves up, had only one meaning: Their belief depended on the Prophet; it would continue as long as he lived, and would disappear the moment he died. In other words, they wanted reward of this world for their belief, and it was this matter for which they were reprimanded by Allāh. This connotation is supported by the concluding clause, *''and Allāh will reward the grateful''*. Note that the same clause has been repeated in the next verse, after the words, *''and whoever desires the reward of this world. We shall give him of it and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We shall give him of it.''* (Ponder on its significance.)

The clause, *''and Allāh will reward the grateful''*, is a sort of exception — as the context shows; and it proves that among them there were a few who were grateful, who did not turn back on their heels nor did they retreat.

What is the reality of gratefulness? It is manifestation of the favour, display of the bounty. Its opposite is ungratefulness, which means hiding the bounty. How does one display a favour? It is done by using it in the place the donor had intended, in the way he would be pleased with, and to remember and mention the donor by tongue (and it is called praise) and heart (without forgetting him). For thanking Allāh for any of His favours and bounties, you should remember Him at the time of using it,

and should use it in the way He is pleased with — without transgressing the limits. There is nothing in this world but it is a bounty from the bounties of Allāh; and He does not want us to use any of His bounties but in the way of His worship, in His obedience. He says: *And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allāh's bounties, you will not be able to compute them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful* [14:34].

Accordingly, His absolute thank — without any restriction — means to remember Him without forgetting Him, and to obey Him without disobeying Him. Allāh says: *... and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me* [2:152]. It means as follows: Remember Me without polluting the remembrance with forget-fulness; and obey My command without spoiling it with disobedience. (The reader should not listen to him who says that it would oblige us to do something beyond our power. Such comment arises from not paying attention to these divine realities, from being distant from the plane of servitude.)

We have explained in previous volumes the difference between verb and adjective. The verb shows the active agent (the doer) doing the work — no matter how temporary, how transitory, his relation with that work may be. But an adjective shows permanent relation between the agent and the attribute; it implies that the attribute has become an inseparable characteristic of the man. There is a word of difference between the phrases, 'those who worshipped idols', 'those who were patient', 'those who did injustice', and 'those who transgressed', on one hand, and the adjectives, 'the idol-worshippers', 'the patient ones', 'the unjust', and 'the transgressors', on the other. Here, in the verse under discussion, Allāh has used the adjective, *''the grateful'';* it refers to those in whom the attribute of gratefulness is firmly rooted, who have inseparable connection with this virtue. Also, we have described that absolute gratitude demands that man should never remember any thing — as every thing is a divine bounty — without remembering Allāh; and should not use anything — the divine bounty — except in His obedience. It is now clear that gratitude and thank cannot be complete except with total sincerity towards Allāh, with purification in knowledge and action. The grateful ones are those who are purified, sincere servants of Allāh — those in whom the Satan can have no hope, who are beyond the Sanatic designs and plans.

This fact is clear from the words of the Satan quoted in the Qur'ān: *He* (Satan) *said: ''Then by Thy Might I will surely beguile them all, except Thy servants from among them, the purified one''* [38:82 — 83]; *He said: ''My Lord! because Thou hast left me to stray, I will certainly make* (evil) *fair-seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly cause them all to go astray, except Thy servants from among them, the freed* (purified) *ones''* [15:39 — 40]. Note that Allāh did not refute this claim of the Satan. Again Allāh quotes him as saying: *''He said: 'As Thou hast caused me to go astray, I will certainly lie in wait for them in Thy straight path. Then I will certainly come to them from before them and from behind them, and from their right-hand side and from their left-hand side; and Thou shalt not find most of them thankful' ''* [7:16 — 17]. The last clause is an implied exception that some of them shall be thankful. Here the adjective, *''purified''* has been changed to *''thankful''*. It can only mean that it is the purified ones who shall be grateful, and on whom the Satan has got no hold. The Satan's design is to make man forget his Lord and to call him to sin and disobedience; [but he cannot ensnare the purified and grateful servants in this trap].

This explanation is further supported by a verse, coming later, which was revealed about this very battle: (As for) *those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met, only the Satan sought to cause them to make a slip on account of some deeds they had done, and certainly Allāh has pardoned them; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing* [3:155]. Read it in conjunction with the end of the verse under discussion, *''and Allāh will reward the grateful''*, and the end clause of the next verse, *''and We will reward the grateful''*; and keep in mind that these clauses are a sort of exceptions. Think over these verses together and you will discover sublime realities.

But someone has given a really astonishing explanation. He thinks that the verse just quoted, ([As for] *those of you who turned back ... only the Satan sought to cause them to slip ...*) refers to the story which says that the Satan cried aloud on the day of Uḥud that Muḥammad was killed; and this cry made the believers lose their hearts and flee from the battle-ground. Looking at this explanation, in light of the one given by us, one is amazed as to how trivially they have treated the Book of Allāh, bringing it down from that height of reality and knowledge to such a lowly level.

The verse shows that there were a few believers on the day of Uḥud who did not show any weakness nor did they lose courage; nor did they give up the cause of Allāh. It is they whom Allāh calls ‘‘the grateful ones’’, and has confirmed that the Satan has got no power over them, nor has he any hope of ensnaring them. They have remained steadfast, grateful, not only in this battle; it is an inseparable characteristic of theirs, a deeply-rooted attribute. The Qur’ān has nowhere used the adjective ‘‘the grateful’’ in appreciation except in these two verses, that is, *‘‘And Muḥammad is no more than a messenger ... and Allāh will reward the grateful. And it is not for a soul to die ... and We will reward the grateful.’’* Yet, He has not mentioned in either place what their reward will be; this silence speaks a lot about its greatness and value.

QUR’ĀN: *And it is not for a soul to die but with the permission of Allāh* (according to) *the term that is fixed; ... and We will reward the grateful:* It is an adverse allusion to their talk about their slain brethren which is referred to in a forthcoming verse: *O you who believe! be not like those who disbelieve and say of their brethren when they travel in the earth or engage in fighting: Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain ...* [3:156]; also it refers to the talk of a group among them: *‘‘Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here’’* [3:154]. It should be noted here that these people were from among the believers, not the hypocrites who had already left the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and had not participated in the fighting at all.

This talk of theirs implies that a person’s death was not dependent on Allāh’s permission, nor was it a decisive process emanating from firm divine decree. If such an idea were correct then it would negate the Kingdom of Allāh, nullify the precise divine arrangements. (We shall explain, God willing, in the beginning of the chapter of The Cattle, what fixation of the term means.)

It necessarily follows that those who had spoken such words, had accepted Islam becauses they thought that all affairs were in the hands of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the believers. In other words, when they accepted Islam, their aim was to gain worldly benefits, as we have explained earlier. But those who desisted from such thoughts, their goal was the hereafter. That is why Allāh says: *‘‘and whoever desires the*

reward of this world, We shall give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We shall give him of it.'' Here Allāh has said, *''We shall give him of it''*, instead of saying, ''We shall give him it.'' It points to a fine distinction: Often man has some desires, but fails to provide total causes leading to the total desires, and consequently is not given all that he had desired. Therefore, if the causes conform with all the desires, he shall be given all desires; and if the causes agree with some of the desires, he will get only some of it. Allāh says: *Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away. And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer;* (as for) *these their striving shall surely be thanked* [17:18 — 19]. Also He says: *And that there is not for man* (aught) *except what he strives for* [53:39].

Thereafter, He has specially mentioned the grateful ones, excluding them from both groups; saying, *''and We will reward the grateful''*. It is because they work only for the sake of Allāh, without looking at any thing of this world or the hereafter — as we have explained earlier.

QUR'ĀN: *And how many a prophet has fought ... and Allāh loves those who do good* (to others): *''Ka-ayyin''* (كَاَيِّنْ = how many), indicates great number; *min* (مِنْ = from), here is an explicative particle. *ar-Ribbiyyūn* (اَلرِّبِّيُّوْنَ), plural of *ar-ribbī* (اَلرِّبِّي), like *ar-rabbānī* (اَلرَّبَّانِي), denotes a divine person, someone who is exclusively attached to God. Also it is said that it is plural of *rabā* (رَبِي = thousand) and thus means, thousands. *al-Istikānah* (اَلْاِسْتِكَانَةُ = to submit, to abase oneself).

The verse contains advice, sermon and lesson with a shade of admonition, together with some encouragement to the believers to follow in those Godly men's footsteps, so that Allāh should give them the reward of this world and an excellent reward of the hereafter (as he had given those Godly men) and should love them for their good-doing, as He had loved them for it.

Allāh has described some of their words and deeds in order that the believers may learn lessons from it, and adopt it as their motto. Then they would not be afflicted with what had afflicted them on the day of Uḥud (where they were involved in undesirable words and deeds, which Allāh was not pleased with). If they followed those Godly men, then Allāh

would join for them the rewards of both worlds as He had done for those Godly men.

Allāh has characterized the reward of the hereafter as ‘‘excellent’’; it points to its sublimity and high prestige in comparison to this world’s reward.

* * * * *

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تُطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ
فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ــ ١٤٩ . بَلِ اللهُ مَوْلَيْكُمْ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ ــ
١٥٠ . سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللهِ مَا لَمْ
يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَاناً وَمَأْوَيهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَىٰ الظَّالِمِينَ ــ ١٥١ . وَلَقَدْ
صَدَقَكُمُ اللهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي
الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَرَيٰكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا
وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ
وَاللهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ١٥٢ . إِذْ تُصْعِدُونَ وَلَا تَلْوُونَ عَلَىٰ
أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَيٰكُمْ فَأَثَابَكُمْ غَمّاً بِغَمٍّ لِكَيْلَا
تَحْزَنُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ــ
١٥٣ . ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُعَاساً يَغْشَىٰ طَائِفَةً مِنْكُمْ
وَطَائِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
يَقُولُونَ هَلْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي
أَنْفُسِهِمْ مَا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَا
قُتِلْنَا هَٰهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ
إِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ بِـــذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ــ ١٥٤ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ
الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللهُ
عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ــ ١٥٥ .

O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back upon your heels, so you will turn back losers (149). *Nay! Allāh is your Guardian and He is the best of the helpers* (150). *We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they set up with Allāh that for which He has sent down no authority, and their abode is the fire; and evil is the abode of the unjust* (151). *And certainly Allāh made good to you His promise, when you were extirpating them by His permission, until when you became weak-willed and disputed about the affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you loved; of you were some who desired this world and of you were some who desired the hereafter; then He turned you away from them that He might try you; and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allāh is Gracious to the believers* (152). *When you ran off precipitately and did not turn towards any one, and the Messenger was calling you from your rear, so He gave you another sorrow instead of* (your) *sorrow, so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor* (at) *what befell you; and Allāh is aware of what you do* (153). *Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you, a slumber coming upon a party of you, and* (there was) *another party who cared only for their own selves; they entertained about Allāh thoughts of ignorance quite unjustly. They say: ''Do we have any hand in the affair?'' Say: ''Surely the affair is wholly* (in the hands) *of Allāh.'' They conceal within their souls what they would not reveal to you. They say: ''Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here.'' Say: ''Had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they* (now) *lie;'' and that Allāh might test what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and Allāh knows what is*

in the breasts (154). (As for) *those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met, only the Satan sought to cause them to make a slip on account of some deeds they had done, and certainly Allāh has pardoned them; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing* (155).

COMMENTARY

It is the continuation of the verses revealed about the battle of Uḥud. These verses exhort and encourage the believers to obey none except their Lord, because He alone is their Guardian and Helper; it calls them as witness that Allāh had fulfilled His promise to them, and the debacle and disaster which they suffered on that day was brought upon them by their own hands, because they had transgressed the limits of what Allāh had told them and His Messenger had invited them to; in spite of that Allāh has forgiven them of their sins because He is Forgiving, Forbearing.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! if you obey those who disbelieve ... He is the best of the helpers:* It may possibly be inferred from the context that the unbelievers — after the battle of Uḥud, when these verses were revealed — were putting ideas in the believers' minds (just as ''friendly'' advice!) to hold them back from fighting and to incite strife and disunity among them, in order to create rift and division in the camp of Islam. This implication might probably get support from the verses 173 — 175 coming later: *Those to whom the people said: ''Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them'' ... It is only the Satan that frightens his friends; so do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers.*

It has also been said that the verse alludes to the shouting by the Jews and the hypocrites on the day of Uḥud, ''Muḥammad has been killed; you should return to your families.'' But this explanation is nothing.

The verse first made it clear to the Muslims that if they obeyed the unbelievers and were inclined towards their friendship seeking their help, they would suffer a great loss, that is, they would turn back to infidelity, would become unbelievers themselves. Then it strikes at this idea by showing them the bright reality that *''Allāh is your Guardian and He is*

the best of the helpers.''

QUR'ĀN: *We will cast terror into the hearts ... and evil is the abode of the unjust:* It is a beautiful promise to the believers that Allāh will help them through terror and scare. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to mention ''scare'' among the special bounties which Allāh had reserved for him — not giving it to any other prophet. Such traditions have been narrated by both sects.

The clause, *''because they set up with Allāh that for which He has sent down no authority'',* points to the fact that the polytheists set up such things as partners or colleagues for Allāh, which have got no authority, no proof for it. The Qur'ān repeatedly says that there is no authority, no proof, which could prove any partner or colleague for Allāh. Among many types of polytheism is the rejection of the Creator by saying that some thing other than Allāh — like time or matter — has caused the creation and goes on managing it.

QUR'ĀN: *And certainly Allāh made good to you His promise, ... and Allāh is Gracious to the believers: ''al-Ḥass''* (اَلْحَسُّ = to extirpate by slaying).

The traditions unanimously say, and history records, that on the day of Uḥud, at first the believers overpowered the enemy and defeated them; they started slaughtering them and plundering their goods. But then most of the archers left their position at the mountain-pass, and Khālid ibn Walīd with his group attacked and slaughtered 'Abdullāh ibn Jubayr and the few archers who had remained with him. Now the way was clear for them to attack the believers from the rear — which they did. Seeing this, the fleeing polytheists turned back and put the Muslims to the sword, killing seventy of the companions and bringing utter defeat upon them.

Accordingly, the words, *''And certainly Allāh made good to you His promise''*, affirms that Allāh's promise of help — on the condition that they should remain on guard and be patient — was certainly fulfilled; the clause, *''when you were extirpating them by His permission''*, is applicable to the victory which Allāh gave to them to begin with on the day of Uḥud; and the next clause, *''until when you became weak-willed and disputed about the affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you loved''*, may be pointing to what the archers had done; they

disputed one with the other, an overwhelming majority of them left their position and ran away to join those companions who were busy in gathering the booty. In this way they showed their lack of will-power; they differed among themselves and disobeyed the Prophet's order not to leave their place no matter what happened to the others. Accordingly, *al-fashal* (اَلْفَشَلُ = generally translated as 'to lose heart', 'to be weak-hearted'), would imply here, weakness or lack of will-power; obviously the meaning of weak-heartedness or cowardice would not be appropriate in this context, because they had not left their position because of any fear; rather it was because of the avarice of war-booty. If we take *al-fashal* for cowardice, then it would apply to the whole 'army'; and in that case, the adverb, *''then''*, in the clause, *''then He turned you away from them''*, would denote ordinal sequel, not sequence of time. The word, *''disputed''*, proves that not all of them were united in that weak-willedness and disobedience; some of them were determined to carry on the order, and to continue in the obedience. That is why Allāh follows it with the comment: *''of you were some who desired this world, and of you were some who desired the hereafter''*

QUR'ĀN: *then He turned you away from them that He might try you;...:* Allāh stopped you from entangling with the idol-worshippers, after you manifested your lack of will-power, disputed one with the other and disobeyed the Prophet — in short, after you became disunited. He did so in order that He might examine you and test your faith and patience in His cause. When the hearts and minds are disunited, it provides the strongest reason to conduct an examination, so that a believer may be distinguished from a hypocrite; such a test would also separate a believer who is firmly-rooted in belief and steadfast in conviction from the one who is inconsistent and fickle. Nevertheless, Allāh has forgiven them by His grace, as He says, *''and He has certainly pardoned you''*.

QUR'ĀN: *When you ran off precipitately and did not turn towards any one and the Messenger was calling you from your rear: ''al-Iṣ'ād''* (اَلْاِصْعَادُ = to go far away on the gound) is different from *aṣ-ṣu'ūd* (اَلصُّعُوْدُ) which means to rise up, to ascend. They say, *Aṣ'ada fi jānibi 'l-barr* (اَصْعَدَ فِي جَانِبِ الْبَرِّ = he went far in the land), and *Ṣa'ada fi 's-sullam* (صَعَدَ فِي السُّلَّمِ = he climbed up the ladder). It is said that *al-iṣ'ād* is,

sometimes, used in the meaning of *aṣ-ṣu'ūd.*

The adverb, *''when''*, is related to an implied verb, ''remember'' (i.e. remember when you ran off ...); or to the verb in the preceding verse, *''He turned you away''*; or to the one after that, *''He might try you''*, according to various explantions. *al-Layy* (اَللَيُّ = to turn towards, to incline). According to *Majma'u 'l-bayān*, it is always used in negative (and never in affirmative), i.e. they do not say, *Lawaytu 'alā kadhā* (لَوَيْتُ عَلَي كَذَا = I turned towards so-and-so).

The clause, *''and the Messenger was calling you from your rear''*, the word, *''rear''* here is opposite of front. The fact that the Prophet was calling them from their rear, shows that they had fled away *en masse* from around him in such a way that the mob in forefront was far off from the Prophet and the rear group was nearer; he was calling them but nobody was turning towards him — neither those in the front nor those in the rear. They ran off precipitately to save their own skins, leaving the Messenger of Allāh (blessings of Allāh be on him and his progeny), almost alone surrounded by the hordes of the blood-thirsty enemies.

Of course, the words in the the verse 144, *''and Allāh will reward the grateful''*, (as explained earlier) prove that there were a few among them whose determination was not shaken; they did never retreat — neither in the beginning nor after the rumour spread that the Prophet was martyred, as is clear from the words, *''if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?''*

The words under discussion, *''and did not turn towards any one, and the Messenger was calling you from your rear''*, clearly show that the rumour of the Prophet's martyrdom spread among them after they had retreated and run away from him.

QUR'ĀN: so *He gave you another sorrow instead of* (your) *sorrow*, *... of what you do.* He changed their sorrow to another sorrow in order to divert their attention from this grief. This *''another sorrow''* that afflicted them was, in any case, a divine grace; because Allāh says: *''so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor* (at) *what befell you;''* and He has condemned such grief in His Book where He says: *So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you* [57:23]. Obviously, this another sorrow that would prevent them from that disliked grieving would be a grace and

bounty. Accordingly, this *''another sorrow''* should refer to the remorse that overwhelmed them for what they had done, to the distress they felt for the victory that had slipped from their hands because of their weak will-power. Consequently the second sorrow mentioned in the clause, *''instead of* (your) *sorrow''*, would refer to that undesirable grieving; the preposition *''bi''* (بِ) in *''bi-ghammin''* (بِغَمٍّ = *instead of sorrow*) indicates exchange. The meaning is therefore as follows: You were grieving at what had escaped you and what had befallen you; Allāh changed it to the remorse and distress for the lost victory.

Another alternative: *''athābakum''* (اَثَابَكُمْ = translated here as *''He gave you''*) may contain the connotation of change. The meaning in this case will be as follows: He changed your remorse and distress to the grief, entitling you for its reward. The the meanings of the two *''sorrows''* will interchange, *vis-a-vis,* the preceding explanation.

In either case, the sentence, ''*so He gave you another sor-row''*, branches out from the clause, *''and He has certainly pardoned you''*; and the next verse, *''Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you ...''*, is closely related to it. The meaning: He pardoned you, then changed your sorrow to another sorrow to prevent you from that grief of yours which He was not pleased with, then He sent down upon you security in the form of slumber which overtook you.

A third alternative is apparently supported by the context, in that the sentence, *''so He gave you another sorrow ...''*, would branch from the immediately preceding clause, *''When you ran off precipitately ...''*; in this case, *''another sorrow''* would refer to their running off and retreating from the battlefield; and the next phrase, *bi-ghammin* (بِغَمٍّ) would be translated ''because of the sorrow'' (taking the preposition *bi* بِ for the cause); it would then refer to the polytheists' attack on them from the rear which in its turn was the direct result of their disputation and disobedience. It is a good meaning. In this case, the clause, *''so that you might not grieve ...''*, would mean as follows: We explain these facts to you so that you might not grieve. Thus, it would fall into line with the words of Allāh: *No misfortunate befalls you on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence; surely that is easy to Allāh: So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you; and Allāh does not love any arrogant boaster* [57:22 — 23].

[The meaning: He gave you another sorrow that you ran away from the battle-ground, because the polytheists attacked you from the rear when you disputed among yourselves and disobeyed the Prophet. We explain it to you so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor at what befell you.]

These three possible grammatical structure maintain the order of the verse and keep the sentences well-connected to each other. The exegetes have written many other possibilities. For example, to which sentence does the conjunctive, *''so''*, join the words, *''so He gave you another sorrow''*. What are the connotations of the first and the second *''sorrow''*? What is the import of the preposition *''bi''* in *''bi-ghammin''* (translated here as *''instead of''*)? What is the significance of *''so that you might not''*? But they are not tenable in the least, and there is no use of quoting and commenting on them.

In the light of the first two meanings given by us, *''what had escaped you''*, (in the clause, *''so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor* [at] *what befell you''*) would refer to victory and war booty; and *''what befell you''* to their slaughter and injuries.

QUR'ĀN: *Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you, a slumber coming upon a party of you: ''al-Amanah''* (اَلْاَمَنَةُ = security); *an-nu'ās* (اَلنُّعَاسُ = lethargy before sleep; light sleep; slumber); *''slumber''* is appositional substantive standing for ''security''. It is also possible to take *al-amanah* as plural of *al-'āmin* (اَلْاَمِنُ = peaceful) like *aṭ-ṭālib* and *aṭ-ṭalabah*; in that case it will be circumstantial clause related to *''you''* in *''upon you''*; and *''slumber''* will become object of the verb, *''sent down''. al-Ghashayān* (اَلْغَشَيَانُ = to cover, to envelop).

The verse shows that this slumber had overtaken only some, and not all, of the believers, as the clause, *''a party of you''*, clearly says. These were the people who had come back to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) after retreating and running off precipitately, and felt remorse and sorrow for what they had done. Far be it from Allāh to pardon them mercifully while they were still fleeing away from the *jihād,* and were thus engaged in one of the greatest sins. Allāh says about them, *''and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allāh is Gracious to the believers''*, and it is unthinkable that Allāh's grace would cover a sinner when he was actively engaged in open defiance and sin — until and unless he repented. But as

explained above, Allāh looked on them graciously when He changed their sorrow to another sorrow in order that they might not grieve, lest their hearts be polluted with something disliked by Allāh; [and it proves that they had come back and repented before that].

So, these were some of the believers; they were those who felt remorse for what they had done, and returned to the Prophet gathering around him. Probably it was at the time when the Prophet separated himself from the hordes of the polytheists and reached the mountain-pass — although they returned to him gradually, one by one, when it was known that the Prophet was not slain.

The other group is referred to in the next sentence, *''and* (there was) *another party who cared only for their own selves''*

QUR'ĀN: *and* (there was) *another party who cared only for their own selves:* This was another group of the believers. The word ''believer'' is used here only to distinguish them from the hypocrites who have been mentioned later on [in 3:167 — 168]: *And that He might know the hypocrites and it was said to them: ''Come, fight in Allāh's way, or defend yourselves.'' The said: ''If we knew fighting, we would certainly have followed you''* ... Allāh did not give this second group (that cared only for itself) the honour accorded to the first one (who were pardoned, then given another sorrow and lastly provided security and slumber). This second party, on the other hand, was left on their own; they were wholly engrossed in their own selves, oblivious of every thing else.

Allāh mentioned here their two characteristics although one was a concomitant or branch of the other. First, that they cared only for themselves. It does not mean that they wanted for their own selves the happiness — in its real sense. After all, even the believers want the same thing — the happiness for themselves. Not only the man, every creature that has a little bit of will and volition thinks only about itself. What this clause connotes is that their whole attention was riveted to save their own skins — lest they lose their lives and be slain. In other words, their only aim in accepting the religion — or doing any other work — was to let their own selves have the usufruct of this world. They had professed Islam only because they thought that it was an unconquerable factor, and that Allāh would not like it to be overwhelmed by His enemies — even if the enemies had all the factors in their favour. These people sought to

gain benefits from the religion as long as it went on giving them something to their advantage. But if the situation changed and the tables were turned against them, they would turn back on their heels, retreating into disbelief.

QUR'ĀN: *they entertained about Allāh thoughts of ignorance ... the affair is wholly* (in the hands) *of Allāh:* They entertained about Allāh a thought that was not correct, was actually a thought of ignorance. They ascribed to Him a characteristic that was not true, and was like that which the people of ignorance used to ascribe to Him. Whatever that thought, it was related to their words, *''Do we have any hand in the affair?''*. It may also be inferred from the reply Allāh taught His Prophet, i.e., *''Say: 'Surely the affair is wholly* (in the hands) *of Allāh.' ''* This reply evidently shows that according to their thinking some affairs were in their own hands. That is why as soon as they were defeated and massacred, they started having doubts about religion, and said to each other, *''Do we have any hand in the affair?''*

It is clear from the above that they thought that outright victory and triumph was their right. Why? Because they were Muslims ! They believed that the true religion cannot be vanquished, and consequently the followers of that religion cannot be defeated — because, according to them, it was incumbent on Allah to help it unconditionally, without any restriction, because He had promised to help.

So that was the unjust thought, the thought of ignorance. The idol-worshippers of the days of ignorance believed that Allāh was the Creator of every thing; that at the same time there was a separate Lord for every phenomenon, like sustenance, life, death, love, war, etc. Also, every species and every part of creation like man, earth, river, etc., had a Lord of its own; each Lord managed the affair of his subjects and none could overpower him within his jurisdiction. They worshipped those lords so that they would provide them with sustenance, give them happiness, and protect them from evil and misfortune; and Allāh was like an overlord, allotting each group of His subjects and each part of His Kingdom to a lord who had full authority to do whatever he liked within his jurisdiction and in his domain.

If someone thinks that the true religion could not be over-powered in its advancement, and that the Prophet — being the first to receive it from

his Lord and be responsible for it — could not be defeated in his mission or could not die or be killed, then surely such a man entertains about Allāh thoughts of ignorance. He has taken a partner for Allāh, and idolized the Prophet as a deity who has been given domain over victory and war booty — while in fact Allāh is One Who has no partner, and in Whose hand lies every power and every authority; and none else besides Him has any authority at all. That is why when Allāh said in a preceding section, *''That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them so that they should return disappointed of attaining what they desired''*, He cut short the speech, turning towards His Prophet to tell him, *''You have no concern in the affair''*. He did so, lest someone thought the Prophet had any concern or authority in that cutting off a portion of unbelievers or abasing them. It is Allāh Himself Who has established the system of cause and effect. The stronger the cause the surer the appearance of its effect, no matter whether that effect is right or wrong, virtue or vice, good or bad, guidance or misguidance, justice or injustice. Also, it make no difference whether the person involved is believer or unbeliever, beloved or hated, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) or Abū Sufyān.

Of course, Allāh has special providence for His religion and for His friends. It is because of that concern that the system in the creation is run in such a way that it would finally lead to the victory of religion, and prepare the earth for His friends — *and the end is for the pious ones* [7:128].

It is a universal law and no exception has been made for prophethood and divine mission. That is why we find that when the normal factors and causes were present for the advancement of the religion and victory of the believers (as was the case in some battles of the Prophet), the believers triumphed; and when there was any weak link in the chain (for example, hypocrisy raised its head, or they disobeyed the Prophet, or became weak-hearted or nervous) the polytheists got the upper hand, defeating the believers. The same was true in case of other prophets, *vis-a-vis,* their people. The enemies were men of the world, whose only aim was to gain benefits of this life; they had overwhelming powers and gathered strength upon strength, and mobilized army after army. Naturally, they got upper hand and crushed the prophets — some were slain like Zakariyyā, others were beheaded like Yaḥyā, yet, others had to

leave their place like ‘Īsā and so on.

Nevertheless, if the truth of the religion could not be established without disturbing the normal casuality — in other words when it was a question of life or death for the truth — then it was necessary for Allāh to stregthen the religion in an extraordinary and supernatural way, lest evidence of its truth be destroyed. Some details of this subject were given in the discourses on Miracle[1] in volume one, and on Deeds[2] in volume three.

However, to return to our topic: When these people (who did not care except for their own selves) asked each other whether they really had any authority in the affair, it showed that they entertained doubts about the truth of the religion, and as we have explained above, their religion had the spirit of idolatry in its body. Therefore, Allāh told His Prophet to reply them in these words: *‘‘Surely the affair is wholly* (in the hands) *of Allāh’’.* Before that He had told the Prophet himself that he had no concern, no authority, in the affair. All this made it clear that the religion of nature, the religion of monotheism, is the one in which all authority is reserved for Allāh; the rest of the things — including the Prophet — have got no authority at all; rather they are links in the chain of cause and effect, governed by the divine system that leads to the law of test and trial.

QUR’ĀN: They conceal within their souls what they would not reveal to you ... and Allāh knows what is in the breasts: It exposes their lack of belief in a much more harsher light than their words, ‘‘Do we have any hand in the affair?’’, had shown. Those words had expressed their doubt in the form of a question. But the idea hidden in their hearts (‘‘Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here’’), is an argument to prove according to their thinking untruth of the religion! That is why although they had dared to uttter the former question before the Prophet, they kept the later words concealed in their hearts, as it would have clearly shown that they gave preponderance to disbelief over belief.

Allāh therefore told His Prophet to reply their undisclosed thought in

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1 Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 1, pp. 106 — 126. (*tr.*)

2 *ibid.* vol. 3, pp. 245 — 274. (*tr.*)

these words: *''Say: 'Had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they* (now) *lie;' and that Allāh might test what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts.''* These words made it clear to them that:

First: When the martyrs were slain in the battlefield, it was not because you were not on truth nor because the authority was not in your hands — as you think. Rather, it had happened because the divine decree — which is enforced without fail — had ordained that those martyrs would lie in this place. If you had remained behind, those for whom martyrdom was ordained would surely have gone ahead to the place of their martyrdom. There is no way of escaping from the appointed time of death; when it comes nobody can delay it an hour nor can he bring it on before its times.

Second: It is a divinely established system that test and purge would encompass each and every human being; it would inevitably cover one and all, you as well as them. Neither you could avoid coming out of your homes nor the battle could be put off. All this was necessary in order that the martyrs might arrive at their right positions and achieve their high ranks, and you might reach your due places. In this way, everyone would be placed in his proper place — either felicity or infelicity, happiness or unhappiness — after the testing of the thoughts and ideas hidden in your breasts, and the separation of belief and polytheism concealed in your hearts.

It is amazing to see a number of exegetes writing that the group mentioned in this verse refers to the hypocrites — when the context clearly shows that it describes the condition of some believers. As for the hypocrites (i.e., the group of 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy that had withdrawn from the battle in the very beginning even before the battle had started), their condition has been described much later. Of course, that explanation might be in place if they use the word, ''hypocrites'', for those of weak faith, who were so confused in their belief that it ultimately boiled down to rejection of faith (in reality) although they professed Islam (in words). It is they whom Allāh describes as 'those in whose hearts was disease'. He says: *When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was disease said: ''Their religion has deceived them''* [8:49]; *and among you there are those who hearken for their sake* [9:47]. Or may be they want to say

that all hypocrites had not gone back to Medina with ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy.

Even more amazing is some others’ assertion that these people were good believers. They say that these people thought that the affair of divine help and victory was in their hands because they were on the true religion, and they had seen how in the battle of Badr they were given victory and how angels were sent to help them. According to these exegetes, when they said, *‘‘Do we have any hand in the affair?’’*, and thought, *‘‘Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here’’*, it was actually their way of confessing that the affair was in the hands of Allāh, not theirs, otherwise they would not have been massacred.

If we accept this interpretation then the replies (*Say: ‘‘Surely the affair is wholly* [in the hands] *of Allāh’’*, and, *Say: ‘‘Had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they* [now] *lie’’*), would be totally irrelevant. Some people have realized this defect and then have tried to explain it away in a way that has compounded the confusion. In any case, we have already explained its true meaning to you.

QUR’ĀN: (As for) those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met, only the Satan sought to cause them to make slip,on account o f some deeds they had done: ‘‘Istazallahumu ’sh-shayṭān’’ (اِسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطانُ = the Satan wanted them to slip); he wanted so only because they had acquired some evil traits in their psyches, and done some bad deeds; one evil leads to another, because it emanates from following the heart’s desires — and the heart desires only that which has some affinity to it.

Someone has taken the preposition *‘‘bi’’* (بِ = *on account of*) as indicative of instrument, and said that *‘‘some deeds’’* refers to their turning back on the day of fighting. But this interpretation is far fetched; because *‘‘some deeds they had done’’* manifestly shows that their deeds had preceded their turning back; the two cannot refer to the same thing.

In any case, the verse shows that some sins and evil deeds done by them had given the Satan power to mislead them by making them retreat and flee from the *jihād.* Consequently, there is no ground to suppose that the verse points to the Satanic cry on the day of Uḥud that the Prophet

was killed (as has been narrated in some traditions), because such interpretation is not supported by the wordings of the verse in any way.

QUR'ĀN: *and certainly Allāh has pardoned them; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing:* This pardon was granted to those who turned back on the day of battle, as mentioned in the beginning of the verse. The verse is unrestricted, and therefore covers all those who fled on that day. In other words it includes both groups: those on whom slumber was sent down and those who cared only for their own selves. But there is a difference between the two, as the former has been honoured by Allāh, but not the latter. Because of that difference, this general pardon (which covers both groups) does not mention the aspects of honour related to the former's pardon (as mentioned earlier).

It also shows that the pardon mentioned in this verse is not the same as the one described [in 3:152] above, *''and He has certainly pardoned you''*. That the two pardons are different may be gathered from different tones used in the two verses. Look first at the former where Allāh says, *''and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allāh is Gracious to the believers''*. It clearly, shows Allāh's grace and mercy on them, and mentions them as *''believers''*; thereafter it goes on saying that He changed their sorrow to another sorrow in order that they might not grieve; then tells them that He sent down security on them in the form of slumber. How different is that tone from the one employed in this verse where it merely says: *''and certainly Allāh has pardoned them; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing''*. Note that it speaks only about the pardon, but is silent about all the abovementioned aspects of honour; then it ends with the adjective, *''Forbearing''* — focusing the attention on the fact that Allāh does not make haste in giving punishment. A pardon accompanied by forbearance indicates that although the Master has overlooked the sin but still He is not pleased with the sinner.

Suggestion: Those who think that both groups are equal in rank, do so because both have been granted pardon.

Reply: The former pardon is different from the latter in its connotation, although both denote pardoning. There is no proof to show that pardon, forgiveness and things like that have the same connotation everywhere; and we have explained how the two differ in these verses.

PARDON AND FORGIVENESS IN THE QUR'ĀN

What is pardon? As ar-Rāghib has said (and it is the meaning derived from its various uses): *''al-'Afw* (اَلْعَفْوُ = pardon) originally means to proceed straight away to get something. They say: *'afāh* or *i'tafāh* (عَفَاهُ،اِعْتَفَاهُ = he proceeded towards him to take a certain thing from him); *'afati 'r-rīḥu 'd-dār* (عَفَتِ الرِّيحُ الدَّارَ = the wind proceeded to the house taking away its traces or vestiges).'' They say, *'afati 'd-dār* (عَفَتِ الدَّارُ) when they want to say that the house has become effaced, obliterated; probably there is a fine literary point in this usage: It is as though the house itself came cover its traces and decorations, got hold of them and disappeared from sight. It is in this meaning that *al-'afw* is attributed to Allāh; as though Allāh goes to His servant and takes away whatever sins he might be having — thus the servant is left without any sin.

It appears from the above that *al-maghfirah* (اَلْمَغْفِرَةُ = forgiveness; lit. = to cover) in a way emantes from *al-'afw.* The sin is first taken away then it is covered up so that it cannot be seen — neither by the sinner nor by others. The Qur'ān says: *and pardon us and forgive us* [2:286]; *and Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving* [4:99].

Also it is clear that pardon and forgiveness — although having different meanings, the one branching out from the other, academically — are one and the same for all practical purposes. Also, these meanings are not reserved for Allāh; these words may be used for others too in the same meanings. Allāh says: ... *unless they remit* [*ya'fūna* يَعْفُوْنَ]*or he remits* [*ya'fuwa* يَعْفُوَ] *in whose hand is the marriage tie* [2:237]; *Say to those who believe* (that) *they forgive those who do not hope the days of Allāh* [45:14]; *pardon them therefore and ask forgiveness for them, and take counsel with them in the affair* [3:159]. Here Allāh enjoins His Prophet to pardon them; he should not mete out to them the consequences of their disobedience, like censuring and admonishing them or shunning and avoiding them. He should also beseech Allāh to forgive them (and He will grant that prayer without fail) in order that they are saved from punishment of their sins.

Also, it is clear that the theme of pardon and forgiveness may be related with creative phenomena and legislative effects, as well as with affairs of this world and the next. Allāh says: *And whatever affliction*

befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults) [42:30]. This verse definitely includes pardon of worldly consequences of the sins and faults. The same is the apparent significance of the words of Allāh: *... and the angels declare His glory with the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth* [42:5]. Also the words of Adam and his wife, quoted in the Qur'ān, point to this reality: *They said: ''Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers''* [7:23]. Certainly this injustice to their own selves and the forgiveness asked for were not related to the hereafter, because the prohibition which they had contravened was in nature of an advice, not of a law.

Many Qur'ānic verses prove that nearness and proximity to Allāh and enjoyment of the paradise's blessings cannot take place unless and until the rust of polytheism and sins are removed by repentance, etc., followed by the divine forgiveness. For example, Allāh says: *Nay! rather, what they used to do has become* (like) *rust upon their hearts* [84:14]; *and whoever believes in Allāh, He guides aright his heart* [64:11].

Pardon and forgiveness are, in short, like removal of impediments and eradication of contrary antagonistic facotrs. Allāh has counted belief and the hereafter as ''life''; and the effects of belief, the deeds of the people of the hereafter and their lively progress as ''light''. He says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth?* [6:122]; *and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life* [29:64]. Thus, polytheism is death, and sins are utter darkness. Allāh says: *Or like utter darkness in the deep sea: there covers it a wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud,* (layers of) *utter darkness one above another; when he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it; and to whomsoever Allāh does not give light, he has no light* [24:40]. Forgiveness then removes the death and darkness; it takes shape through the life (i.e., belief) and the light (i.e., divine mercy).

An unbeliever has neither life nor light. A believer whose sins are forgiven, has the life and the light both; on the other hand, a believer who is encumbered with sins is alive but with diminished light; his light will become perfect when he is forgiven. Allāh says: *their light shall run on*

before them and on their right hands; they shall say: ''Our Lord! make perfect for us our light and grant us forgiveness [66:8].

The above discourse makes it clear that when pardon and forgiveness is attributed to Allāh regarding creative affairs then it means removal of impediment (by creating a factor to erase it); in the context of legislative matters, it indicates removal of such factors that would prevent man's success in the hereafter; while in the circle of happiness and unhappiness it would entail removal of those things that would impede his happiness.

* * * * *

يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاٰ تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا غُزًّى لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللهُ ذٰلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللهُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَاللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ــ ١٥٦ . وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ــ ١٥٧ . وَلَئِنْ مُتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ــ ١٥٨ . فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ــ ١٥٩ . إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللهُ فَلاٰ غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ــ ١٦٠ . وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَغُلَّ وَمَنْ يَغْلُلْ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفّٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لاٰ يُظْلَمُونَ ــ ١٦١ . أَفَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِنَ اللهِ وَمَأْوٰيهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ــ ١٦٢ . هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللهِ وَاللهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ــ ١٦٣ . لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً

مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ــ ١٦٤ .

O you who believe! be not like those who disbelieve and say of their brethren when they travel in the earth or engage in fighting: ''Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain;'' so Allāh makes this to be an intense regret in their hearts; and Allāh gives life and causes death; and Allāh sees what you do (156). *And if you are slain in the way of Allāh or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allāh and mercy is better than what they amass* (157). *And if indeed you die or you are slain, certainly to Allāh shall you be gathered together* (158). *Thus it is due to mercy from Allāh that you are lenient to them, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask forgiveness for them, and take counsel with them in the affair, but when you have decided, then place your trust in Allāh; surely Allāh loves those who trust* (in him) (159). *If Allāh assists you, then there is none that can overcome you, and if He forsakes you, who is there then that can assist you after Him? And on Allāh should the believers rely* (160). *And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should defraud; and he who defrauds shall bring* (with him) *that which he has defrauded, on the Day of Resurrection; then shall every soul be paid back fully what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly* (161). *Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allāh like him who has brought upon himself the wrath from Allāh, and whose abode is hell? And it is an evil destination* (162). *They are of* (diverse) *grades with Allāh, and Allāh sees what they do* (163). *Certainly Allāh conferred* (His) *favour upon the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His signs and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error* (164).

COMMENTARY

It is the continuation of the verses revealed especially about the battle of Uḥud. It deals with another affair affecting them, i.e., the grief and sorrow that had overwhelmed them because so many of their braves and notables had been slaughtered. The overwhelming majority of the martyrs was from the Helpers; as reportedly no more than four of the Emigrants were martyred. It gives rise to the surmise that most of the resistance was from the Helpers' side and that the Emigrants had left the battleground long before them.

In short, these verses explain the error and mistake in sorrowing and grieving; then turn to another matter resulting from that grief, that is, their critical attitude towards the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), thinking that it was he who had brought them to that disaster and put them into that perdition. It may be inferred from their talk alluded to herein: *''Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain.''* In other words, if they had listened to them and not obeyed the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) they would have been alive today. It means that it was he who had led them to the slaughter. The verses make it clear that it was not meet for the Prophet that he should deceive anyone; he is Allāh's Messenger, noble of heart, sublime in character; he is lenient to them by mercy of Allāh, pardons them and seeks Allāh's forgiveness for them and takes their counsel by permission of Allāh; and Allāh has conferred His favour on them by sending him to them in order that he may take them out of error bringing them to the guidance.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! be not like those who disbelieve ... and Allāh sees what you do:* The word, *''those who disbelieve'',* refers to the unbelievers — not to the hypocrites, as some people think. It is not the hypocrisy, *per se,* which incites such talks — although the hypocrites had uttered these words. Such talk, in reality, is a product of disbelief. Thus it was necessary to ascribe it to the unbelievers. *aḍ-Ḍarb fi 'l-arḍ* (اَلضَّرْبُ فِي الْاَرْض = lit., striking in the earth) metaphorically means travelling. *al-Ghuzzā* (اَلْغُزَّي) is plural of *al-ghāzī* (اَلْغَازي = fighter) like *aṭ-ṭālib* and *aṭ-ṭullāb* (اَلطَّالِبُ،اَلطُّلَّابُ) or *aḍ-ḍārib* and *aḍ-ḍurrāb*(اَلضَّارِبُ،اَلضُّرَّابُ) *''so Allāh makes this to be an intense regret in their hearts''* , i.e., so that Allāh may punish them through this intense regret; it has thus put the

means in place of the end. The words, *''Allāh gives life and causes death'',* explain the reality about which the unbelievers had gone astray, and had said, *''Had they been with us, they would not have died and they would not have been slain.''* The words, *''death''*, as used here, covers natural death as well as slaughter — we have explained earlier that when used alone, this word covers every type of death. The clause, *''and Allāh sees what you do''*, explains the reason for the prohibition contained in the words, *''be not like those who disbelieve''.*

In the clause, *''they would not have died and they would not have been slain''*, death is mentioned before slaying; the sequence follows that of the preceding clause, *''when they travel ... or engage in fighting''.* Also, unlike slaying (which is an abnormal happening) death is a natural and normal phenomenon; therefore the normal was mentioned before the abnormal.

The verse, in short, admonishes the believers not to be like the unbelievers; they should not say about someone who dies outside his home town or among strangers, or is slain when engaged in *jihād,* that if he had been with them he would not have died or been killed. This type of talk throws one into mental agony and divine punishment — it is the intense grief put in their hearts. Moreover, it emanates from sheer ignorance: Being near them or away from them neither gives life nor causes death. Giving life and death is among the affairs exclusively reserved for Allāh — the One Who has no partner or colleague. Therefore, the believers should fear Allāh and not be like the unbelievers; and Allāh sees what they do.

QUR'ĀN: *And if you are slain in the way of Allāh or you die, certainly forgiveness from Allāh and mercy is better than what they amass:* Obviously, *''what they amass''*, refers to property and wealth as well as to its concomitants, as these are the best objects of desire in this life.

This verse mentions martyrdom before normal death, because being slain in the way of Allāh is nearer to divine forgiveness compared to other deaths. This fine point has caused this change of sequence. Thereafter, the next verse, *''And if indeed you die or you are slain ... ''*, reverts to the normal pattern, putting death before slaughter, because there is no such fine point there to justify any change.

QUR'ĀN: *Thus it is due to mercy from Allāh ... should the believers rely: ''al-Faẓẓ''* (اَلْفَظُّ = rude, rough); hard-heartedness metaphorically means unkindness, ill-nature and intolerance; *al-infiḍāḍ* (اَلْاِنْفِضَاضُ = to disperse).

The verse turns away from the believers, addressing the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) directly, although the real import is as follows: It is due to Our mercy that Our Messenger is lenient to you; that is why We have ordered him to pardon you, ask forgiveness for you and take counsel with you in the affair, and to place his trust in Us when he has taken any decision.

In spite of that meaning, the mode of address was changed (and we have explained this reason in the beginning of this topic of Uḥud) because there is a current of censure, admonition and stricture running throughout the narrative, and the Qur'ān turns its face from the believers whenever a chance occurs. This situation is one of them, because it touches a condition of theirs which tends to put blame on the Prophet. Their grieving for the slaughter of their martyrs might sometimes lead them to find fault with the Prophet's actions and to accuse him of bringing them to the hazardous eventuality where they were killed and extirpated. That is why Allāh turned away from them and addressed His Prophet directly: *''Thus it is due to mercy from Allāh that you are lenient to them ...''*

This talk is based on another implied one which may be understood from the context: ''If they are entangled, as you see, in such undesirable condition that they resemble the unbelievers and intensely grieve for their martyrs, then it is only due to Our mercy that you are lenient to them; otherwise, they would have dispersed from around you.'' (And Allāh knows better.)

The clauses, *''pardon them therefore and ask forgiveness for them, and take counsel with them in the affair''*, endorse the precedent established by the Prophet, as he was doing all this from the beginning, and he had taken their counsel shortly before the battle of Uḥud. The verse points to the fact that the Prophet does what he is told by Allāh to do, and Allāh is pleased with his performance.

Allāh told His Prophet to pardon them (i.e., he should not mete out to them the consequences of their disobedience), and to ask Allāh to forgive them (and in that case He would certainly do so). The word, although

general and unrestricted, does not include the *sharī'ah's* penal code and things like that; otherwise it would result in discarding the whole *Sharī'ah.* Moreover, the next clause, *''and take counsel with them in the affair''*, implies that the preceding two orders too are related to the matters of government and public affairs — in which he is required to take counsel with them.

Now we have reached the last sentences: *''but when you have decided, then place your trust in Allāh, surely Allāh loves those who turst* (in Him).'' When He loves, He will be your Guardian and Helper; and will never forsake you. The next verse makes it clear and even invites the believers to have trust in Him: *''If Allāh assists you, then there is none that can overcome you, and if He forsakes you, who is there then that can assist you after Him?''* Then He orders the believers to have trust in Him and says: *''and on Allāh should the believers rely.''* The sentence metaphorically puts the effect in place of the cause. They should rely on Allāh because they believe in Him, and there is no helper or supporter except Him.

QUR'ĀN: And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should defraud ... and Allāh sees what they do: ''al-Ghill'' (اَلْغِلُّ = to defraud, to act faithlessly). We have mentioned in verse 3:79 (It is not meet for a man that Allāh should give him the Book and the wisdom and prophethood, then he should say to men: ''Be my servants rather than Allāh's'') that this mode of speech is intended to declare the purity and blamelessness of the Prophet showing that he was far removed from evil and indecency. This verse means as follows: Far be it from a prophet to defraud or be faithless to his Lord or the people (and defrauding the people too is another form of defrauding Allāh); it is because he who defrauds will have to meet his Lord with that which he has defrauded and shall be paid back fully what he has earned.

Then He declares that accusing the Prophet of defrauding is an unjust and untenable idea, because he follows the pleasure of Allāh, he never goes beyond His pleasure; and the man who defrauds, brings upon himself severe wrath of Allāh and his abode is the hell, and it is an evil destination. The verse, *''Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allāh ...''*, gives the above connotation.

Then He says that the various groups (i.e., those who follow the

pleasure of Allāh and those who bring wrath of Allāh upon themselves) are of diverse grades; and Allāh sees what they do. The people should not think that Allāh loses sight of even an iota of good or evil done by them; they should not be careless in following His pleasure or avoiding His wrath.

QUR'ĀN: *Certainly Allāh conferred* (His) *favour ... they were surely in manifest error:* Again the mode of address has changed, taking the believers as absent. The general reason of such changes has already been explained. As for this particular verse, the reason is as follows: The verse intends to describe Allāh's favour upon the believers — because of their belief. That is why it has used the adjective, *''the believers''*, and not the verb, ''those who believe'', because only an adjective shows inseparable relationship, and only the adjective could show the causality (as has been said) or could show it more perfectly. The verse's meaning is clear.

There are other matters worth explaining in this verse; and, God willing, some will be given in appropriate places.

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أَوَلَمَّا أَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَيْهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنَّىٰ هَٰذَا قُلْ
هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ــ ١٦٥ . وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ
يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَبِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ١٦٦ . وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ
نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أَوِ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ
قِتَالاً لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ
بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ــ ١٦٧ .
اَلَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَءُوا
عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ــ ١٦٨ . وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ
قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أَمْوَاتاً بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ــ ١٦٩ .
فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ
مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ــ ١٧٠ . يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ــ ١٧١ .

What! when a misfortune befell you while you had certainly afflicted (the unbelievers) *with twice as much, you began to say: ''Whence is this?'' Say: ''It is from your own selves; surely Allāh has power over all things''* (165). *And what befell you on the day*

when the two armies met (at Uḥud) *was with Allāh's permission, and that He might know the believers* (166), *And that He might know the hypocrites; and it was said to them: ''Come, fight in Allāh's way, or* (at least) *defend yourselves.'' They said: ''If we knew fighting, we would certainly have followed you.'' They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts; and Allāh best knows what they conceal* (167). *Those who said of their brethren whilst they* (themselves) *held back: ''Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed.'' Say. ''Then ward off death from yourselves if you are truthful''* (168). *And reckon not those who are killed in Allāh's way as dead; nay, they are alive* (and) *are provided sustenance from their Lord* (169), *Rejoicing in what Allāh has given them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of those who,* (being left) *behind them, have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve* (170). *They rejoice on account of favour from Allāh and* (His) *grace, and that Allāh will not waste the reward of the believers* (171).

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COMMENTARY

It is the conclusion of the verses about the battle of Uḥud. These verses describe the position of some hypocrites who had deserted the believers when they were proceeding from Medina to Uḥud, and refute what they were saying about those who were slain in the way of Allāh; then the verses extol the condition of the martyrs saying that they were enjoying Allāh's bounties in His presence and were happily waiting for their brothers who were left behind in this world.

QUR'ĀN: *What! when a misfortune befell you ... Allāh has power over all things'':* First they were told not to be like the unbelievers — grieving and feeling intense sorrow for their slain brethren. It was explained to them that life and death were exclusively in the hands of Allāh, they had no concern in this affair; and it would have made no difference whether the martyrs were near them or far from them, or whether they had gone

forth to fight or sat behind. After making all this clear, now Allāh explains the immediate cause of that disaster according to the law of causality. He tells them that debacle was caused by their disobedience which they committed on that day: the disobedience of the archers when they left their position, and then the disobedience of all those who fled away from the battlefield. In short, the disaster took place because they disobeyed the Messenger, their Commander, and showed lack of courage and disputed among themselves. All this led to their retreat according to the law of nature and custom.

The verse's meaning is therefore as follows: Do you know how this misfortune befell you? Was it not a misfortune that you had previously inflicted twice as much on your enemies, the unbelievers? This time the disaster was brought on you by your own selves. It were you who undermined the means of victory with your own hands; it were you who did not follow the clear order of your Commander, fell into temptation and disputed one with the other.

The clause, *''while you had certainly afflicted* (the unbelievers) *with twice as much''*, prompts them to compare their losses in Uḥud (martyrdom of seventy believers) with those suffered by the unbelievers in Badr when they had suffered twice as many casualties — as seventy of the unbelievers were slain and seventy taken prisoners.

This description is intended to soothe the believers' feelings, making the calamity look less devastating. After all, they have suffered only half of that which they had inflicted on their enemies; so they should not grieve, should not be distressed.

Some people have explained it differently. According to them the clause, *''It is from your own selves''*, means that you yourselves had opted for this misfortune. It happened like this: They had chosen to release the prisoners of Badr in exchange for ransom. But the initial order was to kill them; and they were warned that if they accepted the ransom, a similar number from their side would be killed next year; but they said: ''We agree to this condition. We shall take the ransom and enjoy its benefits; and if one of us is killed later on, he shall be a martyr.''

The ending clause of this verse (*surely Allāh has power over all things*) supports, or rather proves, this latter explanation; as this clause does not connect properly with the former meaning. We shall quote in the next ''Traditions'' *aḥādīth* from the Imāms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.)

regarding this topic.

QUR'ĀN: *And what befell you on the day ... and Allāh best knows what they conceal:* The first of these two verses supports the above theme that the clause, *''Say: 'It is from you own selves' ''*, refers to their opting for the ransom in exchange of Badr's prisoners and agreeing to the attached condition. Only in this way, it can be said that the misfortune that befell them in Uḥud was with Allāh's permission. As for the former explanation, (that the immediate cause of this misfortune was your disobedience), it has no relevance with this verse; obviously, there is no sense in saying that their disobedience was by permission of Allāh.

Accordingly, the statement that the misfortune that had befallen them was by Allāh's permission, explains the preceding declaration that it was from their own selves. It paves the way of the next clause, *''and that He might know the believers''*, which in its turn opens the way to deal with the hypocrites, together with their talk and its refutation; and to unveil the reality of this especial death, i.e., martyrdom in the way of Allāh.

The clause, *''or* (at least) *defend yourselves''*, intends to persuade them to fight; if you do not fight in the way of Allāh, then at least defend your families and your own selves. *''They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief''* The preposition *''li''* (ل) in *''li 'l-kufr''* (لِلْكُفْر = to unbelief) and *''li 'l-īmān''* (لِلْاِيْمَان = to belief) has been used in meaning of *''to''*. It shows their position *vis-a-vis* open disbelief; as for hypocricy, they had certainly fallen in it.

The word, *''with their mouths''*, in the sentence, *''They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts''*, has been put here for emphasis and as a counter-balance to the clause, *''in their hearts''*.

QUR'ĀN: *Those who said of their brethren ... if you are truthful.* The word, *''brethren''* refers to those with whom they had family ties from among the martyrs. Allāh has mentioned here their ''brotherhood'', side by side with the comment, *''while they* (themselves) *held back''*; it is meant to put them to shame in a most vivid and crushing way, showing that they held back from helping their own brothers who were meanwhile massacred by the enemy. The sentence, *''Say: 'Then ward off death from yourselves' ''*, refutes their talk. *ad-Dar'* (اَلدَّرْءُ = to ward off; to avert).

QUR'ĀN: *And reckon not those who are killed in Allāh's way ... provided sustenance from their Lord:* Again the speaker turns away from the Muslims and speaks with the Prophet alone; and its reason has been mentioned several times in Commentaries of the relevant verses.

Also, it is possible to treat this address as continuation of the preceding sentence where it addresses the Prophet, *''Say: 'Then ward off death ...' ''*

Death in this verse means nullity of consciousness and action. That is why Allāh explains the martyrs' life by showing that they receive sustenance (and it is action) and rejoice in Allāh's grace (and it shows their feeling which proves consciousness).

QUR'ĀN: *Rejoicing in what Allāh has given them ... nor shall they grieve: ''al-Faraḥ''* (اَلْفَرَحُ = joy) is opposite of *''al-ḥuzn''* (اَلْحُزْنُ = sorrow). *al-Bishārah* and *al-bushrā* (اَلْبِشَارَةُ،اَلْبُشْرِي = good news); *al-istibshār* (اَلْاِسْتِبْشَارُ = to seek happiness through a good news). The verse means: They rejoice in what they have received of Allāh's grace and which is always present with them; they feel happy when they receive the good tidings regarding those who have not yet joined them — are still in this world — that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.

Two things are clear from the above:

First: Those who are killed in the way of Allāh continue to receive the news about good believers whom they had left alive in this world.

Second: The good news concerns the reward of the believers' deeds — that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. It happens that they see this reward in the abode which they abide in. It is because their knowledge of things emanates from observation, not from arguments.

The verse therefore proves that after death man's existence continues between his death and the Day of Resurrection. We have described it in detail under ''The Life of al-Barzakh'' under the verse, *And do not speak of those who are slain in Allāh's way as dead* [2:154].[1]

QUR'ĀN: *They rejoice on account of favour from Allāh and* (His) *grace ... the reward of the believers:* This rejoicing is more comprehansive and covers their joy for others as well as for themselves. It is proved from the

[1] See *al-Mīzān* [Eng1 transl.], vol. 2, pp. 197 — 201. (*tr.*)

clause, *''and that Allāh will not waste the reward of the believers''*, which being unrestricted covers all the believers. Pehaps this is the reason why the *''rejoicing''* — and also *''grace''* — have been repeated here. Meditate on this verse.

The words, *''favour''* and *''grace''*, have been used as common nouns, and *''sustenance''* has been left unspecified. This style gives the hearer's imagination full rein; he is free to visualize whatever he likes. Likewise fear and grief are left vague, so that put in negative form they would signify comprehensiveness.

One finds on meditating on the verse that:

First: The verses intend to describe the believers' reward;

Second: That reward consists of their sustenance near Allāh;

Third: That sustenance is a favour and grace from Allāh;

Fourth: That favour and grace is mirrored in the fact that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.

The clause, *''that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve''*, is really wonderful; the more you meditate on it, the more expansive and extensive its meaning will be, with its subtility, sublimity and graceful flow. The thing that comes before the eyes is that the fear and sorrow are removed from the martyrs. Fear takes shape when there is possibility of something occurring which would nullify an existing happiness of man; sorrow appears when that thing has already happened. Misfortune — or any undesirable phenomenon — is feared as long as it has not befallen; but once it has begun, the fear gives way to sorrow. There is no fear after a misfortune has taken shape, and no sorrow before that.

Fear — with all its aspects — may be removed from man only when there is no chance of deterioration or extinction for any bounty that he enjoys and possesses. Sorrow — with all its aspects — may be removed from him only when he is not deprived of any such bounty to begin with, nor has he lost it after finding it. When the Qur'ān says that Allāh has removed general fear and general sorrow from a man, it means that He has given him all possible bounties and favours for his enjoyment; and those bounties and favours will never deteriorate or be taken away from him. In other words, man will remain alive for ever enjoying the everlasting happiness.

It is evident that removal of fear and sorrow means the same as man's receiving sustenance from Allāh; He says: *and that which is with Allāh is*

best for the righteous [3:198]; *and what is with Allāh is enduring* [16:96]. These two verses show that what is with Allāh is everlasting and enduring bounty, not tainted by any affliction, not liable to extinction.

Also, it is clear that negation of fear and sorrow is one with affirmation of favour and grace, that is, divine bounty. But we have explained in the beginning of the book (and further details will be given under the verse, ... *with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours* ... 4:69) that *''favour''*, whenever used in the Qur'ān, means divine guardianship. Therefore, this verse means that Allāh is their Guardian Who manages their affairs and bestows on them exclusive grace.

Some people have supposed that *''grace''* means a bounty given in excess of what a man's deeds have made him eligible to; and *''favour''* means the bounty equal to the deeds. But it does not enmesh with the end clause, *''and that Allāh will not waste the reward of the believers''*. The word, *''reward''*, shows that they are ''eligible'' for grace and favour both; and you have seen that all these clauses, *''are provided sustenance from their Lord''*, *''Rejoicing in what Allāh has given''*, *''They rejoice on account of favour from Allāh and* (His) *grace''*, *''and Allāh will not waste the reward of the believers''*, lead to one and the same reality.

There are other aspects of these verses, some of which were explained under the verse, *And do not speak of those who are slain in Allāh's way as dead* [2:154]; hopefully Allāh will help us to complete, according to our capacity, other related matters in other oppropriate places, God willing.

* * * * *

اَلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلّٰهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِمَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ
أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ــ ١٧٢ . اَلَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ
النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَاناً وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللهُ
وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ــ ١٧٣ . فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ
سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللهِ وَاللهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ــ ١٧٤ . إِنَّمَا ذٰلِكُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ
ــ ١٧٥ .

(As for) *those who responded to the call of Allāh and the Messenger* (even) *after the wound had afflicted them, those among them who do good* (to others) *and guard* (against evil) *shall have a great reward* (172). *Those to whom the people said: ''Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them''; but this* (only) *increased their faith, and they said: ''Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is* (He)'' (173). *So they returned with favour from Allāh and* (His) *grace; no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allāh; and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace* (174). *That is only the Satan that frightens his friends; so do not fear them; and fear* Me *if you are believers* (175).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These verses have connection with those revealed about the battle of Uḥud, as may be understood from the clause, *''after the wound had afflicted them''*, when read in conjunction with the preceding words, *''If a wound has afflicted you* (at Uḥud), *a wound like it has also afflicted the* (unbelieving) *people''*.

QUR'ĀN: (As for) *those who responded to the call of Allāh and the Messenger ... shall have a great reward: ''al-Istijābah''* (اَلْاِسْتِجَابَةُ) and *al-ijābah* (اَلْاِجَابَةُ) both reportedly have the same meaning: You ask for something and get positive response.

Allāh and His Messenger both have been mentioned here, although either word would have sufficed. Perhaps it is because the Muslims in Uḥud disobeyed Allāh and the Prophet both. They disobeyed Allāh by fleeing and retreating from the battlefield, while Allāh had ordered them to fight and forbidden them to flee. They disobeyed the Prophet when the archers violated his order not to leave their post in any case, and when the rest of the Muslims ran off precipitately and did not respond to his call although he was calling them from their rear. Now that they did respond positively on this later occasion, they were described as responding to Allāh and the Messenger both, to set the matter in parallel.

The clause, *''those among them who do good* (to others) *and guard* (against evil) *shall have a great reward''*, restricts the promise to only a group among those who had responded. It is because the response is an external action which does not necessarily spring from the reality of doing good and guarding against evil — on which the great reward depends. It is an amazing watchfulness of the Qur'ān that one topic does not distract it from other realities. It is evident from above that not all of the responders were sincere to Allāh in this matter; some of them were not true doers of good to others nor did they sincerely guard themselves against evil — and these are the important characteristics which make one eligible for great reward from Allāh.

Some people have said that *''min''* (مِنْ = from, among) in *''minhum''* (مِنْهُمْ = among them), is not here to indicate a portion; rather it is explanatory, in the same way as it is in verse 48:29, where it says: *Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are severe*

against the unbelievers ... Allāh has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward. But it is an interpretation which does not agree with the context.

Also, it is clear that their praise contained in later verses, *''Those to whom the people said ...''*, is intended for a selected band of them although in wordings it is attributed to the whole group.

QUR'ĀN: *Those to whom the people said: ''Surely men have gathered against you ... and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace: ''an-Nās''* (اَلنَّاسُ = people, men) is used for human beings when no distinguishing factor (to separate one from another) is taken into account. The first *an-nās* (translated here as *''people''*) is different from the second (translated as *''men''*); the latter refers to the enemy that was gathering army to fight the believers, while the former were those who had forsaken the believers in Uḥud and held back from them and were now talking with them in this way to keep them back, so that they (the believers) would not proceed forth to fight the polytheists. In other words, the latter refers to the polytheists and the former to their agents within the Muslim camp who insidiously worked against the believers. The verse manifestly shows that they were a group not one person. It supports the report that the verses were revealed not about the events of the Lesser Badr, but about the Prophet's campaign when, after Uḥud, he went forth with the remnants of his companions in pursuit of the polytheists. Both events will be narrated in the coming ''Traditions''.

''Surely men have gathered against you'', that is, they have gathered to attack you again. (And Allāh knows better.) *''but this* (only) *increased their faith'':* It is but natural that when a man intends to do something, and someone whom he does not trust advises him not to do it, then that prohibition gives an impetus to do it by all means; his powers and faculties become geared to do that work, and his intention becomes firmer. The more the said advisor persists in prohibition, the more determined the man becomes to do it. This effect is even more stronger when the man so advised believes that he is on right and that he must do what his duty requires him to do. That is why whenever someone blamed the believers regarding some divine orders or put hindrance in their way, their belief increased even more and their determination and courage became much more stronger.

Possibly one factor that helped to increase their faith was the confirmation that such news produced of the revealed information that they had had in advance that they would have to suffer trouble, harm and damage in the divine cause until their affairs were favourably settled by Allāh's permission. Allāh had promised to help them, and naturally that type of help presupposes fighting and war. *''and they said: 'Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is* (He)*' '': Ḥasbunā* (حَسْبُنَا = sufficient for us); this word is derived from *al-ḥisāb* (اَلْحِسَابُ = to count, to reckon), because sufficiency is reckoned, *vis-a-vis,* the need. The sentence portrays their total dependence on Allāh, because of their faith — without caring about external causes which the divine system has created in the world. *al-Wakīl* (اَلْوَكِيْلُ = agent, manager, representative) refers to one who manages the affairs on behalf of someone. The connotation of the verse is therefore similar to that of the verse 65:3: *and whoever trusts in Allāh, He is sufficient for him; surely Allāh attains His purpose.* That is why this clause (*and they said: ''Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is* [He]'') has been followed by the words, *''So they returned with favour from Allāh and* (His) *grace; no evil touched them.''* Therefore, when they followed His pleasure, He praised them in these words, *''and they followed the pleasure of Allāh; and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace''.*

TRUST IN ALLĀH

The fact is that fulfilment of desire and success of design in this material world depends on some material and other psychological causes. When man intends to do something and produces its necessary material causes, then the only thing that can prevent his realization of his wishes is some shortcoming in its psychological causes, in his mental attitude; like weakness of will-power, fear or sorrow, recklessness or covetousness, foolishness or distrust, and things like that — and they are important and common factors. But when a man relies on Allāh, he is connected to the unconquerable cause that can never fail — the cause above all the causes. This connection strengthens his will to such an extent that no adverse psychological cause can overpower it — and it spells success and triumph.

There is another aspect to the trust in Allāh which in effect joins it to

super-natural miraculous phenomena, as is evident from the words of Allāh: *and whoever trusts in Allāh, He is sufficient for him; surely Allāh attains His purpose* [65:3]. Some aspects of this subject have already been described under the topic of ‘‘Miracle’’.[1]

QUR’ĀN: *That is only the Satan that frightens ... and fear* Me *if you are believers:* Evidently the demonstrative pronoun *‘‘dhālikum’’* (ذٰلِكُمْ = that) refers to the people who had brought the quoted news. It is therefore one of the occasions where the Qur’ān has used the word, *‘‘Satan’’*, for man; as is apparent also from the verses: *... from the evil of the whispering of the slinking* (Satan), *who whispers into the hearts of men, from among the* jinn *and the men* [114:4 — 6]. This explanation is supported by the next sentence, *‘‘so do not fear them’’*, that is, do not fear the people who have spoken to you in that manner, because they are only Satans. (We shall later on explain this matter, unveiling the reality behind it, if Allāh so wills.)

TRADITIONS

Innumerable traditions have been narrated concerning the battle of Uḥud; but there is so much contradiction and conflict among them — about various aspects of the event — that it is difficult to trust all of them. The most glaring contradictions are seen in those traditions which try to explain the reasons of revelation of most of the verses (there are nearly sixty verses in all). One is amazed to look at those traditions; a contemplating reader finds himself bound to decide that various sectarian inclinations have filled them with their own spirits — making them to speak what would benefit narrators in their sectarian causes. That is why we have not quoted them in this discourse; whoever is interested, should consult various collections of traditions and biger books of exegesis.

Ibn Abī Ḥāim narrates from Abu ’ḍ-Ḍuḥā that he said: ‘‘The verse was revealed: *and take* (‘‘*ash-shuhadā’ ’’* اَلشُّهَدَآءُ) *witnesses from among you* [3:140]; so seventy of them were martyred on that day: four from the Emigrants — Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abdi ’l-Muṭṭalib, Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr (from Banū ‘Abdu’d-Dār), ash-Shammās ibn ‘Uthmān al-Makhzūmī and

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[1] See *al-Mīzān* [Engl. transl.], vol 1, pp. 106 — 125. (*tr.*)

‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh al-Asadī — and the rest were from the Helpers.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: The tradition shows that Abu ’ḍ-Ḍuḥā has taken the word *ash-shuhadā’* for ‘martyrs’; and an overwhelming majority of the exegetes has followed suit. But we have explained in the relevant Commentary that apparently no proof can be found in the Book for this meaning; evidently the word refers to the witnesses of the deeds.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *Do you think that you will enter the Garden while Allāh has not yet known those who strive hard from among you ...:* ‘‘Certainly Allāh did know what He was going to create before He created it, when they were tiny particles; (likewise) He knew who would strive and who would not, as He knew that He would give death to His creatures (even) before He caused their death — while their death was not yet seen, (and) they were still alive.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: The tradition points to what has been explained earlier that there is a difference between knowledge before creation and the factual knowledge which is the same as the action. When this verse says, *Allāh has not yet known those who strive* ..., it does not speak about the knowledge before creation.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *And certainly you desired death before you met it, so indeed you have seen it* (even) *while you look* (at it): ‘‘When Allāh, the High, informed the believers what (favour) He had done to their martyrs of Badr in their abodes in the Garden, they coveted that (honour), and said: ‘O Allāh, show us [i.e. provide for us] a fighting in which we should be martyred.’ Therefore Allāh showed it to them on the day of Uḥud; but they did not remain firm except him whom Allāh wished among them. So this is the word of Allāh, *And certainly you desired death ...’’* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah, al-Ḥasan and as-Suddī.

The Imām said: ‘‘Surely the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was wounded on the day of Uḥud, and observers saw him in that condition; then they started telling whomever they met, ‘Certainly the Messenger of Allāh has been killed; (look for) safety.’ So when they returned to Medina, Allāh revealed: *And Muḥammad is no more than a Messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you then turn back upon your heels?* (He means: to the disbelief?) *And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allāh in the least.’’* (*ibid.*)

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from ar-Rabī‘ about the above verse; ‘‘It was on the day of Uḥud when they were afflicted with what afflicted them of slaughter and injury, and they talked among themselves about the Prophet of Allāh; they said: ‘He has been killed.’ Others among them said: ‘Had he been a prophet he would not have been killed.’ But some high-ranking Companions of the Prophet said: ‘Fight for what your Prophet had fought for, until Allāh gives you victory or you join him (after martyrdom).’ And we have been told that an Emigrant passed by a Helper who was struggling in his blood, and said: ‘O so-and-so! do you know that Muḥammad has been killed?’ The Helper said: ‘If Muḥammad has been killed, then surely he had (already) conveyed (the divine message); so fight in the cause of your religion.’ Then Allāh revealed: *And Muḥammad is no more than a Messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you then turn back upon your heels?* He means: Will you then turn back to disbelief after believing?’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from as-Suddī that he said: ‘‘(A rumour) spread among the people on the day of Uḥud that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was killed. Then some Companions of the rock [i.e. the people who had fled on the mountains] said: ‘Would that we had a messenger to ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy so that he could obtain protection for us from Abū Sufyān. O people! Muḥammad has been killed; so return back to your people [to polytheism], before they come to you and kill you.’ [Hearing this] Anas ibn an-Naḍr said: ‘O people! If Muḥammad has been killed, the Lord of Muḥammad has not been killed. Fight there-fore for what Muḥammad had fought for. O Allāh ! I apologize to Thee from what these people say, and disavow before Thee what they have brought.’ [Saying this] he drew his sword and fought until he was martyred. Then

Allāh revealed: *And Muḥammad is no more then a Messenger ...''* (*ibid.*)

The author says: This theme has been narrated through numerous other chains of narrators.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ''Surely ‘Alī was afflicted with sixty wounds. The Prophet told Umm Salīm and Umm ‘Aṭiyyah to treat him. They said: ‘No sooner do we dress him [his wounds] in one place than another place is torn apart; and we are afraid about him [his life].’ Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) entered, and the Muslims were visiting him (‘Alī) — and he [his body] was one [big] wound. [The Prophet] started wiping him [‘Alī’s body] with his hand; and was saying: ‘Certainly a man who met this [much affliction] in [the way of] Allāh, has proved himself brave and is absolved [from every blame].’ And no sooner did the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) touch a wound than it was healed. Then ‘Alī said: ‘Praise be to Allāh as I did not flee and did not turn [my] back.’ So Allāh thanked him for it in two places in the Qur’ān; and it is His word, *and Allāh will reward the grateful,* and, *We will reward the grateful.''* (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: It means that Allāh thanked ‘Alī’s steadfastness and firmness, not his words, ‘Praise be to Allāh.’

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) recited, *''And how many a prophet has fought with whom were myriads of Godly men''*, and said: ''Thousands and thousands.'' Then he said: ''Yes, by Allāh, they were martyred.'' (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: This recitation and meaning has been reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn Mas‘ūd and others; and it has been narrated that Ibn ‘Abbās was asked about this word and he said: ''gatherings.''

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Mujāhid that he said about the words of Allāh, *after He had shown you that which you loved:* ''Allāh helped the believers against the polytheists until the women of the polytheists rode every spirited and feeble [camel]. After

that the polytheists were let to triumph over them because of their (the Muslims') disobedience of the Prophet.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Rāhwayh, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Dalā'ilu 'n-nubūwwah*) have narrated from az-Zubayr that he said: ''You would have seen me with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); when the fear overwhelmed us, Allāh sent sleep on us; then there was not a man among us but his chin was on his breast. Then, by Allāh, I was hearing the talk of Mu'tab ibn Qushayr — and I heard it as if it were in a dream — 'Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here.' So I remembered it from him; and it was about it that Allāh revealed: *Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you, a slumber coming upon a party of you*, *... we would not have been slain here,* because of the talk of Mu'tab ibn Qushayr.'' (*ibid*.)

The author says: This information has been narrated from az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām through numerous chains of narrators.

Ibn Mandah has narrated in, *Ma'rifatu 'ṣ-ṣaḥābah,* from Ibn 'Abbās that the verse, ''(As for) *those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met ...*, was revealed about 'Uthmān, Rāfi'ibn al-Mu'allā and Ḥārithah ibn Zayd.'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: Nearly similar traditions have been narrated through several chains from 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf, 'Ikrimah and Ibn Isḥāq. In some of them the names of Abū Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Aqabah, al-Walīd ibn 'Aqabah, Sa'd ibn 'Uthmān and 'Aqabah ibn 'Uthmān, have been added.

In any case, the names of 'Uthmān and others have been mentioned in these traditions as examples only. Otherwise, the verse covers all those Companions who had fled away and disobeyed the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Of course, there is a reason why 'Uthmān has especially been mentioned in the traditions: He and those who fled with him continued running away until they reached al-Jal'ab (a mountain in the region of Medina near al-Aghwaṣ), and they remained there for three days; then they came back to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), who said to them:

‘‘You had indeed gone very far in it!’’

As for the Companions of the Prophet in general, there are numerous traditions that all of them had fled; and there was none left with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) except two persons from the Emigrants and seven from the Helpers; then the polytheists attacked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and all the Helpers, one after the other, gave their lives defending the Prophet; none of them survived.

It has variously been reported that eleven persons remained with the Prophet, or eighteen or even thirty — but this tradition is the weakest of all.

Perhaps, this difference emanates from different information reaching the narrators, or for some other reasons. The traditions which describe how Nasībah al-Māziniyyah defended the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) prove that at that particular time nobody was with the Prophet and that those who had remained steadfast — had not fled away — were busy in fighting the polytheists. The only person who, the traditions unanimously say, had not fled was ‘Alī; and probably Abū Dujānah al-Anṣārī, Simāk ibn Kharashah also comes into this category; but he fought with the sword of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), thereafter when the Companions left the Prohet alone, Abū Dujānah continued shielding him with his own body, deflecting the arrows from him with his shield until he fell down seriously wounded. May Allāh be pleased with him.

As for the rest of the Companions, some returned to the Prophet when they recognized him and realized that he was not killed; some others came back after sometime. It were these returning Companions on whom Allāh had sent the slumber. However, Allāh pardoned all of them. You have seen in the preceding Commentary what pardon means. Some exegetes have said that pardon in this verse means that Allāh diverted the polytheists from them, so that they (the polytheists) did not exterminate them (the Muslims) completely.

Ibn ‘Adiyy and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Shu‘abu ’l-īmān*) have narrated through good chain from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘When the verse (*and take counsel with them in the affair*) was revealed, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘As for Allāh and His Messenger, they are in no need of it [counsel]; but Allāh has made it a mercy for my *ummah*; therefore whoever among them shall consult [others] will not be deprived of guidance, and whoever leaves it will not avoid misguidance.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī has narrated in his, *al-Awsaṭ*, from Anas that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘He who asks (Allāh) for good, does not go wrong; and he who takes counsel does not regret.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

‘‘He who proceeds independently in his opinion is destroyed, and he who seeks advice of men becomes partner in their wisdom.’’ (*Nahju ’l-balāghah*)

‘‘To seek advice is the guidance itself; and he who proceeds independently with his opinion incurs the danger.’’ (*ibid.*)

The Prophet said: ‘‘There is no solitude more dreary than pride; and no support stronger than consultation.’’ (*at-Tafsīr aṣ-Ṣāfī*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions about consultation. The consultation is valid in those matters where one has the choice of doing or not doing a thing as would seem more preferable. As far as the definite divine rules and laws are concerned, there is no question of consultation about them, as no one has got any authority to change them. Otherwise, it would be as though current events and new trends would abrogate the words of Allāh!

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘People’s pleasure cannot be controlled, and their tongue cannot be restrained. Did not they accuse him [i.e., the Prophet] on the day of Badr that he had taken for himself a red velvet from the war booty? Until Allāh informed him of [the whereabouts of] the velvet and absolved His Prophet from [embezzlement and] faithlessness; and revealed in His Book: *And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should defraud ...’’* (*al-Majālis*)

The author says: al-Qummī has reported it in his, *at-Tafsīr*; and there it says: ‘‘Then a man came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘Surely so-and-so has fraudulently taken a red velvet and has buried it in that place.’ So the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) ordered to dig that place; and the velvet was found out.’’

This and nearly similar meanings have been narrated in *ad-Durr ’l-manthūr* through numerous chains. Perhaps when the traditions say that this verse was revealed about that event, they mean that it points to that; otherwise, as we have already explained, the context shows that it was revealed after the battle of Uḥud.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘He who defrauds something, will see it on the Day of Resurrection in the Fire; then he will be charged to enter therein and take it out of the Fire.’’ (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

The author says: It is a fine inference from the words of Allāh: *‘‘and he who defrauds shall bring* (with him) *that which he has defrauded.’’*

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *They are of* (diverse) *grades with Allāh:* ‘‘Those who follow the pleasure of Allāh are the Imams, and they are, by Allāh, of grades with Allāh for the believers; and through their love and devotion to us, Allāh increases their deeds for them, and Allāh enhances (their) high grades for them; and those who have brought upon themselves the wrath from Allāh are those who rejected the right of ‘Alī (a.s.) and the right of the Imāms from us, *Ahlu ’l-bayt*; so in this way they brought upon themselves Allāh’s wrath.’’ (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: It is based on the ‘flow’ of the Qur’ān, and applies the verse to its most prominent example.

ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: ‘‘The ‘grade’ is (the distance) between the heaven and the earth.’’ (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *What! when a misfortunate befell you while you had certainly afflicted* (the unbelievers) *with twice as much* .... ‘‘The Muslims had afflicted at Badr one hundred and forty (unbelievers) people — they had killed seventy men and imprisoned seventy. When there came the day of Uḥud, the Muslims were afflicted with seventy men, and they were grieving for them; so (this verse) was revealed.’’ (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, at-Tirmidhī (who said that this tradition is good), Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from ‘Alī (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘Jibrīl came to the Prophet and said: ‘O Muḥammad! Surely Allāh is displeased with what your people have done in taking the prisoners; and He has ordered you to give them option between two things: Either they [the prisoners] are brought forward and beheaded; or they [the Muslims] take ransom [for the prisoners] on the condition that an equal number from among them [the Muslims] shall be killed [later].’ So the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) called the people and explained the matter

to them. They said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! [they are] our clans and our people; we shall take their ransom and shall strengthen ourselves by it for fighting against our enemy; and there shall be martyred from among us equal to their number but it is not something that we might be displeased with.’ Thus were martyred seventy men from among them on the day of Uḥud — the number of the prisoners of Badr.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: [aṭ-Ṭabrisī] has narrated it in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* from ‘Alī (a.s.); and also al-Qummī has quoted it in his *at-Tafsīr*.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) has said about the verse, *And reckon not those who are killed in Allāh’s way as dead* ..., that it was revealed about the martyrs of Badr and Uḥud together. (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

The author says: Numerous traditions of the same meaning have been narrated in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* and other books. But you have seen that the verses are general and cover everyone who is actually martyred in the way of Allāh or is counted as a martyr.

Sometimes it is said that these verses were revealed about the martyrs of Bi’r [i.e. Well of] Ma‘ūnah. They were seventy or forty Companions of the Prophet whom he had sent to call ‘Āmir ibn aṭ-Ṭufayl and his people to Islam; and they were near that water. [The Companions] sent Abū Milḥān al-Anṣārī ahead to convey the message; but they killed him, then they attacked the rest of the Companions of the Prophet and fought them until they [the enemy] killed all of them. May Allāh be pleased with them.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about this verse: ‘‘They are, by Allāh, our Shī‘ahs. When their souls enter the Garden and they receive the honour from Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, they acquire knowledge and certainty that surely they were on the truth and on the religion of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great; so they rejoice on account of those who have not yet joined them, from among their brothers, who are behind them from among the believers.’’ (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: It is based on the ‘‘flow’’ of the Qur’ān. That they

would acquire knowledge and certainty of their being on the truth, means that they would perceive it by the eye of certainty, after they had known it in this world by knowledge of certainty. It does not mean that before that they had any doubt or uncertainty about it.

Aḥmad, Hannād, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, al-Ḥākim (who said that this tradition is correct) and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Dalā’ilu ’n-nubūwwah*) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘When your brethren were afflicted (i.e. martyred) in Uḥud, Allāh put their souls inside the green birds, who come to the Garden’s rivers, and eat from its fruits and lodge in golden candelabra suspended in shadow of the Throne.

‘So when they found the goodness of their food and drink, and beauty of their resting place, they said: ‘‘Would that our brothers knew what Allāh has done for us.’’ ’ Another narration says: ‘They said: ‘‘[Would that our brothers knew that] we are alive in the Garden, getting sustenance, so that they would not abandon *jihād* and would not shrink from fighting’’ Thereupon, Allāh said: ‘‘I shall convey to them [this message] on your behalf.’’ So Allāh sent down these verses: *And reckon not those who are killed ...’ ’’* (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of this theme, narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, Abu ’l-‘Āliyah, Ibn ‘Abbās and others. Some of these traditions, like that of Abu ’1-‘Āliyah, use the phrase, ‘in the forms of green birds’; others like that of Abū Sa‘īd say, ‘in the green birds’; yet others like that of Ibn Mas‘ūd say, ‘like green birds’; but all the wordings convey almost similar meanings.

It has come to us through the chains reaching to the Imāms of the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* that the above tradition was put before them and they denied that it was said by the Prophet; some traditions say that they interpreted that tradition in some other way; and there is no doubt that — keeping in view the confirmed and accepted principles — that tradition has to be interpreted away, if it is not rejected altogether.

In any case, those traditions do not purport to describe the martyrs’

condition in the Garden of the hereafter; rather they refer to the Garden of *al-Barzakh.* It is proved by the tradition of Ibn Jarīr from Mujāhid in which he says: 'They are given sustenance from the fruit of the Garden and feel its scent but they are not in it.' Also, Ibn Jarīr narrates from as-Suddī in which he says: 'Surely the souls of the martyrs are inside the green birds in golden candelabra hanging from the Throne; so they pick their food in the Garden in morning and evening, and lodge at night in the candelabra.' As you have seen in the earlier discourse on *al-Barzakh* that these themes may fit the Garden of this world, but not on that of the hereafter.

As regards the verses: (As for) *those who responded to the call of Allāh and the Messenger ...*, Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr and al-Bayhaqī (in his *ad-Dalā'il*) have narrated from 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥazm that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) came out [proceeding] towards Ḥamrā'u 'l-Asad; and Abū Sufyān [and his retreating army] had unanimously decided to return to [reattack] the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his Companions. They said [to each other]: 'We have returned before annihilating them (i.e. the Muslims); certainly we must attack their remnants again.' Then news reached him (i.e. Abū Sufyān) that the Prophet had come out with his Companions in his pursuit. This (news) dissuaded Abū Sufyān and his army [from pursuing their plan]; Some riders from the tribe of 'Abdu 'l-Qays passed them; so Abū Sufyān. said to them: 'Give the news to Muḥammad that we [the Quraysh] have decided to reattack his Companions aiming at their annihilation.' The riders met the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) at Ḥamrā'u 'l-Asad, and informed him as Abū Sufyān had asked them to do. But the Messenger of Allāh and the believers with him said: 'Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is He.' Thereupon Allāh revealed about it: (As for) *those who responded to the call of Allāh and the Messenger ...* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: al-Qummī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* in detail; he reports, *inter alia,* that the Prophet had taken with him to Ḥamrā'u 'l-Asad only those of the Companions who had been wounded [at Uḥud]. Some other traditions say that he had taken only those who were with him at Uḥud. Practically the import of both reports is the same.

Mūsā ibn ‘Aqabah (in his *al-Maghāzī*) and al-Bayhaqī (in his *al-Dalā’il*) have narrated from Ibn Shahāb that he said: ‘‘Surely the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) called the Muslims together to be at the appointed time at Badr for [fighting] Abū Sufyān [about a year after the battle of Badr]. The Satan thereupon instigated his friends among the men who went to the people frightening them and saying: ‘We have been informed that they (the polytheists) have gathered for fighting you an army like the (dark) night, they hope to attack you and plunder you. Therefore, beware, beware.’ But Allāh protected the Muslims from the frightening [campaign] of the Satan; and they responded to the call of Allāh and His Messenger, and came out with their [trade] articles; they said: ‘If we meet Abū Sufyān, then it is for what we have come forth; and if we did not meet him then we would sell our articles.’ (Badr was the site of an annual trade-fare.] So, they went forth until they reached the fare-ground of Badr, and they fulfilled their needs there; while Abū Sufyān failed to reach the rendezvous — neither he nor his companions did come forth. Meanwhile, Ibn Ḥamām passed from near them (the Muslims) and asked: ‘Who are these?’ People told him: ‘(They are) the Messenger of Allāh and his Companions (who are) waiting for Abū Sufyān and his group of the Quraysh.’ He then went to the Quraysh and told them the news. This frightened Abū Sufyān who went back to Mecca. And the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) returned to Medina with Allāh’s favour and grace. This *al-ghazwah* (اَلْغَزْوَةُ)[1] is called the Expedition of the army of *as-sawīq* (اَلسَّوِيْقُ)[2];and it was in Sha‘bān, the third year of hijrah.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: [as-Suyūṭī] has narrated it from another chain too. [aṭ-Ṭabrisī] has narrated it in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān,* in detail, from al-Bāqir (a.s.), in which he, *inter alia,* says that the verses were revealed about the *ghazwah* of Lesser Badr; and that the army of *sawīq* refers to that of Abū Sufyān, because he had come out from Mecca with an army of the Quraysh; and they had with them loads of *sawīq* (as provision). They

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[1] *al-Ghazwah,* means military expedition; in Islamic terminology it is used for every expedition in which the Prophet participated — irrespective of whether there was any fighting or not. (*tr.*)

[2] *as-Sawīq,* means a kind of mush made of wheat or barley. (*tr.*)

camped out of Mecca and sustained themselves with the *sawīq,* and then they returned to Mecca because they became frightened of meeting the Muslims at Badr. Therefore, the people called them the ‘‘army of *sawīq*’’, in mockery and derision.

an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and aṭ-Ṭabarānī have narrated through correct chain from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘When the polytheists returned from Uḥud, they said [to each other]: ‘Neither you killed Muḥammad, nor you took buxom girls with you [as captives] on the camels. Wretched is what you have done! Return [to attack the Muslims].’ The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) heard the news; so he called the Muslims and they gathered until he reached Ḥamrā’u ’l-Asad or the Well of Abū ‘Utbah. (The doubt is from Sufyān, [one of the narrators]). Then the polytheists said: ‘We shall come back next year.’ Therefore, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) too returned. So it was counted as *al-ghazwah.* Thereupon, Allāh revealed, (As for) *those who responded to the call of Allāh and the Messenger* ... Indeed Abū Sufyān said to the Prophet: ‘Your appointed place and time is the fare of Badr where you had slain our companions.’ So as for the coward, he returned, and as for the brave, he took (his) fighting arms and trade-articles; then they came there (i.e. Badr) but did not find anyone there; so they sold and bought [at the fare]; then Allāh revealed: *So they returned with favour from Allāh and* (His) *grace ...*’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: We have quoted this tradition here although it goes against the principle of brevity and abridgement which we generally observe in the traditions. We have quoted here comprehensive examples of every theme, in order that a discerning research scholar may understand that what the scholars have written regarding the causes of revelation is — all or most of it — based on personal views; that is, generally they would describe historical events, then write after it the Qur’ānic verses which would correspond with the theme; and then they would count that event as the cause of that verse’s revelation. Often this results in fragmentation of a single verse, or a set of verses of a single context, and then they ascribe each part to an independent cause of revelation — even if it disturbs the verse’s structure or negates its context. It is one of the causes of weakness in those traditions that are

narrated about the occasions of revelation.

Add to it what we have mentioned in the beginning of this topic that sectarian differences and inclinations have greatly influenced the style and tone of these traditions as everyone has tried to pull them in the direction of his particular belief and view.

Moreover, political environment and ruling atmosphere has in every era strongly put its stamp on the realities either by hiding it completely or covering it in ambiguity. Therefore, a thinking scholar should never close his eyes from these factors which have utmost relevance to the understanding of realities. And Allāh is the Guide.

THE MARTYRS OF UḤUD

Seventy Muslims were martyred on the day of Uḥud, the list of their names being as follows:

1. Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abdi ’1-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim.
2. ‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh.
3. Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr.
4. Shammās ibn ‘Uthmān. (These four martyrs were from the Emigrants.)
5. ‘Amr ibn Mu‘ādh ibn an-Nu‘mān.
6. al-Ḥārith ibn Anas ibn Rāfi‘.
7. ‘Ummārah ibn Ziyād ibn as-Sakan.
8. Salamah ibn Thābit ibn Waqsh.
9. ‘Amr ibn Thābit ibn Waqsh.
10. Thābit ibn Waqsh.
11. Rifā‘ah ibn Waqsh.
12. Ḥusayl ibn Jābir (alias al-Yamān [father of Ḥudhayfah]).
13. Ṣayfī ibn Qayẓī.
14. Ḥabāb ibn Qayẓī.
15. ‘Abbād ibn Sahl.
16. al-Ḥārith ibn Aws ibn Mu‘ādh.
17. Iyās ibn Aws.
18. ‘Ubayd ibn at-Tayyihān.
19. Ḥabīb ibn Yazīd ibn Taym.

20. Yazīd ibn Ḥāṭib ibn Umayyah ibn Rāfi‘.
21. Abū Sufyān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Qays ibn Zayd.
22. Ḥanẓalah ibn Abī ‘Āmir (the one washed by the angels).
23. Unays ibn Qatādah.
24. Abū Ḥayyah ibn ‘Amr ibn Thābit.
25. ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr ibn an-Nu‘mān (the Commander of the archers).
26. Khaythamah (the father of Sa‘d ibn Khaythamah).
27. ‘Abdullāh ibn Salamah.
28. Subay‘ ibn al-Ḥāṭib ibn al-Ḥārith.
29. ‘Amr ibn Qays.
30. Qays ibn ‘Amr ibn Qays
31. Thābit ibn ‘Amr ibn Zayd.
32. ‘Āmir ibn Makhlad.
33. Abū Hubayrah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Alqamah ibn ‘Amr.
34. ‘Amr ibn Muṭarrif ibn ‘Alqamah ibn ‘Amr.
35. Aws ibn Thābit ibn al-Mundhir (brother of Ḥassān ibn Thābit).
36. Anas ibn an-Naḍr (uncle of Anas ibn Mālik, the servant of the Holy Prophet).
37. Qays ibn Mukhallad.
38. Kaysān (slave of Banū Māzin ibn an-Najjār).
39. Sulaym ibn al-Ḥārith.
40. Nu‘mān ibn ‘Abd ‘Amr.
41. Khārijah ibn Zayd ibn Abī Zuhayr.
42. Sa‘d ibn ar-Rabī‘ ibn ‘Amr ibn Abī Zuhayr (these two [Khārijah and Sa‘d] were buried in one grave).
43. Aws ibn al-Arqam.
44. Mālik ibn Sinān al-Khudrī (father of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī).
45. Sa‘īd ibn Suwayd.
46. ‘Utbah ibn Rabī‘.
47. Tha‘labah ibn Sa‘d ibn Mālik.
48. Thaqf ibn Farwah ibn al-Badiyy.
49. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn Wahb.
50. Ḍamrah (an ally of Banū Ṭarīf).
51. Nawfal ibn ‘Abdillāh.
52. ‘Abbās ibn ‘Ubādah.
53. Nu‘mān ibn Mālik ibn Tha‘labah.

54. al-Mujadhdhar ibn Ziyād.
55. ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ḥasḥās (these three [Nu‘mān, al-Mujadhdhar and ‘Ubādah] were buried in one grave).
56. Rifā‘ah ibn ‘Amr.
57. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr (from Banū Ḥarām).
58. ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ (from Banū Ḥarām).
59. Khallād ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ.
60. Abū Ayman (slave of ‘Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ).
61. Sulaym ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥadīdah.
62. ‘Antarah (slave of Sulaym).
63. Sahl ibn Qays ibn Abī Ka‘b.
64. Dhakwān ibn ‘Abd Qays.
65. ‘Ubayd ibn al-Mu‘allā.
66. Mālik ibn Numaylah.
67. Ḥārith ibn ‘Abdī ibn Kharashah.
68. Mālik ibn Iyās.
69. Iyās ibn ‘Adī.
70. ‘Amr ibn Iyās.

This list of the seventy martyrs has been taken from *as-Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām.

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وَلاَ يَحْزُنْكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللهَ
شَيْئاً يُرِيدُ اللهُ أَلاَّ يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حَظّاً فِي الآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ —
١٧٦ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الْكُفْرَ بِالإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللهَ شَيْئاً وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ — ١٧٧ . وَلاَ يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ
لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِثْماً وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ — ١٧٨ .
مَا كَانَ اللهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ
مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللهَ يَجْتَبِي مِنْ
رُسُلِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ
عَظِيمٌ — ١٧٩ . وَلاَ يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
هُوَ خَيْراً لَهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخِلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَلِلهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ — ١٨٠ .

And let not those grieve you who fall into unbelief hastily; surely they can do no harm to Allāh at all; Allāh intends that He should not give them any portion in the hereafter, and they shall have a great chastisement (176). *Surely those who have bought unbelief at the price of faith shall do no harm at all to Allāh, and they shall have a painful chastisement* (177). *And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is good for*

their souls; We grant them respite only that they may increase in sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement (178). *On no account will Allāh leave the believers in the condition which you are in until He separates the evil from the good; nor is Allāh going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allāh chooses of His messengers whom He pleases; therefore believe in Allāh and His messengers; and if you believe and guard* (against evil), *then you shall have a great reward* (179). *And let not those deem, who are niggardly in giving away that which Allāh has granted them out of His grace, that it is good for them; nay, it is worse for them; they shall have that whereof they were niggardly made to encircle their necks on the Resurrection Day; and Allāh's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allāh is aware of what you do* (180).

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COMMENTARY

The verses have some connection with those revealed about the battle of Uḥud. These and especially the first four of them are probably a sort of epilogue to the preceding ones. The most important theme of the preceding talk was the principle of test and trial which Allāh makes His servants to undergo. Therefore, these are like the sum total of the verses of Uḥud. Allāh describes here that the test and trial is an established and continual system from which no one — neither a believer nor an unbeliever — can escape; Allāh will certainly test both in order to expose and unveil the hidden realities of their souls; in this way the unbeliever will become totally fit for the Fire, and the evil will become separated from the good in the believer.

QUR'ĀN: *And let not those grieve you ... and they shall have a painful chastisement:* The verse consoles the Prophet and removes sorrow by describing the reality of the whole affair. The unbelievers compete with each other in rushing towards disbelief; they help one another to extinguish the light of Allāh and sometimes even succeed in overpowering the believers. It sometimes grieves the believers as it

seems as if they (the unbelievers) have scored against Allāh by thwarting His plan to make the word of truth triumphant. But if the believer ponders on the system of general and all-encompassing test, he will become sure that it is Allāh Who is victorious; and that all persons are relentlessly proceeding to their destination in order that their creative and legislative guidance to their goals may be completed. The unbeliever is driven to that goal by the health and strength, bounty and comfort that he is provided with — Allāh in this way draws him nearer to his destruction in degrees and unfolds His plan against him — enabling him to go to the furthest possible limit of transgression and disobedience. The believer on the other hand is continuously scraped through test and trial until his belief and faith is cleansed from all rust and pollution, and he becomes absolutely pure for Allāh; while the unbeliever's polytheistic tendencies are purged of every shade of belief and he falls down where other friends of false deities and leaders of infidelity have gone.

The verse therefore means as follows: You should not grieve on account of those who proceed with increasing haste towards disbelief. Why should you grieve? Do you think as if they can do any harm to Allāh? Certainly you cannot think so, because they cannot do any harm to Allāh; they are under complete control of Allāh, and He is driving them in their lives' journey to their goal where they will be left with no portion, no share, in the hereafter (and it is the final limit of their infidelity); and they shall have a painful chastisement. The prohibition, therefore, in the clause, *''And let not those grieve you''*, is of advisory nature; the clause, *''surely they can do no harm to Allāh''*, describes the reason of that prohibition; and the next words, *''Allāh intends that He should not give them ...''*, explains why they are unable to do any harm to Allāh.

Thereafter Allāh makes it clear that no unbeliever — whether he hastens to fall into disbelief or not — can do any harm to Him. The next verse thus states the general principle after mentioning a particular case. This may serve as the reason for the preceding prohibition, *''And let not those grieve you''*, or it may be treated as the reason of the preceding reason, *''surely they can do no harm''* — because it has a general import which may explain the reason of a particular reason. The meaning thus will be as follows: We have said that those who fall into disbelief hastily can do no harm to Allāh, because no unbeliever can do any harm to Him.

QUR'ĀN: *And let not those who disbelieve think ... a disgraceful chastisement:* After putting the Prophet's mind at rest regarding the unbelievers' falling into unbelief hastily, and explaining that in all this they are in fact subservient to Allāh's plan, Who is driving them to a stage where they shall have no share in the hereafter, Allāh now turns to the unbelievers themselves. He tells them that they should not be happy with the respite granted to them by Allāh, because Allāh through this respite is giving them a chance to pile up sins over sins, and behind it all there is a disgraceful chastisement waiting for them — there is nothing for them except shame and ignominy in the hereafter. This all is based on the divinely established system of completion that every creature should bring his potentials to fruition, according to his own choice.

QUR'ĀN: *On no account will Allāh leave the believers ... then you shall have a great reward:* Now the Speaker turns to the believers. He explains to them that the system of test and trial covers them too, in order that they too should reach the stage of completion; and the purified believer may be distinguished from the unpure, and evil and wicked ones may be separated from the good and virtuous ones.

The next sentence aims at removing a possible misconception. It could be assumed that there was another way of distinguishing evil from good; that is, Allāh could let the believers know who was wicked and evil so that they could avoid him. Thus, they could easily be saved all these troubles and turmoils which they had to suffer because of their commingling with hypocrites and those whose hearts were diseased. Allāh erases such erroneous impression by pointing out that He has exclusively reserved the knowledge of unseen to Himself, He does not reveal it to anyone except to some chosen messengers whom He might acquaint with it. This is the import of the sentence, *''nor is Allāh going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allāh chooses of His messengers whom He pleases''.*

Thereafter, Allāh says to them: As there is no escape from test and trial, nor from turning the potentials into accomplishments, it is in your interest that you should believe in Allāh and His messengers, so that you should be counted among the good ones — and not among the evil ones. But mere belief is not sufficient to preserve the blessedness of the life, it is also necessary to support it with good deeds that would raise the belief

up to Allāh and preserve its blessings — it is then that the reward would be complete. It was with this connotation in view that the Qur'ān first said, *''therefore believe in Allāh and His messengers''*, and then completed it with the next clause, *''and if you believe and guard* (against evil), *then you shall have a great reward''*.

It is evident from this verse that:

First: Every soul has to reach its perfection, has to be brought to its goal and destination — be it felicity and happiness or infelicity and unhappiness. It is an issue which cannot be avoided, a proposition from which there is no escape.

Second: The good and the evil are attributed to the ''self'' or ''soul'' of the persons, but at the same time and in the same context they depend on the belief and the disbelief respectively — and these two are within man's power and emanate from his will and choice. This is among the finest Qur'ānic realities which opens the door to many secrets of monotheism. It may be understood from the words of Allāh: *And every one has a direction to which he would turn; therefore hasten to* (do) *good works* [2:148], when read in conjunction with the words: *but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds* [5:48]. We shall write on this topic in full detail under the verse: *That Allāh may separate the impure from the pure, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into hell* [8:37].

Third: The belief in Allāh and His messengers is the essence of the goodness of life, i.e., goodness of ''person'' or ''soul''. So far as reward is concerned it depends upon piety and good deeds. That is why Allāh has first mentioned the subject of separating the good from the evil; then basing on that, has given the order to believe in Allāh and His messengers; thereafter when He wanted to mention the reward, He added piety (guarding against evil) to the belief; and said: *''and if you believe and guad* (against evil), *then you shall have a great reward''*.

From the above, you may easily understand the connotation of the verse 97 of chapter 16: *Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.* Evidently his happy life is the result of his belief, and emanates from it; but the reward is the result of the good deeds. Therefore, belief is the

soul of the good life. But its continuity — so that it may produce the desired effects — requires good deeds. It is like the natural life which depends on a soul for its coming into being but its continuity depends on the use of its powers and organs — if all become still, all will die and life will end.

The name, *Allāh,* has been repeated several [i.e. four] times in this verse. There was a possibility of using pronouns in place of the latter three, but the proper Divine Name was used so that it might clearly guide to the Source of all greatness and beauty, because the verses were related to those affairs which are exclusively reserved to Him in His divinity, that is, test of the creatures, knowledge of the unseen, selection of the messengers and man's ability to believe in Him.

QUR'ĀN: *And let not those deem, ... and Allāh is aware of what you do:* The preceding verse has described how Allāh gives respite to the unbelievers. The case of niggardliness, of not spending the wealth in the way of Allāh, is not different from that; a niggardly person rejoices in, and boasts of, the riches he has amassed. Therefore Allāh now addresses them and shows that what they are proud of, is actually worse for them. The wealth is described as, *''that which Allāh has granted them out of His grace''*; it shows how mean they are and how much they should be condemned. The description, that the wealth which they are so niggardly about shall become like iron collar around their necks, shows why their niggardliness is worse for them. The clause, *''and Allāh's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth''*, is apparently a circumstantial one related to *''the Resurrection Day''*, that is, on the Resurrection Day when to Allāh will belong the said heritage. The same is the position of the last clause, *''and Allāh is aware of what you do''*.

As a remote possibility, the words, *''and Allāh's is the heritage ...*, may be treated as the circumstantial clause of the verb, *''are niggardly''*; while the next clause, *''and Allāh is aware of what you do''*, may have the same position [i.e. circumstantial clause of, *''are niggardly''*], or may be treated as an independent sentence.

TRADITIONS

al-Bāqir (a.s.) was asked about the unbeliever whether death was

better for him or life. He said: ‘‘Death is better for the believer and the unbeliever (both); because Allāh says, *and that which is with Allāh is best for the righteous* [3;198], and He (also) says: *‘And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is good for their souls ...’’* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: The argument given in this tradition does not fully conform with the style of the Imāms of the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.), because the word, *‘‘righteous’’*, refers to only a particular group of the believers, not to all of them. Although it may be said that the word covers all the believers because each of them has got some portion of righteousness in him.

A tradition of the above meaning has been narrated in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*, from Ibn Mas‘ūd.

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لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ــ ١٨١ . ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ــ ١٨٢ . الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللهَ عَهِدَ إِلَيْنَا أَلَّا نُؤْمِنَ لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَنَا بِقُرْبَانٍ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِي بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالَّذِي قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ــ ١٨٣ . فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ــ ١٨٤ . كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ــ ١٨٥ . لَتُبْلَوُنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ــ ١٨٦ . وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ــ ١٨٧ .

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أَتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا
فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ — ١٨٨ . وَلِلَّهِ
مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ — ١٨٩ .

Allāh has certainly heard the saying of those who said: ''Surely Allāh is poor and we are rich.'' We shall certainly write what they say, and their killing the prophets unjustly, and We shall say: ''Taste the chastisement of burning (181). *This is for what your* (own) *hands have sent before and because Allāh is not in the least unjust to the servants.''* (182). (Those are they) *who said: ''Surely Allāh has enjoined us that we should not believe in any messenger until he brings us an offering which the fire consumes.'' Say: ''Indeed, there came to you messengers before me with clear evidences and with that which you said; why did you kill them if you are truthful?''* (183). *But if they reject you, so indeed were rejected before you messengers who came with clear evidences and scriptures and the illuminating Book* (184). *Every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the Resurrection Day; then whoever is removed far away from the Fire and is made to enter the Garden, he indeed has attained the object; and the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities* (185). *You shall certainly be tried respecting your wealth and your souls, and you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from those who are polytheists much annoying* (talk); *and if you are patient and guard* (against evil), *surely this is one of the matters of* (great) *resolve* (186). *And when Allāh made a covenant with those who were given the Book: ''You shall certainly make it known to men and you shall not hide it''; but they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it; so evil is that which they buy* (187). *Do not think those who rejoice for what they have brought about and love that they should be praised for what they have not done — so by no means think them to be safe from the chastisement, and they shall have a painful chastisement* (188). *And Allāh's is*

the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Allāh has power above all things (189).

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COMMENTARY

The verses are connected with the preceding ones. The general import of the preceding verses was to invigorate the believers and inspire them to fight in the way of Allāh with their properties and their lives, as well as to warn them against weakheartedness, cowardice and niggardliness. This connects it to the Jews' talk that ''Allāh is poor and we are rich'', together with their upsetting the Muslims' affairs, rejecting the evidence of messengership and hiding what they had been enjoined to make known. These are the very topics which these verses deal with. In addition, they strengthen the believers' hearts to remain firm and steadfast; urge them to be patient and courageous; and exhort them to spend in the way of Allāh.

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh has certainly heard the saying of those who said. ''Surely Allāh is poor and we are rich'':* The sayers were the Jews, as may be understood from the next clause which mentions their slaying of the prophets, apart from other indications.

They said it after they had heard such divine words as, *Who is it that will lend to Allāh a goodly loan ...* (2:245). This view is somewhat strengthened when it is noted that this verse comes immediately after the one which condemns niggardly person: *''And let not those deem, who are niggardly in giving away ... ''*. Or may be they said it when they saw the poverty and starvation of most of the believers. They taunted them saying that had their Lord been rich, He would have taken care of them and made them rich; therefore He is but poor while we are rich.

QUR'ĀN: *We shall certainly write ... the chastisement of burning:* Writing here means preservation and recording; or it may refer to the writing in the scroll of their deeds — the net result is the same in both cases. Their killing the prophets unjustly means that they had killed them knowingly and intentionally — not by mistake, ignorance or

misunderstanding. Allāh has joined this utterance of theirs to their slaying of the prophets because this was a very grievous word; *''al-ḥarīq''* (اَلْحَرِيْقُ = translated here as burning) refers to the Hell-fire; or flame; it has been said that it has a transitive sense, that is, that which burns something.

QUR'ĀN: *''This is for what your* (own) *hands ... to the servants'':* This clause, *''what your* (own) *hands have sent before''*, means 'whatever deeds you have sent before'; hands have been mentioned because usually they are instrumental in sending a thing somewhere. The clause, *''and because Allāh is not in the least unjust to the servants'', is in* conjunction with the words, *''what your* (own) *hands have sent''*, and they explain the reason for writing and punishment. If Allāh had not recorded their deeds and not rewarded or punished them accordingly, it would have been tantamount to neglecting the system of the deeds; and this in its turn would have been a gross and enormous injustice because huge number of deeds would be involved — in this way Allāh would become most unjust to the servants; far above is He from such things.

QUR'ĀN: (Those are they) *who said: ''Surely Allāh has enjoined us ... if you are truthful'':* It is related to the preceding, *''those who said''*. *''al-'Ahd''* (اَلْعَهْدُ = enjoining; order); *al-qurbān* (اَلْقُرْبَانُ = that which is offered, is sacrificed like sheep, etc.); *''fire consumes''* means the fire burns it. The clause, *''indeed, there came to you messengers before me''*, refers to such prophets as Zakariyyā and Yaḥyā — those Israelite prophets who were slain by the Jews.

QUR'ĀN: *But if they reject you, so indeed were rejected before you messengers ...:* It aims at consoling the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when they belied him. *''az Zubur''* (اَلزُّبُرُ) is plural of *az-zabūr* (اَلزَّبُوْرُ = a book of wisdom and sermons). The phrase, *''scriptures and the illuminating book''*, refers to such revelations as the book of Nūḥ, scriptures of Ibrāhīm, the Torah and the Injīl.

QUR'ĀN: *Every soul shall taste of death ... a provision of vanities:* The verse contains a good promise for the believer and a threat to the rejector. It begins with a general rule that encompasses every living being.

''at-Tawfiyah" (اَلتَّوْفِيَةُ = full payment). Someone has proved the existence of *al-Barzakh* from this verse, because it implies some partial recompense before the Resurrection Day, when the full payment will be made. It is a good argument.

''az-Zaḥzaḥah'' (اَلزَّحْزَحَةُ = to remove far), it in fact imlies repeated pulling with haste; *al-fawz* (اَلْفَوْزُ = to attain the desired object); *al-ghurūr* (اَلْغُرُوْرُ) is either infinitive of *gharra* (غَرَّ = he deceived; he deluded), or plural of *al-ghārr* (اَلْغَارُّ = deceiver).

QUR'ĀN: *You shall certainly be tried respecting your wealth and your souls ...: ''al-Iblā' ''* (اَلْاِبْلاَءُ = to test; to try). Allāh first described the tests and trials that had afflicted the believers; then He mentioned the utterances of the Jews which could weaken the believers' will. Now He informs them that such divine tests and such annoying talks of the People of the Book and the polytheists will repeatedly affect the believers; that they will have to face such things and bear such talks. They should remain patient and pious, should guard themselves against evil, in order that Allāh may protect them from mistakes and weak-heartedness; so that they should emerge as people of strong and firm determination.

This prophecy gives them advance news of what they would have to suffer in future; it aims at preparing them mentally for it before hand, so that they may reconcile themselves to it. *''Adhan kathīran''* (اَذيً كَثِيْراً = much annoyance) has been used for ''annoying talk''; it is a metaphorical use of effect in place of cause.

QUR'ĀN: *And when Allāh made a covenant ... evil is that which they buy. ''an-Nabdh''* (اَلنَّبْذُ = to cast away; to throw away); *''they cast it behind their backs''* is an idiom meaning 'they left it', 'they neglected it'. Its opposite idiom, 'he put it before his eyes', means 'he directed his attention to it'.

QUR'ĀN: *Do not think those who rejoice ... Allāh has power over all things:* The phrase, *''for what they have brought about''*, means the wealth that Allāh has bestowed upon them [1], which is accompanied by

[1] Evidently it is a slip of pen. The meaning given by the author could be in place if the verb had been in passive voice, that is, *ūtū* (اُوتُوْا = they were

love of riches and niggardliness. *''al-Mafāzah''* (اَلْمَفَازَةُ = deliverance; safety). These people were destroyed because their hearts were attached to the falsehood, and consequently they removed themselves from the protection of the truth.

At the end Allāh mentions His Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and His power over every thing. These two attributes may explain the reason of all things described in the preceding verses.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have narrated from Qatādah about the verse, *Allāh has certainly heard the saying of those ...*, that he said: ''It has been reported to us that it was revealed about Huyayy ibn Akhtab; when the verse [2:245] was revealed that: *Who is it that will lend to Allāh, a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold,* he said: 'Our Lord asks loan from us! Surely a poor (man) asks loan from a rich one.' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said regarding this verse: ''By Allāh, they had not seen Allāh so that they could know He was poor. But they saw the friends of Allāh (who were) poor. So they said: 'Had He (Allāh) been rich He would have made His friends rich.' Thus, they boasted against Allāh of (their) riches.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ''They are those who think that the Imām is in need of what they bring to him.'' (*al-Manāqib*)

The author says: As described in the Commentary, the first two meanings correspond to the verse. The third tradition is based on the ''flow'' of the Qur'ān.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''There was, between those who uttered (this word) and those who killled (the prophets), a gap of five hundred years; but Allāh attached to them the (crime of) murder because they were pleased with what they [i.e., their ancestors] had done.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

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given; they were brought). But it is in active voice, that is, *ataw* (اَتَوْا = they brought; they gave). (*tr.*)

The author says: The gap mentioned in it does not agree with the current Christian Era. See the historical discourse given earlier.

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* under the verse: *Every soul shall taste of death:* ''Ibn Abī Ḥātim has narrated from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) that he said: 'When the Prophet died and the condolence began, there came to them a comer — they heard his voice but did not see his person — and he said: ''Peace be upon you, O People of the House! and mercy of Allāh and His blessings. Every soul is to taste of the death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the Resurrection Day. Indeed, there is in Allāh consolation for every misfortune, and successor of everyone who dies, and overtaking everything that is lost. Therefore, in Allāh put your trust, and to Him attach your hope; because afflicted is he who is deprived of reward.'' ' Then 'Alī (a.s.) said: 'He was al-Khiḍr.' ''

Ibn Marduway has narrated from Sahl ibn Sa'd that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Verily, a place in the Garden (just sufficient) to put a whip of one of you in, is better than the world and all that is in it.' Then he recited this verse: *then whoever is removed far away from the fire and is made to enter the Garden, he indeed has attained the object.''* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: [as-Suyūṭī] has narrated this meaning in that book through other chains from other Companions. It should be noted here that there are numerous traditions purporting to give the reason of revelation of these verses; but we have left them out because evidently they are merely people's attempts to apply the verses to various events; they are not real reasons of revelation.

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إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاٰفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهٰارِ لَآيٰاتٍ
لِأُولِي الْأَلْبٰابِ ــ ١٩٠ . الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللهَ قِيٰاماً وَقُعُوداً وَعَلىٰ
جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنٰا مٰا خَلَقْتَ
هٰذٰا بٰاطِلاً سُبْحٰانَكَ فَقِنٰا عَذٰابَ النّٰارِ ــ ١٩١ . رَبَّنٰا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تُدْخِلِ
النّٰارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ وَمٰا لِلظّٰالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصٰارٍ ــ ١٩٢ . رَبَّنٰا إِنَّنٰا سَمِعْنٰا
مُنٰادِياً يُنٰادِي لِلْإِيمٰانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنّٰا رَبَّنٰا فَاغْفِرْ لَنٰا ذُنُوبَنٰا
وَكَفِّرْ عَنّٰا سَيِّئٰاتِنٰا وَتَوَفَّنٰا مَعَ الْأَبْرٰارِ ــ ١٩٣ . رَبَّنٰا وَآتِنٰا مٰا وَعَدْتَنٰا
عَلىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلاٰ تُخْزِنٰا يَوْمَ الْقِيٰامَةِ إِنَّكَ لاٰ تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعٰادَ ــ ١٩٤ .
فَاسْتَجٰابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لاٰ أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عٰامِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ
أُنْثىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ فَالَّذِينَ هٰاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيٰارِهِمْ
وَأُوذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقٰاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئٰاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ
جَنّٰاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰارُ ثَوٰاباً مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ وَاللهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ
الثَّوٰابِ ــ ١٩٥ . لاٰ يَغُرَّنَّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلاٰدِ ــ ١٩٦ .
مَتٰاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوٰيهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهٰادُ ــ ١٩٧ . لٰكِنِ الَّذِينَ
اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنّٰاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰارُ خٰالِدِينَ فِيهٰا نُزُلاً

مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ ــ ١٩٨ . وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ
بِآيَاتِ اللهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِنَّ اللهَ سَرِيعُ
الْحِسَابِ ــ ١٩٩ .

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding (190). *Those who remember Allāh standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: ''Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the Fire* (191). *Our Lord! surely whomsoever Thou makest enter the Fire, him Thou hast indeed brought to disgrace, and there shall be no helpers for the unjust* (192). *Our Lord! surely we heard a crier calling to the faith, saying: 'Believe in your Lord'; so we did believe; Our Lord! forgive us therefore our faults, and cover our evil deeds and make us die with the righteous* (193). *Our Lord! and grant us what Thou hast promised us by Thy messengers and disgrace us not on the Day of Ressurection; surely Thou dost not break the promise''* (194). *So their Lord accepted their prayer: ''That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; they, therefore, who emigrated, and were turned out of their homes, and were persecuted in My way, and fought, and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow''; a reward from Allāh, and with Allāh is yet better reward* (195). *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities* (fearlessly) (196). *A brief enjoyment! then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting place* (197). *But as to those who fear* (the wrath of) *their Lord, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding in them; and entertainment from their Lord, and that which is with Allāh is best for the righteous* (198). *And most surely of the followers of the Book there are those who believe in*

Allāh and (in) *that which has been revealed to you and* (in) *that which has been revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allāh; they do not sell the signs of Allāh for a small price; these it is that have their reward with their Lord; surely Allāh is quick in reckoning* (199).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses give the resume of the conditions of the believers, the polytheists and the People of the Book as represented in this chapter. They explain the characteristics of the righteous believers that they always remember Allāh and reflect on His signs; they seek Allāh's protection from His chastisement and beseech for His forgiveness and the Garden; and that Allāh has accepted their prayers and will surely give them what they have asked for. This is the general condition of the believers. As for the unbelievers, although they fearlessly roam the earth, but it is a brief enjoyment; and soon they will abide in the Hell-fire. One should not compare the believers with them. The only exception is of those People of the Book who have left their evil ways to follow the truth — they are with the believers.

QUR'ĀN: *Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding:* Most probably, the word, *''creation''*, here has a comprehensive connotation, denoting as to how these things came into being, what are their characteristics, properties and other concomitants like movement and stillness, changes and variations. In that case, the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day would encompass all the great phenomena of creation. Its explanation has been given in the chapter of The Cow [1]; so has also the meaning of the *''men of understanding''*[2]

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[1] In the Commentary of 2:164. (*Author's Note*); see *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol 2, pp. 266 — 271. (*tr.*)

[2] In the Commentary of 3:7. (*Author's Note*); see *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 5, pp. 42 — 43. (*tr.*)

QUR'ĀN: *Those who remember Allāh standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth:* That is, they remember Allāh in every condition — whether they are standing, sitting or lying down. We have earlier explained the meaning of ''remembrance'' and ''reflection''. The gist of the two verses is as follows: Observation of the signs of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day has made them remember Allāh continuously and at all times; they never forget Him in any situation. Also that observation has led them to reflection and meditation on the creation of the heavens and the earth; through it they remember that Allāh will surely raise them again for awarding the recompense; therefore, they ask from Allāh His mercy and beseech Him to fulfil His promise.

QUR'ĀN: *''Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! ...:* The demonstrative pronoun used here is *''hādhā''* (هٰذَا = this) which is singular and masculine, although the things referred to are plural and faminine. It is because the speakers are not concerned with particular names or distinct identification of each and every item; they look at the whole as a single creation. It is the same style that has been used in 6:78, where Ibrāhīm (a.s.) is quoted as saying: *Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: ''This is my Lord; this is greater!''* [In this verse, where Allāh describes the rising and setting of the sun, the faminine words have been used — as is normally done. But Ibrāhīm is reported to use masculine pronouns and words for it. Ibrāhīm did so] because at that time he was completely unaware of its name or its characteristics — except that it was a ''thing'', [and ''thing'' in Arabic is masculine].

''al-Bāṭil'' (اَلبَاطِلُ = untrue, futile, vain) is that which has no purpose, no aim. Allāh says: *then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people it remains in the earth* [13:17]. That is why when they realized that the creation was not in vain, they understood that Allāh would surely gather the people for recompense; and that at that time Allāh would mete out to the unjust people a disgraceful punishment, i.e., the Hell. They also knew that there was none who could ward off the underlying principle of chastisement; otherwise, the creation would be in vain. It is the connotation of their prayer: *''save us then from the chastisement of the Fire: Our Lord!*

surely whosoever Thou makest to enter the Fire, him Thou hast indeed brought to disgrace; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust''.

QUR'ĀN: *''Our Lord! surely we heard a crier calling to the faith, saying: `Believe in your Lord' ...'':* The crier or caller refers to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). The clause, *''saying: Believe'',* describes the cry or call; *''an''* (اَنْ = translated here as, *saying*) is explicative. They affirm before Allāh that they have believed in the crier, i.e., the Messenger. He has brought to them news of many things from Allāh; some of which he has warned them against, e.g., sins, faults, death in infidelity and transgression; and some others he has exhorted them to do or seek, e.g., forgiveness, mercy, details of the Garden (which Allāh has promised his believing and righteous servants). Therefore, they pray to their Lord to forgive them, to cover their faults, and to make them die with His righteous servants. Also, they ask Him to fulfil His promise to them — the Garden and the mercy — which the messengers have guaranteed to them by Allāh's permission. Thus they said: *''forgive us therefore our faults ...''; 'alā rusulika* (عَلٰي رُسُلِكَ = translated here as, *by Thy messengers*) literally means, 'on Thy messengers'; i.e., the promise which Thou didst give to Thy messengers, and they guaranteed it to us on Thy behalf; *''and disgrace us not''*, i.e., by not fulfilling the promise; it is because of this implication that the verse ends on, *''surely Thou dost not break the promise''.*

These verses clearly show that those believers acquired the belief in Allāh and the hereafter and believed that Allāh had been sending His messengers — they got these beliefs by reflecting on the signs of Allāh. As for the details of that which the Prophet had brought, they learned them by believing in the Prophet. They, thus, follow the nature in that which may be known by reflecting on the nature and creation; and in other matters they accept and obey what they are told by the Prophet.

QUR'ĀN: *So their Lord accepted their prayer ...:* Using the word, '*Lord,'* and relating it to them [*''their Lord''*] points to the quickening intensity of the divine mercy. Also the unrestricted sentence, *''I will not waste the work of a worker among you''*, points to this reality. There is no discrimination between one work and the other, nor between one worker and another.

The next sentence (that branches out from the above), i.e., *''they, therefore, who emigrated, and were turned out of their homes, and were persecuted in* My *way, and fought, and were slain ...''*, aims at describing some good deeds for the description of their reward. The conjunctive (*''and''*) have been used for enumeration only, not for combination; otherwise the described reward would be reserved for only those Emigrants who were martyred and combined all these attributes.

Even then, the verse mentions only those virtues and deeds which this chapter exhorts the believers to acquire and do, which it puts utmost emphasis on, i.e., giving preference to religion over one's home town or country, patiently bearing the troubles in the way of Allāh and fighting in the cause of religion.

Apparently, emigration encompasses all types of fleeing, be it from polytheism, or family, or home. This may be inferred from three factors: 1) The word used, *''emigrated''*, is unrestricted and unqualified; 2) it is followed by the phrase, *''and were turned out of their homes''*, which denotes a particular type of emigration and it shows that the former refers to all types of ''going out''; and 3) it is followed later by the clause, *''I will most certainly cover their evil deeds''*; in the Qur'ānic language the word, *as-sayyi'āt* (اَلسَّيِّئَاتُ = evils; evil deeds) is apparently used for small and minor sins [1]; it means that they have already fled from major sins earlier through abstaining or repenting from them. All this shows that the emigration or fleeing mentioned here is more comprehensive. (Try to understand it.)

QUR'ĀN: *''Let it not deceive you ... in the cities* (fearlessly): It purports to remove a possible misunderstanding. The meaning: This is the condition and reward of the righteous believers. But as for the unbelievers, you should not be deceived by their affluence and opulence, their luxurious life and abundant riches (the pronoun, being singular, addresses the Prophet, but the talk is actually meant for the ears of the other people); after all, it is but a brief enjoymnet which has no permanence.

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[1] Not always. The verse 78 of chapter 11 uses this word for sodomy, one of the greatest sins. (*tr.*)

QUR'ĀN: *But as to those who fear* (the wrath of) *Allāh ... is best for the righteous: ''an-Nuzul''* (اَلنُّزُلُ = food, drink and other things served to a guest; here it has been translated as *''entertainment''*). The phrase, *''those who fear* (the wrath of) *Allāh''*, refers to the righteous, as may be understood from the last clause of the verse. It supports what we have written above that the verse, *''Let it not deceive you ... the resting place''*, aim at removing an unspoken but possible misunderstanding.

QUR'ĀN: *And most surely of the followers of the Book ... quick in reckoning:* It means that they, like other believers, will get the better reward. It purports to affirm that the next life's happiness is not reserved to any particular nation or tribe — so that the People of the Book would be debarred from it even if they believed. Rather, it depends on believing in Allāh and His messengers. Therefore if they accept true belief, they will become eligible to the hereafter's reward like other believers.

This verse praises these People of the Book in a special manner. It removes from them all those evil traits for which the preceding verses had been condemning other Jews and Christians — differentiating between the messengers of Allāh, hiding what they had made a covenant with Allāh to make known, and selling Allāh's signs and communications for a small price.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE QUR'ĀN AND THE BIBLE REGARDING TREATMENT OF WOMEN

Observation and experience confirm that man and woman are two classes of the same species, i.e., human being. All the effects and characteristics that are found in man are also found in woman — without any difference. Undoubtedly when all the characteristics of a species are found in a being it must belong to that species. Of course, some shared traits or characteristics may appear more strongly — or more weakly — in one group than the other; but it does not make that group [for example, woman] less human [than man] . It is clear from the above that the specific potential perfections that are available to one group, are available to the other too. It includes spiritual perfection that is acquired through

belief, obedience and other deeds that bring a human being nearer to Allāh. Now it should be clear to you that the best and most comprehensive statement to convey this theme is found in these words of Allāh: *''I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other.''*

Compare it with what the Bible says on this subject, and you will clearly see the difference between the positions taken by the two Books. We find in the *Ecclesiastes* the following observations:

> I turned my mind to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the sum of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness which is madness. And I found more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters; ... One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found. [1]

Most of the ancient peoples believed that woman's deeds were not acceptable to God. In Greece she was called an abomination from the Satan's handiwork. The Romans and some Greeks said that she did not have a soul — although man did have an abstract immaterial human soul. The Christians in the Council of 586 C.E. held at France, decided after a lengthy debate that woman was a human being, but she was created to serve man. In England, just a hundred years ago, she was not considered a part of human society. For details refer to the books written on ancient beliefs and opinions as well as on mythology and anthropology — you will find a lot of amazing beliefs.

TRADITIONS

Abū Nu'aym has narrated in *Ḥilyatu 'l-awliyā'* from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Meditate on the creation of Allāh, and do not meditate on Allāh (Himself).' '' (*ad-Durru'l-manthūr*)

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[1] *Ecclesiastes* (Revised Standard Version), chapter 7, vrs. 25 — 28. (*tr.*)

The author says: This theme has also been narrated from the Prophet through other chains from a number of the Companions, like ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām and Ibn ‘Umar. It is narrated through Shī‘ah chains too.

Meditation on Allāh (or according to another version, on the person of Allāh) which has been forbidden means meditating on Allāh’s ‘‘essence’’; because Allāh has said: ... *they do not comprehend Him in knowledge* [20:110]. So far as His attributes are concerned, the Qur’ān is the best witness that it is through them that Allāh may be known; numerous verses exhort the people to know Him by His attributes.

Abu ’sh-Shaykh has narrated in *al-‘Aẓamah* from Abū Hurayrah that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: ‘One hour’s thought is better than sixty years’ worship.’ ’’ (*ibid*.)

The author says: Some traditions say, ‘‘one night’s worship’’; others say, ‘‘one year’s worship’’; and it is also narrated through Shī‘ah narrators.

It has been reported through Sunnī chains that the word of Allāh: *So their Lord accepted their prayer* ..., was revealed because of the Mother of the believers Umm Salamah. She had said to the Prophet: ‘‘O Messenger of Allāh! I have not heard Allāh mentioning anyhow the women regarding (their) emigration.’’ Thereupon Allāh revealed the verse, *So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female* ...

The Shī‘ah traditions say that the words: *they, therefore, who emigrated, and were turned out of their homes* ..., were revealed about ‘Alī (a.s.) when he emigrated with the Fāṭimahs, i.e., Fāṭimah bin Asad, Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and Fāṭimah bint az-Zubayr. Then reached to them at Ḍajnān, Umm Ayman and a few of the weaker believers. So they travelled and they were remembering Allāh in every condition, until they came to the Prophet and (by that time) these verses had been revealed.

The Sunnī traditions say that it was revealed about the Emigrants.

Also, it has been reported that the verse: *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve* ..., was revealed when some believers expressed the

desire for the good life enjoyed by the unbelievers. Also, it has been said that the verse: *And most surely of the followers of the Book there are those who believe* …, was revealed about Negus and some of his companions. When he died, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) prayed his funeral prayer at Medina. Some hypocrites blamed him that he was praying for someone who was not on his religion. Then Allāh sent this verse: *And most surely of the followers of the Book there are those who believe ... surely Allāh is quick in reckoning.*

But all these traditions represent the narrators' endeavours to fit the verses on various events or stories; they do not give the actual reason of revelation.

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يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ـــ ٢٠٠ .

O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience and remain lined up; and fear (the wrath of) *Allāh, that you may be successful* (200).

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COMMENTARY

This final verse is like the sum total, giving a gist of all that has been said in this chapter. It ends the chapter with a summary of its main theme.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience:* The order is unrestricted. The clause, *''be patient''*, covers every type of patience: Patience in hardships, patience in the obedience of Allāh, and patience against the disobedience of Allāh. However, it refers to individual's patience, as the next clause shows.

''al-Muṣābarah'' (اَلْمُصَابَرَةُ) translated here as helping each other in patience, literally means vying with one another in being patient. It implies collective patience — when individuals bear a common hardship together and each one's patience is augmented by others' steadfastness.

In this way, their strength is enhanced, their patience redoubled and its effect multiplied. This phenomenon may easily be experienced, if we first look at an individual as a single person, and then look at his behaviour in a group when he becomes a part of a collective whole, each one acting on and reacting towards the others. We shall describe this topic in detail, God willing, in its place.

QUR'ĀN: *and remain lined up; and fear* (the wrath of) *Allāh, that you may be successful: ''al-murābaṭah''* (اَلْمُرَابَطَةْ) is more comprehensive than *al-Muṣābarah* (اَلْمُصَابَرَةْ = vying with one another in patience; helping each other to be patient), because *al-murābaṭah*[1] implies people's linking up with one another in their powers, faculties, and activities in all affairs of their religious life — in time of ease as well as in difficulties. As the main aim of these orders is to let the believers attain the reality of happiness of this world and the next — otherwise only partial worldly happiness can be achieved which obviously is not the real happiness — these orders have been followed by the words, *''and fear* (the wrath of) *Allāh, that you may be successful''*, i.e., you may achieve total and real happiness and success.

A DISCOURSE ON BELIEVERS' MUTUAL CONNECTION IN ISLAMIC SOCIETY

1. Man and Society

There is no need to bring a lot of arguments to prove that mankind is a social species. Every member of this species is created with this instinct. Man has always lived in society, as the history says and the archaeological finds show (the finds that are related to the earliest eras when this species lived in and dominated this globe.)

The Qur'ān has described this reality in the best possible way in many verses. For example:

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[1] *al-Murābaṭah*, in post-Qur'ānic era is used for troops being garrisoned, posted, stationed. Many translators have rendered it as, ''be ever-garrisoned''; but the author has taken it in its literal and original sense, i. e., to be linked with each other. I have used a word (i.e. *remain lined up*) which may be interpreted both ways. (*tr.*)

O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may recognized each other ... [49:13];
We have distributed among them their livelihood in the life of this world, and We have exalted some of them above others in degrees, that some of them may take others in subjection ... [43:32];
... the one of you being from the other ... [3:195];
And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood-relationship and marriage-relationship ... [25:54].
There are many other such verses.[1]

2. Man and the Growth of his Society

Human society, like man's any spiritual characteristics or its related factors, was not born — when it was born — in its complete and perfect shape; there was a lot of room for development and improvement. Like all other concomitants of humanity, the society too kept growing and improving with man's progress in his material and spiritual journey. It would be unrealistic to expect this human characteristic to be different from other factors — to think that it would appear from the very beginning in its perfect shape. Rather it, like man's other characteristics related to his knowledge and will, has gradually progressed from the primitive to the advanced stage, and the process continues.

It appears from history that the first social group that appeared was the domistic circle based on marriage, because its natural agent (the procreative organs) was the most powerful factor in bringing people together. It was not, for example, like food gathering and eating which could be done alone. Satisfaction of sexual urge required union of two persons [and it laid the foundation of society]. From it gradually emanated the instinct which we have earlier called the instinct of exploitation. It takes shape when a man, dominating over and forcing another person, uses him to fulfil his [dominating one's] needs and plans. Then it took the shape of headship or leadership, e.g., head of the family, patriarch of the clan, chief of the tribe, and president of the nation. Naturally, in the beginning the leadership went to the strongest and

[1] Look into the places related to each verse to see how they prove our theme. (*Author's Note*)

bravest; after sometime it was given to him who was bravest and richest, and also had many children. Thus, the views kept changing until now it goes to him who is thought to be the most efficient in administration and the most expert in diplomacy and politics. This was the primary reason why and how idol-worship raised its head and why it looks strong even today; we shall write about it in detail, God willing, somewhere else.

Social institution with all its manifestations (family as well as other groupings) has always existed with mankind since the dawn of humanity. But man was not consciously aware of it in the beginning. It was there growing with man's other natural instincts and characteristics like exploitation, self-defence and things like that.

The Qur'ān informs us that it was the institution of prophethood which made the man aware of society and social bonds in detail and exhorted him to preserve and protect it as a distinct factor of humanity. Allāh says: *And mankind was naught but a single people, then they differed* [10:19]. Also He says: *Mankind was but one people; so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed* [2:213]. It shows that mankind in its earliest days was one nation, simple and uncomplicated; there was no diffference among them. Then differences occurred and disputes appeared; so Allāh sent the prophets and revealed the books to them in order that it might remove the said disputes and differences, and bring them back to social accord and unity which in its turn would be protected through ordained laws.

Again Allāh says: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, that establish the religion and be not divided therein* [42:13]. This verse too informs us that it was the call to establish the religion without being divided therein which removed the discord among the people and united them on one word. Thus, it was religion that had guaranteed the safety of their good social order.

As you see, the verse attributes this call (of society's good and unity) to Nūḥ who was the first prophet to be given a law and a book; then it ascribes it to Ibrāhīm, then to Mūsā, then to 'Īsā (peace be on them all). The *sharī'ah* of Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm contained very small amount of rules

and regulations. Of the four prophets, the most elaborate was the *sharī'ah* of Mūsā, which was followed by 'Īsā — as the Qur'ān says and the Gospels show — but the *sharī'ah* of Mūsā contains only about six hundred rules, as has been reported.

In any case, the call to live in a society — a distinct and clear call — was not given except by the prophets in the mould of religion, as the Qur'ān clearly says and — as will be seen — the history confirms.

3. Islam and the Attention it gives to Society

Undoubtedly, Islam is the only religion which has purposely laid its foundation on human society, on community life. It has never neglected the social aspects in any of its affairs. If you want to know more, then look at the mass and volume of human actions and activities (which imagination cannot fully grasp) and their branching into various categories, classes and orders and you will be really astonished to see how this divine *sharī'ah* covers all those actions and activities, and gives direction for every conceivable situation. Then see how it has moulded all those rules and regulations in the mould of social life. Then you will realize how it has filled it with the spirit of communal life to the maximum limit.

Then compare your findings with every divine *sharī'ah* to which the Qur'ān has given any importance, that is, the *sharī'ah* of Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsā; and you will realize that those laws cannot bear comparison with Islam, they cannot stand at its side.

As for those systems which the Qur'ān does not think worthy of consideration — like idolatry, Sabi'ism, Manichaeism, dualism, etc. — the difference is too clear to need description.

As for the groups and nations — be they civilized or otherwise — the history only says that they used to follow what they had inherited from ancient times — that social life gave rise to exploitation and people were united under autocratic or monarchic rules; tribal, national and regional societies lived under the domain of a king or chief, whose selection was governed by factors of heredity, place of origin and things like that. No nation was paid any particular attention in its affairs; no discussion was held or views exchanged to better their condition. Even the great nations which dominated the known world at the time when the divine religion

illuminated the earth — i.e., the Roman and Persian empires — were nothing more than autocratic and despotic rules of Caesar and Khusraw; subject nation were ‘‘united’’ under the banner of the king or emperor; and the society progressed if the empire developed; otherwise it regressed.

Of course, they had inherited some treatises on sociology, among the writings of their philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and others. But they were just papers which were never acted upon, merely mental images which never took shape outside imagination. The history that has come to us is the most reliable witness of what we have said.

Therefore, the first call that reached the human ear and invited this species to pay attention to the society’s affairs — by making it an independent subject, taking it out from oblivion and insignificance — was the voice of the Prophet of Islam (on whom be the best blessings and peace). He invited the people, through the divine messages revealed to him, towards happy life and good living — all together. Allāh says:

And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together, and be not divided, ... And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong. [Here Allāh draws men’s attention to protect the society from division and disunity.] *and these it is that shall be successful. And be not like those who became divided and disagreed after clear evidences had come to them* [3:103 — 105];

And (know) *that this is My path, the straight one, therefore follow it; and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you away from His way* [6:153];

Surely they who divided their religion into parts and became sects, you have no concern with them [6:159].

There are many other unrestricted verses which call the people to live together in society.

Also, Allāh says:

The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren [49:10];

... and do not quarrel, for then you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart [8:46];

... and help one another in goodness and piety ... [5:2];

And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and

enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong [3:104].

There are many such verses that exhort the Muslims to build the Islamic society on the foundation of unity and harmony acquiring and protecting its spiritual and material benefits and distinction — as we shall later describe in short.

4. Relationship of Individual and Society in the Eyes of Islam

While manufacturing or inventing something, one first makes its elementary parts, each part has its own properties and effects. Then one joins them together — in spite of their separate identities — and obtains from the whole new benefits in addition to the sum total of the various parts' benefits. Man, for example, has parts, limbs, organs and powers, each of which has distinct material and spiritual benefits. Sometimes they are compounded, and are thus strengthened and enhanced, like the weight of each part and that of the whole, or its power and turning from one direction to the other, etc. At other times the parts do not combine but continue as separate entities like the powers of hearing, seeing, tasting, will and movement; yet all these different parts are jointly placed under the control of one being, i.e., man. Then the benefit of the whole collection far exceeds the sum total of those found separately in various parts; they are immense benefits, like action and reaction, as well as the spiritual and physical uses. One of the benefits is the presence of this astonishing plurality within the framework of unity itself. When the human matter, i.e., the sperm and ovum completes its growth, it gets the power to separate a part from itself and bring it up as another perfect man, able to do all the spiritual and material activities the former man used to do. All human beings in spite of their vast number are human being, i.e., one; and their activities although plentiful in number are one in species; they are capable of uniting and joining. It is not unlike water — when put in various pots it is called many waters, but it is in fact one species; it has many properties but under one species; and the more water you gather in one place the more powerful are its characteristics and the far greater its impact.

Islam, in bringing up the individuals of this species and guiding them to their real happiness, looks at this real import of humanity; it could not do otherwise. Allāh says:

And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood-relationship and marriagerelationship [25:54];

O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female [49:13]; *the one of you being from the other* [3:195].

This real relationship between individual and society inevitably leads to another actuality in the society inasmuch as people individually feed it with their existence and powers, especialities and characteristics; thus the society itself — like its members — acquires a sort of independent entity and characteristics, and it is a fact known to and seen by every one. That is why the Qur'ān considers a nation as having an existence with an appointed term of its own; accordingly every nation has got a book; it has a perception and an understanding; it acts and obeys or disobeys Allāh.

Allāh says:

And for every nation there is an (appointed) *term, so when their term is come they shall not remain behind* (even) *an hour, nor shall they go before* [7:34];

... every nation shall be called to its book ... [45:28];

Thus have We made fair-seeming to every people their deeds ... [6:108];

... there is a group of them keeping to the moderate course ... [5:66];

... there is an upright party; they recite Allāh's communications ... [3:113];

... and every nation purposes against their apostle to destroy him, and they disputed by means of the falsehood that they might thereby render null the truth, therefore I destroyed them; how was then My *retribution!* [40:5];

And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly [10:47].

That is why you see that the Qur'ān pays attention to histories of nations as much as it does to individuals' stories — or even more. It did so at a time when the history was only a record of achievements or failures of kings and nobles. It was long after the revelation of the Qur'ān that the historians deigned to concern themselves with the histories of nations and societies. A few of them like al-Mas'ūdī and Ibn Khaldūn wrote on this line to a certain extent, until the changes were lately affected in narrative history and individuals gave way to the nations.

Reportedly, the first [Westerner] to lay the foundation of the new history was Frenchman, August Kent (d. 1857 C.E.).

However, as we have said above, society's power and characteristics are necessarily stronger than those of an individual. In case of conflict or discord between the two, the former must overwhelm the latter. Perception and experience are best witnesses for this phenomenon — in active as well as passive powers and traits all together. A group's will in any matter, e.g., in crowds and mobs, cannot be restrained by any individual's contrary will or opposite intention. A part cannot escape from following the whole — it must proceed as the whole does. So much so that the whole suspends the individual member's perception and thinking. The same is the effect of general terror and common fright as, for example, at times of retreat, during riots and disorder, in aftermath of earthquake, in periods of famine or epidemic. Even some less frightening things have the same effect; for example, traditional rites or national attires and things like that, which an individual feels himself obliged to follow — they deprive him of his thinking power or perception.

It is for this reason that Islam has paid so much attention to the affairs of society. We do not find — and cannot find — such care and attention given to it in any other religion, nor in any civilized nation. (Probably you will find it difficult to accept!) The fact is that although individual is the foundation of society, giving only an individual a good upbringing and training him to be of virtuous character can hardly produce desired effect if the society is permeated with opposite atmosphere and environment. Only a negligible number can withstand such pressure and preserve their good character.

Thus Islam has built its most important rules and laws — like *ḥajj,* prayer, *jihād,* spending in the way of Allāh, and in short, the religious piety — on the foundation of social life. And how did it arrange to preserve it? Apart from the authority of Islamic government (which is responsible to protect the general religious ceremonies and their boundaries), and in addition to the obligation of inviting to good, enjoining virtue and forbidding evil (which is a common obligation for the whole *ummah*), it has prescribed an important goal for the Islamic society — and no society can survive without a common goal — and that is the true happiness and nearness to Allāh and honour in His presence. This goal is an unseen but vigilant supervisor, from which even secret

thought of man cannot remain hidden — let alone the manifest action — although the preachers and those engaged in enjoining good and forbidding evil may fail to see it. It is this reality which led us to declare that the care and concern shown by Islam to the affairs of its society excels all systems and cultures.

5. Is Islamic social System capable of Implementation and Continuation?

Someone may say:

‘‘You claim that Islamic ideology for creating good society is the strongest in foundation and loftiest in structure, and even the societies evolved by the advanced and civilized nations cannot reach its standard. Well, if it is so, then how is it that it could not be implemented except for a very short period, and then it changed into blatant despotic rule? Did it not turn into an imperialism more atrocious and horrid than all that had preceded it? Compare it with the Western civilization that is so enduring.

‘‘This in itself is a proof that their civilization is more advanced and their culture and tradition more vital and sound. They have laid the foundation of their social order and legal system on the people’s will and their natural inclination. They give credence to the will and resolve of the majority, because usually it is impossible for the whole community to achieve unanimity on any matter; and dominance of majority is a perpetual natural phenomemon. We find that every natural cause and physical source succeeds in bringing about the effect in majority of the cases — not always. The same thing happens when diverse and conflicting causes act on one thing — only the majority succeeds in affecting the object, neither all causes nor the minority has any effect. Therefore, it is proper that the structure of social order be built on the majority’s will, and it should apply to the goal of the society as well as to the systems and laws enforced therein. As for the hypothesis of religion, in the present world it is nothing but a wishful thinking that does not pass the stage of theory, an intellectual ideal that cannot be put into practice.

‘‘The modern civilization, in the countries where it has taken root, guarantees the power and felicity of the society, purifies its members and cleanses them from evil traits and bad characteristics, i.e., the things which the society does not approve, like falsehood, fraud, unjustice,

oppression, rudeness and things like that.''

The above contains a gist of what preoccupies the minds of a group of our oriental scholars, and especially some of our eminent sociologists and psychologists. Unfortunately they have taken a wrong way to approach the subject, and it has caused confusion in their minds, as will be seen from the following explanation:

They have said: The Islamic social order — unlike the modern civilization — cannot be implemented in the world in its present environment; it means that the situation prevalent in today's world is not propitious for the laws legislated by Islam.

COMMENT: Agreed. But it proves nothing. Every system now prevalent in various human societies came into being after it was not there; it appeared when the then prevalent conditions and surroundings were against it; then it stood up and struggled against the previously deep-rooted system. Often it was repulsed and defeated in the first attempt; then it rose again and again until finally it gained upper-hand, triumphed and got dominance over the society. Sometime it perished and became extinct if the conditions and factors were not favourable. History testifies to it regarding every religious and temporal system, not excepting democracy and communism. [1] It is such instances that the divine words point to: *Indeed there have been example* [lit., systems] *before you; therefore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the rejecters* [3:137]. The verse implies that the systems accompanied by rejection of divine commands do not have a happy ending, do not take

[1] Here is one of the clearest examples: After the World War I, the system of democracy (and today it is considered the only acceptable system in the world) changed in Russia to the Communism and the Socialist system of government. After the World War II, the countries of Eastern Europe and China followed suit. Thus almost half of human populace was lost to the democracy. Then about one year ago [i.e., in 1956. *tr.*] it was announced in the Communists' Congress that their late leader, Stalin, during his reign extending to nearly 30 years after Lenin's death, had turned the socialist rule into autocratic despotic reign of terror. Even now a group starts believing in Stalin after disbelieving, while another disbelieves in him after believing! This up and down continues. We may find many such examples in the pages of history. (*Author's Note*)

one to a desirable goal.

Therefore, merely the fact that a system is not agreeable to, or goes against the current social environment does not prove that it is wrong or erroneous. In fact, this is a well-established natural phenomenon through which every new idea and event reaches its final goal, after various actions and reactions, as a result of interaction of diverse causes and factors.

Islam is not exception to this principle; it like all other systems is governed by the same physical and social factors in its progress or retrogress, and is influenced by the same agencies and conditions. Islam's position today — when it has captured the hearts of more than four hundred million people [1] — is not weaker than it was in the days of Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm or Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). Each of them began his call alone, while the world in their times knew nothing except disorder and depravity. Then their message spread, took roots and became a living phenemenon that continues upto these days of ours.

The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) began his mission while there was none to support him except a man and a woman [2]; later people joined them one after another; the days were full of privation — and what a privation it was! Then came to them the help from Allāh and they established a good social order; a society whose members were — for a major part — governed by goodness and piety; until after the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) the strife and intrigues did to the Islamic society what they did.

It did not take long for even such a small model of Islamic social order, in spite of its short life and narrow range, to spread itself, in less than fifty years, from one corner of the Earth to the other; it turned the history of mankind to a new direction, and brought a fundamental and substantial change in it, whose overwhelming effects are seen even today — and will continue to do so for ever.

Sociological and psychological discourses within the framework of ideological history cannot escape from admitting that the immediate and sufficient cause of the world's contemporary advancement is none other

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1 Now in 1986, there are more than a thousand million Muslims in the World. (*tr.*)

2 i.e., ʻAlī (a.s.) and Khadījah (a.s.). (*tr.*)

than the Islamic civilization and the light it spread over the Earth. Of course, most of the European scholars have neglected to give Islam its due credit, for which we may thank either religious prejudice or political expediency. How can a knowledgeable research scholar, looking at modem civic and social progress, say with justice that it was a contribution of Christianity? How can Christ (a.s.) be counted as its leader and standard-bearer, when he himself clearly says [1] that he was concerned only with spiritual affairs and had nothing to do with body or its affairs, and did not care about governmental and political affairs? While Islam clearly invites towards social life and mutual cooperation, and guides about and manages all aspects of human society and its members without exception. Why do the Westerners shut their eyes from this manifest reality? To what should we ascribe this silence of theirs, if not to their desire to extinguish the light of Islam (while Allāh refuses but to perfect His light) and to put out its flame from the hearts by their envy and enmity — so that they could present Islam as a nation which has left no imprint on modem civilization?

However, Islam has proved its ability to guide the mankind to their happiness and their good lives. Such a phenomenon cannot be dismissed as a hypothesis inapplicable to human life. Nor can it lose hope of one day dominating the world (inasmuch as its objective is the mankind's true happiness). We have already mentioned [2] in the Commentary of the verse, *Mankind was but one people ...* [2:213], that deep research in the conditions of creation leads us to the conclusion that the human species will surely reach its destination and achieve its goal — and it means the total domination of true Islam over the world, its complete authority over the social order. Allāh has promised, according to this very principle, in His Mighty Book: *... then Allāh will bring a people that He shall love Him, humble before the believers, mighty against the unbelivers, they shall strive hard in Allāh's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer ...* [5:54]; *Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that*

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1 Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. transl.], vol. 6, pp.

2 *ibid.* vol.3, pp. 167 — 182. (*tr.*)

He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me [24:55]; *that the earth, shall inherit it* My *righteous servants* [21:105].

There is another dimension to this question which these people are totally oblivious of. The motto of Islamic social system is to follow the truth in theory and practice; while the ideal of today's civilization is to follow the views and desires of the majority. This basic difference in outlook has resulted in difference in the aims and goals of the respective societies. The goal of Islamic society is the real and rational happiness and felicity. It means that man should practise moderation in giving his various powers their demands; he gives to his body what it desires but to the extent that it does not hinder him from knowing Allāh through the path of servitude; rather it becomes a means of reaching that destination. In this way, man attains happiness through the happiness of all his powers and faculties. It is the greatest Comfort (although today we do not fully perceive it because we lack the proper Islamic training). That is why Islam has laid the foundation of its commandments on wisdom and intellect which by its nature follows the truth and reality; and it has very strongly prohibited all that disturbs the healthy intellect. It has laid the responsibility of enforcing all activities, moral and basic gnosis on the shoulders of the society. It is in addition to what the Islamic government is expected to do, like enforcing the penal code, etc. This aspect in any case would not be palatable to the general public. Such ideal would be intolerable to those who are astonishingly immersed in their desires and lusts — as we see today in all classes of society, be they affluent or hard pressed. Islamic system based on wisdom and intellect curbs people's freedom of enjoying whatever pleasure they like, whatever entertainment they desire, of attacking or devouring whom they are angry with. Naturally people would not like such restrictions, such limitations, except after intense efforts and tireless endeavours for spreading the message, and after intensive and extensive training given to the people; it is not different from other development affairs in which man needs firm determination, sufficient training and never ending vigilance.

On the other hand, the goal of the modern civilization is material enjoyment. Obviously it encourages a sensual life that follows heart's desire — no matter whether it conforms with rational truth or not. It follows intellect only when it does not go against its desires or ambitions.

That is why today's law follows, in its legislation and implementation, the pleasure of the majority of society and the desire of their hearts. Apart from that, only those laws may be guaranteedly implemented that are concerned with overt actions. But as far as ethics and fundamental gnosis are concerned, there is no way of enforcing them; people are at liberty to adopt or reject them — except when these factors go against the law of the land, as then they are expressly forbidden.

Consequently, such a society would be wont to do what falls in line with its desire like base lust and inordinate rage. Such people would prefer most of the things condemned by religion; they would take good morals and high spiritual knowledge as mockery, shielding themselves behind ''constitutional freedom''.

As a result of this phenomenon the ideology is bound to change its course from rational to sensual. What the wisdom treats as immorality and depravity, is glorified by sensual outlook as chivalry, manhood and good manners. Look at what is happening in Europe between the youths, between men and married or unmarried women, between women and dogs, and between men and their own daughters or other women within prohibited degrees; look at what is done in festivities and dance parties, etc. — the things which a person brought up in religious atmosphere feels ashamed even to bring on his tongue.

Sometimes religious rites appear in these people's eyes as odd curiosities and laughing matters — and vice versa. This is because the thinking and perceptions are completely different in their essence as well as in modality. These social orders based on sensuality take no benefit from intellect — as you have seen — except for paving the way for sensual enjoyment. This enjoyment is their only goal; nothing is allowed to oppose it, nothing can stand in its way — except when one has to choose between two enjoyments of equal degree. After all there were — and still are — among the legislated laws things like suicide and duel, etc. One gets what he wants and desires except when it is in conflict with the will and desire of the society.

Ponder on this difference; then you will understand why the western social order — unlike the religious one — seems more agreeable to the human society. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that it is not only the present day's western social order that has proved consistent with

people's nature (so that it may be given preference over other civilizations for this reason); all the social systems which were or are found in any society, from the early dawn of humanity to this day of ours, right from roaming nomands to the flourishing settlements, had and have one thing in common: People give preference to them over the religion that invites them to reality and truth; it is their first reaction when they are called to the true religion — because they are enthralled by material idolatory.

If you ponder deeply you will find that the modern civilization is nothing more than a collection of various customs of early idolatory; but it has ''progressed'' from individual to collective level, from the stage of simple rites to that of technical finesse.

What we have said — that the Islamic social order is based on following the truth and reality, not on conformity with hearts' desires — is amongst the clearest declarations of the Qur'ān. Allāh says:

He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth ... [9:33];

And Allāh judges with the truth [40:20];

(Also He says commending the believers) *... and enjoin on each other truth ...* [103:3];

Certainly We have brought you the truth, but most of you are averse to the truth [43:78].

Here it is clearly stated that truth is not agreeable to the majority and their desires. Then Allāh totally rejects the idea that the majority's will should be followed. Why this rejection? Because it results in depravity and destruction. Allāh says: *Nay ! he has brought them the truth, and most of them are averse from the truth. And should the truth follow their desires, surely the heavens and the earth and all those who are therein would have perished. Nay! We have brought to them their reminder, but from their reminder they turn aside* [23:70 — 71].

Have a bird's-eye view of the world history; see the manmade calamities taking shape one after another; chaos and disaster, depravity and iniquity piling up one over another. Then you will appreciate how true the divine words have proved. Allāh again says: *... and what is there after the truth but error, how are you then turned back?* [10:32]. There are many many verses of this or similar theme. If you want to gain more insight then study Chapter 10, Yūnus, where ''the truth'' [and its

derivatives] have been mentioned more than twenty times.

They have said: To follow the majority is a regular trait of the nature.

COMMENT: No doubt that the nature follows its major effects; but it never nullifies or contradicts the obligation of following the truth and reality. Nature itself is a truth. How can it negate its own self?

For proper understanding of this statement, a few premises should be explained here:

First: The external things and affairs, which are found outside man's imagination, are the basis of his cognitive beliefs and practical ideas; in their genesis and development, they depend on the system of causality — a permanent and all-encompassing system that allows no exception. All knowledgeable thinkers are unanimously agreed on this fact, and the Qur'ān too testifies to its truth as we have described earlier[1]. Such external happenigs appear and continue without fail [following their sufficient cause]. Even the effects appearing in majority of cases are — from the point of reason — permanent in their majorityness. For example, fire that — looking at all its uses — brings heat most of the times, its ''heat-giving in majority of cases'' is its permanent property. Likewise there are other exmaples; and this is the truth.

Second: Man by nature follows what he finds in any way a real external thing or affair. He follows the truth by dictate of nature. Even those [agnostics] who deny definite knowledge, if you tell one of them something which he has no doubt about, he will surely accept it.

Third: Truth, as you have seen, is an external thing which man accepts in belief and follows in deeds. Man's own views or perceptions are just a means to reach that external truth — as mirror is a means to see the image.

Now that you have understood these premises, it should be clear to you that truth or reality, i.e., something's happening in nature in all or majority of the cases, is an attribute of an external thing that exists outside imagination and happens always or in most of the cases; but it is not knowledge or perception. In other words, truth is attribute of a thing that is known, not of the knowledge itself. A thing that occurs always or in majority of cases is in a way the truth. But the view of the majority of

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. transl.], vol. 1, pp. 106 — 107 on ''Miracle'' (*tr.*)

the people, or their aspiration or belief, *vis-a-vis,* that of the minority, is not always truth. It may be truth — when it conforms with reality; or it may be falsehood if it does not. In the latter case, man should not submit to it; nor would he do so if he became aware of its falsity. When you were sure of a thing and then all the people said you were wrong, you would not accept their view; and even if you made a show of submitting to them, you would do so only out of fear, embarrassment or some other factor — but not because you believed their view to be correct. The following verse is one of the best statements to show that the majority's views and opinions were not necessarily truth that must be followed: *Nay! he has brought them the truth, and most of them are averse from the truth* [23:70]. If every opinion of the majority were truth, they would not have been averse or opposed to it.

The above discourse shows clearly the untenability of the argument that to follow the majority is the dictate of the nature. This natural system applies to external happenings and things — which are subject of knowledge — not to the knowledge or thought itself. According to this principle, man should follow in his intention and action that which happens — externally — most of the times; not that he should follow what a mjority of the people believes. In other words, his activities and actions should be based on the good of the majority; and it is the principle upon which the Qur'ān has based its legislations and ordinations. Allāh says: *Allāh does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may be grateful* [5:6]; *... fasting has been prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard* (against evil) [2:183]. There are many other verses that describe the underlying reasons of given orders which are found in most of the cases.

They have said: The modern civilization has provided the developed countries with society's happiness, has refined its members and purified them from evil characteristics which are disapproved by the community.

COMMENT: This talk is not free of confusion and medley. Probably when they say ''society's happiness'', they mean its superiority in technology and power, its exploitation — to the maximum — of natural resources. But you have repeatedly seen that Islam does not count it as happiness and felicity. Rational arguments too support this principle.

Mankind's happiness is in fact a combination of the felicity of the spirit and that of the body. This bestows on man the material bounties, and at the same time adorns him with excellent character and true divine gnosis. It is the felicity that guarantees to him his happiness in this life and in the hereafter. If one submerges oneself in material enjoyments and ignores spiritual felicity, then it is nothing but infelicity, unhappiness.

As for their marvelling at the good characteristics — like truth, sincerity, trustworthiness and fine manners, etc. — which they find in the people of advanced countries, again they are confused. The trouble is that most of our oriental scholars are unable to think in a collective framework, to look at a society as a social unit; they look at an individual as an individual, and that is that. They see a man and think that he is a being who is independent of all things and has no such connection with anything as to affect his independent existence. (But the reality is otherwise.) Also, when such a scholar thinks about his life, his only aim is to gain benefits for himself and ward off harms from himself. He is always involved in his own affairs — and it is individualistic thinking. Then he weighs others with the same measure and decides that they too are individualistically independent.

Such judgment can be true, if at all, about that man only whose thinking is individualistic. But it cannot be applied to a person who is conditioned to think in the framework of society: he considers himself an inseparable part of his society, who has no existence separate from it; his benefits are a part of his society's benefits; the society's good is his good; and its harm, is his harm; every attribute and condition of the society is his own attribute and condition. Such a man thinks in an entirely different way. When it comes to establishing relations with other persons, he only concerns himself with relations outside his society; as for relations with other parts of the same society, he does not care in the least.

Let us give you an example. Man is a compound, made of numerous limbs and faculties, all of which are combined together to give them a real oneness which we call ''humanity''. This makes them merge their separate identities and actions in the man's independent existence. Eyes, ears, hands and feet, see, hear, attack and walk for the man; each of these organs enjoys its activity when the man enjoys it. Each of them aspires to establish contact with some separate identity whom the man wants to link with — either with good intention or bad. Eyes, ears, hands or feet want

to do good or bad to him whom the man wants to do good or bad. But as for the organs' own mutual relation and contact — when all of them are under the banner of one human being — seldom does one of them any harm to any other, nor is any of them discomforted by any other.

This is then the condition of the parts of a man, and theirs is one unified collective progress. The same is the position of individual members of a human society when their thinking is moulded in collective mould. Their good or evil, piety or depravity, benevolence or malevolence are one with those of the society when looked at as one single identity.

The Qur'ān has done the same when it has judged various nations and groups whose thinking, because of their religious or national prejudice, was moulded in collective mould, like the Jews, the Arabs, and a number of ancient nations. Thus, you will find it censuring the present generations for the sins of their progenitors, blaming the contemporary groups for the misdeeds of their predecessors. All this because it is a fair and true judgment regarding those who think in a collective way. The honoured Qur'ān has so many verses of this theme that it is not even necessary to quote them.

Of course, justice demands that if there be some good people in that same society, their due rights should not be suppressed. Although they live in that corrupted social order and mingle with their compatriots, their hearts are not pulluted by their society's evil thinking and widespread inner sickness. They are in it but — like extra limbs — are not a part of it. The Qur'ān has taken the same view when, in middle of general censure, it excepts good and righteous persons.

It is clear from the above description that while deciding about the goodness or badness of the members of advanced civilized societies — in contrast to those of other nations — one should not see as to how they live with one another, how they deal with their compatriots, how in short is their internal life. Rather, one should look at their collective personality as it shows itself when they deal with other weaker nations, as they behave with other collective societies of the world. It is this criterion that should be kept in mind when one wants to judge the worth of a society — its goodness or badness, its felicity or infelicity. It is from this angle that our scholars should approach the subject. After that they are at liberty either to admire that social order or to be scandalized by it.

By my life, if a thoughtful observer looks at the history of their collective life since the European renaissance, and ponders on what they have done to other poor helpless nations .and tribes, he will at once realize that these people (who supposedly are full of mercy and sincerity for mankind; who serve the humanity with their lives and properties; who have bestowed freedom and given helping hand to oppressed and suppressed nations; and who have abolished slavery and bondage) have no other goal except subjugating weak and poor nations as long as they can, by any method at hand. One day it is done through military campaign, another day by colonial intrigues; some day it is by outright annexation, on other occasions in the guise of suzerainty; one day they establish themselves in the name of guarding the joint interests, another day on the pretext of helping to preserve the independence; sometimes they establish foothold in the name of peace-keeping or repulsing a danger, at other times to defend the rights of deprived and disloged groups; and so on and so forth.

Healthy human nature does not agree to treat such societies as good ones, nor to praise them as happy ones — even if we shut our eyes from the meaning given to happiness by religion, revelation and prophethood.

How can human nature agree to this paradox? It equips all its members equally with all faculties; then how can it contradict its own decision and give some men a charter to own the others? An ownership that gives the ‘‘owners’’ authority on lives, honour and properties of the ‘‘subjects’’, and paves the way for them to play with their (the subjects’) lives and existence, to control their perception and will? And all this savagery to a degree not seen or experienced even by primitive men? For reference you should study the history of these nations and have a look at what present generation is suffering on their hands. If such a situation is called happiness and goodness, it could only be in an ironical and sarcastic sense.

6. What is the Basis of Islamic Society? How it lives on?

Society — of any type — comes into being when a common goal and ambition unites its individual members. That goal is a single spirit spread throughout the society that makes it one entity. In non-religious societies that goal is man’s worldly life seen collectively — not individualistically

— i.e. collective enjoyment of the advantages of physical life.

What is the difference — in characteristics — between collective and individualistic enjoyments? If man is able to live alone, he will be unhindered, unrestricted, in all his enjoyments; there will be nothing to oppose or prevent him. The only restriction will come from the limitations put by his own limbs. For example, he cannot breath in all the air in atmosphere — even if he wants to — because his lungs are not so big; he cannot take the food except to a certain amount, because his digestive system would not tolerate it. The same applies to other faculties and limbs that restrict each other's activities. But, as we have supposed that there was no other human being to demand share in exploitation of natural resources and benefits, there would be nothing to put restriction on his activities or to hinder him in his desires and actions.

But the position is different for a man living in a society. If he were to act without any restraint, with a will of his own, it would create friction and collision, life would become intolerable and the mankind would perish. (We have fully described it under the discourse of Prophethood.[1])

That is the only reason that leads people to the rule of law in society. But uncivilized societies do not consciously realize its need; they just follow their customs and traditions which in their turn give rise to discord and quarrel among the members; thus all of them feel obliged to observe some rules that could give some protection to the society. As those laws are not based on a solid foundation, they are liable to imperfection and nullification, alteration and invalidation.

On the other hand, civilized societies base their laws on solid foundation — according to their degree of progress and advancement. Through those laws they remove the discord and difference appearing in the society's intentions and activities, inasmuch as they put some restrictions and limits on them. Then they concentrate the power and authority in a centre which is given responsibility to enforce the law and implement its provisions. It appears from the abvoe that:

First: Law, in fact, is the factor that moderates people's desires and actions, by putting limitations on them and thus removing the sources of discord and difference.

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 3, pp. 204 — 208. (*tr.*)

Second: The society governed by law allows its members complete freedom in matters not covered by the law; and it is as it should be, because man has been equipped with perception and will, and once these factors are moderated further restriction is uncalled for. That is why modern laws do not care about divine knowledge or ethics. Consequently, these two important things appear to the people in the shape given to them by the nature of law. They have to compromise and conform with the law — as its dependent. Thus sooner or later they turn into external rituals devoid of inner purity. Also, it is for this reason that we see the politics playing with the religion: one day it (politics) decides against religion and makes it illegal; another day it relies on it and goes to the extreme to keep its banner aloft; a third day leaves it alone in benign neglect.

Third: This system is not free from defect. Although the society has given an individual or some individuals responsibility to enforce the law, yet ultimately there is no guarantee that it would be enforced. If the person who has final power and authority deviates from truth, and changes the collective power into personal hold; and ignores or nullifies the law to establish his own rule over mankind, then there will be nothing to subdue this despot or to bring him back to the path of justice. There are countless examples of this phenomenon even in this time of ours, this age of culture and civilization — let alone the historical proofs of earlier days.

Add to this defect another shortcoming: Many is a time when the executive authority remains completely unaware that law had been broken. Or, the criminal manages to go out of its jurisdiction.

Now, we come back to our original topic: A society is held together by a single shared goal, i.e., enjoyment of this worldly life's advantages. It is what general public calls happines. But from Islam's point of view, human life has a much wider circle than this worldly life — it encompasses also the life hereafter which is the real life. Islam knows that nothing will be of any use in that next life except divine gnosis — all of which is concentrated in monotheism. Also it realizes that this knowledge cannot be preserved or protected except through noble moral values and by purifying the self from all base traits. It recognizes that these meritorious characteristics cannot be completed and perfected unless man lives in a healthy society which relies on divine worship,

which submits to the demands of Allāh's Lordship, and wherein each member deals with all others according to social justice. In short, from Islamic point of view the unifying goal on which human society is based is the religion of montheism; it has the same principle of montheism. It has not stopped — in this legislation — at merely moderating the intentions and actions; rather it has completed it with the acts of worship and added to it true divine knowledge and noble moral traits.

Thereafter, it gave the responsibility of its enforcement first to the Islamic government and then to the whole society. The latter would do it through good training in knowledge and practice and by enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

One of the most important aspects of this religion is the fact that all its parts, all its components, are so well-knit together that the whole constitutes one perfect unit: The spirit of monotheism permeats all the virtuous characteristics and ethics which this religion invites to; and the spirit of good character is spread throughout the deeds which the society members are obligated to perform. Thus all the components of Islamic religion, in final analysis, return to monotheism; and monotheism on exoteric level become noble ethics and good deeds. When monotheism comes down, it becomes ethics and deeds; and when they ascend, they become monotheism. *To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed lifts them up* [35:10].

Question: The objection laid down against civil laws (when, for example, the executive authority refuses to implement them or fails to detect the law-breakings) may also be brought against Islam with equal force. Its clearest proof may be seen in the present condition of Islam, when it has become so enervated that it has lost all its grip over the society. The reason here too is the same: There is no one who could enforce its tenets among the people — even for a day.

Reply: What is the reality of law in general, be they divine or man-made? They are only imaginative forms in people's minds, some cognition retained in hearts. It is by appropriate human will that they are implemented and thus perceived and observed. Obviously, if the will is lacking, nothing can be found to apply the laws to. The same is the case of those factors which maintain the relation of this will with law's enforcement — in order to preserve and strengthen the law. However,

secular laws are concerned with no more than connecting the actions with intentions of the majority; but they do not care to arrange for preservation of that intention. As long as the intention is alive, perceptive and active, the law is implemented. But if that will die (because of deterioration in the people's spirit, or decrepitude eating away the society's structure); or if it was alive but was bereft of perception and cognition (because the society was submerged in vain distractions, or inordinately involved in luxuries and material enjoyments); or even if it was alive and perceptive but became ineffective (because some other stronger power imposed its own will over that of the majority); in all these situations the nation would not attain its ambition of enforcing the law and protecting the society from destruction and annihilation. The same would be the case in the events like secret crimes which the executive could not detect; or which it cannot deal with — like the events occurring outside its jurisdiction. The discords and splits appearing within European nations after the World Wars I and II give a clear picture of this syndrome.

This breakdown of laws and destruction of society occurs only because society does not care to establish the real factor that preserves the nation's will and keeps it strong and dominant — and it is the high morality, the noble character. The nation's will, in its survival and continuation of existence, gets support from relevant characteristics only — as is explained in psychology. If the nation's traditions and applied laws are not based on sound foundation of high morality, they would be like an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface, that has no stability.

Ponder, for example, on the appearance of communism. It is but a natural child of democracy; it came into being because some classes of the society were extremely opulent while the others were totally deprived. There was a huge distance between the two extremes; on one side was cruelty and oppression, on the other was growing impatience and accumulated hatred and rage. The same happened in the World Wars, coming one after the other, and the third is waiting on the side to pounce on humanity any moment. It has undermined the earth and destroyed the tilth and the stock; and it did not, and does not, have any reason except the ''civilized and advanced'' nations' arrogance mischief and greed.

On the other hand, Islam has laid the foundation of its traditions and laws on morality and has put utmost efforts in training the people in noble character, in order that it may ensure that the laws shall be

enforced practically. This noble moral character is with the man in secret and in open, in private and in public; it does its duty and discharges its responsibility — far better than any guarding police, more effectively than any other authority that engages itself in maintaining the law and order.

Of course, the educational institutions in these countries try to train the people in meritorious characteristics, and vigorously exhort the people to it. But it proves of no use.

First: The only fountain-head of evil traits is extravagance and inordinate material enjoyment on one side and extreme deprivation on the other. The civil laws have given the people unrestricted freedom in this respect; it has provided one class with all privileges and left the others destitute. In this background, is not the call to sublime morality a call to two mutually contradictory things? An attempt to join two opposites?

Moreover, as you have seen, these nations have adopted a collective thinking. Their societies even today endeavour their utmost to oppress weaker societies and trample on their rights; they exploit these poor nations' resources, subjugate their people, and dictate their own decisions to them to the utmost possible extent. What is this call to goodness and piety — with these characteristics? Is it not a self-contradicting call that could bring no result?

Second: Even sublime morality needs — for its continuation and preservation — a guarantor to protect it and keep it alive; and there can be no guarantee for it other than monotheism, i.e., the belief that there is one God for the universe, Who has beautiful names; He has created the creatures in order that they should attain to their perfection and happiness; He loves good and virtue, and dislike evil and mischief ; He will surely gather all for deciding between them and awarding them their recompense; thus He will reward the good-doer for his good deeds and punish the evil-doer for his evil.

Obviously, if you remove the belief in the Day of Judgment, there would be no genuine reason why one should not follow one's desires, why should one desist from material enjoyments and physical lust. The human nature wants and demands what a man himself desires, not what would benefit someone else — except when the other person's desire somehow becomes this man's. (Think over it properly.)

Suppose a man desires something that he cannot obtain without trampling on someone else's rights. There is nothing to restrain him, no judge to punish him, no censurer to censure him and no reprover to reprove him. Now, what hindrance is there to stop him from committing the crime and perpetrating the injustice, no matter how serious and heinous it might be? As for some imaginary restraints (and often scholars are misled in this matter!), like patriotism, love of humanity, exalted commendations or things like that, they are merely heart's inclinations and inner feelings; there is nothing to sustain them except education and training — and that too is not based on any solid reason. Thus these things are just conventional attributes and common occurrrences; there is no guarantor to prevent their obliteration. Why should a man sacrifice his life in order that someone else might live after him, when he believes that death is complete annihilation and total extinction? As for the exaltation and praise, it depends on others' tongues; and how can he enjoy it after he has sacrificed himself and become ''nothing''?

In short, no thinking person can deny that man would never opt for a deprivation whose recompense would not reach him, whose benefit would go to someone else. As for the promise in such situations that his good memory would remain alive for ever and he would ''enjoy'' eternal wonderful praise, it is just a deceit and delusion in which he allows himself to be entrapped. It is self-delusion that lets him think that even after death and extinction his condition would be the same as before death; that he would know about and enjoy the good things told about him after his death. But surely it is nothing except self-deception, a fantasy of imagination. His condition is not unlike a drunk man driven by his emotions; he pardons his enemies, offers his life and honour, wealth and prestige, for causes which he would never approve of, if he were in his senses; but he is drunk and unable to understand, and therefore thinks that it is heroism — while in fact it is nothing but foolishness, madness.

Man cannot safeguard against this or other such misjudgments and blunders except through belief in monotheism mentioned above. That is why Islam has built the noble character (which is an integral part of its ordained laws) on the foundation of monotheism — a concomitant of which is the belief in the Day of Judgment. If a man believed in these realities, he would feel bound to do good and abstain from evil, wherever and in whatever situation he might be, whether anybody knew of his

action or not, whether anyone praised him or not, whether or not there were someone to exhort him to do it or not to do it. He would know that Allāh was with him, the Knower, the Preserver, Who watched what every soul was doing; he would also know that later on a day was coming when every soul should find present what it had done of good and what it had done of evil, and in which every soul would be given recompense of what it had earned.

7. Two Logics: Logic of Understanding and Logic of Sensuousness

The logic of sensuousness calls to worldly benefits and drives one to it. If an action is profitable and man is aware of its profitability, then his senses intensely yearn to do it. If, on the other hand, he does not see any benefit in it then he remains inactive and inert.

The logic of understanding, on the other hand, motivates one to follow the truth, and believes that it is the best thing which may benefit the man, no matter it is accompanied by worldly benefit or not; because that which is with Allāh, is better and more enduring.

To see the difference between the two logics, compare two lines of a poem of ‘Antarah (which is based on the logic of sensuousness) with a Qur’ānic verse [on the same subject] based on the logic of understanding. Antarah says:

And my saying (to my soul) *whenever it belched or was agitated:*
‘(Stay) *at your place; you shall either be praised or shall get rest.’*

He wants to say: I keep my soul steadfast (whenever it is shaken in dangerous and fearsome war situations) by saying to it: Be calm and remain steadfast; if you are killed, people will praise you for your steadfastness and remaining firm in the midst of the danger; and if you kill the enemy you will be rid of him and thus get peace of mind. Therefore, remaining steadfast is good in either case.

Check it with the divine words (based on the logic of wisdom): *Say: ‘‘Nothing will afflict us save what Allāh has ordained for us; He is our Patron; and on Allāh should the believers rely.’’ Say: ‘‘Do you await for us but one of the two most excellent things? And we await for you that*

Allāh will afflict you with punishment from Himself or by our hands. So wait; we too will wait with you.'' [9:51 — 52].

The believers believe that it is only Allāh Who is their Guardian and Patron; and it is entirely .in the hand of Allāh to support and help them. They do not care about whatever good or evil comes to them; they long only for the reward which He. has promised them for being submissive to Him and holding fast to His religion. As He says: *... this is because there afflicts them not thirst or fatigue or hunger in Allāh's way, nor do they tread a path which enrages the unbelievers, nor do they attain from the enemy what they attain, but a good work is written down to them on account of it; surely Allāh does not waste the reward of the doers of good. Nor do they spend anything that may be spent; small or great, nor do they traverse a valley, but it is written down to their credit, that Allāh may reward them with the best of what they have done* [9:120 — 121].

Accordingly they say to their enemies: If you kill us or do us any harm, we shall get great reward and good result from our Lord; and if we killed you or afflicted you with some misfortune, we shall again get great reward and good result from our Lord in addition to the victory we shall get over you in this world. In either case, we shall be happy and our position is enviable; whatever you await for us is one of the two good things, we shall be successful and happy in either case. But according to your belief, you will attain your goal and will get happiness only in one case, i.e., if you were to vanquish us. We therefore await for you what would displease you, while you await for us only that which would please us, would make us happy.

These, therefore, are the two logics. One tries to build courage and steadfastness on foundation of sensuousness; it teaches that he who would stand firm in battle would get one of the two benefits: either people's admiration and praise or deliverance from enemy; and that too on the condition that there was some benefit in it for the figher who was exposing himself to danger; if there was no benefit coming to him (e.g., people were not expected to applaud and acclaim him because they did not appreciate war; or did not distinguish faithful service from betrayal; or the service was of a type that they could not know about; or faithfulness and faithlessness were equal in their eyes; or his heart was not at rest by destruction of enemy) then this logic becomes totally ineffective, inoperative and useless.

The above examples cover most of the usual reasons involving injustice and wrong, fraud and crime. An embezzler, when going against the law, says: 'My services are not properly appreciated by the people; a faithful servant and a faithless one are all equal in their eyes; the faithless one enjoys rather a more pleasant life, his condition is far better than mine.' A criminal thinks that he would surely wriggle out of the clutches of law; that the supervising authorities could not catch him out; his affairs would remain a secret and people would not be able to detect his misdeeds. One who is apathetic and sluggish in establishing the truth and rising against its enemies, and fraternizes with the forces of untruth, offers the plea that standing for truth would humiliate him in people's eyes, the modem world would laugh at him and would look down at him as a relic of the middle ages or the pre-historic times. If you talked to him about spiritual purity and moral decency, he would reply: Of what use to me shall the spiritual purity be if it leads to misery, hardship and shortened life?

On the other hand, the other logic, the Islamic one, has built its structure on following the truth and seeking the reward and recompense from Allāh. As for the worldly aims and goals, they occupy secondary position in its scheme. It is clear that no situation in life can remain out of the above-mentioned basic and primary goal — it is all-encompassing general aim which covers all human activities. According to this logic, every action — be it an act of commission or omission — is done for the pleasure of Allāh, in submission to His will, for following the truth which He has ordained; and He is the Guard, the Knowing that neither slumber overtakes Him nor sleep; none can protect from Him, nor anything in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Him; and Allāh is Aware of what you do.

Thus there is for every soul, in whatever it does or fails to do, an Observer, a Witness Who preserves what is done by man. It makes no difference whether the people witness in it not, admire it or not, appreciate it or not.

Islamic training had been so effective that people used to come to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and confess to him the sins and crimes they had done in secret, and accepted the penalty and punishment given to them (from death sentence downwards); their only motive being to seek the pleasure of Allāh, and to cleanse their souls from the filth of sins and

rust of evil.

If a scholar ponders on those events, he would understand how wonderful the effect of religious training was on the people's souls, and how it had trained them to gladly offer to Allāh the most desired and most important things they had — that is, the life and all that it covers. If this discussion were not Qur'ānic, we would have given some relevant examples from Islamic history.

8. What is the Meaning of seeking Reward from Allāh, and turning away from others? Someone might ask:

To make the reward of the hereafter as the common and primary goal of human social life would entail discarding this life's aims which the human nature invites to; it would destroy the social system and drive people to monasticism. After all, how could it be possible to attach oneself exclusively to one goal and at the same time preserve other important goals too? Is it not a contradictory statement?

Reply: It is an erroneous impression emanating from ignorance of divine wisdom and secrets which the Qur'ān has so clearly described. Islam has based its legislation on the foundation of creation, as we have repeatedly shown in many discourses in this book. Allāh says: *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion in natural devotion* (to the truth), *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no alteration* (by anyone else) *in the creation of Allāh; that is the right religion* [30:30].

In short, the series of actual creative causes by linking together have brought the human species into being, and are driving it to its life's goal that is presecribed for it. It is therefore essential for man to develop his life in the framework of free will and struggle, according to the laid down causes to attain his goal, in order that his life does not turn into a battle between cause and goals — otherwise it would lead to destruction and annihilation. This then is the religion of Islam — if the questioner would understand it. Of course, there is one Single Cause above all the causes Who has created all causes and manages all its big and small affairs; and He is Allāh, Who is the Complete Cause above all the causes (in the correct meaning of this word). Man is obliged to surrender to His will and submit to His command. This is what we mean when we say that

monotheism is the only foundation of Islamic religion.

It is clear from the above that preserving the belief of monotheism, surrendering to Allāh's will and seeking His pleasure throughout one's life follows entirely the system of causality by giving everyone his due right — without polytheism or heedlessness. A Muslim has some worldly goals and some Of the hereafter, some material objectives and some spiritual. But he does not involve himself with material or worldly goals more than what is rationally required of him. That is why we find Islam calling to the belief of monotheism, to attach oneself exclusively to Allāh, to have pure belief in Him turning away from every other cause, every other goal; and yet it orders the people to follow the laws of life, to proceed on the path of nature.

Again, it is obvious that it is only the members of Islamic society who are truly happy — both in this world and the next; that their objective — to seek the pleasure of Allāh in all activities — does not conflict with life's other objectives, provided it has the upper hand.

The above discourse removes one more misunderstanding, which has been shown by some sociologists. They think that the reality of religion and its fundamental objective is to establish social justice, and the matters related to divine worship have secondary position — they are mere shoots branching from that root. Whoever therefore establishes social justice is on religion, even if he had no belief nor did he perform any worship.

But if a scholar meditates on the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* and especially on the life history of the Prophet, he would at once see through the falsity of this ''argument'', without any trouble or effort. Moreover, this talk that intends to discard the belief of monotheism and noble virtues from religious tenets, actually is an attempt to change the religious objective (i.e., belief of monotheism) into secular objective (i.e., material enjoyment); and you have seen that these are two opposite objectives, none of them can be changed into the other — neither in roots, nor in shoots, nor in its fruits.

9. What is the Meaning of Freedom according to Islam?

The word, 'Freedom', in the sense it is used nowadays, is not older than a few centuries. Probably, its genesis dates from the Europeans

renaissance a few hundred years ago. Yet, its idea was present in minds — a choicest desire of hearts — since ancient times.

The creative natural basis, which this idea emanates from, is the will the man is equipped with in his existence and which gives rise to his actions; it is a psychological condition nullification of which would nullify perception and sensation, that in its turn would lead to the nullification of humanity.

But man is a social being; his nature drives him to living in society, cooperating with others, co-ordinating his will and aligning his activity with the will and activities of others. This leads him to submit to a law that would regulate people's wills and actions by demarcating proper boundaries for each. The same nature that has given the man freedom of will and action, puts also limitations on that will and action and restricts that initial freedom.

As the modern civil laws have built their regulations on the foundation of material enjoyment — as you have seen — it has resulted in freedom from religion: man is free in matters of basic religious knowledge to adhere to it or not; in moral issues (and in all things beyond the sphere of civil laws) to choose, and act on, whatever he desires. This is what the freedom means in modern times.

But as for the Islam, as you know, it has based its laws on monotheism, and secondarily on noble moral values. Then it has given guidance for all types of personal and social activities, be they big or small; there is nothing related to man but the Islamic *sharī'ah* has a law prescribed for it. Therefore, there is no room here for the freedom (in the above sense).

Of course, it has freed man from the fetters of serving other than Allāh. It is a short sentence; but has a vast meaning. Its significance may be appreciated when you ponder deeply on Islamic system and the practical way of life which it guides to and which it establishes among the society's members and its various classes. Then compare it with what you see of the systems of domination, control and power found in the civilized societies, as between its own members and classes and also between a strong and a week nation.

As for the Islamic commandments, it has given choice and freedom in all those things which Islam has made lawful of good sustenance and advantages of moderate life without inclining to either extreme. Allāh

says: *Say: ''Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allāh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?''* [7:32]; *He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth* [2:29]; *And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself* [45:13].

It is really astonishing to see an exegete labouring to ''prove'' freedom of belief in Islam on the evidence of the verses like: *There is no compulsion in religion* [2:256]. We have explained its true significance in its Commentary in the chapter of The Cow. Here it should be added that, as you know, monotheism is the foundation of all Islamic tenets and beliefs. How is it possible, then, to allow freedom of belief? Is it not just a clear contradiction? The idea of freedom of belief has the same position in Islam as the idea of freedom from the rule of law would have in the civil laws.

Look at it from another angle. Belief (i.e., attainment of affirmative knowledge firmly-rooted in mind) is not a voluntary action of man, so that it could be a subject of permission or prohibition, compulsion or freedom. What can be prohibited or permitted is the action resulting from that belief. For example, propagation of that belief, canvassing for it, writing and publishing it, undermining the opposite belief and activity of the people — these are the things which may be allowed or forbidden. Obviously if such activities are against the laws of the. land, or go against the constitution or principles on which the laws are based, then there is no alternative to prohibiting them by law. The basis of Islamic legislation is the religion of monotheism (the belief in the Oneness of God, the prophethood and the Day of Judgment); it is what is unanimously believed by all the Muslims as well as the People of the Book (i.e., the Jews, the Christians and the Zoroastrians). The Islamic freedom is confined within this limit. To claim freedom beyond this limit is tantamount to destroy the foundation of religion.

Of course, there is one more freedom, i.e., freedom of describing one's belief for debate or discussion, as we shall explain below in item 14.

10. What is the Way to Change and Perfection in Islamic Society?

It might be said: Agreed that the Islamic system encompasses all that is necessary for a happy life, and that the Islamic society is enviably

happy and pleasant. But this system, because of its allpervasiveness and lack of freedom of belief, leads to stagnation of society, retards its evolutionary progress, and blocks the way to change and perfection — and, as they say, it is a serious defect for a society which claims to be perfect. Evolutionary process demands presence of opposite forces in a thing: those forces, through mutual action and reaction [through conflict between an original direction and its direct opposite], would bring about a new position free from the defects of the original forces. If we admit that Islam removes the opposite tenets and especially the beliefs opposed to its fundamentals, then such a society would be brought to a standstill in its evolutionary progress.

COMMENT: It is one of the objections of the dialectical materialism; but it is based on an astonishing confusion. Human knowledge and belief is of two kinds: One, that which accepts change and evolution: these are technical subjects that serve to raise the standard of material life and to subdue the natural forces, e.g., the mathematics, the physics, etc. Whenever these subjects and technologies would progress from lower to higher level, from defectiveness to perfection, the society would accordingly change and progress.

The other type of knowledge is that which does not accept change — although it accepts perfection in another sense. This is the metaphysical divine knowledge and cognition, that unveils the genesis and resurrection, happiness and unhappiness, etc. It explains these affairs definitely and finally; there is no change or evolution in it — although it accepts development and perfection in the sense of depth and detail. This knowledge and this cognition do not effect societies and ways of life except in a general manner. If this knowledge and these beliefs remain standstill in one condition, it would not cause the society to stop in its developmental progress. We know that we have a lot of general ideas which are unchangeable and static, but they have not hindered the society's progress. For example, we say and believe that man should work to protect his life; that the work should aim at a benefit returning to the man; that man should live within a society; that the universe exists in reality, it is not a delusion; that man is a part of the universe, a part of the planet called the Earth; and that he has got some limbs and organs, some powers and faculties. There are a lot of other such confirmed and

unchangeable informations and beliefs, and their unchangeability does not affect the progress of the society, nor does it make the society stagnant. In this category comes the belief that the universe needs, and is created by, One God, Who has ordained for the people a comprehensive law that combines all the ways of happiness, and which was sent to us through the prophets, and He will gather all people on a day when He will award them the recompense of their deeds. It is the only foundation on which Islam has built its social order, and which it jealously guards. As is known, it is such a proposition that, if made subject to dialectical conflict between thesis and anti-thesis producing a synthesis, it would cause decline and retrogress of the society — as we have explained several times. This is also the case with all real facts and truths related to metaphysics; their rejection cannot do any good to the society, it can bring only its decline and fall.

In short, human society in its evolutionary progress needs day to day change and perfection only in the ways of exploiting natural resources. It takes place through continuing technical research and application of knowledge to practical needs; and Islam does not hinder this process in the least.

As for the changes in the principles of sociology, in the theoretical aspects of social order — like autocratic monarchy, democracy, communism and theories like that — they become necessary only when the prevalent system fails to bring the society nearer to social perfection. It is not an evolution from defectiveness to perfection. If there is any relation between one theory and the other, it is that of wrong and right, not that of defective and perfect, nor of undeveloped and developed. Now suppose that a social order is firmly established exactly as man's nature desires, i.e., on social justice; people under its beneficial training are equipped with useful knowledge and good deeds; then enhancing the level of the knowledge and activities, they are proceeding joyfully and energetically towards their happiness; in this way they are continuously perfecting themselves and increasing the sphere of their happiness and felicity. What is the need, in this case, to change such a social order? What do they want more than that? No thinking person will say that man must change every thing around himself even if there is no need for any change.

Objection: You cannot avoid change even in those things which you

claim to be above the change, like beliefs, noble ethics, etc. All these things do change with the passage of time when social conventions change and new environment replaces the old. No one can deny that the thinkings of modem man are so different from those of the ancient ones. Likewise, his ideas are affected by variation in his habitat, i.e., whether he lives in equatorial, polar or moderate zone. Also, his way of life affects his thinking, depending on whether he is a boss or a servant, a Bedouin or a townsman, prosperous or unprosperous, rich or poor and so on. No doubt, ideas and opinions differ with difference in influencing factors, and change when the times change.

Reply: This objection is based on the theory of relativity of human knowledge and ideas. According to this theory, truth and falsehood, good and evil, are relative affairs. General theoretical knowledge concerned with genesis and resurrection, as well as general practical opinions (e.g., the proposition that society is good for man, or that justice is a virtue — a general proposition, not as applied to practical conditions) have only relative values which always change with the change of time, environment and conditions. But we have described in another place falsity of this theory in its generality. [1]

The sum total of our discourse there was that this theory does not cover general theoretical propositions and a part of general practical ideas.

It is enough to show invalidity of generality of this theory that: If we agree that this theory is in fact general, unrestricted and unchangeable, then it entails acceptance of [at least] one unrestricted general proposition that is not relative — and that is this theory, this proposition, itself. Alternatively, if we say that it is not an unrestricted generality, but only a partially correct proposition, then it proves — as a concomitant — existence of unrestricted general propositons. Thus, the theory is not general, in any case. In other words, if it is correct that `Every opinion and belief must change at some time', then this theory itself must change one day, i.e., there should be some beliefs and opinions that will never change. (Think it over.)

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 2, pp. 234 — 244. (*tr.*)

11. Is Islamic *Sharī'ah* competent to bring happiness in the modern Life?

Someone might ask: Let us say that Islam had provided comprehensive guidance for all situations of life as it was in those days when the Qur'ān was revealed; and was thus able to lead that society to its true happiness and to all its ambitions. But times have changed; and so have the ways of human life. The culture and mechanical life of modern civilization is totally different from the simple life of fourteen centuries ago that was confined to primitive natural resources. Now man, as a result of his long and arduous struggles, has reached a level of development and civilization which, if compared to his condition of a few centuries earlier, would look like a comparison between two different species. How can the laws made to regulate the life of that time solve the problems of modern times' complicated and ingenious life? How can either of the societies take the burden of the other on itself?

Reply: Obviously, there is difference between the two eras — in the forms of life. But it does not mean difference in general principles and substance of life. What has changed is not the principle, but its application. Man even today needs food to eat, clothes to wear, house to live in, means of transportation to carry him and his goods from one place to another, and a society to belong to, as well as associations and connections of various types — sexual, commercial, technical, professional, etc. This need is general and universal; it will not change as long as man is man with this nature and physique, as long as his is a human life. There is no difference in this matter between a primitive man and a modern one. The difference is only in the means and equipments which he uses to satisfy his material needs. The primitive man used to eat fruits, vegetables and game meat, which he obtained in simple ways. Today he has got thousands of preparations for food and drink, of various qualities beneficial to his nature, different colours pleasing to his eyes, various flavours delicious to his taste, attractive shapes and forms pleasant to his touch, with a lot of other variations in its specifications. But all this variation does not change the basic reality that both categories are food, which man eats to satiate his hunger and satisfy his

desire.

These general conditions and ideas of man have not changed with the change of times; it is only their applications that have taken other shapes. In the same way, the general laws of Islam — that have been laid down according to the demand of nature for attainment of happiness — are not nullified just because a new means has replaced the old one, if the conformity with basic nature is not affected, if the new means has not deviated from nature. But if there is any conflict with the nature, then Islamic system never agrees with it, neither in old days nor in modern times.

As for rules concerned with day to day affairs and happenings, which by their nature are subject to rapid change, like monetary and administrative matters related to defence, means of communications, transport, municipal affairs and things like that — they are left to the discretion of the ruler. A ruler has the same position within his domain as a head of the family has within his family. The ruler may take decisions about these matters as the family head may do for his family. The ruler may decide about the internal and external affairs of his country — regarding war or peace, financial or other matters — keeping in view the interest of the society, after holding consultations with the Muslims. As Allāh says: *and take counsel with them in the affairs; but when you have decided, then place your trust in Allāh* [3:159]. All this concerns the public affairs.

However, these rules and decisions are of specific nature, not general. They may change according to the situation and condition; policies may change because of new factors coming up and old ones going away. But divine rules are not so, they do not come and go; they are based on the Book and the *sunnah,* and they are not subject to abrogation. (Its detail will be given somewhere else.)

12. Who is entitled to rule over the Islamic Society? What Characteristics he should have?

The authority to rule over the Islamic society belonged to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); and the Qur'ān clearly says that the people were obliged to obey him and follow his commands.

Allāh says:

And obey Allāh and obey the Messenger [64:12];
... that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has taught you [4:105];
The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves [33:6];
Say: ''If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you'' [3:31].

There are many such verses that describe one or the other aspects of his all-encompassing general authority over the Islamic society.

The best way to understand this reality is to study deeply the life of the Prophet and then to ponder collectively on the verses revealed about ethics and laws covering the divine worship, mutual dealings, politics, and other common and social affairs. The picture that will appear on his mind from the sum total of this divine revelation will speak more eloquently than that which may be seen from one or two sentences.

There is another point that a research scholar must keep in mind. Generally the verses dealing with the subjects of the rites of worship, fighting in the way of Allāh, enforcement of the penal code and other such subjects are addressed to the believers collectively, not especially to the Prophet. For example:

... and establish prayers ... [4:77];
... and strive hard in His way ... [5:35];
... and give upright testimony for Allāh ... [65:2];
... fasting has been prescribed for you ... [2:183];
And spend in the way of Allāh ... [2:195];
And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong [3:104];
And strive hard in (the way of) *Allāh a striving as is due to Him ...* [22:78];
(As for) *the fornicatress and the fornicator, flog each of them,* (giving) *a hundred stripes ...* [24:2];
And (as for) *the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands ...* [5:38];
And there is life for you in (the law of) *retaliation ...* [2:179];
And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided ... [3:103];

... that establish the religion and be not divided therein ... [42:13];

And Muḥammad is no more than a messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allāh in the least; and Allāh will reward the grateful [3:144].

There are many verses of this nature, and all taken together make it clear that the religion is a collective matter which Allāh has made people responsible for; He is not pleased with disbelief for His servants; and He intends only that all of them together should establish the religion. The society of which they are members should be managed by themselves — none of them should be less responsible than the others. Enforcement of law is not an especial prerogative of some to the exclusion of the others — be he the Prophet or the others. Allāh says: *That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other* [3:195]. The verse is unrestricted; and it shows that Allāh has kept in consideration the natural effect the members of the Islamic society have on their social order — He cares for it in legislation as He has done in creation. He will not let it waste. He says: *Surely the land is Allāh's; He causes such of His servants to inherit it as He pleases, and the end is for those who fear* (Allāh) [7:128].

Of course, to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) belongs the mission, the guidance and the training. Allāh says: *... who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom ...* [62:2]. He was appointed by Allāh to look after the *ummah,* and manage its affairs in this world as in the hereafter, and he continued to lead them as long as he was alive.

But one should not forget that this system was totally different from a monarchic rule — the rule which treats Allāh's wealth as personal booty of the monarch, and the servants of Allāh as his slaves; giving him full authority to do with them whatever he wants and rule over them in any way he pleases. Nor was it like the social orders based on the principle of material enjoyment, like democracy, etc.; because there are so many distinguishing factors that separate Islam from these systems, and which have left no room for any mix-up.

One of the greatest differences is found in the fact that these societies,

being based on material enjoyment, are motivated by the spirit of exploitation and utilization. It is another name of man's arrogance, that wants everything — even other human beings — subjugated to his will and actions. It permits him to take any route to reach that end; to use any means to get what he desires, to acquire what he wants. In olden days it was known as despotic monarchy; now it appears before our eyes wearing the mask of development and civilization. We are daily witnessing the oppressions, injustices and arrogance meted out by strong nations to the weaker ones; is there any need to remind ourselves of their tyrannies and high-handedness recorded in the histories?

A Pharaoh, a Caesar or a Kisra behaved despotically towards weaker sections of his reign, and played with their lives, properties and dignity in any way he liked. His excuse — if any excuse was ever offered — was that it was a necessary ingredient of rulership which contributed to the efficiency of government and strengthened the Kingdom. He believed that it was a tribute due to his outstanding qualities, to his sovereign status — and his sword spoke for him. Exactly the same thing is happening even now. Look at political relationships of today's strong nations with the weak ones; you will find the history repeating itself. Of course, the sceptre previously held by an individual is now carried collectively by the society, but the spirit is the same and the ambition unchanged.

On the other hand, Islamic system is free of such ambitions and desires; and its proof may be found in the life of the Prophet as evidenced by his conquests and treaties.

Another difference: No human society, that ever appeared on the stage of history, was free from various types of disparity among its members, a factor that always led to discord and chaos. If there are various strata, different classes, in society, it is ultimately bound to destroy the social order: when a few persons hoard treasures of wealth while the common people do not get necessities of life; when elites or nobles get all the privileges which public is deprived of; when so-called ''public servants'' become overlords of the country, then the nation is bound to fall into perdition.

Islamic society presents a pleasant contrast. It is a social order whose parts are all alike; no one has precedence over the others; there is no prvileged class, no dignified lords, no distinguished group. If there is any

distinction it is the one loudly demanded by human nature; it is the superiority accorded to piety — and it is a factor which is in Allāh's hand to decide, men have nothing to do with it. Allāh says: *O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one among you who is most pious* [49:13]; *therefore hasten to* (do) *good works* [2:148]. The ruler and the ruled, the leader and the follower, the superior and the subordinate, the free man and the slave, the man and the woman, the rich and the poor, the big and the small, all of them have equal status in Islam. The legal code is equally applied to all; there is no class at all in social affairs and civil aspects — as may be seen in the life of the Prophet.

A third distinction: The executive power in Islam is not confined within a separate class; implementation of Islamic laws is the responsibility of all members of the society. Each and every individual is obligated to call to the good, to enjoin what is good and forbid the evil. There are many other distinguishing features which a research scholar may easily find out.

This was the condition during the lifetime of the Prophet. As for the subsequent period, the majority of the Muslims believe that it is the Muslims who have the right to choose a caliph to rule over the society; but the Shī'ī Muslims believe that the caliph must be appointed by Allāh and His Messenger, and that they are the twelve Imāms (as explained in detail in theological books).

In any case, there is no doubt that in these days, when the Prophet has died and the twelfth Imām is in occultation, the authority of the Islamic government lies in the hands of the Muslims themselves. It may be inferred from the Divine Book that they are required to appoint a ruler for the Islamic society according to the tradition established by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) — and that is the tradition of *imāmah*, not of monarchy or imperialism. That ruler has the responsibility of enforcing the Islamic laws without any change. As for other matters — apart from the laid down laws — he has to manage the affairs with consultations according to the time and situation.

The proof of the above may be inferred from the verses describing the overall authority of the Prophet when read in conjunction with the verse, *Certainly there is for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent*

example ... [33:21].

13. The Boundary of Islamic State is Ideology and Belief, not physical Landmarks, nor Man-made Borders

Islam has totally refused the theory of national separateness to have any effect or influence on the society. What is the basic factor of nationalism? It has emanated from nomadism and tribal and clannish way of life; another influencing factor was the physical differences in regions or habitat where various groups lived. These two — nomadic wanderings and natural differences in various geographical regions, like hot or cold climate, barrenness or fertility of land, and other features like that — led to the division of mankind into various clans and tribes, as well as to the differences in their languages and colours, as has been explained in its place.

Later these two factors led every group to take possession of the piece of land or region where they lived — it depended on their endeavour and strength. They reserved it for themselves, called it their ‘‘home country’’; gradually they came to love it and repulse the intruders from it with all their powers.

Although this phenomenon came into being for satisfying a natural need, yet it contained a characteristic which was diametrically opposed to the demand of basic human nature, that is, the demand that mankind should live as one single society. It is self-evident that nature wants various scattered powers to join hands and unite, in order that they may get strengthened by that consolidation and union; it will help it to attain its desired good purpose in the best and most perfect way. We may observe this phenomenon in the upward progress of primary matter — it appears first as an element, then passing through different stages it becomes a vegetable, then an animal, then a human being.

When mankind is divided according to the countries people live in, then inhabitants of a country join hands together and unite as citizens of that country; as a result they are separated from other nationalities. They together constitute a ‘‘nation’’, a unit that is totally separate — in body and spirit — from other nations, other units. In this manner, humanity is deprived of its unity and wholeness; and is afflicted by discord, difference and disunity — the very trap which it wanted to avoid. Now this ‘‘new’’ unit starts treating other ‘‘new’’ units (i.e. other nations) in

the same way as it treats other natural things; i.e., it wants to exploit and subjugate other nations. The experience — from the early dawn of humanity to this day — testifies to this truth; and the same theme may be inferred from many verses quoted in earlier discourses.

That is why Islam has discarded these differences, divisions, and separations altogether; and has based the society on the foundation of faith and belief, instead of race, origin, domicile or other such considerations. Even in such matters as matrimony and consanguinity, the criterion for the conjugal rights and inheritance is not the the home or country, but identity of monotheistic belief.

The best proof for this reality may be seen in various facets of this religion's laws, as it has not neglected any aspect of human life without giving a clear direction for it. If the Islamic society is dominating over the world, then the Muslims are obligated to establish the religion and not be disunited. If it is oppressed and overpowered, then again they must try to revive and revitalize the Islam, and to raise its prestige as much as they can. Even if there is only one Muslim in a place, it is his duty to hold fast to the religion, to act according to its laws and to implement it as much as he can — even if it is only by having belief in the heart and praying just by gestures.

It is clear from the above that the Islamic society has been framed in such a way that it can be lived in all conditions, and in every situation — no matter whether Muslims are rulers or ruled, victorious or vanquished, advanced or backward, conspicuous or hidden, powerful or powerless. Particularly, the Qur'ānic verses dealing with the subject of *at-taqiyyah* (اَلتَّقِيَّةْ = dissimulation of one's religion under duress or in face of threatening harm or damage) make this reality abundantly clear. Allāh says: *He who disbelieves in Allāh after his having believed, not he who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of faith ...* [16:106]; *... except when you guard yourselves against them for fear of them ...* [3:28]; *Therefore fear Allāh as much as you can* [64:16]; *O you who believe! fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslims* [3:102].

14. Islam cares for social Order in all its Aspects

The verse under discussion, *O you who believe! be patient, and help*

each other in patience and remain lined up, and fear Allāh, that you may be successful, proves this fact (as explained earlier) apart from many other verses.

Islam makes it a point to establish collectivity in every law and rule which can be observed jointly or performed collectively in relevant manner, ordering and exhorting the Muslims in a way that would lead to the desired goal. A research scholar should look at it from two angles:

First: One should keep in view the difference in degrees of emphasis on collectivity. The Law-Giver has ordained joint efforts directly in *jihād* to the extent that is necessary for the defence. This is the highest category. Then fasting and *ḥajj* have been made obligatory for everyone who is able to do so (and has no genuine excuse for exemption); and as a concomitant people are bound to gather together for these two rites of worship; then they have been sealed by the two *'īds* and their prayers. Then come the daily five-time prayers which are obligatory for every adult and sane Muslim, but congregation is not compulsory in them. Even then, one congregational prayer has been made obligatory once a week on Fridays within a radius of one *farsakh* (اَلفَرْسَخُ = a distant of 6000 yards). So it is another category.

Second: As we have seen, Islam has prescribed congregation for some things directly. Further we find that in some other things it has put emphasis on gathering and collectivity without making it directly obligatory, e.g., obligatory prayers performed in congregation; it is *sunnah* and highly recommended, as it is a tradition established by the Prophet, and people are exhorted to establish the Prophet's traditions.[1] The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) once said about a group of the Muslims who avoided coming to the congregational prayer: ''We are on the verge of ordering — about a group that has left praying in the mosque — that firewood be brought and put on their doors; then fire be kindled over them and their houses be burnt down on them.'' That is the way to be followed in all the traditions established by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); the Muslims are obligated to preserve his traditions by all possible means and at all costs.

These are the subjects related to *ijtihād* based on the Book [of Allāh]

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[1] *Wasā'ilu 'sh-Shī'ah, ''Kitābu 's-Ṣalāh''*, chapter of undesirability of avoiding congregational prayer. (*Author's Note*)

and the *sunnah;* and their explanations and details may be seen in the Islamic Jurisprudence.

Now that we know that Islam emphasizes collectivity in all laws (rites of worship, mutual dealings, and political affairs) which it has laid down for the people, as well as in noble manners and basic beliefs, the time has come to turn our eyes to another direction, that is, the collectivity of Islam in its basic knowledge and fundamental gnosis.

We find that Islam invites the people to the natural religion on the ground that it is the manifest truth in which there is no doubt. There are numerous Qur'ānic verses of this theme, which need not be quoted here. This in itself is the first step in joining and uniting different minds; because people — in spite of their differences, and their attachments to various customs and characteristics — are united in the belief that: ''Truth must be followed''.

Then we see that Islam accepts the excuse of a person for whom the proof has not been furnished, and the path not made clear, even though he might have heard some arguments. Allāh says: ... *that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof* ... [8:42]; *Except the weak from among the men and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way* (to escape); *so these, it may be, Allāh will pardon them, and Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving* [4:99]. Look at the unrestrictedness of the verse and the position of the clause, *''who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way''*. These words give complete freedom to every thinker (who is able to think, examine and research) to meditate on matters connected with religious cognition and to ponder on them deeply. Moreover, the Qur'ānic verses are full of exhortation to meditate, contemplate and ruminate.

It is not a secret that various internal and external factors affect people's thinking in different ways — in its imagination and confirmation as well as in its achievements and decisions. Consequently, it leads to difference in those fundamental principles upon which the Islamic society is based (as we have earlier explained).

However, the difference in understanding of two persons (as explained in psychology, ethics and sociology) emanates from one of the following factors:

1. It may issue from the difference in psychological traits and

intrinsic characteristics — be they good or bad. Such factors have great effect on human knowledge and cognition, because they affect intellectual capacity and ability. The perception and intellectual performance of an upright and just man cannot be compared to that of a headstrong tyrant; a moderate and dignified person will receive knowledge in a way that cannot be imitated by a rash, prejudiced and narrow-minded man; nor by a barbarian who follows every Tom, Dick and Harry; nor by a misguided person who does not know where he is rushing to or what is going to happen to him. This difference can easily be overcome through religious training. This training agrees with religious principles and cognitions, and creates such characteristics that coform with those principles, i.e., noble virtues. Allāh says: ... *a Book revealed after Mūsā verifying that which is before it, guiding to the truth and to a right path* [46:30]; *With it Allāh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His permission and guides them to the straight path* [5:16]; *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways; and Allāh is most surely with the doers of good* [29:69]. The relevance of these verses with the subject matter is obvious.

2. Or it may be a result of the difference in actions. Anti-truth activities like sins and various kinds of lust, temptations and wicked thoughts, teach a man — especially if he is simple-minded — wrong ideas; and prepare his mind for infiltration of doubts and penetration of erroneous thoughts. In this way is created difference in thinking and resistance against the truth.

Islam has laid down some rules to overcome this difficulty:

Firstly, it has obligated the society to call the people to the religion — continuously;

Secondly, it has ordered the society to enjoin the good and forbid the evil;

Thirdly and lastly, it has made it compulsory to dissociate from deviating persons and doubting groups.

Allāh says: *And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong* ... [3:104]. Inviting to good would confirm the true belief and let its roots grow deep in the hearts — through constant teachings and reminders. Then enjoining what is right and forbidding the evil would erase adverse traits that could

prevent the true belief from taking root. Also Allāh says: *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse; and if the Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people. And nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), *but* (theirs) *is only to remind, haply they may guard. And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has deceived, and remind* (them) *thereby lest a soul should be fettered with what it has earned ...* [6:68 — 70]. Here Allāh admonishes the Muslims not to join in a discourse that aims at creating doubt, directing objections or casting aspersions upon religious facts, and divine realities — even if by allusion or implication. He reminds us that it can happen only if man does not take his religion seriously, treats it only as a vain sport or on idle game; it happens when man is beguiled by this transient life; and it may be remedied only through good training and constant reminder of Allāh's majesty.

3. Or this difference may be a result of some extraneous factors; for example, if the man lives in a remote corner where the message of true faith has not reached; or has reached only superfluously or in a distorted form. Or if the man does not have enough understanding to properly grasp the realities of religion, as in the case of idiots or simpletons.

Islam has prescribed for it two remedies: the propagation of religion should cover each and every corner of the world, and the people should be invited to Islam patiently with politeness and good manners. These two factors are the especialities of Islam's missionary activities. Allāh says: *Say: ''This is my way: I invite* (you) *to Allāh; with clear sight* (are) *I and he who follows me ... ''* [12:108]. It is known that a proficient and discerning speaker gauges how much his words would influence a man, what would be their effect on different people of different types; therefore, he speaks only what would be listened to. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said — and it has been narrated by both sects: ''We, the group of prophets, talk with people according to the measure of their understanding.'' Allāh says: *... why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may acquire* (proper) *understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them, so that they may be cautious?* [9:122].

These in short, are various ways for avoiding difference in belief, and

of removing the difference if it appears.

Islam has also laid down a further sociological rule to prevent the difference creeping into the society (which could lead to disorder and weakness of the social order). Allāh says: *And* (know) *that this is* My *path, the straight one, therefore follow it; and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard* (against evil) [6:153]. This verse makes it clear that if they remained united in following the straight path, and cautious against following the other ways, they would be saved from disunity; and their unity and identity would be preserved. Again He says: *O you who believe! fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslims. And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided ...* [3:102 — 103]. It has already been explained that ''the cord of Allāh'' refers to the Qur'ān which explains the realities of religion, or to the Qur'ān and the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) together, as may be inferred from the verses preceding these: *O you who believe! if you obey a party from among those who were given the Book, they will turn you back as unbelievers after you have believed. But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom the communications of Allāh are recited, and among you is His Messenger. And whoever holds fast to Allāh, he indeed is guided to the straight path* [3:100 — 101].

These verses emphasize the importance of unity in religious beliefs, identity of ideas and ideals and cooperation in seeking and imparting knowledge. Whenever the people are confronted with a new ideology or assailed with a doubt, they should resort to the Qur'ān that is recited to them, and meditate on it, so that the roots of difference are pulled out. Allāh says: *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* [4:82]; *And these examples, We set them forth for the people and none understand them but the learned* [29:43]; *so ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know* [16:43]. The verses show that differences may be removed by meditating on the Qur'ān or by referring the matter to those who do meditate.

Also, they prove that referring to the Messenger — and he has the overall responsibility of religion — would remove the discord and disunity from the society and explain the truth which they were obligated to follow. Allāh says: *... and We have revealed to you the Reminder that*

you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect [16:44]. Nearly the same is the import of the verse: *... and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those among them who* (can) *draw out* (the truth) *in it, would have known it ...* [4:83]; *O you who believe! obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything; refer it to Allāh and the Messenger if you believe in Allāh and the last day; this is better and very good in the end* [4:59].

This then is the picture of collective thinking in Islam.

The above discourse also shows that this religion allows the people complete freedom of thought in the same way as it safeguards the especial divine cognition. The way shown by it is as follows:

It is obligatory for the Muslims to meditate on the realities of religion and to try their utmost to think and research for its cognition — collectively and in cooperation with each other. They should not be worried if in this process they are assailed with a doubt or conflicting pointers. What is required in this case is to review his doubt or thought with the help of the Qur'ān — through collective meditation. If that does not remove the trouble, then he should refer it to the Messenger or his successor so that his doubt is removed, and (if it was not valid then) its invalidity is explained to him. Allāh says: *Those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; these are they whom Allāh has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding* [39:18].

Freedom of belief and thought (as we have described above) is something different from the freedom to propagate that idea or belief before referring it to the Qur'ān and the Messenger or his successors. Such propaganda would lead to disunity and discord which in its turn would damage the foundation of the healthy society.

What has been mentioned above is the best possible system for running the society's affairs, inasmuch as it opens the door to intellectual development, and at the same time preserves man's personal freedom. On the other hand, imposition of belief on the people, putting seals on their hearts, crushing the thinking power of men by suppression and oppression, and keeping them in line through whip or sword, anathema or excommunication, boycott or banishment — far be it from Islam to allow or agree to such tactics. In fact, such tactics were and are the trademark

of the Christianity. The history of the Church is replete with its misdeeds, misconducts and high-handedness — particularly between the fifth and the sixteenth centuries of the Christian era. You would look in vain for any parellel in history to the tyrannies, oppressions and cruelties perpetrated by the Christian Church.

Regrettably, we Muslims are now deprived of this bounty and its concomitants (i.e., collective thinking and freedom of belief), just as we have been deprived of many other great bounties which Allāh had bestowed on us. It is because we have fallen short of our duties towards Allāh; and Allāh does not change the condition of a people unless they change their own condition. Now, the churchly behaviour has taken root in our society, with the result that there is disharmony among the hearts and discord in the society; and various sects and groups have raised their heads. May Allāh forgive us, and help us to do what He is pleased with, and guide us to His straight path.

15. The true Religion will ultimately prevail over the world

The good end belongs to piety, to fear of Allāh. Human species, by its nature that is ingrained in it, is seeking its true happiness looking for its real felicity. In other words, it is striving to sit firmly on the throne of its spiritual-cum-physical life — a social life that would give the soul its full share in this world as well as in the hereafter. We have already told you that it is what is known as Islam, the religion of monotheism.

There have appeared there deviations in humanity's march towards its destination, in its ascension to the pinnacle of perfection. But it happens not because the nature has lost its hold, but simply because of some error of judgment, some mistake in applying a principle to a particular situation. The goal decided by creative nature has to be reached sooner or later, it cannot be avoided. Allāh says: *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion in natural devotion* (to the truth), *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no alteration in the creation of Allāh; that is the right religion, but most people do not know.* (That is, they do not have its detailed knowledge, although their nature is aware of it in a general way.) ... *So as to be ungrateful for what We have given them; but enjoy yourselves* (for a while), *for you shall soon come to know ... Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea on*

account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return [30:30 — 41]. Again He says: *... then soon Allāh will bring a people that He shall love them and they shall love Him, humble before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allāh's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer* [5:54]; *And certainly We did write in the Zabūr after the reminder that the earth shall inherit it My righteous servants* [21:105]; *and the* (good) *end is for guarding* (against evil) [20:132]. These and similar other verses tell us clearly that Islam is bound to prevail, appearing one day in its most perfect and complete form; and then it will rule over the world.

Question: Islam appeared on the world's stage at a certain time; it was a link in the chain of history, and it left its effects on the succeeding links. The modern civilization is, wittingly or unwittingly, much indebted to Islam. In spite of that, it is just a wishful thinking that Islam would prevail over the world, that this religion — with all its elements, in its complete form — would ever rule over the earth and attain its goals. It is a proposition which human nature does not accept and would never agree with. Moreover, it, has never been tested in this role, so that we may say that it could really happen and that Islam could ever dominate over the humanity.

Reply: This objection is untenable. We have explained earlier that Islam — in the meaning we have been using it for — is the final destination of mankind, the perfection of humanity to which it is driven by nature; it makes no difference whether man recognizes that goal in its full details or not. Definite experiences, obtained from other species, prove that every species is proceeding towards the goal which is relevant to its being; it is driven to its final destination by the system of creation — and man is not an exception to this universal rule.

Moreover, no system, no ''ism'', that had ever prevailed, or now prevails, in any human society, was ever proved by any previous experiment before it was enforced. Look at the *sharī'ahs* brought by Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsā — they just appeared on the scene and were implemented. The same was the case with the laws brought by Brahma, Buddha, Māni and others. In the same way, the secular systems, like democracy and communism, etc., were established in various societies in

different manners — all without any previous experimentation.

What is required for a social system to be established and to take its roots, is a group of persons with courage of their convictions, endowed with firm determination and high ideals, who would not rest until they have reached their goal; who would not tire, would not be weakened; who would not be assailed by doubts and misgivings about their ultimate success; they would never entertain the idea that perchance they could fail, that perhaps their endeavours would not succeed. They would go on trying determinedly until they have succeeded. This principle applies everywhere, and it makes no difference whether the goal itself is divine or Satanic.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience and remain lined up:* ‘‘Have patience in misfortunes, and help each other to be patient in trial [and temptation], and be lined up with him whom you follow.’’ (*Ma‘āni ’l-akhbār*)

The same Imām said: ‘‘Be patient about your religion, and have patience against your enemy and be linked up to your Imām’’ (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: Nearly the same theme has been narrated from the Prophet through the Sunnī chains.

The same Imām said: ‘‘Be patient about the obligatory commandments, and help each other to be patient in misfortunes, and be linked up to the Imāms.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

‘Alī (a.s.) said: ‘‘Be lined up for the prayers.’’ He said: ‘‘That is, remain waiting for them, because (the system of) garrisoning did not exist at that time.’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

The author says: The difference in the traditions springs from the generality of the orders, as we had mentioned earlier.

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Ḥayyān have narrated from Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Anṣārī that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Should not I guide you to that by which Allāh erases the mistakes and covers the sins?’ We said: ‘Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allāh!’ He said: ‘To perform *al-wuḍū’* properly in spite of inconveniences, and to walk many times to the mosques, and to wait for the (next) prayer after the prayer; so that is the lining up.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: [as-Suyuṭī] has narrated it from the Prophet, also through other chains. There are innumerable traditions about excellence of being lined up or linked up.

* * * * *

Chapter Four

an-Nisā'

(The Women)

176 verses—Medina

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ يٰا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
مِنْ نَفْسٍ وٰاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهٰا زَوْجَهٰا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمٰا رِجٰالاً كَثِيراً وَنِسٰاءً
وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ الَّذِي تَسٰاءَلُونَ بِـــهِ وَالْأَرْحٰامَ إِنَّ اللهَ كٰانَ عَلَيْكُمْ
رَقِيباً ــ ١

In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. [1]

O people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) *and spread from these two, many men and women; and fear Allāh, by Whom you demand one of another* (your rights), *and* (be mindful of) *relationship; surely Allāh is vigilant over you* (1).

* * * * *

[1] *Bismillāhi 'r-Raḥmāni 'r-Raḥīm* is a part — in fact, the first verse — of every chapter except the ninth. It is the well-known and unanimous verdict of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) who according to the Prophet (s.aw.a.) were inseparable Companions of the Qur'ān. According to az-Zamakhsharī, the reciters and jurists of Mecca and Kūfah, as well as ash-Shāfi'ī and his followers are of the same view, as was Ibn 'Abbās, who said that whoever leaves *Bismillāh* ... , leaves 114 verses of the Book of Allāh. (Vide *al-Kash-shāf,* Beirut, vol. 1, pp. 24 — 26)
But the author has followed the system of numbering used by the majority of the Muslims (including the Ḥanafits, the Mālikites and the reciters of Baṣrah and Syria) whereby they do not count it as a verse. Probably, he has done so to avoid confusion in references. (*tr.*)

COMMENTARY

The chapter aims — as may be seen from this opening verse — describing matrimonial laws, like the number of wives allowed, the women with whom marriage is forbidden and things like that; together with the laws of inheritance. It also touches some other matters, e.g., some rules of prayer, *jihād,* evidence, commerce, etc., and some comments on the People of the Book.

The subject matters indicate that it is a Medinite chapter revealed after *hijrah.* Apparently it was revealed piecemeal, not all at one time, although we find in most of the verses some sort of connection with one another.

This verse (as well as a few following ones which touch the subject of orphans and women) are a sort of prologue to prepare the minds for the rules of inheritance and marriage. The permissible number of wives that comes in the third verse — although an important subject — has been mentioned here just as a side-line, taking advantage of the talk preceding it, as we shall describe in its Commentary.

QUR'ĀN: *O people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same* (kind) *and spread from these two, many men and women:* The verse calls them to the fear of their Lord, to the piety, concerning their selves, as they all are human beings, identical in their humanity; there is no difference among them in this reality; man and woman, big and small, old and young, weak and strong, all are the same in their humanity. Therefore, man should not oppress woman, nor should a big and strong person trample on his smaller or weaker fellow, neither in their society to which Allāh has guided them for completion of their happiness, nor in the laws or rules adopted by them which Allāh has inspired them to. They have been given the laws in order that they may live easy life, their existence may be protected and they may continue in this world, as individuals and as members of society.

This explains why the verse is addressed to the ''the people'', and not only to the believers. It also shows why they have been admonished to fear their ''Lord'', instead of saying ''fear Allāh'' or using some other divine name, because the condition attributed to them, *''Who created you from a single being ... many men and women''*, encompasses the whole

mankind and is not confined to the believers; and these are the attributes more relevant to Lordship (i.e., concerned with the affairs of managing and perfecting) and not with the attributes of worship or divinity.

The words, *''Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same* (kind)'': *''an-Nafs* (اَلنَّفْسُ = translated here as ''being'') according to the dictionary and language denotes the thing itself. They say: ''He came to me (*nafsuhu*; نَفْسُهُ =) himself''; or ''He came to me (*'aynuhu;* عَيْنُهُ =) the self same''; although the basis for use of these two words, *''an-nafs''* and *''al-'ayn''* in this meaning (self; same; quiddity of a thing) is etymologically different. *an-Nafs* of a man is that because of which man is man; and it is the combination of soul and body in this life and only the soul in the life of *al-Barzakh*, as we have explained in the Commentary of the verse: *And do not speak of those who are slain in Allāh's way as dead; nay,* (they are) *alive, but you do not perceive* [2:154].

The context obviously shows that the words, *''a single being'',* refer to Adam (a.s.) and *''its mate''* to Adam's wife. These two were the progenitors of this species to which we all belong; and all the human beings return to the same root, to those two parents, as Allāh says in other verses too: *He has created you from a single being, then made its mate of the same* (kind) [39:6]; *O children of Adam! let not the Satan cause you to fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the Garden* [7:27]; and the Satan is quoted as saying: *If Thou shouldst respite me to the Day of Resurrection, I will most certainly cause his progeny to perish except a few* [17:62].

Some exegete has opined: The words, *''a single being''* and *''its mate''*, in this verse refer to human couple of male and female in general, on which human progeny depends. The verse in effect means: 'Allāh has created everyone of you from a human father and mother, there is no difference among you in this respect.' Thus it goes parallel to the words of Allāh: *O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one among you who guards himself most* (against evil) [49:13]. Apparently, it shows that there is no distinction among individuals inasmuch as each has been born of a couple of the same species — from a male and a female.

But this interpretation is patently false. The said exegete has missed

the clear difference between this verse of the Chapter of the ‘‘The Women’’ and that of the Chapter 49 (The Chambers). The latter intends to show that all human beings are one inasmuch as all are human beings, and there is no difference among them in this respect because everyone is born of a human father and a human mother; therefore no one should think himself as superior to the others, as there is no distinction or superiority except through piety. On the other hand, the verse under discussion intends to show their unity in their reality, that all human beings, in spite of their great number and their division between males and females, are the branches of the same root; and although they are now numerous, all of them have sprung from the same source, as the apparent meaning of the phrase, *‘‘and spread from these two, many men and women’’*, shows. This idea is lost if we take the words, *‘‘a single being’’*, and *‘‘its mate’’*, to mean human males and females in general who are the means of producing children. Moreover, this interpretation is not in keeping with the Chapter’s main aim, as explained above.

The phrase, *‘‘and created its mate of the same* (kind)’’: ar-Rāghib has said: ‘‘Each member of a pair of opposite sexes in living creatures is called *az-zawj* (اَلزَّوْجُ = pair, couple, mate); so is a pair in animate and inanimate things, e.g., a pair of socks or shoes; also it is used for anything taken together with another, whether they are similar or opposite to each other ... [Use of] *az-zawjah* (اَلزَّوْجَةُ = wife) [to denote female or the abovementioned pairs] is bad language.’’

The clause, *‘‘and created its mate of the same’’*, apparently is meant to show that its mate was of the same species — similar in humanity to the [original] ‘‘single soul’’; and that all these human beings are the offspring of the original couple — the two similar human beings. The preposition *min* (مِنْ = from, of) therefore signifies origin. The verse has the same import as the others given below:

And Allāh has made wives for you from among yourselves, and has given you sons and grandchildren from your wives ... [16:72];

And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion [30:21];

The Originator of the heavens and the earth; He made mates for you from among yourselves, and mates of the cattle too,

multiplying you thereby [42:11];

Of similar connotation is the verse: *And of every thing We have created pairs that you may be mindful* [51:49].

In spite of this clear meaning, some exegetes have written that the verse tends to show that the mate was derived from that single being and created from one of its parts. This explanation aims at making the verse conform with some traditions which say that Allāh had created Adam's wife from one of his ribs. But the fact remains that the verse does not support this view.

The clause, *''and spread from these two, many men and women: ''al-Baththʼʼ* (اَلْبَثُّ = to spread, to propagate through dissemination or scattering, etc.); Allāh says: *So that they shall be as scattered dust* [56:6]. On this connotation is based the idiom, to spread the sorrow; and that is why sometimes they use the word *al-baththʼ* to denote grief and sorrow itself, because it is something which man by nature spreads [to his friends and relatives]; Allāh says: *He said: ''I only complain of* (*baththi,* بَثِّي =) *my grief and sorrow to Allāhʼʼ* [12:86].

The verse apparently shows that the present human race originates from Adam and his wife without anyone else having any share in it; Allāh says: *''and spread from these two, many men and women;''* He has not said: 'and spread from these two and some others'. Proceeding from this interpretation we arrive at the following two conclusions:

First: The words, *''many men and women''*, refer to all human beings from their progeny, be they their immediate children or children's children how low so ever. Thus the words mean: and spread you, O people! from these two.

Second: Marriage of the first generation after Adam and his wife (i.e., of their immediate children), was done between brothers and sisters (i.e., Adam's sons married his daughters), because they were the only human males and females at that time. There was no harm in this; because it is a legislative matter and it depends on the discretion of Allāh; He may allow it one day and disallow it another day. Allāh says:

Judgment is only Allāh's [12:40];

And Allāh pronounces an order — there is no repeller of His decree [13:41];

... and He does not make any one His associate in His

judgment [18:26];

And He is Allāh, there is no god but He! All praise is due to Him and this (life) *and the hereafter, and His is the judgment, and to Him you shall be brought back* [28:70]. [1]

QUR'ĀN: *and fear Allāh by Whom you demand one of another* (your rights), *and* (be mindful of) *relationship: ''at-Tasaā'ul''* (اَلتَّسَآءُلُ = to ask one another); here it refers to people's asking one another in the name of Allāh. One says to his companions: I ask you by Allāh to do so and so; it is adjuration by Allāh. To ask one another by Allāh is an allegorical expression alluding to the reverence and love they have for Allāh, because man swears by only that which he respects and loves.

As for the word, *''and relationship''*, the conjunctive apparently joins it to the name *''Allāh''*. Thus it would mean fear Allāh and (be mindful of) relationship. Another explanation joins it to the pronoun ''whom'' which is in position of accusative; it gets support from Ḥamzah's recital (*wa 'l-arḥāmi* وَالْاَرْحَام) whereby the last letter *''m''* is recited with the vowel point *''i''* [instead of the *''a''* which is the more common recital] to make it conform with the joint pronoun ''whom'' — although the grammarians do not give much credence to such construction. However, in this case the meaning would be as follows: and fear Allāh by whom and by the relationship you ask one of another your rights; you say to one another, I ask you by Allāh, and I ask you by the relationship. This was the explanation given by some people, but the context and the Qur'ānic style in general do not agree with it: If ''relationship'' is treated as an independent *aṣ-ṣilah* (اَلصِّلَةُ = syndetic relative clause) of the relative pronoun *al-ladhī* (اَلَّذِي = he who, that which), then the reconstructed sentence will be as follows: and fear Allāh, He who, by relationship you ask one of another; this construction omits the pronoun ''by whom'', which is not correct. And if the whole phrase beginning with ''Allāh'' is taken together as one *aṣ-ṣilah,* [fear Allāh by whom and by the relationship] then it would make relationship equal to Allāh in majesty and grandeur, and it is totally against the Qur'ānic manners.

Of course, there is no harm if one is told to fear Allāh and be mindful of relationship in the same breath, because the preceding sentence has

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[1] We shall comment later on this hypothesis of the author. (*tr.*)

clearly shown the relationships as a creation of Allāh. Also, *at-taqwā* (اَلتَّقْوي = guarding against, piety, fear) has also been attributed in divine speech to others than Allāh.

For example:

And fear an affliction which may not smite those of you in particular who are unjust [8:25];

And fear the day in which you shall be returned to Allāh [2:281];

And guard yourselves against the fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers [3:131].

In any case, this section of the speech coming after the first part (*O people! fear ... and women*) is a sort of particularization after generalization, a restriction after liberalization. The first part in effect says: Fear Allāh because He is your Lord and because He has created and made you, 0 people! from one root that is preserved in your being, from one substance that is preserved and propagated through your propagation; and it is the species known as humanity. On the other hand, the second part implies as follows: Fear Allāh because you believe in His majesty and Power (and it is an aspect of His Lordship, and one of its concomitants); and remain mindful of the unity of relationship which He has created in you (and relationship is a branch of unity and an aspect of the essence that permeates all the human beings).

It shows why the order to fear Allāh has been repeated in the second sentence. The second sentence itself is a repetition of the first with an additional import: It throws full light on the importance of relationship.

''ar-Riḥm'' (اَلرِّحْمُ) means uterus, womb, the internal reproductive organ of a woman, whose function is to develop the sperm into a child. Then they began using it for relationship, because of the association between a receptacle and its content, as the relatives issue forth from the same womb. *ar-Riḥm* therefore is relative, plural *''al-arḥām''* (اَلْاَرْحَامُ = relatives). The Qur'ān has given full importance to relationship as it has done to the community and nation. Relationship is a small society, while nation is a big one. The Qur'ān has concerned itself with the affairs of society, and has counted it as a reality having its own special characteristics and effects. Likewise, it has concerned itself with the affairs of individual man, and has counted him as a reality having its own

characteristics and effects which spring from his existence. Allāh says:

> *And He it is Who has made two seas to flow freely, the one sweet that subdues thirst by its sweetness, and the other salt that burns by its saltness; and between the two He has made a barrier and inviolable obstruction. And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood-relationship and marriage-relationship, and your Lord is powerful* [25:53 — 54];
>
> *… and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other ...* [49:13];
>
> *... and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allāh to inheritance ...* [33:6];
>
> *But if you held command, you were sure to make mischief in the land and cut off the ties of kinship* [47:22];
>
> *And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account ...* [4:9].
>
> There are many other verses of the same import.

QUR'ĀN: *surely Allāh is vigilant over you: ''ar-Raqīb''* (اَلرَّقِيْبُ = guard; preserve); *al-murāqabah* (اَلْمُرَاقَبَةُ = to watch; to keep an eye on); may be it is derived from *ar-raqabah* (اَلرَّقَبَةُ = neck) because they used to watch the necks of their slaves. Or it may be based on the fact that a watcher or guard usually stretches his neck for looking towards the object he is watching or guarding. However, this word does not imply mere watching or guarding; it means watching over activities of the watched person — all his acts of commission and omission — in order to reform the defects and make up the deficiencies, or just to keep the record; in other words, it implies guarding a thing with special concern towards it in knowledge and observation. That is why it is used for vigilance, observation, supervision, guarding, awaiting and controlling. Allāh is called *ar-Raqīb* because He preserves the actions of the people in order to give them their recompense. He says:

> *... and your Lord is the Preserver of all things* [34:21];
>
> *... Allāh watches over them, and you have no charge over them* [42:6].

Therefore your Lord let fall upon them the whip of chastisement. Most surely your Lord is on watch [89:13 — 14].

Look at the command of being mindful of humanity's unity (which pervades each and every human being) and of preserving its characteristics; and note that this order is followed by the reminder that Allāh watches everything. Then you will appreciate the great threat it poses, and the ominous warning it gives to the transgressors. Also, if you ponder on this reality, you will realize that all the verses dealing with the topics of transgressing the limit, oppressing the people, doing mischief in the land, exceeding the bounds and things like that (and which generally have prescribed such harsh and painful chastisement for the offenders) have very strong connection with the divine purpose, i.e., protecting the humanity's unity from disorder, decline and fall.

HOW OLD THE HUMAN SPECIES IS; THE FIRST MAN

The Jewish history says that the present human species is not older than seven thousand years [1] ; and contemplation supports this view.

Let us suppose there is a pair of a man and a woman, and that they live an average span of life in average health and average environment so far as peace, food production, comfort and other factors affecting human life are concerned. They are married and produce children in average environment and condition. Then we repeat exactly the same cycle of events for the said children — males and females — all in an average way. We will find that in a hundred years the original population of two will increase to one thousand persons; in other words, one person will beget about five hundred souls in a hundred years.

Then we look at the adverse factors affecting a human life, the general calamities with which he is faced, e.g., heat and cold, flood and

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[1] Obviously, the author refers to the Old Testament. But he himself has mentioned in the sixth volume how unreliable these books were; and I have proved in the footnotes there that these books were not authored by Mūsā and were full of contradictions right from the first chapter. How can such a contradictory, and inaccurate book of dubious origin be relied upon for deciding such an important question? (*tr.*)

earthquake, draught and famine, plague and epidemics, landslide and avalanche, massacres and genocide, and other unusual general catastrophes. Let us suppose that these disasterstake their full toll of the human population until nine hundred and ninety-nine are dead and only one out of the thousand offspring remains. It means that reproduction would increase the population at the rate of 50% in a hundred years — the originaltwo with addition of one (1000-999) becomes three in a century.

If we compute the original two at this rate of seven thousand years (seventy centuries), we will arrive at a total of more than two and a half billion — and it is the total human population these days — as the world census indicates. [1]

This contemplation supports the above-mentioned age of the human race. But the geologists say that the age of this species exceeds million of years. They have found human fossils, bodies and artifacts which are older than five hundred thousand years, as they have estimated. This is in short their proof. But they have not produced any satisfactory evidence to show that this present generation is unbrokenly descended from those ancient groups and vanished races. Is it not possible that a certain race appeared on this earth, reproduced, increased and inhabited the land for a time and then vanished, became extinct? Then in the same way other

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[1] It was written in 1957. However this argument is patently untenable; it is neither sound in theory nor correct in practice. The writer seems unaware of the fact that the population increases not in arithmetical, but geometrical, proportions. This has led him to fix a constant rate of increase for the whole human history — 50% in a hundred years. This is an arbitrary figure, not supported by data. It is estimated that from the beginning of the Christian Era to 1650 C.E. (in $16^{1/2}$ centuries) the world population only doubled, while it took it only 150 years (1650-1800) to double again. In 1900 the world population was 1610 million; in 1950 it rose to 2509 million; in 1970 it shot up to 3650 million; in 1987 it has passed 5000 million; and according to the U. N. O. World Population Projection of 1969, it will reach 6100 million by end of the century. Thus the increase in this one century (1900 — 2000) will be at the rate of 379%, nearly fourfold. And it will shoot upto 11000 million by 2050. Vide *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th ed. vol. 14 (under Population & Demography); *Harver World Encyclopedia,* vol. 16. This type of computation therefore cannot help us at all in deciding the age of the human race. (*tr.*)

races appeared and vanished? This cycle could have been repeated several times until this race of ours appeared after all the previous extinct ones.

As for the Holy Qur'ān, it does not say clearly whether the appearance of this species is confined to this present cycle (which we are passing), or there were various cycles of which this one is the latest. Although it may be inferred from the verse 30 of Chapter 2 (*And when your Lord said to the angels, ''Verily lam going to make in the earth a vicegerent,'' they said: ''Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood ...''*) that there had passed on the earth a cycle of humanity before this one of ours; and we had hinted to it in the Commentary of the said verse.

Of course, some traditions narrated from the Imāms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) show that there have passed many cycles of humanity before this cycle [which has begun with Adam - a. s.]; and we shall quote them under ''Traditions''

THE PRESENT HUMAN RACE BEGINS WITH ADAM AND HIS WIFE

It is sometimes said: Human beings are of different colours, the main ones being the white (e.g., the colour of Europeans and Asians living in the Temperate zones), the black (e.g., the colour of the people in the southern Africa), the yellow (like that of the Chinese and the Japanese), and the red (as that of the American Red Indians). This difference shows that the origin of each race is different from that of the others — people of each colour have separate origin — because colour difference emanates from difference in the nature and composition of their respective bloods. Accordingly there must have been at least four different and independent pairs of human beings from which the four colour groups have originated.

It is also urgued that when the Western Hemisphere was discovered, it was already inhabited by human beings. There was such a great distance between them and the people living in the Eastern Hemisphere as to render any contact between the two groups impossible; and thus ruled out the possibility of both groups originating from the same father and the same mother.

But both these arguments are defective:

Let us look at the question of difference in blood because of colour difference. Scientific discussions nowadays are based on the theory of the evolution of species. If so, then how can we be sure that the difference in blood — and consequently in colour — is not caused by evolution or adaptation in a single species. They believe that there had been many changes in various animal species, e.g., horse, goat, sheep, elephant and many others. Research has unearthed many geological remains and fossils which throw light on it. Apart from that, scientists today do not give so much importance to this difference.[1]

Coming to the question of human presence across the oceans, the scientists say that the human life has existed for millions of years; the transmitted history however does not go further back than six thousand years. In this background, could not some events have taken place in pre-historic days which would have separated the Western Hemisphere from other continents? There are many geological findings which show many basic changes that have appeared in the crust of the Earth extending to far distant eras. Oceans have turned into dry lands and vice versa; plains have become mountains and moutains, plains. Even the Poles are said to have turned upside down, and various zones to shift places. All this may be learnt from geology, astronomy and geography. Keeping all this in view, all that remains for these people to fall back upon is their feeling of improbability!

As far as the Qur'ān is concerned, it says in an apparent, nay rather clear-cut, way that this present human race goes back to one male and one female, who were the father and the mother respectively of all the human individuals. The father is named by Allāh in the Qur'ān as Adam, but his wife is not named in His Book, although the traditions call her Ḥawwā', as does the present Torah. Allāh says:

> *... and He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an extract, of water held in light estimation* [32:7 — 8];
>
> *Surely the likeness of 'Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of*

[1] It was published recently in the magazines that some doctors have discovered a medical formula which changes man's skin colour, e.g., from black to white. (*Author's Note*)

Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, ''Be'', and he was [3:59];
And when your Lord said to the angels, ''Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent;'' they said: ''Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?'' He said: ''Surely I know what you do not know.'' And He taught Adam the names, all of them ... [2:30 — 31];
When your Lord said to the angels: ''Surely I am going to create a man from dust: So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My *spirit, then fall down making obeisance to him ...''* [38:71 — 72].

The verses, as you see, make it clear that the system made by Allāh for continuation of this species is by means of sperm. But when He brought him into being for the first time, he was created from dust; Adam was created from dust and the people are his children. There is no doubt therefore that this species, going back, ends at Adam and his wife — although other interpretations could be advanced for these verses.

Also sometimes it is claimed that the word, Adam — in the verses of creation and prostration — signifies not an individual, but the species. According to them, man has been called Adam because his creation originates from the earth and because he is the means of procreation and impregnation. Sometimes support is sought for it from the verse: *And certainly We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: ''Prostrate before Adam''* [7:11]. The argument runs as follows: The verse indicates that the angels were ordered to prostrate before the same whom Allāh had created and fashioned, and the beginning of the verse (*And certainly We created you, then We fashioned you*) shows that it refers to the whole mankind [as it uses plural pronouns], not to a particular human being. The same idea is inferred from the following verse: *He said: ''O Iblīs! what prevented thee that thou shouldst not obeisance to him whom I created with My two hands?...'' He said: ''I am better than he; Thou hast created me of fire, and him Thou didst create of dust.'' ... He said: ''Then by Thy Might, I will surely beguile them, all, except Thy servants among them, the purified one''* [38:75 — 83]. It is pointed out that the same Adam who in the beginning is mentioned by singular pronouns, is then referred to with plural ones.

But this view is totally untenable, as it goes against the obvious meanings of the verses quoted above. Moreover, Allāh says in the Chapter Seven, after narrating the story of Adam, prostration of the angels and refusal of Iblīs: *O children of Adam! let not the Satan cause you to fall into affliction as he got your parents out from the garden, pulling off from them both their clothing that he might expose to them both their shame* [7:27]. The verse [by using dual pronouns] clearly establishes the individual identity of Adam, in a way that leaves no room for any doubt.

Then there are the verses 61 — 62 of the Chapter 17: *And when We said to the angels: ''Make obeisance to Adam;'' they made obeisance, but Iblīs* (did it not). *He said: ''Should I make obeisance to him whom Thou hast created of dust?'' He said: ''Tell me, is this he whom Thou hast honoured above me? If Thou shouldst respite me to the Day of Resurrection, I will most certainly cause his progeny to perish except a few.''* Likewise the verse under discussion makes it abundantly clear: *''O people! fear your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same* (kind) *and spread from these two, many men and women,''* as we have already explained.

These verses, as you see, refute the idea that man has been called Adam, in one respect, and 'son of Adam' in another. Likewise they refuse to ascribe the creation to the dust from one angle and to the sperm from the other. It applies even more particularly to the verse like 3:59: *Surely the likeness of 'Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, ''Be'', and he was.* Otherwise, the argument of the verse will not stand that 'Īsā's creation was something exceptional, against the normal process.

Thus the view that ''Adam'' refers to the human species is inordinately extreme. The opposite extreme is the view that it is *al-kufr* (اَلْكُفْرُ = disbelief) to say that more than one Adam had been created. This extreme was held by the Sunnī scholar, Zaynu '1-'Arab.

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MANKIND IS AN INDEPENDENT SPECIES, NOT EVOLVED FROM ANY OTHER SPECIES

The earlier quoted verses have already decided this question. They have made it clear that the present species, which is propagated through sperm, ends at Adam and his wife, and that they two were created of earth. The human species begins with them and they two were not connected with any other analogous or resembling species. Theirs was original creation.

The theory prevalent today among the scientists is that the first man evolved [from a lower species] and developed into homo sapiens, that is, human being. Although the particular hypothesis is not definitely and unreservedly agreed upon, and is the target of many objections which may be seen in relevant books, yet the basic theory, that man is an animal that evolved into human being, is accepted by them and constitutes the basis of all research in human nature.

According to their theory, the earth, one of the planets in the solar system, was a part of the sun, which had separated from it; it was then a mass of burning molten liquid which gradually began to cool under the influence of cooling factors. Torrential rains poured on it, heavy floods inundated it, mass of water collected as oceans. Water and earth reacted to each other; algae appeared; aquatic plants continued to develop; its living cells evolved into fish and other aquatic animals; then came flying fish adapted for both water and land; it gradually evolved into land animals, which in their turn developed into homo sapiens. All this happened through evolution: the lower order of life developed into the next higher one, and so on. First there were simple cells, then came aquatic plants, then aquatic animals, then amphibious animals, then land animals and finally man.

This theory is based on obsevation: One finds systematic gradual perfection in creatures placed on evolutionary rungs, graduating from imperfection to perfection in ascending order. Also, they argue on the basis of experiments which have created partial changes.

This theory was invented to explain the new characteristics and faculties which appear more developed and advanced in each succeeding species. But no proof has been given to show that only this theory is correct and others were untenable. After all, these species could possibly

have been created separate from each other, without any evolutionary connection between them. Also, the changes occurring in a species might be limited to its conditions and concomitants, not to its person; the experiments done in this field are all confined to the concomitants. Experiments have not found or produced a single individual in all these species that would have actually changed from one species to another, e.g., from ape into homo sapiens. All these experiments touch only some characteristics or concomitants.

Detailed discussion of this topic should be sought somewhere else. Our aim is only to show that it is just a hypothesis which was invented to answer some problems concerned, without there being any definite argument or clear-cut proof. The reality that the Qur'ān points to — that man is a species separate from all other species — remains undisputed by an academic argument.

HOW MAN'S SECOND GENERATION PROCREATED

The first ''generation'' of man — Adam and his wife — procreated by marriage and begot sons and daughters who were brothers and sisters to one another. The question is: How did this second generation procreate? Did the brothers and sisters marry one another? Or was there any other way? As we have explained before, the verse, *''and spread from these two, many men and women'',* with its unreserved apparent meaning, shows that the present generation of man ends on Adam and his wife, and no other male or female had joined them in this process. The Qur'ān has not attributed ''the spreading'' except to these two; if anyone else would have shared in it, the verse would have said: and spread from these two and from others than them; or would have used some other suitable words. And we know that the restriction of the origin of this race to Adam and his wife means that their sons had married their daughters.[1]

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[1] No record has reached us from Adam or his children. Now the only thing that could enlighten us on this subject is the Creator's word. It is a question of fact, of what really happened in that distant part. There is no room for the so-called philosophical arguments in this field as they would be mere speculations. Therefore, I shall confine my comments to only those arguments of the book which are based on the Qur'ān and the traditions.

It should be said at the outset that the author's view goes against correct traditions of the Imāms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), which say that Shīth and Yāfith, two sons of Adam, were married to two houris (or to a houri and a jinn, respectively), and one brother's children were married to those of the other, and it was in this way that human race spread.

The author's main argument is based on the clause, *''and spread from these two'',* as he says: ''The present human race emanates from Adam and his wife; ... the Qur'ān has not ascribed this spreading except to these two; and if any other person had been involved in this process, it would have said, 'and spread from these two and from other than the two' '' But the question is: Has the Qur'ān said: 'from these two *only'?* It seems strange that while the author gives so much importance to the prepostion *min* (مِنْ = from) in the clause, *''from these two''*, he explains it away in the first part of this very verse where it literally says: and created its mate from it The obvious meaning of this clause would be that Ḥawwā' was created from Adam (as the Jewish and Sunnī traditions allege that she was made from one of Adam's left ribs). But the author has summarily (and rightly) dismissed it claiming (not so rightly) that ''the verse does not support this view''. This much about his argument from the Qur'ān. As for the traditions, it will be seen later that out of numerous traditions he has selected only one from *al-Iḥtijāj* of Abū Manṣūr aṭ-Ṭabrisī (d. 620 A.H.). That narration is attributed to as-Sajjād (a.s.) and mentions the followings:

1. Qābīl and a daughter, Lawzā, were twins; so were Hābīl and Iqlīmā; Qābīl was married to Iqlīmā and Hābīl to Lawzā.
2. They begot children. After the immediate children of Adam, marriage of brothers with sisters was prohibited.
3. Ḥawwā' was created from Adam. Allāh allowed Adam's marriage with her; after that, such marriage (i. e., with a part of one's own body or let us say, between father and daughter!) was prohibited.

First of all, this tradition of *al-Iḥtijāj* is without any *sanad* (السَّنَدُ = chain of narrators) and therefore cannot be relied upon.

Secondly, it says that Ḥawwā' was created from Adam, a view which the author himself rejects. The question is: How can one accept one half of a tradition and reject the other half?

Thirdly, this tradition is contradicted by numerous traditions of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), at least four of which are with good chains of narrators, which the traditionalist, Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091 A.H.) confirms as *ṣaḥīḥ* (الصحيح = correct) and reliable.

I think it is advisable to mention here some other traditions which the author has not quoted.

There are two traditions supporting his view: The first is narrated by Abū 'Alī aṭ-Ṭabrisī (d. 548 A.H.) in his *Tafsīr Majma'u 'l-bayān,* in explanation of

the verse 27 of the Chapter 5. It is attributed to al-Bāqir (a.s.) but has no *sanad.* It says that Qābīl killed Hābīl because the sister that was to be married to Hābīl was prettier than the one to be given to Qābīl.

This tradition is contradicted by two *aḥādīth* from the same Imām (a.s.) narrated with *asnād* (الاسناد = chains of narrators) in two of the four basic books, *al-Kāfī* and *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l faqīh.* Moreover, this tradition ascribes the crime to passion and love of beauty, while another narration given by al-'Ayyāshī (died in 2nd half of the 3rd century A.H.) in his *Tafsīr* attributes it to a more serious matter. That tradition *inter alia* says that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was told of the people thinking that Qābīl had killed Hābīl because of the jealousy for their sisters-wives. The Imām (a.s.) said: ''You say this? Are you not ashamed of narrating such a thing about Adam, the prophet of Allāh [that he married brothers to sisters]?'' He was then asked as to the reason of that murder. He said: ''For the excutorship of the will'', i.e., for successorship of Adam. ''Verily, Allāh revealed to Adam to entrust Hābīl with the executorship and the great name of Allāh. But Qābīl was the eldest (son) and on getting this news be became angry. He said that he was more deserving to (that) honour and executorship. Then Adam acting on the divine revelation, ordered them to offer sacrifices. They did, and Allāh accepted the sacrifice of Hābīl. Qābīl became jealous and killed Hābīl.''

(Incidently, this tradition too is without *sanad;* but al-'Ayyāshī lived in the 3rd century in the days of the Lesser Occultation, and his narration, even without *sanad,* would naturally have less chance of alteration or interpolation than those narrated without *sanad* in the middle of the sixth or beginning of the seventh centuries, as is the case with the traditions of *Majma'u 'l-bayān* and *al-Iḥtijāj,* respectively.)

The second tradition, supporting the author's view, is narrated from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) in *Qurbu 'l-isnād* of al-Ḥimyarī (d. 297 A.H.). It mentions the story of the marriages of Hābīl and Qābīl, ending with the words: ''Then prohibition came [of such marriages] after that.''

But as mentioned above, this one tradition is opposed by at least four with good or correct *asnād,* and which forcefully refute the story of the alleged marriages between brothers and sisters.

There are two traditions narrated by aṣ-Ṣadūq (d. 381 A.H.) in his *'Ilalu 'sh-sharāyi'* (ch. 17); both are narrated by Zurārah from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.). In both the Imām (a.s.) is reported to vehemently reject that story about Adam (a.s.) and his children. He said: ''Glory be to Allāh! He is far above such things. Those who say it (actually want to) say that Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, has made His chosen servants and beloved ones — His prophets and His messengers, the believing men and women, and the submitting men and women — issue forth from unlawful root; and that He did not have power to create them through

lawful means, while He Himself had taken covenant from them to (use only) lawful (ways) and clean, pure and good (things).'' Then the Imām described that even some animals abstained from such sexual relations.

In the second tradition, the Imām (a.s.) *inter alia* says: ''But a group of these people do not like the knowledge (obtainable) from their prophet's houses, and seek it from where they have not been ordered to; they therefore have gone to what you see — to misguidance and ignorance.'' Further he says: ''I tell you the truth; those who say this or similar things, their only aim is to strengthen the arguments of the Majūs (the fire-worshippers). What has happened to them! May Allāh kill them!''

Then the Imām (a.s.) describes how two houris were sent for Shīth and Yāfith, sons of Adam, and how sons and daughters were born to both, and then the cousins were later married to each other, and human race spread.

One of the above traditions is narrated by him also in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh.* He has also narrated a third tradition in this latter book from al-Bāqir (a.s.) in which the Imām (a.s.) says that one of Adam's sons was married to a houri from the Garden and another to a jinn woman. ''Now whatever beauty and good characteristics are found in men, they emanate from the houri, and whatever bad characteristics are there, they originate from the jinn.''

Before all these comes the tradition supporting our view, narrated by al-Kulaynī (d. 329 A.H.) in *al-Kāfī* from the same Imām (a.s.). There appears to be a variation in detail, as it says that four sons of Shīth (born of a houri) were married to four jinn women. But another tradition narrated by al-'Ayyāshī may solve this problem. It says that four sons of Shīth (born of the houri mother) were married to four daughters of Adam's another son (born of the jinn mother).

Looking at these traditions together (four with *asnād* and two without *asnād*) we find that, in spite of some differences in details, they are agreed on the following points:

1. The human race did not spread through Hābīl or Qābīl It spread through Shīth and Yāfith (or through Shīth). By the way, this point is accepted even by the Sunnī historian aṭ-Ṭabarī in his *Tārīkh* (vol. 1, p. 103), where he narrates a tradition (with his *sanad*) through Abū Dharr from the Prophet in which he (s.a.w.a.), *inter alia,* says: ''The genealogies of all people today (go) to Shīth, peace be upon him.''
2. There never was any marriage between brothers and sisters.
3. Emanating from the above premises, obviously it was not any passion or love affair that motivated Qābīl to kill his brother; it was the really serious matter of Adam's successorship. Incidentally, the Sunnī scholar, ath-Tha'labī reportedly says the same thing in his *al-'Arā'is* (p. 26).

The Shī'ah traditionalist al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī in his *Tafsīr aṣ-Ṣāfī* (vol. 1, pp. 413 — 418) accepts the authenticity of these traditions, saying that ''they are

Of course, such marriage is prohibited in Islam, and also reportedly in previous *sharī'ahs*. But it is a legislative order based [like all such rules] on benefits or harms, it is not a creative decree which does not admit any change; its rein is the hand of Allāh, He does what He pleases and orders what He intends. It is possible that He should allow it one day because it was then necessary, and prohibit it thereafter because the need was fulfilled, and if that permission were allowed to remain, it would have created indecency in the society.

It is said that it is against the nature, and what Allāh had given to His prophets was the natural religion. Allāh says: *Then set your face uprightly for religion in the natural devotion* (for the truth), *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no alteration in the creation of Allāh; that is the right religion* [30:30]. But this argument is wrong; when nature rejects it and exhorts against it, it does not do so because it thinks such sexual intercourse (between brother and sister) loathsome; it does so rather because it would lead to increase in indecency and reprehensible behaviour, which in its turn would nullify the instinct of chastity and erase decency from human society. We know that today this type of relationship and sexual intercourse is considered debauchery and immoral throughout the world. But imagine a time when Allāh's creation consisted of only brothers and sisters, and divine will intended to increase and spread them; we cannot apply today's norms on that society.

The evidence, that nature does not eschew such relations because of any instinctive aversian, may be found in Zoroastrian society which, according to history, practised such marriages for a long time; and in Russia where it is reportedly legalized; also in the fact that in Europe incest is widespread.[1]

It is sometimes said that such relation is against natural laws — the laws which guided man before he established a good society to ensure his

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correct and reliable''; and rejects the earlier-mentioned narrations (which speak about brothers-sisters marriages) because ''they agree with the view held by *'āmmah,* and as such cannot be relied upon.'' (*tr.*)

[1] Nowadays, it is very common in civilized nations of Europe and America for the girls to lose their virginity before they are legally married, or even before they reach the age of marriage; available data shows that some of them are deflowered by their fathers or brothers. (*Author's Note*)

happiness; it is because familiarity and constant mingling within family circle negates the sexual inclination and desire between brothers and sisters — as has been said by some experts of law.[1]

This argument too is defective, because:

First, the premises are not correct, as we have explained just now;

Second, its putative undesirability is confined to a- situation where it is not essentially required; and

Third, it is restricted to a time when there are no legislated unnatural laws to safeguard the essential well-being of society, to ensure the happiness of its members. Otherwise, most of the laws and principles, that governs the lives and are prevelant today, are unnatural.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said in a *ḥadīth, inter alia;* ''Perhaps you think that Allāh had not created any man other than you? Certainly, by God, Allāh had created a million Adams; you are at the end of those human beings.'' (*at-Tawḥīd*)

The author says: Ibn Maytham has quoted in his *Sharḥ Nahju 'l-balāghah,* a tradition to the same effect from al-Bāqir (a.s.), and aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated it in *al-Khiṣāl* too.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said: ''Surely Allāh has created twelve thousand worlds, each of those worlds is greater than the seven heavens and the seven earths. None of (those) worlds thinks that Allāh has got any other world.'' (*al-Khiṣāl*)

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) has said: ''Surely Allāh had created in the earth — since He created it — seven worlds; they were not from the children of Adam; He created them from the surface of the earth, then He placed them in it one after another with its world. Then Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, created Adam, the father of mankind, and created his progeny from him ...''(*ibid.*)

ash-Sahybānī narrates from 'Amr ibn Abi '1-Miqdām, from his father that he said: ''I asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.): 'From what did Allāh create Ḥawwā'?' He (a.s.) said: 'What do these people say?' I said: 'They say

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[1] Montesquieu: *The Spirit of the Laws.* (*Author's Note*)

that Allāh created her from one of the ribs of Adam.' He said: 'They have said a lie. Was Allāh incapable of creating her from (something) other than his ribs?' I said: 'May I be made your ransom, from what did He create her?' He said: 'My father informed me through (the chain of) his fathers that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Verily, Allāh, Blessed and High is He, took a handful of dust and mixed it with His right hand — and both His hands are right — and created Adam from it; and there remained (some) residue from the dust, so He created Ḥawwā' from it.'' ' '' (*Nahju 'l-bayān*)

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣaduq from 'Amr. There are some other traditions to the effect that she was created from the shortest left rib of Adam. The same thing is said in Chapter 2, of the *Genesis.* Although this story is not impossible in itself, but as we have explained earlier, it is not proved by the Qur'ānic verses.

A tradition given in *al-Iḥtijāj* quotes a talk of as-Sajjād (a.s.) with a Qurayshite, in which the Imam is said to describe how Hābīl was married to Lawzā, sister of Qābīl, and Qābīl to Iqlīmā, sister of Hābīl. Then the tradition continues: ''The Qurayshite asked him: 'Did they beget from them?' He said: 'Yes.' The Qurayshite said: 'But this is what the Majūs do today?' He said: 'Surely the Majūs are doing it after Allāh has prohibited (it).' Then he explained: 'Do not deny it. These were but divine laws which were enforced. Was it not that Allāh created Adam's wife from him, and then made her lawful to him? Thus it was a *sharī'ah* from their commandments; then Allāh sent down the prohibition after that ...' '' (*al-Iḥtijāj*)

The author says: What has been narrated in this tradition agrees with the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān and with contemplation. There are other traditions which oppose this theme. They say that they had married with houri and jinn that had been sent to them. But you have seen what the truth is.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh: *and fear Allāh by Whom you demand one of another* (your rights), *and* (be mindful of) *relationship:* ''And be mindful of relationship lest you severe it.''

(*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

The author says: This explanation is based on [the usual] recital, that is, with vowel point *‘‘a’’* on the last letter *‘‘m’’* of *al-arḥāma.*

Another tradition: ‘‘It refers to people’s relationship; verily Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, has ordered to join it and has shown its greateness. Don’t you see that He has placed it with Himself?’’ (*al-Kāfī; at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: The Imām’s words (Don’t you see ...?) explain how Allāh has shown its greatness; ‘‘He has placed it with Himself’’: These words refer to the joint mentioning in the verse; *and fear Allāh ... and relationship.*

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated from ‘IKrimah that Ibn ‘Abbās said about the verse, ... *by Whom you demand one of another* (your rights) *and* (be mindful of) *relationship:* ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: Allāh, the High, says: ‘‘Join your relationship, because it is more preserving to you in this life and good for you in your hereafter.’’ ’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: The words, ‘‘it is more preserving to you’’, point to what has been said in nearly-*mutawātir* traditions that joining the relationship, that is, behaving lovingly towards relatives, increases the life; while its opposite shortens it. Its reason may possibly be understood from the forthcoming Commentary of the verse, *And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account* ... [4:9]

Possibly the statement, that joining the relationship is more preserving, means that it is its natural effect to preserve life longer. This good behaviour strengthens the family ties and revitalizes the unity found in the clan; in this way man gets courage and strength to face the adverse conditions of life — the misfortunes, afflictions and enemies — which might otherwise poison the spring of life.

al-Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah said: ‘‘I heard the Leader of the faithful (‘Alī

- a.s.) saying: ‘Surely one of you becomes angry and (then) is not conciliated until he enters the fire. Therefore, whoever of you becomes angry with his relative, should get closer to him, because womb (relationship), when touched by womb (relationship), calms down; and it is suspended from the Throne; it rings (the Throne) as iron is rung [by striking at it] , and cries out: ‘‘O Allāh! join him who joins me and cut him off who cuts me off’’: And it is the words of Allāh in His Book: *and fear Allāh by Whom you demand one of another* (your rights) *and* (be mindful of) *relationship, surely Allāh is vigilant over you.* And who over becomes angry while he is standing, should at once cling to the earth [i.e., should sit down], as it removes the filth of the Satan.’ ’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: The ‘‘womb’’, as you have seen, refers to that unity which is found between individuals inasmuch as they share the same life substance originating from the same father and mother (or from one of them). The relationship is a real and factual aspect running through all the relatives; it has real effects — on character and appearance, on psyche and body. These effects are undeniable, although at times some contrary factors may weaken its force, they may even nullify those effects to almost extinction point — but they can never be erased altogether.

In any case, relationship is one of the most potent causes of natural harmony among family members; it has overpowering ability to effect [their psyche and behaviour]. That is why a good done to a relative brings far better and firmer results than the one done to a stranger. Likewise, ill behaviour of a relative hurts the feelings more grievously than it does in case of strangers.

The reason behind the order, ‘‘whoever of you becomes angry with his relative, should get closer to him ...’’, may be understood from the above explanation. When one would go closer to a relative — in obedience to this order and to strengthen its effect — one would naturally be awakened to its cause [i.e., relationship which binds them together], and its effect would be revived — the anger would change into kindness and love.

Also clear is the import of the last sentence: ‘‘And whoever becomes angry while he is standing, should at once sit down.’’ Anger is a product

of spirit's rashness and fickleness. It comes to surface and flares up because of passion — as then the Satan makes it oblivious (of reality) and turns its attention to imaginary and trivial matters. If an angry man sits down, he turns his attention to a new position, focusing his mind to a new activity. It would divert him from the anger and rage, because human soul by nature is more inclined to mercy than to anger. That is why some traditions direct a man to change his position if he feels angry. aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) narrated from his father (a.s.) that, talking about anger, he said: ''Surely man becomes angry so much so that he is never conciliated, and because of it he enters the fire. Therefore, any man who feels anger while he is standing should sit down, as it would surely remove the Satan's filth from him; and if he is sitting, he should stand up; and any man who becomes angry on a relative, should go to him, get near him and touch him — because when relationship touches relationship it quites down.'' (*al-Majālis*)

The author says: Its effect is a phenomenon perceived and experienced.

The words of the Imām, ''and it is suspended from the Throne; it rings (the Throne) as iron is rung [by striking at it]'' mean: it causes it to sound as a bell is rung by striking at it. *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ* says: *''al-Inqāḍ* (اَلِانْقَاضُ = sounding like banging or striking).'' We have hinted when speaking about the Chair (and more details will be given in the talk on the Throne) that the Throne is the level of the general [divine] knowledge which is related to the events; it is that stage of existence where various expediencies, different influences and creative causes converge. It alone moves the chains of various causes and influencing factors; it is the motive force that pervades the whole system and keeps it running, as the affairs of a kingdom — with its various aspects, forms and conditions — are attached to the king's throne, and a single word spoken by him moves the chains of authority and effects the whole bureaucracy throughout the kingdom; its effects appear everywhere in appropriate forms and shapes.

The womb or relationship, as you have seen, is in fact a spirit pervading the personalities of all those who share a common lineage. As such, this too is attached to the Throne. When it is subjected to injustice and oppression, it seeks protection and help from the Throne to which it

is attached. It is this reality which the Imām (a.s.) alludes to when he says: ‘‘It rings the Throne as iron is rung’’. It is a very fine and original simile; it describes the effect of its cry for help on the Throne as the ringing of a bell; when a bell is rung, the vibration permeates its whole being and the sound comes out reverberating as it it were trembling.

The reported prayer, ‘‘O Allāh! join him who joins me and cut him off who cuts me off’’, is the interpretation of its mute expression — which it would have said had it had a tongue.

It has been emphasized in numerous traditions that joining the relationship prolongs the life, and severing it decreases it. We have already described in the second volume, when writing on the Relation between actions and natural phenomena[1] under the heading, ‘‘An essay on the rules governing actions’’, that the Administrator of this universe is driving it to an excellent goal and good destination; He will not ignore or neglect its well being. If one or more parts of it go wrong, he rectifies the situation, either by repairing the parts or removing and discarding them. The man who cuts his relationship off, actually wages a war against Allāh in His creation. If he refuses to mend his ways, Allāh cuts his life short and destroys him.

The fact that man today does not perceive this or other similar realities, does not diminish its importance. Today, humanity’s body is so much affected by moral depravity and spritival diseases that it has lost its sense, feeling and perception; the sickness has numbed and paralysed the whole system, and man is no more able or free to feel the pain or realize the chastisement.

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 3, pp. 263 — 269. (*tr.*)

وَآتُوا الْيَتَامىٰ أَمْوٰالَهُمْ وَ لاٰ تَتَبَدَّلُوا الْخَبِيثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ وَلاٰ تَأْكُلُوا
أَمْوٰالَهُمْ إِلىٰ أَمْوٰالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوباً كَبِيراً ــ ٢ . وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاّ تُقْسِطُوا
فِي الْيَتَامىٰ فَانْكِحُوا مٰا طٰابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسٰاءِ مَثْنىٰ وَثُلاٰثَ وَرُبٰاعَ
فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلاّ تَعْدِلُوا فَوٰاحِدَةً أَوْ مٰا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمٰانُكُمْ ذٰلِكَ أَدْنىٰ
أَلاّ تَعُولُوا ــ ٣ . وَآتُوا النِّسٰاءَ صَدُقٰاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ
شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ نَفْساً فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئاً مَرِيئاً ــ ٤ . وَلاٰ تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهٰاءَ أَمْوٰالَكُمُ
الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللهُ لَكُمْ قِيٰاماً وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهٰا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ
قَوْلاً مَعْرُوفاً ــ ٥ . وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامىٰ حَتّىٰ إِذٰا بَلَغُوا النِّكٰاحَ فَإِنْ آنَسْتُمْ
مِنْهُمْ رُشْداً فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوٰالَهُمْ وَلاٰ تَأْكُلُوهٰا إِسْرٰافاً وَبِدٰاراً أَنْ
يَكْبَرُوا وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيّاً فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيراً فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
فَإِذٰا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوٰالَهُمْ فَأَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَفىٰ بِاللهِ حَسِيباً ــ ٦ .

And give to the orphans their properity, and do not substitute worthless (things) *for* (their) *good* (ones), *and do not devour their properity* (as an addition) *to your own property; this is surely a great crime* (2). *And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do*

justice (between them), *then* (marry) *only one or what your right hands possess; this is nearer that you may not deviate from the right course* (3). *And give women their dowries as free gift but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment* (and with) *wholesome* (result) (4). *And do not give away your property which Allāh has made for you a* (means of) *support to the weak of understanding, and maintain them out of it, and clothe them and speak to them with kind words* (5). *And test the orphans until they reach* (age of) *marriage, then if you find in them maturity of intellect, make over to them their property, and do not consume it extravagantly and hastily, lest they attain to full age; and whoever is rich, let him abstain altogether, and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably; then when you make over to them their property, call witnesses in their presence; and Allāh is enough as a Reckoner* (6).

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

The verses are part of the prologue which began with the first verse. The aim is to pave the way for the laws of inheritance and basic rules of marriage like the number of wives allowed and the women within prohibited degree. These two are among the greatest and most important laws governing human society; and they have profound effect on its formation and continuation. Matrimony controls affinity and genealogy of society members, and deeply affects other constituent factors. Inheritance regulates the distribution of wealth existing in the world — the factor on which a society depends for its life and continuity.

As a *sine qua non* the chapter prohibits fornication and illicit sexual relations, and forbids devouring others' property unlawfully — except that it be a trade deal with the parties' consent. In this way two fundamental principles have been established for regulating the two most important aspects of society, i.e., the subjects of affinity and property.

We may now understand why it was necessary to prepare the minds before promulgating the laws for these subjects which concerned the whole society and which were enmeshed with the roots of the social

system. It is really not an easy thing to divert the people from the social norms which they are accustomed to and which have nurtured their ideas and ideals; to make them discard the systems which they grew up believing in, and which the generations of ancestors had sanctified by faithful adherence; to cast off the customs and traditions which had moulded their character and outlook.

It was in this difficult situation that the laws revealed at the beginning of this chapter were promulgated. It may easily be appreciated if we look just briefly at the world's situation at that time, and particularly at the condition of Arabia — the place of the revelation of the Qur'ān and rise of Islam. Also, it will make it clear why the Qur'ān was sent down piecemeal, and why the Islamic laws were promulgated gradually.

THE ERA OF IGNORANCE

The Qur'ān calls the pre-Islamic days of Arabia the Era of Ignorance. It is a clear indication that at that time they were in the grip of ignorance, and knowledge was a thing alien to them. Falsehood ruled over them, and truth was an unknown commodity. This fact appears from what the Qur'ān describes of them. Allāh says: *they entertained about Allāh thoughts of ignorance quite unjustly* [3:154]; *Is it then the judgment of* (the times of) *ignorance that they desire?* [5:50]; *When those who disbelieve harboured in their hearts chauvinism, the chauvinism of* (the days of) *ignorance* [48:26]; *and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of you* [33:33].

At that time, Arabia was surrounded by three big powers: In the south ruled Christian Ethiopia; the west lorded over by the Romans, again a Christian Empire; in the north was Fars, the Zoroastrian Empire. At some distance were India and Egypt, both idol-worshippers. There were also a few tribes of the Jews in Arabia. However, the Arabs were idolaters and most of them lived tribal life. All this together had created a barbaric nomadic society that had some traces of Judaism, Christianity and Mazdaism — and they were intoxicated of their ignorance. Allāh says: *And if you obey most of those in the earth, they will lead you astray from Allāh's way; they follow but conjecture and they only* (falsely) *guess* [6:116].

The nomadic tribes, with their despicable and miserable lives, lived

on foray and plunder; they forcibly seized others' property and tarnished their honour. There was neither safety nor integrity, neither peace nor security. The authority belonged to whoever subdued others, and the sceptre of power to whoever snatched it.

As for the menfolk, their superiority and excellence consisted of bloodshed and chauvinism of ignorance; pride and hauteur; cooperation with the oppressors and devouring the rights of the oppressed; mutual antagonism and rivalry; gambling games, intoxicating drinks and illicit sexual relations; and feasting on dead animals, blood, and inferior quality dates.

As for the women, they were deprived of every privilege of society. They had no will of their own, nor did they possess any of their work. They had no right in inheritance; and men married as many of them as they liked; the position was the same as with the Jews and some idolaters: there was no limit to the number of the wives. On the other hand, they appeared in public adorned with fineries, inviting to themselves anyone who caught their fancy. Fornication and adultery was their morality; their love of displaying themselves sometimes led them to go on pilgrimage completely naked.

As for the children, they were affiliated to their fathers, but the minor ones had no share in inheritance, which was taken away by the elder ones — and the widow was a part of the inheritance. In short, the minor children — both male and female — and the women did not inherit.

Of course, if the deceased left only a minor, he inherited him, but an elder relative acting as his guardian devoured the orphan's property; and if it was a daughter, he took her as his wife, swallowed her property and divorced her; she was thus left in the lurch: neither she had any money to live on nor there was anyone willing to marry and maintain her. Most of the time there were problems concerning one orphan or the other, because the chains of wars, battles and forays were unending, and consequently people lost their lives like flies.

One of the misfortunes fatally affecting their children was the country's terrain — a desolate desert and barren wasteland, where famine and hunger were norms of the day. Therefore, people killed their children for fear of poverty (vide 6:151); and buried their daughters alive (81:78); to them the most disgusting thing was the news of the birth of a daughter (43:17).

As for their governmental system, sometimes some rulers established their monarchies in the periphery of Arabian peninsula under protection or suzerainty of some strongest neighbouring power, for example, under Iran in the northern region, and under Rome and Ethiopia in the western and southern regions, respectively. Yet the central towns, i.e., Mecca, Yathrib and Ṭā'if, etc., lived under a system which was the nearest thing to democracy — but it was not exactly that. The tribes in the desert, and even in the towns, were ruled by oligarchies of chiefs and *shaykhs*, which sometimes changed into monarchy.

This was the chaotic muddle which appeared in every group in a new colour, in every quarter in a new form — with all the strange myths and superstitious rites prevelant among them. Add to it the scourge of ignorance and lack of teaching and learning that blighted their towns, let alone the nomadic tribes.

All that we have mentioned above concerning the prevailing conditions, activities, customs and rites, may be clearly inferred from the context of the Qur'ānic verses which it has addressed to them. Just ponder on the themes of the verses revealed at Mecca and then of those revealed after triumph of Islam at Medina; then look at the characteristics it attributes to them, the affairs it criticizes and blames them for, the prohibitions of various customs and habits — with varying degrees of stricture. If you meditate on these lines, you will see the truth of what we have described above. Of course, the history records all these things in detail, but we have not given their specificities, because the verses have not gone into detailed description. The shortest, yet most comprehensive, word used to describe their situation was coined by the Qur'ān when it called that period, 'the era of ignorance'. All the details are compressed in this name. So, this was the situation in the Arab world in those days.

As for the countries surrounding them like Rome, Fars, Ethiopia, India, etc., the Qur'ān mentions them only briefly.

As for the People of the Book among them, i.e., the Jews, the Christians and their fellows, their societies were controlled and managed by despotic desires and individual vagaries of the emperors, lords, officials and bureaucrats. Consequently, the society was divided in two classes: 1) The ruling class which was all-powerful; it did whatever it liked, and played with people's lives, honour and property; 2) The subjects, enslaved and oppressed; they had no security for their property,

honour or life, nor had they any freedom of will — except the freedom to agree with their overlords. The ruling class had won over the religious scholars and the guardians of *sharī'ah* and joined hands with them. In this way, it had captivated the masses' hearts and minds. This class was the real ruler that ruled over the religion of the people as well as their worldly life; it ruled over their religion as it thought expedient, through the tongues and pens of religious scholars; and over their worldly life with whip and sword.

The subjects, in their turn, were likewise divided in two strata, according to their strength and wealth (and people follow the system adopted by their rulers!). There was a class of wealthy people living in ease and luxury; and another of weak and poor as well as of slaves. The same was the situation within a household where the head of the family lorded over the women and children. Another division was between the males and the females: the men were privileged to have freedom of will and action in every walk of life while the women were deprived of it all; they were merely adjuncts of men; they served their men in all their (men's) whims, without having least independence.

These historical facts may clearly be seen in miniature in the words of Allāh: *Say: ''O People of the Book! come to a word common between us and you that we shall not worship any but Allāh and* (that) *we shall not associate anything with Him, and* (that) *some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allāh''; but if they turn back, then say: ''Bear witness that we are submitting ones''* [3:64]. The Prophet had included these words in his letter to Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, and also reportedly in those written to the kings of Egypt, Ethiopia and Fars as well as to the people of Najrān.

There are also other verses that throw light on their condition at that time. For example: *O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one among you who guards himself most* (against evil) [49:13]. Also see the instruction concerning marriage with slave-girls and other believing maidens: *... you are* (sprung) *the one from the other; so marry them with the permission o f their people ...* [4:25]; and about the women in general: *That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other ...* [3:195]; there are many

other verses relevant to this topic.

As for others than the People of the Book, i.e., the idolworshippers and those similar to them, their condition was more unfortunate and disastrous then the People of the Book. The verses revealed in rebuttal of their ‘‘arguments’’ show clearly how their endeavours had failed and their ambitions frustrated in all affairs of life and means of happiness. For example:

> *And certainly We did write in the Zabūr after the reminder that the earth, shall inherit it* My *righteous servants. Most surely in this is a message to a people who worship* (Us)*... Say: ‘‘It is only revealed to me that your God is one God; will you then submit?’’ But if they turn back, say: ‘‘I have given you warning all alike ...* [21:105 — 109]; *... and this Qur’ān has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches ...* [6:19].

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ISLAM ARRIVES ON THE SCENE

So, this was the condition of human society at that time — in the era of ignorance; people were blissfully inclined to falsehood, and mischief and injustice dominated all aspects of life. It was in this situation that Islam, the religion of monotheism and truth, came on the scene. Its aim was to put sceptre of power in the hand of truth and give it absolute authority over mankind, in order that their hearts might be cleansed of the filth of polytheism and their actions and activities be purified; the goal was to establish an ideal social order at a time when corruption and decay had completely destroyed its roots and shoots, its exterior and interior.

In short, Allāh wished to guide them to the clear truth; He did not want to put any difficulty on them but He wished to purify them and that He might complete His favours on them. They were at that time steeped in falsehood, and Islam wanted them to join together on the word of truth. The two positions were poles apart, diametrically opposed to each other. What was Islam to do? Should it have tried to gain favour with a few people among them and then use them to reform other adherents of falsehood? Then used some to transform some others — all this in its eagerness to make the truth prevail in any way possible, through any

means available? After all, people say: The end justifies the means — however objectionable it may be. It is the normal way of politics which the politicians always use.

This method seldom fails to achieve its aim — whatever the goal might be. But it is not suitable for arriving at the clear truth, which the Islamic call aims at. The end is obtained through its means, the result from its premises; how could a falsehood bring forth the truth, or a rotten tree bear good healthy fruits — when a child is a composite originating from its parents.

Politics desires and aspires to acquire authority and domination; to go ahead and enjoy fruits of power, no matter how it is achieved, or whatever shape it takes — whether it is good or evil, whether it is based on truth or falsehood. But the mission of truth does not want any goal except the truth. If it were to achieve that goal through falsehood it would be a confirmation of falsity, and then it would no longer remain a mission of truth — it would become one of falsehood.

This reality clearly shines in the life histories of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his purified progeny (a.s.).

This was what his Lord ordered the Prophet; and which was reiterated by the Qur'ān whenever the misguided people tried to tempt him to show some indulgence or go easy (even a little) in matters of religion. Allāh says: *Say: ''O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship, nor do you worship Him Whom I worship; nor am I going to worship that which you worship, nor are you going to worship Him Whom I worship; unto you be your religion and unto me my religion''* [109:1 — 6]. Also He says in a somewhat threatening tone: *And had it not been that We had already firmly established you, you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little; in that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double* (punishment) *in this life and a double* (punishment) *after death* [17:74 — 75]. Again He says: ... *nor could I take those who lead* (others) *astray for aiders* [18:51]. Also He says — and it is a parable of wide application: *And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth* (abundantly) *by the permission of its Lord, and* (as for) *that which is bad* (its herbage) *comes forth but scantily* [7:58].

As the truth cannot mix with falsehood, Allāh ordered the Prophet — when the mission's burden made him weary — to proceed gradually in this respect on three sides: concerning the mission itself, those to whom

the call was addressed and the mode of approach.

First: Concerning the mission itself with all its true knowledge and ordained laws. These are intended to reform the society's condition and uproot the decay and depravity. As we know, it is extremely difficult to change people's ideas and beliefs, especially if they are enmeshed with their character and activities; if they have become the norms of the day, entrenched by passage of centuries, sanctified by convention of ancestors, faithfully followed by succeeding generations. The task becomes even more herculean if the religion which is intended to replace the ancient system is all-encompassing, if it covers all affairs of life and ordains laws for all human movements and stillness; if it looks at the exterior as well as the interior, at all times and for all individuals and societies without any exception — as the Islam does. It is a venture that boggles the minds and looks practically impossible.

The task is even harder and tougher in actions than in beliefs. Because man becomes familiar with customs and rites and becomes habituated to them long before he starts believing in any thing. Action is perceived by perceptions more clearly and is more closely attached to man's desires and cravings. That is why, in the beginning, the Mission announced only the true beliefs — and that too in general terms. It was later that it gradually unfolded the divine laws and rules one after another.

In short, Islam revealed its secrets, step by step, so that people do not balk at accepting them, and hearts do not tremble at stacking one rule upon another. This fact is clear to anyone who meditates on these realities. He will see a clear difference between Meccan and Medinite verses of the Qur'ān, so far as exposition of divine knowledge and ordained laws is concerned. The Meccan verses call to the basic principles couched in general terms, while the Medinite ones (i.e., those revealed after *hijrah* [emigration], wherever they might have been revealed) explain the matters and give the details of the commandments which were communicated in general or vague terms during Meccan period. Allāh says: *Nay! man is most surely inordinate, because he sees himself free from want. Surely to your Lord is the return. Have you seen him who forbids a servant* (of Allāh) *when he prays? Have you considered if he were on the Guidance, or enjoined guarding* (against

evil)? *Have you considered if he* (i.e., this unbeliever) *gives the lie to the truth and turns* (his) *back? Does he not know that Allāh does see?* [96:6 — 14]. These verses were revealed at the beginning of the Messengership after the Prophethood, as was mentioned in the second volume under the verses of the Fast[1] and they point out in general terms to the Oneness of God and the resurrection, as well as to piety and worship.

Also He says: *O you who are enwrapped! Arise and warn, and your Lord do magnify* [74:1 — 3]. These verses too were revealed at the beginning of the Call. Again He says: *And* (I swear by) *the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it, he will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it* [91:7 — 10]; *He indeed shall be successful who purifies himself, and remembers the name of his Lord and prays* [87:14 — 15]; *Say: ''I am only a human being like you; it is revealed to me that your God is one God, therefore follow the right way to Him and ask His forgiveness''; and woe to the polytheists, who do not give zakāt and they are unbelievers in the hereafter.* (As for) *those who believe and do good, for them surely is a reward never to be cut off* [41:6 — 8]. All these verses were revealed during the early days of the Call.

Also Allāh has said: *Say: ''Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you —* (remember) *that you do not associate anything with Him and do good to* (your) *parents, and do not slay your children for* (fear of) *poverty — We provide for you and for them — and do not draw near to indecencies, those of them which are apparent and those which are concealed, and do not kill the soul which Allāh has forbidden except for* (the requirements of) *justice; this He has enjoined you with, that you may understand. And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner until he attains his majority; and give full measure and weight with justice — We do not impose on any soul a duty but according to its ability; and when you speak, then be just though it be* (against) *a relative, and fulfil Allāh's covenant; this He has enjoined you with, that you may be mindful. And* (know) *that this is My path, the straight one, therefore follow it; and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with, that you*

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 3, pp. 15 — 28. (*tr.*)

may guard (against evil)'' [6:151 — 153].

Look at the style of these verses; how they speak about religious prohibitions in general terms, and also about religious commandments in the same manner. See how all prohibitions have been summarized in one word which even a layman's mind will not balk at, because no sane person will hesitate in admitting that ''indecencies'' are bad and man should desist from them. Likewise, no one can doubt that uniting on the straight path is a good thing, as it prevents division and weakness and protects the society from destruction and decay. The Qur'ān in this way has appealed to the natural instincts of its audience. It is for this reason that some prohibited things have been described in detail, for example, disobedience of, and misbehaviour towards the parents, killing the children for fear of poverty, unjustified slaying of a human being, devouring an orphan's property and other such things; human instinct supports this call because in normal conditions it baulks from committing these sins and crimes. There are other verses of this type, and on meditation one will find the same style and the same condition in all of them.

In any case, the Meccan verses give only a general outline, details of which were filled by the Medinite ones; and the same gradual approach is seen within the Medinite verses themselves, because not all the religious laws and rules were sent down there at once — they were revealed little by little, step by step.

Only one example — mentioned earlier — will suffice here, and that is of the verses prohibiting the intoxicants. Allāh said: *And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes — you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision* [16:67]. It is a Meccan revelation; it mentiones intoxication and remains silent — except putting it *vis-a-vis* the phrase, *''goodly provision'',* and thus hinting that intoxicants were not goodly provision. Then came another verse: *Say: ''My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin ...''* [7:33]. This too belongs to the Meccan period; it prohibits ''sin'' clearly but does not say that drinking liquor is a sin. It treads softly, preparing the minds gradually to leave a bad habit to which they were pulled by their desires, and on which their flesh had grown and bones strengthened. Then came the Medinite verse: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: ''In both of them there is a great*

sin and (some) *profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit''* [2:219]. The verse pointed out that drinking liquor was a sin which had earlier been prohibited by the verse 33 of the chapter seven. Yet, you may see that the language of the verse is advisory, its tone gentle. Lastly it was revealed: *O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful. The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allāh and from prayer. Will you then desist?* [5:90 — 91]. This verse revealed at Medina finally sealed the prohibition.

The same gradual approach is seen in the matter of inheritance. The Prophet first established brotherhood between his companions and ordained that one such brother would inherit from the other. It was in the beginning and the aim was to prepare the Muslims to readily accept the laws of inheritance which were soon to be promulgated. Then came the revelation: *and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allāh to inheritance, one with respect to another, than* (other) *believers and* (than) *those who have fled* (their homes) [33:6]. It is this same consideration which is seen in many abrogated and abrogating verses.

In these and other similar matters, the Call went ahead step by step in promulgation and enforcement of the laws. It dealt with people gently in order that they might easily and gladly accept and obey the orders. Allāh says: *And a Qur'ān which We have revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees, and We have sent it down in portions* [17:106]. If the Qur'ān had been revealed to the Prophet all at once, he would have been obliged to explain the deails of his *sharī'ah* to the people (as the divine words clearly show: *and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them* [16:44]). Then it would have been necessary for him to describe in the very early day all the matters concerning the belief and ethics, as well as the whole set of the acts of worship and the rules regarding mutual dealings, social affairs, political matters, penal codes and other factors. Obviously, the minds at that time could not even imagine and tolerate such subjects, let alone accepting and practising

them — and the *sharī'ah* could never control their hearts (in their will and intentions) nor their limbs and bodies (in their actions). It was the gradual revelation which prepared the way for the religion to be accepted and to capture the hearts. Allāh says: *And those who disbelieve say: ''Why has not the Qur'ān been revealed to him all at once?'' Thus, that We may strengthen your hearts by it and We have arranged it well in arranging* [25:32]. This verse shows that Allāh had intended the graudal revelation to be a kindness to His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) as well as to his *ummah.* Ponder on this point and especially on the last clause, *and We have arranged it well in arranging.*

It is necessary to point out here that proceeding from general to particular, and going step by step in promulgation of law — for using gentle approach towards people and training them effectively stage by stage, keeping the ultimate good before one's eyes — is completely different from compromise and indulgence; and this distinction, needs no elaboration.

Second: Gradual increase in the circle of people to whom the call is addressed. We know that the Prophet was sent to the whole mankind; his call was not meant for a particular nation to the exclusion of the others; nor was it confined to a specific time or place. (The latter clause in effect means the same as the former.) Allāh says: *Say: ''O people! surely I am the Messenger of Allāh to you all, of Him Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth* [7:158]; *and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches* [6:19]; *And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds* [21:107].

Apart from that, the history records his invitations to the Jews (and they were Israelites) as well as the rulers of Rome, Persia, Abyssinia and Egypt, and they were non-Arabs. Among the well-known believers were Salmān (from Persia), his *mu'adhdhin,* Bilāl (from Abyssinia), and Ṣuhayb (from Rome). Thus the fact, that his prophethood was universal and meant for the whole world since his own days, is beyond doubt; the abovequoted verses too are not confined to any time or place.

Also there are following two verses which prove universality of his prophethood and show that it is meant for all times and all places. Allāh says: *and most surely it is a Mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised*

One [41:41 — 42]; *... but he is the Messenger of Allāh and the Last of the Prophets ...* [33:40]. Detailed descriptions of these verses shall be given in their Commentaries.

In any case, his prophethood is all-encompassing and universal. If we ponder on the vast range of Islamic knowledge and laws, and see the condition the world was in, the day Islam came on the scene — the dark ignorance, the repulsive depravity and the filthy transgression — then we shall certainly realize that it was just impossible to face the whole world at once, or to struggle against polytheism and depravity all at one go.

The reason demanded that, to begin with, the Call should be addressed to only a small portion of humanity — and that it should be the people of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) himself. After they were well-imbued with religion, the Call could be extended to others — and that is what was done. Allāh says: *And We did not send any messenger but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly* [14:4]; *And if We had revealed it to any of the foreigners, so that he should have recited it to them, they would not have believed therein* [26:198 — 199]. The verses that imply some link between the Call and the Arabs, show only that they were included among those to whom the Call and the Warning were addressed. The same is the position of the verses which offer the Qur'ān as a challenge to the mankind — if there were anything in them which implied the restriction of the challenge to rhetorics, then it would be just because rhetoric was one of the aspects of its miraculousness; it does not mean that the Call was confined to only the Arabs.

Of course, language by itself plays a very important role in communication and explanation, as has been described in several verses; for example: *And We did not send any messenger but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly* [14:4]; *We narrate to you the best of narratives, by Our revealing to you this Qur'ān* [12:3]; *And most surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. The faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your hearts, that you may be of the warners, in plain Arabic language* [26:192 — 195]. The Arabic language has unparallelled capacity of expressing the ideas and mental images in the most perfect style. That is why Allāh selected it from among all languages for His Mighty Book, and said: *Surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand* [43:3].

However, Allāh ordered the Prophet, when he took up the Call, to begin with his nearest relations: *And warn your nearest relatives* [26:214]. The Prophet, obeying the command, gathered his relatives and called them to what he was sent with; he further promised them that the first one to answer his call would be his successor after him. ‘Alī (a.s.) answered his call; the Prophet appreciated his response while the others mocked him for it — as the correct traditions and books of history and biography have recorded [1]. Then other people from his family adhered to him, like his wife, Khadījah, his uncle, Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abdi ’l-Muṭṭalib, ‘Ubayd, and his uncle, Abū Ṭālib — as is recorded in Shī‘ite traditions, and declared and implied in his own poems [2], (although he did not announce his acceptance of faith in order that he could continue protecting the Prophet.

Then Allāh ordered him to extend the circle of the mission to the whole nation, as is shown by the following verses: *And thus have We revealed to you an Arabic Qur’ān, that you may warn the mother city* (i.e., Mecca) *and those around it ...* [42:7]; *... that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you, that they may follow the right direction* [32:3]; *and this Qur’ān has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches* [6:19]. This last verse is a clear proof that the Call was not confined to them, although it had begun with them for underlying benefits.

Lastly Allāh ordered him to spread the Call to the whole world, to include followers of every religion and creed, as the earlier quoted verses show. See for example: *Say: ‘‘O people! surely I am the Messenger of Allāh to you all ...’’* [7:158]; *but he is the Messenger of Allāh and the Last of the prophets* [33:40]; and other verses quoted above.

Third: Proceeding step by step in calling and guidance as well as in enforcement of the law. [It has three stages:] Inviting them by word of mouth, passive resistance and *jihād.*

Invitation by Word: It is seen throughout the Qur’ān, all by itself. Allāh

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1 Vide *Biḥāru ’l-anwār* (vol. 6); *as-Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām and other books. (*Author’s Note*)

2 Vide *Dīwān* of Abū Ṭālib. (*Author’s Note*)

had directed the Prophet to pay regard to human dignity and observe good manners in his missionary activities. He says: *Say: ''I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me ...''* [18:110]; *... and make yourself gentle to the believers* [15:88]; *And not alike are the good and the evil Repel* (evil) *with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend* [41:34]; *And bestow not favours that you may receive again with increase* [74:6]. There are numerous verses of similar theme.

Also, Allāh told him to use all methods and levels of explanation having regard to the understanding and mental capacity of the individuals. He says: *Call to the way of Thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner* [16:125].

Passive Resistance: It means that the believers were to cut themselves off from the unbelievers in their belief and activities. In this way there were to establish an Islamic social order unalloyed with any non-monotheistic belief or non-Islamic action (e.g., sins and ethical shortcomings) — except mingling with non-Muslims to the extent required by dictates of life. Allāh says:

> *Unto you be your religion and unto me my religion* [109:6].
>
> *Stand fast then* (in the right path) *as you are commanded, as also he who has turned* (to Allāh) *with you, and be not inordinate* (O men!), *surely He sees what you do. And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the fire touch you, and you have no guardians herides Allāh, then you shall not be helped* [11:112 — 113];
>
> *To this then go on inviting, and go on steadfastly* (on the right path) *as you are commanded, and do not follow their low desires, and say: ''I believe in what Allāh has revealed of the Book, and I am commanded to do justice between you: Allāh is our Lord and your Lord; we shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds; no plea need there be* (now) *between us and you: Allāh will gather us together, and to Him is the return''* [42:15];
>
> *O you who believe! do not take* My *enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you o f the truth ... Allāh does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of* (your) *religion, and*

have not driven you forth from you homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allāh loves the doers of justice. Allāh only forbids you respecting those who made war upon you on account of (your) *religion, and drove you forth from your homes and backed up* (others) *in your expulsion, that you make friends with them, and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust* [60:1, 8 — 9].

There are numerous verses with the theme of keeping aloof and remaining separate from, and clear of, the enemies of religion; and as you see they explain the meaning of this aloofness, its method and its particulars.

Jihād: This subject has already been explained under the verses of *jihād* in the Chapter of The Cow.[1]

However, these three stages are the special feature and exclusive property of Islam. The first is inseparably included in the latter two, and the second in the third one. The Prophet, in all his battles, invariably always called the unbelievers to the right path and exhorted them to submit to the One God — before the hostilities started, as he was commanded by his Lord to do: *But if they turn back, say: ''I have given you warning all alike ...''* [21:109].

One of the vulgarest charges against Islam is the cliche that it is a religion of sword, not of preaching. The Qur'ān, the biographies of the Prophet and the history, all together throw light on the reality, but ''to whomsoever Allāh does not give light, he has no light.''

Many of these critics belong to a Church that had established the Inquisition and run it for centuries to convict the so-called heretics and bum them alive — as if it were the divine court on the Day of Resurrection ! Its agents roamed the Christian countries and caught and sent to the Inquisition whomsoever they accused of atheism or heresy — often it meant only having modem views in the fields of physics and mathematics which went against the ''philosophy'' of scholasticism propagated by the Church.

Would that I knew which was more important in the eyes of the reason: spreading the monotheism, uprooting idol-worship and cleansing

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 3, pp. 93 — 101. (*tr.*)

the earth of depravity [as Islam did], or strangling a scholar who said that the earth revolved round the sun, or who denied the Ptolemaic sky.

Also, it was the Church that incited and agitated the Christian world against Islam, in the name of fighting against ''idolatry''. Thus began the wars known as Crusade which continued for about two hundred years; it devastated the regions, annihilated millions of lives and tarnished the dignity of countless women. [1]

There are other detractors, outside the Church, who are supposedly imbued with ideals of civilization and freedom. These are the very people who have no hesitation in detonating the fuse of world wars and turning the world upside down whenever they perceive some of their material interests threatened by a small danger. The question is: What is more disastrous to the mankind: Consolidation of polytheism in the world, moral decadence, lapse of virtue and suffocation of world with depravity and corruption? Or losing one's grip on a few yards of land or incurring loss of a few dollars? Yes, ''certainly man is ungrateful to his Lord.''

Here I would like to quote what one of the great scholars has written on this subject in one of his booklets. He says:

The methods used for reforming social order, uprooting injustice and establishing justice, and fighting against corruption and evil are almost confined to three categories:

1. Methods of propagation and guidance through lectures, articles, books and publications. It is the noble way pointed to by Allāh as He says in His Book: *Call to the way of Thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner.* Also, He says: *Repel* (evil) *with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.* This was the method used by Islam in the beginning of the mission ...

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[1] The spirit of Crusade is still alive in Christiandom which, taking advantage of the Zionist movement and internal strifes of the Muslim world, has won the latest round of the battle by putting the State of Israel like a dagger in the heart of the Muslim land. After the Europe was devastated in the Second World War, the super powers have learned to fight their wars by proxy in the third world, e.g., in Korea, Vietnam and Nicaragua. Using the same principle, the Christians are now continuing the Crusade by proxy, through Israel. For the time being they have won the battle, but the war continues. (*tr.*)

2. Methods of peaceful and passive resistance, like demonstrations, strikes, economic boycott, and non-cooperation with the tyrants by remaining aloof from their services and governments. Believers in this method do not agree with methods of killing, war and violence. This is the way pointed out by Allāh in His words: *And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the fire touch you.* Again He says: *Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends.* There are a lot of verses in the Qur'ān pointing to this method. Prominent among its advocates were the Indian prophet, Buddha and 'Īsā (a.s.) as well as the Russian writer, Tolstoy and the Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi.

3. War, uprising and fighting.

Islam proceeds by degrees in these three methods. First comes good exhortation and peaceful invitation. If it fails to repulse the unjust people and to remove their corruption and despotism, then the second method is adopted, and that is peaceful boycott, passive resistance and non-cooperation with them, withholding all assistance from them. If this too proves ineffective, then the only alternative is the third one, that is, armed confrontation, because Allāh is never pleased with injustice; and he who silently agrees with an unjust person, is his partner in injustice.

Islam is a belief. He is completely mistaken and has crossed the limits of reason who says that Islam was spread by sword and wars. Islam is a faith and belief, and faith cannot be created by compulsion and coercion; it comes from proofs and arguments. The Honoured Qur'ān announces this fact in many verses, e.g., *There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error* [2:256].

Even when Islam drew sword and took up arms against the unjust people (who had disregarded the divine communications and proofs), it used the force only to remove those who had become like stumbling blocks in the way of the Call of the truth. In other words, it used the arms to repel the enemies'mischief, not to make them enter the fold of Islam. Allāh says: *And fight with them until there is no more mischief* [2:193]. Thus the fighting was resorted to, for erasing mischief, not for compelling them to accept the faith and religion.

Islam therefore does not wage war arbitrarily or by its own choice. It is the enemies who push it into a corner and then it has to resort to war. Even then it uses noble ways to fight. It has forbidden — both in war and in peace — destruction and arson, poisoning and cutting off water from

enemy. Likewise, it prohibits killing of women, children or prisoners — instead it orders the Muslims to deal with them gently, to do good to them, no matter how much enmity and hatred towards the Muslims they might have shown. It disallows assasination in war and in peace, as well as killing aged men and women or him who had not participated in the war. It does not allow attacking the enemy at night; [*and if you fear treachery on the part of a people,*] *then throw back to them on terms of equality* [8:58]. It forbids killing someone just on suspicion, or punishing him before he has committed a sin. It has prohibited many such practices which are rejected by sense of nobility and ideals of manhood, and which spring from meanness and cruelty, vileness and barbarity.

All the above-mentioned deeds which Islam in its nobility refused to do against its enemies in any of its battles or wars, have been committed, in their most heinous form and in the most horrid way, by the ‘‘civilized’’ nations of this era — the era of enlightenment. Yes, this enlightened era has allowed massacre of women and children, old and sick; it practises nightsorties, and attacks in middle of night with arms and bombs against defenceless civilians. In short, it has ligalized murder in all its various shapes.

Did not Germany in World War II send rocket on London, demolishing the buildings and killing the women, children and civilian population? Did not they exterminate thousands of prisoners? And did not the Allies [in their turn] send thousands of bombers against Germany to destroy its cities and towns? Did not the U.S.A. drop atomic bombs on the Japanese towns?

Now that even more modern means of destruction have been invented, like the missiles and atomic and hydrogen bombs, nobody — except Allāh — knows what disasters and destructions, tragedies and calamities would fall on the earth if a World War III were to erupt and the fighting parties resorted to these bombs [1] May Allāh guide the man to

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[1] The nuclear arms race continues unabated, in spite of the pious verbal professions of the super powers to ‘‘limit’’ it. The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. have amassed between themselves enough nuclear war-heads to pulverize the earth several times over. Now their attention is focused on colonizing the outer space and — even before that — on finding the ways to destroy it. They are rushing towards ‘‘Star War’’ when the majority of mankind (including millions of Americans and Russians) are either living below the

the right path and lead him to the straight way.[1]

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *And give to the orphans their property ... a great crime:* It is an order to return to the orphans their property, and it paves the way for the next two sentences (*and do not substitute ..., and do not devour ...*); or the latter two serve as explantion of the former. But as the reason given at the end (*this is surely a great crime*) refers to the latter two or the last one sentence, it supports the view that the first sentence is put here as a prologue to the next two.

The main prohibition that one should not use an orphan's property in a manner detrimental to his interest, in itself prepares the ground for the soon-coming laws of inheritance, and of the marriage described in the next verse.

The words, *''and do not substitute worthless for good''*, mean: Do not substitute your worthless things for their good ones; if there is any good property belonging to them, you should not keep it for yourself returning to them some worthless property of yours in exchange. Some people have explained it as follows: Do not substitute unlawful things for lawful ones. But the former meaning is more obvious, because apparently the two sentences (*do not substitute ..., and do not devour ...*) describe a particular type of unlawful management, and the first sentence (*And give the orphans ...*) paves the way for both. In the last clause, *''this is surely a great crime''*, *al-ḥūb* (اَلْحُوْبُ = sin; crime) is infinitive verb and also verbal noun.

QUR'ĀN: *And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you:* We have mentioned previously that there was always a great number of orphans

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poverty line or dying of starvation. Allāh says:

Chaos has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done ... [30:41]. (*tr.*)

[1] ash-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn Kāshifu 'l-Ghiṭā', in his booklet: *al-Muthulu 'l-'ulyā' fi 'l-Islām lā fī Baḥamdūn*. (*Author Note*)

among the Arabs of the era of ignorance — who were seldom free from war, fighting, murder and forays, and among whom death by killing was a very common occurrence. Usually, the leaders of tribes and people of power and influence took the orphan girls (with properties) as wives; they devoured their (i.e., the orphans') properties with their own and then behaved with them unjustly. Often they turned them out after swallowing their property; the helpless girls became poverty-stricken destitutes; neither they had any money to live on, nor was there anyone willing to marry and maintain them. The Qur'ān has reproached them very severely for this evil habit and disgusting injustice, and prohibited very strongly doing any injustice to orphans or devouring their property. For example, Allāh says:

> (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire* [4:10].
>
> *And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless* (things) *for* (their) *good* (ones), *and do not devour their property* (as an addition) *to your own property; this is surely a great crime* [4:2].

As a result, the Muslims reportedly became afraid for their own souls and were so panic-stricken that they turned out the orphans from their own homes in apprehension, lest they inadvertently do something wrong with those orphans' property or fail to give them their just dues. If someone kept an orphan with him, he set apart the orphan's share in food and drink; if the orphan could not finish it, nobody else would touch it — it remained as it was until it was spoiled. It caused difficulties for the people; and they complained to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) asking for his guidance. Then Allāh revealed: *And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say: ''To set right for them* (their affairs) *is good; and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren; and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well-doer; and if Allāh had willed, He would certainly have made it harder for you; surely Allāh is Mighty, Wise''* [2:220]. Thus, Allāh allowed them to give shelter to orphans and to keep them with themselves for looking after their affairs, and to mingle with them because they were their brethren. In this way, their difficulties were removed and their worries dispelled.

When you ponder on this fact, and then look at the verse under

discussion (*And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you ...*) — and remember that it comes after the verse, *''And give to the orphans their property ...''* — it will be clear to you that the verse raises the prohibition a degree higher. Its connotation will be as follows — and Allāh knows better: Be careful regarding the orphans and do not substitute your bad or worthless property with their good ones; nor should you devour their property with your own; so much so that if you are afraid that you would not be able to treat the orphan girls equitably and therefore you do not like to take them as your wives, then better do not marry them; instead you should marry other such women as seem good to you — two, three or four.

The conditional sentence (*And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such* [other] *women as seem good to you ...*), actually means: If you do not like to marry the orphan girls because you fear that you cannot act equitably towards them, then do not marry them, and marry such women as seem good to you. Obviously the clause, *''then marry ...''* is substitute of the real *al-jazā'* (اَلْجَزَآءُ = second construct of the conditional sentence), [i.e., then do not marry the orphans]; the clause, *''such women as seem good to you'',* makes further description [i.e., women other than the orphans] unnecessary. The verse does not say, those women who seem good to you; instead it says: such women as seem good to you; it is because it points to the number mentioned later: two and three and four. The verse begins with the clause, *''if you fear that you cannot act equitably''*, while it actually means, if you do not like to marry the orphans because of fear; thus it has allegorically put the cause in place of the effect, pointing to the deleted effect later where it says: *''as seem good to you''.*

Many other things have been written in explanation of this verse, as may be seen in bigger exegeses. They are in short as follows:

1. The Arabs used to marry four, five or more wives; their thinking was as follows: Why should I not marry as has Mr. X done? When his own property was finished, he spent the property of orphans under his care. Therefore, Allāh forbade them to marry more than four wives, so that they should not be compelled by circumstances to unjustly use the orphans' property.
2. They were strictly honest in matters affecting the orphans, but

did not observe the same standard in affairs of women; so they married numerous wives without maintaining equity and justice. Therefore, Allāh said: If you are afraid about orphans, you should likewise be careful about women; you should marry only one or upto four.

3. They were reluctant to accept guardianship of orphans or to eat their property. So Allāh said: If you are reluctant of these things, you should also desist from fornication; instead you should marry such women as seem good to you.

4. If you fear that you cannot act equitably towards the orphans brought up under your care, then marry other lawful women from the orphans among your relatives, two and three and four.

5. If you are reluctant of eating together with orphans, then likewise avoid marrying more than one wife; if you are afraid of not acting equitably with them, do not marry except her whom you can treat with justice and equity.

These were the explanations given by them. But it is clear that none of them properly fits the wordings of the verse. Therefore the only interpretation is the one we have written.

QUR'ĀN: *two and three and four:* the paradigms, *maf'al* and *fu'al* (مَفْعَلُ،فُعَالُ), when applied to numbers, signify repetition of the root word; thus the clause, *mathnā wa thulātha wa rubā'a* (مَثْنى وَ ثُلثَ وَ رُبعَ) means, two two and three three and four four [or twos, threes and fours]. The verse is addressed to all individuals, and the numbers have been separated by ''and'' which implies choice; these factors together show that every believer has a right to marry two wives, or three, or four. When looked at together, they would be grouped as twos, threes and fours.

The above explanation, coupled with the next clause, *but if you fear that you will not do justice* (between them) *then* (marry) *only one or what your right hands posses,* together with the following verse, *And all married women ...* [4:247], disproves the idea that the verse allows to marry two, three or four wives in one contract of marriage; or that it permits to marry two together, then two together and so on, and likewise three or four together, then other three or four together; or that it approves polyandary — marriage of several men with one woman. These are ideas which the verse does not tolerate at all.

Apart from that, it is a self-evident truth that Islam does not allow a man to gather more than four wives at a time, or a woman to have more than one husband at a time.

Likewise, there is no room for the hypothesis that the word, ‘‘and’’, between the numbers, is for conjunction, and that the verse accordingly allows marrying nine (i.e., 2 + 3 + 4) wives at a time. *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* says as follows: Using the total in this manner is not a possibility at all. If someone says, ‘‘The people entered the town in twos, threes and fours’’, does not mean the total of these numbers — in other words, it does not imply that they entered in groups of nine. Moreover, there is a proper word, ‘‘nine’’, to denote that number; so leaving the correct word and changing it to ‘two and three and four’, shows an incapability of proper expression — Too exalted and sanctified is His speech from such defects.

QUR’ĀN: *but if you fear that you will not do justice* (between them) *then* (marry) *only one:* That is, marry only one, not more. Allāh has made this order conditional on fear, not on knowledge, because knowledge in such matters is usually difficult to achieve, especially when thought is clouded by temptation; the underlying benefit would be lost if the rule were made dependent on knowledge.

QUR’ĀN: *or what your right hands possess:* That is, slave-girls. If a man is afraid that he will not do justice between many wives, then he should marry only one; and if he wants more, then he should take slave-girls, because they are not entitled to division of nights.

Obviously, the provision of the alternative — taking the slave-girls — does not mean that one may misbehave with, or do injustice to them; Allāh does not like the unjust, nor is He unjust to His servants. It only means that it is easier to maintain justice with them because they are not included in the rule of division of nights. This very reason shows that this clause refers to taking, and living with them by virtue of possession, not by marriage; the matter of marrying them has been described later in the verse: *And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then* (he may marry) *of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens ...* [4:25].

QUR'ĀN: *this is nearer, that you may not deviate from the right course: ''al-'Awl',* (اَلْعَوْلُ = to deviate from the right course). The law as ordained above brings you nearer to the point whence you shall not deviate from justice or transgress the wome's rights.

Someone has written that *al-'awl* means burden; but it is a far-fetched interpretation, both in word and in meaning.

This sentence — which mentions the underlying reason of this legislation — proves that the foundation of the marriage laws is laid on justice and equity as well as on rejection of oppression and usurpation of rights.

QUR'ĀN: *And give women their dowries as a free gift ... with enjoyment* (and with) *wholesome* (result): *aṣ-Ṣaduqah, aṣ-ṣadaqah, aṣ-ṣadāq* and *aṣ-ṣidāq* (اَلصَّدُقَةُ،اَلصَّدَقَةُ،اَلصَّدَاقُ،اَلصِّدَاقُ), all mean dowry; *an-niḥlah* (اَلنِّحْلَةُ = gift, a thing given freely without bargaining).

The possessive construction, *''their dowries''*, shows that the order to give dowry to woman is based on the usage prevalent among the people: it was customary in marriage to reserve for the wife some property or anything of value as her dowry. Seemingly it has the same position *vis-a-vis* the conjugal relationship as the price does *vis-a-vis* the commodity sold; and as we shall describe in the forthcoming Academic discourse, customarily it is the man who proposes and asks for marriage as a buyer brings the price to the seller and receives the purchased item. In any case, the verse endorses this prevalent custom.

It was possible to think that the husband was not allowed to use the dowry at all — even if the wife was pleased with it. Probably it was to remove that possible misunderstanding that the conditional clause was added: *''but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment* (and with) *wholesome* (result).*''* The imperative, *''eat it''*, is qualified with the words, `with enjoyment and with wholesome result.' It puts emphasis on the previous sentence containing basic rule and also shows that the order is elective, not compulsory.

al-Hanā' (اَلْهَنَآءُ = being easily digested, being agreeable); it is used for food. *al-Marī'* (اَلْمَرِئ) is derived from *ar-riyy* (اَلرِّيّ = quenching of thirst); it has some connotation regarding drinks as *al-hanā'* does about food, but with one difference: *al-Hanā'* may be used for food and drink

both; but when the combined phrase, *hanī'an marī'an* (هَنِيْأً مَرِيْأً) is used, the former word refers exclusively to food and the latter to drink.

QUR'ĀN: *And do not give away your property which Allāh has made for you a* (means of) *support to the weak of understanding: ''as-Safah''* (اَلسَّفَهُ = feeble-mindedness; weakness or slightness of understanding). Probably, its basic meaning was lightness of a thing which by nature should not be light; thus they say: *az-Zamāmu 's-safīh* (اَلزَّمَامُ السَّفِيْهُ = a rein or halter that shakes too much); *thawb safīh* (ثَوْبٌ سَفِيهٌ = a badly-woven cloth); now it is mostly used for lightness of soul, and its implication varies with context; in worldly affairs, *as-safīh* means feeble-minded, weak of understanding; in religious context, it means a dissolute person, one who does not follow religious commandments; and so on.

It is obvious from the verse that one should not spend too much of feeble-minded persons, should not give them more than is needed for their necessary expenses. But the context — the verse is among the ones dealing with orphans' property which is managed and looked after by guardians — provides a definite association that *''the weak of understanding''* refers to the orphans of immature mind; and that *''your property''* actually means the orphans' property, although it has been ascribed to the guardians because of a certain consideration; this explanation is further supported by the clause, *''and maintain them out of it, and clothe them.''* If one insists on interpreting the word, *''the weak of understanding''*, in general terms, then it should be generalized to include orphans and non-orphans both. Yet the former meaning carries more weight.

In any case, if the word refers to the orphans of feeble understanding, then *''your property''* means the orphans' property; it has been ascribed to the guardians — whom the verse addresses — keeping in view the fact that all the property and riches found in the world are for the whole mankind. Some individuals keep some portions of these riches, and others some other portions; it is done for general good, on which is based the principle of ownership and exclusive possessive relationship. Accordingly, it is necessary for people to grasp this reality and appreciate that they are all members of a single society, and the whole property belongs to the whole society. Consequently, it is each one's responsibility to protect and preserve it, one should not let it be wasted or

squandered by people of weak understanding, nor should it be left under the management of such persons (like minor children or insane people) as are not capable of admininistering it properly. So this is the significance of the possessive case here; it is not unlike the verse: *And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then* (he may marry) *of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens* [4:25], as it is known that the phrase, *''your believing maidens''*, does not refer to the slave-girls owned by the one who wants to marry them.

The verse contains a general rule ordained for the whole society. The society is a single entity — or let us say a [legal] personality — that owns all the riches which Allāh has given it for its livelihood, and with which He has strengthened it. Accordingly, it is the society's responsibility to manage it and to keep it in good order; it should invest it in profitable ventures and use the profit for one's sustenance on a medium scale; it is also obliged to protect it from waste and loss. This basic principle gives rise to the rule that the guardians are obliged to look after, and manage, the affairs of the people of weak understanding; they should not hand over their wards' property to them, lest they waste it through mismanagement. The guardians must hold back the property, manage it profitably and let it grow through earning, trades and profit-sharing; they should maintain those feeble-minded wards with its profit and growth — not with its capital. This law has been laid down, so that the capital is not decreased little by little until a time comes when the ward is left in wretched poverty without any means of livelihood.

It appears from the above explanation that the clause, *''and maintain them out of it and clothe them''*, implies that a feeble-minded ward should be maintained from the growth and profit of the capital, not from the capital itself. He should not be allowed to start eating from the capital, keeping it idle without circulation, lest it is eaten up completely. As az-Zamakhsharī has said, it was to show this fine point that Allāh has said, *''out of it''*, and not, 'from it'.

Also it is not unreasonable to infer from the verse the principle of general guardianship of the wards, that is, Allāh is not pleased that the affairs of such wards be neglected; nay! the Islamic society is obliged to look after their affairs: If there is any guardian in the family, like the father and paternal grandfather, he will be his guardian and will manage

his affairs; otherwise the responsibility falls on the Islamic government, and lastly on other believers, to look after his affairs — detailed rules of which are given in the books of jurisprudence.

ALL THE RICHES BELONG TO THE WHOLE MANKIND

The above is a Qur'ānic reality which forms the basis of many important rules and laws in Islam, and which is inferred from the verse under discussion:

All property and riches belong to Allāh in real ownership; He has made it a means of support and a source of livelihood for the human society, without bequeathing it on a particular person to the exclusion of the others (as a permanent irrevocable endowment); without bestowing it on someone as a gift transferring the authority of lawful management to the new owner. Then Allāh allowed individual members to have exclusive relation with a portion of the riches (which was originally bestowed to the whole humanity), provided that that possessive relationship is established through lawful means, like inheritance, taking possession, and trade, etc. He then laid down some conditions which have to be fulfilled before the individual might be allowed to manage his property, e.g., sanity, majority and so on.

The firm root which has to be respected at all times and which has developed many branches is this: All property belongs to all men. The individuals' interest should be respected if the common interest of the society is protected, i.e., if the private interest is not in conflict with the public weal. Otherwise, public welfare will take precedence over private one, definitely and without any hesitation.

Numerous important laws and rules in Islam are solidly based on this foundation; for example, the regulations related to maintenance, and most of the rules governing mutual dealings and other such aspects of life. Allāh has confirmed it in many places in His Book, e.g., *He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth* [2:29]. We have written some things related to this topic under the verses of maintenance in the second chapter which may be referred to.

QUR'ĀN: *and maintain them out of it, and clothe them and speak to*

them with kind words: We have fully explained the meaning of sustenance or maintenance under the verse; *and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest, without measure* [3:27].[1]

The clause, *''and maintain them out of it and clothe them''*, has the same significance here as does the one in 2:233: *and their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father.* The maintenance refers to the food that nourishes man; and clothing is the dress that protects him from heat and cold. But the phrase, ''maintenance and clothing'', as used in the Qur'ānic language (as in our own) metaphorically points to all the things that together fulfil man's material needs in life; it thus covers all necessities of life including house and other such things. It is not unlike the word, eating, which has a particular meaning, yet metaphorically refers to the use (in general), as the Qur'ān says: *''but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment* (and with) *wholesome* (result).''

QUR'ĀN: *and speak to them with kind words:* It is an ethical guidance for improving the standard of guardianship. The wards may be weak of understanding who are prevented from managing their own properties, yet they are neither dumb animals nor grazing cattle; they are human beings, and they should be treated as such; they should be spoken to in good manner, not harshly or insultingly; and dealt with, dignity.

Apparently it is possible to take this clause as a metaphorical expression for good dealing and commendable social intercourse — not objectionable one, as was explained under the verse: ... *and speak to men good* (words) ... [2:83].

QUR'ĀN: *And test the orphans until they reach* (age of) *marriage; then if you find in them maturity of intellect, make over to them their property: ''al-Ibtilā' ''* (اَلِابْتِلاَءُ = to test); reaching age of marriage, thus it contains a rational allegory; *al-'īnās* (اَلِايْنَاسُ = to see, to find); the word has a connotation of ''friendliness'' and ''geniality'' because its root is *al-uns* (اَلْاُنْسُ = friendly atmosphere); *ar-rushd* (اَلرُّشْدُ = translated here as maturity of intellect) is opposite of *al-ghayy* (اَلْغَيُّ) and means to find way to the goals of life. Handing over to the orphans their property

[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 5, pp. 206 — 212. (*tr.*)

means to give it back to them, into their possession; [the verb used is *ad-daf'* (اَلدَّفْعُ = to repulse, to push away]; it is as though the guardian pushes the property away from himself; thus it is in spite of its triteness, a very fine metaphor.

The clause, *''until they reach* (age of) *marriage''*, is related to the verb, *''test''*; it thus shows that the testing should be a continuous exercise. The guardian should start testing the orphan as soon as he shows some discretion and appears ready for such tests; it should continue until he reaches marriageable age and becomes a ''man''. The order by nature demands this continual process, because one cannot find out whether the child has attained maturity of intellect just by testing him once or twice; the test must be repeated again and again until the guardian finds out the orphan's maturity of mind and it becomes a part of his nature until he reaches puberty and then the marriageable age.

The words, *''then if you find in them maturity of intellect''*, branches from the imperative verb, *''And test''*; and the meaning is as follows: Test them, and if you find in them maturity of intellect, hand over their property to them. The wording shows that the orphan's reaching the age of marriage is the basis of returning his property to him and of bestowing on him the power to manage his estate independently. Maturity of intellect is the necessary condition for bestowal of authority of independent management.

Islam has laid down two different standards regarding *al-bulūgh* (اَلْبُلُوْغُ = majority, adulthood) for two different sets of responsibilities: As for the acts of worship and matters like penal code the majority begins on reaching a prescribed age, but for financial affairs, acknowledements and other such dealings (details of which are given in the books of jurisprudence) mere attainment of age is not enough, he must also achieve maturity of intellect. This differentiation throws light on the highest refinement and sophistication which Islam has maintained in its legislative programmes. Had it disregarded the maturity of intellect in financial and similar dealings, the social life would have suffered disorder and chaos — as far as orphans and other wards were concerned. Had they been given power [just on reaching a certain age] to independently manage their finance or to make agreements or acknowledgments, etc.; it would have given a chance to mischief-makers to mislead and deceive them. Cunning hoaxers could have defrauded

them of all their means of livelihood, with their smooth talks, false promises and swindling deals. Therefore, it was essential to impose the condition of maturity of intellect in such matters. But obviously there was no need to put this condition in the things like acts of worship, etc.; also it was not necessary in such affairs as penal code. One does not need sharp mind or maturity of intellect to understand and perceive the evil of these crimes and sins or to realize that one should desist from them. Man understands such things long before attaining maturity of intellect, and one finds no difference, in these matters, between the perception gained before maturity of intellect and that achieved afterwards.

QUR'ĀN: *and do not consume it extravagantly and hastily, lest they attain to full age ... and Allāh is enough as a Reckoner: ''al-Isrāf''* (اَلْاِسْرَافُ = extravagance, immoderateness) is exceeding the medium course of action. *al-Badār* (اَلْبَدَارُ = hurry, haste). The clause, *''and hastily, lest they attain to full age''*, means: and hastily fearing that they would grow up and then would not allow you to consume their property. (The phrase, *''lest they attain''*, begins in Arabic with *an* [اَنْ = that] and has no particle of negation; thus it may also be translated, 'that they attain'). Omission of particle of negation before *an* or *in* (اَنْ،اِنْ = that) is consistent with norms of language, as grammarians have said: Allāh says: *Allāh makes clear to you, lest you err* [4:176], i.e., fearing that you would err.

The two phrases, *''extravagantly''* and *''hastily, lest they attain ...''*, have been put parallel to each other. This setting points to their difference.

Consuming the orphans' property extravagantly refers to the situation when the guardian eats it without needing or deserving it, unjustly and carelessly. Consuming it hastily, to the condition where the guardian takes from the estate only the normal and usual fee for his services, but with an eye on the possibility that the orphan might stop it when he grows up. All such consumptions are forbidden, except when the guardian is poor and in such a position that either he earns his livelihood somewhere else or looks after the orphan's affairs and meets his necessities of life from his ward's estate. It would be just like a worker in trade or construction, etc. taking his wages from his employer. It is this aspect which Allāh mentions in the sentence: *''and whoever is rich''*

(i.e., is not in need of taking from the orphan's property for his livelihood). *''let him abstain altogether''* (i.e., he should follow and adhere to the path of abstinence and continence, and should not take anything from the orphan), *''and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably''*.

An exegete has opined that it means that the poor guardian should eat as usual from his own property, not from that of the orphan. But if that was what Allāh had intended to say, then why did He bring in the difference between rich and poor?

The words, *''then when you make over to them their property, call witnesses in their presence; and Allāh is enough as a Reckoner''*, ordain the law to call witnesses at the time of handing over the estate to the wards. It is done to affect the transition in proper way and to remove the danger of dispute and controversy [in future]; lest the orphan — after attaining maturity and receiving the property — makes claims against the guardian. The verse ends on the words, *''and Allāh is enough as a Reckoner''*; and it relates the order to its original and basic source — the fountain-head of every rule from Allāh's names and attributes. Allāh is the Reckoner, He would not leave His servants' affairs without meticulously accurate reckoning — and that is His clear legislation. Also the clause completes the Islamic training, because Islam aims at training the people on the basis of monotheism. Although calling the witnesses removes strife and difference in most of the cases, yet sometimes it fails to do so, either because the witnesses deviate from justice or because of other factors. Islam reminds the parties that the spiritual reason [of this law], which is also higher and stronger, is the fear of Allāh Who is enough as a Reckoner. There would never be any discord and difference, if the guardian, the witnesses and the orphan (who is receiving the property) keeps this reality before their eyes.

Look at these two verses and see how singularly and marvelously they explain the subject in such a lovely style:

First, they give basic rules of guardianship over orphans' and other wards' properties; then they explain other important factors: how the property should be taken in trust and protected, how it should be managed to let it grow and bring in profits, how it should be returned to the ward; when the orphans or other wards should be put under guardianship and when should they be given independent authority to

manage their affairs.

All this has been reinforced by describing its underlying common benefit, i.e., all property belongs to Allāh Who has made it a means of support for mankind — as we have explained above.

Second, they point to the basic ethical value which man is expected to attain through these laws; it is given by Allāh in these words: *''and speak to them with kind words''*.

Third, they show that all these rules are based on the foundation of monotheism. This factor affects and governs all practical laws and ethical values; and its good influence remains effective always and everywhere — even when practical laws and ethical values are enfeebled and their hold on minds and hearts loosened. This reality is described in the last clause, *''and Allāh is enough as a Reckoner''*

TRADITIONS

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has narrated from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr (about the verse, *And give to the orphans their ...*) that he said: ''A man from (the tribe of) Ghaṭfān had with him a great wealth of an orphan nephew of his. When the orphan attained majority, he demanded his property, but (the uncle) held it back from him. So he (the orphan) sued him before the Prophet; then the verse was revealed: *And give to the orphans their property ...''* (*ad Durru 'l-manthūr*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''It is not lawful for man's water to flow into more than four wombs of free women.'' (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

The same Imām said: ''When a man has gathered four (wives) and divorces one of them, then he should not marry the fifth until the waiting period of the woman he has divorced comes to an end.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: There are many traditions on this subject.

It is narrated from Muḥammad ibn Sinān that ar-Riḍā (a.s.) wrote to him *inter alia* in reply to his questions: ''The reason, why man has right to marry four women and why woman is forbidden to marry more than one, is that when a man marries four women, the child would be affiliated to him; but if a woman had two or more husbands, it would not be known to whom the child belonged, because all of them [i.e., the

husbands] would be sharing her marriage, and this would lead to perversion in relationship, inheritance and identification.'' Muḥammad ibn Sinān said: ''One of the reasons of free women (sic) and permission of four women to one man is that they are more (in number) than men. So when [Allāh] saw it — and Allāh knows more — He said: *'then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you, two and three and four.'* So this is the determination which Allāh has done, to give amplitude to rich and poor, so that man may marry according to his ability ...'' (*'Ilalu 'sh-sharā'i'*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said *inter alia* in a *ḥadīth:* ''And jealousy is [a characteristic] of men; and for this reason a woman is forbidden (all men) except her husband, and man is allowed four (wives); because Allāh is too gracious to afflict them with jealousy and then allow the man to have three (other wives) with her.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: It may be explained as follows: Jealousy, in the meaning of sense of honour, is a commendable characteristic and noble instinct; it changes equilibrium of man's nature, and it is this emotional agitation that exhorts him to defend what he reveres or holds dear, be it religion, honour or dignity, and provokes him to take revenge on anybody who violates its sanctity. This trait is found — more or less — in every human being, because it is a part of human nature. Now, Islam is a natural religion. It looks at all the natural instincts and traits and moderates them, restricting them to what is good for human life, and omitting that which is not necessary, e.g., the defective and imperfect ways of obtaining or hoarding the wealth, or matters connected with food and drink, clothes and spouses, and so on.

Now suppose that Allāh allowed man to marry three more wives in addition to the one he had before — and we know that this religion pays full attention to the dictates of nature. It follows that what is seen of a woman's reaction when her husband brings another wife, and the change that occurs in her attitude towards her husband, is in fact envy, not jealousy. Further explanation will be given in the forthcoming discourse on polygamy, to show that this reaction of theirs is not a part of their nature, it is an extraneous accident.

Zurārah narrates from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ''The man shall not

take back whatever he gives in gift to his wife, nor shall she do so regarding whatever she gifts to her husband — whether she was compensated for it or not. Does not Allāh, the Blessed, the High, say: *'and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them'* [2:229]? Again He says: *'but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment* (and with) *wholesome* (result)'; and it is applicable to dowry and gift (both).'' (*al-Kāfī*)

'Abdullāh ibn al-Qaddāḥ narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) who narrates from his Father (a.s.) that he said: ''A man came to the Leader of the faithful (a.s.) and said: 'O Commander of the faithful! I have got stomach pain.' The Commander of the faithful (a.s.) asked him: 'Do you have a wife? He said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Ask her to give you in gift something from her property which she be pleased to give you; then buy with it some honey; then pour on it some rainwater and drink it. Because I have heard Allāh saying in His Book: *''And We send down from the cloud water abounding in good ...''* [50:9]; and He has said: *''There comes forth from within it* [i.e., the bee] *a beverage of many colours, in which there i s healing for men''* [16:69]; and He says: *''but if they of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment* (and with) *wholesome* (result)''. You will be cured, God willing.' '' (The Imām, a.s.) said: ''So he did it and was cured.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: Also as-Suyūṭī has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from the Imām (a.s.). It is a fine inference, and is based on extension of meaning. There are many traditions, based on the same principle, narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), some of which shall be quoted in appropriate places.

al-Baqīr (a.s.) said: ''When I tell you something, ask me (where it is) in the Book of Allāh.'' Then he said in one of his talks: ''Verily the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has forbidden idle talk, spoiling of property and asking too many questions.'' He was asked: ''Where is it in the Book of Allāh? O Son of the Messenger of Allāh!'' He said: ''Verily Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *'There is no good in most of their secret talks except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people.'* [4:114]; and He has said: *'And do not give away your property*

which Allāh has made for you a (means of) *support to the weak of understandin'*; and He has said: *'do not put questions about things which if declared to you, may trouble you'* [5:101].'' (*al-Kāfī*)

Yūnus ibn Ya'qūb said that he asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *And do not give away your property ... to the weak of understanding'*; he said: ''Whom you do not trust.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abdu 'l-Ḥamīd said that he asked the same Imām (a.s.) about the same verse, and he said: ''Anyone who drinks intoxicant is weak of understanding.'' (*ibid.*)

'Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.). He says: ''I asked him about the verse, *And do not give your property* ... He replied: 'They are the orphans; do not give them their property until you recognize maturity of intellect in them.' So I said: 'Then how will their property become our property?' He said: 'If you are their heirs.' '' (*ibid*.)

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about this verse: ''So the weak of understanding are the woman and child. When a man knows that his woman is foolish and spoils (the property), and his child is foolish and spoils (the property), he should not give any of them control of his property which Allāh has made for him a support — i.e., a means of livelihood ...'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: There are may traditions on this subject, and they support what we have described earlier that *as-safah* (اَلسَّفَهُ) has a wide range of meaning, having different grades, like the weak of understanding who is prevented by law to administer his estate, a child before attaining maturity of intellect, a woman who is fond of amusement and fantasy, one who drinks intoxicants, and generally the one whom you do not trust. The implications of giving the property will change with change of context, and so will do the possessive case of ''your property''; you should apply the meanings accordingly.

The Imām's words in the tradition of Ibn Abī Ḥamzah, ''If you are their heirs'', point to the reality we had mentioned earlier that all the property primarily belongs to the whole society, and then it comes to individuals and particular interests secondarily; it is because the whole society primarily shares the property that it is transferred from one person to another.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘Orphanhood of an orphan ends with nocturnal discharge and that is his maturity; and if he got nocturnal discharge, but no maturity of intellect was found in him — he was foolish or weak — then his guardian should hold back his property from him.’’ (*Man lā yaḥḍuruh ’l-faqīh*)

The same book narrates from the same Imām (a.s.) about the verse, *And test the orphans* ..., that he said: ‘‘To find the maturity of intellect is protection of property.’’

The author says: We have described earlier how the verse points to this meaning.

The same Imām (a.s.) said about the verse, *and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably:* ‘‘He is the man who holds back himself from (earning his) livelihood; there is no harm (for him) in eating [from his ward’s property] reasonably, if he makes (things) better for them (i.e., the wards); but if the property is small then he should not eat anything from it.’’ (*Tahdhību ’l-aḥkām*)

Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and an-Naḥḥās (in his *an-Nāsikh*) have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said: ‘‘A man asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘I do not have any property, and I have an orphan [under my guardianship].’ (The Prophet) said: ‘Eat from the property of your orphan, (but) not extravagantly nor wastefully; neither consolidating (your) property, nor protecting your property with his property.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of this theme from the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.) and others. There are relevant laws of jurisprudence, and also traditions related to them. Anyone who wants them, should look in the collections of taditions and books of jurisprudence.

Rifā‘ah narrates from the Imām (a.s.) about the verse, ... *let him eat reasonably,* that he said: ‘‘My father used to say that it was abrogated.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

Abū Dāwūd and an-Naḥḥās (both in *an-Nāsikh*) and Ibn al-Mundhir have narrated through the chain of ‘Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās about the

verse, *and whoever is poor, let him eat reasonably,* that he said: ‘‘It has been abrogated by (the verse), (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies.’’* (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: The claim that this verse was abrogated does not agree with the criteria of abrogation. No verse in the Qur’ān could stand *vis-a-vis* this verse in the way an abrogating verse does with the abrogated one. The verse, (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies,* does not go against the theme of this verse, because the eating allowed in this verse is conditional to being ‘‘reasonable’’, while the eating forbidden in the other verse is conditional to being unjust; and there is no contradiction between permission to eat reasonably and prohibition to eat unjustly. Therefore, the truth is that the verse is not abrogated, and the two above-mentioned traditions are not in agreement with the Qur’ān — it is apart from their weakness.

‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mughīrah narrates from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad (peace be on them both) about the words of Allāh, *then if you find in them maturity of intellect, make over to them their property,* that he said: ‘‘If you see them loving the progeny of Muḥammad, then raise them up in grade.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: It is based on the flow of the Qur’ān, of the esoteric meaning of the Book. The Imāms of the religion are the fathers of the believers; and the believers, when they are unable to reach the Imāms, are orphans of the knowledge. Therefore, if their affiliation to the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* is established by their love, they should be raised in status and degree by teaching them true knowledge — which is the inheritance of their fathers.

AN ACADEMIC ESSAY IN THREE CHAPTERS

1. Marriage is one of the Goals of Nature

The basic reality of sexual relation between man and woman is most

clearly established by human — nay, even animal — nature; Islam being the religion of nature, confirms it without any doubt. Procreation — the goal nature wants to achieve with this union — is the basic factor and the only reason which has transformed cohabitation into marriage, and raised it from mere carnal relation to a durable union. That is why we see that the species of animals in which both parents jointly bring up their offspring — like the birds in their guarding the eggs and feeding and bringing up the chicks, and those animals who need a den or lair for giving birth to and bringing up their offspring and for preparation and protection of which the female needs cooperation of the male — have opted for a constant attachment and exclusive relationship between the male and the female. In this manner they come together, and share the tasks of guarding and hatching the eggs, and this cooperation continues till the chicks grow up and go their own way; then the parents separate (if they separate at all), then a new cycle begins. It shows that the real cause of marriage and the rationale for matrimony is the instinct of procreation and bringing up the children. As for the satisfaction of sexual urge or joining hands in struggle of life, like earning and saving money, preparation of food and drink, obtaining household effects and, in short, managing the domestic life — these things are not a part of the goal of nature; they are mere preliminaries of, or benefits accruing from, marriage.

It is clear from the above that:

Freedom and licentiousness shown by the couples — husband or wife cohabiting with other than his or her spouse without any restraint whenever and wherever he/she desires, like animal world where male mounts female wherever he gets the chance — as is the norm of the day in ‘‘civilized’’ countries; likewise fornication and particularly adultery;

Treating the marriage as a permanent union; and prohibition of divorce and separation, not allowing either party to dissolve the marriage and marrying another spouse — as long as the couple is alive;

Elimination of procreation and refusal to rear children; laying the foundation of marriage-tie on sharing the domestic life, as is prevelant in ‘‘advanced’’ countries; and consequently sending the newborn children to public nurseries established for their nursing and bringing up;

All this goes against the laws of nature. The nature has equipped human being with instincts and organs which totally oppose these

‘‘modern’’ habits, as we have mentioned above.

Of course, there are animals in whose birth and rearing male’s continued presence is not needed. Once the female becomes pregnant, she takes on herself all the duties of pregnancy, and of nursing and rearing the offspring. In such cases there is no natural need of durable union between male and female. Such animals are free to cohabit as and when they feel the urge, to the extent that does not disturb the nature’s aim of preserving the species.

It would be a folly to think that it won’t harm man to disturb the system ordained by creation, to go against the dictates of nature, provided one compensated for the resulting defects with thought and deliberation; and that in this way he would freely enjoy the life and its blessings.

But such thought is nothing short of madness. These natural structures — including the human personality — are composites made of innumerable parts. When each part is kept in its proper place, following the laid down conditions, it creates an overall effect agreeable to the goal of nature, the aim of creation. This effect leads the species to its perfection. It is not unlike the medical mixtures and compounds, which require particular ingredients with especial qualities and prescribed measure and weights, and are dispensed with laid down process; and if changes are made even slightly in its weight or quality it will lose its effects.

Man is a being, naturally created of various parts compounded in a particular way; this especial process results in some inner qualities and psychological characteristics, which in their turn produce various actions and activities. If some of these actions are changed from their natural position, it will badly disturb the alignment of those qualities and characteristics, which in its turn will dislocate all the intrinsic characteristics and qualities from their natural position, will deviate the whole being from the path of nature; this would severe man’s link with his natural perfection, and turn him from the destination the nature was urging him to reach.

If we look at the general calamities mankind is submerged in nowadays, which render people’s endeavours to achieve comfortable and happy life null and void, and which are threatening the humanity with downfall and ruination, we shall find that it has been caused, in the main part, by the total absence of piety, and by the mastery that stupidity and

cruelty, violence and greed, have got over human psyche; and the biggest factor in this mastery is this licentiousness and permissiveness, this discarding of natural laws concerning marital responsibilities and rearing of children. The system adopted nowadays for domestic life and for bringing up the children, kills the instincts of mercy and kindness and erases the traits of chastity, modesty and humility from man's psyche, from the first moment of his awareness to his last breath.

Can't we compensate for these deficiencies through our reason and contemplation? Forget it. Reason and understanding, like other faculties of life, is a tool acquired by nature as a means to bring the deviating factors back to the natural path. It is not meant to negate the endeavours of creation and dictates of nature; otherwise it would be tantamount to killing the nature by the very sword it had given in man's hand to defend himself. Moreover, if the reason (a tool of nature) is used to support the depravity and decay of other natural faculties, this tool also would be damaged and misaligned like those others.

We are witnessing today that whenever man tries to remove, through his thinking, one of the catastrophes threatening the society, he opens the gate of a greater and more disastrous calamity; and sufferings and travails extend their tentacles some more.

Someone among these people might say: The psychological traits like chastity, generosity, modesty, kindness and truthfulness, which are called spiritual virtues, are relics of the era of superstition and barbarity; they are not good for the modern advanced man. Chastity puts fetters on man's many desires. Generosity negates man's endeavours for gathering money, and disregards all the troubles he had undergone in earning it; moreover, it encourages the poor to remain idle and degrade himself by begging here and there. Modesty is a bridle that prevents man from freely expressing his ideas or demanding his rights. Kindness weakens the heart; and truth does not agree with demands of today's life.

COMMENT: This talk in itself is an example of the deviated thinking which we have mentioned above. This man is oblivious of the fact that these virtues are essential for a human society; if they are removed, the society cannot remain alive as society even for an hour.

What will happen if these characteristics were removed from the society? Everyone will exceed his limits to snatch others' rights,

properties and honour; nobody will offer any help to meet dire needs of society; nobody will feel any shame in breaking the laws of the land; no one will show any mercy to weaker groups — who cannot be held responsible for their weakness — like children and others; everyone will lie to everyone else, giving him wrong information and false promises. The society will disintegrate at once.

This man should understand that these virtues have not gone, nor will they ever go, away from this world. Human nature adheres to them and it will keep them alive as long as it is calling the mankind to live in society. The most important thing is to arrange and moderate these traits, so that they conform with the goal of nature, which invites man to a happy life. If the attitudes reigning nowadays over the advanced societies were really virtuous or truly well-balanced, they would not have pushed the society to such depravity and disaster; instead they would have led mankind to safety and peace, comfort and happiness.

To come back to our original topic: Islam has put the institution of matrimony in its natural place — as we have mentioned earlier. It has allowed marriage and forbidden fornication and illicit sexual relations. It has established the marriage tie, putting up with possibility of its dissolution, that is, divorce; and made this bond exclusive to a certain extent, as we shall explain below. The foundation of this bond was laid on procreation and bringing up the children; there is a well-known saying of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): 'Marry, procreate, increase your number ... ''

2. Domination of Males over Females

Observation of animals' sexual behaviour shows that the males have a sort of domination and authority over the females in this matter. It is as though the male considers himself to be the master of the female, possessing the right to mount her. That is why we see the males fighting each other for the females, but not vice versa; the female does not stand up to fight another female if the male goes to the latter. Likewise, love-rites, the equivalent of proposals in our society, are initiated in animal kingdom by the males, not the females. It only means that the female is by nature aware that in this respect the male is the active and dominant agent, while she is only a passive receiver. Do not be mislead by occasional ingratiating behaviour of the male with the female when he fawns on her by doing whatever would please her; it is but a part of love-

play, which he does to heighten the desire and increase the pleasure. But as far as the domination and mastery is concerned, it springs from his virility and its natural function.

The idea that strength and power are inseparable concomitants of the males, and softness and submissiveness, the characteristics of the females, is found more or less in all nations, and has filtered into various linguistic idioms and expressions. They call a tough unbendable thing as ‘‘male’’, and a tender pliable item as ‘‘female’’; e.g., [in Arabic] they say: Male iron, male sword, male grass, male place, and so on.

This idea is generally common to the whole human species, prevalent in different societies and various nations — although there might be some difference in degrees.

Islam has kept this reality in view in its legislation. Allāh says: *Men are the maintainers of women, because of that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the other* ... [4:34]. Islam has made it obligatory for a wife to submit to her husband if he wants to cohabit with her — whenever possible.

3. Polygamy

As far as we have observed, the question of ‘‘monogamy or polygamy’’ in the animal world is not definitely settled. In cases where the male and the female have to live together (because the male remains busy whole time in helping his mate in ‘‘domestic’’ affairs, raising the children and looking after them) ‘‘monogamy’’ is the rule, i.e., the female remains exclusively attached to the male. Yet sometimes the system may be changed through skill, planning and guarantee of security, i.e., by domestication and training, as is seen between cock and hens and even pigeons, etc.

Coming to our own species, polygamy was a custom prevalent in most of the ancient nations like Egypt, India, China and Persia; and even Rome and Greece, who supplemented the wife with concubines who lived with her in the same house. Some nations, like the Jews and the Arabs, observed no limit; some married ten, twenty or even more wives; reportedly the king Solomon had married hundred of women.

Mostly, polygamy was prevalent in tribal and other similar communities, like villagers and highlanders. A head of family in such societies always felt a pressing need for a large coterie of followers.

Polygamy was his way of achieving this goal; increased births gave him a large number of sons, who in some years became a force for defending his interests — a necessary part of life in those communities — and raising him to the leadership of the community. Also, the increased number of marriages increased the circle of relatives through affinity.

Some scholars have said that the main factor leading tribesmen or villagers to polygamy was their preoccupation with a lot of back-breaking jobs, like carrying and transporting loads; shepherding and cattle grazing; farming and irrigation; hunting, cooking and weaving; and things like that.

This theory is correct to a certain extent; but contemplation of their psychological traits proves that these factors had a secondary importance in their eyes. What we have mentioned earlier was the primary and basic concern or a nomad. Also it was this factor which led them to gather adopted sons around themselves.

There was one more basic reason which increased the number of wives in those societies, and that was the presence of women in much greater number than men. In those tribal societies battle and war was a never ending phenomenon, as was assasination and murder. Such killings continued to decrease the male population, and women's number increased to a level where the only way to fulfil their natural needs was through polygamy. Think over it.

Islam has ordained marriage with one wife, and allowed marrying upto four, provided the man is able to treat them equitably; it has at the same time taken steps to remove the difficulties and shortcomings found in polygamy, as we shall mention later. Allāh says: *and they* (women) *have rights similar to those upon them in a just manner* [2:228].

Objections against Polygamy:

First Objection: It creates evil effects in society. It hurts the feelings of women, frustrates their hopes and stops the fountain-head of love in their hearts. The love is transformed into a desire for revenge. They neglect the household, do not look after children's welfare, and pay their men in their own coin. Thus they indulge in adultery, embezzle their property, and tarnish their honour. The society immediately sinks to the lowest level possible.

Second Objection: Polygamy goes against the system which the

nature has obviously established. Census figures, obtained from various communities generation after generation, show that the male and female populations are almost equal. It means that nature provides only one woman for one man. To disturb this balance goes against the nature's programme.

Third Objection: Allowing polygamy encourages men to lust and avidity, and gives boost to such tendencies in society.

Fourth Objection: Polygamy degrades women in society, as it counts four women as equal to one man; and it is an unjust assessment, even from Islamic point of view which treats two women as equal to one man, e.g., in inheritance and evidence, etc. On that basis too, marriage with only two women should have been allowed — not with four. Marriage with four is deviation from justice, however we look at it.

These objections have been written by Christians or by those sociologists who advocate equal rights for both sexes in society.

Reply to the First Objection: We have repeatedly explained that Islam has laid the foundation of human society on rational, not emotional, life. In sociological field, it follows what is good for the society in reason, not what is desired by emotions or feelings.

It does not mean that Islam kills the emotions and feelings, or negates the divine gift of natural instincts. It is accepted in the Psychology that difference in education and training creates difference quantitatively and qualitatively in psychological traits and inner feelings and emotions. For example, many rites and customs that are highly appreciated by the Orientals are looked down upon by the Occidentals, and vice versa. Every community differs from the others in one way or the other.

Religious education and training in Islam raises the woman to a level where her feelings are not injured with such things. Of course, the Western woman has become accustomed since many centuries to being the only wife, and has been taught this idea generation after generation. This has created in her a psychological aversion against polygamy. Proof of this may be found in the shocking licentiousness and promisquity of men and women prevalent in the ‘‘advanced’’ nations nowadays.

Do not their men satisfy their lust with anyone they like and who responds favourably to their advances — no matter whether she is within prohibited degree or outside, is virgin or deflowered, is married or

unmarried. It has reached a stage where one cannot find among them a single man or woman in a thousand who has not indulged in illicit sexual relations. Not only that; now they have plunged into sodomy to the extent that no one seems clean of it. The debauchery has become a norm of the day, so much so that just last year it was proposed in the British parliament to legalize the sodomy — after it had spread among them ‘‘illegally’’. As for the women, and especially virgins and spinsters, their affairs are even more amazing and more shocking.

Would that I knew why the women in those countries are not sorry for this state of affairs? Why are they not embarrassed by it? Why are their hearts not broken by it? Why are their feelings not injured when they see all this debauchery from their men? Also, why is the man not annoyed when he marries a girl and finds her deflowered and comes to know that she had already been bedded not only by one or two men? Why does he start boasting in the morning that her bride had been so popular with men that tens, rather hundreds, had vied with each other to win her favours? Why this insensitivity? Is there any reason except that this wantonness and immorality has been going on for so long, and this licentiousness and lasciviousness has so captured their minds, that now it has become a second nature to them; now it neither hurts their feelings nor looks strange or objectionable to them. It is as we had mentioned earlier that the prevalent customs mould the feelings and emotions in their own mould, and do not let them take any other shape.

As for the claim that polygamy makes the women neglect their house, ignore the children’s education and incline towards illicit sexual relations and embezzlement, experience shows hollowness of such talks. This law was ordained and enforced in the early days of Islam, and no scholar of history can claim that it had caused any disturbance in the social order. The reality was poles apart from such claims.

Moreover, the women who marry a man as his second, third or fourth wife — in Islamic or other polygamous societies — enter into marriage contract willingly, with their open eyes. They belong to the same society, they are not captured from other countries, nor have they been brought here for this purpose from outer space. Yet they willingly agree to such marriage for one or the other sociological reason. It follows that woman by nature is not against polygamous marriage; nor are her feelings injured by it. If there is any resentment it should be shown by the first

wife; when a woman has remained alone with her husband, she would not like intrusion of another woman in her house, lest her husband show more attachment to the new wife, or the new wife acquire more authority, or differences raise their heads between the two wives' children, or things like that. It shows that unhappiness and resentment, if there be any, springs not from natural disposition, but from an incidental situation, that is, remaining for sometime alone with the husband.

Reply to the Second Objection: The argument by the equality that nature supposedly maintains between numbers of males and females is untenable for many reasons:

1 — Marriage does not depend on equal rates of birth alone; there are many other factors and conditions that control it. First of all, maturity of mind and capability of marriage appears sooner in girls than in boys. Girls, and especially in hot climates, are ready for marriage as soon as they reach the age of nine; while boys do not attain puberty before the age of sixteen (and this is what Islam has kept in view for deciding the age of marriage).

Its evidence may be found in the behaviour prevalent among the girls in the ''civilized'' countries: Rarely does a girl remain virgin upto the age of the ''legal adulthood''; and the only reason is that nature makes her ready for marriage long before bestowing that ability on boys.

Now, let us look at a group of boys and girls born during the last sixteen years — and supposedly both sexes are equal in number. How many marriageable boys will be there in the group? Only those who are sixteen years old, that is, those born in the first year of the period under study. But how many girls of marriageable age will be there in the group? All those who were born from the first to the seventh year of this period [i.e., the marriageable girls will be seven times more than the marriageable boys]. Increase the period under study to twenty-five years (the age when men usually reach their full maturity and strength). How many men and women of marriageable age you get in this group? The men who were born during the first ten years, and the women who were born during the first fifteen years. It gives us an average of two women for each man, by natural law.

2 — Census reportedly shows that expectancy of life is greater in woman than in man. In other words, men die earlier, leaving some

women who would remain alone, with no man to marry them if monogamy is to be the rule.[1]

3 — The ability to procreate continues longer in men than in women. Usually women reach menopause at the age of fifty, while men's virility continues for years and years after that. Sometimes his ability to procreate continue to the end of his natural age, i.e., a hundred years. Accordingly a man's reproductive period, about 80 years, would be double of that of a woman (which is about 40 years). This premises in conjunction with the preceding one proves that the creative nature allows the man to marry more than one wife. How can nature bestows the ability to reproduce and then prohibit the use of receptacles suitable for that reproduction? Such contrariness is not the way natural causality works.

4 — The carnages like battles and wars liquidate mainly the male population, compared to which women remain almost unaffected. As mentioned above, it was a strong factor in the spread of polygamy in the tribal societies. If those widows and spinsters are not cared for through polygamous marriages, then what are the alternative available to them? Either fornication or negation and nullification of their natural faculties!

This problem had raised its head in West Germany a few months before writing these lines. There the spinster women spoke about the hardships and difficulties they were facing because they could not find any man free to marry them; they demanded from the government to allow them to contract polygamous marriage — in Islamic manner. The idea was to permit the men to marry more than one wife in order that those spinsters should not be deprived of their natural rights. But the government rejected the demand, and the Church refused to agree — although tacitly they agreed to the spreading of adultery and fornication

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[1] It is supported by a report published recently in a newspaper (*Iṭṭilā'āt*, Tehran, 11th Dey, 1335 A.H. Solar [= 1st January, 1957]), quoting the Census report of France as follows: The census shows that in France 105 boys are born for every 100 girls. Yet the women have a plurality of 1,765,000 over men in a population of about 40 million. The reason for this disparity lies in the fact that the boys have less resistance to diseases than the girls, and consequently by the age of nineteen boys' number decreases by 5 per cent. Then their number continues to decrease upto the age of 25 — 30, and by the time they reach 60 — 65 years of age, only 750,000 males remain alive *vis-a-vis* 1,500,000 females. (*Author's Note*)

and to the ruining of would-be generation.

5 — Even if we close our eyes from all the above factors, the argument of equality of the numbers of both sexes would stand only if we suppose that every man in the society marries polygamously — upto four wives. But nature has not prepared every man for it; only a few, and not all, can marry more than one wife. Islam has not made it compulsory for every man to enter into many marriages; it has only made it lawful — for him who is able to treat all wives equitably. This permission does not create any difficulty or disturbance; and its clearest proof may be found in the Muslim and other polygamous societies where it has not created any shortage of women and no man fails to find a wife for him. In contrast with that, we find in the monogamous societies thousands of women who are left in the lurch as they cannot find anyone to marry them and provide them a chance to settle in life; their only outlet is fornication.

6 — Apart from that, this objection could only be advanced if Islam had not had provided this rule with checks and balances for keeping it safe from those imaginary defects. Islam has made it compulsory for a man who wants to marry more than one wife to behave with them with justice and equity, to live with them in fairness, and divide the nights between them; it has obliged him to maintain them and their children equitably. Obviously, not every man can easily spend on, let us say, four wives and their offspring, keeping within the circle of justice and fairness in his dealings with them; it may be done only by some of the well-to-do people.

Moreover, there are some lawful Islamic ways which may be used by a woman to encourage and oblige her man not to marry another wife after her.

Reply to the Third Objection: This objection springs from not looking attentively at the Islamic way of education and training or at the goals of this *Sharī'ah.* The education given to women in an Islamic society — as approved by religion — trains them to keep themselves covered, makes chastity and modesty their second nature, and protects them from breach of decency. Consequently, a Muslim woman grows up with far less sexual desire than is found in a man. This is in spite of common belief that sexual desire in a woman is stronger and greater.

Why has this idea spread? Just because by nature a woman seems more concerned with her adornment and beauty. But the fact is otherwise; and no Muslim man (who has married women grown up in Islamic atmosphere) can have an iota of doubt about it. In reality, an average man's sexual desire far exceeds that of a single woman — even of two or three of them.

Let us look at it from another angle. Islam is very concerned that none should be deprived of necessary natural desires or essential biological demands. From religious point of view, it is not good for a man to dam up his sexual desire and remain frustrated, as it would lead him to indecency and immorality. But a woman remains justifiably incapable of sexual relations for about a third of her married life, e.g., during monthly periods, advanced stages of pregnancy, delivery, breast-feeding and for similar other reasons. But it is necessary to provide for prompt satisfaction of the husband's desire. It is the necessary conclusion of the repeatedly mentioned principle that Islam has laid the society's foundation on rational, not emotional, basis. It is therefore a great danger from Islam's point of view to leave the man unmarried or in his above-mentioned sexual frustration, as it would lead him to lustful thoughts and immoral activities.

Apart from that, the Law-giver of Islam considers it very important that the Muslims should have lots of offspring, in order that the Earth should flourish with goodly prosperity at the hands of a Muslim society, erasing polytheism and mischief from the World.

It is these and similar other considerations which have led the Islam to legalize the institution of polygamy; it was not for spreading lustful ways or encouraging lecherous behaviour. Had our detractors followed the dictates of justice, their own social customs — popular among them who have built their society on the foundation of material enjoyment — more deserving to be accused of spreading immorality and encouraging licentiousness, than the Islam which has based its social order on the foundation of religious bliss and felicity.

Furthermore, just the fact, that man has the permission to marry other wives, pacifies and calms down the avidity, which a sense of deprivation could have agitated. Every deprived one is greedy; when one is forbidden a thing, his mind remains continually busy in devising plans to 'get that thing. Every Muslim — even if he has only one wife — is satisfied and

contended that he is not prevented from satisfying his sexual desires if a need arose in future to do so. This in a way calms down his such desires, and protects him from inclining towards indeceny and tarnishing other's honours.

A Western scholar has rightly said that the strongest factor that has contributed in spreading adultery and immorality in the Christian nations is the Church's prohibition of polygamy.[1]

Reply to the Fourth Objection: This allegation is totally unacceptable. We have described in a previous discourse, when writing on the rights of women in Islam [2], that no social system whatsoever — be it religious or secular, ancient or modern — has ever honoured the women as much, and cared for their rights so comprehensively and perfectly, as the Islam has done; and we shall further explain it somewhere else. As for allowing a man to marry more than one woman, it is not intended to be a negation of women's social prestige, nullification of their rights or degradation of their status in life; it is founded on several underlying benefits, some of which have been mentioned above.

A lot of the Western scholars — both men and women — have admitted the goodness and perfectness of this Islamic law, and the social disorder and dangers inherent in prohibition of polygamy. Interested readers should look for their comments in their books.

The strongest argument used by the Western detractors of polygamy, which they offer before their audience with much embellishment, is the condition found in those Muslim families where there are two or more wives. Such houses are devoid of happy life and good living. No sooner do the two rival wives enter the house than they start envying each other.

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1 Vide John Davenport, *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*, Which has been translated into Persian by the scholar, Sa'īdī. (*Author's Note*)
Mr. Sa'īdī has translated the title of the said work of Davenport as: عذرخواهي به بارگاه محمد و قرآن — which if retranslated into English would mean 'Offering Apology to Muḥammad and the Qur'ān'. He seems unaware of the difference between 'apology for' and 'apology to', and of the fact that the word 'apology' as used in this title, means, explanation or defence of belief", etc. The title, therefore, means 'In Defence of Muḥammad and the Qur'ān'. (*tr.*)

2 Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. transl.], vol. 4, pp. 61 — 83. (*tr.*)

(People call envy, the disease of rival wives.) Thereafter all the kind of feelings and noble characteristics which are ingrained in woman's nature — love and tender-heartedness, kindness and gentleness, compassion and affection, good advice and looking after husband's honour in his absence, faithfulness and devotion, mercy and sincerity for husband and his children from other women, and care for the house and household — are changed to their opposites. The home — the place intended for man's comfort, where he expects to rest and relax after his daily toils and troubles, when he is dead tired in body and mind after the drudgery of earning his livelihood — is transformed into a battlefield where life and honour, wealth and prestige are freely attacked and violated; nothing is safe from any side; horizon of life becomes cloudy, pleasant existence, a thing of the past. In place of bliss and happiness, appear hitting and slapping, abuse, invective and curse, backbiting and tale-bearing, spying, intrigue and trickery. Children quarrel and dispute with one another. Things sometimes reach a stage where the wife plans to kill the husband, and some children kill the others or even their father. Kinship is metamorphosed into a never ending feud that for generations causes bloodshed, genocide and downfall of the house. Add to it the effects it brings to the society: unhappiness, moral corruption, cruelty, injustice, transgression, indecency and lack of security and trust. [There is also another dimension to this problem,] when you add legality of divorce to the permission of polygamy. These two factors, combined together, create in the society connoisseurs, who live luxurious lives and whose interest is centred on satisfaction of their lust and avidity; their passion revolves around getting this woman and discarding that one, raising one's status and lowering the other's. It is nothing less than thwarting and frustrating a half of the mankind, i.e., the females, and submerging them into sorrow and grief. Their degradation results in depravity of the other half [and the whole society is demoralized].

COMMENT: This was the gist of what they have said, and the objection is true — but its targets are the Muslims, not the Islam or its teachings. When have the Muslims truly followed the Islamic teachings, that Islam could be held responsible for the consequences of their misdeeds? Centuries have passed that there is no good government which could train them with noble teachings of the *sharī'ah.* On the contrary, the first

people to rip apart the curtain put up by the religion, to break the laws of the *sharī'ah* and to violate its limits were the very Muslim rulers and people in power — and people follow the customs of their rulers. It is not possible to narrate here even a small portion of the life style in the ''Muslims'' Kings' palaces, or the scandals indulged into by the sultans and governors, since the days the religious government turned into monarchy and sultanate; otherwise we will have to write a complete book on this subject. In short, the objection, if valid, can be laid against the Muslims: that they adopted a way of life which could not bring any happiness in their homes, and followed a policy which they could not prevent from deviating from the straight path. The whole blame lies on the men, not on their women or children — although every soul is responsible for what it has earned of sin. Why? Because it was these men's behaviour — they thought nothing of sacrificing their own happiness, and that of their families and children together with the clean environment of the society, on the altar of their greed, lust and ignorance — that was the root cause of all these disasters and fountan-head of all these destructive troubles.

As for the Islam, it has not legislated polygamy as a compulsory and obligatory duty of every man. It looked at the people's nature and at the difficulties some of them faced now and again, and so it concluded that polygamy contained definite goodness [for solving those problems], as was described above in detail. Then it looked minutely at the negative effects of polygamy and its dangers. Consequently, it allowed polygamy for the underlying benefit of humanity, but at the same time imposed such a restiction on it as to remove the chances of all those disgraceful depravities — that the man should be confident that he would live with them in equity and treat them justly and fairly. Islam allows plurality of wives only to him who is sure of himself in this respect. As for those who do not care for their own or their families' and children's happiness and felicity, whose only mark of honour is satisfaction of their stomachs and genitals, and in whose eyes woman is only a means to satisfy man's lust and to give pleasure to him, Islam is not concerned with them, nor does it allow them to marry more than one — if we say that they are allowed to marry even the one, with that mentality of theirs!

Moreover, there is a mix-up in this objection between two completely separate aspects of religion, i.e., the legislation and the governmental

authority. It may be explained as follows:

According to modern scholars the criterion to judge about a laid down law or prevalent tradition whether it is a good law and tradition or bad, is to look at the acceptable or unacceptable effects and results obtained from enforcement of that law in the societies, and whether or not the societies in the prevalent condition accept the law faithfully. I do not think they are oblivious of the fact that society sometimes is fettered by some customs, traditions or accidents that do not agree with the law under study; in such a condition, the society should be reformed in a manner as not to hamper or negate the said law or tradition, in order that it may be seen how the law works, and what effect it brings in its wake — whether it is good or bad, beneficial or harmful. The only difference is that their criterion for a laid down law is the currently prevailing desire and demand of the society — whatever that demand may be. Thus what agrees with their current wishes and demands is considered a good law, and what goes against it, is bad.

That is why when those Westerners saw the Muslims wandering in the valley of error, steeped in immorality in this life and wickedness in the next, they attributed to the Islamic *sharī'ah* (which the Muslims supposedly followed) all the evils found among the Muslims, e.g., falsehood and embezzlement, indecency and usurpation of rights, prevalent transgression and ruined homes, and in short the whole spectrum of corrupted social order. They thought that the Islamic tradition and system is like other social systems in its implementation and effects. The other systems conform with their members' desires and demands. So, those scholars thought that Islam too has the same quality, and that all these social disorders have been generated by Islam; that it is this religion that gives rise to depravity and corruption (and among them are found the most depraved and the most immoral persons; as they say, there are all kinds of game in the belly of the wild ass). Had it been a real religion, and its laid down laws really good and containing people's welfare and felicity, it would have produced good and beautiful effects in the society, instead of becoming a curse for it.

But these people have confused the nature of a good and beneficial law with the nature of a corrupt and harmful people. Islam is a composite unit of spiritual knowledge, moral teachings and practical laws — all of which are interrelated. If one part is damaged or tampered with, the

whole is damaged, and its effects are changed. It is not unlike the medical compounds and mixtures which require, for their health-restoring effects, their proper ingredients and a proper place to prepare them. If some ingredients are spoiled or adulterated, or if the directions for its use are not properly followed, it will not bring the desired effect; rather it may produce opposite result [and harm the patient].

At this juncture let us admit, for the sake of argument, that the Islamic system could not reform the people, and could not erase common social vices and depravities — because its legislative base was unsound. But why is it that the democratic system has not succeeded in our eastern countries as it has in Europe? Why is it that the more we try to go ahead on this path the farther back we fall? No one has any doubt that the vices and depravities have taken deeper roots in our society today (when we have become civilized and enlightened) than it was fifty years ago (when we were uncivilized barbarians!). Today our society is devoid of social justice; we trample on human rights; we do not give higher education to our masses; and we lack all the social benefits and blessings — for us these are merely names without substance, words without meaning.

Ask them the reason, and they will say: This good system has not worked among you because you have not really put it into practice, have not tried to implement it properly. Well, why this excuse is acceptable in case of democracy, but not in case of Islam?

Let us suppose that Islam, because of the weakness of its foundation (God forbid!), could not capture the people's hearts and could not take deep roots in the society; and consequently its rule could not continue, it lost its vitality in the Muslims' social order and was discarded at the first opportunity. But why did the democratic system — the universally appreciated system — go away, after the World War I, from Russia? Why were its traces lost there? Why was it replaced by the communist system? Again, why did it give way, after the World War II, to the communist system in China, Lithuania, Estonia, Albania, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, etc.? Why does it pose a danger to other countries, after having established considerable influence in them?

Now let us look at the communist system. It flourished for about forty years; and spread to, and ruled over, nearly half of the mankind. Its rulers and champions are never tired of boasting of its excellence and superiority. According to them it is the only clean stream that is

unpolluted by dictatorial tendencies and democracy's exploitation; the countries where it has taken roots have turned into Utopia. If this claim is correct, then why did the same rulers and champions, some two years back, stand up to condemn the rule of its matchless leader, Stalin, who had led and governed Russia for thirty years? Why did they announce that his rule was despotic and dictatorial, and that it was nothing but enslavement in the guise of communism? Everyone agrees that Stalin had great influence in legislation of the laid down laws and their enforcement and all that follows. In other words, all this was produced by the will of an enslaving dictator; it was a one man's rule, which revived thousands and killed thousands; made some people happy and kept others oppressed, deprived and unhappy. Only Allāh knows who will come after these [present rulers] to condemn them as they had done with their predecessors.[1]

Look into history books and you will find mention of a lot of systems, civilizations and cultures that governed the societies for sometime; some were good, others bad; then they passed away because of various factors — the strongest being the treachery of the leaders and feeble will of the masses.

Would that I knew what is the difference between Islam (as a social system) and those other transformed and changed systems, that the excuse [of leaders' treachery and followers' weak-willedness] is accepted in their case and rejected in the case of Islam? Yes, today the word of truth has fallen between a formidable western might and an imitative eastern ignorance; neither any sky shelters over it nor any earth raises it up. However, it should be clear from what we have mentioned above that whether a system is effective or not, and whether its hold on the people remains strong or it loosened, depends not so much on its correctness or incorrectness — so that this aspect could be used to prove its truth or falsity. It is rather affected by so many other causes and reasons. There was not a single system in the long human history but it produced results for sometimes and then became barren; it ruled over the society for a stretch of time and then passed away — all this for some factors acting

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[1] Khrushchev, who had denounced Stalin in February, 1956, was himself forced by Leonid Brezhnev and Alexey Kosygen to resign in disgrace in October, 1964. (*tr.*)

for or against it; *and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allāh may know those who believe and takes witnesses from among you* [3:140].

In short, the Islamic *sharī'ah* and its laws differ in their fundamental philosophy from all other social orders prevalent in various human societies. These [man-made] social systems go on changing with change of times and policies, but not so the Islamic laws. The Islamic laws — consisting of obligatory, prohibited, like, disliked and permissible — never change. Of course, those actions which a person has the choice to do or not to do, and every disposition which he has right to enact or leave, the Islamic ruler has got authority to order the people to do it or forbid them doing it; he can dispose such matters as if the society were a single body and the ruler its thinking mind and soul.

Had there been an Islamic ruler there, he could have prevented the people from the inequities and injustices they commit in the name of polygamy or for other pretexts, without affecting any change in the divinely given permission. It would have been a general executive order based on an underlying benefit, just as a man might decide for his personal reasons not to marry more than one wife — not because the rule had changed but because it was only a permission which he had full right not to avail himself of.

ANOTHER RELATED ACADEMIC DISCOURSE ON MANY MARRIAGES OF THE PROPHET

Another target of their objection is the many marriages of the Prophet. They say: Plurality of marriage in itself points to avidity and to yielding to lust and desire; and the Prophet was not content with four wives which he had allowed to his *ummah*, but exceeded even that limit and married nine women.

This question is related to many different verses of the Qur'ān, and detailed discussion of its every aspect should be given under those verses. Therefore, we are leaving the details for the relevant places, restricting ourselves to a short description here in a general way.

It is necessary to point out that the plurality of the Prophet's marriages is not such a simple matter as to be dismissed in a sentence

that ‘he was inordinately fond of women, so much so that he married nine wives.’ The fact is that he had married each one of his wives for some particular reason in particular circumstances during his long life. His first marriage was with Khadījah (may Allāh be pleased with her), and he lived with her alone for more than twenty [1] years, and it constitutes two-thirds of his married life — and covered [almost] the whole Meccan period of the prophethood. Then he emigrated to Medina and began spreading the Call and raising the words of religion. Thereafter he married several women — virgin and widows, young, old and middle-aged. This continued for about ten years, then the women were prohibited to him other than those who were already in his marriage. Obviously, these happenings with this peculiarities cannot be explained just by love of women or desire and passion for them, because his early life and the later period both contradict this assumption.

Just look at a man with a passion for women who is infatuated with carnal desire, and enamoured of female companionship, with a sensual lust for them. You will find him attracted to their adornment, spending his time in pursuit of beauty, infatuated with coquetry and flirtation, and craving for youth, tender age and fresh complexion.

But these peculiarities were diametrically opposite of the Prophet’s character. He married widows after virgin, old-aged women after young girls. He married Umm Salamah (an aged woman) and Zaynab bint Jaḥsh (who was more than fifty years of age) after marrying ‘Ā’ishah and Umm Ḥabībah, and so on.

Then he offered his wives a choice that he should give them a provision and allow them to depart gracefully (i.e., divorce them) if they desire this world and its adornment, or they should renounce the world and abstain from adornments and embellishments if they desired Allāh and His Messenger and the latter abode. It may be seen in the following words of Allāh: *O Prophet! say to your wives: ‘‘If you desire this world’s life and its ornature, then come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a goodly departing. And if you desire Allāh and His Messenger and the latter abode, then surely Allāh has prepared for the doers of good among you a mighty reward’’* [33:28 — 29]. As you see this is not the attitude of a man who is enamoured of women’s love and infatuated

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[1] Twenty-five years, to be exact. (*tr.*)

with carnal desire.

If a scholar, after deeply studying this matter, follows the dectates of justice, he will have to look for some reasons, other than avidity and lust, for his plurality of wives, beginning with his early life to the latter days.

In fact he (s.a.w.a.) had married some of them to add to his strength by increasing relationships and helping hands; some of them were taken into marriage to win the enemies' hearts and as a protection from some of their evils. He married some others to maintain and protect them, in order that it might become a regular practice among the believers for the protection of widows and aged women against poverty and degradation. Some marriages were performed to practically affirm and enforce a lawful order, for abolition of evil traditions and false innovations which were prevalent in the society. This was the case of his marriage with Zaynab bint Jaḥsh; she was first married to Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, then Zayd divorced her; this Zayd was called ''son of the Messenger of Allāh'' by the [pre-Islamic] custom of adoption; the pagans considered wife of an adopted son like the wife of an actual son and the ''father-in-law'' could not marry her. Therefore the Prophet married her [to confirm abrogation of adoption and the related customs], and several verses were revealed on this subject.

The first woman to be married to the Prophet after the death of Khadījah, was Sawdah bint Zam'ah, whose husband had expired after returning from the second migration of Abyssinia. Sawdah was a believing lady who had migrated [for her faith]. If she were left to return to her own family who at that time were unbelievers, they would have tortured and tormented her as they were doing with other believing men and women using suppression and killings and forcing them to renounce their faith.

He married Zaynab bint Khuzaymah after her husband, 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh, was martyred in Uḥud. She was one of the most generous ladies even in the era of ignorance, and was called ''Mother of the poor'', in recognition of her generosity and kindness towards needy people. The Prophet, with this marriage, preserved her prestige and dignity.

He also married Umm Salamah, whose actual name was Hind. Before that, she was married to 'Abdullāh Abū Salamah, who was a cousing of the Prophet (son of his paternal aunt) and his foster brother; Abū Salamah [and his wife] were among the first to emigrate to Abyssinia.

She had renounced the worldly pleasure and was highly distinguished in piety and wisdom. When her husband died she was very advanced in age and had many orphan children. That is why the Prophet married her.

Ṣafiyyah was daughter of Ḥuyayy ibn Akhṭab, the chief of Banū 'n-Naḍīr. Her husband was killed in the battle of Khaybar, and her father with Banū Qurayẓah, and she was among the captives of Khaybar. The Prophet chose her for himself and married her after emancipating her. With this marriage he protected her from humilitation and established affinity with the Children of Israel.

The marriage with Juwayriyyah, i.e., Barrah, daughter of al-Ḥārith, the chief of Banū 'l-Muṣṭaliq, was performed after the battle of Banū 'l-Muṣṭaliq. The Muslims had arrested two hundred of their families together with women and children. The Prophet married Juwayriyyah; so the Muslims said: ''These are the relatives of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) by marriage; they should not be held captives.'' So they freed all of them. Impressed by this nobility, the whole tribe of Banū 'l-Muṣṭaliq entered into the fold of Islam. It was a very large tribe, and this [generosity of the Muslims as well as the Islam of that tribe] created a good impression throughout Arabia.

One of his wives was Maymūnah, whose name was Barrah bint al-Ḥārith al-Hilāliyyah. She was the one who gifted herself to the Prophet after the death of her second husband, Abū Ruhm ibn 'Abdi 'l-'Uzzā (al-'Āmirī). The Prophet then married her, and a verse was revealed regarding her marriage.

Also he married Umm Ḥabībah, i.e., Ramlah daughter of Abū Sufyān. She was married to 'Ubaydullāh ibn Jaḥsh and had emigrated with him to Abyssinia in the second Migration. While there, 'Ubaydullāh was converted to Christianity, but she remained steadfastly on Islam; while her father, Abū Sufyān, in those days, was gathering army after army to annihilate the Muslims. Therefore, the Prophet married her and afforded protection to her.

Ḥafṣah bint 'Umar was married to him after her husband, Khunays ibn Ḥudhāfah, was killed in Badr, and she was left a widow.

And he married 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr, and she was a virgin.

When one looks at these details, and ponders on what we have mentioned above regarding the Prophet's life from his early days to the end, and on his self-denial and rejection of worldly embellishments, and

his exhortation to his wives to do the same, one can have no doubt that the marriages which he had contracted with these women were not like those done by other people. And to it the benevolence with which he treated the womanhood, revived their rights which the centuries of ignorance and barbarism had put to sleep, and restored their prestige and honour in the society. [He was so much concerned with women's welfare that] reportedly the last words he uttered were addressed to the men about their women. He had said: ''(Be careful about) prayer, (be careful about) prayer; and (about) what your right hands possess, do not impose on them what they have no strength for; (fear) Allāh, (fear) Allāh about the women, because they are helpless in your hands ...''

His behaviour was matchless in dealing equitably with his wives, living with them gracefully and paying regard to their feelings and wishes (as we shall describe some aspects of it when writing on his characteristics in the coming discourses, God willing.) As for the permission to marry more than four, it was, like the fasting continuously for two days without any break at night, an order exclusively reserved for the Prophet — the *ummah* was prohibited it. It was these especial characteristics — and the fact that all people were clearly aware of them — that did not have any room for objection to his enemies, although they were always on the look out for some openings to attack him.

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لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ
مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيباً مَفْرُوضاً ـــ ٧ .
وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُوا الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينُ فَارْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ
وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلاً مَعْرُوفاً ـــ ٨ . وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ
ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَافاً خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلاً سَدِيداً ـــ ٩ .
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْماً إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَاراً
وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيراً ـــ ١٠ .

Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, and women shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, whether there is little or much of it; a decreed share (7). *When there are present at the division the relatives and the orphans and the needy, give them* (something) *out of it and speak to them kind words* (8). *And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account; so let them fear Allāh, and let them speak right words* (9). (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire* (10).

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COMMENTARY

Now begins the legislation of inheritance laws, after paving the way for it. These verses give a precis of the said laws in its basic form, to let the people know that nobody can be deprived of inheritance after the proof of his birth or relation, as they used to debar minor heirs and women. Further it warns them against depriving the orphans from inheritance, as it would result in swallowing by others heirs of the orphans' share unjustly, and Allāh has very severely prohibited it. The verses also recommend giving something from the estate to relatives, orphans and poor who, although not included among the heirs, might be present at the time of dividing the property.

QUR'ĀN: *Men shall have a share ... a decreed share. ''an-Naṣīb''* (اَلنَّصِيْبُ = share, portion) is derived from *an-naṣb* (اَلنَّصْبُ = to make something stand, to lift up, to raise); this name points to the fact that at the time of division, every share is put separately to prevent its mixing with the others'. *at-Tarikah* (اَلتَّرِكَةُ = the heritage, the property left by the deceased); it is as though he goes away leaving it; thus initially it was an allegorical usage, then became common. *al-Aqrabūn* (اَلْاَقْرَبُوْنَ = the nearer ones) refers to nearer relatives; choice of this word [of comparative degree] in preference to *al-aqribā'* (اَلْاَقْرِبَاءُ = the near ones) and *ulu 'l-qurba* (أُولُوالْقُرْبٰي = relatives) , etc., gives an indication that it is the essential pre-requisite of inheritance that the deceased should be nearer to the heir, as will be explained under the verse, *your parents and your children, you know not which of them is nearer to you in usefulness* [4:11]. *al-Farḍ* (اَلْفَرْضُ) originally meant to cut a hard thing and to detach its parts from one another; that is why it is used for obligatory rules, because to follow and obey it is ''determined'' without any doubt; ''a decreed share'' means a determined and fixed portion or ratio.

The verse ordains a comprehensive law and legislates a new system which was unfamiliar to the people. The people had never known any system similar to this inheritance law, as ordained in Islam. Traditionally they used to deprive many heirs of inheritance, and it had become a second nature to them; so much so that if anything was said against it, the minds were agitated and feelings hurt.

Islam paved the way for this new system, first by strengthening the

‘‘love in Allāh’’ and giving perference to religion among the believers. Thus it established ‘‘brotherhood’’ between the believers and then made one ‘‘brother’’ inherit the other. This wiped out the previous succession rules, and the believers abondoned the old pride and prejudice. When the religion became strong and could stand on its feet, this final system of inheritance between the relatives was introduced — at a time when they were enough believers to accept this law with open arms.

The above discussion shows that this verse aims at clear description, and removal of all possible misunderstandings, by giving a fundamental and comprehensive basis of the law. Thus it says: *‘‘Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave.’’* The rule is general and unrestricted, it is not qualified by any condition, attribute or other such things. Likewise the subject, i.e., *‘‘men’’*, is general and not qualified in any way; therefore the minors shall inherit like the adults.

Then it says: *‘‘and women shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave.’’* Like the preceding sentence it is a general statement, without any shade of restriction; thus it covers all women without any qualification or condition. The clause, *‘‘of what the parents and the near relatives leave’’*, has been repeated, although it could be replaced by a pronoun; the reason is to make the topic as clear as possible. It is followed by the clause, *‘‘whether there is little or much of it’’*; it makes the matter even more clear, and shows that there is no room for any indulgence or negligence in this matter thinking that the deceased’s estate was very small or the value negligible. The verse ends on words, *‘‘a decreed share’’*; it is a circumstantial clause, related to the preceding word, *‘‘a share’’*, as it contains a connotation of *masdar;* it gives a double emphasis and makes the declaration even more clear that the shares are definitely fixed, and there is no room for any confusion or ambiguity.

It has been proved with this verse that the general law of inheritance covers the estate of the Prophet as well as of other Muslims, and that the doctrine of *at-ta‘ṣīb* (اَلتَّعْصِيْبُ = giving preference of agnates) is invalid.

QUR’ĀN: *And when there are present ... kind words:* Apparently the verse refers to these people’s presence at the time when the heirs are dividing the estate among themselves, and not to their presence near the dying person when he is bequeathing his estate — as someone has

written.

Accordingly, *''the relatives''*, would refer to the poor among them; it is also proved from the fact that they have been mentioned with the orphans and the needy. The tone of the clauses, *''give them* (something) *out of it and speak to them kind words,''* obviously exhorts the hearers to mercy and kindness, and therefore it is addressed to the heirs and executors of the will.

There is a difference of opinion whether the order given in this verse (to give those people something from the estate) is obligatory or only a desirable act. It is a matter of jurisprudence beyond the scope of this book. Also there is disagreement whether the verse is decisive or has been abrogated by the verse of inheritance. But the relation between the two verses is not that of contradiction, because the verse of inheritance fixes the shares of the heirs, and this verse speaks about the non-heirs — either as obligation or recommendation — without fixing any share; therefore there is no ground for saying that it was abrogated, and especially if the described ''giving'' is only a recommendation — as the verse somewhat apparently shows.

QUR'ĀN: *And let those fear ... speak right words:* Fear is a psychological effect caused by nearness of a somewhat great danger or evil; *as-sadād* and *as-sadad* (اَلسَّدَادُ،السَّدَدُ) of a talk means its being right, correct, straight, relevant.

Probably the verse has a sort of connection with the previous one, *''Men shall have ...'',* because that verse with its generality contains the laws of the orphans' inheritance; now this one in a way is a warning and a threat to him who wants to follow the old system of depriving small heirs of inheritance. In that case, the clause, *''and let them speak right words''*, will be an adverse and unfavourable allusion to their habit as they did not give any share to, and swallowed the rights of, the minor orphans. The allegorical use of ''word'' for ''deed'' is very common because of their mutual association. Allāh has said: ... *and speak to men good* (words) ... [2:83]. This idea is also supported by the use of the adjective, ''right'' for ''words'' instead of ''kind'' or ''gentle''; apparently a word may be called right when it can be believed and acted upon — not when it can only preserve people's dignity and honour.

In any case, the clause, *''And let those fear who, should they leave*

behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account'', is obviously a simile to animate and stimulate mercy and compassion for small weakly children who have lost their guardian and protector (who could have looked after their welfare and saved them from humiliation and disgrace). The implied threat and warning is not directed to only him who may at the material time be actually having some weakly offspring; it uses the conjuction *law* (لَوْ = if) [which as a rule introduces hypothetical conditional clauses], and does not say, 'should they leave behind *their* weakly offspring'. It is rather a simile to present a clear image of the situation. The connotation therefore would be as follows: Let those fear who have in their hearts mercy for humanity and compassion and sympathy for those weakly small children who have lost their fathers and are orphaned — only such people are real Muslims who are imbued with divine characteristics and graced with Allāh's manners. In other words: Let those people fear and be afraid of Allāh in matters of the orphans, because they are like their own orphans, small and weak; the people must fear for them and care for their welfare; these helpless children should not be oppressed nor their rights usurped. The style is the same as we say: ''Let him who fears dishonour and humiliation, try his level best to earn his livelihood'' — and who does not fear it?

People have not been ordered here to show mercy and compassion, etc.; they have been told to fear and be afraid of Allāh. It is a threat that whatever they do to other people's orphans by usurping their rights and swallowing their property unjustly, would befall their own orphans after them; whatever misfortunes and miseries they cause to others' orphans would return to their own orphans after their passing away.

As for the clause, *''so let them fear Allāh and let them speak right words''*, we have already explained that apparently the ''words'' connotes practical behaviour; also possibly it may mean views, ideas and advice.

THE DEED RETURNS TO ITS DOER

Whoever deals unjustly with an orphan in his property, his injustice will surely return to his own orphans, to the orphans from his offspring. It is one of the marvellous Qur'ānic realities. It branches from a divinely revealed reality that there is a connection between the good and bad

deeds and the natural phenomena. We have thrown some light on it while discussing the Rules Governing Actions in the second volume of this book. [1]

People, on the whole, believe that man reaps what he sows, that he harvests the fruits of his deeds; a benevolent good-doer gets bliss and felicity in his life, while an oppressive evil person has to taste the evil consequences of his misdeeds. There are many verses in the Qur'ān which prove this fact with their unrestricted style. Allāh says:

Whoever does good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is against it [41:46].

So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it [99:7 — 8].

He said: ''I am Yūsuf and this is my brother; Allāh has indeed been gracious to us; surely he who guards (against evil) *and is patient* (is rewarded) *for surely Allāh does not waste the reward of those who do good''* [12:90].

... for him is disgrace in this world ... [22:9].

And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought [42:30].

There are many such verses which show that good and evil deeds react on, and return to, their doer in this world too.

Our thoughts are conditioned by our experiences in the society; and when we hear such statements, the first thought that comes to our minds is that the doer himself reaps the fruits of his actions. But there are verses that show that the affair is much wider and more encompassing; that man's deeds — good or bad — sometimes return to his progeny. Allāh says: *And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man; so your Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure, a mercy from your Lord* [18:82]. It is obvious from the verse that their father's righteousness had had some hand in what Allāh intended for them as a mercy from Him. On the other hand, Allāh says in the verse under discussion: *''And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account.''*

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 3, pp. 263 — 267. (*tr.*)

Therefore, the matter of deeds' effects is wider and more general; and the blessing of misfortune that befalls a man results sometimes from his own actions and sometimes from what his progenitors had done.

Meditation on the divine words leads us to the basic cause of this phenomenon. We have described in the second volume [1] on the topic of Invocation, under the verse: *And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then verily I am very near* [2:186], that according to the divine words, whatever comes to man from Allāh is because of an invocation which he addresses to his Lord; whatever preliminaries and causes a servant prepares, are in reality a sort of supplication and invocation addressed by him to his Lord; and it brings to him the effects and results from the Lord. Allāh says: *All those who are in the heavens and the earth do beseech Him; every day He is in a* (new) *state* (of glory) [55:29]; *And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allāh's bounties, you will not be able to number them* [14:34]. It should be noted that Allāh has not said, 'and if you count it, you will not be able to number it.' [In other words, He has not used pronouns which would refer to all that they had asked for and was consequently given to them by Allāh; instead, He has used the clear expression, *''Allāh's bounties''*] because not all that they had [practically] asked for was a bounty (and the verse aims at showing His favours to them and admonishing them for their ungratefulness]; that is why He mentioned only a part of what they had asked for, and that is the bounties.

Whatever man opts for himself, or whatever he does to another person — whether good or bad — shows that he is pleased that it should befall the other person who is a human being like himself. In this way he practically asks for that thing for himself and shows his pleasure that it should befall him — because he too is a human being like his victim. It clearly means that when a man does good to someone else, he in reality asks Allāh to do exactly the same good to himself — an invocation that is bound to be answered and cannot be rejected. Also when he does an evil or injustice to someone, he in effect asks for it for himself and shows his pleasure with it. Thus whatever he is pleased to do with others' children and orphans, in effect he is pleased that it be done to his own children, and practically asks it to be done to his own orphans — be it good or bad.

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[1] *Vide al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 3, pp. 39 — 43. (*tr.*)

Allāh says: *And every one has a direction to which he would return; therefore hasten to* (do) *good works* [2:148]; i.e., hasten towards good works so that your direction should be good.

All human beings have a common blood in their veins and have come out from the same womb. It makes the descent, i.e., progeny, a single unit. Whatever condition affects any side of this unit, and whatever misfortune befalls it, in reality affects and befalls the main body and reaches through it to all sides [including the doer's]. We have thrown some light on womb (relationship) at the beginning of this chapter.

Now it is clear without any doubt that whatever a man does to another person or to that person's progeny, is bound to come back to him or his progeny, except that Allāh should decide otherwise. We have inserted this exception because there are many causes and factors affecting one's existence which we are not even aware of, and possibly some of them might exert an opposite influence on one's affairs. Some hint of it may be found in the divine words, *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hand have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults) [42:30].

QUR'ĀN: (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire:* The sentences, 'He swallowed it', and, 'He swallowed it into his belly', both have the same meaning, but the latter is clearer and more emphatic. This verse too, like the preceding one, is related in theme with the opening sentence, *''Men shall have a share ...''* It threatens people and deters them from swallowing the orphans' shares of inheritance.

The verse is one of those which prove embodiment of deeds, as was explained in the first volume [1], under the verse: *Surely Allāh is not ashamed to set forth any parable ...* [2:26]. Perhaps it is this idea which an exegete had in mind when he wrote that the words, *''surely they only swallow fire into their bellies''*, have been used in their literal, not metaphorical, sense. Another exegete has unjustifiably taken exception to this statement. He has said: The verb, *''they only swallow''*, is used here as a present, not future, tense, because the future is described by the

[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* [Eng. Transl.], vol. 1, pp. 129 — 130. (*tr.*)

subsequent clause, *''and soon they shall enter burning fire''*. (Note the word, *''soon''*.) Now if swallowing the fire is taken in its literal meaning — and it is to happen on the Day of Resurrection — then this sentence too should have contained the word, ''soon''. Therefore, the clause is, in fact, used in allegorical sense and means that in swallowing the orphans' property they resemble someone who swallows fire into his belly.

This is the gist of his objection; but it shows that the objector was oblivious of the import of embodiment of deeds.

The end clause, *''and soon they shall enter burning fire''*, points to the chastisement in the hereafter. *''as-Sa'īr''* (السَّعِيْرُ = burning fire) is one of the names of the fire of the hereafter; [*yaṣlawna,* يَصْلَوْنَ = translated here as ''they shall enter'', is derived from] *ṣaliya 'n-nār, yaṣlā, ṣalyan* (صَلِيَ النَّارَيَصْلي صَلْيًا i.e., he broiled and burned into fire; he underwent ordeal of fire).

TRADITIONS

Majma 'u 'l-bayān says about the verse, *Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave:* ''People have two views about this verse; one is that it is decisive and not abrogated; and this has been narrated from al-Bāqir (a.s.).''

The author says: It is narrated from *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī that this verse was abrogated by the verse, *Allāh enjoins you concerning your children* ... But there is no justification for this view. We have explained in the above Commentary that this verse gives a precis of the coming inheritance laws; and there is no contradiction at all between this and the other decisive verses of inheritance, so that it could be said to have been abrogated.

Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from 'Ikrimah about this verse: ''It was revealed about Umm Kulthūm and daughter of Umm Kuḥlah or Umm Kuḥḥah herself and Tha'labah ibn Aws and Suwayd (all of them from the Anṣār). One was her husband and the other the paternal uncle of her child. She said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! My husband died leaving me and his daughter, but we were not

given anything from his inheritance.' The uncle of her child said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! (How can she get his inheritance when) she neither rides a horse nor attacks an enemy, and while she needs others to earn for her and she does not earn? Then the verse was revealed: *Men shall have a share ...* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: Some other traditions say that it was revealed about a man from the Anṣār who died leaving two daughters. Then his two cousins came and they were his agnates [to take his inheritance]. His wife told them: ''Marry these two (girls)'' — and they were not beautiful. So they refused. Then she brought the matter before the Messenger of Allāh (s.s.w.a.); then the verses of inheritance were revealed ... As we have repeatedly said, there could be more than one reason for revelation of a verse.

Majma'u 'l-bayān says about the verse, *And when there are present ...*''People have two different opinions about this verse; one is that it is decisive, not abrogated, and it is narrated from al-Bāqir (a.s.).''

ash-Shaybānī says that the above is narrated from both al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (peace be on them). (*Nahju 'l-bayān*)

The author says: Some traditions say that it is abrogated by the verses of inheritance; but we have mentioned earlier that it is not repealable.

Abū Abdillāh and Abu 'l-Ḥasan (peace be on them) have said: ''Allāh has threatened two punishments concerning the orphan's property: One is the punishment of the hereafter, (and that is) the fire; and as for the other, it is the punishment of this world, (and it is) His words: *And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account; so let them fear Allāh and let them speak right words.''* (Then) he said: ''He means that he should fear that Allāh would requite him in his offspring as he had done with these orphans.'' (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: A similar tradition is narrated in *al-Kāfī* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), and in *Ma'āni 'l-akhbār* from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

‘Abd ’l-A‘lā, *mawlā* (freed-slave) of Āl Sām, says: ‘‘Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said (without anybody asking him): ‘Whoever does injustice, Allāh shall give someone power over him, who will oppress him; or over his children or over his grandchildren.’ So I thought and said in my heart: ‘Injustice is committed by him and someone is imposed on his children and grandchildren?!’ The Imām then said to me before I could speak: ‘Surely Allāh says: *‘‘And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account; so let them fear Allāh, and let them speak right words.*’’ ’ ’’ (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated from Qatādah that he said: ‘‘We have been told that the Prophet of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Fear Allāh regarding to weaklings: the orphan and the woman; (Allāh) made him orphan, then urged (people) to take care of him; and put him to test, and put (others) to test through him.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are a lot of almost *mutawātir* traditions narrated through the chains of both sects, in condemnation of swallowing the orphan’s property, showing that it is a major and mortal sin.

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APPENDIX 'A'

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES

THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh	Rasūlu'llāh, Nabiyyu'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabī' I, in the Year of the Elephant. (25. 8. 570 AD)	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH (25. 5. 632 AD)	Natural	Holy Medina, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27.1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar)	15th Ramaḍān, 3 AH (1. 3. 625 AD)	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH (6. 3. 670 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Aṣghar)	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH (8. 1. 626 AH)	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (10. 10. 680 AD)	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā	Holy Karbalā" (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH (16. 12. 676 AD)	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH (28. 1. 733 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH (20. 4. 702 AD)	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH (14. 12. 765 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abd aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH (28. 10. 746 AD)	25th Rajab, 183 AH (1. 9. 799 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 148 AH – (29.12.765 AD)	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH (24. 8. 818 AD)	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs - Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH (8. 4. 811 AD)	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH (25. 11. 835 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third)	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH (27. 9. 827 AD)	3rd Rajab, 254 AH (28. 6. 868 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā), Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH (3. 12. 846 AD)	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH (1. 1. 874 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā, Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghā'ib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH (29. 7. 869 AD)	Still alive, but in occultation.	– –	– – – –

APPENDIX "B"

In this book the references of the Qur'ãnic verses have been given by writing serial number of the relevant chapter, followed by a colon (:) that is followed by the number/s of the verse/s. The names of the chapters have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The names of the chapters with their serial numbers are given here for the guidance of the readers.

To find, for instance, the verse 5:67 in the Qur'ãn, the reader should open the fifth chapter, that its, *al-Mã'idah* (اَلمَآئِدة = The Table) and then find the 67th verse.

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
1.	فاتِحَةُ الكِتاب	*Fatihatu 'l-kitãb*	The Opening of The Book
2.	البَقَرة	*al –Baqarah*	The Cow
3.	آل عِمران	*Ãl 'Imrãn*	The House of Imran
4.	النِّساء	*An-Nisã'*	Women
5.	المَائِدة	*Al-Mã'idah*	The Table
6.	الأنعام	*Al –An'ãm*	Cattle
7.	الأعراف	*Al-A'rãf*	The Battlements
8.	الأنفال	*Al-Anfãl*	The Spoils
9.	التَّوْبَة	*At-Tawbah*	Repentance
10.	يُونُس	*Yunus*	Jonah

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
11.	هُود	*Hũd*	Hood
12.	يُوسُف	*Yũsuf*	Joseph
13.	الرَّعد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder
14.	اِبراهيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham
15.	الحِجْر	*Al–Ḥijr*	El-Hijr
16.	النَّحل	*An-Naḥl*	The Bee
17.	الاِسْرآء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey
18.	الكَهْف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave
19.	مَريَم	*Maryam*	Mary
20.	طه	*Ṭã Hã*	Ta Ha
21.	الأنْبيآء	*Al-Anbiyã'*	Prophets
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage
23.	المؤمِنون	*al-Mu'minũn*	The Believers
24.	النّور	*an-Nũr*	Light
25.	الفُرقان	*al-Furqãn*	Discrimination (Salvation)
26.	الشُّعَراء	*Ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets
27.	النَّمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ant
28.	القَصَص	*Al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Stories
29.	العَنْكَبُوت	*Al-'Ankabũt*	The Spider
30.	الرُّوم	*Ar-Rũm*	The Greeks
31.	لُقْمان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman
32.	السَّجْدة	*As-Sajdah*	Prostration
33.	الأحزاب	*Al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates
34.	سَبَأ	*Saba'*	Sheba
35.	فاطِر (المَلائِكة)	*Fãṭir (or, al-Malã'ikah)*	The Originator (or The Angels)
36.	يـس	*Yã Sīn*	Ya Sin
37.	الصّـافّات	*aṣ-Ṣãffãt*	The Rangers
38.	ص	*Ṣãd*	Sad

S.No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
39.	الزُّمَر	*az-Zumar*	The Companies
40.	المُؤْمِن	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished
42.	الشُّورى	*ash-Shũrã*	Counsel
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments
44.	الدُّخان	*ad-Dukhãn*	Smoke
45.	الجاثِية	*al-Jãthiyah*	Hobbling
46.	الأحقاف	*al-Aḥqãf*	The Sand-Dunes
47.	مُحَمّد(ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory
49.	الحُجُرات	*al Ḥujurãt*	Apartments
50.	ق	*Qãf*	Qaf
51.	الذّاريات	*adh-Dhãriyãt*	The Scatterers
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭũr*	The Mount
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon
55.	الرَّحمن	*ar-Raḥmãn*	The All-
56.	الواقِعَة	*al-Wãqi'ah*	The Terror
57.	الحَديد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron
58.	المُجادَلة	*Al-Mujãdalah*	The Disputer
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering
60.	المُمتَحَنة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman
61.	الصَّف	*aṣ-Ṣaff*	The Ranks
62.	الجُمُعة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation
63.	المُنافِقُون	*Al-Munãfiqũn*	The Hypocrites
64.	التَّغابُن	*At-Taghãbun*	Mutual Fraud
65.	الطَّلاق	*aṭ-Ṭalãq*	Divorce
66,	التَّحْريم	*at-taḥrīm*	The Forbidding
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
68.	القَلَم	*Al-Qalam*	The Pen
69.	الحَاقّة	*Al-Ḥãqqah*	The Indubitable
70.	المَعارج	*Al-Ma'ãrij*	The Stairways
71.	نُوح	*Nũḥ*	Noah
72.	الجِنّ	*Al-Jinn*	The Jinn
73.	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped
74.	المُدَّثِّر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded
75.	القِيامَة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection
76.	الدَّهر (الإنسان)	*Ad-Dahr* (or, *al -Insãn)*	The Time (or, Man)
77.	المُرسَلات	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones
78.	النَّبأ	*an-Naba'*	The Tiding
79.	النّازعات	*An-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers
80.	عَبَس	*'Abas*	He Frowned
81.	التَّكْوير	*At-Takwīr*	The Darkening
82.	الإنفِطار	*Al-Infiṭãr*	The Splitting
83.	المُطَفِّفين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters
84.	الإنشِقاق	al-Inshiqãq	The Rending
85.	البُروج	*Al-Burũj*	The Constellations
86.	الطّارق	*aṭ-Ṭãriq*	The Night-star
87.	الأعلى	*Al-A'lã*	The Most High
88.	الغاشِيَة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper
89.	الفَجْر	*Al-Fajr*	The Dawn
90.	البَلَد	*Al-Balad*	The Land
91.	الشَّمْس	*Ash-Shams*	The Sun
92.	اللَّيل	*Al-Layl*	The Night
93.	الضُّحى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon
94.	الإنشِراح	*Al-Inshirãh*	The Expanding

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
95.	التِّين	*At-Tīn*	The Fig
96.	العَلَق	*Al-ʻlaq*	The Blood-clot
97.	القَدر	*al -Qadr*	Power
98.	البَيِّنَة	*al -Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign
99.	الزِّلزال	*Az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake
100.	العَاديات	*Al-ʻÃdiyãt*	The Chargers
101.	القارعَة	*al-Qãriʻah*	The Clatterer
102.	التَّكاثُر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry
103.	العَصْر	*Al-ʻAṣr*	Afternoon
104.	الهُمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter
109.	الفيل	*Al-Fīl*	The Elephant
106.	قُرَيْش	*Quraysh*	Quraish
107.	الماعُون	*Al-Mãʻũn*	Charity
108.	الكَوْثَر	*al-Kawthar*	Abũndance
109.	الكافِرون	*Al-Kãfirũn*	The Unbelievers
110.	النَّصر	*An-Naṣr*	Help
111.	تَبَّت	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab)*	Perish (or,The Flame)
112.	الإخْلاص (التَّوحيد)	*al Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd)*	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)
113.	الفَلَق	*Al-Falaq*	Daybreak
114.	النَّاس	*an-Nãs*	Men

AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān

BY:

al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad

Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 8

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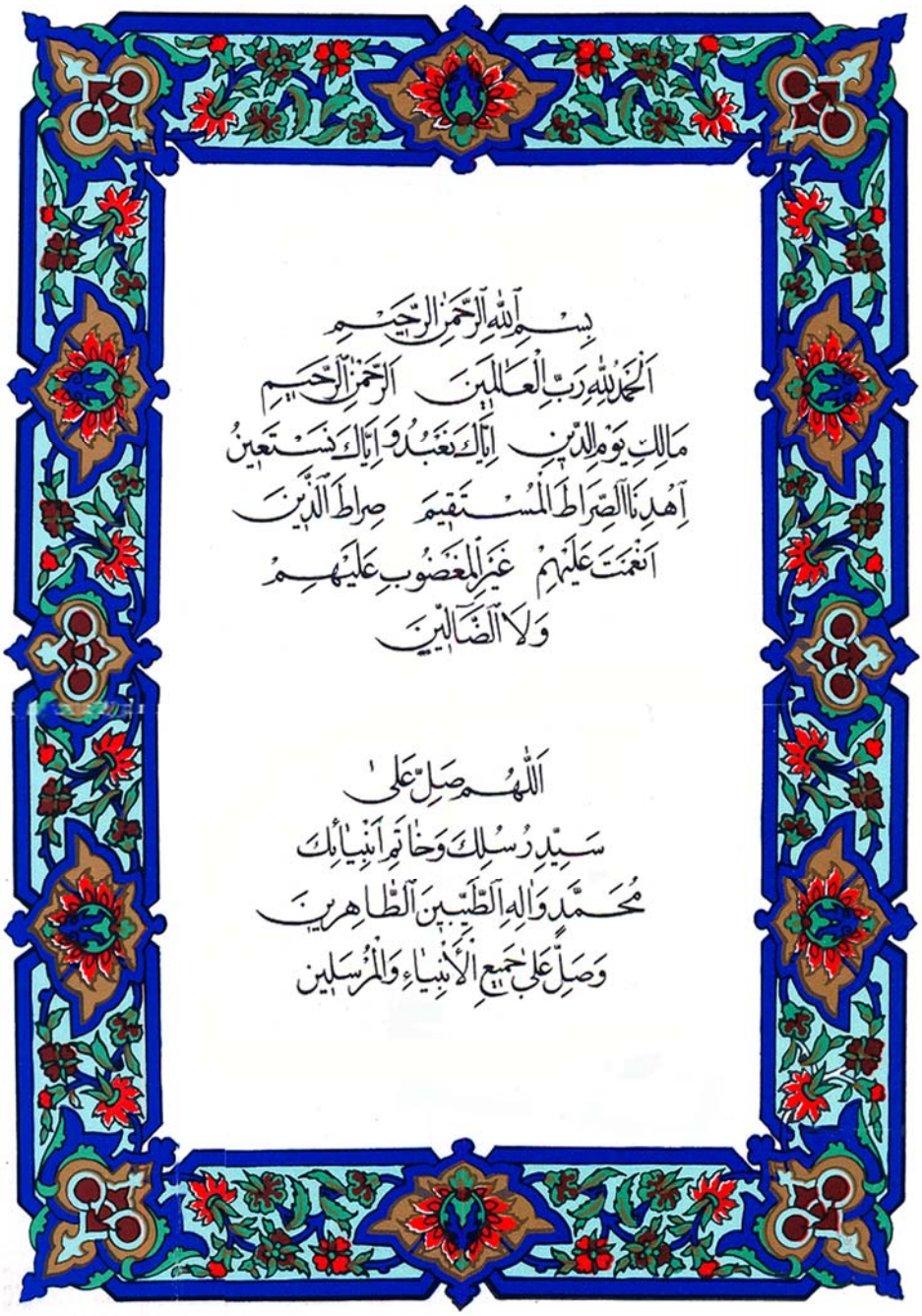
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ

اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى

سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	ك	k
ب	b	ل	l
ت	t	م	m
ث	th	ن	n
ج	j	ه	h
ح	ḥ	و	w
خ	kh	ي	y
د	d	ة	ah, at
ذ	dh		(construct state)
ر	r	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	z		
س	s		
ش	sh		**Long Vowels**
ص	ṣ	آ	ã
ض	ḍ	و	ũ
ط	ṭ	ي	ī
ظ	ẓ		
ع	‘ *or* ‘		**Short Vowels**
غ	gh	ـَ	a
ف	f	ـُ	u
ق	q	ـِ	i

تصدير

١ـ العلّامة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الاسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤ ـ ١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه‌الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول‌الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢ـ اشتهر العلّامة الطّباطبائي رحمه‌الله بالعديد. من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلّامة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣ـ شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، و بعد مداولات و استشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لانّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقتر حنا على الأستاذ العلّامة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربّي، و كفاء ته الأدبّية في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلّامة الطّباطبائي رحمه‌الله هوالزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

۴ـ و نحن إذ ننشر (الجزء الثامن) من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة لتفسير (الميزان) و يطابق النّصف الثاني من الجزء الرابع للنّصّ العربيّ، لنرجو من الله سبحانه إن يأخذ بأيدينا و يعيننا على إعداد التّرجمة الكاملة للكتاب و نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين: (الأولى) بأسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة إلى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الا نجليزيّة، ولكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجد هماالقارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

* * *

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لا تمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى و نعم النّصير.

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الاسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)
طهران ـ ايران

۱۴۱۲/۷/۱۳
۱۹۹۲/۱/۱۹

FOREWORD

1. al ‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) may Allāh have mercy upon him — was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān.*

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the eighth volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān.* This volume corresponds with the second half of the fourth volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allāh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of -the English translation of *al Mīzān*: One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * *

We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

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al-Mīzān

Volume Eight

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يُوصِيكُمُ اللهُ فِي أَوْلادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الأُنْثَيَيْنِ فَإِنْ كُنَّ
نِساءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ
وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ
لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَواهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ
السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لا
تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعاً فَرِيضَةً مِنَ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً
حَكِيماً ــ ١١ . وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ
وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمُ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ
بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ
كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ تُوصُونَ بِهَا
أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلالَةً أَوِ امْرَأَةٌ وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ
فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ
فِي الثُّلُثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَى بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرَ مُضَارٍ وَصِيَّةً مِنَ
اللهِ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ــ ١٢ . تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللهِ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ

الْعَظِيمُ ــ ١٣ . وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَاراً خَالِداً فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ــ ١٤ .

Allāh enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; then if they are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what (the deceased) *has left, and if there is one, she shall have the half; and* (as for) *his parents, each of them shall have the sixth from what he has left if he has a child, but if he has no child and* (only) *his two parents inherit him, then his mother shall have the third; but if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the sixth after* (the payment of) *any bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt; your parents and your children, you know not which of them is the nearer to you in usefulness; an ordinance from Allāh: Surely Allāh is knowing, Wise* (11). *And you shall have half of what your wives leave if they have no child, but if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth from what they leave after* (payment of) *any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt, and they shall have the fourth from what you leave if you have no child, but if you have a child then they shall have the eighth from what you leave after* (payment of) *a bequest you may have bequeathed or a debt; and if a man or a woman leaves property to be inherited by neither parents nor offspring, and he* (or she) *has a brother or a sister, then each of them two shall have the sixth, but if they are more than that, they shall be sharers in the third after* (payment of) *any bequest that may have been bequeathed or a debt that does not harm* (others); *this is an ordinance from Allāh: and Allāh is Knowing, Forbearing* (12). *These are Allāh's limits; and whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them; and this is the great achievement* (13). *And whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement* (14).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *Allāh enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females;: ''al-Īṣā' ''* and *''at-tawṣiyah''* (اَلْإِيْصَآءُ،اَلتَّوْصِيَةُ = to entrust, to enjoin); ar-Rāghib says in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān: ''al-Wasiyyah* (اَلْوَصِيَّةُ) = to direct someone — with a shade of exhortation — to do something.'' The use of the word *al-awlād* (اَلْاَوْلَادُ = children) instead of *al-abnā'* (اَلْاَبْنَآءُ = sons) shows that the rule of one or two shares is restricted to the deceased's immediate children. As for the children's children, how low so ever, they should get the share'of their progenitor through whom they are connected to the deceased; thus a son's daughter would get two shares while a daughter's son would be given one share — provided there is no one nearer to take their precedence. Likewise, the offspring of brothers and sisters would get the share of him or her through whom they are connected to the deceased. [All this is inferred from the word, *al-awlād* whose root word signifies birth.] But the word, *al-ibn* (اَلِابْنُ = son) does not necessarily mean immediate child, as the word, *al-ab* (اَلْاَبُ = father) may be used in a general sense for other than the immediate progenitor.

As for the divine words at the end of the verse: *your parents and your children, you know not which of them is the nearer to you in usefulness,* we shall explain later that there is a special consideration which has made the word, *al-abnā'* (اَلْاَبْنَآءُ = *lit.* sons) preferrable to *al-awlād* (اَلْاَوْلَادُ = children).

The expression, ''The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females'', was chosen to point to the nulification of the system prevalent in the era of ignorance whereby women were not given any share in inheritance. This expression takes the females's share as granted and confirmed,and based the male's share on it — that it is double of it. Or let us say that the female's share is treated as the yardstick of legislation and the male's share is fixed with its help. If it were not for this consideration, it could simply be said: the female shall have the half of the male's share; but it would not have given that connotation, and the context would have changed — as you may see. This theme has been mentioned by a scholar and the point seems well-established. The idea is also strengthened by the fact that the verse does not describe explicitly and independently except the women's shares; if and when it explains

some of men's shares it is always done as an adjunct to the women's shares, as may be seen in the following verse and in the verse at the end of this chapter.

In short, the statement, ''The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females'', explains the beginning clause ''Allāh enjoins you concerning your children''. The definite article in ''the male'' and ''the two females'' denotes genes or category, i.e., the category of male is equal in share to the two of the female category. This principle shall be applied when there are males and females among the heirs, as the male shall have twice the share of a female. The verse did not use such expressions as, ''The male shall have equal to two shares of a female'', or, ''double of a female's share''; because the chosen expression explains also the share of two females when they are the only heirs, as will be explained later — and all this with such brevity.

In any case, when there are males and females among the heirs, every male shall have two shares and every female one share — no matter what their number may be.

QUR'ĀN: *then if they are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what* (the deceased) *has left,:* This sentence, coming after the preceding one, *The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females,* apparently shows that it is in conjunction with a deleted but understood clause, i.e., 'This law is when there are males and females among the heirs', but if they are more than two females ... Such deletion is common in usage. For example, look at the following two verses:

> *And complete the* ḥajj *and* 'umrah *for Allāh, but if you are prevented,* (send) *whatever offering is easy to obtain* (2:196).
>
> *For a counted number of days; but whosoever among you is sick or on a journey, then* (he shall fast) *a* (like) *number of other days* (2:184).

The conjunctive personal pronoun hidden in the verb *kunna* (كُنَّ = they are) refers to the 'children' (in the phrase, ''your children''); the feminine gender has been used to make it agree with the predicate 'females'; the other such pronoun hidden in the verb, ''has left'', refers to 'the deceased', which is understood from the context.

QUR'ĀN: *and if there is one, she shall have the half,*: The pronoun

refers as above to the ‘‘the child’’, understood from the context, and its feminine form agrees with the predicate; ‘‘the half’’ refers to the half of what the deceased has left — thus the definite article stands for the second construct of the genitive case.

The verse is silent about the share of two females, because it may be understood from the clause: *The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females.* Let us suppose there is a male and a female heir; according to this verse, the female shall have a third of the estate and the male, the two-thirds — as it is the share of the two females. In other words, two females shall have two-thirds of the inheritance. This much may be inferred from the verse in a general way, but it is not in itself the verse’s definitely fixed connotation; there would have been no contradiction if the verse had continued to say, for instance, and if there are two females they shall have a half (or the whole) of the estate. But the verse by its silence about their share confirms the inferred meaning; and the clear statement about the share of the more than two females indicates that that silence is intentional, and not an oversight. Moreover, the fact that they should get two-thirds of inheritance is confirmed by the Prophet’s practice, and the said *sunnah* has continued uninterrupted since the days of the Prophet till this day, with complete unanimity of the Muslim jurists — except one reported dissent by Ibn ‘Abbās.

This is the best explanation why the two females’ share has not been clearly stated. al-Kulaynī (may Allāh have mercy on him!) has written in *al-Kāfī:* ‘‘Surely Allāh has appointed the two females’ share as two-thirds; because He says: *The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females*; so when a man leaves a daughter and a son, the male shall get the equal of the two females’ share, that is, two-thirds; therefore the share of two females is two-thirds. After this, there was no need to say that two females would get two-thirds.’’

The same explanation has been quoted from the exegete, Abū Muslim: ‘‘(The said rule) is inferred from the divine words, *The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females.* A male with a female gets two-thirds; thus two-thirds shall be the share of two females.’’ But these two explanations are not perfect; they should be completed in the light of what we have written above. Ponder on it.

There are some other explanations given for this verse which are quite unworthy of divine words. For example, someone has written that

the words; *if they are more than two females,* means, two females or more; thus this sentence contains the description of the share of two females as well as of more than two. Another writer has said that the share of two daughters is known by analogy from the law concerning two sisters (coming at the end of the chapter) where it apportions two-thirds to them. There are other similarly ridiculous claims.

QUR'ĀN: *and* (as for) *his parents, each of them shall have the sixth of what he has left if he has a child ... then his mother shall have the sixth:* The conjunction of parents with the law of the children, shows that the parents are co-sharers with the children and together they constitute one class. The words: ''and (only) his two parents inherit him'', indicate that they are the only heirs. The words: ''but if he has brothers'', (coming after the clause: ''but if he has no child and [only] his two parents inherit him'') show that brothers come into second class, after the class of sons, daughters [and parents], and they would not inherit as long as there is an heir of the first class — but the brothers shall partially exclude the mother from one-third [as it would be reduced to one-sixth].

QUR'ĀN: *after* (the payment of) *any bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt;:* Bequest and will has been enjoined by the divine words: *Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth ...* (2:180). Although in this verse bequest precedes debt, it does not contradict the *sunnah* which says that debt takes precedence of bequest at the time of paymnet; because sometimes during a talk one mentions less important things first and then progresses towards more important ones. It is done when an important matter, because of its position and strength, does not need as much emphasis as the unimportant one does — and giving precedence in description is one way of emphasizing. Accordingly, the words: ''or a debt'', put the things in ascending order or importance.

This also shows why ''bequest'' has been qualified by the words, ''he may have bequeathed''; it puts further emphasis on it, and also points to the necessity of showing reverence to the deceased and honouring his wishes when he has made a bequest. Allāh has said: *Whoever then alters it* [i.e., the bequest] *after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it* (2:181).

QUR'ĀN: *your parents and your children, you know not which of them is nearer to you in usefulness;:* It is addressed to the heirs, that is, the general public, inasmuch as everyone inherits his deceased relatives. The sentence alludes to the reason why the inheritance share of the parents differs from that of the children. It also provides a sort of education to them; that is why they have been addressed with the words: ''you know not''; and such expressions are commonly used by the people.

Had the verse been addressed to other than the heirs, i.e., to the dying people who would, after their death, be inherited by their parents and children, there would have been no reason to say: ''which of them is nearer to you in usefulness''; because apprently usefulness and benefit implies making use of, and benefitting from, the inherited property, and it fits on the heirs, not on the deceased.

The parents have been mentioned before the children; it is a sort of a hint that the parents are nearer in benefit than the children. It is like the verse: *Surely the* Said *and the* Marwah *are among the signs of Allāh ...* (2:158), as we had quoted the tradition that the Prophet had said: ''I begin with what Allāh has begun ...''

From the point of view of relationship and considering the human sentiments, it is a fact that man feels more compassion towards his children than towards his parents. In his eyes, his child's existence is his own — but not so that of his parents. Man's parents have stronger connection with him, when compared to his children's attachment to him. When usefulness is based on this principle, then at the time of dividing an inheritance, man should naturally get, for example, from his father a greater share than he would from inheriting, for example, his son — although it would appear from a superficial glance that the opposite should be the case.

This verse (i.e., *your parents and your children, you know not which of them is nearer to you in usefulness*) proves that Allāh has based the inheritance law on a creative reality found outside imagination — like other natural Islamic laws.

This principle is also supported by other unrestricted Qur'ānic verses which speak about legislation in general. For instance: *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion in natural devotion* (for the truth); *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no alteration in the creation of Allāh; that is the right religion* (30:30). In presence of

such verses, it is unthinkable that the *sharī'ah* would contain such compulsory and unchangeable rules and laws, without there being to a certain extent basis for them in the creation.

It may possibly be inferred from this verses (*your parents and your children ...*) that children's children would have precedence over grandfathers and grandmothers; the grandparents will not inherit as long as a child or a child's child [how low so ever] is present.

QUR'ĀN: *an ordinance from Allāh ..*: Apparently it is in accusative case governed by a deleted verb, e.g., obey, or, hold fast, etc. It has a reinforced emphasis that the described shares are decreed and fixed, and that they cannot be changed.

This verse prescribes the shares of the first class of the heirs, i.e., the children, the father and the mother, with all the variations, either explicitly or implicitly.

Explicitly: Shares of the father and the mother: They get a sixth each if the deceased has a child or children; but in the absence of children, the mother gets either one-third or one-sixth (depending on the details mentioned in the verse);

Share of a single daughter: She gets a half;

Share of several daughters when they are the only children: They get two-thirds;

Shares of sons and daughters when they are together: The male shall have the equal of the share of two females;

And to this is added the share of two daughters, and it is two-thirds, as explained above.

Implicitly: Share of the only son: He shall get the whole property; it is understood when we read the clause: *The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females,* in conjunction with the clause, *and if there is one* [daughter], *she shall have the half.*

Likewise, when he has left only the sons as heirs, they shall share it among themselves equally, because the clause, *The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females,* indicates that the males shall have equal shares among themselves.

The verse is truly amazing in its comprehensiveness with such brevity.

It should be noted here that the verse with its unrestrictedness shows

that there is no difference whatsoever — in matters of inheritance — between the Prophet and the other people. We have seen similar unrestrictedness or generality in the divine words: *Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leaves, and women shall have a share* ... (4:7). Someone has opined that the general Qur'ānic declarations are not applicable to the Prophet, because he had announced them himself. But such views are not worth looking at. Of course, there is a dispute between the Sunnīs and the Shī'ahs whether a prophet is inherited by his heirs or whatever he leaves goes to charity. This originates from the tradition which Abū Bakr had narrated in the case of Fadak. This discussion is beyond the scope of this book; therefore we think it better not to go into it here; the reader should consult relevant books for it.[1]

QUR'ĀN: And you shall have half of what your wives leave if they have no child ... after (payment of) any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt;: The meaning is clear. The half share has been described in

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[1] The alleged tradition of Abū Bakr and the opinion based on it — that the prophets neither inherit anyone, nor anyone inherits them — is not so irrelevant to the exegesis of the Qur'ān; because it goes directly against several Qur'ānic verses, and accordingly it is necessary, for the purpose of removing any possible misunderstanding, to point to this contradiction. Suffice it to say that this tradition and the opinion are not only against the general and clear meanings of the verses of inheritance, but are also contradicted by some other verses. Allāh says: *And Sulayman inherited from Dawud* (27:16); again He says quoting Zakariyyā's invocation: *And surely I fear my relatives after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant me from Thyself an heir, who should inherit me and inherit from the children of Ya'qūb* (19:5 — 6). These verses cannot refer to prophethood or divine knowledge, because prophethood and divine knowledge come directly from Allāh, they are not a thing to be inherited, nor was there any need for Zakariyyā (a.s.) to be afraid of his relatives that they would take over the prophethood after him. The verses simply refer to inheritance of property (or, in case of the first verse, the Kingdom). Here we find Sulayman and Yaḥyā (a.s.) inheriting properties from their fathers, Dāwūd and Zakariyyā (a.s.) respectively; and all of them were prophets. Thus according to the Qur'ān two prophets left their properties to their heirs, and two prophets inherited them. (*tr.*).

possessive case, ‘‘half of what your wives leave’’; but the one-fourth share is disconnected; and they shall have the fourth from what you leave; when on such occasions a possessive construct is disjointed, it becomes necessary to complete it with min (مِنْ = from) — either in words or implied and understood. This min gives the connotation of taking from and beginning; this meaning seems appropriate when the word related to min is a negligible portion of the whole, when it is a small part or ratio of the original, like one-sixth, one-fourth or one-third; but not when it is a larger portion like a half or two-thirds. That is why Allāh has said: sixth from what he has left; the mother shall have the third; you shall have a fourth from what they leave — all this with disjointed possessive. But He has said: *half of what your wives leave; two-thirds of what* (the deceased) *has left* — all this in possessive case; also He has said: *she shall have the half* as the definite article, ‘‘the’’, stands for the second construct of the possessive case, i.e., half of what he has left.[1]

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[1] This explanation may be correct to a certain extent only. It is not allinclusive. For instance, the author has had to explain a single construction in two different ways to suit his purpose. Where the Qur’ān says that, *the mother shall have the third*, he has implied that there is a *min* (= from) hiddden after it; but in another exactly the same construction, *she shall have the half*, he says that the word, *the*, stands for the deleted possessive construct, i.e., it means, half of what the deceased has left. It is an arbitrary way of interpretation.

We may interpret the verses in a more realistic way if we take the preposition, *min* (from) to denote, not the beginning, but *at-tab‘īḍ* (اَلتَّبْعِيْضُ = portioning), e.g., if we interpret, *fourth from what you leave*, as a fourth of a portion of your estate.

Where the Qur’ān uses the possessive case, it means that the prescribed share or ratio is to be taken out from the whole of the estate; and where it prescribes a certain share ‘‘from it’’, it means that the said heir shall get that share, not from the whole estate, but only from a part of it.

Now let us look at each clause in this light:

and (as for) *his parents, each of them shall have the sixth from what he has left if he has a child:* The eldest son is entitled to *al-ḥabwah* (اَلْحَبْوَةُ = *lit,* gift; here it denotes gift of some personal effects of his father, like ring, sword, etc.) from the original estate before it is divided among the heirs. Therefore, the parents will not get one-sixth of the whole estate, as they will not get any share from the said *ḥabwah;* hence *‘the sixth from’*, not ‘the sixth of’.

QUR'ĀN: *and if a man or a woman leaves property ... and Allāh is Knowing, Forbearing: 'al-Kalālah'* (اَلْكَلَالَةُ) is in fact a *maṣdar* which means to encompass; from it is derived *al-iklīl* (اَلْاِكْلِيْلُ = icrown) because it encircles the head; also *al-kull* (اَلْكُلُّ = whole, all, total) comes from it because it encompasses its parts; another derivative is *al-kall* (اَلْكَلُّ = to be tired, dull); it implies a sort of wearisome encompassing against the one on whom he depends. ar-Rāghib says: *''al-Kalālah* is an heir other than the child and the father.'' Again he says: ''It has been narrated that the Prophet was asked about *al-kalālah.* He said: 'He who dies and does not leave behind a child or a parent.' Thus he (the Prophet) has taken it as an attribute of the deceased; and both explanations are correct, because *al-kalalāh* is a *masdar* which encompasses the inheritor and the inherited, both.''

The author says: In that case, it is possible to treat *'kāna'* (كَانَ = was

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And you shall have half of what your wives leave if they have no child, but if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth from what they leave: When there is no child, the husband gets half of the whole property. But when there is a child, the son shall get the *ḥabwah* before the estate is divided, so the husband will get a fourth of a portion of estate.

and they [wives] *shall have the fourth from what you leave if you have no child, but if you have a child then they shall have the eighth from what you leave*: The wives naver get their one-fourth or one-eighth share from the whole estate. It is because they are not entitled to any share in land; and as for other immovable property (like house, garden, etc.) they get only the price of their prescribed share, but not the property itself; and in case of there being a son he is given the *ḥabwah* before the division. Thus the wife always gets her one-fourth or one-eighth from only a portion of the estate.

Other clauses, where possessive case has explicitly or implicitly been used, indicate that the heir gets his/her share from the whole estate. For example:

then if they are more than two females,they shall have two-thirds of what (the deceased) *has left; and if there is one,she shall have the half:*

but if he has no child and (only) *his two parents inherit him, then his mother shall have the third.*

It is now clear that the two different styles have been used to describe two different legal eventualities. There is a solid legal reason behind the use of possessive case and that of the preposition, *from.* It is neither for literary beauty nor for denoting largeness or smallness of a prescribed share. (*tr.*).

— it is not included in the translation of the verse,) as an auxiliary verb, and ‘‘a man’’, as its subject, with *‘‘to be inherited’’*, as an adjectival phrase related to the said subject, and *al-kalālah* as its predicate. Then the meaning will be as follows: and if a man or a woman who is to be inherited is neither a parent nor an offspring of the heir.

Also, we may take *kāna* (was) as a perfect verb, with, *‘‘a man or a woman to be inherited’’*, as its subject, and *kalālah* as a *maṣdar* used as a circumstantial clause. The meaning again will be the same: that the deceased is neither a parent nor an offspring of the heirs. az-Zajjāj has reportedly said: According to those who have recited *yūrithu* (يُوْرِثُ = makes someone his heir), *kalālah* will be the object; and according to those who recite *yūrathu* (يُوْرَثُ = is inherited by), *kalālah* is a subjective, being a circumstantial clause.

The clause, *that does not harm* (others), also is a subjective and a circumstantial clause. *al-Muḍārrah* (اَلْمُضَارَّةُ = to harm, to impair). Obviously, it forbids the dying person to harm the heirs through the debt; he should not indulge in borrowing with intention of harming the heirs and depriving them of inheritance. Another interpretation: He should not harm their interest by bequeathing more than one-third of his property.

QUR’ĀN: *These are Allāh’s limits, ... And whoever disobeys ... he shall have an abasing chastisement: al-Ḥadd* (اَلْحَدُّ) means a barrier between two things which prevents their mixing together and keeps their mutual distinction and differentiation intact, like the limit or boundary of a house or a garden. The word, as used here, refers to the inheritance laws and the decreed shares. Allāh has shown their utmost importance by describing, in these two verses, the reward of obeying Allāh and His Messenger in this respect, and the abasing everlasting chastisement for him who disobeys Allāh and His Messenger.

A GENERAL DISCOURSE ON INHERITANCE

These two verses: *Allāh enjoins you concerning your children ... Allāh is Knowing, Forbearing;* together with the verse at the end of the chapter: *They ask you for a decision of the law. Say: ‘‘Allāh gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring ... ’’* [4:176], in conjunction with the previously explained verse: *Men shall*

have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave ... [4:7] and the verse: *and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allāh to inheritance ...* (33:6; 8:75), give the fundamental Qur'ānic principles of inheritance in Islam; and the traditions provide the explanations in clearest terms.

The principles, which are inferred from them and form the basis of detailed laws, are as follows:

1. The principle already explained under the verse: *your parents and your children, you know not which of them is the nearer to you in usefulness.* It shows clearly that nearness and distance from the deceased has effect on inheritance. Also, this sentence, read in conjunction with the rest of the verse, shows that this matter affects the share of inheritance — whether the heir would get a larger or smaller portion. When it is read togther with the divine words: *and the possessors of relationship have the better claim ... to inheritance,* it guides us to the principle that a nearer relative debars a remoter one from inheritance.

The nearest of all to the deceased are his father, mother, son and daughter, because their relationship with the deceased is direct; there is no intermediary between him and them. The son and the daughter debar the grandchildren from inheritance, because the grandchildren are related to the deceased through the children. Of course, if there is no child, then grandchildren will take their place.

Then comes the second class of heirs, i.e., the deceased's brothers, sisters, grandfathers and grandmothers; they are related to him through one intermediary link only, i.e., through his father or mother. [If there is no brother or sister, then] their children will take the place of their father or mother. Every nearer generation will debar the remoter one, as explained above.

After that comes the third class of the heirs. They are the deceased's paternal uncles and aunts and maternal uncles and aunts. There are two intermediary links between them and him, i.e., a parent and a grandparent. The other details are the same as above.

The principles of nearness and remotness also shows that an heir having a double relationship will debar the one having a single relationship. For example, a consanguine brother or sister debars an agnate brother or sister, although an uterine brother or sister is not

debarred.[1]

2. There is found another type of precedence or sequence among the heirs from another angle. Sometimes various shares combine in such a way that their sum-total exceeds the original. Now there are some heirs whose share has been reduced to another fixed ratio in case of such ‘‘crowding’’; for example, husband’s share is a half, but when he is joined by a child, his share is reduced to one-fourth; the same thing happens to the wife with her one-fourth and one-eighth. Likewise, mother is allotted a third, but in case of there being a child or brothers, her share is reduced to one-sixth; but father’s share remains the same — one-sixth — whether there is a child or not.

On the other hand, there are heirs whose share has been fixed, but nothing has been said about it in case of ‘‘crowding’’. For example, one daughter or sister, and two or more daughters or sisters have been given a half and two-thirds, respectively, but nothing has been said concerning them when the heirs seem to crowd together.

It is inferred from this difference in approach that the former heirs are not to suffer any further loss in cases where the sum-total of shares exceeds the original; the loss, whatsoever, shall be borne by the latter heirs who have been allotted any reduced fixed share for such contingency.

3. Sometimes shares exceed the original [as mentioned just above]; for example, let us say, there is the husband and two or more consanguine sisters; their shares are a half and two-thirds respectively, [but 1/2 + 2/3 = 1.1/6] i.e., more than the original [because the total of all shares should come to ‘one’ only]. Likewise, if the deceased has left her father, mother, two daughters and husband, their shares will exceed the original, because it will be 1 /6 + 1 /6 + 2/3 + 1 /4 [with a sum-total of 1.1/4].

On the other hand sometimes the property exceeds the shares. For example, if there is only a daughter [who shall get a half] or only two

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[1] The term, consanguine, is used for a relative who is connected to someone through father and mother both, e.g., two brothers having the same father and mother are called consanguine brothers.

Agnate is a relative connected only through father or through other males, while uterine is one related only through mother or through other females. (*tr.*).

daughters [with a share of two-thirds; leaving another half or one-third un-allotted, respectively].

The traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) which explain and expound the Divine Book — clearly say that in former cases, when the shares exceed the original, the loss shall be borne by those heirs who have been allotted only a single share, and they are the daughter/s and sister/s, but not the mother or husband whose shares have been fixed — albeit on a reduced scale — for the changed conditions too. Likewise if the property exceeds the shares, the excess shall be returned to only those heirs who are expected to bear the loss in the former example. For example, if there is a father and a daughter, then the father shall get his one-sixth, and the daughter her one-half by allotment; and also she shall be given the remaining one-third by return, [thus she shall get five-sixths of the property].

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, during his reign, started the system of *al-'awl* (اَلْعَوْلُ = to provide, to deviate; in Islamic law it refers to the system by which all the shares are proportionately reduced in case they exceed the original); and people in early days of Islam resorted to *at-ta'ṣīb* (اَلتَّعْصِيْبُ = to wrap around; in Islamic law it refers to the system by which agnate relatives were given preference). We shall write about these two systems under the coming ''Traditions''.

4. On pondering on the shares of men and women in inheritance, we find that on the whole a woman's share is less than that of a man — except in the shares allotted to the parents. A mother's share sometimes exceeds that of the father. The mother has been given equal to, or more than, the father's share: it is probably because, in the eyes of Islam, she is more strongly attached to her child, and she undergoes a lot of troubles and hardships during pregnancy and delivery, as well as in looking after the child and bringing him up. Allāh says: *We have enjoined on man doing of good to his parents; with trouble did his mother bear him and with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months* (46:15). The fact that her share — instead of being half of man's portion — is equal to, and sometimes double of, the father's share, gives precedence to her without any doubt.

However, the question arises why man's share in general has been fixed as double of that of woman. Two factors have been kept in view concerning this matter: Man's excellence over woman in rationally

managing the affairs of life; and his responsibility to maintain the woman and spend on her. Allāh says: *Men are the maintainers of women because of that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the others and because of what they spend out of their property* (4:35). *''al-Qawwām''* (اَلْقَوَّامُ = translated here as maintainer) is derived from *al-qiyām* (اَلْقِيَامُ = to stand up) which refers to management of livelihood; the excellence points to man's superiority in rational thinking. Man's is a life dominated by intellect while that of woman is run by emotions and sentiments. It is much better and more proper to leave financial affairs in the hand of a thinking and contemplating person than to an emotional and sentimental being. If we look at all the wealth found in the world — which is to pass from the present generation to the next one — and consider this Islamic arrangement, we should find that two-thirds of this wealth would come under the authority and management of men, and the remaining one-third would be managed and administered by women. In this way the intellectual management will dominate the sentimental administration; the society will reap its benefits, and life will be happier and more worthy of living.

The deficiency in woman's share has nevertheless been made up in an amazing way. Allāh has enjoined man to treat his woman with justice and equity. Man accordingly is expected to treat her as an equal partner in his two-thirds. In other words, the woman would have the benefit and usufruct of [another one-third, i.e.,] a half of the two-thirds which man has got, and it would be in addition to her own one-third.

The net result of this marvellous ordinance is that man and woman have inverse relation in the spheres of possession and usufruct: Man owns two-thirds of the world's wealth but uses only one-third; while woman, who owns only a third of that wealth, has usufruct of two-thirds. As mentioned above, consideration has been given to predominance of contemplation and intellect over emotion and sentiment in man (and financial management, saving, exchange, production and investment are more germane to rational thinking than to emotion) and to primacy of sentiment over intellect in woman (and that is more relevant to making use of, and benefiting from, a property). This is the underlying reason why Islam has differentiated between men and women in matters of inheritance and maintenance.

Obviously, it is this natural pre-eminence in man of intellect and

rationality and his superiority over woman in this field which Allāh has described in His speech as excellence: *Men are the maintainers of women because of that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the others* (4:34). Apparently it does not refer to men's superiority in strength, hardiness and intrepidity. Admittedly, roughness and hardiness is a distinguishing feature of man, and many great things in society depend on it, like defence, security, hard labour, endurance of hardships and afflictions, and steadfastness and composure in face of commotion and horror. These are essential aspects of life which nature has not equipped women for. It has equipped them instead with opposite qualities, i.e., delicate emotions and benevolent sentiments — which no society can flourish without. These are essential factors of life which give rise to love and affection, mercy and kindness; they enable the woman to bear the burdens of pregnancy and delivery; and create in her a natural inclination for bringing up the children and looking after them; and it is this quality which makes them pre-eminently suitable for nursing and house-keeping. Humanity cannot progress with roughness and hardiness alone, it also needs softness and kindness; mankind will be incomplete if its anger is not balanced with desire. World's affairs are not run by repulsion if it is not counterpoised with attraction.

In short, these two qualities maintain an equilibrium between man and woman and keep the scales of life well-balanced in a society which necessarily is constituted of both sexes. Far be it from Allāh to commit injustice in His speech, action or judgment: *Or do they fear that Allāh and His Messenger will act wrongfully towards them?* (24:50); *and your Lord does not deal unjustly with any one* (18:49). He Himself has said [about men and women]: *the one of you being from the other* (3:195); and it is to this mutual complementariness and interlocking existence that Allāh refers in His words: *because of that with which Allāh has made some of them excel the others.*

He has also said: *And one of His signs is that He created you from dust, then lo! you are mortals* (who) *scatter. And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect* (30:20 — 21). Ponder on the marvellous description the verses contain. Mortal (i.e., man — as it stands parallel to the ''mates'', i.e., women) scatters, i.e., goes here and

there to earn his livelihood; he it is who is made responsible to gather and obtain all necessities of life with his strength and hard labour — even leading to conflicts, forays and wars. Nevertheless, if this scattering were the only characteristics of mankind, the whole human race would have been devided between the attackers and the attacked, the pursuers and the pursued. But Allāh created women and equipped them with qualities which men find comforting. He puts between them love and compassion. They attract the men with their beauty and glamour, love and kindness. Thus the women are the premier cause and the basic agent for bringing the civilization into being.

That is why Islam has made the domestic life, i.e., marriage, the basis of society. Allāh says: *O people! surely We have created you of a male and female, and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one among you who guards* (himself) *most* (against evil) (49:13). See how the verse first describes the marriage of male and female, and goes to the spreading of human race, and then proceeds to the larger society made of tribes and nations.

The end of the verse shows that the detail given in the verse: *Men are the maintainers of women because of that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the others ...,* looks at equipping both sexes with faculties and characteristics necessary for managing the affairs of the worldly life in the best possible way, and which may keep the society in the best condition. Obviously, the ‘‘excellence’’ mentioned in the above verse does not mean the real superiority and honour in Islam, which denotes nearness to Allāh. Islam in reality does not care about material amplitude or temporal or bodily strength which can be useful in the physical life only — these things are mere tools which have to be used to receive spiritual favours from Allāh.

The above discourse makes it abundantly clear that men have been given excellence over women in their intellectual power, and this difference has led to the difference in inheritance and other similar matters; but this ‘‘excellence’’ means only increase [in intellectual power]. As for the excellence in the meaning of honour before Allāh — which is the main concern of Islam — it entirely depends on piety and fear of Allāh, wherever it is found [be it in a man or a woman].

TRADITIONS

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh, that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and Abū Bakr came walking to visit me (in my illness) in Banū Salamah. The Prophet found me unconscious; so he called for some water and made ablution with it; then he sprinkled (it) on me, and I gained consciousness. So I said: ‘What do you order me to do with my property? O Messenger of Allāh!’ Then (the verse) came down: *Allāh enjoins you concerning your children: The male shall have the equal of the portion of two females.’’* (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: It has been repeatedly mentioned that it is possible for several ‘‘reasons of revelation’’ (which have been narrated to us) to combine in respect of one verse; nor is there any difficulty if the verse goes beyond the scope of those specific reasons; also possibly an event might have coincided with the revelation and the theme of the verse corresponded with that happening. Therefore, there is no difficulty in the above tradition because of Jābir’s report that he had asked: ‘‘What do you order me to do with my property? O Messenger of Allāh!’’, and then this verse was revealed. We should not worry how Jābir could have asked that question when the division of inheritance was not his responsibility.

Even more strange is another tradition narrated in the same book through ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd and al-Ḥākim from Jābir that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to visit me when I was sick. So I said: ‘How should I divide my property among my children?’ But he did not give me any reply; and then the verse was revealed: *Allāh enjoins you concerning your children ...*’’

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from as-Suddī that he said: ‘‘The people of (the era of) ignorance did not give inheritance to the girls, nor to weak boys. Only that man inherited his father who had strength to (participate in) war. Then ‘Abdu ’r-Raḥmān, brother of the poet Ḥassān, died, leaving a wife, named Umm Kuḥḥah, and five girls. (Other) heirs came and took away the inheritance. Umm Kuḥḥah

complained to the Prophet about it. Then Allāh revealed this verse: *then if there are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what* (the deceased) *has left, and if there is one, she shall have the half;* then it was revealed about Umm Kuḥḥah: *and they shall have the fourth from what you leave if you have no child, but if you have a child then they shall have the eighth from what you leave ...*'' (*ibid*)

The same two scholars of tradition have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘When the verse of shares [of inheritance] was revealed, in which Allāh ordained what He ordained [of the shares] for male and female child and (for) parents, people (or, some of them) disliked it and said: ‘(How is it that) woman is given one-fourth or one-eighth, and daughter gets a half, and a small child is given (his share), while none of them can fight the people, nor can he gather booty?’ They used that (system) in the (era of) ignorance: They did not give inheritance except to him who could fight the people; and they gave it to the eldest, then elder [and so on].'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: *at-Ta‘ṣīb* (اَلتَّعْصِيْبُ = agnacy) was a part of that system of ignorance. They gave the inheritance to the agnates of father if the deceased had not left a big son capable of fighting. The Sunnīs follow the same system in the excess property which is left after giving the prescribed shares. Perhaps something may be found about it in their traditions; but the traditions coming from the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) totally reject this theory and say that the excess property shall be returned to those heirs who at other times bear the loss, and they are children, consanguine or agnate brothers and in some cases, the father. As mentioned earlier, the verses in their connotation agree with this verdict.[1]

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[1] The system of *at-ta‘ṣīb* which Islam had taken such pain to abolish and eradicate, was revived for political reasons by the second ‘Abbāsid caliph, al-Manṣūr, in the middle of the second century of *hijrah.* First a short description of that system in practice:

Mr. Justice Ameer Ali (who, it is necessary to mention, was a Mu‘tazilite, and not a Shī‘ah, as he himself has repeatedly said in his hook, *Mahommedan Law*) says that in Arabia, prior to Islam, the inheritance ‘‘was governed by the rule of agnacy.'' It means that only the relatives connected with the deceased ‘‘through males'' were recognized as entitled to take a share in his inheritance. But neither women nor persons connected to the

deceased through them had any right of succession.

‘‘Thus it was that whilst adopted sons and even slaves had rights, the children of daughters and sisters had no place in the customary rules which regulated succession.’’ (Ameer Ali,*Mahommedan Law*, vol.2,p.11)

Now a background of the ‘Abbāsid dynasty:

The ‘Abbāsids were descendants of al-‘Abbās, an agnate uncle of the Prophet. The descendants of Fāṭimah (a.s.) were also descendants of ‘Alī (a.s.), son of Abū Tālib who was a consanguine uncle of the Prophet.

Before coming to power, the family of ‘Abbās, like other Hāshimites, generally followed the *madhhab* of the *Ahlu ’l-Bayt* (a.s.). As an example, we may refer to several traditions narrated in coming pages from both Shī‘ī and Sunnī chains, from Ibn ‘Abbās, in which he has strongly denounced the system of *al-‘awl* (اَلْعَوْلُ), innovated by ‘Umar.

When the Hāshimites were planning to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty, the ‘Abbāsids had joined hands with the Ḥasanid branch of the Fāṭimids, although al-Imām Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) had remained aloof from all these activities. It was agreed among the ‘Abbāsids and the Ḥasanids that on achieving success they would install Muhammad *an-Nafsu ’z-Zakiyyah* (The Pure Soul) as caliph. (He was a son of ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan [al-Muthannā II] ibn [al-Imām] al-Hasan, a.s.). Among those who did *bay‘ah* (اَلْبَيْعَةُ = to give allegiance) to him, were Abu ’l-‘Abbās as-Saffāh and al-Manṣūr.

Their slogan of *‘‘riḍā’u āli Muḥammad’’* (رِضَاءُ آل مُحَمَّدٍ = to please the progeny of Muhammad) proved a success. People-gathered behind their agents thinking that they wanted to remove the tyrant dynasty of the Umayyads and install a descendant of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in their place. When the Umayyads, were overthrown in 132 AH, it was not Muḥammad *an-Nafsu ’z-Zakiyyah* who was put on the thrown, but the ‘Abbāsid, Abu ’1-‘Abbās as-Saffāh, who was succeeded four years later by his brother, al-Mansūr.

‘‘They [the ‘Abbāsids] made the affection of the people for the children of Fātima the means for their own elevation, and when they had attained the desired end they rewarded the Fātimides with bitter persecution.’’ (Ameer All, *The Spirit of Islam,* p.304)

When conflict started between Muḥammad *an-Nafsu ’z-Zakiyyah* and al-Manṣūr, the latter left no stone unturned to prove the legitimacy of his claim. Among other devices (which this is not the place to mention) he revived the system of agnacy.

Mr. Justice Ameer Ali writes:

‘‘When the Abbasides (*sic.*) succeeded in overthrowing the ‘Ommeyades (*sic.*) they found it necessary to legitimatise their title to the Caliphate, for the eyes of the Moslem (*sic.*) world were still turned to the descendants of

a1-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The first person to introduce the system of *al-‘awl* (= to reduce all shares proportionately) was ‘Umar. The shares crowded over and began pushing each other aside. So he said: ‘By Allāh! I do not know what to do with you. By Allāh! I do not understand which of you Allāh has given precedence to, and which of you He has deferred. And I do not find for this property anything better than this: that I should divide it among you

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the Prophet as the rightful heirs to his temporal and spiritual heritage — and in effecting this they found their chief support in the doctrine of agnacy. They claimed that as descendants of the Prophet’s uncle, ‘Abbās, they were his ‘agnates’ and as such had a better title than the descendants of his daughter Fātima. And this was the keystone of the fabric built up by the ablest monarch of the House of ‘Abbās, Manṣūr, the real founder of the Sunnī Church (*sic.*).’’ (*Mahommedan Law*, vol.2, pp.11 — 12).

He further says:

‘‘The rule of agnacy has thus remained, chiefly from dynastic reasons, a part of the Sunni system. In early times it was as strongly enforced as under the old Romans. If a person died without leaving any ‘agnatic’ relation but a daughter’s or sister’s child, his property did not go to the latter but escheated to [i.e., was taken over by] the Caliph. In 896 AC the Caliph M‘utazid b’lllāh (*sic.*) abolished this cruel rule; and laid down that in the absence of sharers and ‘agnates’ (*‘Asabāh*), the ‘uterine relations’ should succeed. And this has remained the law ever since.’’ (*ibid.*, p.12)

Even then, according to him, the uterine relations are placed in the last category, and it is only in the absence of sharers, agnates and even the emancipator that they receive any share in the inheritance. (*ibid.* p.68)

This was in short the origin of *at-ta‘ṣīb* (agnacy) in Islam. It is necessary to point out two things before ending this note:

First: As Ameer All has pointed out (and we have mentioned above) the ‘‘descendants of Fāṭimah were also descendants of ‘Alī, who, as son of Abū Ṭālib, was an agnate relative of the Prophet.’’

In fact, ‘Alī (a.s.) was nearer than al-‘Abbās to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), because Abū Ṭālib (a.s.) was a consanguine uncle of the Prophet, and not merely an agnate like al-‘Abbās.

Second: This whole argument was in fact falacious and deceptive. In the heat of their political polemics neither Muhammad *an-Nafsu ’z-Zakiyyah* nor al-Mansur paused to think that Imamate was not an inheritance. It was based on appointment by Allāh which is announced through the Prophet or the preceding Imam. *an-Nafsu ’z-Zakiyyah* had based his claim on a falsity and al-Mansur replied him with a greater falsehood. (*tr.*)

proportionately.' '' Then Ibn 'Abbās said: ''By Allāh! if he had given precedence to him whom Allāh had given precedence, and put behind the one whom Allāh had put behind, there would have been no need for proportionate reduction of shares.'' He was asked: ''And which of them has been given priority by Allāh?'' He said: ''Every share which Allāh has not brought down from a prescribed share but to (another) prescribed share, then that is which has been given precedence by Allāh; and every share that — when it leaves its (original) position — does not get except the residue, then it is (the share) which Allāh has put behind. Thus the share that is given precedence is like that of husband, wife and mother; and that which is put behind is like that of sisters and daughters. Therefore, if there gather together those who have been given precedence by Allāh and those who have been placed behind, the division should begin with those having precedence, and he shall be given his complete share; then if something remains (of the property) it shall be for those [who have been placed behind] and if nothing is left they shall get nothing.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''Do you suppose that He Who knows the number of the sands of the valley, 'Alij, has prescribed in the property one half, plus one-third plus one-fourth?'' (*ibid.*)

'Atā' says: ''I said to Ibn 'Abbās: 'People do not follow my word or your word; and when you and I shall be dead, they will not divide the inheritance according to your verdict.' He replied: 'Then let them gather, and then we (i.e., both parties) should put our hands on the *rukn* (of the Ka'bah), then we should earnestly pray and put the curse of Allāh on the liars. Allāh has not ordered that which they say.' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: This theme has been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās also through the Shī'ī chains, as is quoted below.

az-Zuhrī quotes 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abdillāh ibn 'Utbah as saying: ''I was sitting with Ibn 'Abbās when the talk turned towards description of inheritance-shares. Ibn 'Abbās said: 'Allāh, the Great, be praised! Do you think that He Who knows the number of the sands of (the valley) 'Alij, has appointed one-half plus one-third in a property? Well, these two halves have finished the whole property; now where is the slot of the

(remaining) one-third?' Zufar ibn Aws al-Baṣrī then asked him: 'O Abu 'l-'Abbās! Who was then the first to reduce these shares?' He said: ''Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. When several shares gathered near him, pushing each other, he said: ''By Allāh! I do not know which of you Allāh has given precedence to, and which of you He has deferred. And I do not find anything more accommodating than this: that I should divide this property among you proportionately, and let every right-owner get his right.'' In this way he introduced the proportionate reduction of shares. By Allāh! if he had given precedence to him whom Allāh had given precedence to, and put behind whom Allāh had put behind, there would be no need for proportionate reduction of shares.' Zufar ibn Aws asked him: 'And which of them has He given precedence to, and which has He kept behind?' He said: 'Every share which Allāh has not brought down from a prescribed share but to another prescribed share, that is which Allāh has given precedence to. And as for that which Allāh has kept behind, it is every share that — when it leaves its (original) place — does not get except the residue, it is (the share) which Allāh has put behind. As for that which has been given precedence, [it is these]: the husband gets a half, but if a situation arises to bring his share down, he comes to one-fourth, nothing removes him from there; and the wife receives one-fourth, but when she comes down to one-eighth, nothing removes her from there; and the mother is allotted one-third, but when she moves from it, she goes to one-sixth, and nothing removes her from it. These are therefore the shares which Allāh has given precedence to. As for that which He has kept behind, it is the share of the daughters and sisters — they are entitled to one-half or two-thirds, and when [other] shares remove them from it, they do not get except what is left, so these are whom Allāh has kept behind. When there gather together those whom Allāh has given preference and those whom He has kept behind, it (i.e., the division) will begin with those whom Allāh has given precedence, and he shall be given his full share; then if something remains, it will be for him who has been kept behind; and if nothing is left, he shall get nothing.' Then Zufar said to him: 'Then what prevented you from offering this opinion to 'Umar?' He said: 'His dread.' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: 'Alī (a.s.) had rejected the theory of proportionate reduction of share, long before Ibn 'Abbās did so. And it is the *madhhab*

of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) as is described below:

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a *ḥadīth:* ''The Leader of the faithful (a.s.) used to say: 'Most surely, He Who knows the number of the sands of 'Alij, (also) knows that the shares should not be deviated (i.e., reduced) from six; had you looked at its (proper) direction, it would not be more than six.' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: It is written in *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ: ''* 'Alij is a place in a valley with sands.'' The Imām's words, ''the shares should not be deviated from six'', means that no share could deviate in a way to change the six prescribed portions to some other portion. The six shares, explicitly mentioned in the Qur'ān are as follows: a half, one-third, two-thirds, one-fourth, one-sixth and one-eighth.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The Leader of the faithful (a.s.) said: 'All praise is due to Allāh; there is none to let precede what He has set behind, and none to set behind what He has let precede.' Then he struck his one hand with the other and again said: 'O nation (that is) bewildered after its Prophet! If you had let that precede which Allāh had given precedence to, and kept behind that which Allāh had set behind; and had put authority and inheritance where Allāh had put it, no friend of Allāh would have remained in poverty, and no share from Allāh's ordained shares would have decreased, nor two people would have differed in Allāh's commandment; and the *ummah* has not disputed about any command of Allāh but that 'Alī has its knowledge from the Book of Allāh. So (now) taste evil consequences of your affair and of your inordinateness in that which your hands have sent before; and Allāh is not unjust to the servants; and they who act unjustly shall soon know to what final place of turning they shall turn back.' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: A further explanation of how some heirs' shares are decreased is given below:

The shares, according to the Qur'ān, are six: a half, two-thirds, one-third, one-sixth, one-fourth and one-eighth. Sometimes these shares gather together in a way it creates problem. For in-stance, in the first class of heirs, there may exist a daughter, father, mother and husband.

Their respective shares are a half, two-sixths and one-fourth — the total [1.1/12] exceeds the original property [which is 'one']. Likewise, if there are two daughters, both parents and husband, their shares, two-thirds, two-sixths, and one-fourth [total = $1^1/4$] exceed the original. In the same way, in the second class of heirs, there may exist together a sister, a paternal and a maternal grandfather, and a wife; and their shares, a half, one-third, one-sixth and one-fourth [total = $1^1/4$] would exceed the original. Or, if there are two sisters, two grand-fathers and a husband, their shares — two-thirds, one-third, one-sixth and a half [total = 1.2/3] — would far exceed the original.

If we reduce all the shares proportionately, it would be *al-'awl.* On the other hand, if we leave the shares of parents, husband, wife and uterine relatives (i.e., one-third, one-sixth, a half, one-fourth and one-eighth) intact — because Allāh has explicitly prescribed them and has not left them un-explained in any eventuality — then the deficiency will always fall on the shares of one or more daughters, and one or more consanguine or agnate sisters, and on the shares of male and female children — when there is one or more, for the reason explained earlier.

As for ''returning'' to the latter group the property left after distribution of prescribed shares, the reader should consult books of *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence.

al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated about Zayd ibn Thabit that he used to partially exclude mother [i.e., reduced her share from one-third to one-sixth] if the deceased had left two brothers. People said to him: ''O Abū Sa'īd! surely Allāh says: *and if he has brothers* ... [and plural in Arabic indicates at least three], and you are partially excluding her by [only] two brothers?'' He said: ''Verily the Arabs call two brothers *al-ikhwah* (اَلْاِخْوَةُ = brothers [in plural]).'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: The same theme is narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.); although it is generally said that *al-ikhwah* is plural of *al-akh* (اَلْاَخُ = brother) and plural is not used for less than three.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The mother is not partially excluded from one-third except by (presence of) two consanguine of agnate brothers or four consanguine or agnate sisters.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: There are many traditions of the same theme. As for uterine brothers, they are connected to the deceased through the mother who by her presence debars them from inharitance. It is narrated in the traditions of both the Shī‘īs and the Sunnīs that the brothers partially exclude the mother, but they themselves do not get any share in inheritance because of the presence of the parents who have precedence over them in class. Thus the law, that the brothers partially exclude the mother while they themselves do not inherit anything, has been laid down keeping in view the position of the father — because the excess portion shall be returned to him. That is why the uterine brothers do not partially exclude the mother, because they are not the father's dependants.

The Leader of the faithful (a.s.) said regarding the clause, *after* (the payment of) *any bequest he may have bequeathed or debt:* ‘‘Surely you recite in this verse the bequest before the debt, but the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has decreed (to pay) the debt before the bequest.’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

The author says: This tradition has also been narrated by as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from several traditionalists and exegetes.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) explained *al-kalālah* in these terms: ‘‘Other than parent and child.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The same Imām (a.s.) says about the clause: *and if a man or a woman leaves property to be inherited by neither parents nor offspring,* that Allāh has meant by it specifically the uterine brothers and sisters. (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of this theme and the Sunnīs too have narrated them. The number of such traditions reaches near to *mutawātir.* These traditions also say that the law regarding consanguine and agnate *al-kalālah* is mentioned in the last verse of the chapter which says: *They ask you for a decision of the law. Say: ‘‘Allāh gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring* ... [4:176].

It is a further proof of this explanation that the shares allotted to those relatives in that last verse exceeds the shares mentioned in this verse by

double or even more. We know from the context and the above-mentioned verses that Allāh has made a male's share generally equal to that of two females — as far as possible. Relatives other than parents and children are connected with the deceased either through father and mother both, or through father or through mother alone. Naturally, the difference maintained between father and mother will be carried over to those relatives too, because they are connected through them. In other words, the consanguine or agnate relatives will get a larger share than the uterine relatives. It leads us to the above-mentioned conclusion that the verse giving smaller shares speaks about the uterine relatives and that prescribing larger shares about the consanguine or agnate relatives.

Muḥammad ibn Sinān has narrated that Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) wrote in reply to his questions, *inter alia:* ''The reason why women are given half of men's share in inheritance: It is because when a woman marries she receives (the dowry) and it is the man who pays; that is why men have been given more. Another reason why male is given twice of what female gets: It is because female is a dependant of male if she is in need; the male is obliged to maintain her and he is responsible for her sustenance; the woman is not liable to maintain the man nor is she held responsible to give his sustenance if he is in need; that is why men have been given more; and that is the word of Allāh: *Men are the maintainers of women because of that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the others and because of what they spend out of their property.*'' (*Ma'āni 'l-akhbār*)

al-Aḥwal said: ''Ibn Abi 'l-'Awjā' said: 'Why is it that a poor weak woman takes one share and men take two shares?' Some of our companions mentioned this to Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) and he said: 'Verily, there is no *jihād* on woman, nor maintenance nor blood-money, (all) this is on men, that is why woman was allotted one share and man two shares.' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: There are very many traditions of this import, and we have shown that the Qur'ān too shows the same thing.

AN ACADEMIC ESSAY ON INHERITANCE

1. How Inheritance Began

Inheritance — taking possession, by some living persons, of the property left by the deceased — is one of the most ancient traditions of human society. It is impossible to find out from the available histories of nations and countries when this custom began — not unexpectedly it is hidden in the mist of antiquity. We understand by pondering on man's social nature that man yearns to get a property — and especially if it is not in any one's hand — longing to use it for his needs. It is one of his primary and most encient customs to gain control of a property, especially if there is none to stop him. Also man, be he primitive or civilized, cannot be oblivious of the notion of nearness and close association (which give rise to the concept of being nearer and closer in relationship) between various members of society. It is this concept which has led to establishment of home, family, clan and tribe, etc. Inevitably, in a society some persons will be nearer to one another than the rest, like a child to his parents, a relative to another relative, one friend to another, a master to his slave, husband and wife to each other and a head to his followers; even a powerful person to a weak one — although different societies have different concepts and standards for identifying this nearness, a difference which it is almost impossible to record.

These two factors make us believe that inheritance is a custom prevalent in human beings since the earliest days of society.

1. Gradual Development of Inheritance

This system, like all other social traditions, was intermittently changing from one position to another; evolution and gradual development playing a hand in it since its first appearance. But the primitive society was never well-organized and consequently no historical record can be found to give us a reliable picture of its gradual development.

Nevertheless, it is certain that they did not give any share to women and weak persons; inheritance was exclusively reserved for strong males. It was only because in their eyes, women and weak persons (like slaves

and small children) were in the same category as that of tamed animals and merchandise — these things are always used by man without themselves getting any benefit from man or his property, nor are they entitled to the social rights that are accorded to the human race.

However, the connotation of 'strong' varied from time to time. Sometimes it meant head of the community or clan; at other times, it was head of the family; occasionally, it implied the bravest of the community. Such changes naturally meant fundamental alterations in inheritance rules.

Those customs prevalent from time to time were devoid of the bliss and felicity which human nature aspires for; and consequently each was altered [or discarded] before long. Even civilized nations which were governed by legal codes or some well-established tribal laws, like Rome and Greece, went the same way. Uptil now no inheritance law prevalent in any community or nation has stood the test of time and remained alive as long as the Islamic inheritance law has — it has ruled over the Muslim nations from the day it was ordained to this day, foraboutfourteen centuries.

3. Inheritance in Civilized Nations

The Romans had a peculiar social theory: A house was a selfcontained social entity, independent of the greater society; its members were beyond the jurisdiction of the government.in all their social rights; the house had its own rules and regulations and [consequently] its own system of reward and punishment, and so on. The head of the family was the deity of his family — of his wife, children, slaves and dependants. He was their absolute owner — no other person owned anything as long as he remained a member of the house. The head had total power over them and managed their affairs by his absolute authority. He in his turn worshipped his predecessor — the previous head of the family.

Whatever property there was, it was inherited by the house. Suppose a son died leaving some property (which he had earned and owned with permission of the family-head), or a daughter expired leaving what she had been given possession of (as dowry, etc.) with permission of the family-head, or some other relative died — in all such cases the property was inherited by the head of the family, because it was the inevitable

consequence of his godship and absolute ownership of the house and its members.

When the head of the family died, one of his sons or brothers inherited him — who could do so. When several sons inherited him, then if they separated and established new houses, each became the deity of his house. But if they continued to live in the old house, their position *vis-a-vis* the new deity (their brother, for example) would be the same that was under their late father — all would come under the authority and absolute guardianship of the new deity.

Adopted sons had the right to inherit him; the system of adoption was prevalent among them just like the pre-Islamic Arabs. As for women (like wife, daughter and mother), they were not given any share of inheritance — lest the property of the house be transferred to another house if they changed residence on marriage; for it was not lawful to transfer a property from one house to another. It is probably this concept which someone had in mind when he said that they believed in society's communal ownership, not in private or personal one. But I think that it was based on something other than socialistic ownership. Even primitive barbaric communities, since early dawn of humanity, prevented other tribal groups to share or encroach in the pasture and fertile lands which they had taken under their hold; they protected it and even fought for it. It was a sort of common public property which was owned not by individuals but the society. Nevertheless, it was not disallowed for an individual member to reserve a portion of that common property for himself.

It was a valid kind of possession, although they could not keep balance in its management and use. Islam respects such possessorship as we have mentioned earlier. Allāh says: *He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth* (2:29). Therefore, the human society, i.e., the Islamic society and those who are under its protection, do own the riches of the earth in this sense; thereafter, the Islamic society is the owner of all that it has under its control. That is why Islam does not allow a non-Muslim to inherit from a Muslim.

Even today some nations follow a similar principle and do not allow foreigners to acquire ownership of any land or immovable property, etc., in the country.

As the house, in ancient Rome, had complete independence by itself,

this old system had taken root therein like other independent nations and countries.

Now, the Romans followed the above-mentioned inheritance code; and also they did not allow marriage within the prohibited degrees. These two things together obliged them to divide the relationships in two categories: First, the natural relationship, originating from a common blood. On it was based the illegality of marriage within the prohibited degree and its lawfulness outside that cirlcle. Second, the official or legal relationship. On this relationship depended inheritance or disinheritance, maintenance, guardianship and things like that. The sons had both types of relationship-natural and legal — with the head of the family and with each other; but women were recognized only as natural, but not legal, relatives. Consequently, they inherited from none: neither from father nor son, neither from husband nor brother, nor from anyone else. This was the inheritance code of the ancient Rome.

As for Greece, their old custom in establishment of the houses was almost similar to that of the ancient Rome. They gave inheritance to the most mature of the male children; women were totally debarred from it, be they wife, daughter or sister; also small children and others like them were not entitled to any share. But the Greeks, like the Romans, sometimes devised plans to give inheritance to small children or those women — like wives, daughters or sisters — whom they loved and were apprehensive for their welfare; with these devices, like will, etc., they could easily give them a small or large portion of property. We shall speak on it under the ‘‘Will’’.

India, Egypt and China were not different from Rome and Greece in totally excluding the women from inheritance and debarring weaker children from it — or they continued to live under the authority and guardianship of the stronger male heirs.

As mentioned earlier, the Persians allowed polygamy and marriage with women within ‘prohibited degrees’; adoption was legal; the most beloved wife sometimes had a status equal to that of an adopted son and shared the inheritance equally with the son and the adopted son, debarring other wives. A married daughter was not entitled to inheritance, lest the property go out of the family: but an unmarried daughter was given half of a son’s share. In short, the wives (except the senior-most) and married daughters were debarred, while the senior-most

wife, son, adopted son and unmarried daughter shared in the inheritance.

The Arabs gave no share to women or minor sons; the inheritance was taken by the mature sons who could ride a horse and defend the honour (of the family); if there were no such child, the agnatic relatives took away the property.

This was the state of affairs in the world when the verses of inheritance were revealed. These matters are described in detail or mentioned in short in various histories dealing with customs and civilizations of ancient communities, in travelogues, law books and other such writings which may be consulted by anyone who wants more information.

The above description shows, in short, that in those days it was the common practice throughout the world to deprive the women of the inheritance — be it a wife or mother, a daughter or sister. If one wanted to give them a share, one had to devise a plan for it. Also it was an established system to debar small children and orphans — except in some cases where they were taken under other relatives' guardianship — a perpetual guardianship that was never terminated.

4. What Islam did in such a Situation

It has been repeatedly said that according to Islam the correct foundation of rules and laws is the nature on which people have been created — and there is no alteration in the creation of Allāh. Islam has laid down the inheritance on the 'womb' that is, relationship, which is a part of nature and an established creative factor. For the same reason, it has negated the custom of adopted sons' inheritance. Allāh says: ... *nor has He made those whom you assert to be your sons your real sons; these are the words of your mouths; and Allāh speaks the truth and He guides to the way. Assert their relationship to their fathers; this is more equitable with Allāh; but if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brethren in faith and your friends* (33:4 — 5).

Then it removed the bequest from the general rule of inheritance and gave it an independent legal status, by which a dying person may bestow and a beneficiary may receive — although before that even bequest was called inheritance. But in Islam it is not just a nominal difference; there are two separate principles governing the inheritance and the will or bequest, respectively, with an independent natural basis for each. The

factor that governs inheritance is relationship, and the deceased's wish or will does not effect it at all; while the basis of bequest is in compliance with the deceased's wish after his death (you may say, at the time of his bequeathing) in the property he owned when he was alive; implementation of bequest shows. respect to the deceased's wish. If one included the will under the heading of inheritance, it would be merely in name, not in reality.

What the people, like the ancient Romans, called inheritance did not take into consideration the two factors of relationship and respect to the deceased's wishes. It was only based on the deceased's desire to prevent the transfer of property to another house; the intention was to keep it in the hands of the head of the family, (i.e., its deity); or on his desire to transfer it to someone he loved and was apprehensive of his welfare. In any case, it only looked at the deceased's desires. Had it been founded on relationship and common blood, many of those who were deprived would have shared in inheritance.

After that, Islam turned its attention to the inheritance. In its eyes, there are two basic factors affecting it:

[First:] The factor of relationship. It is the common bond that unites a man to his relatives. There is no difference in this respect between a male and a female, nor between an adult and a minor (or even a foetus in the womb). Nevertheless, various relationships have different effects; some get priority, others are kept behind, some prevent the others from inheriting. All this is related to the strength of a relationship, which in its turn depends on a relative's nearness or distance from the deceased — whether his relationship with the deceased is direct or through some intermediaries, and whether there are less or more intermidiate links, for instance, son, brother and uncle. This principle bestows the right of inheritance on the relatives, and at the same time establishes different classes of the heirs according to their nearness or distance from the deceased.

[Second:] The factor of natural difference between male and female. It creates difference in their respective capabilities, as one group is more equipped with intellect while the other is more endowed with sentiments. Man by nature is a contemplating human being, while woman is an embodiment of sentiments and emotions. This difference very clearly affects their lives as far as management of property and its usufruct are

concerned. This factor has led to the difference in the shares of men and women — even when they happen to be in the same class, like son and daughter, or brother and sister, as we shall explain below.

The first factor has led to grading of heirs in classes according to their nearness or distance from the deceased, keeping in view whether their connection with the deceased is direct or through one or more intermediary links. The first class consists of the heirs related to him directly — without any intermediary. They are son, daughter, father and mother. The second class is of brother, sister, grandfather and grandmother. They are connected to him through one link, that is, either through father, or mother or both. The third class consists of paternal and maternal uncle and aunt. They join the deceased through two intermediate links, that is, through a parent and a grandparent. In every class, children take the place of their parents in their absence and debar the next class.

As for husband and wife, marriage had mingled their blood, and accordingly they share with every class; neither any class debars them, nor they debar any class.

The second factor, that is, the difference between man and woman, has led to the principle of a male getting equal to the share of two females — except in case of the mother and the relatives connected through her.

The laid down shares are six (a half, two-thirds, one-third, one-fourth, one-sixth and one-eighth) although they may occasionally change. Likewise, the property received by an heir may differ at times from his prescribed share because of decrease or 'return'. Also, the share of father *vis-a-vis* mother and the relatives connected through her does not conform with the general principle of the male's share being double that of female. Such variations make it difficult to give here a comprehensive description of Islamic inheritance laws. Nevertheless, the whole structure, inasmuch as the preceding generation gives place to the succeeding one, is based on the principle that one spouse is succeeded by the other, and the progenitors (i.e., fathers and mothers) give place to the progeny (i.e., children). And the shares, as decreed by Islam for both groups (spouses and children), give a male double of that allotted a female.

This general review shows that Islam provides for division of the

world's wealth in two portions of one-third and two-thirds. The one-third belongs to the female and the two-thirds to the male. This is on the level of possession. But as far as the usufruct is concerned, it is governed by another principle. It says that maintenance of the wife is the husband's responsibility, and that he has to treat her with justice — both should equally share and use the man's wealth for their needs. Also it has given the woman freedom of will and independence of action in the wealth she herself owns — her husband cannot interfere in it. These three factors prove that woman has the right to make use of the two-thirds of the world's resources (one-third her own property plus a half of the two-thirds belonging to man) while man may use only a third.

5. The Position of Women and Orphans in Islam

The orphans do inherit like stronger adult men. They are brought up, and their property continues growing, under their guardians' care, like the father [*sic.*] and grandfather, or the believers in general, or the Islamic government. When they attain to marriageable age and show the signs of maturity of intellect, their property is handed over to them, and they begin their independent life. It is the most just and equitable system that can be imagined for such cases.

As for women, as described above, from a general point of view they own one-third of the world's wealth and have the usufruct of its two-thirds. They are independent and absolute owners of what belongs to them; they are not put under any guardianship, be it permanent or temporary; and it is no concern of the men what the women do about themselves in a lawful and proper manner.

In Islam woman is recognized as an individual personality equal in every legal aspect to that of man; she has freedom of will and action in every way. Her position is not different from that of men, except as much as is demanded by her especial psychological traits that differ from those of man — that is, hers is a sentimental life while that of man is intellectual. For this reason, man has been given a major share in general wealth, in order that the management based on intellect and contemplation — in the world in general — may outbalance the management based on feelings and sentiments. But the deficiency of her share has been more than made up by giving her overwhelming share in usufruct. Also, she is obliged to obey her husband in conjugal relations,

and has been compensated for it with dowry. Likewise she is disqualified from occupying the position of a judge, a ruler or a fighting soldier, as these are the responsibilities that can best be discharged through contemplation, rather than emotion. This has been balanced by making the men responsible for the women's security and safety, for protection of their honour and dignity. Man bears the burden of earning the livelihood and maintaining the wife, the children and the parents; while woman has been given the right of custody of children — without making it obligatory for her. All these rules have been counter-balanced with other things the women are obliged to do, like wearing *ḥijāb* (اَلْحِجَابُ = veil), not mingling with men, looking after the household and bringing up the children.

The question may be asked: Why has Islam not allowed the [women with their] emotions and sentiments to occupy such public offices as defence, judiciary and rulership? Why does it refuse to give these departments into her hands? The answer may be found in the bitter harvest which humanity is reaping in modern days as a result of the domination of sentimentality on thought and contemplation. Just ponder on the great World Wars (the gifts of the modern civilization) and on the conditions prevailing throughout the world; then review them in the light of intellect and emotional feeling; you may then easily see where the temptation springs from and what offers good and sincere advice. And Allāh is the Guide.

Moreover, the civilized nations of the West, since last many centuries, have spared no effort — have rather gone out of their way — to teach and train the girls together with the boys, in order that their potentials of perfection may be turned into reality. Nevertheless, if you look at the Who's Who of politicians and statesmen, legislators and judges, and military leaders and generals (the three above-mentioned fields of gevernment, judiciary and war) you will not find women's names there in any considerable number, nor can their numbers be compared with the hundreds, rather thousands, of men's names. This in itself provides the most telling evidence that women by their nature, are not suitable for training in these fields — which *per se* require deep contemplation and planning; and the more chance is given to emotions to infiltrate into them, the more frustration and failure follows.

This and other similar observations provide conclusive rebuttal to the

well-known theory that the only reason why women lag behind in society is the insufficient training given to them since the earliest days of human history; had they been given good and useful training, then — with their sentimentality and fine feelings — they would have overtaken or gone ahead of the men in all aspects of perfection. But this argument is almost like a selfdefeating syllogism. [The reality is the other way round.] Because it is the women's exclusive — or predominant — attachment to emotional feelings, that has kept them behind in all those fields which demand strong reasoning and domination of thinking over sentiments, like governing and judiciary; and has let the group having these qualities, that is, men, go ahead of them in these professions. Definitive experiments have proved that when a person possesses some psychological traits in strong measures, his/her training in related professions and occupations can be carried out very successfully. It naturally follows that men can be successfully trained in the fields of government and judiciary, and will surpass the women in achieving perfection in these spheres. On the other hand, the women's training in matters connected with sentiments and feelings can succeed tremendously, as for example in some branches of medical profession, painting, weaving and embroidery, as well as bringing up children, nursing sick persons, decoration, cosmetics and things like that. In other fields both sexes have equal chances of advancement.

Moreover, if, as is claimed, the women's backwardness in the above-mentioned masculine fields is attributed only to chance, it should have, at least for some eras in the long human history, broken down or reversed itself — and they say that mankind is millions of years old. The same applies to those typically feminine activities in which men are behind. Really these are inherent characteristics which are inseparable from human society; and if we start counting these realities as mere casual and chancy affairs — especially when they are in total conformity with inner workings of human physique — then we cannot put our hands on a single characteristic in the whole human world which we could say was natural and intrinsic to man, be it his inclination to social life and society, his love of knowledge, or his curiosity that leads him to discover the hidden secrets of nature, and things like that. These too are inseparable attributes of humanity, and human structure is in complete agreement with these traits and characteristics. That is why we say they are natural attributes.

The same principle applies to women's advancement in luxuries and sentimental affairs and to their backwardness in intellectual matters or the affairs entailing severe hardships and dangers. This too is based on their natural characteristics. The opposite is true in those matters in which men are advanced or behind.

The only thing that remains is the offence that women might take at attribution of perfect intellect to men and of perfect sentimentality and feelings to them (women). But this objection is not tenable. In the eyes of Islam, intellect and sentiments both are valuable divine gifts, ingrained in human nature for truly divine purposes; neither has any excellence over the other. [Neither has any hand in achieving any honoured position before Allāh.] Honour entirely depends on piety. As for other attributes — whatever they may be — they grow and develop only if they proceed on the right path; otherwise they turn into evil burdens, undesirable loads.

6. Modern Inheritance Laws

These laws and codes had got support from, and were influenced by, Islamic laws of inheritance — although they differ from it in quantity (of shares) and mode (of division) as we shall describe here in short. There is a lot of difference between the stand taken by Islam and that of these legislations as far as women's inheritance is concerned.

As for Islam, it had initiated a thing which the world had never known, nor the earlier generations were ever told of by their progenitors; while these later laws were legislated when the Islamic laws were firmly established and constantly implemented in the Muslim *ummah* inhabiting a greater part of the then known world; hundreds of millions of people had been practising this code for more than a millennium, the progenies inheriting it from their ancestors. Obviously when a novel idea is put into practice and is accepted and implemented, and thus becomes a permanent feature of the society, then it becomes very easy for similar principles to appear on the scene. Every preceding social custom provides the ideational substance for similar following customs; rather the former becomes the substance that is reshaped into the latter. Therefore, no social scientist should spurn the fact that the modern inheritance laws have got support from the Islamic inheritance code that had preceded them, and that it is the Islamic code which they have remoulded into their statutes — we are not concerned here whether they could do justice to it

or not.

The most amusing is the claim sometimes made — may Allāh destroy the ignorance of the yore! — that the new laws have got their ideas and substance from the ancient Roman code. You have already seen what that ancient Roman custom was, and what the Islamic *sharī'ah* has offered to the mankind. The Islamic code came into being and was implemented after the old Roman code and long before the modern Western laws; it was deeply rooted in the societies of millions, nay, hundreds of millions, of people continuously for long centuries. It is impossible to suggest that such a living code remained ineffective and did not influence the thinkings of these legislators.

Even more strange is the assertion by some writers that the Islamic code of inheritance was adapted from the ancient Roman code!

However, the modern laws prevalent in the Western nations, in spite of their differences in some details, are almost unanimous on one point: They treat females as equal to males in inheritance shares; the daughters and sons get equal shares as do the mothers and fathers, and so on.

The French code has divided the heirs in the following classes: i) Sons and daughters; ii) fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters; iii) grand-fathers and grand-mothers; iv) Paternal and maternal uncles and aunts. It has kept the marriage-tie separate from this classification, saying that it is based on the foundation of love. We are not concerned here with its details or description of other classes. If anyone wants it he should look into the relevant books.

But what we are concerned with is the net result of this prevalent customs. This type of legislation makes the woman equal partner of man in the wealth of the world — taken as a whole. Yet they have put the wife under the guardianship of the husband; she has no right to manage or control her own inherited property — except with the consent and permission of her husband. It means that although the world's wealth is divided half and half between man and woman (so far as ownership is concerned), the total wealth is placed in the hands of the man (so far as its management and control is concerned). Now, some groups and parties have risen up which are trying to make women truly independent owners of their properties, taking them out of men's control and guardianship. If they succeed, then the men and the women would be really equal in ownership as well as in control and management.

7. Comparison of these Codes: One with Another

We have already described.in short the customs which were prevalent in ancient nations in old days. Now we leave it to research scholars to compare one with another and deliver their judgment for each, whether it was perfect or defective, and whether it was beneficial for human society or harmful — in short, whether it was on correct footing on the highroad of felicity and happiness. Then, he may compare the Islamic code with each and judge accordingly.

The basic difference between the Islamic laws and the others is in the respective aims and objectives. Islam intends that the world should achieve its righteousness, goodness and probity; while the other laws want it to get what it desires. All the branches sprout from these two different roots. Allāh says: *and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allāh knows, while you do not know* (2:216); *and live with them kindly; then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allāh has placed abundant good in it* (4:19).

8. Will and Testament

It has been explained that Islam has given the will an independent status, unlinking it from the general rules of inheritance. It is because the will has an independent basis, that is, respecting the owner's wishes concerning what he had possessed in his life. In ancient nations, will was a device which the testator used to give his property — or a part of it — to someone who customarily was not entitled to it, to prevent it from going to the recognized heir, for instance, the father or the head of the family. That was why they were always busy enacting laws putting restrictions on testamentary bestowals lest it nullify the rules of inheritance completely; and such efforts are continuing in those societies upto these days of ours.

On the other hand, Islam has restricted the application of will to a third of the property; it is invalid beyond that limit. Some modern codes, like the French one, has imitated the Islamic principle in this respect; but the aims differ. That is why Islam exhorts people to bequeath, while other laws discourage it or are silent about it.

Meditate on the verses concerning bequest, alms, *zakāt, khums,* and

general spending in the way of Allāh; and you will realize that these laws pave the way for setting aside about half of the properties and two-thirds of their benefits for philanthropy charity, for meeting the needs of the needy and poor. This brings various classes nearer, and narrows the gaps between them, thus strengthening the weaker sections of the society. It is in addition to the guide-lines given to wealthy persons as to how they should use their wealth — which brings them nearer to the poor. We are not going into details of this topic, as it will be written, Allāh willing, in another place.

* * * * *

وَاللاَّتِي يَأْتِينَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ
فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّىٰ يَتَوَفَّاهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ
اللهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلاً ــ ١٥ . وَاللَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَانِهَا مِنْكُمْ فَآذُوهُمَا فَإِنْ تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا
فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ تَوَّاباً رَحِيماً ــ ١٦ .

And as for those who are guilty of indecency from among your women, call to witness against them four (witnesses) *from among you, then if they bear witness confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allah makes some way for them* (15). *And as for the two who are guilty of it from among you, afflict them both; then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them; surely Allāh is Oft-returning* (to mercy), *the Merciful* (16).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ĀN: *And as for those who are guilty ... from among you: Atāh* and *atā bihi* (اَتَاهُ،اَتي به = translated here as being guilty) actually means ''doing it''. *al-Fāḥishah* (اَلْفَاحِشَةُ) is derived from *al-fuḥsh* (اَلْفُحْشُ = indecency); thus *al-fāḥishah* means indecent behaviour ; it is generally used in the meaning of fornication; it has also been used in

the Qur'ān for sodomy or for sodomy and lesbianism both, as Allāh quotes Lūṭ (a.s.) as saying: *Most surely you are guilty of an indecency which none of the nations has ever done before you* (29:28).

Apparently this word refers here to fornication, as explained by all the exegetes. They have narrated that when the verse of flogging was revealed, the Prophet said that the flogging is the way Allāh has opened for them when they are guilty of fornication. It is also supported by the style of the verse which clearly shows that this order was to be abrogated soon, as Allāh says: *or Allāh makes some way for them;* and nobody has said that the penalty of lesbianism was abrogated by any succeeding order, nor that this penalty [of flogging] was meted out to anyone guilty of lesbianism; [all this together shows that this verse is not concerned with sodomy or lesbianism]. The phrase, ''four (witnesses) from among you'', indicates that the witnesses should be males [because the pronoun used for 'you' is of masculine gender].

QUR'ĀN: *then if they bear witness confine them ... some way for them:* The confinement, that is, perpetual imprisonment, depends on the evidence, not on actual guilt without the required evidence — although it might be known; it is one of the mercies of Allāh on the *ummah* showing His magnanimity and forbearance.

The punishment is perpetual confinement; it is clearly indicated by the prescribed limit, ''until death takes them away''. But Allāh has not used the word, imprisonment or internment; instead He has said, *fa-amsikūhunna* (فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ) which literally means, then restrain them; the use of this mild word is another clear indication of His indulgence and tolerance.

The clause, ''until death takes them away or Allāh makes some way for them'', means: or Allāh opens a way for them to be free from perpetual confinement. The alternative indicates probable abrogation of the order; and it happened when the rule of flogging replaced this order. Everyone knows that the penalty given to fornicating women — since the later period of the Prophet and in practice among the Muslims after him — is the flogging, not confinement to the houses. The verse, supposing that it contains the rule about the fornicating women, has been abrogated by the verse of flogging; and the way mentioned in this verse

undoubtedly refers to flogging.

QUR'ĀN:*And as for the two who are guilty of it from among you, afflict them both:* The two verses are inter-related, and certainly the pronoun 'it' refers to 'indecency'. It supports the view that both verses deal with punishment of fornication. The second verse therefore completes the order given in the first one; the first one had explained the law only to the extent it affected the women, while the second one describes the rule as it affects both parties — and it is the 'affliction'. So the two verses together explain the rule of fornicating man and fornicating woman both — that both should be afflicted and the confinement of the women to the houses.

But this explanation does not agree with the following clause: *then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them;* obviously it does not fit in with the order of confining the women for the life. Therefore, it is necessary to say that turning aside from them refers to discontinuation of their punishment while the confinement continues as before.

That is why sometimes it is said — following some traditions which shall be quoted later — that the first verse speaks about those women who are not virgin while the second one gives the order about the virgins; accordingly the virgins who commit fornication should be punished by confining them to the houses until they repent and amend their behaviour, and then they may be released from the confinement. But this explanation leaves two problems unsolved:

First: Why should the first verse be reserved for non-virgins and the second one to virgins when there is nothing in the wordings to support this differentiation?

Second: Why does the first verse speak about the fornicating women only, while the second one talks about both parties: ''And as for the two who are guilty of it from among you ...''?

It has been said that according to the exegete, Abū Muslim, the first verse ordains the law about lesbianism, and the second one about sodomy, and that both verses are un-abrogated.

But that view too is obviously wrong. As for the first verse, the explanation given by us earlier (for the words, *As for those who are guilty of indecency from among your women ...*), proves untenability of Abū Muslim's interpretation. As for his explanation of the second verse, it is rejected by the well-established *sunnah* that the penalty of sodomy is

death. The correct *ḥadīth* of the Prophet says: ‘‘Whoever among you commits the sin of the people of Lūṭ, kill (both) the doer and (the man) done to.’’ This law is either from the beginning (which has not been abrogated); or is a subsequent law which has abrogated the verse; in any case, it refutes Abū Muslim’s views.

Looking at the apparent meaning of the two verses (which come to the mind at once), and at the associations found with them; and keeping in view the difficulties arising out of the given explanations, we may interpret the verses as follows — and Allāh knows better:

The verse lays down the law concerning adultery by married women. Also the fact that the verse mentions only women, and not men, indicates this meaning; the word, ‘women’, is commonly used for ‘wives’ and especially when it appears as first construct of a genitive case where the second construct is ‘men’, as is the position in this verse: ‘‘you [i.e., you men’s] women’’; also Allāh says: *And give women their dowries as a free gift* (4:4); *...of your women to whom you have gone in* (4:23).

Accordingly, the first and temporary order was to confine them to the houses; then stoning was ordained for them. al-Jubbā’ī has used this example to prove that the Book may be abrogated by the *sunnah;* but it is not so. Abrogation repeals an order which was apprently meant to continue for ever; while this order of confinement contains a clause that points to its temporariness, and it is the words: *or Allāh makes some way for them.* These words clearly show that there was another order that would be promulgated later. Even if it were called ‘abrogation’, there would be no trouble; because it would not contain those difficulties which were inherent in abrogating the Book with the *sunnah* — the Qur’ān itself indicates here that this order was to be repealed after sometime; and the Prophet is the one who explains the meaning of the honoured Qur’ān.

The second verse promulgates the rule about fornication (other than adultery), that the parties should be afflicted; that punishment includes confinement, hitting them with shoes, admonishing and shaming them by harsh words or other such ways of hurting them. Accordingly this verse stands abrogated by the verse of flogging in the chapter of ‘The Light’. As for a tradition that this verse speaks about virgin girls who commit

fornication, it is a *khabaru 'l-wāḥid* [1], apart from being *al-mursalah* [2], and therefore weak. And Allāh knows better. (However, this interpretation is not free from weakness, because prior indication that a certain rule would be abrogated later, does not water down the abrogation.)

QUR'ĀN: *then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them:* Repentance is qualified by amendment; it is to establish the reality of repentance, to make it clear that repentance is not mere utterance of some words or just to be carried away by some pangs of conscience; [it requires definite improvement of behaviour and character].

TRADITIONS

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said about the word of Allāh: *And as for those who are guilty of indecency from among your women ...*, that it was abrogated and that the 'way' [referred to here] was the laid down penal code. (*al-Kāfī*)

al-Bāqir (a.s.) was asked about this verse and he said: ''It is abrogated.'' He was asked: ''How was it?'' He said: ''When a woman committed indecency [i.e., fornication], and four witnesses stood (to give evidence) against her, she was confined to a house; no one spoke to or talked with her, nor anyone sat with her; she was provided her food and drink — [this was to continue] until she died or Allāh made some way for her.'' Then he said: ''Making way (for her) is the flogging and stoning.'' It was said: ''(And what is the meaning of the words of Allāh:) *And as for the two who are guilty of it ...*?'' He said: ''It means, when a virgin is guilty of the indecency which was done by this non-virgin.'' [He was asked the import of the words:] *afflict them both.* He said: ''She will be confined.'' ... (*ibid.*)

The author says: The story that the rule in the early days of Islam

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[1] *Khabaru 'l-wāḥid* (خَبَرالْوَاحِدِ) = a tradition narrated by a few, or only one, narrator. (*tr.*)

[2] *al-Mursalah* (اَلْمُرْسَلَةُ) = a tradition quoted from the Prophet or Imām without describing the linking sources between the narrator and the Prophet or Imām. (*tr.*)

was to confine them into the houses until death, has been narrated by the Sunnīs through many chains of narrators, from Ibn ʻAbbās, Qatādah, Mujāhid and others. It has been narrated from as-Suddī that confinement into the houses was the rule for non-virgins, and the affliction mentioned in the second verse was the order for unmarried girls and boys.

But you have seen what is to be said in this context.

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إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللهُ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً ــ ١٧ .
وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَاباً أَلِيماً ــ ١٨ .

Repentance with Allāh is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allāh) *soon, so these it is to whom Allāh turns* (mercifully), *and Allāh is All-knowing. Wise* (17). *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: ''Surely, now I repent''; nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement* (18).

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COMMENTARY

These two verses are not without a certain connection with the preceding two which had ended on the theme of repentance, possibly all four might have been revealed together. Nevertheless, these two

independently throw light on a theme which is among the most sublime Islamic realities and highest Qur'ānic teachings, and that is the reality of repentance and its significance as well as the rules governing it.

QUR'ĀN: *Repentance with Allāh is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn* (to Allāh) *soon: ''at-Tawbah''* (اَلتَّوْبَةُ) means to return. It signifies returning of a servant to Allāh with remorse for his misdeeds and a firm intention to leave the way that was distancing him from the path of servitude. When ascribed to Allāh, it means that Allāh returns towards His servant with mercy, (first) forgiving his sin. We have repeatedly said that, according to the Qur'ān, a servant's single repentance is flanked by two returnings from Allāh. The fact is that repentance is a good deed, a virtuous act which requires strength and will-power; and all virtues emanate from Allāh, and all power and strength belongs to Him. It is Allāh who manages the affairs in a way that the servant becomes able to repent, gets strength to cut himself off from the factors which were taking him away from Allāh, and thus he returns to his Lord. After being helped in this way to repent from his sins and to return to Allāh, he again needs a second 'returning' by Allāh in order that he could be cleansed from those impurities, purified from those pollutions, so that he may reach and be settled near his Lord — this second returning again shows divine mercy and compassion as well as His forgiveness and pardon.

These two divine returnings are the two 'repentances' which surround a servant's repentance and returning. Allāh says: *then He turned to them* (mercifully) *that they might turn* (to Him) ... (9:118). This refers to the first returning. Again He says: *these it is to whom I turn* (mercifully) ... (2:160); and this is the second returning; between these two divine returnings comes the servant's returning, his repentance.

The starting clause, ''Repentance with Allāh is only for those ...'' literally means: Repentance on (عَلي = *'alā*) Allāh is only for (لِ = *li*) those ... *'alā* (on) and *li* (for) denote harm and benefit, respectively; as we say: 'Adversities came on 'Amr (عَلي عَمْرٍو = *'alā 'Amr*) to the benefit of (لِزَيْدٍ = *li Zayd*) Zayd. Or as we say: The race was for (*li*) X on (*'alā*) Y, that is, X won the race against Y. It is because *'alā* (on) implies height and domination; and *li* (for) denotes possession and right. Consequently, in the matters involving two parties (like war, fighting and dispute, in

which one party gets some benefits and the other is harmed, one overpowers and the other is overpowered), the victor acquires some rights over the vanguished, and the latter is prevailed upon, ruled over. The same is the case in similar situations. Look, for example, at the effect between an influencing factor and the influenced, or at the link a promise creates between the giver of promise and the one to whom it was given, and so on. It is now clear that the two prepositions (*'alā* and *li*) have acquired the connotations, of harm and benefit, respectively, because of contexts in which they are frequently used — not because it is their original meaning.

Now, let us see, how repentance succeeds, why it benefits the servants of Allāh. It is because of a promise which Allāh has given to the servants; in this way He Himself has made it obligatory for Himself to accept their repentance. He has said in this verse: ''Repentance with (on) Allāh is only for those who do evil in ignorance''. In this way it becomes obligatory for Allāh to accept His servant's repentance. It does not mean that anyone else can obligate Allāh to do something, or can prescribe a duty for Him — it makes no difference whether you call that one the reason, the nature of the affair, the reality, or the truth; or give it any other name, Allāh is Greater and Holier than such ascriptions. Rather this matter is based on the fact that Allāh has promised His servants that He would accept the repentance of those who would repent; and He does not break His promise. This is the implication of the statement that it is obligatory for Allāh to accept and grant the repentance in relevant situations. And it is the connotation of every declaration where we say that a certain action is *al-wājib* (اَلْوَاجِبُ = obligatory) for Allāh.

Obviously, the verse is focussed not on a servant's repentance, but on Allāh's returning with mercy towards that servant, although in this process it inevitably throws light on matters related to the servant's repentance. Allāh's returning (with all its conditions) cannot remain separate from the servant's repentance (with all its conditions fulfilled). This topic, that the verse is meant to describe Allāh's returning, does not require further explanation.

Secondly, it covers all types of repentance, whether the servant repents from polytheism and disbelief and returns to the true faith, or from sin and disobedience and returns to obedience (if he is already a believer). The Qur'ān calls both aspects as repentance. Allāh says: *Those*

who bear the throne and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe: ''Our Lord! Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore grant forgiveness to those who turn (to Thee) *and follow Thy way ...* (40:7). Here, the words, 'those who turn (to Thee)', mean, those who believe, because previously it has been said: *and ask forgiveness for those who believe.* Thus belief has been called *at-tawbah* (اَلتَّوْبَةُ = repentance), In another verse, Allāh says (referring to some believers): *then He turned to them* (mercifully) *that they might turn* (to Him), (9:118).

The generality found in the next verse, *And repentance is not for those ...*, proves that repentance, as envisaged in these verses, covers repentance from polytheism and disbelief as well as from sin and disobedience, because the verse comments on situations of disbelievers and believers both. Accordingly, the clause, ''those who do evil in ignorance'', encompasses both the believers and the disbelievers; a disbeliever is included, like a disobeying believer among ''those who do evil in ignorance''. How? It is because disbelief is an action of heart and 'doing evil' covers deeds of heart too like those of other organs; or because disbelief always brings evil actions in its wake. Therefore, ''those who do evil in ignorance'', refers to a disbeliever as well as to a disobeying believer — provided they are not wilfully obstinate in their disbelief or sin.

As for the words, ''in ignorance'', obviously ignorance, *per se,* is opposite of knowledge. People are conscious of the fact that they do all their deeds with knowledge and will; and that the will emanates from a certain love or longing. It makes no difference whether that action is likeable in the eyes of the society's sages or not; but it is believed that a man of discriminating intelligence will not commit an evil censured by the sages. Based on this assumption they believe that anyone who, being overcome by psychological bent, or motives of desire or anger, commits any blameworthy evil deed, does so only because he becomes oblivious of knowledge, and consequently loses his sagacity which distiguishes between good and bad, between praiseworthy and blameworthy: in this manner, he is overpowered by desire and commits evil. That is why they call it ignorance, although in reality it could not be done without a degree of knowledge and will. But as his knowledge of the indecency and evil of that action did not prevent him from falling into that trap, that knowledge

was discounted as nonknowledge, and he was called ‘ignorant’. That is why they call a young inexperienced person ‘ignorant’ as his actions are governed by desire, and raw sentiments and emotions dominate his life. Also it is for the same reason that they do not call an unrepentant sinner (who feels no remorse for his sins and does not turn away from desires and sentimentalities) ‘ignorant’; his condition is rather called obstinacy and willfulness, etc.

It is now clear that ignorance in this context means doing an evil deed under the influence of desire or anger — without being obstinate in face of truth. It is an intrinsic nature of such deeds (done in ignorance) that when the storm subsides and the inflamed desire or anger is extinguished — be it because of doing that evil, or because of some hindrance, or because of passage of time, or weakening of powers, or through ill health — the man returns to the knoweldge and that ignorance goes away; then he feels remorse for what he had done.

But this process does not take place in the evil which is done because of obstinacy and willfulness, etc. Such evil is not done because of some agitation of a power or inflamation of desire or sentiments; its root cause is what they call malevolence of nature, wickedness of heart. There is no hope that one day it will go away after the inflamed passion has subsided. It would rather continue throughout the life without his feeling any remorse in near future — except that Allāh wills it.

Of course, it happens sometimes that an obstinate stubborn person turns away from his obstinacy and stubborness; and instead of confronting the truth he now submits to it and enters into the fold of servitude. This change proves that even his obstinacy was based on ignorance. And why not? In actuality every disobedience emanates from man’s ignorance. From this point of view, no one could be called an obstinate and stubborn sinner except the one who never turns away from his evil deeds to the last moment of his life and health.

The above discourse shows the significance of the divine words, ‘‘then turn (to Allāh) soon’’. The man who does evil because of ignorance, would not remain busily engaged in his misdeed, addicted to it all his life; he would not do as obstinate stubborn ones do who never show any sign of returning to piety and submission. He would rather turn away from that misdeed and return to Allāh soon. The adverb. ‘soon’, refers to nearness of time; and it means, ‘before death comes to him and

before the signs of the other world appear before his eyes'.

Of course, every obstinate and stubborn person becomes contrite when he is faced with unpleasant consequences and chastisement of his evil deeds; he then disavows his deeds, shows repulsion towards them. But actually he is not repentant in his heart; his remorse does not emanate from any reform of character. It is merely a device, his wicked soul has adopted for saving himself from the consequences of his evil activities. Proof? As soon as that particular punishment is averted, he returns to the same evil-doing. Allāh says: *and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden, and most surely they are Tiers* (6:28).

Why do we say that the word, 'soon', here means: before the signs of death appear before him? It is because Allāh says in the second verse: *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: ''Surely now I repent.''*

Accordingly, the clause, ''then turn (to Allāh) soon'', is an adverse indirect allusion to those who go on postponing repentance until its chances are lost for ever.

The above discourse shows that the two clauses, ''in ignorance'' and ''then turn (to Allāh) soon'', are exclusive conditions. The former means that the servant does not do evil in arrogance and obstinacy; the latter, that he does not delay his repentance until the death-time — showing his indifference, negligence and procrastination. Repentance, after all, is man's returning to Allāh with firm intention of serving Him. Allāh's turning then means that He accepts that servant's return to Him. But service and worship of Allāh has no meaning if there is no time left in this world; because it is this worldly life which is the arena of the free choice and the place of obedience and disobedience. When the signs of death appear, the free will and choice — the basis of obedience and disobedience — ceases to exist. Allāh says: *On the day when some of the signs of your Lord shall come, its faith shall not profit a soul which did not believe before, or earn good through its faith* (6:158); *But when they saw Our punishment, they said: ''We believe in Allāh alone and we deny what we used to associate with Him.''But their belief was not going to profit them when they had seen Our punishment;* (this is) *Allāh's law, which has indeed obtained in the matter of His servants, and there the unbelievers are lost* (40:84 — 85).

In short, the verse says that Allāh accepts the repentance of a disobedient and sinner servant, provided the sin was not committed in haughtiness, showing arrogance towards Allāh (because it would then kill the spirit of repentance and submission to Allāh) and provided the man does not display indifference and tardiness in repentance, neglecting it until death arrives and the chance is lost for ever.

Also, it is possible to treat the clause, ‘‘in ignorance’’, as an explanatory description. The meaning then would be as follows: ‘... those who do evil; and evil is always done in ignorance, as with it man puts himself in danger of painful chastisement’, or, ‘... evil is always done in ignorance, because the evil-doer does not know the reality of disobedience nor the resulting dangers’.

If we adopt this explanation, then the clause, ‘‘then turn (to Allāh) soon’’, would signify their repenting before appearance of signs of death; it would not be an allusion to tardiness in repentance. Why? Because, according to this explanation, those who commit evil deeds because of arrogance, and because they do not submit to their Lord, would be excluded, not by the words, ‘‘in ignorance’’ but by the clause, ‘‘then turn (to Allāh) soon’’; and in that case, this latter clause cannot be an allusion to indifference and negligence. Ponder on it.

But probably the first explanation is more in conformity with the apparent meanings of the verse.

Someone has reportedly said: The words, ‘‘then turn (to Allāh) soon’’, signify that repentance should occur nearer to the time of disobedience, that is, immediately after committing a sin or soon enough to be thought as connected to it. One should not neglect it until the time of death.

Reply: This explanation is wrong, because it undermines the second verse’s meaning. The two verses aim at giving the basic comprehensive principle concerning Allāh’s turning, that is, how and when Allāh accepts a servant's repentance. It may clearly be understood from the particle of exclusion and restriction in the first verse, ‘‘Repentance with Allāh is only for those ...’’. The second verse describes the situations when repentance is not accepted; and it mentions only two situations: i) Repentance of that sinner who goes on neglecting and delaying it until the death arrives; ii) Repentance of an unbeliever who dies in his disbelief. Now, if only that repentance were acceptable which would

follow the sin without delay — that which could be thought connected to the sin — then it would give us a third situation where repentance was unacceptable. But the verse mentions only two.

QUR'ĀN: so *these it is to whom Allāh turns* (mercifully); *and Allāh is All-knowing, Wise:* The demonstrative pronoun *ulā'ika* (أُولَٰئِكَ = translated here as 'these') actually means, 'those', and points to distant objects. Its use might be a symbolic expression of the honour and dignity which Allāh wants to bestow on them. The same is the implication of the singular, 'evil', as it indicates an indulgence in reckoning of their sins. Compare it with the plural in the next verse: *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds ...*

The verse ends on the clause: ''and Allāh is All-knowing, Wise''; it does not say, Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful. The two divine attributes show why Allāh has opened the door of repentance. It is because He knows His servants' condition, and the effects of their weaknesses and ignorance; and because He, in His wisdom, found it necessary to open some ways to strengthen the system and put the things in good shape. Also, the attributes remind the repenting servant that Allāh is not deceived by appearance, He examines the hearts; deceit and cunning cannot deceive Him; therefore, a repenter must repent in a proper and sincere way, so that Allāh should answer him with mercy and forgiveness.

QUR'ĀN: *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds ... ''Surely, now I repent''*: Note that the words, *with Allāh*, have not been repeated here, although the connotation is the same. This omission gives a clear hint that they have been cut off from the especial divine mercy and care. Also the use of plural, ''evil deeds'', shows that all their misdeeds will be counted and recorded for the final reckoning, as we have mentioned earlier.

The clause, ''who go on doing evil deeds'', as qualified by the following clause, that is, ''until when death comes to one of them'' indicates continuation of action. It is either because carelessness in repentance, postponing it day after day, is in itself a continuously repeated sin; or because it is as though he was going on committing sins incessantly; or because indifference towards repentance generally makes

one commit the same or similar sins again and again.

The verse says: ‘‘until when death comes to one of them’’, instead of saying, until when death comes to them. It points to the disdain and indifference with which they treat this matter. Its connotation: Repentance, in their eyes, is such an un-important matter, such an easy thing, that they go on doing what they desire, going the way they wish, without any care. Then when death comes to one of them he says: ‘Surely, now I repent.’ And he thinks that merely by uttering these words, or by just thinking of them in the last moment of his life, the consequences of sins, the perils of disobeying divine commands, will be everted.

This explanation makes it clearer why the words, ‘I repent’, have been qualified by ‘now’. It shows that the speaker is only repenting — in words or thought — because death has overtaken him and now he sees the next world’s overwhelming power before his eyes. In effect it means: I repent as I have now seen the inescapable death and inescapable recompense. Allāh describes a similar plea to be made by the guilty ones on the Day of Resurrection: *And could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord: ‘‘Our Lord! we have seen and we have heard, therefore send us back, so that we do good; surely* (now) *we are certain.’’* (32:12).

So, that is a repentance that is not acceptable at all: because it is his losing hope of worldly life and the fright of the newly seen horizon that have forced him to feel remorse for his misdeeds and to resolve to return to his Lord. But where is there any chance of returning, when there is no worldly life left and no practical choice available?

QUR’ĀN: *nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers:* This is the other case where repentance is not accepted. It concerns a man who continues in his disbelief and dies in disbelief. Allāh does not accept his returning, because on that day his repentance, i.e., his belief, will not benefit him at all. The Qur’ān repeatedly says that there is no deliverance after death if one dies in disbelief, and that they will not get any reply even if they asked and prayed. Allāh says: *Except those who repent and amend and make manifest* (the truth), *these it is to whom I turn* (mercifully); *and I am the Oft-returning* (to mercy), *the Merciful. Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on*

whom is the curse of Allāh and the angels and men all; abiding in it; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite (2:160 — 62). Also He says: *Surely, those who disbelieve and die while they are unbelievers, the earth full of gold shall not be accepted from one of them, though he should offer to ransom himself with it; these it is who shall have a painful chastisement, and they shall have no helpers* (3:91). As explained in the third volume under this verse, the negation of helpers means that they shall have no intercessors.[1]

The qualifying phrase, ‘‘while they are unbelievers’’, indicates that there is a possibility of ‘return’ for a disobedient believer if he dies in disobedience — but without arrogance or negligence. Of course, death will make the idea of the servant’s repentance (his return to the fold of servitude by his own choice) irrelevant, as described above. But Allāh’s return to the servant with forgiveness and mercy may still happen because of the intercessors’ intercession. This in itself is a proof that the two verses primarily aim at describing Allāh’s return to His servant; if they throw some light on the servants’ repentance, on their return to Allāh, it is only incidentally and in passing.

QUR’ĀN: *These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement:* Again the demonstrative pronoun for distant objects has been used. (The pronoun translated as ‘these’ literally means, ‘those’.) This word, in this context, points to their distance from the courtyard of proximity and honour. *al-I‘tād* (اَلْاِعْتَادُ = to prepare; to promise).

ON REPENTANCE

Repentance, in its full significance as laid down in the Qur’ān, is among those positive teachings which are exclusive property of the Qur’ān. Repentance, in the meaning of belief after disbelief and polytheism, was common in all divine religions, *vis.* the religions of Mūsā and ‘Īsā (peace be on both); but it was seen as ‘belief’ and that was that; there was nothing like analysing the reality of repentance and extending it to the belief.

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[1] See the Eng. transl. vol.6, pp.235 — 7 (*tr.*)

Not only that. It appears from the foundations on which the Christianity was built as an independent religion, that repentance is useless and man cannot gain any benefit from it. This may easily be seen in the arguments offered for explaining the crucifixion and atonement; as narrated in the third valume [1] of this book where we have discussed the creation of Christ.

Nevertheless, the Church went so far in the matter of repentance that it was selling indulgence certificates turning it into a merchandise; and the priests were [and are] pardoning sins of those who confessed before them. But as for the Qur'ān, it has analysed man's condition seeing that he has been invited to Allāh and provided with guidance; and looking at the perfection, honour and felicity he is entitled to in the hereafter near Allāh; which is indispensable in his intended journey to his Lord — and that .analysis has found the man utterly poor in his person, empty-handed in his entity. Allāh says: *O men! you are the ones who stand in need of Allāh, and Allāh is He Who is the Self-sufficient, the Praised One* (35:15). Also He says: *... and they control not for themselves any harm or profit, and they control not death, nor life, nor raising* (the dead) *to life* (25:3).

Therefore, man has fallen in the pit of unhappiness, away from divine proximity, isolated in his neediness, as the words of Allāh point to it: *Certainly We created man in the best make. Then We rendered him the lowest of the low* (95:4 — 5); *And there is not one of you but shall come down to it; this is a decided decree of your Lord. And We will deliver those who were pious, and We will leave the unjust therein on their knees* (19:71 — 72); *... therefore let him not drive you both from the garden so that you should be put to toil* (20:117).

Consequently, if he wants to achieve the position of honour and enjoy ever-lasting happiness, he must come out from that pit of unhappiness, return from the far away station, and transfer himself to the proximity of his Lord. It is what is called his returning to his Lord in the basic happiness, i.e., true faith, and in secondary happiness, i.e., all good deeds. This is what is called repentance and returning from root of happiness, i.e., polytheism, and branches of unhappiness, i.e., evil deeds other than polytheism. It is on repentance (i.e., returning to Allāh and removing all

[1] See the Eng. transl. vol.6, pp.145 — 217 (*ed.*)

the pollutions of infelicity and disobedience) that settlement in the abode of honour through true belief depends, as does enjoyment of various bounties of obedience and proximity. In other words, man can reach nearer to Allāh in the appointed abode of honour only if lie repents from polytheism and all disobedience. Allāh says: ... *and turn to Allāh all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful* (24:31). Thus repentance, in the meaning of returning to Allāh, covers both types of repentance; rather it covers these two and other kinds also, as we shall describe later, Allāh willing.

Man is needy in himself and does not control for himself any good or happiness except by favour of his Lord. Consequently, for this return too, he needs a favour from his Lord and a divine help in his affairs. The servant's return to his Lord with feelings of servitude and dependence needs first a return of his Lord to him with help and support; and it is a return of Allāh to the servant that proceeds repentance of the servant to his Lord, as Allāh has said: ... *then He turned to them* (mercifully) *that they might turn* (to Him) ... (9:118). But repentance and return to Allāh is of no use unless Allāh accepts it by forgiving his sins and cleansing him of the pollution of separateness; and this is the second returning of Allāh that follows the servant's repentance, as Allāh has said in the verse under discussion: so *these it is to whom Allāh turns* (mercifully) ...

On meditating deeply, it will be realized that this plurality of divine returning occurs only when one looks at it *vis-a-vis* servant's repentance. Otherwise, it is actually a single return; that is, Allāh turns to His servant with mercy and compassion; and it takes place when a servant repents and returns to Allāh — and that mercy covers the servant from before his repentance till after it. Moreover, that merciful divine turning sometimes takes place even without the servant's repentance, as we have earlier inferred from the divine words: *nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers.* It has also been explained that granting intercession for sinner servant on the Day of Resurrection is an example of turning mercifully to him. The following verse points to that connotation: *And Allāh desires that He should turn to you* (mercifully), *and those who follow* (their) *lusts desire that you should deviate* (with) *a great deviation* (4:27),

Nearness and remoteness are relative terms. Therefore, it is quite possible that within circle of nearness some areas would be remoter than

the others. In this way, 'repentance' may be used for even those good servants who are nearer to Allāh, when they rise to a station that is even higher and nearer than their previous place. This phenomenon is seen in the verses where Allāh mentions 'repentance' of the prophets even though they are sinless as other verses clearly say For example:

Then Adam received (some) *words from his Lord, so He turned to Him mercifully* (2:37).

And (remember) *when Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl were raising the foundations of the House: ''Our Lord! accept from us: ... and turn to us* (mercifully), *surely Thou art Oft-returning* (with mercy), *the Merciful.''* (2:127 — 8).

... he (Mūsā, a.s.) *said: ''Glory be to Thee, I turn to Thee, and I am the first of the believers.''* (7:143).

Therefore be patient (O Prophet!); *surely the promise of Allāh is true; and seek pardon for your fault and sing the praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning* (40:55). *Certainly Allāh has turned* (mercifully) *to the Prophet and those who fled* (their homes) *and the helpers who followed him in the hour of straitness ...* (9:117).

This is the general 'return' of Allāh which is referred to by many Qur'ānic verses, as for example: *The Forgiver of the faults and the Accepter of repentance ...* (40:3); *And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants ..* (42:25).

The above discourse may be summarized as follows:

First: Bestowal of Allāh's mercy on a servant by forgiving his sins and removing the darkness of disobedience from his heart — whether polytheism or other evils — is Allāh's merciful returning to His servant; and return of a servant to His Lord seeking pardon of his sins and removal of his disobedience — whether polytheism or lesser evils — is the servant's repentance, and his return to his Lord.

It shows that a true Divine Call should be as much concerned with the subject of sins as it should be with polytheism and disbelief; it should invite men to a comprehensive repentance covering polytheism as well as other sins.

Second: Return of Allāh to His servant both the first and the second one — is a grace of Allāh like other bounties which He bestows on His creatures without any coercion or constraint from anyone else. When it is said that by reason it is obligatory for Allāh to accept repentance, its

connotation is not different from what is mentioned in many Qur'ānic verses. See, for instance, the following verses: ... *and the Accepter of repentance* ... (40:3); ... *and turn to Allāh all of you, O believers* ... (24:31); ... *surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him) ... (2:222); ... *so these it is to whom Allāh turns* (mercifully) ... (4:17). These and other such verses praise Allāh for His acceptance of repentance, call people to repent, exhort them to seek forgiveness and turn to their Lord; as such they contain promise of acceptance of repentance, either explicitly or implicitly; and Allāh does not break His promise.

Obviously, Allāh is not under any compulsion to accept repentance; His is the Kingdom and authority without any exception; He does what He pleases to do and decides what He wishes. It is for Him to accept a repentance according to His promise; or to reject that which He rejects, as is clear from the divine words: *Surely, those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in unbelief, their repentance shall never be accepted* ... (3:90). Possibly the same is the connotation of the following verse: *Surely* (as for) *those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them in the* (right) *path* (4:137).

A very strange interpretation has been advanced by a writer concerning the Qur'ānic verses narrating the story of Pharaoh's drowning and repentance: ... *until when drowning overtook him, he said: ''I believe that there is no god but He in Whom the children of Israel believe and I am of those who submit.'' What! now! and indeed you disobeyed before and you were of the mischiefmakers* (10:90 — 91).

His interpretation, in short, is as follows: The verse does not indicate that Pharaoh's repentance was rejected, nor is there anything in the Qur'ān to show his ever-lasting perdition. It is difficult, for someone who ponders on the spaciousness of God's mercy and its precedence over His wrath, to believe that Allāh would drive him away who was seeking shelter at the door of His mercy and grace, abasing and humiliating himself with abject desperation. Even a human being, after acquiring natural good characteristics of generosity and benevolence, does show mercy to such persons when they are really sorry for the evil deeds they had done before. Then how much mercy will be shown by Him Who is the Most Merciful of all, the Most Generous of all and Who is the Refuge of the refuge-seekers?

Reply: This hypothesis is rebutted by the divine words: *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: ''Surely, now I repent,'' nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers.* We have already explained that repentance and regret at that late hour is a falsity; man shows that remorse only because he now clearly sees the consequences of his sins, and looks at the misfortunes of the next life rushing towards him.

Not every remorse is repentance, nor every repentance acceptable. See how Allāh describes the condition of the guilty on the Day of Resurrection: *And they shall conceal regret when they shall see the punishment* (34:33). There are many other verses describing their regret for what they had done and their plea to be sent back to this world in order that they could do good deeds, and its rebuttal that even if they were returned they would do what they were forbidden to and that they were liars.

You should not imagine even for a moment that the earlier explained Qur'ānic analysis of repentance is merely a mental exercise having no relation with realities. If you contemplate on human felicity and infelicity, goodness and wickedness, you will not get any result other than repentance. Look at a normal man in society, keeping in view the effect of education and bringing up on him. You will find that he by himself is devoid of sociological good and evil; his psyche is capable of accepting both imprints — without any preference to either. Now, let us suppose that he wants to adorn himself with merit and virtue, to acquire piety and righteousness. It will not be possible unless all necessary factors join together to rescue him from the evil conditions he is surrounded with. In spiritual context, it is like the first returning of Allāh to His servant. Then comes the stage of taking himself out of, and away from, the shabby condition and the fetters of tardiness. It is a repentance like that of the servant returning to his Lord. Thereafter comes the final step of removing the rust of mischief and depravity from his heart, so that virtuous characteristics and light of goodness may take its place; because the heart cannot accomodate goodness and vileness together. This is equivalent to the acceptance of repentance and forgiveness — in the context of the subject under discussion. The same process takes place in the matters of collective good of society in which man lives according to natural dictate. All the rules and effects which the religion considers

important in matters of repentance are applied in individual and social context too, according to the natural trait which Allāh has created in man.

Third: As may be inferred from all the verses of repentance, including the ones quoted in this discussion, repentance is a reality having real effect on human psyche. It reforms and prepares it for human good which contains felicity of this world and the next. In other words, repentance proves effective — when it does — in removing spiritual evils which pull man to all kinds of infelicity in this life and the hereafter and prevent him from settling on the throne of felicity. But so far as the rules of *sharī'ah* and laws of religion are concerned they stay in their place. No repentance can waive them as no disobedience can remove them.

Nevertheless, there are some rules which have some links with repentance, and are waived if one repents. This is ordained, keeping in view the interest of the creation; but in no way it means that repentance, *per se*, waives any of the divine laws. Allāh says: *And as for the two who are guilty of it* (i.e., indecency) *from among you, afflict them both; then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them; surely Allāh is Oft-returning* (to mercy), *the Merciful* (4:16); *The punishment of those who wage war against Allāh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement; except those who repent before you have them in your power so know that Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (5:33 — 34). There are a few other verses of this import.

Fourth: The basic purpose for which the institution of repentance has been established, (as is clear from the above discourse) is to get deliverance from perdition of sin and disaster of disobedience, because repentance is a means of success and is instrumental in achieving felicity, as is implied in the verse: *... and turn to Allāh all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful* (24:31).

One of its benefits, apart from the above, is this: It preserves the spirit of hope, lest it be overwhelmed by desperation. Man cannot proceed straight on the path of life unless there is a perfect balance between hope and fear. It is this equilibrium that attracts him to what is beneficial to

him and repulses him from what is harmful; otherwise he would have perished. Allāh says: *Say: ''O my servants who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord ...''* (39:53 — 54). Any scholar of human psychology will tell you that man perseveres in his efforts with zeal and ardour as long as his labour seems to bear fruits. But if he finds his efforts going to waste, he feels dejected and depressed, hope gives way to despair and his actions lose vigour and vitality. Often he stops whatever he was doing, as he feels that he can in no way achieve success; he loses heart and is overwhelmed by pessimism. Repentance is the only cure for this disease; it revives his heart even when he has reached the brink of disaster and perdition.

Some people have misunderstood repentance and said that establishment of the institution of repentance and calling people to avail themselves of its benefits was tantamount to inciting them to commit sins and encouraging them to disobey Allāh. When man is sure that if he committed a sin Allāh would accept his repentance, it will surely embolden him to violate the sanctity of divine law, to dive headlong in the abyss of sins and crimes. He will go on committing sin after sin intending to repent after each transgression.

But, in view of what we have explained above, there is no room for this misunderstanding. Apart from the fact that acquirement of virtues depend on remission of sins, repentance is meant to keep the hope alive; and this revival of optimism has its own good effects. There is no question here of a man committing a sin thinking that he would repent afterwards. This objection has missed the point altogether; because such a repentance is totally devoid of the reality of repentance. Repentance is renouncement of sins, and there is no renouncement in the situation mentioned by the objector. Why? Because he had planned to repent before the sin, and with the sin, and after the sin; and how can one feel remorse (i.e., repentance) before the action? The fact is that, in such cases, the whole activity — the sin and the so-called repentance — taken together is one action with one intention; and that is trickery and deception, with which he tries to deceive the Lord of the worlds. But evil plan does not beset any except its authors.

Fifth: Sin is an evil stand of man and has bad effect on his life. Consequently, he cannot repent, cannot turn away from it, unless first he

realizes, and is sure of, its evil. This knowledge and certainty cannot fail to produce regret and remorse for it. Remorse is a particular psychological response to committing an evil deed. When that remorse takes hold, then man may change his direction to do some good deeds, opposite to that evil one. This second step will be a proof that he has really repented and returned to his Lord.

This forms the basis of all the formalities and manners of repentance laid down by the *sharī'ah,* e.g., expressing regret, asking for forgiveness, acquiring habit of doing good deeds, discarding evil deeds, and other related things described in the traditions and the books of ethics.

Sixth: Repentance means returning, by one's free will and choice, from evil and sin to obedience and servitude. As such, it can take place only where man has free choice, i.e., in the life of this world. But where there is no freedom to choose between good and bad, between felicity and infelicity, there is no room for repentance. The preceding discourse throws light on this aspect.

A field where repentance is ineffective and inadmissible, is violation of other people's rights; because repentance is beneficial concerning Allāh's rights only. If a sin has violated other people's rights, more repentance will do no good at all; the victims' pleasure must be obtained if the sinner wants to erase that sin. Allāh has given some rights to people in their properties, honour and lives. According to the divine law, it is an injustice and transgression to violate these rights. He cannot grant remission if someone transgresses any of these rights. Otherwise it would be tantamount to depriving the victims of their due rights without any mistake on their part. Far be it from Him to do injustice when He has forbidden us to do it; He has said: *Surely Allāh does not do any injustice to men* (10:44).

Nevertheless, Islam — being repentance from polytheism — erases every preceding evil, every past sin, which concerns the branches of religion. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said: ''The Islam cuts away all (that had happened) before it''. This is the connotation of those verses which declare that all sins will be forgiven. For example, Allāh says: *Say: ''O my servant! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh; surely Allāh forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord and submit to Him ...* (39:53 — 54).

Another example is the repentance of a person who originates an evil custom or leads people astray. According to numerous traditions, his chastisement will be equal to that of all those who followed him in that evil custom or went astray. Obviously, reality of 'return' cannot take place in such cases, because he had established something whose effect would persist as long as that thing continues. Unlike those sins which are confined between the servant and his Lord, it is almost impossible for an originator of an evil custom to undo what he has done.

Seventh: No doubt, repentance erases the sins where it is effective and admissible, as Allāh says: *To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, then he desists, for him shall be what has already passed, and his affair rests with Allāh* (2:275), as has already been explained in the second volume [1] . Also look at the following verse: Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allāh changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever repents and does good, he surely turns to Allāh a (goodly) turning (25:70 — 71). Its apparent meaning, especially in view of the second verse, shows that repentance, by itself or in conjunction with belief and good deeds, causes evil deeds to change to good ones.

All this is true. But the fact remains that keeping away from evil deeds is far better than committing a sin and then erasing it through repentance. Allāh has made it clear in His book that sins, of whatever type they may be, ultimately have some links with Satanic insinuation and temptation. On the other hand He has portrayed His pure-hearted servants, those who are free from sins and evils, in a way that cannot be equalled by all praises revealed for the others: [Satan] *said: ''My Lord! because Thou hast left me to stray, I will certainly make* (evil) *fair-seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly cause them all to go astray. Except Thy servants from among them, the freed ones.'' He said: ''This is a straight path with Me. Surely, as regards* My *servants, thou hast no authority over them* ... (15:39 — 42). Also Allāh says quoting Iblis in the same story: ... *and Thou shalt not find most of them thankful* (7:17).

So, these sinless people have a especial prestigious position in the

[1] See the Eng. transl. vol.4, pp.279 — 82 (*tr.*)

circle of servitude that is not shared by other good repenting servants.

TRADITIONS

The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, *inter alia*, in his last sermon: ‘‘Whoever repents one year before his death, Allāh will turn (mercifully) to him.’’ Then he said: ‘‘Surely, a year is too long; whoever repents one month before his death, Allāh will turn (mercifully) to him.’’ Then he said: ‘‘Surely a month is too long; whoever repents one day before his death, Allāh will turn (mercifully) to him.’’ Then he said: ‘‘Surely a day is too long; whoever repents one hour before his death, Allāh will turn (mercifully) to him.’’ Then he said: ‘‘Surely an hour is too long; whoever repents while his soul has reached here’’ — and he pointed with his hand to his throat — ‘‘Allāh will turn (mercifully) to him.’’ (*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l faqīh*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said when he was asked about the word of Allāh, *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: ‘‘Surely now I repent’’:* ‘‘That is, when he looks at the affairs of the next world.’’

The author says: al-Kulaynī has narrated the first tradition in *al-Kāfī* through his chain from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.); it is also narrated through the Sunnī chains, and there are other traditions too of the same import.

The second tradition gives the explanation of the verse; also it explains those traditions which say that repentance in presence of death is not accepted. Accordingly ‘‘in presence of death’’ means ‘when man knows that the process of death has begun, and sees the signs of the hereafter’; it is at that point that the door of repentance is closed against him. But if a man is unaware of his impending death, then there is no snag in acceptance of his repentance. Some of the following traditions have similar meaning.

Zurārah has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘When the soul reaches here’’, pointing to his larynx, ‘‘then there is no repentance for the knower; but there is repentance for the ignorant.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* that Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī (in his *at-Tafsīr*), al-Ḥākim and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Abū Dharr, that he said: ''Surely the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Surely Allāh accepts repentance of His servant, or forgives His servant, until the curtain comes down.' It was asked: 'And what is the coming down of curtain?' He said: 'The soul goes out while a polytheist.' ''

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from al-Ḥasan that he said: ''[A report] has come to me that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Verily Iblīs said when he found that Adam had cavity [in his body]: ''By Thy honour! I will not leave his cavity as long as there was soul inside him.'' Then Allāh, the Blessed, the High, said: ''By My honour! I will not come between him and repentance as long as there was soul inside him.'' ' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

'Alī al-Aḥmasī has narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''By Allāh! None gets deliverance from sins except he who confesses them.'' Also he has narrated from the same Imām (a.s.): ''Enough is remorse for repentance.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

It is narrated in *al-Kāfī* through two chains from Ibn Wahb that he said: ''I heard Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) saying: 'When the servant repents, a sincere repenting, Allāh loves him and covers him.' I said: 'And how does He cover him?' He said: 'He makes his two angels forget what they had written against him; then He inspires his limbs and the areas of the earth to conceal his sins. Thus he meets Allāh — when he meets Him — and there is nothing to give evidence against him concerning his sins.' ''

Muḥammad ibn Muslim has narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''O Muḥammad ibn Muslim! sins of the believer are forgiven to him when he repents from them. Therefore, the believer should perform his deeds afresh after repentance and forgiveness. But, by Allāh! it is not but for the people of faith.'' ''I said: 'But what if he relapses into sins after repentance and forgiveness, and then repents again?' He said: 'O Muḥammad ibn Muslim! do you think that a believer servant feels remorse for his sin and asks forgiveness from Allāh for it and repents and then Allāh will not accept his repentance?' I said: 'Then if he does so repeatedly; commits sin and repents and asks forgiveness?' Then he said: 'Whenever the believer returns asking for forgiveness and repenting, Allāh the High, returns to him with forgiveness; and surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful; He accepts repentance and pardons the evils.

Therefore, be careful, lest you make the believers lose hope of Allāh's mercy.' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

Abū 'Amr az-Zubayrī narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, And most surely lam most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, then continues to follow the right direction [20:82], that he (a.s.) said: ''This verse has an explanation, which explanation is proved [by the fact] that Allāh does not accept any deed from any servant except from him who meets Him with fulfilment of that explanation, and with that condition which Allāh has imposed on the believers.'' And he said: ''Repentance with Allāh is only for those who do evil in ignorance; Allāh means that every sin which the servant does — although he may be aware of it — he is ignorant when he thinks in his heart to disobey his Lord; and Allāh has spoken about it quoting the talk of Yūsuf to his brothers: *Do you know how you treated Yūsuf and his brother when you were ignorant?* [12:89]. So he charged them with ignorance because they planned in their hearts to commit sin against Allāh.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: The text of the narration is not free from confusion and disarray. Apparently the ealier portion is meant to show that good deed is accepted when the servant fulfils its condition and does not destroy it. After all, repentance is acceptable only when it restrains and prevents the repenter from sin — even for a limited time.

And probably the text, ''And he said: *Repentance with Allāh is only for those ...* '', is a new topic, to show that the word, *in ignorance,* in this verse is an explanatory clause, and that sin in general is ignorance — it has already been given as an alternative explanation in the commentary. This latter part is narrated also in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* from the same Imām (a.s.).

* * * * *

يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاٰ يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسٰاءَ كَرْهاً وَلاٰ
تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مٰا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِينَ بِفٰاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ
وَعٰاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئاً
وَيَجْعَلَ اللهُ فِيهِ خَيْراً كَثِيراً ــ ١٩ . وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمُ اسْتِبْدٰالَ زَوْجٍ مَكٰانَ
زَوْجٍ وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدٰاهُنَّ قِنْطٰاراً فَلاٰ تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئاً أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتٰاناً وَإِثْماً
مُبِيناً ــ ٢٠ . وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ إِلىٰ بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ
مِنْكُمْ مِيثٰاقاً غَلِيظاً ــ ٢١ . وَلاٰ تَنْكِحُوا مٰا نَكَحَ آبٰاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسٰاءِ
إِلَّا مٰا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كٰانَ فٰاحِشَةً وَمَقْتاً وَسٰاءَ سَبِيلاً ــ ٢٢ .

O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against (their) *will; and do not straiten them in order that you may take part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest indecency; and live with them in a proper manner; then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allāh has placed abundent good in it* (19). *And if you wish to have* (one) *wife in place of another and you have given one of them a heap of gold, then take not from it anything; would you take it by slandering* (her) *and* (doing her) *manifest wrong?* (20). *And how can you take it when one of you has already gone in to the other and they have made with you a firm covenant?* (21). *And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has*

already passed; this surely is indecent and hateful, and it is an evil way (22).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The talk returns to the subject of women, guiding the Muslims about some related matters. This piece contains the clause, *and live with them in a proper manner; then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allāh has placed abundant good in it.* It is a basic Qur'ānic principle which regulates woman's social life.

QUR'Ā: *O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against* (their) *will:* The Arabs of the era of ignorance counted wives of a deceased person as part of his inheritance if the woman was not the heir's mother, as history and traditions have reported. The heirs took the widow as part of their share; one of them threw a cloth on her and she became his property. If he wished, he married her, inheriting the deceased's marriage — without giving her a fresh dowry. If he disliked marrying her, he held her in his custody; then if he was so pleased, he gave her in marriage to someone and used her dowry himself; and if he wished, he kept her in straitened condition, not allowing her to marry, until she died and he inherited her property, if she had any.

Apparently, the verse forbids some custom that was prevalent among them; and as some exegetes have written, it could be the above-mentioned system of inheriting the widows. But the clause, ''against (their) will'', does not agree with this interpretation, whether we take it as an explanatory clause or a restrictive one. If it were taken as explanatory clause, it would imply that that inheritance was always disliked by women, always happened against their will — and obviously it was not so. If it were taken as a restrictive clause, it would mean that that inheritance was unlawful nly if it took place against the woman's will, but there was no harm if she freely agreed to it — but this too is not correct.

Of course, dislike and unwillingness was a certainty when the heirs prevented them from re-marrying, coveting, in all or most cases, their

property after taking their possession by inheritance. Obviously, it is this factor — contriving to inherit the woman's property against her will — which this verse has forbidden.

As for marrying them by inheritance, this verse does not deal with it; that is forbidden by a coming verse, which says: *And marry not women whom your fathers married* ... So far as the custom of giving them in marriage to someone else and usurpation of their dowry by the concerned heir is concerned, it is forbidden by such verses as: *and women shall have the benefit of what they earn* (4:32). Also the verse: ... *then when they have fully attained their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a proper manner* (2:234), discredits the whole custom, guiding the people to the Islamic way.

As for the words: *and do not straiten them in order that you may take* ..., they do not refer to the afore-mentioned prevention of their re-marrying (with intention of getting their property on their death), because the subsequent clause: *in order that you may take part of what you have given them,* clearly speaks about taking away part of the dowry which the oppressing husband himself had given her; it does not refer to any property which she might have got from other sources.

In short, the verse stops men from inheriting women's property against their will; it is not concerned with the custom of taking women themselves as part of inheritance. Accordingly, either the word, 'women', metaphorically refers to their property, or the word, 'property of', is implied before it.

QUR'ĀN: and do not straiten them in order that you may take part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest indecency: The conjunctive, 'and', conjoins it either with the preceding: that you should inherit, (in which case it should be translated: nor that you should straiten them), or with: it is not lawful for you, (taking the negative present tense as equivalent to prohibitive mood). al-'Aḍl (اَلْعَضْلُ = to prevent, to straiten, to put in difficulty); al fāḥishah (اَلْفَاحِشَةُ = indecency; it is mostly used for fornication); al-mubayyanah (اَلْمُبَيَّنَةُ = clear). Sībawayh has reportedly said that abāna, istabāna, bayyana, tabayyana (اَبَانَ،اِسْتَبَانَ،بَيَّنَ،تَبَيَّنَ) all have the same meaning, and are used both as transitive and intransitive — all of them are used to say, for example: The thing became clear, or, I made the thing clear.

The verse makes it unlawful to put the wife in straitened condition — in any way — with intention of compelling her to pay back to the husband a part of dowry for dissolution of marriage-tie, so that she may extricate herself from that difficult life. Imposing such difficulties with this intention is unlawful for the husband. Of course, if the wife commits manifest indecency, i.e., adultery, then he may put restrictions on her, keeping her in straitened condition, in order that she may pay him something to obtain divorce.

This verse is not in conflict with the verse 229 of the chapter of 'The Cow': *and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you have given them, unless both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh; then if you fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allāh, there is no blame on them for what she gives up to become free thereby.* It is a specification; the verse of the chapter of 'The Women' specifies the one of the chapter of 'The Cow', by restricting it to the case of fornication. Moreover, the payment mentioned in the chapter of 'The Cow' refers to that which is given by mutual agreement, and that cannot particularize this verse.

QUR'ĀN: *and live with them in a proper manner; ... abundant good in it: ''al-Ma'rūf''* (اَلْمَعْرُوفُ) is that thing or custom which people recognize in their social structure, which they do not reject or disapprove. As the order to live with them is qualified with *al-ma'rūf,* it tells men to live with women in a manner that is known and recognized by the society.

The living together that is known and recognized by the people is as follows:

Every individual is an integral part of society, having equal importance with all other parts; they all together constitute human society; and each of them has a responsibility to strive as much as he can to make up the society's deficiencies. He earns and makes what is beneficial, takes from it according to his requirements, and gives the surplus to the society. If someone is treated in a different way, and is oppressed in a manner that his identity as an integral part is nullified, then he becomes a vassal, he is exploited but is given nothing in lieu of his labour. But it is exceptional case.

Allāh has described in His book that all people — men and women

alike — are branches of a single human root; parts and components of one human species. Society, for its existence, needs males as much as it needs females — in equal degree. Allāh has said: *you are* (sprung) *the one from the other* (4:25).

There is nothing contradictory when we see that each sex has been bestowed some distinct characteristics which are not found in the other. For instance, men on the whole are distiguished for their strength and hardiness; and women by nature are more endowed with sentiments and soft-heartedness. Humanity, in its creative and social lives, needs demonstration of strength and hardiness as much as it requires permeation of love and mercy. The two qualities together represent the forces of attraction and repulsion which are prevalent in human society.

Thus the two sexes are equally balanced in weight, effect and influence; in the same way as individual males are equal in their affect and influences on this structure, in spite of their difference in natural and social matters, like strength and weakness, knowledge and ignorance, intelligence and obtuseness, smallness and greatness, leadership and subordination, mastership and servitude, nobleness and vileness, and so on.

This is the social order emanating from perceptivity of a normal society that continues on the natural way without deviation. Islam has fulfilled all requirements of society and removed its deficiencies. No wonder that it had to establish the system of equality in society; and it is this equality that is called social freedom. It gives freedom to the women like the men.

Man, *per se,* has got the faculty of understanding and free will; with that independent will he chooses what is beneficial to him and discards what is harmful. Living in society he has the right to choose whatever he wants — as long as it does not go against the society's well-being — with independent will without any hindrance from anyone; he is not bound to opt for someone else's choice without any will of his own. But, as you have seen, this principle is not in conflict with specialization that some classes, or a few members of the same class, should be distiguished with some especial qualities — or should be particularly devoid of some qualities. As for example, Islam has reserved judiciary, administration and *jihād* for men; also they have been given responsibility of maintaining the women. Or, as minor children are not competent to make

any acknowledgement or deal, and are exempted from the *sharī'ah's* obligations. These examples show that different classes and individuals are governed by different laws — which are based on difference of their weight in society — although all of them are equal in their basic value in human social structure, where the only criterion is that all are human beings having understanding and free will.

Such restrictions and exclusions are not peculiar to the Islamic laws; they are found, in varying degrees, in all civil codes; nay, in all human systems, even in primitive customs. The clause, that encompasses all these meanings, is the word of Allāh: *and live with them in a proper manner,* as explained above.

As for the words of Allāh: *then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allāh has place abundant good in it,* it presents a known and definite fact in the shape of a doubtful matter. Often this style is used to prevent incitement of antagonism and prejudice in the audience. The same style is seen in the following verses: *Say: ''Who gives you the sustenance from the heavens and the earth?'' Say: ''Allāh. And most surely we or you are on a right path or in manifest error.'' Say: ''You will not be questioned as to what we are guilty of, nor shall we be questioned as to what you do.''* (34:24 — 25).

At the time when the Qur'ān was revealed, human societies did not accord the women the status of human being; they were not considered as integral component of humanity. Some welladvanced civilizations treated them as an appendage — beyond the human circle — whose only purpose was to be used and exploited by man. Others recognized that women were human beings, but of inferior quality; they were deficient in humanity, like children and idiots, but with one difference: While children's or idiot's deficiency was removable (after adulthood or by treatment, respectively) women could never attain full human status. Consequently, it was necessary for them to live as a dependent under total authority of men for ever. It is interesting to note that Allāh has not said: if you dislike their marriage; He has ascribed the dislike and hate directly to their person: ''if you hate them''; probably this expression was used keeping the above-mentioned social norm in view.

QUR'ĀN: *And i f you wish to have ... manifest wrong?: al Istibdāl* (اَلْاِسْتِبْدَالُ = to seek a substitute); it is used here for replacement of a wife

with another; or it implies taking a wife in place of another by substitution. That is why ‘‘you wish’’ has been used with the *istibdāl,* although the latter’s paradigm itself gives the meaning of wishing and wanting. Accordingly, the meaning is as follows: And if you wish to take one wife in place of another by substitution.

al-Buhtān (اَلْبُهْتَانُ) is what stuns and bewilders someone; it is generally used in meaning of false accusation. Grammatically, it is *al-maṣdar,* but in this verse it has been used for an action, i.e., taking back a part of dowry. Syntactically it describes state of the verb, ‘‘would you take it’’; and so does the phrase, ‘‘manifest wrong’’. The question shows disapproval.

The meaning: If you wish to divorce a wife and marry another in her place, do not take back from the divorced wife any part of the dowry which you had paid her — even if the amount you had given her was huge and you want to take only a small portion.

QUR’ĀN: *And how can you take it ... a firm covenant? ...:* The question creates a sense of astonishment. *‘‘al-Ifḍā’ ’’* (اَلْاِفْضَآءُ = to reach, to arrive at) is used for intimate touching; it is derived from *al faḍā’* (اَلْفَضَآءُ = space, vastness).

As taking back a portion of dowry is an oppression and injustice, and the parties had lived in intimacy and union, it was really an amazing situation. Marriage and the resulting intimate sexual relation makes husband and wife like one being; and it is really strange that one should oppress one’s own self, or one part of a body should oppress the other part.

Apparently, the clause, ‘‘and they have made with you a firm covenant’’, refers to the union which the man had firmly established through marriage-tie; and one of whose concomitants is the dowry fixed at the time of marriage and which the woman receives from the man by right.

Someone has said that the firm covenant refers to the promise taken from man for woman that he would either retain her in a proper way or let her go with fairness, as Allāh has mentioned [in 2:231]. Someone else has said that it refers to their becoming lawful to each other as a result of marriage. But quite obviously, these interpretations are far-fetched, as the words of the verse show.

TRADITIONS

Hāshim ibn ‘Abdillāh narrates from as-Sariyy al-Bajalī that he said: ‘‘I asked him about the word of Allāh, *and do not straiten them in order that you may take part of what you have given them:* Then he quoted a talk and then said: ‘As the Nabateans say that when he threw a cloth on her, he restrained her, so that she could not marry anyone else. It was a custom in the (era of) ignorance.’ ’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

Abu ’l-Jārūd narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against* (their) *will:* ‘‘It was [a custom] in the [era of] ignorance [and] when the Arab tribes first accepted Islam, that when a relative of a man died leaving a woman, that man threw his cloth on her and thus inherited her marriage by the same dowry which the [deceased] relative had given her; the man inherited her marriage as he inherited his (the deceased’s) property. When Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat died, Muḥaṣṣan son of Abū Qays threw his cloth on the woman of his father; and she was Kubayshah bint Mu‘ammar ibn Mu‘bad. So, he inherited her marriage; then he left her — he neither went in to her nor spent on her (maintenance). So, she came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat died and his son, Muḥaṣṣan, inherited my marriage. Now he does not come to me, nor does he spend on me, nor does he release me so that I may join my own people.’ The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Go back to your house; and if Allāh ordains something concerning your matter, I will inform you.’ Then it was revealed: *And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed; this surely is indecent and hateful, and it is an evil way.* Thus she joined her own people. Also there were (other) women in Medina whose marriage, like that of Kubayshah, was inherited; but they were inherited from sons. Then Allāh revealed: *O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against* (their) *will.’’* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: The ending clause of the tradition is not free from muddle and confusion. However, several Sunnī traditions too have narrated this story and that the verse was revealed in that connection. All

or most of the traditions say that the verse; *O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women ... ,* was revealed about the above-mentioned event. But you have seen in the commentary that the wording of the verse does not agree with this claim. However, there is no doubt that the said event had happened, and that the verses are somehow related to it and to the prevalent custom of the era of ignorance. Therefore, what we have written earlier should be relied upon.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has written about the clause, *unless they are guilty of manifest indecency,* that it is better to apply this word to every sin; and has said that it is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.). (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

ash-Shaybānī has said: ''Indecency is adultery, and the verse means that if man comes to know of her indecency, then he may take ransom (from her); and it is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Burhān)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Jābir: ''Verily, the Messenger of Allāh has said: 'Fear Allāh about women; because you have taken them in Allāh's trust, and have made their bodies lawful (to you) by the word of Allāh; and it is your right on them that they should not let anyone you dislike trample your bed; if they do so then you (may) hit them (but) not violently; and they have a right on you for their maintenance and clothing in a proper way.' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn 'Umar that he said: ''Verily, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'O people! Verily, the women near you [i.e., your wives] are [like] conscript labour [i.e., they are joined to you for ever]; you have taken them in Allāh's trust, and have made their bodies lawful (to you) by the word of Allāh. So you have got right on them, and it is among your rights on them that they should not let anyone trample your bed, nor should they disobey you in any good (thing); and when they do so [i.e., fulfil these rights] then they have got right of maintenance and clothing in a proper way.' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: The meaning of these traditions may be understood from ealier explanations.

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) has said about the word of Allāh, *and they have made with you a firm covenant:* ''Covenant is the word with which

marriage is contracted ...'' (*al-Kāfī; at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said: ''Firm covenant is the commitment made by the husband at the time of marriage that he will either retain her properly or let her go in fairness. This meaning is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: This meaning is narrated from several early exegetes like Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Abū Malīkah. The wording of the verse is not out of tune with it, because this also is a covenant women make with men; although more obviously it means the marriage formula which is recited to establish marriage-tie.

az-Zubayr ibn Bakkār has narrated in *al-Muwaffaqiyyāt* from 'Abdullāh ibn Muṣ'ab that he said: '' 'Umar said: 'Do not give to women a dowry more than forty *ūqiyyah* [1] . If anyone exceeds [this limit] I will put the excess amount in the treasury.' A woman said: 'You have no such authority.' He said: 'Why?' She said: 'Because Allāh says: ''... *you have given one of them a heap of gold* ...'' ' Thereupon 'Umar said: 'A woman hit the mark and a man missed.' '' (*ad Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has also narrated it from 'Abdu 'r-Razzāq and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir from 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān as-Salamī; and from Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr and Abū Ya'lā through a good chain from Masrūq (and that tradition says ''four hundred Dirhams'' in place of ''forty *ūqiyyah*''); and also from Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr and 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd from Bakr ibn 'Abdillāh al-Muzanī; and all traditions have nearly the same meaning.

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from 'Ikrimah that he said about the word of Allāh, *And marry not women whom your fathers married,* that it was revealed about Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat who took Umm Ubayd bint Ḍamrah who was the widow of his father, al-Aslat; and about al-Aswad ibn Khalaf who had taken the daughter of Abū Ṭalḥah ibn 'Abdi 'l-'Uzzā ibn 'Uthmān ibn 'Abdi 'd-Dār, who was the widow of his father, Khalaf;

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[1] A weight of varying magnitude. Nowadays it ranges from 37.44 gr. in Egypt to 320 gr. in Aleppo. (*tr.*)

and about Fākhitah, daughter of al-Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib ibn Asad, who was the wife of Umayyah ibn Khalaf and then she was taken by his son, Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah; and about Manẓūr ibn Rabāb who had taken Malīkah daughter of Khārijah, who was the widow of his father, Rabāb ibn Sayyār. (*ibid.*)

Ibn Sa‘d has narrated from Muḥammad ibn Ka‘b al-Quraẓī that he said: ‘‘When a man died leaving a woman, his son had the right to marry her if he so wished — provided she was not his own mother — or to give her to someone else in marriage. When Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat died, his son, Muḥaṣṣan, succeeded him and inherited the marriage of his widow; but he did not give her maintenance nor he gave her any property as [her husband's] inheritance. Thereupon, she came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and described the situation to him. He said: 'You go back; perhaps Allāh will send down something about you.' Then it was revealed: *And marry not women whom your fathers married ...;* also it was revealed, *... it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against* (their) *will*.'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: We have already given Shī‘ī traditions of the same meaning.

Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The people of [the era of] ignorance prohibited [marriage with] all whom Allāh has prohibited except the father's wife and having two sisters together as wives. Then Allāh revealed: *And marry not women whom your fathers married;* and, [it is unlawful] *that you should have two sisters together.*'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are other traditions also of the same meaning.

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حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالاَتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللاَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكُمُ اللاَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمُ اللاَّتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلاَئِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلاَبِكُمْ وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الأُخْتَيْنِ إِلاَّ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ غَفُوراً رَحِيماً ــ ٢٣ . وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلاَّ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ كِتَابَ اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكُمْ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا تَرَاضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً ــ ٢٤ . وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلاً أَنْ يَنْكِحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ فَتَيَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ فَانْكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحَاتٍ وَلاَ مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَّ فَإِنْ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ــ ٢٥ يُرِيدُ اللهُ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ سُنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ــ ٢٦ . وَاللهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلاً عَظِيماً ــ ٢٧ . يُرِيدُ اللهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفاً ــ ٢٨ .

Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brother's daughters and sister's daughters and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters and mothers of your wives and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship, (born) *of your wives to whom you have gone in but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you* (in marrying them) *and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins, and that you should have two sisters together, except what has already passed; surely Allāh is Forgiving* (23). *And all married women except those whom your right hands possess;* (this is) *Allāh's ordinance to you; and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that — that you seek* (them) *by means of your wealth taking* (them) *with chastity, not committing fornication. Then as such of them with whom you have* mut'ah, *give them their dowries as appointed; and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after what is appointed; surely Allāh is Knowing, Wise* (24). *And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then* (he may marry) *of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens; and Allāh knows best your faith: you are* (sprung) *the one from the other; so marry them with the permission of their people, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency, they shall suffer half the punishment which is* (inflicted) *upon free women. This is for him among you who fears falling into evil; and that you abstain is better for you, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (25). *Allāh desires to explain to you, and to guide you into the ways of those before you, and to turn to you* (mercifully), *and Allāh is Knowing, Wise* (26). *And Allāh desires that He should turn to you* (mercifully), *and those who follow* (their) *lusts desire that you should deviate* (with) *a great deviation* (27). *Allāh desires that He should make light your burdens, and man is created weak* (28).

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COMMENTARY

These are decisive verses which anumerate the women with whom marriage is prohibited — and those who are allowed. The preceding verse, which prohibited marriage with fathers' wives, is connected in theme with these verses; but its style was more in agreement with the preceding verses; that is why we included it in the preceding commentary, as it had some thematic relevance with those verses also.

The verses give a list of all those women with whom marriage is absolutely prohibited without any condition or exception. This is clear from the words immediately after enumeration of prohibited relatives: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that ...* That is why all scholars unanimously say that the verse prohibits son's daughter and daughter's daughter as well as father's mother and mother's mother; and that the verse: *do not marry women whom your fathers married,* prohibits grandfather's wife too. From this, we may easily understand the Qur'ānic view about sons and daughters and that who are included in these terms according to the *sharī'ah,* as will be explained later, Allāh willing.

QUR'ĀN: *Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brother's daughters and sister's daughters:* It is the list of those who are prohibited by blood-relation; they are seven in number. 'Mother' is a woman from whom man is born, either direct or through an intermediary, like father's mother or mother's mother, how high so ever. 'Daughter' is a woman who is born of the man, either direct or through an intermediary, like son's daughter or daughter's daughter, how low so ever. 'Sister' is a woman having affinity with the man by common birth from the same father and mother, or same father or same mother without any intermediary. 'Paternal aunt' is father's sister, as well as paternal or maternal grandfather's sister. 'Maternal aunt' is mother's sister, as well as paternal or maternal grandmother's sister.

Prohibition of mothers and the others described in the verse, means prohibition of marriage with them, as is understood from the subject and the order. It is not different from other such expressions; for example: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood and flesh of swine ...* (5:3), i.e., eating it; and the words: *... So it shall surely be forbidden to*

them for forty years. (5:26), i.e., living in it. Such metaphorical expressions are very common in every language.

Nevertheless, it seems a bit difficult to say that it is 'marriage' which is implied by the word, 'forbidden', because of the exceptional clause coming later: *except those whom your right hands possess.* Sexual intercourse with one's slave women is lawful without marriage. Therefore, it would seem more appropriate if prohibition is taken to refer to sexual intercourse, and not to marriage alone, as will be explained later. The same is the implication of the words: *that you seek* (them) *by means of your wealth* ..., as will be described afterwards. Thus the fact emerges that the implied word after 'forbidden' is cohabitation, or another similar word, not marriage. Allāh has avoided mentioning it explicitly, because the divine speech refrains from such words and maintains a high moral decorum.

The talk is addressed to men. It does not say: Forbidden to women are their sons, or, for example, there is no marriage between woman and her son. It is because by nature it is the man who seeks the woman and proposes marriage.

The verse addresses the men (in plural), and also the prohibited women are mentioned in plural, e.g., 'mothers' and 'daughters', etc. It implies comprehesive distribution. In other words, it means: Forbidden to each man among you is his mother and his daughter, etc. Obviously, it does not mean that the whole group of these women is forbidden to the whole group of men. Nor does it mean that every woman who happens to be a mother or a daughter is forbidden to every man. Otherwise, it would result in abrogation of the institution of marriage altogether. The verse, therefore, means that each man is forbidden to marry his mother, daughter and sister, etc.

QUR'ĀN: *and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters*: Now begins the list of the women prohibited by other than blood-relationship. They too are seven — six are mentioned in this verse and one in the preceding one: *and marry not women whom your fathers married.*

The style of the verse establishes motherhood and sonship between a woman and the child whom she suckles; likewise it creates brotherhood and sisterhood between man and his foster-sister; note how it uses the

words ‘mothers’ and ‘sisters’ for them as an accepted reality. Therefore, according to the *sharī‘ah,* breast-feeding creates relationship parallel to blood-relationship; and as will be described later, it is a special feature of the Islamic laws.

Both sects have narrated a correct tradition from the Prophet that he said: ‘‘Verily Allāh has prohibited through suckling what He has prohibited through blood-relationship.’’ It follows that suckling creates prohibition parallel to the prohibited blood-relationship, that is, foster-mother, foster-daughter, foster-sister, foster paternal aunt, foster maternal aunt, daughter of foster brother and daughter of foster-sister — a total of seven groups.

How the suckling relationship is established; what conditions are necessary concerning its quantity, quality and duration, to create the prohibition; and other relevant rules — these topics are explained in the Islamic jurisprudence, and are outside the scope of this book.

The words translated as, ‘‘and your foster-sisters’’, literally means, ‘and your sisters from suckling’, and the phrase refers to those sisters whom the man’s mother had suckled with the milk flowing because of his father.

QUR’ĀN: *and mothers of your wives*: It makes no difference whether the man had established sexual relation with that wife or not. The word ‘women’, when used in genitive construction with ‘man’, means wives — unconditionally. This generality is clearly proved from the condition mentioned in the next sentence: ... (born) *of your wives* [*lit.* ‘women’] *to whom you have gone in; but if you have not gone in to them ...*

QUR’ĀN: *and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship,* (born) *of your wives to whom you have gone in; but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you* (in marrying them): *ar-Rabā’ib* (اَلرَّبَائِبُ) is plural of *ar-rabībah* (اَلرَّبِيْبَةُ); it means daughter of a man’s wife from a previous husband; because it is the present husband who looks after the children whom his wife brings with her. It is he who in most, if not all, cases looks after them and brings them up.

The clause translated as, ‘‘who are in your guardianship’’, literally means, ‘who are in your lap’. This too denotes majority of cases, although not all step-daughters grow up in laps of their step-fathers. That

is why it is said that the words, ‘‘who are in your guardianship’’, merely denote general situation, because step-daughter is forbidden whether she grows up in the lap of her mother’s husband or not. The clause, therefore, is explanatory, not restrictive.

It is possible to maintain that the clause, ‘‘who are in your guardianship’’, points to the underlying reason of the law prohibiting women of blood- and other relations, as will be described later. There is continuous and constant mingling between men and these women; they are almost always together in the homes. Consequently, it would have been impossible to avoid incest (merely with prohibition of fornication) if they were not prohibited for ever — as will be explained later.

Accordingly, the clause, ‘‘who are in your guardianship’’, indicates that the criterion and underlying reason of prohibition is applicable to your step-daughters as validly as it is to other groups of prohibited women, because mostly these daughters grow up in your laps and live with you together.

In any case, the clause, ‘‘who are in your guardianship’’, is not a restrictive proviso to limit the prohibition. In other words, it does not mean that a step-daughter is lawful to her step-father if she is not in his guardianship; let us say, if there is an adult daughter whose mother has married another husband. Note for proof the clear wordings of the next clause, ‘‘but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you (in marrying them)’’. Obviously, establishing sexual relation with her mother has a bearing on the law of prohibition, and, therefore, its absence negates the prohibition. If the daughter’s being in the step-father’s guardianship had any bearing on the prohibition, it was necessary to describe it in the same way.

There is a phrase, that is, ‘in marrying them’, implied after the words, ‘‘there is no blame on you’’. It was deleted for brevity's sake as the context had made the meaning clear.

QUR’ĀN: *and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins: al-Ḥalā’il* (اَلْحَلَائِلُ) is a plural of *al-ḥalīlah* (اَلْحَلِيْلَةُ). It is written in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān:* ‘‘*al-Ḥalā’il* is plural of *al-ḥalīlah* which is a synonym of *al-muḥallalah* (اَلْمُحَلَّلَةُ = lawful); it is derived from *al-ḥalāl* (اَلْحَلَالُ = legal, lawful); its masculine gender is *al-ḥalīl* (اَلْحَلِيْلُ = lawful) and its plural is *aḥillah* (اَحِلَّةُ) on the paradigm of *‘azīz* and *a‘izzah* (عَزِيْزٌ،اَعِزَّةٌ =

powerful). Husband and wife were given this name because each of them is lawful to his/her spouse. There is another view that it is derived from *al-ḥulūl* (اَلْحُلُوْلُ = to enter into something), because each spouse enters into bed with his/her partner.''

The word, 'sons', denotes male child begotten by a human being through birth, either direct or through a son or daughter, [how low so ever]. The conditional clause, ''who are of your *loins*'', excludes wives of the so-called sons of adoption.

QUR'ĀN: *and that you should have two sisters together ...*;: It ordains prohibition of marrying sister of a wife as long as the wife is alive and is married to the man. It is the best and the shortest construction to express this idea. The expression makes it clear that man is forbidden to have both sisters together in his marriage at the same time. There is no hindrance if a man marries a woman and then, after her divorce or death, marries her sister. The proof may be seen in the well-established conduct of the Muslims going back to the Prophet's time.

The exceptional clause: *except what has already passed,* has the same implication here as it had in the preceding verse: *And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed.* It looks at the custom, prevalent among the Arabs of [the era of] ignorance, of having two sisters in marriage together. This clause proclaims pardon to what they had done in the past — before this verse was revealed. It does not mean that such marriages — if they were contracted earlier — could continue even after the revelation. The verse clearly shows that from now such marriages, being prohibited and unlawful, cannot continue. We have quoted in the ''Traditions'', under the verse: *And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed,* how the Prophet had separated between the sons and the wives of their fathers, at once after that verse was revealed, although the marriages had been contracted before its revelation.

Question: What is the use of pardoning a previous marriage which was dissolved soon after revelation of the verse, and did not continue? What was the benefit of saying that that past union was not prohibited — was lawful — when it had already ceased to exist?

Reply: It had great benefits, because the effects of that marriage were

continuing even after the marriage was dissolved, like legitimacy of children, recognition of various relationships and other related matters.

In other words, there is no use in saying that a past marriage, which had joined two sisters together, was lawful or unlawful — when both or one of them had died, or both or one of them had been divorced. But it is quite meaningful to declare that that past conjunction was not unlawful at that time. It was necessary for the welfare of the offspring of such marriages, as it gave them legitimacy and established relationship between the children and their natural fathers and other relatives, which in its turn had bearing on inheritance, marriage and other so many family affairs.

Accordingly, the clause:‘‘except what has already passed’’, regularize the resulting legal aspects of that marriage — not the marriage itself which had anyhow ceased before this legislation. It shows that both sides of this exception are inter-related, are not of two different categories, as many exegetes have written.

Also it is possible to apply this exception to all the clauses mentioned in the verse — without restricting it to the last clause, ‘‘and that you should have two sisters together’’. It is true that the Arabs did not marry any of the women mentioned in the verse, except having two sisters together; they did not marry their mothers, daughters or other prohibited relatives. But, at the time of the revelation of these verses, there were many societies, like the Persians, the Romans and several other civilized and uncivilized nations, which married various prohibited women, each society following its own custom. Islam recognizes the validity of the prevalent marriage-systems of non-Muslim societies — provided it was considered lawful by their religion or tradition. Thus, the exception confirms the legitimacy of their children and recognizes the validity of their relationships even when they enter into the fold of Islam.

Even so, the first explanation is more obvious.

QUR’ĀN: *surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful:* It explains the reason of the above-mentioned exception. It is one of those places where divine forgiveness refers to the external effects of a deed, and not to the sins and disobedience.

QUR’ĀN: *And all married women except those whom your right hands*

possess,: *al-Muḥṣanāt* (اَلْمُحْصَنَاتُ) is the *nomen patientis* (passive participle) of *al-iḥṣān* (اَلْاِحْصَانُ = to make inaccessible); they say: *al-ḥiṣn al-ḥaṣin* (اَلْحِصْنُ،اَلْحَصِيْنُ = invulnerable fortress). When this verb is ascribed to woman as, for example, *aḥṣanati 'l-mar'ah* (اَحْصَنَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ), it gives one of the following three connotations: i) The woman, being chaste, protected herself and abstained from illicit sexual relations, as Allāh says: ... *who guarded her chastity* (66:12); ii) The woman married, so her husband, or her marriage, protected her from others; in this sense, the verb may be used in passive voice; also iii) She is a free woman and it keeps her away from illicit sexual relations — because fornication was common among slave women.

Obviously, the word, *al-muḥṣanāt,* in this verse, has the second connotation, i.e., married women. It cannot have the first or the third meaning, because apart from the fourteen groups (mentioned in the preceding two verses), the only thing prohibited is marriage with a married woman; there is no snag at all in marrying other women, whether they be chaste or unchaste, free or slave. There is, therefore, no reason for interpreting the word, *al-muḥṣanāt* here as chaste women (because the prohibition is not confined to the chaste women) and then attaching to the verse a condition that they should not be in other's marriage. Nor is there any justification for explaining the said word as free women (because the rules about slave women are the same as those for free ones) and then attaching to the verse a condition of their being un-married. Such interpretations are not agreeable to good literary taste.

al-Muḥṣanāt, therefore, means married women, i.e., those who are presently married to a husband. The word is in conjunction with *your mothers and your daughters* ... The meaning: Forbidden to you are all married women as long as their present marriage continues.

Consequently, the exceptional clause, ''except those whom your right hands possess''; will exclude one's married slave girl from this prohibition. It has been narrated in traditions that the master of a married slave woman may take away that woman from her husband, keep her untouched for the prescribed term, then have sexual relation with her, and thereafter return her to her husband.

Some exegetes have opined: The exception, ''except those whom your right hands possess'', means, except those chaste women whom you possess by marriage or as slave. Possession thus implies the right of

having sexual pleasure.

But this opinion is not correct, because:

First: It interprets the word, *al-muḥṣanāt* (اَلْمُحْصَنَاتُ = married women) as chaste women, and you have already seen how wrong that interpretation is.

Second: The Qur'ān always uses the phrase, ''those whom your right hands possess'', for slaves; not for any other right of benefitting from something.

Likewise, someone has said: The phrase refers to unbeliever married women imprisoned in *jihād.* A tradition from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī is offered in support, in which he says: ''This verse was revealed about the captives of Awṭās, where the Muslims had captured some women of the polytheists, whose husbands were in (their) non-Muslim region. When this verse was revealed, an announcer announced on behalf of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) 'Be careful! The pregnant ones should not be approached for sexual intercourse until they deliver, nor the non-pregnant ones until they complete (their) waiting period.' ''

But apart from weakness of this tradition, it amounts to particularization of the verse without a particularizer.

Therefore, only the meaning given by us is to the point.

QUR'ĀN: (this is) *Allāh's ordinance to you:* The phrase, ''Allāh's ordinance to you'', means: Adhere to Allāh's command which is ordained and prescribed for you. The exegetes have said: ''Allāh's ordinance to you'' is a cognate accusative of an implied verb. The original sentence is supposed to be: Allāh has ordained an ordinance for you; the verb was then deleted and the accusative — ordinance — attached to the subject — Allāh — in a genitive construction, taking the place of the subject. They have not taken the phrase, ''to you'', as verbal-noun [in the meaning of, 'It is incumbent on you']; because the grammarians say that this phrase, as a verbal-noun, is weak in effect and its object cannot precede it [as it does in this verse].''

QUR'ĀN: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that:* [The construction, *mā warā'a dhālikum* (مَا وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكُمْ = what is besides that) requires careful consideration.] It uses, *mā* (مَا = what) which is obviously used for 'un-rational' things; the demonstrative pronoun, *dhālikum,* is used for

masculine singular object. Also the phrase is followed by the words: *that you seek by means of your wealth.* All these factors together make it clear that the relative and demonstrative pronouns refer to the same thing which was implied by the beginning word, ‘‘Forbidden’’, i.e., sexual intercourse, or words like that. Meaning: It is lawful for you to have it with other than what has been described above, that is, to have sexual intercourse after marriage with other than the fifteen prohibited groups — or after obtaining in slavery some other women. In this way the appositional substantive (*that you seek them by means of your wealth ...*) will perfectly enmesh with the rest of the sentence.

Many exegetes have explained this exceptional clause in very amusing ways. One says that the clause, ‘‘and lawful for you is (all) besides that’’, means that all other relatives are lawful to you. According to another, it means that it is lawful for you to have less than five — i.e., four or less — women that you seek them for marriage by means of your wealth. A third one opines that, it is lawful for you to have slave women outside the mentioned fifteen groups. Still another says that it means: Lawful for you is all besides the prohibited relatives — provided the number does not exceed four — that you seek by means of your wealth to marry them or purchase them in slavery.

All these interpretations are simple absurd, because none is supported by the wordings of the verse. Moreover, all of them apply the relative pronoun, ‘what’, to rational beings, without any justification, as you have seen above. Apart from that, the verse aims only at explaining as with whom conjugal relations cannot be established. In this context, it anumerates the prohibited groups of women — without looking at their number. There is no reason why the exceptional clause should be explained in term of numbers. The fact is that the verse aims at describing permission for the acquisition of women — other than those mentioned in the preceding two verses — by marriage or by possession.

QUR’ĀN: *that you seek* (them) *by means of your wealth, taking* (them) *with chastity, not committing fornication:* The clause is neither an appositional substantive standing for the preceding clauses, (all) *besides that;* or is in explicative apposition with that. In any case, it explains the lawful way of approaching women and having sexual intercourse with them. The preceding exceptional clause: *and lawful for you is* (all)

besides that, if left at that, could be applied to three things: Marriage, possession by slavery and fornication. This clause, ‘‘that you seek ...’’, forbids fornication and restricts permission to the remaining two: marriage and possession by slavery. Then it attaches importance to seeking them by means of one’s wealth: In marriage, it is dowry, which is one of its chief elements; in possession, it is price, which is the main procedure of acquiring slaves. The meaning now will be as follows: Apart from the above-mentioned prohibited categories, you are allowed to seek other women by spending your wealth on dowry of those whom you marry, or on price of slave girls — in all this you have to remain chaste and avoid illicit sexual relations.

It is now clear that the word, *muḥṣinīn* (مُحْصِنِيْنَ) in this clause denotes chastity; it cannot imply being married or free. The phrase ‘‘seek (them) by means of your wealth’’, covers marriage and possession both; there is no reason to restrict it to marriage: therefore, the word, *muḥṣinīn,* should not be restricted here to married ones. Also chastity does not mean celibacy; otherwise, the word would be irrelevant here. The word, chastity, as used here is opposite of illicit sexual relations of all types. It tells men to restrain themselves from unlawful sexual activities and restrict themselves to what Allāh has allowed of the sexual enjoyment — to which man is attracted by natural instinct.

Someone has said that the clause, ‘‘that you seek (them)’’, means ‘in order that you may seek them’. But this view is not correct. This clause explains the same thing which was said by the preceding one: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that.* Therefore, it is appositional substantive standing for the preceding clause; it does not mention anything that springs from the preceding one, or which is the effect of that.

Likewise, another writer has opined that the verb, *al-musāfaḥah* (اَلْمُسَافَحَةُ = to spill or shed something; metaphorically used in meaning of fornication) used here in the form of *ghayra musāfiḥīn* (غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِيْنَ = translated here as, not committing fornication) has actually been used in its literal sense, and the verse forbids merely ejaculating semen in womb, without intending to achieve the goal for which Allāh has created the natural sexual urge in man, i.e., without wanting to establish a family and procreate. Conversely, *al-iḥṣān* (اَلْاِحْصَانُ) implies permanent marriage which aims at producing children.

Reply: The only thing that can be said about the writer is that he is

confused. Generally, there are two ways of discussing a law: Sometimes one looks at its underlying reason and benefit; at other times, talk is focused at the law itself. That writer has muddled the two together, inadvertently putting himself in a corner.

Discussion about underlying reason of a law is rational in nature, based on intellect; while discussion of the law itself — togetherwith its subject, concomitants, conditions and impediments — is based on its wordings, and its expansion or constriction depends entirely on that of the phraseology chosen by the Law-giver. Of course, there is no doubt that all the divinely ordained laws are based on genuine reasons and benefits. The ordainment of marriage laws too is based on real benefit, genuine underlying reason, and that is procreation. We also know that the system of creation wants human species to continue through successive existence of its individual members — as long as Allāh wished. To achieve that goal, human body has been equipped with procreative organs; which take a minute part of human bodies, nurture and develop it until it becomes a new human being, ready to take the place of the preceding generation. In this way the species continues without interruption. At the same time, sexual urge was ingrained in human beings in order that they should not neglect using the said organs. It is because of this urge that each group — male and female — is attracted to the other and establishes sexual relations. All this was perfected with the power of understanding, which prevents human beings from subverting this process to which the system of creation invites.

Even so, although the natural system has achieved its goal, that is, continuation of human species, we know that not every sexual intercourse between man and woman achieves that goal. Cohabitation is the initial step on that path. But not every union is blessed with child, nor every sexual intercourse results in pregnancy, nor every lust brings about that effect. Not every man or woman, nor every marriage, is inexorably pushed to cohabitation and procreation. These things happen in many, but not in all, cases.

The natural faculty exhorts man to marry, seeking procreation through sexual urge; and the reason ingrained in him restrains him from indecency, from unlawful carnal activities, as such deviation spoils felicity of life, demolishes foundation of family and desrupts procreation.

This composite benefit — procreation and prevention of indecency

— is the underlying reason (which takes place in most of the cases), on which the institution of marriage is based in Islam. But this 'appearance in most of the cases', this generality, governs the underlying reason only. So far as the related ordained laws are concerned, they are not for 'most', but for all, human beings and for all times.

Therefore, it is not correct to say that marriage or cohabitation should be lawful or unlawful depending on whether or not the afore-said benefit can be obtained from it. It will be absurd to claim that marriage is not lawful without intention of procreation. Otherwise, such people will have to say that: marriage of an infertile man or woman is unlawful; marriage of a woman in menopause is unlawful; marriage of a minor girl is unlawful; marriage of a fornicator is unlawful; intercourse with a pregnant wife is unlawful; intercourse without ejaculation is unlawful; marriage, before establishing a household is unlawful; and so on and so forth.[1]

The fact is that marriage between male and female is a lawful institution, and it has its own permanent rules and regulations [which apply to the whole mankind for all times to come — without any exception]. This institution was established for protection of common benefits which are obtained from it in most cases, as you have seen. But it is meaningless to make this ordained institution dependent on that benefit for its existence [or lawfulness], or to say that every marriage or its every rule or aspect that did not lead to procreation was unlawful.

QUR'ĀN: *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut'ah *give them their dowries as appointed; ...*: Probably, the word, *mā* (مَا = translated here as 'such') is relative pronoun; the verb,''you have

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[1] The Vatican seems oblivious of this simple difference between underlying reason of a law and the law itself. That is why it has totally prohibited use of contraceptives, on the plea that it goes against the philosophy of marriage. But does Vatican have the conviction of courage to take this 'argument' to its logical end? Is it prepared to forbid intercourse with a pregnant wife, or ban marriage of infertile men or women? They should have banned these and other examples given in the text because they too cannot produce pregnancy. The prelates of the Roman Catholic Church — all unmarried men — are perhaps unaware that lawful satisfaction of sexual urge is in itself a valid underlying reason of marriage. (*tr.*)

mut'ah'' is its antecedent; the pronoun in *bihi* (به = with whom) refers to the relative pronoun, and the words, ''of them'' to the antecedent. Meaning: Then as to Such of the women with whom you have *mut'ah.*

Another possible grammatical explanation: The pronoun in *bihi* (with which) refers to cohabitation (which was implied in the clause: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that; 'mā'* then would denote time and mean 'whenever'; and the words, 'of them', would be connected to the verb, *istamta'tum* (اِسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ) which may literally be translated as, 'you seek to enjoy'. In this case, the translation would be as follows: Then whenever you seek to enjoy (sexually) with any of them, give them their dowries as appointed.

This sentence, ''Then as to such of them ...'', undoubtedly branches out from the preceding talk — as the letter, *fa* (فَ = then) shows — as a component is described after the whole, or a particular is explained after the general. As was explained, the preceding sentence: *that you seek* (them) *by means of your wealth ...*, is certainly a branching of a component or particular from a whole or general concept.

Such branching is very common in the divine book. For example: *For a counted Number of days; then whoever among you is sick or on a journey ...* (2:184); *... when you are secure, then whosoever enjoys by the* 'umrah *until the* ḥajj ... (2:196); *There is no compulsion in relgion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the rebels* (false deities) *and believes in Allāh ...* (2:256); there are many such examples.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the word, *al-istimtā'* (اَلْاِسْتِمْتَاعُ = *lit.*, to enjoy) used in this verse means *mut'ah* marriage. The verse is Medinite, and a part of the chapter of 'The Women', that was revealed in the first half of the Prophet's life at Medina, as the majority of its verses indicate; and in that period this type of marriage, i.e., *mut'ah,* was, without any doubt, a common practice, a prevalent custom among the Muslims — and the traditions unanimously accept this fact. It makes no difference whether or not it was Islam which had originated this system; what is important is the fact that this marriage was in vogue within the sight and hearing of the Prophet; and it had this very name, *mut'ah;* no other word was used to denote this type of marriage. Accordingly, there is no escape from applying the clause, *fa-māsta'tum bihi minhunna* (فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِه مِنْهُنَّ) to the *mut'ah* marriage. There were so many customs,

practices and cohabits prevalent among the Arabs at the period of the revelation, which had their own well-known and well-understood names; and whenever a verse was revealed concerning them using their names — whether it was confirmation or rejection, order or prohibition — there was no other way but to apply that nomenclature to their usual meanings — i.e., to the customs concerned; nobody ever thought of interpreting those names in their literal sense. For example, Qur'ān has used the words, *ḥajj,* trade, interest, profit, booty, and many similar names, but no one could ever think that, for instance, *ḥajj* of the House meant planning to go to the Ka'bah; nor were other such names ever explained in their literal meanings. Likewise, the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) brought many items of the *sharī'ah,* and they spread with their given religious names, like *ṣalāt, ṣawm* (fast), *zakāt, ḥajju't-tamattu',* etc. After the establishment of these names, nobody would think of applying these words, when they appear in the Qur'ān, to their original literal meanings — once the words have been established for their terminological meanings — in the usage of the religion or the people of religion.

Therefore, the only possible way is to apply the word, *al-istimtā',* of this verse, on the *mut'ah* marriage, because it was known with this very name when this verse was revealed. It is quite irrelevant whether or not the *mut'ah* marriage was later abrogated by the Qur'ān or tradition.

In short, the verse speaks about an aspect of the *mut'ah* marriage; and it is the explanation which is narrated from the ancient exegetes among the Companions and their disciples, like Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Qatādah, Mujāhid, as-Suddī, Ibn Jubayr, al-Ḥasan and others. The same is the *madhhab* of the Imams of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

This shows the incorrectness of the following two interpretations:

Some exegetes have written that *al-istimtā'* (*lit.,* to seek enjoyment) means marriage, because marriage-tie is established in order to get enjoyment from it.

Someone else has said that *istamta'tum* (اِسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ) actually means *tamatta'tum* (تَمَتَّعْتُمْ = you enjoy); and 's' and 't' (س، ت) have been added only for emphasis, [not to indicate seeking of something].

But both opinions are wrong, because prevalence and currency of *rnut'ah* marriage (with this very name) among them does not leave any room to its literal meaning to enter the hearers' minds.

Moreover, if we accept [for the sake of argument] that the verse

means seeking enjoyment, or enjoying, then this conditional clause would not agree with the resulting clause. It will be wrong to say that when you enjoy (sexually with) or seek to enjoy with, a woman, then give her dowry to her. The wife becomes entitled to dowry just on recitation of the formula of marriage; it does not depend on sexual relation, nor on the pursuit of the same (a term which may apply even to proposal of marriage, recitation of marriage formula, foreplay and sexual intercourse, etc.). Of course, half of the dowry is payable on recitation of the formula and the balance on coition.

Apart from that, many verses, which were revealed before it, had fully established the obligatoriness of paying dowry, with all its various propositions. Accordingly, there was no reason to repeat the order of its obligatoriness here. Vide, for example:

And give women their dowries as a free gift (4:4).

And if you wish to have (one) *wife in place of another and you have given one of them a heap of gold, then take not from it anything ...* (4:20 — 21).

There is no blame on you if you divorce women while yet you have not touched them or appointed for them a dowry, and make provision for them, on the wealthy according to his means and on the straitened in circumstances according to his means, ... And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have appointed for them a dowry, then (pay to them) *half of what you have appointed, unless they remit or he remits in whose hand is the marriage-tie; and it is nearer to piety that you should remit;...* (2:236 — 7).

Someone has proposed that this sentence may be aiming at putting emphasis on the law of dowry. But the above-mentioned verses, and especially the ending clauses of the verses: *And if you wish to have* (one) *wife in place of another ...,* are much more forceful and stronger than the verse under discussion. Therefore, how can this verse be supposed to put emphasis on those verses?

Now, a look at the question of abrogation:

It has been said that this verse was abrogated by the following verses of the chapter of 'The Believers':... *And who guard their private parts, except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable; but whoever seeks to go beyond that, these are they that exceed the limits* (23:5 — 7).

Another suggestion: It was abrogated by the verse of *al-'iddah* (ٱلْعِدَّةُ = waiting period after divorce or death of husband): *O Prophet! when you divorce women, divorce them for their prescribed time, and calculate the number of the days prescribed* (65:1); *And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three monthly courses ...* (2:228). Their argument: The marriage is dissolved by means of divorce and waiting period, but *mut'ah* marriage has neither.

A third suggestion: It was abrogated by the verse of inheritance: *And you shall have half of what your wives leave ...* (4:12). There is no inheritance in *mut'ah* marriage.

Fourth suggestion: It is abrogated by the verse of prohibition: *Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters ...* (4:23), as this verse is about marriage.

Fifth: It is abrogated by the verse of number: *... then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you, two and three and four ...* (4:3).

Others have said that the verse of *mut'ah* is abrogated by tradition. [But they seem unable to agree on its details:]

It is said that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) abrogated the *mut'ah* marriage in the year of Khaybar [i.e., 7 A H].

Others say: It was abrogated in the year of the Conquest [of Mecca, i.e., 8 AH].

Third claim: It was abolished in the Last Ḥajj [i.e., 10 A H].

A fourth claim is that *mut'ah* was allowed, then forbidden; and this alternate permission and prohibition happened twice or thrice, and the last order was of prohibition.

Let us look at the claims of abrogation by the Qur'ān:

1. As for the verse of the chapter of 'The Believers', first of all it cannot abrogate the verse of *mut'ah,* because it is of Meccan period while the verse of *mut'ah* is of Medinite period, and a Meccan verse cannot abrogate a Medinite one.

Second: The claim that *mut'ah* is not a marriage, or a woman married in *mut'ah* is not a wife, is totally unacceptable. You will see the truth if you just look at the sayings of the Prophet and wordings of the early Muslims, including the Companions and their disciples, who always called it *mut'ah* marriage.[1]

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[1] A part from that, the arguments about the *mut'ah* are intended to

2. As for the claim of abrogation by the verses of inheritance, divorce or number, the relation between these and the verse of *mut'ah* is not that of abrogator and abrogated. It is the relation that exists between general and particular, or between unrestricted and restricted. Let us look, for example, at the verse of inheritance; it is general and covers all wives whether married in parmanent marriage or temporary one; and then the tradition particularizes it by removing some groups from its jurisdiction, i.e., it excludes wives of *mut'ah* marriage from inheritance.[1] The same is obviously the case with the verses of divorce and number. Probably those who claimed abrogation could not distinguish the two relations.

Of course, some scholars of the Fundamentals of Jurisprudence have said that if a particular order is given then a contradictory general order follows, it abrogates the previous particular one. But apart from weakness of this view (as has been explained in its place), it cannot be applied to this case, because:

The verse of divorce (the general order) is in the chapter of 'The Cow', which is the first Medinite chapter revealed before the chapter of 'The Women' which contains the verse of *mut'ah.*

Likewise, the verse of number, a part of the same chapter of 'The Women', precedes [and is not preceded by] the verse of *mut'ah;* the same is the case with the verse of inheritance, which comes before the verse of *mut'ah* in one uninterrupted sequence and context in the same chapter. The particular order, therefore, was given later than the general one, in any case.

3. The claim, that this verse was abrogated by this very verse of prohibition is most astonishing of all. First, because the whole verse

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establish whether *mut'ah* is a valid form of marriage or not; whether the woman of *mut'ah* is a lawful wife or not. Now to assume that the word, 'mates' (or wives), used in this verse excludes the *mut'ah* wife, is to beg the question. (*tr.*).

[1] There are other examples where a wife is not entitled to her husband's inheritance. For example, if she is a slave or has killed the husband, she is debarred from his inheritance. Likewise, the Sunnīs allow marriage with a Jewish or Christian woman, but she, being an unbeliever, does not get any share in the husband's inheritance. Nobody would suggest that this exclusion affects her status as wife in any way. (*tr.*)

containing details of prohibited women and permission of *mut'ah* is one single speech, having one context; its sentences are interlinked, its parts interconnected. How could it be imagined that one of its clauses would legalize the *mut'ah* marriage and the preceding sentences would revoke this subsequent order?

Second: This whole verse says nothing, explicitly or implicitly, about prohibition of temporary marriage. It only aims at describing the categories of the women who are prohibited to man, and then at declaring that all other women are lawful to them, either with marriage or possession; and as we have explained, *mut'ah* is a marriage. The two things are not contradictory to each other, so that it could lead to abrogation or revocation.

Objection: The clauses: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that — that you seek* (them) *by means of your wealth, taking* (them) *with chastity, not committing fornication,* makes it difficult to interpret this verse in terms of *mut'ah*. The former has made lawfulness of women conditional on dowry and on marriage without fornication; and there is no marriage in *mut'ah;* that is why if a man (who has a *mut'ah* wife) commits adultery, he is not stoned, because he is not considered as married.

Reply: First, this argument is not based on solid grounds. We have already described (while explaining the phrase, *taking* [them] *with chastity, not committing fornication*) that *al-iḥṣān* in this context means chastity, not marriage, because the phrase covers union with one's slave girls as well.

Second: There will be no difficulty even if we agree, for the sake of argument, that *al-iḥṣān* refers here to marriage. It would only mean that the law of stoning an adulterer was not applicable to a man who had a wife of *mut'ah,* and that this exclusion was based on the tradition, not on the Qur'ān. After all, the law of stoning itself is not mentioned anywhere in the Qur'ān.

4. As for the claim of abrogation by tradition, we shall discuss it in detail under the ''Traditions''. At this juncture, it is enough to point out that such abrogation is invalid *ab initio,* as it goes against the *mutawātir* traditions ordering the Muslims to judge the traditions with the help of the Qur'ān and reject what does not agree with it.

QUR'ĀN: *And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then* (he may marry) *of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens;:aṭ-Ṭawl* (اَلطَّوْلُ = riches; ampleness of ability); either meaning fits in the context. *al-Muḥṣanāt* (اَلْمُحْصَنَاتُ) in this verse means free women, because it has been used in contrast to slave women; this also shows that it has not been used in the meaning of chaste; otherwise it would have been contrasted with unchaste. Obviously, it does not refer to married women either, because they cannot be married again [as long as their present marriage continues]; nor does it mean Muslim women; otherwise there was no need to qualify it with the adjective, 'believing'.

The words, ''those whom your right hands possess'', actually means slaves of other believers than him who intends to marry, because a man is not allowed to 'marry' his own slave girl — such a marriage is void. Possession has been ascribed to all the believers — not excepting the suitor — because Islam counts all believers as one body, not separate from one another, inasmuch as their religion is one and their benefits are one; it is as though they were one person.

The words, 'free women' and 'maidens', have been qualified with the adjective, 'believing'. It indicates unlawfulness of marriage with non-believing woman, be she a Jewish, a Christian or a polytheist. This topic has a supplement which will be found in the beginning of the fifth chapter, 'The Table', Allāh willing.

The verse says that whoever among you is unable to marry free believing woman, inasmuch as he does not have means to pay dowry and meet her expenses, then he may marry believing slave-girls, in order that he should not face difficulties (because of his inability to marry free women) and should not put himself in danger of indecency and spiritual infelicity.

The marriage, in this verse, refers to permanent marriage. The verse provides an alternative (of an inferior category), i.e., if you are unable to do that, then do this. The talk has been confined to only one group of the higher category, i.e., to the permanent marriage, to the exclusion of the temporary one, because it is the permanent marriage which is more popular and which a man — who wants to establish a house, procreate and leave an heir — naturally opts for. As for the *mut'ah* (temporary) marriage, it is a facility provided by the religion, which Allāh has used to

lighten the burden of His servants, in order that the path of indecency should be closed and social evils be uprooted.

Not infrequently, the Qur'ān narrows an ongoing talk to its well-known aspects which generally come to mind at the first glance — and especially so in ordaining the *sharī'ah's* rules and regulations. For example, Allāh says:

... so whoever of you witness the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) *the same number of other days* (2:185). But we know that genuine reasons of postponing a fast are not confined to sickness and journey.

... and if you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to clean earth ... (4:43). As you see, the verse mentions only the more common and well-known causes of *at-tayammum* (اَلتَّيَمُّمُ = ritual ablution with earth). There are many examples of this style.

This explanation has been written keeping in sight the general view that this verse refers to the permanent marriage. But its wordings can easily be applied to marriage in general — permanent and temporary alike — as will be shown in explanation of the rest of the clauses.

What we have shown here is that even if we apply the word 'marriage' here to permanent one, and look at the inferior alternative it provides and the latitude it gives, it does not necessarily follow that the marriage in preceding verse should exclusively refer to the permanent one and that the verse: *Then as such of them with whom you have* mut'ah ..., should have nothing to do with *mut'ah* marriage — as some people have said. The fact is that both sides of this latitude — the original order and the alternative — are found in this very clause, ''And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means ... then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess ...''. There is no need to go further back to explain this verse.

QUR'ĀN: *and Allāh knows best your faith: you are* (sprung) *the one from the other*;:As this order was conditional on belief; and belief is a matter of heart, the reality of which cannot be known by others. There was a possibility for people to think that the permission was conditional on something difficult or next to impossible; this could have prevented them from making use of it. Therefore, Allāh declared that He knows the

faith of His believing servants. It implies that people are required to base their mutual dealings on apparent signs that point to the faith, like the two witnessings, attending congregational prayers and discharging common religious duties. Thus, the criterion is the apparent belief, not its reality.

The direction given to non-affluent Muslims to marry slave-girls, had another apparent disadvantage, which could affect compliance: Common people looked down at slaves, who generally suffered from disrespect and dishonour, indignity and humiliation. This created in the people a sort of disinclination towards mingling and mixing with them socially, and particularly towards establishing marriage-ties with them, which is a lifelong partnership and unites both parties in heart and body.

[To erase that aversion] Allāh has said, ‘‘you are (sprung) the one from the other’’. It is a clear reality which would, if pondered upon, remove this wrong impression, this prejudice. Slave is as much a human being as is a free man;there is no difference between them in any aspect of humanness. The only difference is in some laid down rules which were necessary for maintenance of human society, so that they could lead to people’s felicity. But such distinctions have no validity before Allāh. What is recognized there is the piety with which man finds honour before Allāh. It is not good for the believers to be influenced by such imaginary allusion which would remove them from knowledge, the real knowledge that ensures their success and happiness in both worlds. It should not be forgotten that deviation from the straight pathway — even if it looks slight in the initial stages — continues to take man further and from the path of guidance until it throws him into the valley of perdition.

It is now clear that the sequence in the beginning of the verse that contains a condition and implies a sort of concession and latitude (*whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means to marry free believing women, then* [he may marry] *of those whom your right hands possess* ...), is just a way of talking, using the same style which the audience generally did under the influence of its habit and custom. But it is not an obligatory condition that the believers must follow this sequence. In other words, it is not that one has to be too poor to marry a free woman before he is allowed to marry a slave girl. It is just that the Qur’ān has addressed the people in their own language. That is why it has said that if you are unable to marry free women, you should

marry slave girls without any hesitation. Then it has drawn their attention to the fact that the free and the slave both are members of the same humanity, each of them is related to the other.

It also shows incorrectness of what someone has written under the clause, ‘‘and that you abstain is better for you’’, that it means: if you abstain from marrying slave women and remain chaste, it is better for you than marrying them — as it may bring disgrace and indignity to you. The fact is that the clause, ‘‘you are (sprung) the one from the other’’, contradicts such interpretations.

QUR’ĀN: so marry with the permission of their people and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours;: In this paragraph, al-muḥṣanāt refers to chaste women; it cannot mean married ones, because there is no question of marrying them while they are married. al Musāfiḥāt (اَلْمُسَافِحَاتُ = fornicating women) is placed parallel to the phrase, ‘‘receiving paramours’’. *al-Akhdān* (اَلْاَخْدَانُ) is plural of *al-khidn* (اَلْخِدْنُ = friend, paramour); it is used for masculine as well as faminine, and for singular as well as plural; this verse uses the plural form to clearly point to numerousness; when one takes a paramour for fornication, one generally does not stop at one or two, because man’s appetite does not stop at any point once it exceeds the limit.

It is looking at this contraposition that someone has said: The word, fornication, as used in this verse, means open illicit sexual relation, and receiving paramour implies secret liaison. Such secret affairs were commonplace in Arabia; even among free women it was not frowned upon; while open fornication was criticized if done by other than slave girls.

The clause, ‘‘so marry them with the permission of their people’’, advises them to marry slave women provided it is done with permission of their masters; because the rein of their affairs is held by none other then their masters. The masters have been called their ‘people’ in accordance with the preceding clause: *you are* (sprung) *the one from the other;* thus the slave girl is a member of the family of her master, and the master is her guardian, her people.

One has to give them their dowries in a proper way. In other words, the suitor should fix her dowry according to prevalent standard; paying it to her actually means paying it to her master. The clause guides the

people to appoint and pay their dowries without reduction, without delay and without hurting the feelings.

QUR'ĀN: *and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency, they shall suffer half the punishment which is* (inflicted) *upon free women:* The verb *uḥṣinna* (أُحْصِنَّ = they are taken in marriage) is in passive voice; some have recited it in active voice, and that recitation is rather preferable.

If *al-iḥṣān* refers to their marriage, then it was included in the conditional clause just because the preceding talk had circled around their marriage. [It has no legalistic significance] because if a slave fornicates, she gets only half the punishment of a free woman who is guilty of the same offence; and it makes no difference whether the slave-girl is married or not; her being married does not increase her sentance in any way.

But if *al-iḥṣān* refers to their being Muslims — which the recitation of active voice would support — then the meaning will fit the wordings effortlessly. They shall suffer half the punishment of the free women, no matter whether they are married or not.

The punishment refers to flogging, not stoning, because stoning cannot be halved. This in its turn proves that the word, *al-muḥṣanāt* (translated here as 'free women') refers to unmarried ones, and not to the married ones who are mentioned by the same word, in the beginning of the verse [24: *And all married women* ...]. The definite article in 'the punishment', refers to the well-known punishment. The meaning: If believing slave women commit indecency, i.e., fornication, they shall be given half the punishment of unmarried free women, that is, they shall receive fifty stripes.

Another possible explanation: *al-Iḥṣān* may imply chastity. The salve girls in those days were not free to do as they liked; they had to obey the orders of their masters, especially in indecency and debauchery. When they indulged in prostitution, it was usually by the order of their masters who exploited them and used them as a source of income. The masters sold their slaves' honour to increase their wealth. This aspect is implied in the prohibition contained in the verse: *and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution when they desire to keep chaste, in order to seek the frail good of this world's life* (24:33). Obviously when they sold their

bodies and indulged in prostitution, it was done by the order of their masters, without any choice left to them. If the masters did not compel them for fornication, then the believing slaves among them would have observed Islamic piety, at least in appearance, and would have preserved their chastity as was expected of a believer. But if they indulged in fornication after that, then they would be given half the punishment of free women. It is this aspect to which the verse points, ‘‘and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency, they shall suffer half the punishment which is (inflicted) upon free women’’.

But if the word *uḥṣinna* (أُحْصِنَّ translated here as, ‘‘taken in marriage’’),is taken to indicate chastity [‘and when they become chaste’], then the conditional clause would be superfluous, because if they were not chaste then they would be under duress, compelled to do as their masters said. Likewise, there would be no meaning in the words: *and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution, when they desire to keep chaste* (24:33), because if they do not want to be chaste, there is no question of compulsion by the masters — they would indulge in fornication willingly. Think over it.

QUR’ĀN: *This is for him among you who fears falling into evil ... Forgiving, Merciful: al-‘Anat* (اَلْعَنَتُ) literally means affliction, hardship and perdition; in this context, it implies fornication, which takes place when man is afflicted by lust, suffers from hardship of sexual desire and thus falls in perdition. The demonstrative pronoun, ‘This’, reportedly refers to the marriage with slave girls mentioned in this verse. Accordingly, the next clause, ‘‘and that you abstain is better for you’’; would mean: If you abstain from marrying slave girls, or from fornication, it is better for you. Also, possibly the pronoun refers to obligatoriness of marriage with slave girls, or marriage in general — if such ideas could be inferred from the context of the preceding verse; and Allāh knows better.

However, abstinence and patience is better, in any case. If it indicates abstaining from marrying slave girls, it is because of the rights their masters have on them and on their offspring — as described in books of jurisprudence; and if it implies abstaining from illicit sexual relations, then it looks at the purity of character that the patience and abstinence create, and at the trait of piety which is strengthened when man refuses to

yield to his lustful desires — no matter whether he is married or not; ‘‘and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful’’: He erases, through His forgiveness, the effects of evil thoughts from the minds of His pious servants, and has mercy on them.

QUR’ĀN: *Allāh desires to explain to you:* This sentence and the subsequent ones indicate and explain the ultimate goal of various laws ordained in the preceding three verses; and the benefits that are derived when society follows them scrupulously. The meaning, accordingly, will be as follows: Allāh desires to explain to you the rules of His religion, as it leads you to the good of this world and the next one, and contains many underlying benefits and reasons. According to this explanation, the object of this verb was deleted to show its greatness and importance. Another possibility: The verbs, ‘‘to explain to you’’, and ‘‘to guide you’’, may be having a common object, i.e., ‘the ways of those before you’.

QUR’ĀN: *and to guide you into the ways of those before you:* That is, the life-styles of the prophets and the good people, who spent their days seeking Allāh’s pleasure, and through it enjoyed the happiness of this world and the hereafter. If this interpretation is correct, then ‘‘the ways’’ would indicate their way of life in general terms, not all their customs and traditions with all their details and particulars. Accordingly, there would be no room for the objection, that the ancients had some laws which these very verses have revoked, like marriage between brothers and sisters in Adam’s time, and having two sisters together (in the *sharī‘ah* of Ya‘qūb, who, according to some reports, had two sisters together — Leah, mother of Judah, and Rachel, mother of Joseph).[1]

There is another interpretation offered by some people: The clause speaks about guiding to the ways of all previous societies, no matter whether they were on the right path or the wrong. Accordingly, it means:

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[1] We have already shown that the hypothesis of marriage between Adam’s immediate sons and daughters was not correct; [see note, vol.7, p.222]. As for Ya‘qūb (a.s.) having two sisters together, it is reported in the Old Testament, and we have described in vol.6 how unreliable those writings of dubious origin are. It is unrealistic to base one's argument on such writings. (*tr.*)

We have explained to you all the previous customs — right and wrong, all — in order that you may have an insight into them, adopt the right customs and reject the wrong ones.

There is no difficulty in accepting this meaning, except that guidance has not been used in this meaning in the Qur'ān. It has always been used for conveyance to the truth or to show the truth. Allāh says: *Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allāh guides whom He pleases* (28:56); *Surely We have shown him the way; he may be thankful or unthankful* (76:3). It is more appropriate to the Qur'ānic taste to express such ideas, as given by that exegete, with the words, explanation or narration, etc.

Nevertheless, if the verb, ''to explain to you'' and ''to guide you'' are taken to have the common object, ''the ways of those before you''; and the subsequent verb, ''to turn to you (mercifully)'', is also taken to refer to the same, then the above explanation will fit the verse properly. The meaning, then, would be as follows: 'Allāh explains to you the ways of those before you, and guides you to the correct ones among them, and turns mercifully to you concerning the wrong customs which you had adopted.' The preceding verses have mentioned previous people's customs — right and wrong both — and have proclaimed pardon for the wrong practices of the past.

QUR'ĀN: *and to turn to you* (mercifully), *and Allāh is knowing, Wise: at-Tawbah* (اَلتَّوْبَةُ) here refers to Allāh's turning to His servant with favour and mercy, ordaining the *sharī'ah* and explaining the reality, and guiding him to the right path. All these are various facets of Allāh's turning, as is the acceptance of the servant's repentance and erasure of sin's effects and consequence from him.

The ending clause, ''and Allāh is Knowing, Wise'', covers all the clauses of the verse. Had it been connected only to the last one, it would apparently have been more appropriate to say: and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

QUR'ĀN: *And Allāh desires that He should turn to you* (mercifully) *and those who follow* (their) *lusts desire ... a great deviation:* The verse reiterates Allāh's turning to the believers to indicate that the following sentence, i.e., ''and those who follow (their) lusts desire that you should deviate (with) a great deviation'', stands face to face with the only last of

the three clauses of the preceding verse. If there were no repetition, the sentence, ‘‘and those who follow ...’’, would have looked as standing parallel to all three preceding clauses, and would have seemed irrelevant.

The great deviation implies transgression of Allāh’s limits described in these verses: Having incestuous relations; disregarding the effects of blood-and marriage-relationships; licentiousness and debauchery; and refusal to follow the right path laid by Allāh.

QUR’ĀN: *Allāh desires that He should make light your burdens, and man is created weak:* Man is weak. Why? Because desire is an integral part of his creation; it unceasingly incites him to indulge in lust, and thus creates an internal turmoil. Allāh in His mercy and favour, has made lawful for them the ways to calm down their desire, i.e., He has ordained the institution of marriage to lighten their burdens and lessen their hardships, as He has said: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that.* This includes marriage and possession; in this way He has guided them to the ways of those who were before them. Then He has given them another concession by legalizing the *mut‘ah* marriage, as it does not entail as much hardships as the permanent marriage does, i.e., heavy dowry, regular maintenance, etc.

Someone has said: The lightening of burdens refers to the permission of marrying slave girls in times of need. But this explanation is not to the point. Arabs used to marry slave girls at times of need even in pre-Islamic days; this custom was prevalent among them, although they did not like it, and, considered it degrading to themselves. What these verses have done is to erase that stigma and removes that dislike and aversion, by explaining that a slave girl is as much a human being as a free woman is, without there being any difference between them in any way. The status of slavery does not make a slave unworthy of social mingling and family ties.

Undeniably, the verses are clearly addressed to the believers of this *ummah.* Accordingly, the said lightening of burdens concerns this *ummah* only, and it means what we have described.

Now, the given reason that, ‘‘man is created weak’’, is not confined to this *ummah;* it is common to all humanity, be they of this *ummah* or of the previous ones; while the lightening of burdens was ordained for this *ummah* only. The verse, thus, gives a general cause but keeps silent about

what restricts its effect. It is as though it was saying: We have lightened your burdens, because the weakness pervading the mankind was always demanding this lightening; but there were always some impediments there, which prevented it from taking effect — the impediments which hindered lightening of burdens and spreading of mercy in previous nations. Then came your turn and the divine mercy has now encompassed you and its effects are now appearing among you. Now the said cause has brought its effects into being and Allāh has reduced your burdens — although the previous nations were not allowed this concession. This fact may be gleaned from the following two verses: *''Our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us''* (2:286); *He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion* (22:78).

It appears from the above that this general cause also aims at showing that all the favours bestowed on humanity have appeared in their complete form in this *ummah.*

TRADITIONS

The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Verily, Allāh has forbidden by reason of breast-feeding what He has forbidden by reason of blood-relationship.''

Also he (s.a.w.a.) has said: ''Suckling is a relationship like blood-relationship.''

Mālik and ʻAbdu 'r-Razzāq have narrated from ʻĀ'ishah that she said: ''Among what was revealed of the Qur'ān was (the verse of) ten known sucklings; then it was abrogated by (the verse of) five known (sucklings); and the Messenger of Allāh expired and those (verses) were a part of what was recited of the Qur'ān.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated in his above book other traditions from ʻĀ'ishah, through other chains. But they are among the traditions which imply distortion and alteration of the Qur'ān; such reports are totally rejected because of their inconsistency with the Qur'ān.

ʻAbdu 'r-Razzāq, ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-

Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated through two chains from ‘Amr ibn Shu‘ayb, from his father, from his grandfather from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: ‘‘When a man marries a woman, then it is not lawful to him to marry her mother, whether he has gone into that girl (his wife) or not; on the other hand, if he marries the mother and divorces her before going into her, then he may marry (her) daughter, if he so wishes.’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: This meaning is narrated through the Shī‘ī chains from the Imams of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.), and it is their known *madhhab,* and the same is inferred from the Qur’ān, as was explained in the preceding Commentary. But the Sunnīs have narrated from ‘Alī (a.s.) that there was no harm in marrying the mother of the wife (if one divorces the latter) before establishing sexual relations with her; and that she was in this respect like the step-daughters; also that it was not unlawful for a man to marry his step-daughter if she was not under his guardianship. But such assertions are contrary to all that is narrated from them (Imāms, a.s.) through the Shī‘ī chains.

al-Kulaynī has narrated through his chains from Manṣūr ibn Ḥāzim that he said: ‘‘I was with Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) when a man came and asked him about a man who had married a woman, but she died before he could establish sexual relations with her — ‘Can he marry her mother?’ Thereupon, Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ‘A man of us had done so and had not considered it objectionable.’ Then I said: ‘May I be made your ransom! The Shī‘ah do not boast except by the judgment of ‘Alī (a.s.) concerning this (problem) about *al-mashīkhah* [1], about which Ibn Mas‘ūd had given a ruling that there was no snag in it. Then he came to ‘Alī (a.s.) and asked him. ‘Alī (a.s.) said to him: ‘‘From where [i.e., on what authority] will he take her?’’[2] He said: ‘‘From the word of Allāh, the

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[1] Probably the correct word is *ash-Shamakhī* (اَلشَّمَخي = one belonging to the tribe of ash-Shamakh اَلشَّمَخْ). Some Sunnī traditions say that he was a man from the tribe of ash-Shamakh. Or, the correct text may be: ‘about the woman from the tribe of ash-Shamakh concerning whom Ibn Mas‘ūd had given a rulling.’. (*Author’s Note*)

[2] The text of *al-Wāfī* says: ‘From where did he take it?’ (*Author’s note*)

Mighty, the Great: *and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship,* (born) *of your wives to whom you have gone in; but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you* (in marrying them).'' ‘Alī (a.s.) said: ‘‘This is conditional, while that (i.e., prohibition of the mother-in-law) is unconditional.'' '' Then Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said to the man [who had asked the question]: ‘Do you not hear what this (man) narrates from ‘Alī (a.s.)?'

‘‘Thereafter when I stood up, I felt remorse and said (to myself): ‘What have I done? He [i.e., the Imām, a.s.] says: ‘‘A man of us had done so and had not considered it objectionable'', and then I [contradict him and] say: ‘‘ ‘Alī (a.s.) had given such ruling on this (matter)''.' So I met him afterwards and said: ‘May I be made your ransom! Concerning that man's enquiry, it was a mistake on my part that I spoke as I did; so what do you say in this respect?' He said: ‘O Shaykh! You inform me that ‘Alī (a.s.) had decided this matter and then you ask me what I say about it!' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: The story of his judgment concerning the ruling of Ibn Mas‘ūd, as narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from *as-Sunan*, is as follows: A man from (the tribe of) Banū Shamakh married a woman, but before establishing sexual relations with her, he saw her mother and liked her. He asked Ibn Mas‘ūd about it; and he told him to leave (i.e., divorce) the said wife and then marry her mother. He did so, and got children from her. Then Ibn Mas‘ūd came to Medina and was told that she was not lawful (for him). Therefore, on returning to Kūfah he informed the man that she was forbidden to him; and he separated from her.

But this story does not ascribe that judgment to ‘Alī (a.s.). It rather says that he had asked the Companions of the Prophet about it. Another text says that he had asked ‘Umar about it. A third narration says that he was informed that his ruling was not correct and that that condition applied to the step-daughters only.

[ash-Shaykh narrates] through his chains from Isḥāq ibn ‘Ammār from Ja‘far (a.s.) from his father (a.s.) that ‘Alī (a.s.) used to say: ‘‘The step-daughters are forbidden to you (who are born) of the mothers with whom you have cohabited, no matter whether they are in your guardianship or not; and (the wives') mothers are (forbidden) unconditionally, whether sexual intercourse was established or not.

Therefore, treat as unlawful and unconditional what Allāh has kept unconditional.'' (*al-Istibṣār*)

The author says: Some Sunnī traditions ascribe to ʻAlī (a.s.) that prohibition of step-daughters was conditional on their being in one's guardianship. But this is rebutted by the traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), and as was explained earlier, the latter was in conformity with the connotation of the verse.

al-Mubhamāt (اَلْمُبْهَمَاتُ = translated above as 'unconditionally,) is derived from *al-buhmah* (اَلْبُهْمَةُ), which implies a thing that has a single colour, unmixed with another colour. This adjective is used for those categories of prohibited women whose prohibition is general and unconditional, that is, mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal aunts, maternal aunts, brother's daughters and sisters's daughters, as well as foster relatives, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Zurārah narrates from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he asked him about a man who has a slave girl with whom he has cohabited — ''Is it lawful for him to marry her daughter?' The Imām (a.s.) said: 'No. She is as Allāh has said: *and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship ...*' '' (*ibid.*)

Abū ʻAwn has reported that he heard Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥanafī saying: '' ʻAlī (a.s.) said one day: 'Ask me (whatever you wish to ask).' Ibn al-Kawwā' said: 'Tell me about the daughter of the foster sister, and about two sisters in possession (of one master).' (The Imām, a.s.) said: 'Surely you are wan dering;(better) ask about that which concerns you or may be useful to you.' Ibn al-Kawwā' said: 'We ask you only about what we do not know; as for that which we know, we do not ask you about.' Then (the Imām, a.s.) said [*inter alia*]: 'As for the two slave sisters, one verse makes them lawful, while another prohibits them; and I neither allow them nor forbid them; but I do not do it nor does anyone of my household.' '' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyāshī)

It is narrated from Muʻammar ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sālim that he said: ''We asked Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) about what the people narrate from the Leader of the faithful (a.s.) concerning somethings which he neither allowed nor prohibited except his own self and his children; and I said: 'How is it possible that he said, ''One verse allows it and another forbids it''.' We said: 'First of all, either, one of them had abrogated the other, or both

were decisive which should be followed.' (The Imām, a.s.) then said: 'He made the matter clear to them when he forbade himself and his children.' We said: 'What prevented him from explaining it [in clear words] to the people?' He said: 'He was afraid that his (orders) would not be obeyed; because if the Leader of the faithful could firmly establish his authority, he would have enforced the Book of Allāh, all of it, and the truth, all of it!' '' (*at-Tahdhīb*)

The author says: The tradition of 'Alī (a.s.), referred to, is the one narrated from him through the Sunnī chains. It is quoted in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from al-Bayhaqī and others that 'Alī (a.s.) said about two sister slave girls: ''One verse makes them lawful while another one prohibits them; and I neither allow (it) nor disallow (it); nor do I make them lawful or unlawful; and I do not do it, nor do the people of my household (do so).'' The same book narrates from Qubayṣah ibn Dhu'ayb that someone asked 'Alī (a.s.) about it and he said: ''If I had any authority and had found anyone doing it, I would have made him a warning example (i.e., would have given him exemplary punishment).''

'Abdullāh ibn Sinān said: ''I heard Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) saying: 'If a man has two [slave] sisters in his possession, and has sexual relations with one of them, and then wishes to have the same [relations] with the other, it is not allowed to him to do so, until the former goes out of his possession — either he gifts her (to someone) of sells her. Thus it will be sufficient if he gives her as a gift to his son.' '' (*at-Tahdhīb*)

'Muḥammad ibn Muslim said: ''I asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.) about the word of Allāh: *and all married women except those whom your right hands possess.* He said: 'It is [like] this, that a man orders his slave (whom is married to his slave girl), and tells him, ''Put aside your wife and do not go near her''. Then he keeps her confined until she sees her blood; after that he touches her. There after when she again sees blood after his touching her, he returns her to him [i.e., to her slave husband] without [any need of a new] marriage.' '' (*al-Kāfī; at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

Ibn Muskān has narrated through Abū Baṣīr, from one of the two Imāms (a.s.), about the word of Allāh: *And all married women except those whom your right hands possess,* that he said: ''They are the women having husbands except those whom your right hands possess. If you

have given your slave girl in marriage to your slave boy, you may remove her from him if you so wish.'' ''I said: 'Do you see, if he has given her in marriage to other than his own slave boy?' He said: '(Then) he has no right to remove (her from him) until she is sold away; then if he sells her, her affair is transferred to other than him (i.e., to the buyer); then the buyer may separate (her from her husband) if he so desires, and may reconfirm (the marriage) if he so wishes.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

as-Suyūṭī has narrated from Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī (who has said that the tradition is good) and Ibn Mājah, from Fīrūz ad-Daylamī, that he entered into Islam and there were two sisters under him (i.e., he had gathered two sisters in marriage); so the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to him: ''Give divorce to whomever you wish (to leave) of the two.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Barr has narrated in *al-Istidhkār,* from Ayās ibn 'Āmir that he said: ''I asked 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and said: 'I have two sisters among my slaves, with one of whom I have established sexual relations and she has borne children for me; then I am attracted to the other; now what should I do?' He said: 'You should emancipate the one you had cohabited with, then you (may) cohabit with the other.' Then he said: 'Surely, all the categories of free women forbidden to you in the Book of Allāh, are also forbidden to you from among those whom your right hands possess, except the number (or he said, 'except the limit of four') and all the categories forbidden to you in the Book of Allāh through kinship, are also forbidden to you through breast-feeding.' '' (*ibid.*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated it from 'Alī (a.s.) through other chains too.

Abū Hurayrah said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'A woman and her paternal aunt are not gathered together, nor are a woman and her maternal aunt.' '' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ,* al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

The author says: This theme is found also in some Sunnī traditions narrated through other chains; but the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) refute it, and the Qur'ān supports them.

aṭ-Ṭayālisī, 'Abdu 'r-Razzāq, al-Fariyābī, Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad,

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī and an-Nasā’ī; as well as Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that he said: ‘‘Verily, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) sent an army, on the day of Ḥunayn, to Awṭās. They met the enemy and defeated them. after a fight and took captives. Some companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) refrained from cohabiting with them, because they had their polytheist husbands. Then Allāh revealed: *And all married women except those whom your right hands possess,* that is, except those whom Allāh has given to you as booty. So we treated them as lawful to us on that authority.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: The same book narrates it through aṭ-Ṭabarānī from Ibn ‘Abbās.

‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated from ‘Ikrimah: ‘‘This verse in the chapter of ‘The Women’, i.e.: *And all married women exept those whom your right hands possess,* was revealed about a woman, called Ma‘ādhah, who was married to an old man of Banū Sadūs, named Shujā‘ ibn al-Ḥārith. There was his other wife with her, who had borne to him children, [now grown-up] men. Shujā‘ went to Hajar to get provisions for his family. In the meantime, a cousin of Ma‘ādhah passed from there, and she said to him: ‘Take me away to my people, because there is no good with this old man.’ So he carried her away with him. (Their departure almost) coincided with the old man’s arrival. He went to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh, and the most excellent of the Arabs! I had gone out in [the month of] Rajab to get provisions for her; and and she fled away; and she is the worst dominator for anyone who is dominated; she saw a boy sitting on the hump; there is a desire in her and in him.’ The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Bring (them) to me! Bring (them) to me! If the man has opened her cloth (i.e., committed adultery with her), then stone her; otherwise, return to the old man his wife.’ So Mālik, son of Shujā‘ from the other wife, went out in pursuit and and brought her back and she came down to her house.’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: It has repeatedly been mentioned that such stories

purpoting to describe the occasion when a verse was revealed — and especially those dealing with some parts or clauses of a verse — are merely the attempts of the narrators to fit some events to some verses or sentences; they do not give the real reasons of revelation.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about the word of Allāh, *And all* al-muḥṣanāt (اَلْمُحْصَنَاتُ) *women:* He said: ‘‘It means those who are married.’’ Then he was asked about the words, *and* al-muhsanāt *from among those who have been given the Book before you* [5:5]; he said: ‘‘The chaste women.’’ (*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l-faqīh*)

The author says: al-‘Ayyāshī too has narrated it from the same Imām (a.s.).

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has explained the words, *And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means,* as ‘‘whoever among you does not have riches’’; and according to him it is narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.). (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘Today a free man should not marry a slave girl. It was (allowed) as Allāh has said, *And whoever among you has not within his power ampleness of means;* and ampleness of means refers to dowry, but today the dowry of a free woman is (just like) the dowry of a slave girl or even less.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: Wealth and riches is one connotation of ‘ampleness of means’, as was explained earlier. The tradition does not show more than undesirability of such marriages.

Abu ’l-‘Abbās al-Baqbāq has said: ‘‘I said to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.): ‘Can a man marry a slave girl without the permission of her people?’ He said: ‘It is fornication. Surely Allāh says: so *marry them with the permission of their people.*’ ’’ (*at-Tahdhīb*)

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ib Naṣr says: ‘‘I asked ar-Riḍā (a.s.): ‘Can *mut‘ah* be done with a slave girl with the permission of her people?’ He said: ‘Yes. Surely Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *so marry them with the permission of their people*.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn Muslim says narrating from one of the two Imāms

(a.s.): ‘‘I asked him about the word of Allāh regarding the salve girls, *and when they are taken in marriage* — ‘What was the connotation of *al-iḥṣān* (اَلْاِحْصَانُ) here?’ He said: ‘Consummation of marriage.’ I said: ‘Then if the marriage is not consummated, there is no [fixed] punishment prescribed for them?’ He said: ‘Certainly.’ ’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

Ḥarīz said: ‘‘I asked him about *al-muḥṣin* (اَلْمُحْصِنُ). He said: ‘He who has that which suffices him.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn Qays narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘The Leader of the faithful (a.s.) used to sentence slave men and women, if any of them committed fornication, to be flogged fifty stripes — whether he/she be a Muslim or unbeliever or Christian; and he/she was not to be stoned or banished.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

Abū Bakr al-Ḥaḍramī narrates that Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said about a slave who defamed a free man [of fornication]: ‘‘He shall be flogged eighty stripes; it is among the rights of the people; as concerning that which is among the rights of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, he shall be given half of the prescribed punishment.’’ ‘‘I said: ‘What are the things among the rights of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great?’’ He said: ‘When he fornicates or drinks liquor; it is among those rights for which he shall be given half of the punishment.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

Barīd al-‘Ijlī narrates from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said about a slave girl who commits fornication: ‘‘She shall be given half the prescribed punishment, no matter whether she has a husband or not.’’ (*at Tahdhīb*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: *‘‘al-Musāfiḥāt* (اَلْمُسَافِحَاتُ)refers to those who commit fornication openly; and *muttakhidhāt akhdān* (مُتَّخِذَاتُ اَخْدَانٍ), to those who have only one paramour.’’ Also he said: ‘‘The people of the (era of) ignorance considered fornication unlawful if it was done openly; but what remained concealed was treated as lawful. They used to say: ‘What becomes known is ignoble, but there is no blame in that which remains secret.’ Then Allāh revealed: *and do not draw near to indecencies, those of them which are apparent, and those which are concealed.*’’ [6:151], (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions on the themes described above; but we have quoted only a few of them as samples.

A REVIEW OF TRADITIONS ABOUT *MUT'A* MARRIAGE

Abū Baṣīr says: ''I asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.) about the *mut'ah.* He said: 'It has been revealed in the Qur'ān: *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut'ah, *give them their dowries as appointed; and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after what is appointed.*' '' (*al-Kāfī*)

Ibn Abī 'Umayr narrates through his narrator from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: ''It was revealed (as follows): *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut'ah — for a fixed period — *give them their dowries as appointed.*'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: This recital has been narrated by al-'Ayyāshī from Abū Ja'far (a.s.); also the Sunnis have narrated it by various chains from Ubayy ibn Ka'b and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, as will be described below. Probably, such traditions aim at describing the intended meaning of the verse, rather than asserting that the actual revelation contained these words.

Zurārah said: '' 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umayr al-Laythī came to Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and asked: 'What do you say about *mut'ah* with women?' He replied: 'Allāh has made it lawful in His Book and on the tongue of His Prophet; therefore, it is lawful upto the Day of Resurrection.' He said: 'O Abū Ja'far! (a person) like you says this while 'Umar had prohibited and made it unlawful?' He said: 'Even if he did so.' Then (al-Laythī) said: 'I seek Allāh's protection for you that you should consider a thing lawful which 'Umar had made unlawful.' ''

Zurārah says: ''Then the Imām said to him: 'Well, you adhere to the word of your companion, while I am on the word of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Well, come on, let me utter imprecations against you that the (right) word is that which the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had said, and that false is that which your companion had uttered.' Thereupon 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umayr turned to him and said: 'Would you like it if your women, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your cousins did it?' '' Zurārah says: '' 'Then Abū Ja'far (a.s.) turned away from him when he mentioned his women and cousins.'' (*ibid.*)

Abū Maryam narrates that Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ''As for the

mut'ah, the Qur'ān was revealed for it (i.e., the Qur'ān allowed it), and the tradition of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) put it in force.'' (*ibid.*)

'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn Abī 'Abdillāh said: ''I heard Abū Ḥanīfah asking Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about *mut'ah.* (The Imām, a.s.) said: 'About which *mut'ah* you are asking?' He said: 'I have already asked you about the *mut'ah* of *ḥajj* [i.e., *ḥajju 't-tamattu'*]; now tell me about the *mut'ah* of women, is it right?' Then (the Imām, a.s.) said: 'Allāh be praised! Have you not read the Book of Allāh: *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut'ah, *give them their dowries as appointed?*' He said: ''By Allāh! (It seemed as if) it was a verse I had never read.' '' (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn Muslim narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh has narrated from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) that they [i.e., the Muslims] went on an expedition with him [the Holy Prophet], and he made *mut'ah* lawful for them and (then) did not prohibit it; and 'Alī used to say: 'Had not the son of Khaṭṭāb (i.e., 'Umar) gone ahead of me in this matter [i.e., had he not forbidden it before I came to power], none would have committed fornication except a scoundrel'[1] ; and Ibn 'Abbās used to say: *'Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut'ah — for a fixed period — *give them their dowries as appointed;* and these people deny it, while the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had allowed it and not forbidden it.' '' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

Abū Baṣīr narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said about *mut'ah:* ''The verse was revealed; *then as to such of them with whom you have* mut'ah, *give them their dowries as appointed; and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after what is appointed.*'' Then he said: ''There is no blame if you increase her (dowry) and she increases your (period), when the period (fixed) between you two expires. You may say, with her consent, 'I make you lawful for me for another (fixed) period.' But she is not lawful for other than you until her waiting period expires; and her waiting period is two monthly courses.'' (*ibid.*)

ash-Shaybānī narrates from Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that they said regarding the verse, *and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after what is appointed:* ''It means that he increases her dowry or she increases his (fixed) period.''

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[1] Another version says: 'except the most scoundrel.' (*Author's Note*)

The author says: There are *mutawātir* or nearly *mutawātir* traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* on the above themes; but we have quoted only a few of them. Anyone wanting to study the lot, should refer to the collections of traditions.

[Traditions on the Recitation: ''For a Fixed Period'']

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has narrated from Ibn ʻAbbās, that he said: ''The *mutʻah* of women was in the beginning of Islam. A man used to arrive at a town; there was none with him to mend his things or to look after his property. Therefore, he married a woman for as long as he thought his work (there) would last; and she looked after his property and mended his things.'' And he [Ibn ʻAbbās] used to recite: *''Then as to such of them with whom you have* mutʻah *— for a fixed period.''* ''It was abrogated by the words: *with chastity, not committing fornication.* [1] And marriage-tie was in the hand of man, he kept (her) as long as he wished, and let (her) go when he wished.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

al-Ḥākim narrates through his chains from Abū Naḍrah, that he said: ''I recited before Ibn ʻAbbās, Then *as to such of them with whom you have* mutʻah, *give them their dowries as appointed;* Ibn ʻAbbās said: *'Then as to such of them with whom you have* mutaʻah — for a fixed period.' I said: ''We do not read it like that.' Ibn ʻAbbās said: 'By Allāh! Allāh had revealed it like that.' '' (*al-Mustadrak*)

The author says: This tradition has also been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from al-Ḥākim, ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu '1-Anbārī (in *al-Maṣāḥif*).

ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Qatādah that he said: ''Ubayy ibn Kaʻb used to recite: *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mutʻah — for a fixed period.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Muḥammad ibn Kaʻb narrates from Ibn ʻAbbās that he said: ''The *mutʻah* was in the beginning of Islam. A man used to arrive at a town which he did not know. So, he married a woman for as long as he thought he would stay there; so she looked after his property and mended his things. (It continued) until the verse was revealed: ... *except before their*

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[1] How can a preceding phrase of the same verse abrogate the clause of *mutʻah* which comes after it? (*tr.*)

mates or those whom their right hands possess'' [23:6]; Ibn ‘Abbās said: ''Now every woman except these two (categories) is unlawful.' '' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, at-Tirmidhī)

The author says: It implies that the *mut‘ah* was abrogated in Mecca [before *hijrah*], because the purportedly abrogating verse is of Meccan period!

‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Malīkah says: ''I asked ‘Ā'ishah (r.a.) about the *mut‘ah* of women. She said: 'The Book of Allāh is between me and you.' Then she recited: *And who guard their private parts, except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable,* [23:5 — 6]; but whoever seeks to go beyond what Allāh has given in his marriage or in his possession, he surely exceeds the limit.''[1]

[Some Traditions showing that the *Mut‘ah* was abrogated by the Qur'ān]

Abū Dāwūd (in his *an-Nāsikh*), Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and an-Naḥḥās have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that the verses, *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut‘ah, *give them their dowries as appointed,* was abrogated by the verses, *O Prophet! when you divorce them for their prescribed time* [65:1]; *And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three monthly courses* [2:228]; *And* (as for) *those of your women who have despaired of menstruation, if you have a doubt, their prescribed time shall be three months* [65:4]. (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Abū Dāwūd (in his *an-Nāsikh*), Ibnu '1-Mundhir, an-Naḥḥās and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab that he said: ''The verse of inheritance has abrogated the *mut‘ah.''* (*ibid.*)

‘Abdu 'r-Razzāq and Ibnu ''l-Mundhir have narrated from ‘Alī, that he said: ''Ramaḍān abrogated every (other) fast; and *az-zakāt* abrogated every (other) alms; and *mut‘ah* was abrogated by divorce, waiting period and inheritance; and the sacrifice (of *ḥajj*) abrogated every (other) slaughter.'' (*ibid.*)

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[1] As the author has commented above, such claim would antedate the supposed prohibition of *mut‘ah* prior to *hijrah,* which even the Sunnīs do not claim. Moreover, as I have noted earlier, the whole argument for or against *mut‘ah* is meant to establish whether a women of *mut‘ah* is a lawful wife or not. Now to assume that the word, 'mates', used in this verse excludes the *mut‘ah* wife is begging the question. (*tr.*)

[Some Traditions showing that the *Mut'ah* was abrogated by the *Sunnah*]

'Abdu 'r-Razzāq, Aḥmad and Muslim have narrated from Sabrah al-Juḥanī that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) allowed us, in the year of the Conquest of Mecca, to marry women in *mut'ah*. So I went out with a man of my tribe; I was his better in beauty while he was almost ugly. Each of us had a garment; my garment was worn and shabby, while my cousin's was brand new and fresh. When we reached upper region of Mecca, a girl came before us — like a beautiful young she-camel. We said (to her): 'Do you agree that one of us should marry you in *mut'ah*?' She said: 'And what will you pay?' So each of us spread his garment. She kept looking at two of us. When my companion saw her (hesitation), he said: 'Surely, his garment is old and worn; and my garment is new and fresh.' She kept replying: 'Even his garment is not bad.' So, I did *mut'ah* with her. We had not even departed from Mecca when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) prohibited it.'' (*ibid.*)

Mālik, 'Abdu 'r-Razzāq, Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah have narrated from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: ''Verily, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) forbade the *mut'ah* of women on the day of Khaybar; and (the same day, prohibited) eating the flesh of domesticated donkeys.'' (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad and Muslim have narrated from Salamah ibn al-Akwa' that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) allowed us to do *mut'ah* with women, in the year of Awṭās for three days, then he forbade it.'' (*ibid.*)

Ibnu 'l-'Arabī writes in his *Commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmidhī:* ''Ismā'īl narrates from his father, from az-Zuhrī, that Sabrah said that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prohibited it in the Last Pilgrimage. It has been narrated by Abū Dāwūd, ... and it has been narrated by 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz ibn 'Umar ibn 'Abdi 'l-'Azīz from ar-Rabī' ibn Sabrah from his father, in which he says that it was in the Last Pilgrimage, after it was allowed, and that it was [marriage] for a fixed period; and al-Ḥasan has said that it was (forbidden) in the *'Umrah* of *al-Qaḍā'.''*

The same book narrates from az-Zuhrī that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) forbade *mut'ah* in the expedition of Tabūk.

The author says: As you see, the traditions contradict each other in

identifying the time when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prohibited the *mut'ah.* Some say it was prior to *hijrah*;others that it was after *hijrah.* A group says it was abrogated by the verses of marriage, divorce, waiting period and inheritance, while others claim that it was prohibited by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in the battle of Khaybar [Rajab, 7 AH], or at the *'Umrah* of *al-Qaḍā'* [end of 7 AH], or in the year of Awṭās or the Conquest of Mecca [8 AH], or the year of Tabūk [9 AH], or after the Last Pilgrimage [end of 10 AH]. That is why the Sunnī scholars say that it was prohibited several times, and each of the above traditions describes one or the other of the occasions. But some of the narrators, like 'Alī, Jābir and Ibn Mas'ūd, were too great to remain unaware of the Prophet's orders — especially when we remember that they were constantly with him (s.a.w.a.) and knew every big and small matter of his life.[1]

al-Bayhaqī narrates from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) forbade *mut'ah.* It was only for him who did not get [means for permanent marriage]; but when (verses of) marriage, divorce, waiting period and mutual inheritance (rights) of husband and wife were revealed, it was abrogated.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

an-Naḥḥās has narrated that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib said to Ibn 'Abbās: ''Surely, you are a straying man; verily, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had forbidden *mut'ah.*'' (*ibid.*)

al-Bayhaqī narrates from Abū Dharr that he said: ''The *mut'ah* was allowed for the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) only for three days; then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) forbade it.'' (*ibid.*)

Abū Jamrah says that Ibn 'Abbās was asked about *mut'ah,* and he allowed it. Thereupon a slave of his said to him: ''Surely it was (allowed) when the number of women was small and the condition was hard.'' Ibn 'Abbās said: ''Yes.'' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ,* al-Bukhārī)

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[1] Other scholars say that it was allowed and disallowed repeatedly. Muslim has given the following heading to the chapter of ''Mut'ah'' in his *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ:* ''Chapter of the *mut'ah* marriage, and that it was allowed, then abrogated, then again allowed, and then abrogated ...'' ash-Shāfi'ī says: ''I do not know anything in Islam that was allowed, then prohibited, then allowed and then prohibited.'' Some have said that it was allowed and abrogated three times; others have said, more than three times. Vide *Tafsīr Maẓharī,* by Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpatī, p.72. (*tr.*)

al-Bayhaqī has narrated that ‘Umar delivered a lecture in which he said: ‘‘How is it that some men marry (in) this *mut‘ah* form, and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had forbidden it? None will be brought before me who had married (in) this (form) but I shall stone him.’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad and Muslim have narrated from Sabrah that he said: ‘‘I saw the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) standing between the Rukn and the door [of the Ka‘bah], and he was saying: ‘O people! I had allowed you to marry in *mut‘ah* form; well, Allāh has prohibited it upto the Day of Resurrection. Now, if anyone has got any (woman) from them, he should let her go, but do not take back anything from what you have given them.’ ’’(*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah narrates from al-Ḥasan that he said: ‘‘By Allāh! *Mut‘ah* was not but only three days, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had permitted them in that (period); it was not before that, nor after that.’’ (*ibid.*)

[Some Traditions of some Companions and their Disciples about Lawfulness of the *Mut‘ah*]

Mujāhid has said about (the verse), *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut‘ah: ‘‘It is the *mut‘ah* marriage.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* aṭ-Ṭabarī)

as-Suddī said about this verse: ‘‘It is *mut‘ah*; a man marries a woman on the condition of a fixed period; and when the term expires, he has no authority on her and she is free of him; but she is obliged [to observe the waiting period] to be sure of what is in her womb; and there is no inheritance between them, neither will inherit the other.’’ (*ibid.*)

It is narrated in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Bukhārī and *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim, and reported in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from ‘Abdu ’r-Razzāq and Ibn Abī Shaybah, from Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said: ‘‘We used to go on expeditions with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and our women were not with us. So we said: ‘Should not we castrate ourselves?’ But (the Prophet) forbade us to do so; and allowed us to marry a woman on (dowry of) a garment for a (fixed) period.’’ Then ‘Abdullāh recited: *O you who believe! do not forbid* (yourselves) *the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you* [5:87].

Ibn Abī Shaybah narrates from Nāfi‘ that Ibn ‘Umar was asked about

mut‘ah, and he said that it was unlawful. It was said to him: ‘‘Verily, Ibn ‘Abbās declares it as lawful.’’ He said: ‘‘Why did not he open his mouth in the reign of ‘Umar?’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, aṭ-Ṭabarānī and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr that he said: ‘‘I said to Ibn ‘Abbās: ‘What have you done? Travellers have carried your ruling (far and wide), and poets have composed poems about it.’ He said: ‘And what have they said?’ I said: ‘They have said:

‘‘I say to the old man, as he has stayed a long time,
O my companion! Are you interested in the rulling of
Ibn ‘Abbās?
Would you like to have a chubby unmarried girl?
Who would be your resting place, until the people depart
[from here].’’ ’

(Ibn ‘Abbās) said: ‘Surely, we are Allāh’s, and to Him we shall surely return. No, By Allāh! I have not given this ruling, nor is this which I have meant. I have not allowed it but to one who is hard-pressed; and I have not allowed of it except what Allāh has allowed of dead body, blood and flesh of swine.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

Ibnu ’l-Mundhir narrates from ‘Ammār (slave of ash-Sharīd) that he said: ‘‘I asked Ibn ‘Abbās regarding the *mut‘ah,* whether it is marriage or fornication. He said: ‘Neither marriage nor fornication.’ I said: ‘Then what is it?’ He said: ‘It is *mut‘ah,* as Allāh has said.’ I said: ‘Does it have a waiting period?’ He said: ‘Its waiting period is one monthly course.’ I said: ‘Do they inherit each other?’ He said: ‘No.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

‘Abdu ’r-Razzāq and Ibnu ’l-Mundhir have narrated through ‘Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘May Allāh have mercy on ‘Umar. *Mut‘ah* was but a mercy from Allāh, which He had bestowed on the *ummah* of Muḥammad. If he (‘Umar) had not forbidden it, none but the most wicked would have needed fornication.’’ Also he said: ‘‘It is that which is in the chapter of ‘The Women’: Then as to such of them with whom you have *mut‘ah* to such and such a period on such and such a dowry.’’ Again he said: ‘‘There is no inheritance between them. If they decide to agree after the term [to extend it], then, yes; and if they separate, then, yes; and there is no [permanent] marriage between them.’’ ‘Aṭā’ said that he heard from Ibn ‘Abbās that in his opinion it was lawful (even) now. (*ibid.*)

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr,* aṭ-Ṭabarī and also in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from ʻAbdu 'r-Razzāq and Abū Dāwūd (in his *an Nāsikh*) from al-Ḥakam that he was asked about this verse [of *mutʻah*] whether it was abrogated. He said: ''No.'' Also ʻAlī (a.s.) has said: ''If ʻUmar had not forbidden *mutʻah*, none but a scoundrel would have committed fornication.''

[Some Traditions showing that it was ʻUmar who had forbidden the *Mutʻah*]

Jābir ibn ʻAbdillāh said: ''We used to do *mutʻah* on a handful of date and flour, for fixed days, in the time of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and Abū Bakr — until ʻUmar disallowed it in the affair of ʻAmr ibn Ḥurayth.'' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ,* Muslim)

The author says: This tradition has also been quoted in *Jāmiʻu 'l-uṣūl* (of Ibnu 'l-Athīr),*Zādu 'l-maʻād* (of Ibnu 'l-Qayyim), *Fatḥu 'l-bārī* (of Ibn Ḥajar) and *Kanzu 'l-ʻummāl.*

Mālik and ʻAbdu 'r-Razzāq have narrated from ʻUrwah ibn az-Zubayr that Khawlah bint Ḥakīm came to ʻUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and said: ''Rabīʻah ibn Umayyah had done *mutʻah* with a woman of not pure Arab blood, and she had become pregnant from him.'' [Hearing this] ʻUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb came out, trailing his robe in dismay, and said: ''This is *mutʻah*! Had I gone ahead about it [i.e., Had I forbidden it before], I would have stoned (the person concerned).'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: It has also been reported from ash-Shāfiʻī (in his *Kitābu 'l-umm*) and from al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*).

Sulaymān ibn Yasār narrates from Umm ʻAbdillāh, daughter of Abū Khaythamah, that a man came from Syria and stayed with her. Then he said: ''Verily, bachelorhood has become hard for me to bear; therefore, find for me a woman with whom I should do *mutʻah.*'' She says: ''So, I led him to a woman and he made conditions with her, and got men of probity as witnesses for it. He remained with her as long as Allāh wished him to; and then he went away. Then ʻUmar was informed of it. He called for me and asked: 'Is it correct what I have been told?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'If he comes (back), let me know.' When he came back, I informed ʻUmar; and he called for him and asked: 'What made you to do

what you did?' He said: 'I did so in the days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and he did not forbid us to do so until Allāh took him (to Himself); then (we did it) in the days of Abū Bakr, and he too did not forbid us to do so, until Allāh took him away; then (we did so) during your days and you did not issue to us any prohibition against it.' Then 'Umar said: 'Well, by Him in Whose hand my soul is, if I had gone ahead with its prohibition, I would have stoned you; announce it, in order that marriage might be distinguished from fornication.' '' (*Kanzu 'l-'ummāl*)

'Aṭā' has said: ''Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh came for *'umrah*; so we went to him at his staying place, and people asked him regarding various things, then they mentioned *mut'ah.* He said: 'We did *mut'ah* in the time of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and Abū Bakr and 'Umar.' '' Aḥmad's narration adds: ''until it was the last period of 'Umar's (r.a.) caliphate.'' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ,* Muslim; *Musnad,* Aḥmad)

Nāfi' reports that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar was asked about *mut'ah* and he said: ''(It is) forbidden. Why, look, if 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb had caught anyone doing it, he would have stoned him.'' (*as-Sunan,* al-Bayhaqī)

Ibnu 'l-Jawzī says: '' 'Umar (r.a.) used to say: 'By Allāh! Nobody will be brought before me, (accused of) practising *mut'ah,* but I shall stone him.'' (*Mir'ātu 'z-zamān*)

Ibn Rushd narrates from Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh that he said: ''We did *mut'ah* in the days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and Abū Bakr, and during half the reign of 'Umar; then 'Umar forbade people to do so.'' (*Bidāyatu 'l-mujtahid*)

Ibn al-Kalbī has said: ''Verily, Salamah ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf al-Jumaḥī did *mut'ah* with Salmā, slave girl of Ḥākim ibn Umayyah ibn al-Awqaṣ al-Aslamī, and she bore from him a child, but he denied (paternity of) her child. This news reached 'Umar; therefore he forbade *mut'ah.*'' (*al-Iṣābah*)

Ayyūb says: '' 'Urwah said to Ibn 'Abbās: 'Do you not fear Allāh, that you allow *mut'ah*?' Ibn 'Abbās said: 'Ask your mother, O 'Urwah!' Then 'Urwah said: 'But Abū Bakr and 'Umar did not do it!' Thereupon, Ibn 'Abbās said: 'By Allāh! I do not think you will stop (in your arrogance) until Allāh chastises you. We talk to you from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and you talk to us from Abū Bakr and 'Umar.' '' (*Zādu 'l-*

ma‘ād)

The author says: The mother of ‘Urwah [mentioned in the above tradition] was Asmā’, daughter of Abū Bakr, who was married in *mut‘ah* form by az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām, from whom she bore ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr and ‘Urwah.

ar-Rāghib writes: ‘‘ ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr reproached ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās because the latter considered *mut‘ah* as lawful. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās told him: ‘Ask your mother how the censers glowed between her and your father?’ So he asked her and she replied: ‘I did not give birth to you but in *mut‘ah*’ ’’(*al-Muḥāḍarāt*)

Muslim al-Quriyy says: ‘‘I asked Ibn ‘Abbās about *mut‘ah;* and he allowed it; but Ibn az-Zubayr used to reject it. So (Ibn ‘Abbās) said: ‘This is the mother of Ibn az-Zubayr, who narrates that the Messenger of Allāh had allowed it; so go to her and ask her.’ ’’ Muslim says: ‘‘So we went to her and, lo! she was a stout blind woman. She said: ‘The Messenger of Allāh has allowed it.’ ’’ (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim)

The author says: The context shows that the question was about the *mut‘ah* of women; and other traditions too give the same meaning.

Abū Naḍrah said: ‘‘I was with Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh when someone came to him and said: ‘Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn az-Zubayr have differed about the two *mut‘ahs* [i.e., *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* and *mut‘ah* of women].’ Jābir said: ‘We did both with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), then ‘Umar forbade us both, but we did not deviate from them.’ ’’ (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim)

The author says: Reportedly al-Bayhaqī too has narrated it in his *as-Sunan*; and the same theme has been narrated in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, in three places with different wordings, one of which reports Jābir as saying: ‘‘But when ‘Umar stood up [i.e., came to power], he said: ‘Surely Allāh used to allow for His Messenger whatever He wished in any way He wished. Therefore, you complete the *ḥajj* and the *‘umrah,* as Allāh has ordered, and stop marrying these women. No man shall be brought to me who would have married a woman for a [fixed] period but I shall stone him.’

Also this theme has been narrated by al-Bayhaqī in his *as-Sunan* and al-Jaṣṣāṣ in his *Aḥkamu 'l-Qur'ān;* also it is reported in *Kanzu 'l-'ummāl* and *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr,* as well as in *at-Tafsīr* of ar-Rāzī and *Musnad* of aṭ-Ṭayālisī.

al-Qurṭubī has narrated, in his *at-Tafsīr,* from 'Umar that he said in his lecture: ''Two *mut'ahs* were [practised] in the time of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); but I forbid them and shall inflict punishment on them; the *mut'ah* of *ḥajj* and the *mut'ah* of women.''

The author says: This lecture of his is among the things unanimously accepted by all narrators; and they have reported it as an undisputed fact. Vide, for example, *at-Tafsīr* of ar-Rāzī, *al-Bayān wa 't-tab'īn, Zādu 'l-ma'ād, Aḥkāmu 'l-Qur'ān,* [*at-Tārīkh* of] aṭ-Ṭabarī and of Ibn 'Asākir among other references.

aṭ-Ṭabarī has narrated from 'Umar that he said: ''There were three things in the time of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); but I am forbidding them; and shall give punishment on them: *mut'ah* of *ḥajj,* and *mut'ah* of women, and *ḥayya 'alā khayri 'l-'amal* in the *adhān* (call for prayer).'' (*al-Mustabīn*)

'Imrān ibn Sawādah says: ''I prayed dawn (prayer) with 'Umar; he recited (the chapter of) *Subḥān* and another one with it; then he returned and I stood with him. He said: '(Do you have) any work (with me)?' I said: '(Yes,) there is (some) work.' He said: 'Then join (me).' I joined him. When he entered (his house), he gave permission to me. I found him on a bare bed-stead which had nothing on it. I said: '(I have come with) a sincere advice.' He said: 'Welcome to the adviser, day and night.' I said: 'Your people blame (you) for four things.' (Hearing this) he put the handle of his whip under his chin and its tip on his thigh, and said: 'Let me hear it.' I said: 'They say that you have prohibited *'umrah* during the months of *ḥajj,* while neither the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) nor Abū Bakr (r.a.) had done so, and it is lawful (in *sharī'ah*).' He said: 'Is it lawful? If they do *'umrah* during the months of *ḥajj,* they will think it suffices them from *ḥajj;* and will go out at once like a chick from it shell; and the *ḥajj* (days) will be empty (of people), while it is a splendour from Allāh's spleandours; and I have done right.'

‘‘I said: ‘Also they say that you have prohibited the *mut‘ah* of women, while it was a permission from Allāh. We used to do *mut‘ah* on a handful [of date, etc.] and separate after three (days).’ He said: ‘Surely, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had allowed it at a time when there was need (of it), then the people did get affluence; thereafter, I do not know any Muslim who did it or resorted to it. Now let anyone who so wishes marry [permanently] on a handful [of date] and separate the third day by divorce; and I have done right.’

‘‘Then I said: ‘You have granted freedom to a slave girl if she delivers a child, even without being emancipated by her master.’ He said: ‘I have joined honour with honour; and I did not mean but good; and I ask pardon of Allāh.’

‘‘I said: ‘And they complain against your reviling the public and your harsh demeanour.’ (Hearing this,) he drew the whip and wiped it until he came to its end, then said: ‘I am a travelling-companion of Muḥammad and was his travelling-companion in the expedition of Qarqaratu ’l-Kidr. By Allāh! I put (animals) to pasture until I satiate, and I give (them) drink until I quench their thirst; I hit the unruly camel and restrain the untamed one; and I defend my cooking-pot and drive my steps; and gather obdurate ones, and join slow ones; and I often admonish but seldom strike; and make a show of whip but repulse by hand. (Even) if it had not been so, I would have had an excuse.’ ’’

(‘Imrān) said: ‘‘This narrative reached Mu‘āwiyah, and he said: ‘He was, by Allāh, knowledgeable of his subjects.’ ’’ (*at-Tārīkh,* aṭ-Ṭabarī)

The author says: Ibn Abi ’l-Ḥadīd has narrated it in his *Sharḥ Nahji ’l-balāghah* from Ibn Qutaybah.

These are some of the traditions regarding the topic of *mut‘ah* of women.

A discerning scholar, looking at them, cannot fail to see:-

First: The contradictions and irreconcilibility so glaringly found in them. The scholar cannot reach at any conclusion from them except that it was ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb who, during his reign, forbade and prohibited it because of his personal opinion, which he formed after hearing the stories of ‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth and Rabī‘ah ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf al-Jumaḥī. As for the claim of its abrogation by the Qur’ān or

tradition, you have already seen that it has no leg to stand on. It is quite apart from the fact that whatever stand one takes, some traditions contradict the others. The only point of agreement is that it was ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb who prohibited it and enforced his prohibition, who decided that the action was forbidden and laid down the punishment of stoning for him who did it.

Second: That it was a custom that was prevalent in the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) by his permission; it makes no difference whether he had established that custom, or had let an old custom continue. Also that it was practised by such of his companions who cannot be accused of fornication, by any stretch of imagination. For instance, Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām and Asmā’, daughter of Abū Bakr, who had given birth to ‘Abdullāh, son of az-Zubayr through this very *mut‘ah* marriage.

Third: That there were among the companions and their disciples, people who continued to believe and declare that *mut‘ah* was lawful, like Ibn Mas‘ūd, Jābir, ‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth and others (among the companions); and Mujāhid, as-Suddī, Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr and others [among the disciples].

This open and clear conflict among the traditions has led the Sunnī scholars, first to disagree among themselves whether *mut‘ah* was lawful or unlawful, and then compelled the protagonists of prohibition to opt for diverse opinions as to how it was prohibited. In all, they have adopted not less than fifteen views — each different from the others and all amazing.

One may discuss this topic from many angles, but we are concerned here with some of them only. There is a sectarian polemic going on between the Sunnīs and the Shī‘ahs. There is a jurisprudential aspect, whether *mut‘ah* is lawful or not. Lastly, there is the exegetical angle, dealing with the exegesis of the verse: *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut‘ah ...: Does it ordain the lawfulness of the *mut‘ah*? If yes, then was it abrogated by any other verse, like that of the chapter 23 (The Believers) or those of marriage, prohibition, divorce, waiting period or inheritance? Or was it abrogated by the *sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)? Also, if it was legalized, had Islam initiated a new system? Or had it just confirmed an old custom? And so on and so forth.

It is this third aspect, i.e., exegetical, that we shall discuss in this book. We have already explained these matters in the Commentary; but

here we shall give some more details, by drawing the readers' attention to what has been said [by some non-Shī'ahs] against the verse's implication regarding the *mut'ah* marriage and its legislation.

[An Exegete's Claims and our Comments]

A writer, after insisting that the verse only implies that one should pay dowry in full in permanent marriage, expresses his views as follows:

''The Shī'ahs say that the verse refers to the *mut'ah* marriage, i.e., marrying a woman for a fixed term, e.g., one day, one week or one month. They argue by an irregular recital of the Qur'ān which is narrated from Ubayy, Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with them), and by the reports and traditions that have been narrated about *mut'ah.*

''As for the recital, it is irregular, which is not proved to be [a part of] the Qur'ān. It has been explained earlier that if there are correct traditions as *khabaru 'l-wāḥid* in such matters, then the added words are treated as explanation; and it shows what the man concerned had understood [from the verse]; but understanding of a companion is not a proof in matters of religion, especially when the sequence and context [of the verse] rejects it — as it does here. Because the man who marries in *mut'ah* for a fixed term does not intend chastity instead of fornication; rather his first intention is sexual satisfaction. Therefore, even if there is a sort of chastity for man (as it prevents him from free indulgence in fornication), there is surely nothing of chastity for the woman who hires out her body every now and then to a new man; she becomes, as has been said:

A ball that is struck by bats
And is dealt with by man after man.''

COMMENT: He claims that the Shī'ahs argue by a recital of Ibn Mas'ūd and others. But anyone who refers to the Shī'ī books and arguments will see that, when they mention that recital, they do not do so because they think it to be a reliable and independent proof in itself. How can they do so when they do not accept the authoritativeness of irregular recitals, even if they are attributed to their own Imāms? How can they argue by something they do not accept as authoritative against someone who does not accept its authority? Such an idea is nothing but a joke.

The Shī'ahs' actual argument is this: Those companions of the

Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to recite the verse in that way. It means that they believed it to be the verse's connotation. It is irrelevant whether they recited it as a part of the Qur'ān, or just as its explanation which showed that they had understood this meaning from the wordings of the verse.

This argument is useful to the Shī'ahs in two ways:

First: It shows that a number of the companions believed as the Shī'ahs do. As the reports show, a number of the companions and their disciples believed in the lawfulness of the *mut'ah,* and if one wants to verify it, one is free to consult the relevant books.

Second: It proves that the verse means exactly what the Shī'ahs say, and the recital of those companions supports it. Not only that. Even the claim that the verse was later abrogated, clearly shows that the claimants accepted that the verse proved the lawfulness of the *mut'ah* marriage; otherwise, there was no need for them to say that it was abrogated or to narrate traditions of its abrogation. There are a lot of such traditions, a number of which was quoted above. The Shī'ahs make use even of the traditions of abrogation in the same way as they do with the above-mentioned irregular recital. It does not mean that they accept authority of irregular recitals, as it does not mean that they accept the verse's abrogation. What they want to prove is that those reciters and narrators believed that the verse spoke about the lawfulness of the *mut'ah* marriage.

As for the claim that the context of the verse does not agree with this meaning, his whole argument seems to be based on the assumption that the verb, *al-musāfaḥah* (اَلْمُسَافَحَةُ = fornication) has been used in this verse in its literal sense, i.e., ejaculation of semen, and then he links this meaning with its intention. Thus he claims that the temporary marriage for satisfaction of sexual desire is *as-sifāḥ* (اَلسِّفَاحُ = fornication), and not *an-nikāḥ* (اَلنِّكَاحُ = marriage). He seems unaware of the fact that even *an-nikāḥ* literally means sexual intercourse. It is written in *Lisānu 'l-'Arab*: ''al-Azharī says: 'The basic meaning of *an-nikāḥ* in Arabic is to have sexual intercourse.' '' Therefore, it will be necessary for him to say that even *an-nikāḥ* was fornication! Thus, his supposed contraposition between *an-nikāḥ* and *as-sifāḥ* loses its bearing.

Moreover, if the intention of satisfying sexual urge turns the temporary marriage into fornication, then what if someone marries permanently with the same intention? Surely that permanent marriage too

must turn into fornication. But is there any Muslim prepared to say so?

May be someone will say: There is a difference between permanent and temporary marriages. The permanent marriage by its very nature is meant to maintain chastity, procreate children and establish a household. But it is not so in a temporary marriage.

But it is just superciliousness. All the benefits attributed to the permanent marriage are obtainable from the temporary one; protects from fornication, saves the geneology from mix-up; children may be born and cared for, and a house-hold may be established. That is apart from the added benefit which this *ummah* could derive from it because it is much more easier to do; and even he who because of various reasons (poverty, inability to maintain a wife permanently, being on a journey or other such reasons) is unable to marry permanently, may utilize this permission and save himself from sin.

On the other hand, all presumed defects of the temporary marriage — which have led him to say that *mut'ah* was fornication — may be found in the permanent marriage too, like the intention of satisfying sexual desire by ejaculating semen in the woman. Therefore, the claim that permanent marriage was made in its very nature for the claimed benefits, while temporary marriage was made in its very nature for the supposed defects, is just a claim that is not supported by any evidence and whose incorrectness is crystal clear.

Another claim: *Mut'ah* marriage is *as-sifāḥ* (ejaculation); therefore it is fornication that is opposite of marriage. But when you interpret *as-sifāḥ* as ejaculation of semen, then it will cover not only fornication but permanent marriage also — especially if the latter was done for satisfaction of sexual desire.

It is really emazing to read his claim that even if there is a sort of chastity for the man, there is no chastity for the woman. Would that I knew what was the difference between man and woman in this respect. How is it that a man can preserve his chastity and protect himself from fornication through the *mut'ah*, but a woman cannot? Is it anything except foolhardiness?

Now we come to the poetry lines quoted by him. The discourse is on a serious subject, by which we are trying to discover a religious reality which has very important bearing on the life of this world and the next — no matter whether at the end *mut'ah* is proved lawful or unlawful. What

is the use of poetry in such a discourse? Poetry is just an imaginary composition;it recognizes falsehood more than it does truth; and has more affinity with error than with guidance.

One wonders why did he not recite these lines when discussing the above-mentioned traditions, and especially after the words of ‘Umar (in the tradition of aṭ-Ṭabarī quoted above): ‘‘Now let anyone who so wishes marry [permanently] on a handful [of date] and separate the third day by divorce.’’

And who is the real target of his calumination except Allāh and His Messenger who had legalized this type of marriage, either as a new institution or by endorsement of an established custom? After all, it was undeniably a system prevalent among Muslims in the early Islam within the sight and hearing of the Prophet.

Question: The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had allowed it in exigency, because in those days the Muslims were poor, and poverty overwhelmed the *ummah;* also they had to participate in expeditions, as some of the above-quoted traditions imply.

Reply: Once you admit that *mut‘ah* was prevalent among the people in the early days of Islam, and that it was known by the names of *mut‘ah* marriage, or *istimtā‘*, there is no escape from admitting that the verse shows its lawfulness; that it is an unconditional verse and no other verse or tradition has capability of abrogating it. In this background, the claim that it was somehow abrogated is nothing but a willful misinterpretation without any proof.

Let us accept [for the sake of argument] that it was allowed by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as a matter of exigency. Now let us ask ourselves: Was the need during the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) greater and more pressing than in the post-Prophetic era? Especially during the reigns of the ‘rightly-guided’ caliphs, when the armies of the Muslims in their thousands were always on move to the east and the west? What was the difference between the first and the second halves of the caliphate of ‘Umar in this respect? How had the exigency vanished? Were there no poor Muslims in those days? Or had they stopped going to wars or journeys, etc.? Why one type of need had justified its legislation, but other types could not?

Compare the situation of the Muslim societies today with that of the

time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the first half of the ‘‘rightly-guided caliphs’’. Is not the need that justified its legislation greater and more pressing now that it was in those days? Backbreaking poverty reigns over the Muslim countries, and the colonial governments and imperial powers as well as the Pharaohs who rule these places are sucking the blood of the masses, and usurping all green and dry produce of their labour.

Today licentiousness manifests itself everywhere; libertinism appears in ever-more attractive and eye-catching garb; there is ever more effective exhortation to indulge in carnality and debauchery. This trend is spreading its tentacles wider and wider; the trouble is reaching every corner of the world and infecting more and more people. Immorality, illicit sexual behaviour, is engulfing all the youths — be they students, soldiers or factory workers — and this group constitutes the majority of the human population.

Nobody can ever be in doubt about the basic needs which push these youths to fornication, homosexuality and all types of sexual aberrations. They are unable to establish and run a household; they are engaged in temporary occupations, or posted to a base for a fixed term, and it does not allow them to establish a home and marry permanently — no matter whether they are in service or studies or journey, etc. Now, how is it that these necessities could legalize *mut‘ah* marriage in the early days of Islam — when they were comparatively less prevalent and much easier to bear, but cannot make it lawful in other times even when the calamity has overwhelmed the mankind, and mischief has greatly increased?

The said writer has further written: ‘‘Furthermore, the *mut‘ah* goes against what has been established in the Qur’ān about this subject [of marriage]. Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says praising the believers: *And who guard their private parts, except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable; but whoever seeks to go beyond that, these are they that exceed the limits* (23:5 — 7). That is, they exceed the limit of what Allāh has made lawful for them, and go into what He has forbidden. These verses are not in conflict with the verse under discussion, i.e.: *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut‘ah ... [which he takes to mean, with whom you have cohabited]; they are rather of the same connotation, and there is therefore no abrogation. The woman in *mut‘ah* is not a wife, who could have rights on man similar to man’s rights on her, as Allāh has said. It has been

reported from the Shī‘ahs that they themselves do not apply the rules of marriage on her, nor do they give her the concomitants of matrimony: They do not count her among the four wives a man is allowed to have together in marriage (if there is no danger of injustice); they rather allow him to marry in *mut‘ah* a lot of women. Likewise, they do not prescribe the punishment of stoning for a fornicator when he has a *mut‘ah* wife — because they do not count him as married; it shows their conviction that the words of Allāh about those married in *mut‘ah, taking them with chastity, not committing fornication,* [which he interprets as, ‘in marriage, not committing fornication’] is not applicable to him — and it is a clear contradiction in term. Also some exegetes have narrated from them that a woman of *mut‘ah* is not entitled to inheritance or maintenance; and that there is no divorce or waiting period for her. In short, the Qur’ān is far away from this opinion, and there is certainly no proof, or even a quasi-proof, for it in this verse.’’

COMMENT: His claim, that the *mut‘ah* goes against what has been established in the Qur’ān, boils down to this: First, the verses of the chapter of ‘The Believers’: *And who guard their private parts ...*, confine the lawfulness to the wives, and a woman in *mut‘ah* is not a wife; therefore, the verses refute the lawfulness of the *mut‘ah.* Second, these verses do not permit the verse, *Then as to such of them with whom ...,* to be interpreted as speaking about *mut‘ah.*

As for the claim that the verses of the chapter ‘The Believers’ prohibit the *mut‘ah,* he has ignored the fact that these are Meccan verses, while *mut‘ah* was prevalent even after *hijrah.* The question arises: When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) allowed the *mut‘ah* [after *hijrah*], was he allowing what the Qur’ān had prohibited? But the Qur’ān itself declares that the Prophet’s words were final authority of religion, so there seems to be a contradiction in terms in the Qur’ān itself. Or, had his legalization abrogated the verses of [presumed] abrogation (*And who guard their private parts ...*), and then the *mut‘ah* was forbidden again (either by the Qur’ān or the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), thus reviving the prohibiting verses after their death? Did this verse (of The Believers) become decisive after its abrogation? It is such an alternative which no Muslim would ever agree to, nor anyone has ever said so; nor is it ever possible to say.

This analysis is in itself a good proof that the woman of *mut'ah* is a wife, that the *mut'ah* is a marriage, and that these verses, of the chapter of 'The Believers', prove that *mut'ah* marriage is a proper matrimonial state: Otherwise, it will follow that the said verses were abrogated by the permission the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) gave for *mut'ah,* [but nobody would admit it]. Therefore, the said verses actually prove the lawfulness, not prohibition, of the *mut'ah.*

Let us explain it in another way:

The verses of the chapters, 'The Believers' [23:5 — 7] and 'The Stairway' [70:29 — 31], i.e.: *And those who guard their private parts, except before their mates ...,* are the strongest of all the verses to prove the lawfulness of the *mut'ah.* It is agreed by all that these verses are decisive and unabrogated; and that they are of the Meccan period. Also, it is crystal clear from history and traditions that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had allowed *mut'ah.* If the woman of *mut'ah* was not a wife, then obviously the Prophet's permission would abrogate the said verses — but they are not abrogated. The only conclusion is that the *mut'ah* was a lawful marriage. Now that it is clear from the above that the said verses prove lawfulness of the *mut'ah,* then the claim, that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) [subsequently] prohibited it, is also proved wrong, because such claim goes contrary to the Qur'ānic verses and would entail the verses' abrogation; but, as you know, all are agreed that these are decisive ones and were never abrogated.

In any case, the woman married in *mut'ah* is a wife, and *mut'ah* is a *nikāḥ* (marriage), contrary to what its detractors claim. It is enough, in this respect, to draw your attention to the traditions quoted above, in which the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and their disciples have used the name, *'mut'ah* marriage', for this union. Even 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb has used the same name in the traditions which describe his prohibition; for example, see the report of al-Bayhaqī narrated from 'Umar (quoting his lecture), and the tradition of Muslim narrated from Abū Naḍrah. Not only that. Even 'Umar's words (quoted in the tradition of *Kanzu 'l-'ummāl* from Sulaymān ibn Yasār), ''announce it, in order that marriage may be distinguished from fornication'', are based on the same nomenclature; as it implies that the *mut'ah* is a marriage but is not distinguished from fornication; therefore it is incumbent upon Muslims to announce it; they should solemnize a marriage that is known and

distinguishable from fornication. This connotation is inferred from his order to 'announce it'.

In short, there is no room for any doubt that, according to the language of the Qur'ān and that of the companions and their disciples, *mut'ah* is *nikāḥ* (marriage) and the woman so married is wife. It was only after 'Umar's prohibition that the two words, *an-nikāḥ* and *at-tazwīj* (اَلنِّكَاحُ،اَلتَّزْوِيْجُ = marriage), became [gradually] reserved for the permanent marriage, because *mut'ah* marriage went out of practice, and the people performed permanent marriage only. Thus there remained no other application for the two words, and the permanent marriage became the only meaning that immediately came to the minds. The case of the two words is not different from many other words that have acquired a new or restricted meaning in the language of the Muslims.

The above also shows baselessness of what the said writer has written later that the Shī'ahs themselves do not apply the rules of marriage on the woman of *mut'ah.* We have a right to ask him what he means by the word, 'wife'. If he uses the word as it is used in the language of the Qur'ān, then the Shī'ahs apply all its rules on the *mut'ah* wife — without any exception. But if he means the wife as is understood in the language of the Muslims — as explained above — which they use in their jurisprudence, then the Shī'ahs do not apply all its rules on her — but there is no harm in it.

Now we come to his argument that 'the Shī'ahs do not prescribe stoning for a fornicator who has a *mut'ah* wife, and it shows their conviction that the words of Allāh, *muḥṣinīn ghayr musāfiḥīn* (مُحْصِنِيْنَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِيْنَ = which he interprets as 'in marriage') are not applicable to him; and it is a clear contradiction in term.'

First of all, we have explained in the commentary of this verse that, because this clause includes conjugal union with one's slave girls too, it obviously means 'chastity', not marriage. Even if we accept that *muḥṣinīn* (مُحْصِنِيْنَ) means 'in marriage', not, 'in chastity', [as translated by us] , then the verse includes *mut'ah* marriage in any case. As for non-stoning of the fornicator who has a *mut'ah* wife (apart from the fact that stoning is not a Qur'ānic law), it is based on explanation or restriction by the *sunnah*, like other matrimonial laws — inheritance, maintenance, divorce and waiting period.

To put the above statement more clearly, if a verse relating to laws is

taken to be vague — because it only aims at ordaining the basic rule — then whatever restrictions are attached, they will amount to its explanation; they will not be counted as a restriction or a condition. If, on the other hand, the said verse is taken to be a general or unconditional one, then the explanations given in the *sunnah* will be counted as restrictions or conditions. There will not arise any question of contradiction in terms in such cases. See for details the books on the Principles of Jurisprudence.

These verses of inheritance, divorce and maintenance, like other verses, are not free from restrictions and conditions. An apostate wife is debarred from inheritance, and separates without any divorce; the husband may cancel the marriage without giving divorce, if the wife has certain defects; a recalcitrant wife loses her right of maintenance. With all these restrictions, what objection is there if a few other rules are restricted because of the *mut'ah*? The statements that remove the *mut'ah* marriage from the rules of inheritance, divorce and waiting period are either restrictions or conditions.

As for the fact that, in the language of the Muslims, the words, *an-nikāḥ* and *at-tazwīj* are now exclusively used for permanent marriage, it creates no difficulty for our stand, even if the said writer thinks otherwise. When a jurist says: 'A permanently married (*al-muḥṣin*, اَلْمُحْصِنُ) fornicator shall be stoned;'and then says: 'A fornicator who has a *mut'ah* wife shall not be stoned because he is not *al-muḥṣin*'; it only shows that in his terminology *al-iḥṣān* (اَلْاِحْصَانُ) implies permanent marriage that has certain especial effects. But it does not effect the language of the Qur'ān in which *al-iḥṣān* has been used together for both — permanent and temporary — marriages; and which establishes especial rules for each.

As for his claim that the Shī'ah do not prescribe waiting period for a *mut'ah* wife, it is a shameless slander. There are the collections of Shī'ī traditions and the tomes of their jurisprudence, all of which clearly say that the waiting term of a wife of *mut'ah* is two monthly courses. Some relevant traditions narrated through Shī'ī chains from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* have earlier been quoted in this discourse.

The said writer further writes: ''The traditions and *aḥādīth* that have been narrated on this subject, all together show that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to allow *mut'ah* to his companions in some expeditions, then he

forbade them, then again allowed it to them once or twice, then prohibited them to do so — a perpetual prohibition.

''He had allowed it only because he knew that it was difficult for them to abstain from fornication when they were away from their wives. Thus the *mut'ah* was a sort of lesser evil. It was much better if a man married an unmarried girl for a fixed term and stayed with her during the agreed period, rather than being occupied in fornication with any woman he could seduce.''

COMMENT: What he has said that the traditions on the whole show that it was allowed in some expeditions, then disallowed, then again allowed once or twice, then prohibited for ever, does not agree with any of the traditions with all their mutual contradictions and irreconcilability. Just have a look at them (and we have quoted earlier most of them) and you will find that they all together refute word by word what he has offered as a way of reconciliation amongst them.

He has further written: ''The Sunnīs are of the opinion that the permission of *mut'ah,* once or twice, was a sort of a gradual step in final prohibition of fornication, as had been done in the case of intoxicants. Both these evils were wide-spread in the era of ignorance, but fornication was prevalent in the slave girls, not the free women.''

COMMENT: His claim, that permission of *mut'ah* was a step by step approach to the final prohibition of fornication, implies that in their eyes *mut'ah* was a sort of fornication, and that, like other ways of fornication, it was wide-spread in pre-Islamic days; and for this reason the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) took gradual steps — a soft approach — before finally forbidding fornication, hoping that in this way this prohibition would prove acceptable to the people. Therefore, first he prohibited other kinds of fornication and let the fornication of *mut'ah* continue. He first allowed it, then prohibited and again allowed it until he could forbid it for ever, and then he enforced perpetual prohibition.

By my life, it is the most ignominious mockery of the pure religious laws, which Allāh had promulgated with the sole aim of purifying this *ummah* and completing His favours on them. Now let us look at this opinion:

First: We have already explained that the claim that the Prophet

(s.a.w.a.) prohibited *mut'ah* then allowed it, then again prohibited and again allowed it, when seen in the background of the verses: *And those who guard their private parts* ..., which form the parts of the chapters of 'The Believers' and 'The Stairway' — the Meccan chapters — and which, the said writer insists, prove the prohibition of *mut'ah,* would mean only one thing: That the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) first abrogated these verses by allowing the *mut'ah,* then abrogated the abrogation and revived and re-confirmed the verses; then again abrogated the verses and then again revived them and made them decisive, and this cycle was repeated several times. Is it anything but accusing the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) of playing with the Book of Allāh?

Second: Some verses of the Divine Book which prohibit fornication are as follows:

And go not near to fornication; surely it is an indecency and evil is the way (17:32).

What language can be clearer than this? And it is a Meccan verse that forms a part of a chain of several other prohibitions.

Say: ''Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you ... and do not draw near to indecencies, those of them which are apparent and those which are concealed ... ''(6:155)

The word, *al-fawāhish* (اَلْفَوَاحِشُ = indecencies) is plural, preceded by the article, *al,* within a prohibitory sentence. It means that the prohibitionary order covers all types of indecency or fornication. This verse too is of Meccan period.

Say: ''My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed ...'' (7:33)

The same word, *al-fawāḥish,* with the same grammatical details, is used in this verse, and this too is of Meccan period.

And who guard their private parts, except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable. But whoever seeks to go beyond that, these are they that exceed the limits (23:5 — 7; 70:29 — 31).

Both these are Meccan chapters, and the verses prohibit all types of fornication, and, according to the writer's claim, that includes *mut'ah* too.

These are the bulk of the verses which prohibit fornication, the unlawful indecency; all of them were revealed in Meccan period, and all

of them are very clear about the prohibition. So, from where did he get the idea of graduality in prohibition? Or does he say — as is the clear implication of his claim that the verses of the chapter, 'The Believers' show prohibition of the *mut'ah* — that Allāh had prohibited it for ever; still the, Prophet (s.a.w.a.) preferred the step by step approach in enforcing this prohibitory order, by allowing it time after time to humour the people, so that in the end they would accept total prohibition. But Allāh had very strongly admonished His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) against this very policy, when He revealed to him: *And surely they had purposed to turn you away from that which We have revealed to you, that you should forge against Us other than that, and then they would certainly have taken you for a friend. And had it not been that We had already firmly established you, you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little. In that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double* (punishment) *in this life and a double* (punishment) *after death, then you would not have found any helper against Us* (17:73 — 75).[1]

Third: We should think about this permission which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is suppossed to grant time after time. Was he allowing the *mut'ah* without there being any divine order to make it lawful? (We should not forget that the *mut'ah* is presumed to be fornication and indecency.) If he was doing it on his own, then it would be a clear contravention of his Lord's command — but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was protected by Allāh from every error and deviation. Or was he doing it by Allāh's order, then it would mean that Allāh was enjoining indecency. But Allāh has clearly refuted such suggestion when He addresses His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in these words: *Say: ''Surely Allāh does not enjoin indecency''* (7:28).

If, on the other hand, the Prophet was allowing it because there was a divine order to make it lawful, then it was not fornication, nor indecency. It was an ordained institution with its clearly defined boundary. It was not to be done with a woman in prohibited degrees — like the permanent marriage. Also, like the permanent marriage, there was the obligation of dowry, the waiting period (to prevent mixing of sperm and confusion of

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[1] These verses are of Meccan period. Could the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) ignore this clear divine command years later in case of *mut'ah*? (*tr.)*

paternity). Add to it the advantage of satisfying the people's needs. Then why should it be called indecency? What is indecency? It is that evil deed which the society considers repugnant or repulsive because of its moral depravity and licentiousness, or because it disturbs public weal and puts hindrance in fulfilment of the society's needs.

Fourth: The claim, that the *mut'ah* was a sort of fornication prevalent in pre-Islamic days, is a fabrication of history, a fiction that has no historical proof. No history book mentions it, either explicitly or implicitly. It was a system originated by Islam, a concession given by Allāh to this *ummah* to provide for their needs, and to protect the Muslim society from spreading of fornication and other indecencies. Would that they had established this system. Then the Muslim governments would not have felt so much constrained to turn a blind eye to fornication and other indecencies, which have gradually become a part of their social structure — thanks to the secular codes — and which have filled the earth with depravity and wickedness.

As for his claim that ''both indecencies were wide-spread in pre-Islamic days; but fornication was more common among slave girls, not free women'', apparently by the two indecencies he means fornication and drinking intoxicants. This much is correct. But there is no ground to claim that fornication was wide-spread in slave girls and not in free women. Numerous historical proofs of diverse nature prove otherwise. Look, for example, at their poems which describe their exploits. Also, the narration of Ibn 'Abbās has been quoted earlier that, according to the people of the era of ignorance, there was no harm in fornication if it was not done openly.

Also, there was the custom of claiming paternity of one's illegitimate child, and of adoption, that was wide-spread in the era of ignorance. It was not merely a nominal thing to establish whom the child belonged to. It was prevalent because the powerful persons wanted — through this affiliation — to increase their preparedness [for fights] and their man-power. They relied for this matter on illicit sexual relations which they established with free women — even the married ones. So far as the slave girls were concerned, the Arabs, and especially the powerful ones, thought it a disgrace to mix with them, or to court and woo them. As for the slave girls, their only role in this was that their masters coaxed them

for prostitution, exploiting them for their own monetary gains.

The above situation may be comprehended from the stories of affiliations described in traditions and biographies, like the story when Mu'āwiyah, son of Abū Sufyān, attached Ziyād (the bastard) to his father, Abū Sufyān, and the evidence given by [Abū Maryam, the wine merchant] concerning that affair, as well as other such episodes that are narrated in the books.

Maybe someone would quote the words of Hind [wife of Abū Sufyān] spoken to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) at the time of offering her *bay'ah* (allegiance): ''Does a free woman commit adultery?'', and offer it as a proof that adultery and fornication was not common among the free women. But if you look at the collection of the poems of Ḥassān [ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī] and ponder on the satiric poems he had composed to ridicule this same Hind, after the battles of Badr and Uḥud, you will remain in no doubt and will see the reality in its true perspective.[1]

Thereafter, the said writer has tried to clarify the meaning of the traditions, and vainly attempted to reconcile them to one another, and finally has said: ''According to the Sunnīs, there are [three] main proofs of the *mut'ah's* unlawfulness: **First:** As you have seen, it goes against the apparent meanings, if not the clear Wordings, of the Qur'ān, concerning the marriage, divorce, and waiting period. **Second:** The traditions which clearly say that it was forbidden perpetually upto the Day of Resurrection ... **Third:** Its prohibition by 'Umar and his indication, from the pulpit, of its being prohibited, and the confirmation of his views by the Companions; and it is known that they had never remained silent on any unlawful thing, and used to argue with him if he was in wrong.''

Then he has taken the stand that '' 'Umar had not prohibited it by his own *ijtihād;* that he had done so relying on the prohibition that was well-

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[1] This Hind was very much attracted to the black youths, and whenever she gave birth to a black-coloured child, she killed it. (Vide: Sibṭ Ibnu 'l-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat khawāṣi 'l-ummah,* p.186.) *As* for Ḥassān's poems, these are very explicit and were recited in presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Four rather mild lines are as follows:

Have you forgotten the adultery you have committed?
O Hind! Curse be on you to the end of the time!
The midwives believe that she has given birth to
*An infant that is the product of adultery. (*tr.*)*

established by the prohibitory order of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and that this prohibition is attributed to him only because he had made it clear or enforced it, as they say: ash-Shāfi'ī has prohibited wine and Abū Ḥanīfah has made it lawful.''

The author says: As for his first and second proofs, you have seen the reality in the preceding description, as well as in the Commentary, in its utmost clarity. Now comes his third argument: We agree that 'Umar had made it unlawful; it is irrelevant whether he did so by his own *ijtihād,* or relying on Prophetic prohibition (as this writer claims); it is equally immaterial whether the Companions had remained silent because of his fear and dread, being intimidated with his threats, or because they agreed with his prohibition (as the writer claims), or because a certain group did not agree with it, as is seen in the traditions narrated from 'Alī, Jābir, Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās. The fact remains that 'Umar's prohibition and his swearing that he would stone anyone who would do it or would say it was lawful, cannot have any effect whatsoever on the verse under discussion which clearly shows its lawfulness; and whose connotation has not been blunted by the Qur'ān or the *sunnah.* There is no doubt about the meaning of the verses and their decisiveness.

Another writer has really overdone his 'argument' when he claims that the *mut'ah* was only a custom of pre-Islamic days, which had never entered the Islamic boundary; so there was no need of removing it from Islam, or of abrogating it through the Qur'ān or the *sunnah*; the Muslims had never known it, and it is not found except in the Shī'ī books!

The author says: This writing, which by one stroke of pen has wiped off the Qur'ān, the traditions, the consensus and the history, has brought the ever-shifting position [of the Sunnīs] on this subject to an amazing point. The *mut'ah* was an established custom during the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Then came the reign of 'Umar and he forbade it and the prohibition was enforced among the masses. That prohibition was justified on the grounds that the verse of *mut'ah* was abrogated by other verses, or by prohibitory order of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). But several

companions [1] and a lot of their followers from among the jurists of al-Ḥijāz and al-Yaman as well as others opposed that prohibition. This list includes the likes of Ibn Jarīḥ [2] (one of the Imāms of *al-ḥadīth*) who staunchly believed in its lawfulness, so much so that, in all, he had done *mut'ah* with seventy women; and Mālik [3] (one of the four Imāms of Jurisprudence).

This continued for some time. Then the later days' exegetes turned a blind eye to the meaning of *mut'ah* that was clearly understood from the word, *istamta'tum*, and tried to interpret it as permanent marriage; as for the *mut'ah* marriage, they said that it was a system originated by the Prophet's order which was later abrogated by his subsequent tradition. Lately, they claimed that *mut'ah* was a kind of fornication prevalent in the era of ignorance, which the Prophet repeatedly allowed and disallowed until it was perpetually forbidden upto the Day of Resurrection. Now comes this latest 'scholar' who says that *mut'ah* was only a sort of fornication in pre-Islamic days, which had never been known in Islam and which is not found outside the Shī'ī books!

Only Allāh knows what turn this subject will take in coming days.

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[1] A truly astonishing comment on this verse has been written by az-Zajjāj who says: ''A group has committed a great blunder in this verse, because of their ignorance of the language. That is, they have said that the verb, *istamta'tum* (اِسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ = you have *mut'ah*) is derived from *al-mut'ah*, which, all scholars unanimously say, is unlawful.'' Then he claims that ''the said verb means marriage''.

Would that I knew which part of his writing can be mended! Can anyone repair his accusing the people like Ibn 'Abbās and Ubayy of ignorance of language? Or, his claim that all scholars unanimously agree on prohibition of the *mut'ah*? Or, his claim of expertise in Arabic language while he translates *al-istimtā'* (اَلْاِسْتِمْتَاعُ = to do *mut'ah*) as marriage? (*Author's Note*)

[2] See his biography in *Tahdhību 't-tahdhīb* and *Mīzānu 'l i'tidāl*. (*Auth.*)

[3] See the books of Jurisprudence for these views. Detailed juristical and theological discourses on *mut'ah* may be found in the writings of the scholars of these subjects, be they of early days or of later periods — and especially the modern eminent personalities who have scholastically reviewed all the arguments. (*Author's Note*)

AN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE
[MEANING OF ''SON'' IN *SHARĪ'AH*]

The bond of relationship — which connects one person to another by birth — is in fact a natural bond, based on creation, from which originate the clans and tribes; it carries with the blood the hereditary traits and characteristics. Togetherwith other active and passive factors, it is the source of all national characteristics, traditions and customs.

Human societies, whether advanced or primitive, generally give importance to it in their social laws and customs, like marriage, inheritance, etc. Even then, they have often been tampering with it — expanding or contracting its circle — as demanded by exigencies of a given environment. You have seen in the previous discourses, for example, that many ancient nations did not recognize a woman as having the legal relationship with man, while at the same time they accorded such recognition to an adopted son. In the same way, Islam does not recognize any kinship between a belligerent unbeliever and a Muslim; it also affiliates a child to the husband of its mother. And so on and so forth.

As you have seen in the preceding discussions, Islam accords full rights of kinship to women, making them full partners in properties and giving them complete freedom of will and action. Thus son and daughter both stand on the same level so far as relationship and legal kinship are concerned. The same is the case with father and mother, brother and sister, grandfather and grandmother, paternal uncle and aunt, and maternal uncle and aunt. In this way, the vertical column of lineage officially and legally descends through a daughter exactly as it does through a son. A son of the daughter is the son of the grandfather exactly like a son of the son — generation after generation. Likewise, a daughter of the daughter and a daughter of the son, both are the grandfather's daughters — on equal footing. The rules of marriage and inheritance are based on this very foundation. You have seen that the verse: *Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters* ..., reconfirms this reality.

Our ancient scholars have missed the point while writing on this and other similar questions. Although it is a sociological and legal matter, they have treated it as a literary problem, which could be solved with the help of lexicon and literary references. Consequently, there arose a very

severe conflict among them on such questions as, for example: What was the actual meaning for which the word, 'son' was made. Some have enlarged its circle while others have reduced it. But both have taken the wrong approach.

Someone has said: ''Sonship, as is known in the language, continues through a son only. As for the son of a daughter, and all realtionships joined through her, they are affiliated to their fathers, not to their maternal grandfather; and the Arabs do not count them as their maternal grandfather's sons. As for the words of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn: 'These my two sons are Imāms, whether they stand up or sit down', and other similar pronouncements, they are merely honorific expressions.'' Then he has quoted the lines of a poet:

Our sons are the sons of our sons; and as for our daughters,
Their sons are sons of other people.

And likewise, another one has said:

The mothers of the people are merely receptacles
To deposit [the sperm], *and the lineage is taken from*
the fathers.

The author says: The above writer seems confused about the scope of the discussion. He thinks that it is a literary question; according to him, if the Arabs had coined the word, son, for a wider meaning that would have included daughter's son, the result of the discussion would have changed. He seems oblivious to the fact that the laws and effects emanating — in various human societies — from fatherhood, sonship and other such factors, do not depend on language; they are based on the social structures and prevalent customs and traditions. Sometimes, when the social customs change, the laws and effects are also changed without bringing any change in the language. It proves that this question is sociological (or is related to sociology), and not merely a literary discussion related to language.

As for the lines of poetry quoted by him, what value does a poetry have in the market of realities? It is an imaginary embellishment and nothing else. How can he argue on the strength of some words spoken by a blabbermouth poet — especially in matters concerning the Qur'ān, the divine book that is a decisive word, and not a jest?

As for the argument that sons are affiliated to their fathers and not to their maternal grandfathers: first of all, it is not a question of language; secondly, it is not connected with the principles of lineage (so that if a son or daughter is affiliated to the father, it might result in cutting his/her lineage from the mother's side). This affiliation to father emanates from the fact that the man has dominant authority on the household, in maintaining it, bringing up the children and similar other matters.

In short, the mother transfers the relationship of lineage to her male and female children, in the same way as the father does. Its most obvious effects may be seen in the Islamic laws of inheritance and prohibitions of marriage. Of course, there are other rules and directives which are based on other principles, e.g., rules governing paternity, maintenance and distribution of the share of *al-khums* (اَلْخُمُسُ = one-fifth of saving, etc.) among the Prohet's relatives. Each law is governed by a principle that is relevant to it.

ANOTHER ACADEMIC DISCOURSE [PHILOSOPHY OF PROHIBITION OF THE WOMEN OF PROHIBITED DEGREE]

According to the historical evidence available to us, marriage is among the social traditions which have always been prevalent in all types of human societies. This by itself proves that marriage is a natural way of life.

Moreover, its strongest proof may be found in the complementary reproductive system with which males and females have been equipped, (as we have repeatedly said). Both sexes (male and female) are equal in this pursuit, although the female has been additionally equipped with suckling organs and imbued with love and sentiments necessary for bringing up the children.

In addition, there are natural instincts, which manifest themselves in many ways. They instil love of children, enforce the feeling that a person survives through his/her progeny, strengthen the belief that woman is a comfort for man and vice versa, recognize the principle of inheritance (after accepting the basic principles of private property and exclusive attachment), and emphasize the necessity of establishing a household.

The societies which accept, in general, these natural laws and principles, have no escape from establishing and recognizing the marriage system, in the meaning that a woman is exclusively attached to a man, so that men and women do not mingle together in such a way as to nullify the lineage. This factor alone would make the institution of marriage indispensable even if there could be found a way of protecting the public from various diseases and from degeneration of reproductive powers (which is the inevitable result of widespreading fornication and promiscuous sexual behaviour).

These principles are recognized by all nations who accept the institution of marriage, no matter what system they followed, whether it was monogomy, polygamy or polyandry — or even if they allowed a group of husbands for a group of wives. In any case, recognition of marriage is there — in the meaning of an especial type of attachment and companionship between the spouses.

As for indecency and fornication (which by its very nature destroys lineage and corrupts geneology), human nature is the first to abhor it, because the nature demands marriage. The signs of that abhorance and repulsion are visible in various nations and societies, even among those nations which practically grant full freedom of sexual liasions between men and women. Even they are now alarmed of this debauchery and licentiousness, and are enacting laws that could somewhat preserve the lines of descent and geneology.

However, man, while believing in the institution of marriage, does not feel bound by nature to any other restriction. His nature does not tell him that a certain related or unrelated female is unlawful to him. Thus a male may establish sexual relations with his mother, sister, daughter or others like them. Likewise, a female may not consider her father, brother or son as unlawful to herself. This is, of course, if they are left to their desire. Recorded and oral history clearly shows that marriage with mothers, sisters, daughters and other nearest relatives was widespread in all nations — advanced ones and backward ones alike. News media is full of reports of incest between brothers and sisters, and fathers and daughters, in the modern ‘civilized’ nations. When the sexual desire is aroused, nothing can stand in its way. Of course, these nations do not allow marriage with mothers, sisters, daughters and other near relatives; but this restriction is merely a custom they have inherited, and which

perhaps goes back to some ancient national traditions and taboos.

Look at the laws ordained by Islam for regulating matrimonial affairs; compare them with all other codes and customs prevalent in the world. You will find that the Islamic laws are most comprehensive, and give fullest guarantee for avoiding all risk of mix-up in lineage, and provide for complete natural benefit and human welfare. All the regulations laid down by Islam concerning marriage and its concomitants have two objectives in view: To protect the lineage and to block the path of fornication.

The rules which directly ensure the lineage against a mix-up, include prohibition of marriage with a woman presently married to another man. In this way polyandry has been nullified, as it would have caused mix-up of progeny. The same is the underlying reason for fixing a waiting period for woman after divorce — that she should not marry another man upto three monthly courses — so that the two men's sperm is not mixed up.

As for the other prohibited women — the fourteen categories mentioned in the verses of prohibition — the reason for their prohibition is to shut up the door of fornication. Man lives his domestic life, mostly, with these fourteen groups of women; he mingles and intimately associates with them. Continuous association and intimate proximity was enough to fix the man's attention, to focus his thoughts, on them; awakening his animalistic desires and lustful cravings, inciting him to what his libido longs for and base nature tempts to; and whoever hovers around a demarcated area may easily slip in it.

Therefore, it was necessary, in these cases, not to rely too much on the general prohibition of fornication. Regular proximity and repeated craving of lust and desire do not help a human being in guarding oneself against illicit sexual involvement. It was, therefore, essential to prohibit these women perpetually, for ever. Also the society members should be trained and brought up with this idea and belief firmly fixed in their mind, in order that they should have no hope at all that they could ever get these women. This would kill every base desire for them, and root all such evil craving out.

This is what we see in the Muslim societies; even those Muslims, who might be steeped in debauchery, would never think of any indecency with the women of prohibited degrees, or of committing incest with mothers, daughters or such relatives. Surely, without this perpetual

prohibition, no household could be free from incest, etc.

As regards the women other than those of prohibited degrees, Islam has blocked the way of fornication with them by making it compulsory for them to observe *ḥijāb* (veil), and prohibiting the mingling of men with women. Without this rule, prohibition of fornication alone could not stop man from that shameful deed. In fact, there were only these two ways of eradicating illicit sexual conduct. Either the two sexes are prevented from mingling with each other, as Islam has done regarding one group of women; or all thoughts of getting a woman is erased from a man's mind, by making perpetually unlawful to him, so that he grows up with this belief and does not see, or even hear of, any such material union anywhere in the society, and therefore such evil idea never crosses his mind.

Do you want to see the proof? Well, look at the western societies. These Christians believed that fornication was unlawful, and even treated polygamy as adultery. At the same time, they allowed and practised mingling of men and women. Before long, fornication spread all over the society ; now it is almost impossible to find even one person in a thousand who is free from this desease; nor one man in a thousand who can be sure that the children born in his house were really his own. Soon afterwards, the condition deteriorated even further, with men having sexual affairs with their sisters, daughters and mothers. The degeneration of society continued; now men commit sodomy with boys, or youths do it among themselves; and so the debauchery spreads and spreads. Allāh had created the fair sex as a comfort for man, a boon to strengthen the back-bone of humanity, and to make the human life pleasant. But these people have turned woman into a 'hunting gear', which they use to achieve their political, economic and social ambitions; she is a means by which men obtain their objectives — mostly the things that corrupt the society and individuals. Human life has turned into an imaginary hope, a sport and an amusement — in true literal sense of these words. Now the rent is beyond repair.

That was the underlying reason which led Islam to perpetually prohibit those women (either with some condition or unconditionally) — except the married women, whose case is different, as was explained above. This rule protects family from involvement in incest and indecency, and corruption, as you have seen.

Also, it was mentioned earlier that the sentence: *... and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship ...,* gives a sort of indication of this underlying benefit. Moreover, the last part of the verses of prohibition, *Allāh desires that He should make light your burdens, and man is created weak* (4:28), probably points to the same reality. As these fourteen categories of women have been prohibited for ever by Allāh, it has removed the burden of temptation from man; otherwise, the case would have been quite different, and man would have looked towards them with carnal desire; and man is created weak, he finds it difficult to stand against lust and libido. Allāh says: *Surely your guile is great* (12:28). It really would require extra-ordinary self-control for a man to live with one or more non-relative women, spend his time with them alone and in public, remain near them day and night, when his hearing and sight are constantly filled with their sweet talk and attractive demeanour; and yet to remain firm against devilish thoughts about them, and to restrain himself against temptations. We know that sexual desire is one of the two basic needs — the other being the food. All other needs are subsidiary, springing from these two. Probably, it is this reality which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was pointing to, when he said: ‘‘Whoever marries, safeguards half of his religion; so he should fear Allāh regarding the other half.’’ [1]

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[1] See chapter of ‘Marriage’ in *Wasā’ilu ’sh-Shī‘ah.* (*Author’s Note*)

يٰا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاٰ تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوٰالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبٰاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجٰارَةً عَنْ تَرٰاضٍ مِنْكُمْ وَلاٰ تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيماً ــ ٢٩ . وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ عُدْوٰاناً وَظُلْماً فَسَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِ نٰاراً وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللهِ يَسِيراً ــ ٣٠ .

O you who believe! do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means, except that it be trading by your mutual consent; and do not kill your selves; surely Allāh is Merciful to you (29). *And whoever does this in aggression and injustice, We will soon cast him into fire; and this is easy to Allāh* (30).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses have a sort of connection with the preceding ones, inasmuch as these contain prohibition of swallowing up properties by wrongful means, while the former had, *inter alia*, prohibited usurping women's dowries by confining and restraining them and exceeding the limit. We may say that these verses describe a rule in its general form while the former had given one of its specific examples.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! do .not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means, except that it be trading by your mutual consent;:* The connotation of:eating is well-known; it means using up an edible items bit by bit by swallowing. As it implies mastery, control and consumption, they say: The fire ate the fire-wood; as the fire annihilates the wood by burning, it is likened to consuming the food by eating and swallowing. Also they say: He ate the property; i.e., he consumed it by getting control over it. This is because the main use a man makes of a property is to eat it, as taking food is the most essential thing man needs for his existence; that is why, if he uses a thing, it is said, He has eaten it. But this word is not applied to every use; it implies the use with complete mastery over the item in a way that removes all other's control over it; it may be through possession or such other authority. In short, he consumes the goods by having mastery over it as an eater uses up the food by eating.

An action is called 'wrongful' when it does not have a right purpose, a wise objective. *''at-Tijārah''* (اَلتِجَارَةُ = trade) entails managing the capital to get profit, as ar-Rāghib has said in his *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān*; he has also said: ''There is no other word in Arabic in which *ta* (ت) is followed by *jim* (ج).'' However, it implies a deal of sale and purchase.

Why has the clause, ''do not swallow up your property'', been qualified with the words, ''among yourselves''? The qualifying phrase connotes collective earnings and joint usage of property. Consequently it implies, or shows, that the forbidden swallowing up refers to that usage where the property is variously rotated and circulated among themselves. Thus the sentence, when further qualified with, ''by wrongful means'', makes such dealings unlawful which do not lead the society to happiness and success, which bring harm to it and push it to corruption and destruction; these are the dealings which are unlawful in the eyes of *sharī'ah,* like interest, gambling and deceptive trade, e.g., selling something for stone-fruit or rubble and things like that.

Accordingly, the excepted clause, ''except that it be trading by your mutual consent'', is unrelated to the main sentence; it is a disjointed exception; yet it was put here to remove a possible misunderstanding. When the verse prohibited eating up people's property by wrongful means — and a lot of dealings prevalent in a corrupted society, through which properties change hands, are unlawful in the *sharī'ah's* eyes, like

deals involving interest, cheating, gambling, etc. — someone could think that it would demolish the pillars of society, and tear the social fabric to pieces, leading people to perdition and destruction.

To remove that misgiving, the excepted clause mentions one type of dealing which can regulate the diverse affairs of the society, strengthen its back-bone and keep it steadfast, and that is the trade with mutual consent, done in correct way, which can easily fulfil all needs of society.

This exception is not unlike that used in the verses: *The day on which neither property will avail nor sons, except him who comes to Allāh with a submissive heart* (26:88 — 89). As the first sentence had asserted that property or sons will be of no avail on the Day of Resurrection, a misgiving could creep into hearts that there was no way of succeeding on that day; because the main things which benefit a man were property and sons; and if these two could not help, then what was left there except failure and hopelessness? The excepted clause provides answer to this unspoken question; it shows that there was another factor which could bring complete success on that day (although it is neither property nor sons); and that is a submissive heart.

The view we have taken — that it is a disjointed exceptional clause — is more in conformity with the context. The clause, ‘‘by wrongful means’’, is a basic factor, as is the case in verse 188 of chap.2: *And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means, neither seek to gain access thereby to the authorities, so that you may swallow up a portion of the property of men wrongfully while you know.*

Accordingly, there is no need to suppose that the verse is particularized by other lawful dealings and recognized transfers — other than trade — which transfer possession and regularize management, like gift, compromise, prize, as well as dowry, inheritance and similar things.

Some people have said that the exception in this verse is jointed and the clause, ‘‘by wrongful means’’, has only explanatory value; and that it shows the condition of the main clause, after exclusion of the excepted clause (i.e., the remainder is covered by prohibition). Accordingly, the meaning will be as follows: Do not swallow up your property among yourselves, except that it be trading by your mutual consent; if you ate it by any means other than trade, it would be swallowing it up wrongfully which is prohibited. It is the same style as you say: Do not hit an orphan except for teaching him.

COMMENT: Although such usage is correct and well-known among the Arabists, yet you have seen that taking it as a disjointed exception is more in conformity with the context.

Someone has said: What this verse disallows is spending wealth in ways not liked by Allāh; and 'trade' refers to its use in what Allāh is pleased with. A third one has said that this verse implies total prohibition of eating other people's property without giving something in exchange. He claims that after this verse was revealed, people refrained from eating anything in one another's house; it continued until this rule was abrogated by verse 61 of chap.24: *There is no blame ... on yourselves that you eat from your houses, or your brothers' houses ... It is no sin in you that you eat together or separately.*

COMMENT: As you have seen, such interpretations are far-fetched, having no connection with the wordings of the verse.

A really amazing explanation has been given by someone who has tried to combine between the claim that the exception here was a jointed one and the view that the qualifying phrase, ''by wrongful means'', was a basic condition — not merely an explanatory clause. The following is the gist of what he has written:

'' 'Wrongful means' implies swallowing up a property without giving in exchange something equal in value. The main sentence shows that it is unlawful to take someone's property wrongfully without giving something in return. Then trade has been excepted from it, although most of the trade is not free from wrongful ways; because it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to fix the exact return, even with the help of the most sensitive balance, in such a way that the price is exactly equal to the commodity in value.

''Accordingly, the exception implies that the *sharī'ah* would tolerate a deal in which goods were more valuable than the price, or vice versa, or where a deal was done because the trader had made his goods seem beautiful and attractive, using rhetorical flourishes — but without adulteration, cheating or deception — as happens in many cases, or because of other similar reasons. All this is wrongful trade, but the *sharī'ah* has allowed it, giving the traders some latitude and indulgence. Otherwise, none would have gone into trading profession, and the social system based on religion would have been disturbed.''

COMMENT: Its incorrectness is clear from the afore-mentioned explanation. *''al-Bāṭil''* (اَلبَاطِلُ = wrong; void), as understood by scholars of the language, is that which does not lead to the desired effect. What is the desired effect of sale or trade? It is to exchange the goods and price and reciprocally transfer their possession from the buyer to the seller and vice versa. This fulfills the needs of both parties and each gets through this deal what he wants. This effect is achieved when both goods and price are equal as well as when there is some difference — if the deficiency is compensated with some other factor, e.g., the longing of the buyer to acquire that item, or his apprehension in case he does not purchase it, or some other benefits found in it.

We know that some such factors are involved, when both parties agree to the deal; and after the agreement, the exchange is not counted as wrong or void.

Moreover, no one familiar with the Qur'ānic style can ever doubt that it is impossible for the Qur'ān to order and ordain a thing after counting it as void and wrong. Allāh has praised the Qur'ān that it: *guides to the truth and to a right path* (46:30). How can something guiding to wrong and vain be called a guide to the truth?

Also, this interpretation implies that a man is rightly guided by nature, for fulfilment of his needs, to the exchange of goods; then he is rightly guided in the same manner to the exchange through comparison between the goods and the price; then what he has been rightly guided to, cannot rightly fulfil his needs until some portion of falsehood and wrongfulness is added to it! How is it possible that nature is guided — rightly — to something which is not sufficient to fulfil its needs? A thing which can only partially satisfy its demands? How is it possible for the nature to be rightly guided to falsehood? Is there any distinctive factor between truth and falsehood except the same guidance or absence of guidance? Keeping all these aspects in view, there is no alternative for a man, who takes the exception in this verse as jointed, but to say that the clause, ''by wrongful means'', is just an explanatory one.

Even more strange is the following explanation which someone has reportedly written: ''This disjointed exception indicates that all that is in this world — be it trade or some other similar thing — is just vain and void, because it is not ever-lasting, not enduring. A wise person should not involve himself in wordly affairs lest he neglects preparation for the

next world which is far better and more abiding than this life.''

COMMENT: This too is wrong. If it is accepted, then it will be a point in favour of taking it as a jointed, not disjointed, exception. Moreover, such spiritual realities may be suitable for the explanation of the verses as the following: *And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play; and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life* (29:64); *What is with you passes away and what is with Allāh is enduring* (16:96); *Say: ''What is with Allāh is better than sport and* (better) *than merchandise''* (62:11). But in the context of the verse under discussion, applying such points would mean legalizing of wrongful things. The Qur'ān is too sublime to allow wrongfulness by any means.

QUR'ĀN: *and do not kill your selves ...*: Apparently the sentence prohibits suicide. Yet, it comes after the words, *do not swallow up your property among yourselves,* which obviously treat the whole community of the believers as one individual being who owns a property which he should eat by other than wrongful means. This conjunction may imply, or clearly show, that the word, ''yourselves'', refers to all members of the believing society, taken as one individual, each individual's soul is the other's. In such a society, man's life is his own, and also others' lives are his own. Whether he kills himself or kills someone else, he actually destroys his own self. Seen in this light, the sentence, ''do not kill your selves'', will have a general import, covering suicide and murder both.

It may be inferred from ending clause, ''surely Allāh is Merciful to you'',that the above prohibition of killing oneself covers also the situations where man puts his life in danger, or commits such acts as might result in his being killed. Obviously, the reasoning — Mercy — given for the prohibition is more agreeable to this meaning. It will increase the scope of the verse. This appropriateness supports the view that the end clause gives only the reason of the order, ''do not kill your selves''.

QUR'ĀN: *And whoever does this ... and this is easy to Allāh*: *''al-'Udwān''* (اَلْعُدْوَانُ) literary means exceeding — whether it be lawful and praise-worthy or unlawful and blameworthy. Allāh says: *then there should be no hostility* ('udwān) *except against the oppressors* (2:193);

and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression (5:2). Accordingly, its use is more general than 'injustice'. In this verse it connotes exceeding the limits laid down by Allāh. *Nuṣlihi nāran* (نُصْلِيهِ نَاراً = We shall burn him into fire).

The verse, unlike the preceding one, addresses the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), not the believers, because it contains the demonstrative pronoun *dhālika* (ذٰلِكَ = translated here as 'this') [and it, in its turn contains the second person singular pronoun,*ka* = ك]. It implies that whoever among them does so — and they are one soul, one self, and a person should not try to destroy his own self — he is not a part of the believing community; therefore the believers should not be addressed when his punishment is pronounced; the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) is therefore the proper addressee, because Allāh speaks to him on all subjects concerning the believers as well as the unbelievers. Also, that is the reason why the sentence is general (*And whoever does this in aggression* ...), and not specific, i.e., it does not say, whoever among you does this ...

The ending clause, ''and this is easy to Allāh'', supports the view that the demonstrative pronoun, 'this'', here refers to the prohibition of killing people; because the end of the last verse, *surely Allāh is Merciful to you,* was more appropriate to that prohibition, and the two ending clauses are very much in agreement with each other. Apparently the connotation is this: It is a mercy from Allāh that He forbids you to kill your own selves; otherwise it would be very easy for Him to punish a murderer by casting him in fire.

Even then, it is not very difficult to take both — the reasoning of the first verse and the threatening of the second — as related to both prohibitory orders of the first verse, i.e., not eating a property by wrongful means and not killing.

Someone has said that the reasoning and the threatening both, or at least the threatening, refers to all the prohibitions from the beginning of the chapter to this verse. Some others have said that it refers to all prohibitory orders beginning from the verse 19 of this chapter (*O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should inherit women against* [their] *will*); because nowhere else in these verses any punishment is pronounced for contravention.

COMMENT: There is nothing to give credence to such views.

The style has been changed twice in this verse. The first verse ended on the words: *surely Allāh is Merciful to you,* which referred to Allāh as a third person. Then comes the clause: *We will soon cast him into fire,* where the Almighty speaks in first person. This change is related to the earlier mentioned change, as now the talk is addressed directly to the Prophet, and not to the believers. Finally, it again reverts to the third person: *and this is easy to Allāh;* this is done to describe the reason of this statement — This is easy to Him because He is Allāh.

TRADITIONS

aṭ-Ṭabrisī says in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* about the words of Allāh, *by wrongful means,* that there are two explanations given for it, one of which says that it means: usury, gambling, paying less than fair price, injustice. And he says that this meaning is narrated from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) have said that it means gambling, forbidden deals, usury and (false) oaths. (*Nahju 'l-bayān*)

Asbāṭ ibn Sālim has said: ''I was with Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.). A man came to him and said: 'Tell me about the words of Allāh, *O you who believe! do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means*.' He said: 'He refers here to gambling. And as for the words, *and do not kill your selves*, He refers by it to a Muslim who attacks polytheists on his own, and enters their camps and is killed. So, Allāh has forbidden them to do so.' '' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: The verse is general and covers all unlawful ways of swallowing up. Gambling and other similar things have been mentioned only as examples. In the same way, what has been said in explanation of killing oneself, actually enlarges the circle of prohibition instead of reducing it; it does not limit the meaning to the given example.

Isḥāq ibn 'Abdillāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn has said: ''al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd narrated to me, from his father, from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.) that he said: 'I asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) concerning the splints that are put on broken (bones); how should such a man perform *wuḍū'*? And how will he take bath if he is in a state of

major ritual impurity? He said: ‘‘It is enough for him to wipe his wet hand on it in the ritual bath and *wuḍū’* both.’’ I said: ‘‘If there is cold and he is afraid about his self (i.e., health, or life), if he poured water on his body?’’ Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) recited: *and do not kill your selves; surely Allāh is Merciful to you.*’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said: ‘‘Whoever intentionally kills himself, he shall enter the fire of hell, abiding therein for ever. Allāh, the High, has said: *and do not kill your selves; surely Allāh is Merciful to you. And whoever does this in aggression and injustice, We will soon cast him into fire; and this is easy to Allāh.*’’ (*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l faqīh*)

The author says: As you see, these traditions generalize the meaning of the words, *and do not kill your selves ...,* as we have already inferred earlier. There are other traditions of similar import.

Ibn Mājah and Ibnu ’l-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn Sa’īd that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: ‘Surely, trade is by mutual consent.’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās (that he said): ‘‘Verily, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) sold (something) to a man; then he said to him: ‘Exercise your option.’ (The man) said: ‘I have opted (for it).’ Then (the Prophet) said: ‘In this manner (should be) trade.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

al-Bukhārī, at-Tirmidhī and an-Nasā’ī have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: ‘The two parties of a sale have the option (to cancel it) as long as they have not separated, or one of them says to the other, ‘‘Exercise your option.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: The words of the Prophet, ‘‘The two parties of a sale have the option (to cancel it) as long as they have not separated’’, are also narrated through the Shī‘ī chains. The words, ‘‘or one of them says to the other, ‘Exercise your option’,’’ show a way to ascertain the other party’s consent.

* * * * *

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلاً كَرِيماً ـ ٣١ .

If you avoid great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your (small) *sins and cause you to enter an honourable place of entering* (31).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verse is not without some connection with the preceeding ones which had mentioned some great sins.

QUR'ĀN: *If you avoid great sins ... your* (small) *sins: al-Ijtināb* (اَلِاجْتِنَابُ = to avoid, to shun), is derived from *al-janb* (اَلْجَنْبُ = [right or left] side of body); the verb is made from that noun in a metaphorical sense; when man wants to take something, he turns to it with his face and frontal part of the body; and if he wants to avoid or shun it, he turns away from it putting it to his side; thus *al-ijtināb* implies avoidance and shunning. ar-Rāghib has said that ''It is more eloquent than the word, 'leaving' ''. This eloquence comes from its having a metaphorical sense. From the same root come *al-jānib* (اَلْجَانِبُ = side), *al-janbah* (side, region) and *al-ajnabiyy* (اَلْاَجْنَبِيُّ = foreigner, alien).

at-Takfīr (اَلتَّكْفِيْرُ = to expiate, to forgive) is derived from *al-kafr* (اَلْكَفْرُ = to cover, to hide). Generally the Qur'ān uses it for forgiveness of sins. *al-Kabā'ir* (اَلْكَبَائِرُ) is plural of *al-kabīrah* (اَلْكَبِيْرَةُ = the big one); this adjective has been used in place of a deleted noun which it qualifies, like 'sins', etc. 'Greatness' is a relative idea; it cannot exist without correlation with 'smallness'. That is why the words, ''great sins which you are forbidden'', imply existence of some forbidden sins which are small. The verse, therefore, shows two things:

First: The sins are of two types, great and small.

Second: *as-Sayyi'ah* (اَلسَّيِّئَةُ = evil; sin) mentioned in the second clause refers to small sins, because it is put parallel to 'great sins'.

Of course, disobedience and insubordination, of any type, is great when we look at the insignificance of the created and sustained man *vis-a-vis* the greatness of Allāh. But in this case we are making a comparison between man and his Lord, not between one sin and another. There is no contradiction, therefore, in saying that every sin is great (by one criterion) and that some sins are small (by another criterion).

A sin is considered great if its prohibition has been given much more emphasis than that of some other sins. Probably, the words, ''which you are forbidden'', imply, or point to, this reality. We may realize the importance of a prohibitory order if its language is severe, or if it has been much emphasized, or is accompanied by a threat of punishment of fire, etc.

QUR'ĀN: *and cause you to enter an hounable place of entering: al-Mudkhal* (اَلْمُدْخَلُ = place of entering) is an adverb of place; and refers either to paradise or to a position of nearness to Allāh — although the end result of both is the same.

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GREAT AND SMALL SINS AND EXPIATION OF EVILS

There is no doubt that the verse, *If you avoid great sins ...,* confirms

the division of sins into two categories: great and small; the latter has been mentioned here as 'evils'. Likewise the verse 49 of chap.18 proves this fact: *And the Book shall be placed, then you will see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say: ''Ah! woe to us! what a book is this! it does not omit a small one nor a great one, but numbers them* (all)''. Their fear of the book shows that *small one* and *great one* mean small sin and great sin.

As for *as-sayyi'ah* (اَلسَّيِّئَةُ), looking at its root and paradigm, it signifies a happening or action which brings evil. That is why sometimes it is used for those affairs or misfortunes which cause grief. Allāh says: *and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself* (4:79); *And they ask you to hasten on the evil before the good* (13:6). Sometimes it is used for consequences and effects of sins in this world and the next, as Allāh says: *So the evil* (consequences) *of what they did shall afflict them ...* (16:34); *So there befell them the evil* (consequences) *of what they earned ...* (39:51); this connotation actually corresponds with the first meaning. Also, it is often used for the sin itself, as Allāh says: *And the recompense of evil is punishment like it ...* (42:40). In this sense it is sometimes used for sins in general, and covers great and small ones alike, as Allāh says: *Nay! do those who have wrought evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do good — that their life and their death shall be equal? Evil it is that they judge* (45:21). There are many other verses of the same implication. And sometimes it is used particularly for small sins, as in the verse under discussion: *If you avoid great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins;* because if man avoids great sins, then nothing remains there except the small ones.

In short, without any doubt, the verse proves that there are two categories of sins: great ones and small ones, when comparison is made between the sins themselves.

Also, there is no doubt that the verse is meant to show the divine grace and favour for the believers; it conveys to them the affectionate message of Allāh that if they avoided some sins, He would expiate from them the other sins. Not that they are encouraged to commit small sins; the verse undoubtedly exhorts them to shun great sins, and if somebody committed a small sin thinking that it was of no importance and that there was no harm in doing it, it would turn that sin into the worst arrogance and transgression, as it would show his disdain to Allāh's command —

and that is one of the greatest sins. What the verse implies is only this: The small sins will be forgiven because they are minor slips, and hardly a man can remain free from them, seeing that man has been created weak and ignorant and it is really difficult for him to avoid small errors when he comes under the influence of desire or ignorance. The verse in this respect describes the same reality which the following verse expounds: *Say: ''O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh; surely Allāh forgives the faults altogether, surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful: And return to your Lord and submit to Him ...''* (39:53 — 54). No one can claim that this verse encourages man to commit sins, by opening the door of repentance and comforting them with it. In the same way, no objection can be raised against the verse under discussion. In fact, such verses revive dead hearts by giving them hope in place of despair.

The verse does not imply that it was impossible to identify great sins, and, therefore, one must avoid all sins, lest one commits great ones and falls into perdition. Such interpretation would be far-fetched. The verse implies that the addressees identify the major sins and recognize them from the relevant prohibitory orders. The least that can be said is that the verse obligates people to recognize the major sins in order that they could be on guard against them; at the same time they should not treat small sins lightly, because as you have been told, such attitude in itself is one of the mortal sins.

When man will know the great sins, and recognize and identify them, he willunderstand that these were the limits put by Allāh, and no one transgressing that boundary would be forgiven unless he showed definite remorse and sincere repentance. This knowledge in itself will serve as a warning and prevent, him from sinning.

As for the intercession, it is a fact. But you have seen in the preceding relevant discourses that it would not benefit a man who treats divine commands with disdain or takes repentance and remorse lightly. To commit a sin relying on intercession shows indifference and carelessness towards divine orders. This is such a major sin that it definitely closes all the ways of intercession.

The above talk makes clear what we have earlier said that the greatness of a sin is known from severe language of the prohibitory order or from threat of chastisement for it.

This sufficiently throws light on all the views given about great sins. [Many explanations are seen in Islamic books which are given here in short]:-

1] Great sins are those for which Allāh has threatened chastisement in the hereafter and prescribed a fixed punishment in this world.

COMMENT: Persistence in committing a minor sin is a great sin. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said: ‘‘No great sin remains with repentance, and no minor sin remains (minor) with persistence.’’ It has been narrated by both sects; but the *sharī‘ah* has not prescribed any fixed punishment for it. The same is the case with being friends with unbelievers and eating up interest, although these two are among the greatest sins forbidden in the Qur’ān.

2] Great sins are those for which Allāh has threatened punishment of fire in the Qur’ān. (Some have added, ‘‘and in the traditions.’’)

COMMENT: This criterion is neither all-inclusive nor exclusive.

3] All those sins are great which show the doer as being indifferent to religion and heedless to the *sharī‘ah.* This has been said by Imāmu ’l-Ḥaramayn and appreciated by ar-Rāzī.

COMMENT: This is called transgression and rebellion; and it is one of the mortal sins. There are many other mortal sins (even if they are not committed with obstinacy) like eating up an orphan’s property, incest, and unlawfully killing a believer.

4] That sin is great which is forbidden on its own, not because of some incidental concomitants.

COMMENT: It is in a way opposite to the preceding explanation. But transgression and indifference to the *sharī‘ah*, etc. are among the mortal sins, while they are merely concomitants which turn into mortal sins when they occur with any sin.

5] The sins mentioned in this chapter [The Women] from the beginning to the end of the verse 30 are great. Probably, the idea is that the words, *great sins which you are forbidden,* refer to the sins mentioned before this verse, e.g., misbehaving with relatives, eating orphan’s property, fornication, etc.

COMMENT: Generality of the verse does not agree with this restriction.

6] Every deed prohibited by Allāh is a great sin. (This explanation is attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās.) Perhaps it is because disobeying Allāh is a very serious matter, a major transgression.

COMMENT: You have already seen that the division of sins into great and small is based on their comparison with one another, while this interpretation looks at the status of man, a humble servant, *vis-a-vis* Allāh Who is the Lord of everything. Probably someone may be inclined to this view, thinking that the genitive construction in the clause, *great sins which* [lit., of what] *you are forbidden,* was explanatory. This, however, is not correct; because the implication then would be as follows: If you avoid all sins, We shall expiate from you your small sins. But if one avoids ‘all’ sins, where will the small sins come from?

If it is said that the verse speaks about expiation of the believers’ sins committed prior to its revelation, then it would be exclusively reserved for those who were present at the time of revelation, and it does not agree with generality of the verse.

If the verse is still taken as a general one, it would mean: If you firmly decide to avoid all sins, and then actually avoid them, We shall expiate your previous sins. But it is such a difficult condition that one can hardly find a single example of such fortitude; such a general and comprehensive verse cannot be applied to such a rare occurance; because human beings are not free from evils and errors except those whom Allāh takes under His especial protection. Think over it.

7] The small is that sin whose punishment is less than the total reward of its doer; and the great is that whose punishment is greater than the doer’s total reward. This interpretation is attributed to the Mu‘tazilites.

COMMENT: It is an interpretation which is supported neither by this verse nor by any other in the whole Qur’ān. Of course, the Qur’ān says that certain sins cause forfeiture of deeds in certain cases, but it is not a general rule covering all sins — whether or not it is taken in the sense they mean. We have discussed in detail the meaning of forfeiture in the second volume of this book [1].

They have also said that expiation of small sins is obligatory [on Allāh] when a servant avoids great sins; and that it would not be proper

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[1] *al-Mīzān* [Eng. transl.], vol.3, pp.245 — 52 (*tr.*)

then to mete out any punishment to him. But the verse does not prove this theory either.

8] Greatness and smallness are two aspects which are found in every sin. A sin is great when committed in disregard or indifference to the divine command; but the same sin is counted as small if done when one is incensed with anger, overcome by desire or frightened by cowardice — all this is forgiven if one avoids great sins.

As the above criteria of greatness of sin may be combined under the heading of arrogance and transgression of limits, this explanation may be summarized as follows: Every forbidden sin is great if done with arrogance and haughtiness, otherwise it is small and forgiven if not accompanied with arrogance and haughtiness.

Someone has said: There are, in every evil and every divine prohibition, one or more great sins as well as one or more small sins. The greatest of all, in every sin, is indifference to divine order and prohibition, and disdain of the *sharī'ah*; it also includes repeatedly committing a sin, because such a person manifests his disrespect to, and carelessness about, divine orders or prohibitions; while Allāh says: If you avoid the great sins of what you are forbidden, i.e., the great sins which are found in every thing you are forbidden, We shall expiate from you your sins, i.e., We shall forgive you the smaller aspects of that sin and shall not ask you about it.

COMMENT: It is correct that every sin done in a mariner as to show the doer's arrogance and haughtiness becomes a great sin. But it does not mean that it is the only criterion of the greatness of sins. There is no doubt that some sins are great in themselves even without the aforesaid arrogance, etc. Incest when compared to looking at a stranger woman, and murder in comparison to beating, are great sins — whether there was any arrogance there or not. Of course, if indifference, arrogance or haughtiness accompanied a sin, the prohibition will accordingly increase in severity and intensity; the sin will be even greater and the disobedience even more condemnable. Obviously, fornication under overwhelming influence of lust and ignorance is not like the same when committed arrogantly thinking that there was no evil in it.

Moreover, the purported meaning ('If you avoid in every sin its great aspects, We shall expiate from its smaller ones') is in bad taste, not in harmony with the context of the verse: *If you avoid the great sins which*

you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your (small) *sins ...;* as will be vouched by anyone who has a little familiarity with literary styles.

9] Now we come to al-Ghazālī's reported [1] explanation which apparently is a synthesis of the above views; a gist of which is given below:

''Sins are of two types — great and small — when compared with one another. For example,incest with a married woman within prohibited degree *vis-a-vis* looking at a stranger woman. At the same time, some sins become great when they appear with some serious aspects, for example, when a small sin is committed again and again, it becomes great, although to begin with it was not so.

''It shows that sins are divided into two categories — great and small — when looked at the actions, *per se,* in comparison with one another. Even so, they are also divided into these two categories when seen in the perspective of their evil effects and consequences — whether they nullify good deeds or merely reduce the rewards. If the evil deeds are stronger or more numerous than the good ones, the former would erase and nullify the latter; otherwise, the evil deed would be wiped off taking with it an equal amount of reward as its indemnity. Every act of obedience has a good effect on the soul; it raises it in rank, and extricates it from darkness of ignorance. Likewise, every disobedience has an evil effect, degrading the soul and pushing it into abyss of remoteness and darkness of ignorance.

''When a man, who has acquired some light and purity through his obedience, commits a sin, then naturally the darkness of sin collides with the light of obedience. If the darkness of sin and consequences of evil overpower the light of obedience, then the latter is extinguished and forfeited. Such a sin is called great. If, on the other hand, the obedience with its light and purity overcomes the darkness of ignorance and dirtiness of sin, by sacrificing an equal amount of its light, then the remaining [albeit diminished] light and purity will continue to brighten and illuminate the soul. This is the meaning of *at-taḥābuṭ* (اَلتَّحَابُطُ = a Mu'tazilite theory that good and evil actions cancel each other); and it is

[1] As quoted by Fakhru 'd-Dīn ar-Rāzī in his *tafsīr* (commentary) from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'u 'l-'ulūm.* (*Author's Note*)

exactly the meaning of forgiveness of small sins and expiation of evil deeds. Such sins are called small.

‘‘Apparently it is not unreasonable to expect some cases where perfect equivalence might be found between evil and good deeds. It means that there may be a man in total abeyance having in his account neither any obedience nor any disobedience — without any light or darkness. But the words of Allāh refute it, as He says: *a party shall be in the garden and* (another) *party in the burning fire.*[42:7]’’

ar-Rāzī has refuted it, saying that this explanation is based on the Mu‘tazilite tenets which, according to him, are wrong.

The author of *Tafsīru ’l-manār* in his turn has very severely reproached ar-Rāzī on this line of argument. He says:

‘‘When this (i.e., division of sins, *per se,* into great and small) is explicitly mentioned in the Qur’ān, then is it imaginable that Ibn ‘Abbās would deny it? Not at all. On the other hand, ‘Abdu ’r-Razzāq has narrated from him that he was asked: ‘Is the number of great sins seven?’ He said: ‘They are nearer to seventy.’ Ibn Jubayr has narrated that he had said: ‘They are nearer to seven hundred.’

‘‘Actually it is the Ash‘arites who are said to deny the division of sins to great and small. Probably those Ash‘arites who were of this view wanted to refute the Mu‘tazilites — even if it took some explaining away. This may be seen in the writing of Ibn Fawrak, as he has confirmed the Ash‘arite view and has said: ‘All the sins of Allāh are great; it is only relatively [1] that one or the other of them is called great or small. The Mu‘tazilites say that sins are of two categories, small and great; but it is not correct.’ Then he has written a far-fetched interpretation of the verse.

‘‘Well, should the verses and traditions be explained away, just for opposing the Mu‘tazilites? Even in matters where they are right? People are not above such pet mindedness. Religious bigotry and partisanship have prevented many intelligent scholars from using their sagacity for their own benefit and that of their followers, and turned their books into a source of strife for the Muslims. They are too busy with polemical

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[1] That is, in relation to the intentions with which various sins are committed; it does not refer to comparison between one sin and another. (*Author’s Note*)

arguments to look at reality of religion. You will soon see how ar-Rāzī quotes from al-Ghazālī and then refutes it just for this reason; but where is ar-Rāzī from al-Ghazālī, and where is Mu‘āwiyah from ‘Alī?’’ (The last sentences refer to the writings of al-Ghazālī and ar-Rāzī which we have quoted earlier.)

Be that as it may. What al-Ghazālī has written is sound to a certain extent; still it is not free from various defects and shortcomings:

First: According to him, the division of sins into great and small is based on mutual cancellation or reduction of reward and punishment. Again, he believes that sins are also divided into great and small on their own. But the two divisions do not always correspond. A person has a lot of reward to his credit; then he commits many sins which are known to be great in themselves and they drastically decrease his reward, leaving a small residue in his account. Now he commits a small sin and that cancels out the remnant of his reward. In both cases, what was great by one criterion, becomes small by another; and vice versa. Thus the two divisions are not always identical.

Second: It is true that there occurs some collision between the effects of obedience and disobedience in certain cases. But it is not an all-encompassing principle. The hypothetic generality has never been supported by apparent meanings of the Qur’ān and the *sunnah.* Let him show if there is any proof whatsoever from the Qur’ān and the *sunnah* which could prove general and all-encompassing mutual cancellation and reduction between punishments of sins and rewards of obedience.

As for the detailed discourse about the noble and brilliant spiritual status, and the opposite vile, darkened condition, it is marred by the same defect. True that the spiritual light and darkness usually collide, acting on, and reacting to, each other — thus cancelling out, or reducing the strength of, the opposite force. But this too is not a general non-changing rule. Sometimes, virtue and evil both stay in their places, co-existing with each other, and bringing about a split personality. A Muslim, for instance, eats interest, swallows up people’s property, and turns a deaf ear to the cries of an oppressed victim of injustice, and at the same time pays particular attention to obligatory prayers, and entreats his Lord with utmost devotion and humility. Or, another one cynically sheds blood, shamelessly violates people’s honour and creates chaos and mischief on the earth, and then very faithfully carries out other religious commands

with complete sincerity. It is the phenomenon the psychologists call schizophrenia or Jekyll and Hude syndrome, in which various opposing trends fight each other to gain the control of a man's psyche; the man is continually distracted by this inner turmoil — until both traits become firmly set in their places and a sort of truce is affected between them: When one trait raises its head, the other disappears from the scene, leaving the field to its rival to stalk its victim, and pounce on it — as the above examples have shown.

Third: It follows from al-Ghazālī's exposition that avoidance of great sins should not have any role in the expiation of small sins. Suppose there is a person who does not commit any great sin: not because he volitionally avoids it even when he has an urge and ability to do it; he rather does not do it only because he cannot do it. His small sins will however be cancelled by his good deeds, because in this case his rewards will be greater than his punishment — and it is exactly what the expiation of small sins means. And, it does not leave any meaningful function for volitional avoidance of great sins.

al-Ghazālī himself has written in *Iḥyā'u 'l-'ulūm:* ''Avoidance of great sin causes expiation of small sins when one shuns them in spite of ability and urge to do them. For example, a man gets hold of a woman and has a chance of establishing sexual relations with her, and yet he keeps aloof from it and restricts himself to looking at, or touching her. His inner struggle against his base desire is much more effective in illuminating his heart when compared to the darkness caused by his audacity in looking at her. This is what brings about expiation of small sins. If, on the other hand, he was impotent, or avoided it because of some other inability, or because of fear of the affairs of the hereafter, it would not lead to any expiation. Suppose, someone does not like liquor at all, and would not take it even if it was allowed, then his avoidance of liquor would not expiate the smaller sins which are considered preliminary stages of drinking, e.g., listening to music and songs. Of course, if someone longs to drink liquor and listen to music, and struggles with himself to avoid drinking and restricts himself to the listening to music, then probably his inner struggle to shun the liquor would remove from his heart the darkness brought about by the sin of listening to music. All these are the rules of hereafter.''

Again he says in another place: ''A darkness rising to the heart

cannot be erased except by a light brought in by an opposite good deed — and opposites have reciprocal relation with each other. It is therefore necessary that each evil should be erased by a good deed of the same category, in order that it could counteract it. Whiteness is removed by blackness, not by heat or cold. This step by step approach is a sort of favour in erasure of sins; because hope in this way is much stronger, and trust more effective than, for example, in a case when one continues performing only one type of worship — although this too has some role in the said erasure.''

These words of al-Ghazālī clearly show that, according to him, only that avoidance can expiate minor sins which is done volitionally by preventing oneself from a longed for great sin. But his earlier quoted explanation does not necessarily lead to this conclusion.

To sum it up, all that can be said here, relying on the Qur'ānic verses, is this: It is true that the good and bad deeds cancel out, or decrease the force of, each other — in certain cases. But there is no evidence to show that every evil affects every good deed in this way, and vice versa. This fact may be appreciated if we look at moral and psychological conditions — they are the best tools for understanding the Qur'ānic realities regarding reward and punishment.

As for the great and small sins, you have seen that the verse apparently connotes that, compared with one another, some of them are great and others small. For example, killing an inviolable person unjustly, *vis-a-vis* looking at a stranger woman, or drinking liquor claiming that it was allowed *vis-a-vis* drinking it when overcome by desire — without its having any connection at all with the theory of forfeiture and expiation.

Moreover, the verse, being without any restriction, clearly shows that Allāh has promised him who avoids great sins to expiate all his small sins — both, of past and future. Obviously this avoidance implies that every believer should avoid great sins as much as he can, in a way that it would constitute the avoidance in view of his particular situation. It surely does not mean that he should avoid it after first intending to do it and then shunning it. Anyone who has a cursory glance at the list of great sins will undoubtedly realize that the man has not been born yet who would be inclined to commit all of them and also have ability to do so — even if such a case is ever found, it would be so rare as to make it practically non-existent. It would be in bad taste to apply such a general verse to

such a rare and imaginary case.

The verse therefore means that whoever avoids the great sins which are within his power and which his heart longs for, (and these are the great sins which he can and does avoid), Allāh will expiate his small sins, whether or not the latter have any reciprocal relation with the former.

Question: Is this expiation, because of avoidance, in the sense that the avoidance, *per se*, is an act of obedience which brings the expiation in its wake, just like repentance? Or is it that when man does not commit sins, then he is left with only his small sins and good deeds, and then the good deeds expiate his small sins? As Allāh says: *surely good deeds take away evil deeds* (11:114). Apparently, the verse (*If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* [small] *sins*), shows that the avoidance has something to do with the expiation. Otherwise, it would have been more appropriate to say that acts of obedience expiate evil deeds (as was said in the verse, *surely good deeds take away evil deeds*); or, that Allāh will forgive small sins whatever they may be; there was no need then of setting forth a conditional sentence.

A sin is great if the prohibitive order is given in a severe language, or if it contains threat of fire or something similar, whether it is found in the Qur'ān or *sunnah.* But these criteria are not exclusive.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said: ''Great (sins) are those for which Allāh has imposed (the punishment of) the fire.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

al-Bāqir (a.s.) has said about the great sins: ''Every (sin) which Allāh has threatened to punish with fire.'' (*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l faqīh*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said: ''Whoever avoids that which Allāh has threatened (to punish) with fire — if he is a believer — Allāh will expiate his (small) sins from him, and will cause him to enter an honourable place of entering; and the seven great (sins) which impose (punishment of fire) are (as follows): Murder of an inviolable person; disobedience to parents; eating usury; going back to nonIslamic places [where one cannot perform his/her Islamic worship] after *hijrah* [i.e., after emigration to an Islamic centre]; slandering a married woman (of adultery); swallowing up orphan's property; and fleeing from *jihād.*'' (*Thawābu 'l-a'māl*)

The author says: There are many Shī‘ī and Sunnī traditions which have enumerated great sins, some of which will be given later. Most of them count polytheism as one of the seven great sins, although the above tradition does not mention it; probably the Imām (a.s.) has removed it from this list because it is the greatest of the great sins; and the words, ‘‘if he is a believer’’, point to it.

Abdu ’l-Aẓīm ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥasanī has narrated from Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, (who narrates) from his father ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā (who narrates) from (his father) Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (peace be on them all!) that he said: ‘‘ ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd al-Baṣrī came to see Abū ‘Abdillāh Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.). When he saluted and sat down, he recited this verse: *And those who shun the great sins and indecencies* [42:37]. Then he stopped. Abū ‘Abdillāh said: ‘What made you to be silent?’ He said: ‘I would like to know the great sins from the Book of Allāh.’ (The Imām) said: ‘Yes! O ‘Amr, the greatest of the great is to ascribe a partner to Allāh, because Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him* [4:48;4:116]; and He has said: *Surely whoever associates* (others) *with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire*;[5:72].

‘‘ ‘After that comes despairing of Allāh’s mercy, because Allāh says: *... surely none despairs of Allāh’s mercy except the unbelieving people* [12:87];

‘‘ ‘Then is feeling secure from Allāh’s plan, because Allāh says: *But none feels secure from Allāh’s plan except the people who shall perish* [7:99];

‘‘ ‘And among (the great sins) is disobedience to parents, because Allāh has counted a disobedient (child) as insolent (and) unblessed, in the verse [quoting ‘Īsā, a.s.]: *And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed* [19:32];

‘‘ ‘And among them is killing a soul whom Allāh has given protection to — except with [judicial] authority — as He says: *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it ...* [4:93];

‘‘ ‘And slandering married women, because Allāh says: *Surely those who accuse chaste believing women, unaware* (of the evil), *are cursed in*

this world and the hereafter, and they shall have a grievous chastisement. [24:23];

‘‘ ‘And swallowing the property of an orphan, for He says: (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their belies and soon they shall enter burning fire.* [4:10];

‘‘ ‘And fleeing from *jihād,* as Allāh says: *And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day — unless he turns aside for the sake of fighting or withdraws to a company — then he, indeed, becomes deserving of Allāh’s wrath, and his abode is hell; and an evil destination shall it be.* [8:16];

‘‘ ‘And swallowing interest, because Allāh says: *Those who swallow down interest cannot stand except as one whom Satan has confounded with* (his) *touch does stand.* [2:275]; and He (further) says: *But if you do* (it) *not,* [i.e., if you do not forgo the interest], *then be apprised of war from Allāh and His Messenger;*[2:279];

‘‘ ‘And sorcery, for Allāh says:... *and certainly they knew that he who bought it* (i.e., sorcery) *should have no share* (of good) *in the hereafter,* ... [2:102];

‘‘ ‘And fornication, because Allāh says:... *and he who does this* (i.e., fornication) *shall find a requital of sin; the punishment shall be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he shall abide therein in abasement.* [25:68 — 69];

‘‘ ‘And false oath, for Allāh says: (As for) *those who take a small price for the covenant of Allāh and their* (own) *oaths — surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allāh will not speak to them, ...* [3:77];

‘‘ ‘And defrauding; Allāh says: *... and he who defrauds shall bring* (with him) *that which he has defrauded, on the Day of Resurrection;* [3:161];

‘‘ ‘And withholding the obligatory *zakāt*, for Allāh says: *... and* (as for) *those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allāh’s way, announce to them a painful chastisement, on the Day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it; this is what you hoarded up for yourselves*, ... [9:34 — 35];

‘‘ ‘And false testimony and concealing (true) testimony, because

Allāḥ says:... *and whoever conceals it* [i.e., testimony], *his heart is surely sinful;*[2:283];

‘‘ ‘And drinking liquor, because Allāh has made it equal to idol-worshiping [in the verse 5:90];

‘‘ ‘And neglecting prayer or any of the things made obligatory by Allāh, because the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) says: ‘‘Whoever neglects prayer intentionally, he goes out from the protection of Allāh and the protection of His Messenger’’;

‘‘ ‘And breaking a promise and misbehaving with relatives, because Allāh says (about these): ... (as for) *those, upon them shall be curse and they shall have the evil* (issue) *of the abode* [13:25].’ ’’

(Imām al-Kāẓim, a.s.) said: ‘‘Then ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd went away crying out loudly, and he was saying: ‘Perished he who spoke by his own opinion and contended with you in virtue and knowledge.’ ’’ (*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*)

The author says: A *ḥadīth* of nearly the same meaning has been narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās through Sunnī chains. This tradition makes two things clear:

First: The great sins are those which have been very strongly prohibited, either by using forceful language or by threatening with the fire, in the Qur’ān or the tradition (as may be seen in the proofs put forward by the Imām, a.s.). It clarifies the meaning of *al-Kāfī’s ḥadīth,* ‘‘Great (sins) are those for which Allāh has imposed (the punishment of) the fire’’; and also that of *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l faqīh* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī, that great sins are those which Allāh has threatened (to punish) with fire. The imposition and the threat mentioned in these traditions are general; they may be explicit or implied, in the Book of Allāh or in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

I think that the same is the import of the interpretation ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās; and when he speaks about threat with fire he uses it in general terms which covers explicit as well as implicit threat, whether it is found in the Qur’ān or the tradition. It is supported by another tradition found in *at-Tafsīr* of aṭ-Ṭabarī, and attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās in which he says: ‘‘Great are those sins which Allāh ends with (the threat of) fire, or (His) wrath or curse or chastisement.’’ This also makes it clear that what has been narrated from him in *at-Tafsīr* of aṭ-Ṭabarī and other books that,

‘‘Every sin prohibited by Allāh is great’’, does not give a different meaning of great sins; it merely says that every sin is great when looked at in the perspective of man’s insignificance *vis-a-vis* the majesty of his Lord, as was explained earlier.

Second: Some of the preceding and the following traditions give the number of the great sins as eight or nine (as some Sunnī traditions narrated from the Prophet [s.a.w.a.] do), or twenty (as seen in this tradition), or seventy (vide some other narrations). This difference reflects the difference in degrees of greatness of sins, as may be seen in the Imām’s words in this very tradition, ‘‘the greatest of the great is to ascribe a partner to Allāh’’.

al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā’ī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: ‘Keep away from seven mortal sins.’ They said: ‘And what are they? O Messenger of Allāh!’ He said: ‘Ascribing a partner to Allāh; slaying the soul that Allāh has forbidden except by right; sorcery; devouring usury; devouring the property of an orphan; turning back (from the enemy) on the day of marching (to battle); and accusing the married believing women (of adultery) while they are unaware (of such false accusation).’ ’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥazm, from his father, from his grandfather that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) wrote a letter to the people of Yemen, which listed obligatory and recommended deeds and indemnity for bodily injuries; and sent it with ‘Amr ibn Ḥazm, who said: ‘It was written in the letter, *inter alia,* that the greatest of the great sins near Allāh on the Day of Resurrection is associating someone/something with Allāh; killing the soul of a believer without right; fleeing (from war) on the day of marching (to battle); disobeying the parents; slandering a married woman; learning sorcery, devouring interest; and devouring the property of an orphan.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad has narrated in *Zawā’idu ’z-zuhd,* from Anas that he said: ‘‘I heard the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) saying: ‘Well, surely my intercession is for those of my *ummah* who might have done great sins.’ Then he recited the verse, *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins ...’’* (*ibid.*)

* * * * *

وَلاَ تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ
مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اكْتَسَبْنَ وَاسْأَلُوا اللهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ
اللهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيماً ــ ٣٢ . وَلِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِيَ مِمَّا تَرَكَ
الْوَالِدَانِ وَالأَقْرَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَآتُوهُمْ نَصِيبَهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ
كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيداً ــ ٣٣ . اَلرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ
اللهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ
حَافِظَاتٌ لِلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللهُ وَاللاَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ
وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلاَ تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ
سَبِيلاً إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَلِيّاً كَبِيراً ــ ٣٤ . وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا
حَكَماً مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَماً مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلاَحاً يُوَفِّقِ اللهُ بَيْنَهُمَا
إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً خَبِيراً ــ ٣٥ .

And do not covet that by which Allāh has made some of you excel others; men shall have the benefit of what they earn; and ask Allāh of His grace; surely Allāh knows all things (32). *And to every one We have appointed heirs of what parents and near relatives leave, and those with whom your right hands have ratified agreements; so give them their portion; surely Allāh is a witness over all things* (33). *Men are the maintainers of women*

because of that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the others and because of what they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allāh has guarded; and (as to) *those on whose part you fear recalcitrance, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleepingplaces, and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allāh is High, Great* (34). *And if you fear a breach between the two, then appoint a judge from his people and a judge from her people; if they both desire agreement, Allāh will effect harmony between them; surely Allāh is Knowing, Aware* (35).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses are connected with the preceding laws of inheritance and marriage; they reinforce the preceding rules and promulgate some general principles that would effect reconciliation in some cases of strained relationship between husband and wife.

QUR'ĀN: *sAnd do not covet that by which Allāh has made some of you excel others:* Coveting is to say: 'Would that this were like that'. Such words are called ceveting because they describe the covetousness hidden in the heart. It is an exclamatory construction that shows a psychological attitude as when one loves something which is difficult or almost difficult to obtain, whether one declares it in words, or not. Obviously, the verse forbids people to covet the extra bounties granted to others — that bestowal of additional bounties is the cause of covetousness. But one should not attach oneself to those who enjoy such abundance; rather a man should attach himself to Allāh, asking Him to bestow on him such bounties from His treasures. Obviously, the 'extra bounties' specifically refers to the special rights granted to a particular group — men or women — by the divinely ordained law; for example, man has been given the right to marry more than one wife, and gets a double share in inheritance, while woman is entitled to receive her dower and maintenance from her

husband.

Coveting such rights exclusively given to a particular sex has been forbidden in order to completely uproot the tree of evil and disorder. These bounties are coveted by human beings because by nature they love such things and try to achieve and obtain what others have got. At first, it is just a desire and covetousness. When it continues for some time, it changes into hidden envy. When the envy takes root in the heart it shows itself in talk and action. When many people suffering from this disease join together, they cause disorder on the earth and destroy the tilth and the stock.

Also, it shows that this prohibition is of advisory nature, not a legislative order; it aims at safeguarding the preceding legislated regulations.

The verse ascribes the bestowal of bounties to Allāh; also both groups have been described as ‘‘some of you over the others’’. The aim is to awaken their submissiveness to Allāh’s decrees because they believe in Him, and to strengthen their mutual love by reminding them that the receiver of the coveted bounty is not some alien body; but an integral part of him/her.

QUR’ĀN: *men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn*: ar-Rāghib has said, *‘‘ ‘al-Iktisāb’* (اَلْاِكْتِسَابُ = to earn) is used for what a man earns or acquires for himself; while *‘al-kasb’* (اَلْكَسْبُ = to earn) denotes what he acquires for himself or for someone else..’’ [This verse uses the former verb; and] it appears from the above that this sentence explains the preceding prohibition of coveting and describes its underlying reason. That is, you should not covet these things because this excellence, found exclusively with one or the other group, has been granted because that group has earned it through natural traits or physical diligence. For example, men and not the women, have been allowed to marry upto four wives, because men’s place in human society demands it — to the exclusion of women. The same is the reason of their having been allotted double shares in inheritance. Likewise, women have been given half of men’s shares in heritance, while the responsibility of their maintenance is put on men’s shoulders and they have exclusive right to take dower — all this because women’s position in the society demands it. Also, whatever wealth is

earned by one group — by trade or in other ways — is exclusively reserved to it; and Allāh does not want injustice to His servants.

It is now clear that the 'earning' mentioned here actually means a sort of acquisition and reservation; it makes no difference whether this happens through voluntary activity (e.g., handcraft or business;) or otherwise. What is important is that the person concerned has some characteristic which entitles him/her to that excellence; for example, the person's being male or female which makes him/her entitled to a certain fixed portion in inheritance.

Philologists have opined that the verbs, *al-kasb* and *al-iktisāb,* both are reserved for what a person acquires through voluntary action; even so, they say that the basic element in their meaning is 'acquisition'. It may be said that 'He has earned fame by his beauty.' Some exegetes have explained the verb in this verse in the same meaning. It may be said that the verb, *al-iktisāb,* in this verse has been used in this meaning by way of simile or extended simile.

In any case, the verb here cannot be restricted to what man acquires by his own efforts; because it would then mean: Men shall have benefit of the wealth they earn for themselves through their activities; and so shall the women. It would be a prohibition of coveting what other people have acquired through craft and production. This meaning is correct in itself, but the verse cannot be confined to it; otherwise it will have no relevance to the preceding verses of inheritance and marriage.

However, the correct meaning of the verse is as follows: Do not covet the financial and non-financial advantages and excellence which Allāh has exclusively given to either men or women, and has thus given some of you excellence over the others; this bounty has been given to the concerned group because it has acquired and proved its entitlement by its psychological traits or physical activities (like trade, etc.); so it shall have its benefit, and every body shall have the benefit of what he or she has acquired.

QUR'ĀN: *and ask Allāh of His grace ...:* When one bestows something on someone else, usually it is a surplus which the bestower does not need himself, that is why it is called *''al-faḍl''* (اَلْفَضْلُ) which is translated here as `grace' but literally means surplus. Allāh has ordered people to turn their faces away from the bounties bestowed on others. But the

desire of excellence in life and livelihood — rather, love of monopolizing it and surpassing all fellow beings in this respect — is an inseparable human trait. Therefore, the Qur'ān tells them to look towards Allāh Himself and to ask Him for His grace. They should turn away from what the others have got and look towards Allāh to ask for His grace; the grace is in Allāh's hands, and it is He Who has given everyone his or her excellence; He alone can give you the means to surpass others — the others whose bounties you desire and whose excellence you covet.

The grace to be asked for has been left vague by adding the preposition 'of' before it. It has two implications:

First: It teaches the manner of invocation and prayer addressed to Allāh. Man is basically ignorant of what would benefit — or harm — him in the long run, while Allāh is aware of what would in reality be beneficial or harmful to His creatures, and He has power over all things. Therefore, it is only proper to ask Him for the best in what the invoker desires; he should not go on specifying what he wants and how should it reach him. Many times we have seen someone with intense desire of some things like wealth, child, honour or health; he was persistently praying for it, fixing his eyes on that goal; but when his prayer was answered and his desire fulfilled, it brought nothing but destruction and disaster, nullifying all his life's efforts.

Second: It is an indication that one should not ask for something which would be contrary to the underlying divine reason of a certain creative or legislative excellence bestowed. It is imperative that one should not ask of the excellence exclusively reserved for others. If men ask the bounty given to women, or vice versa, and Allāh grants their prayer, the underlying reason would be negated and the laid down laws and regulations nullified. Think it over.

When man prays to Allāh for one of his pressing needs, he should not ask Him for what is given to other people; rather he should ask Him from what is in His hands; even then he should not teach his Lord what is good for him, nor how should that benefit be brought to him. The only proper way is to ask Allāh to fulfil his need in a way He deems best.

The concluding sentence, *surely Allāh knows all things,* explains the reason of the preceding prohibition: You should not covet the bounties which Allāh has bestowed on others; Allāh knows everything, He is not unaware of underlying reasons, nor does He make error in His decisions.

A QUR'ĀNIC REALITY

Difference in men's aptitudes and abilities in acquisition of the life's advantages is based on natural creative phenomenon which inevitably brings about differences in the lives' grades. And, as far as we know, this phenomenon has always been evident in human societies from the earliest times to this day.

In ancient times strong people subjugated weaker persons, using them according to their whims to fulfil their desires without any restraint or hindrance. The poor wretcheds had no choice but to submit to their orders, and to do as their 'masters' required them to do. But their hearts overflowed with rage and hatred, and they always waited for a chance to throw away that yoke. This system continued in history changing its appearence from time to time, beginning from shaikhdom and ending on monarchy and imperialism.

At last, human beings succeeded, through rising after rising, in bringing down this overpowering citadel of usurpation forcing the rulers to abide by the constitutions and laws made for society's well-being and happiness. On the surface, it puts an end to whimsical rules of tyrants. Human beings were no longer divided into various strata; there was no longer an autocratic ruler to lord over slaves whose rein was in his (master's) hand.

Even so, the tree of disorder and mischief continued to grow — finding another base to spread its roots, appearing in another shape — but the fruit was the same, the result unaltered. There remained the same difference between various classes, based on economic disparity. Some had wealth and riches piled up while others' hands were empty. The two groups were poles apart; the wealthy interfered in all aspects of society, because of their wealth, while the poor had no option but to stand and fight against oppression.

This resulted in appearance of communism which believed in sharing all resources of livelihood, by nullifying private property and taking away all capital from private hands. It said that every individual should enjoy the fruits of his labour, accomplished by his personal experties. This erased the difference that was based on personal wealth and affluence. But it opened some new avenues of disorder and mischief which were unheard of in previous systems — it totally destroyed the

free will of the individual and stripped him of all discretion and choice. But nature does not agree with it nor does human instinct allow it. And how can something continue if nature rejects it and human instinct discards it.

Apart from that, the communism has not removed the basic disorder. Human beings by nature do not like to exert themselves except where there is a possibility of gaining distinction and acquiring honour and position. Remove the element of competition and distinction and you have destroyed the work itself; it will result in negation of human nature.

The communists have tried to remove this basic difficulty by trying to fix the workers' eyes on immaterial distinction and glory. But it has brought the difficulty back *in toto*. If a man does not accept those distinctions as real, he will not try for them; and if he believes in them, it will have the same effect as the material incentive.

Democracy resorted to a strategy to remove the disorder sneaking into it. First, it employed wide spread propaganda to expose the defects of communism. Second, it levied heavy taxes that ate away a greater part of the profits of business and industry. But it was of no use. Exposition of the defects of their adversaries' system could not block the way of the defects and disorder infiltrating into their own system. Nor could the gathering of most of the profit in the treasury prevent the affluent classes from their luxurious life and the resulting oppression. Now, their strategy is to get power and authority over the collected wealth, instead of personally owning it. They get the same benefits from that money by having authority over it and by managing it according to their wish, as they would have done it if was owned by them outright.

Neither the democrats could cure the disease nor the communists; and there is no medicine after burning.

All this is because the purpose and goal chosen by man for the society leads to the core of mischief and disorder; his adopted goal is enjoyment of material life by all means; and it cannot be divested of its basic conflict and disorder, whatever changes are brought into its appearance.

And what is the way adopted by Islam to uproot this disorder? It has given the man total freedom in all matters to which his nature leads. Then it has brought the two groups nearer by raising the have-nots' standard of life through levying various taxes on the 'haves', and lowering the haves'

standard by prohibition of extravaganza and show of affluence that would increase their distance from middle classes; then it has created a balance with unity and good manners, and has diverted people's attention from material distinction to the honour of piety; and taught them to ask Allāh for whatever bounty and excellence they desire.

This is to which the Qur'ānic verses points: *and ask Allāh of His grace; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one among you who is most pious* (49:13); *Therefore fly to Allāh* (51:50). We have already explained that by turning their faces towards Allāh people would inevitably hold fast to the real and genuine causes for their desired goals — without resorting to lethargy in earning their livelihood or laziness in getting at their happiness and bliss. Strangely enough, some people say that Islam is a religion of idleness which discourages man from acquiring material benefits in life. Such assertion is totally off the mark and shows ignorance of the speakers.

This is a short note on this subject; and we have written in detail on various points of this subject in various discourses of this book.

QUR'ĀN: *And to every one We have appointed heirs of what parents and near relatives leave ...: ''al Mawālī''* (اَلمَوَالِي = translated here as 'heirs') is plural of *al-mawlā* (اَلمَوْلي) which is synonymous to *al-waliyy* (اَلوَلِيُّ), although mostly it is used for some particular cases of *al-wilāyah* (اَلوِلايَةُ = rule, sovereignty, friendship, authority). For example, a slave's master is called his *mawlā*, as he has authority over him; a helper is called *mawlā*, because he manages the affairs of the helped one; an uncle's son is called *mawlā* as sometimes he acts as guardian of his uncle's daughter in matters of marriage. Most probably it is an infinite verb beginning with *mim* (م) or an adverb of place, indicating a person having in him some kind of authority — as today we say 'government' or 'court' and mean the ruler or the judge.

''al-'Aqd'' (اَلعَقْدُ = to tie) is opposite of *''al-ḥall''* (اَلحَلُّ = to unite); *''al-yamīn''* (اَليَمينُ) is opposite of *''al-yasār''* (اَليَسَارُ = left hand); *al-yamīn* means right hand, and is also used for oath; it has some other meanings also.

The verse follows the preceding one: *And do not covet ...*, having the same context, and contains the admonition to give due share to every one who is entitled to it, and declares that Allāh has appointed for every one

heirs in all that is left by parents and near relatives. It shows that this second verse, in conjunction with the preceding one, gives a gist of all the rules and laws laid down by the verses of inheritance; and sums up the detailed regulations. It is not unlike the verse: *Men shall have a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave ...* [4:7] which, coming before the verses of inheritance stated a general principle which served as the basis and referring point of the inheritance laws.

It follows that the heirs and the inherited ones (summed up in the verse) would refer to those who have been described in detail in the verses of inheritance. Thus, *al-mawālī* would refer to all who have been enumerated as heirs in those verses, like children, parents, brothers, sisters and so on.

Also, the three categories mentioned here — parents, near relatives and those with whom your right hands have ratified agreements — will apply to the three categories mentioned in the verses of inheritance, i.e., parents, near relatives and husband and wife. Thus the phrase: *those with whom your right hands have ratified agreements*, would refer to the husband and the wife.

The meaning, therefore, will be as follows: And to every one of you, whether male or female, We have appointed heirs to inherit whatever property you leave behind. The preposition *min* مِنْ = translated here as 'of') may also mean 'from'; in that case it would be connected with 'heirs', i.e., inheritance originates from the property; it may alternatively be connected to a deleted but understood verb, 'they shall inherit', i.e., the heirs shall inherit from what you leave. What they leave refers to the property left by the deceased relatives — the parents, the near relatives and the husband and wife.

The phrase, ''and those with whom your right hands have ratified agreements'', alludes to husband and wife; it was a custom to shake hands at the conclusion of an agreement or deal; it was as though it was their right hand which had concluded the deal and ratified it. The meaning, therefore, will be as follows: those with whom you have established material relationship through formula of marriage.

''So give them'', i.e., to the heirs, ''their portion'', which has been described in the verses of inheritance. The conjunction, 'so' connects the sentence with, and bases it on, the sentence, ''And to every one We have appointed heirs ...''. The order to give them their share has been further

emphasized by the concluding sentence, *surely Allāh is a witness over all things.*

The above is the most appropriate of the meanings given by the exegetes. [The following are examples of some unsuitable explanations given by them:]

Some have said that *al-mawālī* (heirs, relatives, etc.) refers to agnates other than the heirs who are more entitled to the inheritance. But the wording of the verse does not support this view.

Also it has been said that *min* (from, of) in *''mimmā tarak''* is explanatory, and refers to the heirs, i.e., to every one We have appointed heirs who shall inherit him, and they are those whom he has left behind, that is, the parents and near relatives.

Further it is said that the phrase, ''those with whom your right hands have ratified agreements'', refers to the allies. In preIslamic days a man used to make agreement with another, saying: 'My blood is your blood, my war is your war, my peace is your peace; and you shall inherit me and I shall inherit you; and you shall pay blood money for me and I shall pay blood money for you.' Such an ally used to get one-sixth of the estate of his deceased ally. According to this interpretation, the sentence will be disconnected from the preceding one, and would mean, 'give the allies their one-sixth share'. And then it will have to be treated as abrogated by the verse: *and the possessors of relationship are nearer to each other in the ordinance of Allāh* (8:75).

But some say that, ''so give them their portion'', means that they should be helped, advised and given material assistance; it does not refer to inheritance. In that case there will be no abrogation in the verse.

Some others claim that the phrase refers to those whom the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had declared to be 'brothers' to each other in Medina, and they inherited from each other, until the system was abrogated by the verse of inheritance.

Still others have said that it refers to those who were adopted as sons in the era of ignorance. According to them, this verse exhorts the Muslims to bequeath something to them, as it advises to give them their portions.

None of these meanings is supported by the text or the context of the verse, as any thoughtful scholar may realize; and that is why we see no need to rebut them.

QUR'ĀN: Men are the maintainers of women because of that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the others and because of what they spend out of their property: ''al-Qayyim'' (اَلْقَيِّمُ = one who looks after the affairs of another person); al-qawwām (اَلْقَوَّامُ) and al-qayyām (اَلْقَيَّامُ) give the same meaning in its highly emphasized form. The clause, ''that with which Allāh has made some of them to excel the others'', refers to the natural characteristics of man in which he excels the woman; men have much greater judicious prudence than women, and consequently they are much stronger and braver and more capable of performing strenuous tasks requiring intrepidity and forebearance; while women's life is dominated by feelings and emotions and based on gracefulness and delicateness. The next phrase, ''what they spend out of their property'', refers to the wealth which men spend on women's dower and maintenance.

The generality of these causes shows that the resulting principle, ''Men are the maintainers of women'', is not confined to the husbands. In other words, it does not say that man is the maintainer of his wife; rather it gives authority to the men, as a group, over the whole group of women, in the common affairs which effect lives of both sexes on the whole. The general social aspects which are related to man's excellence as, for example, rulership and judiciary, are the things on which a society depends for its continuence. It is because of the prudence and judiciousness which are found in men in a higher degree than in women. Likewise, the fight and defence depend on strength and far-reaching strategic planning. In such affairs men have authority over women.

Consequently, the order, *Men are the maintainers of women*, is totally unrestricted and comprehensive, while the next sentence, *the good women are therefore obedient ...*, is apparently restricted to the relationship between a man and his wife, as will be explained later on. This next declaration has branched out from the above general principle; but it does not restrict its generality in any way.

QUR'ĀN: *the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allāh has guarded: ''aṣ-Ṣalāḥ''* (اَلصَّلاَحُ = merit, virtue, goodness); *''al-qunūt''* (اَلْقُنُوتُ = abiding obedience and submission). Its place, opposite to, *those on whose part you fear recalcitrance,* shows that ''the good women'' means good wives; and that it is applied to them during

continuance of matrimony, not before or after that; and that the sentence, ‘‘the good women are therefore obedient ...’’, — which gives an order in the form of praise, and means that they should be obedient and should guard ... — is an order related to matrimonial affairs and domestic life. Even so, it is a command whose scope of jurisdiction depends on its basic cause — the man’s maintaining the woman by virtue of marriage. It is therefore incumbent upon her to obey him and guard their mutual or conjugal affairs.

Let us explain it further. Men as a group have authority over women as a group in those common affairs which have more affinity with man’s enhanced prudence and hardiness, i.e., rulership, judiciary and war; but it does not negate the independence of woman in her individual will and activities, she decides what she wants and acts as she wishes and man has no right to interfere in any way — except when she intends to do something unlawful. In short, there is no restriction on them in whatever they want to do for themselves in a proper way. In the same way, husband’s authority over the wife does not mean that she has lost control over her own self or property or is restricted in her will or action regarding its management; nor does it mean that woman is not free and independent in safeguarding and protecting her personal and social rights, nor is she hindered from adopting suitable means to achieve those rights. Rather it means that when the husband spends his wealth on her in return for conjugal rights, then she must obey and submit to him in all things connected with sexual intercourse (when he is present), and protect him in his absence — she should not betray him behind his back by having unlawful affairs with another man. Also she should not deceive him concerning the property which he gives her by virtue of matrimony as a partner in domestic life.

The sentence, ‘‘the good women are therefore obedient ...’’ means that they should achieve goodness for themselves; then inevitably they would be obedient. In other words, they are obliged to submit to their husbands and obey them without fail in all matters pertaining to conjugal relations. Also they must safeguard their interest in all their rights during their absence.

Apparently the word *mā* (مَا) in *bimā* (translated here with ‘as’) in the clause, ‘‘as Allāh has guarded’’, has the import of infinitive verb, and *bi* (بِ) implies instrumentality. The meaning therefore will be as

follows: The good women are obedient to their husbands and guard their interest in their absence, through the husband's rights which Allāh has preserved by giving him the authority and obliging the wives to obey them and guard the unseen for them.

Alternatively, the letter *bi* may imply exchange. Then it will mean that the wives are obliged to obey and guard the unseen in exchange of the rights which Allāh has bestowed on the wives, as He has given a new life to them in human society and has obliged the men to pay them dower and maintenance. But the former meaning is more obvious.

Some other meanings have been given by exegetes, but it is not necessary to mention them as none of them is supported by the context.

QUR'ĀN: *and* (as to) *those on whose part you fear recalcitrance, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping places, and beat them;: ''an-Nushūz''* (اَلنُّشُوزُ = disobedience, refusal to submit); fear of recalcitrance connotes appearance of the signs of disobedience. The order is based, not on disobedience, but on its fear. It is in order that the man should keep the admonition at the level suitable at a particular stage, because admonition has its place at the beginning of recalcitrance as well as at the appearance of its signs — [but with less intensity].

The three remedies — admonition, leaving them alone in the sleeping places and beating — have to be applied one after another in that sequence, although they have been mentioned together, joined with the conjunctive 'and'. First comes admonition; if that fails, then leaving her alone in the sleeping place; if that too proves ineffective, then the beating. This gradual process is inferred from the sequence wherein these remedies are increasing in intensity from leniency to severity. In short, this graduality is inferred from the context, not from the conjunctive 'and'.

It appears from the words, ''leave them alone in the sleeping places'', that he is not asked to sleep in a separate bad, but he should show his displeasure by turning away from her and not touching her, etc. It is far-fetched to believe that it means leaving her bed altogether. The meaning given by us may be supported by the fact that ''sleeping places'' has been used in plural; apparently there was no need of the plural if the latter meanings were intended.

QUR'ĀN: *then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them:* That is, if they are obedient to you, then do not be on look out for excuses to trouble them. Why? Because, *surely Allāh is High, Great.* Greatness and grandeur is reserved for your Lord; do not be deceived by your power and strength nor use it in oppressing your wives, thinking yourselves too high and superior.

QUR'ĀN: *And if you fear a breach between the two,... Allāh is Knowing, Aware: ''ash-Shiqāq''* (اَلشِّقَاقْ = breach, enmity). Allāh has ordered to appoint two judges, as it would reduce the possibility of injustice and arbitrariness. If the husband and wife both desire reconciliation, without obstinacy and obduracy, Allāh will create harmony between them. When both parties divest themselves of power, and entrust the two judges with the responsibility of effecting harmony, then reconciliation is bound to follow.

The verse attributes effecting of harmony to Allāh, although there happens to be a normal cause, i.e., the parties' willingness to be reconciled and their acceptance of the judges' decision. It is because Allāh is the real cause; it is he who relates causes to effects, and gives everyone his right. The speech ends with the sentence, ''surely Allāh is Knowing, Aware;'' its appropriateness is self-evident.

A DISCOURSE ON MEN'S AUTHORITY OVER WOMEN

It is not secret that the noble Qur'ān puts great emphasis on healthy human intellect, and prefers it over desire and pleasureseeking. It does not encourage people to follow their excessive passions and emotions. It exhorts man to follow the path of reason, and admonishes him to guard this divine gift, lest it be lost. This Qur'ānic reality is well-known and needs no bookish proof; there are a lot of verses that point to it explicitly and implicitly, in various way and different words.

Even so, the Qur'ān has not neglected good and pure feelings and emotions, nor has it turned its eyes from their important and beautiful effects which help man to properly build his self, and which in its turn gives strength to the society. For example:

... severe against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves;... (48:29)
... that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion;... (30:21).
Say: ''Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allāh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?'' (7:32)

Yet He has balanced it by requiring it to conform with the demands of intellect; thus by following such feelings and emotions, one would in fact be following the intellect.

It has been explained somewhere earlier that it is because of the protection which Islam accords to the intellect (by basing all its ordained laws on reason) that it has prohibited all such actions, and forbidden all such conditions, and declared as unlawful all such characteristics, which confuse the intellect in its judgment and cause it to act haphazardly in its implementation, thus making it lose its bearing in the society's affairs; for example, liquor, gambling, fraudulent deals, lies, slander and backbiting.

This much is enough to convince a thoughtful scholar that as far as the broad issues and general social aspects — like rulership, judiciary and war — are concerned, they have to be controlled by intellect, free from the influence of emotions and feelings. Thus they have to be entrusted, not to women but, to men who are governed more by intellectual power than emotional feelings.

And this is what Allāh has ordained, when He says: *Men are the maintainers of women;* and the prophetic pronouncements, being the expositions of the Qur'ānic principles, establish its factuality; and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) followed this principle throughout his life; he did not appoint any woman as a ruler or governor of any people, nor did he give her any judicial post, nor were they called upon to participate in any war, i.e., to actively fight in it.

As for other aspects of life, like learning, teaching, trade deals, nursing, medical profession, etc. — the tasks which are not hindered by emotion and feeling — the Prophet's *aḥādīth* (traditions) do not prohibit it, and the Prophet himself had allowed many of it. The Qur'ān too is not without some hint to its being lawful for the women, because it is a necessary concomitant of the freedom of will and action which women

have been allowed in many aspects of life. They have been removed from man's guardianship, and given independent right of owning property and wealth; then how can they be stopped from managing that property and developing it in a way they think fit. Likewise, it would be meaningless to give them the right to lodge a case or to give evidence in a case and then to forbid them to appear before a judge or magistrate. And so on and so forth.

Of course, their freedom will cease if it collides with the husband's right. She is duty-bound to obey him in his presence and protect his interests in his absence, and any right of hers which stands in the way of his rights will cease to exist.

TRADITIONS

The author of *Majma'u 'l-bayān* explains the verse, *And do not covet that by which Allāh has made some of you excel others,* in these words. ''One should not say, 'Would that the bounty and the beautiful woman which that man has got were for me'; for it would be jealousy; but one is allowed to say: 'O Allāh! give me similar to that'.'' Then he has written that it has been narrated from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.).

The author says: al-'Ayyāshī too has narrated this tradition in his *at-Tafsīr* from the same Imām (a.s.).

Ibn Shahrāshūb narrated from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *That is Allāh's grace; He grants it to whom He pleases,* and, *do not covet that by which Allāh has made some of you excel others,* that they were revealed about 'Alī (a.s.).

The author says: This tradition is based on the principle of the flow of the Qur'ān; in other words it points to an application of the verses.

Ibrāhīm ibn Abi '1-Bilād narrates through his father from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''There is no soul but Allāh has apportioned for him his sustenance lawfully which is to reach him with ease and comfort; and He has also shown it (the sustenance) to him alternatively by unlawful means; if he takes something by unlawful means, Allāh reduces it from

his apportioned lawful (sustenance); and Allāh has with Him plenty of grace, apart from the two (aforesaid portions of sustenance); and that is the (meaning of the) word of Allāh, *and ask Allāh of His grace.*'' (*al-Kāfī, at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: al-'Ayyāshī has narrated it from Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr who has reported it from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Also the same meaning has been narrated from Abu 'l-Hudhayl from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.). A nearly similar tradition has been reported by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr* from al-Ḥusayn ibn Muslim from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

We have already discussed in the second volume the meaning of sustenance, its apportionment and its division into lawful and unlawful, under the verse, *and Allāh provides with sustenance whom He pleases without measure* (2:212) [1].

Ibn Mas'ūd says that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Ask Allāh of His grace, because Allāh loves to be asked.'' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ,* at-Tirmidhī)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated through Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr from a man whom he has not named who said that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had said: ''Ask Allāh of His grace, because Allāh loves to be asked; and that the best of worship is to wait for ease.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

[ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭūsī] has narrated through his chains from Zurārah that he said: ''I heard Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) reciting, *And to every one We have appointed heirs of what parents and near relatives leave;* then he said: 'He [Allāh] refers [with the word, *mawālī*] to the relatives who inherit, not to benefactors; the most entitled to (the inheritance of) a deceased is the one who is nearest to the womb that connects him to the deceased'.'' (*at-Tahdhīb*)

The same author narrates through his chains from Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥriz that he said: ''A man asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.), in my presence, about a person who said to his wife, 'Your affair is in your hand.' [The Imām, a.s.] said: 'How can it be, while Allāh says, *''Men are the maintainers of*

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[1] This subject is discussed under chap.3, ver.27: *and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest, without measure,* [vide Eng. transl. vol.5, pp.206 — 212] (*tr.*).

women''? It is nothing.' '' (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has narrated through Ash'ath ibn 'Abdi 'l-Malik from al-Ḥasan that he said: ''A woman came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) complaining against her husband that he had slapped her. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Retribution.' Then Allāh sent down the verse, *Men are the maintainers of women ...;* so the woman returned without retribution.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: [as-Suyūṭī] has narrated it from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) through other chains too. Some of them say that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''I wanted one thing but Allāh decided otherwise.'' Probably it was a case of the woman's recalcitrance; otherwise, the verse, *then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them,* disallows it (the slapping).

Moreover, there is another snag in these traditions' apparent meaning. Apparently the Prophet's word, ''Retribution'', was an answer to a religious question of the questioner to explain the rule of *sharī'ah*; it could not be a judgment of a case as the opposite party was not present. If so, then it would mean that the said verse was sent down to show the error of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in exposition of the law, but it goes against his being sinless. Again, it could not be an abrogation, because it cancelled the law before it was acted upon. Of course, there were some instances where Allāh had amended some prophetic orders by adding to or deleting from it, but it was only in his administrative orders, not in matters of the law ordained by him for his people; otherwise it would have been an invalid nullification.

Abu 'l-Jārūd has narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that the word, *''qānitāt''* (قَانِتَاتُ) means obedient ones.

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) has said that, *leave them alone in the sleeping places,* means that man should turn away from her; and *beat them,* means hitting her with tooth brush (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

[al-Kulaynī] has narrated through his chain from Abū Baṣīr that Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *then appoint a judge from his people and a judge from her people:* ''The two judges will make a condition that they may decide to separate them if they so wish, and to join them if they so wish. Then if they caused separation it would be lawful and if they joined them it would be lawful.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: This and nearly similar meaning has been narrated through several other chains in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī.

Ibn Muslim has narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''The Leader of the faithful (a.s.) gave judgment concerning a woman whom a man had married with an undertaking given to her and her people that she would be [*ipso facto*] divorced if he married another woman and neglected her, or if he took a slavegirl in her presence. He [the Leader of the faithful] said: 'The condition laid down by Allāh has precedence over your condition. [It is upto him;] he may fulfil his condition if he so desires; or he may keep this woman and also marry another woman, or take a slave-girl if he so wishes; and then he may leave (this) woman if she comes in his way. Allāh has said in His Book: ... *then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you, two and three and four* ... [4:3]; ... *of those whom your right hands possess* [4:25]; *and* (as to) *those on whose part you fear recalcitrance, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allāh is High, Great'*[4:34].'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī).

al-Bayhaqī has narrated from Asmā' bint Yazīd al-Anṣāriyyah that she came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and he was (sitting) among his companions. She said: ''My father and mother be your ransom! I have come to you as representative of the women-folk; and you should know, may I be your ransom! that there is no women, be she in the east or in the west who, having heard of my this deputation, does not agree with my views.

''Surely Allāh has sent you with truth to the men and the women. We do believe in you and your God who has sent you. We women-folk are confined and under pressure, restricted to your houses, satisfying your sexual urge, carrying your offspring; while you men-folk have got superiority over us by Friday and congregational prayers, visiting sick, attending funerals, performing *ḥajj* after *ḥajj*, and, even better than that, fighting in the way of Allāh. Even so, when one of you goes out for *ḥajj* or *'umrah* or camping (for *jihād*), we women guard your properties for you, spin your clothes for you and bring up your properties [1] for you.

[1] Apparently it should be ''your children''.

Then what is our share in reward, O Messenger of Allāh?''

The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) turned his face to his companions, and said: ''Have you ever heard any woman talking in a better way than this question of hers concerning her religious affairs?'' They said: ''O Messenger of Allāh! We never thought that any woman would find her way to a (talk) like this.''

Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) turned towards her and said: ''O woman! Go back and inform those women who are behind you that when one of you behaves nicely towards her husband, and seeks his pleasure and pursues his conformance, then this equals (in reward) to all those activities of men.''

The woman then turned back happily saying: *''Lā ilāha illa Allāh''* and *''Allāhu Akbar''*. (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of similar import, narrated in the Shī'ah and Sunnī collections of *ḥadīth*. The most beautiful is the *ḥadīth* narrated in *al-Kāfī* from Abū Ibrāhīm Mūsā ibn Ja'far (peace be on both): ''Woman's *jihād* is (her) nice behaviour towards (her) husband.'' The most comprehensive is the sentence narrated in *Nahju 'l-balāghah* that also points to the basic reason of this legislation; and it has also been narrated by al-Kulaynī through his chain of narrators from 'Abdullāh ibn Kathīr from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) from 'Alī (a.s.); and also through his chain from al-Asbagh ibn Nubātah from 'Alī (a.s.) quoting a letter which he (a.s.) had written to his son; ''Surely, woman is a flower, and not a steward.''

Also it has been narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: ''Woman is but a doll; he who takes it should not destroy it.'' The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to wonder aloud: ''How can you embrace the woman with a hand you had hit her with?''

It is narrated also in *al-Kāfī* through his chain from Abū Maryam from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'What! does one of you hit the woman and then goes embracing her?' '' Countless such statements are found in traditions; and one may understand from them the Islamic views on this subject.

Let us turn our attention to the above-mentioned *ḥadīth* of Asmā' bint Yazīd al-Anṣāriyyah. If we think over this and other similar traditions which show that women used to come to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and talk to

him on religious matters that concerned them; and also look at various laws ordained by Islam about them, it will be clear that although they observed *ḥijāb* (*purdah* = vail) and confined themselves mostly to the domestic affairs, they were not prevented from approaching the highest authority, trying to solve the problems confronting them which they were unable to solve by themselves. This is the freedom of faith which we had described under the last verse of the chapter of ''The House of 'Imrān''.

It may be inferred from this and other similar traditions that:

First: The woman's life-style, preferred and liked by Islam, is that she should confine herself to the managernent of domestic affairs and bringing up the children. Of course, it is an emphasized *sunnah* and not an obligatory order. Yet the exhortation and persuasion to follow this highly recommended path had preserved and guarded this system, especially as the atmosphere was that of religion, and environment, of piety, when people sought the pleasure of Allāh and preferred the reward of hereafter over worldly gains, and women were brought up and trained in good characteristics like chastity and modesty, love of children and involvement in domestic life.

Their engagement in these affairs and their focus on revival of pure feelings (ingrained in their beings) prevented them from coming to men's gatherings or mingling with men (even within the permitted limits). Its proof may be found in the un-interrupted continuation of this custom among the Muslims for centuries and centuries after the early days of Islam. This continued until the western licentiousness — called ''freedom of women'' — seeped into the society. It brought in its wake — for both men and women — moral corruption and life's destruction in a way they do not realize — but will soon see. *And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded* (against evil), *We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they rejected so We overtook them for what they had earned* [7:96]

Second: It is a part of the laid down *sharī'ah* of Islam to forbid women to fight (in *jihād*), in the same way as they are prevented from judgeship and rulership.

Third: Islam has not left these deprivations (e.g., woman's inability to participate in *jihād* in the way of Allāh) without suitably compensating the women for it, nor without making up for it with such virtuous acts of equal value which have intrinsic real glory. For example, it has made

good matrimonial behaviour as equal to *jihād* for women. May be, these virtues and glories have lost their value in our eyes — as we live in these days in this polluted atmosphere. But the Islamic social order evaluates every thing accurately and exhorts people to try to excel one another in human excellence which is appreciated by Allāh (and He measures everything with truth). When a person proceeds on the path he or she is required to walk on, and keeps to the lane prescribed for him or her, the Islamic society evaluates his/her achievement in such a way that various services and activities are considered equal in value to some other services and activities of the same importance. In the eyes of Islam, man's martyrdom on the battle-field and sacrifice of his life's blood — in spite of its great glory — is no better than woman's good matrimonial behaviour. Likewise, a ruler manages the affairs of society, and a judge sits in the judicial court. These are the jobs that give no privileges to their holders. If a ruler or a judge follows the path of truth and justice in his actions and decisions, he gets no worldly reward; on the other hand, he carries a heavy burden of responsibilities on his shoulders, and puts himself in various types of dangers and pit-falls which endanger his spiritual and material well-being — especially in respect of the rights of those who have no protector except the Lord of the worlds, *and surely your Lord is on look-out.* Now what superiority these officials have got over a woman who has been forbidden by religion to accept such responsibilities, and has been shown a different path and advised not to deviate from it.

Only that society can strengthen and revitalize these sociologically important and essential responsibilities (by encouraging a group to volunteer for them) which trains its members to come forward to do whatever they are called to, without any reservation.

No one can deny that social orders and human behaviour differ with changes in the societies' atmosphere. Look at that soldier who puts his life in the utmost danger — that of high-explosive bombs that would shatter his life. He volunteers for it for glory, hoping that his name will be included in the roll of honour as the one who sacrificed his life for his country. He prides himself on it considering himself superior to all, while he himself believes that death is total annihilation. Thus that supposed honour is mere imagination and that superiority just a myth. In the same way these film stars influence the whole society, basking in a glory

which many heads of states would envy. But the work they do and the way they expose themselves to the public was considered for untold centuries the greatest disgrace a woman could face, the ugliest ignominy she could be accused of. Why this change? It is because the social environment decides what should be acceptable to the masses; it glorifies the vulgar and disgraces the respectable. That being the case, what is wrong if Islam exalts some things which we — living in this volatile era — consider vile; or if it regards some things with contempt which we consider good enough to be vied for. Remember that the environment in the early days of Islam was that of piety — where people preferred the hereafter to this world.

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وَاعْبُدُوا اللهَ وَلاَ تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً وَبِالْوالِدَيْنِ إحْساناً وَبِذِي
الْقُرْبىٰ وَالْيَتامىٰ وَالْمَساكِينِ وَالْجارِ ذِي الْقُرْبىٰ وَالْجارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ
بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمانُكُمْ إنَّ اللهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ
مُخْتالاً فَخُوراً ــ ٣٦ . أَلَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ
مَا آتاهُمُ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَأَعْتَدْنا لِلْكافِرِينَ عَذاباً مُهِيناً ــ ٣٧ .
وَالَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوالَهُمْ رِئاءَ النَّاسِ وَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ وَلاَ بِالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ يَكُنِ الشَّيْطانُ لَهُ قَرِيناً فَساءَ قَرِيناً ــ ٣٨ . وَماذا عَلَيْهِمْ
لَوْ آمَنُوا بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللهُ وَكانَ اللهُ بِهِمْ
عَلِيماً ــ ٣٩ . إنَّ اللهَ لاَ يَظْلِمُ مِثْقالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإنْ تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضاعِفْها
وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْراً عَظِيماً ــ ٤٠ . فَكَيْفَ إذا جِئْنا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنا بِكَ عَلىٰ هٰؤُلاءِ شَهِيداً ــ ٤١ . يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَعَصَوُا الرَّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوّىٰ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ وَلاَ يَكْتُمُونَ اللهَ حَدِيثاً ــ ٤٢ .

And worship Allāh and do not associate any thing with Him, and do good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbour of (your) *kin and the alien neighbour, and the companion at your side and the way-farer and those whom your right hands possess, surely Allāh does not love him who is proud, boastful* (36). *Those who are niggardly and bid*

people to be niggardly and hide what Allāh has given them out of His grace; and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement (37); *And those who spend their property* (in alms) *to show to the people and do not believe in Allāh nor in the last day; and as for him whose associate is the Satan, an evil associate is he!* (38) *And what* (harm) *would it have done them if they had believed in Allāh and the last day and spent* (benevolently) *of what Allāh had given them? And Allāh knows them* (39). *Surely Allāh does not do injustice to the weight of an atom, and if it is a good deed He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward* (40). *How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a witness over these?* (41) *On that day will those who disbelieve and disobey the Messenger desire that the earth were levelled with them, and they shall not hide any word from Allāh* (42).

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COMMENTARY

These seven verses exhort good-doing and spending in the way of Allāh, and promise good reward for it; at the same time, they condemn the opposite conduct, be it miserliness or spending for showing to the people.

QUR'ĀN: *And worship Allāh and do not associate any thing with Him,*: This is what is called monotheism; but here it refers to the monotheism in practice, i.e., doing good deed (including the benevolence which is the topic particularly mentioned here) only for the sake of Allāh's pleasure, seeking the reward of the hereafter, not for satisfying one's own desire as it would be tantamount to associating (one's desire) with Allāh.

This interpretation is supported by the verse's ending phrase which gives the reason of this order in these words: *surely Allāh does not love him who is proud, boastful;* and then identifies this unloved person as the one who is niggardly and the one who spends in charity only for showing to the people. These are the ones who associate something else with

Allāh and do not worship Him alone. Then the talk proceeds: *And what* (harm) *would it have done them if they had believed in Allāh and the last day ...* Obviously, their polytheism emanates from their lack of belief in the Day of Judgment. Allāh says in another place: *... and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allāh;* (as for) *those who go astray from the path of Allāh, for them surely there is a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning* (38:26). It shows that those who go astray by following their desire — and every type of polytheism is [unmitigated] astraying — do so because they have forgotten the Day of Reckoning. Again Allāh says: *Have you then seen him who takes his low desire for his god, and Allāh has made him err in spite of his knowledge ...* (45:23). This makes it clear that to follow one's desire is to worship it, associating it with Allāh. It is clear from the above that monotheism in practice demands that whatever good one does, it should be purely for the sake of Allāh — in anticipation of His reward — remembering the Day of Reckoning when rewards and punishments will be awarded. On the other hand, polytheism in practice means forgetting the last day — if he had believed in it, he would not have forgotten it. Such a man does whatever he does, not for the divine reward, but because of what appears to his base desire as attractive, be it niggardliness or spending in charity in order that people should praise him for his generosity and so on. This man treats his desire as equal to his God, and associates it with Him.

The real purpose of the divine worship and unpolluted sincerity is that it should be for seeking Allāh's pleasure and getting His reward, not in pursuance of one's desire.

QUR'ĀN: *and do good to the parents ... and those whom your right hands possess;:* Obviously, the word *''iḥsānā''* (إِحْسَاناً = to do good) is cognate accusative to emphasize a deleted verb; the completed sentence would mean 'do good to the parents, etc., to your utmost capability'. The infinitive verb, *al-iḥsān* (اَلْإِحْسَانُ) uses the prepositions, *bi* (بِ) and *ilā* (إِلي)*;* it is said: I did good to (بِ = *bi*) him; or, I did good towards (إِلي = *ilā*) him.

The words, ''and to the near of kin'' and the following words are in conjunction with ''the parents''. ''The near of kins'' means near relatives. [The neighbours have been classified in two groups:] *the*

neighbour of (your) *kin and the alien neighbour.* This apposition of adjectives indicates that the former refers to a neighbour whose house is near yours, and the latter to the one who is at a distance, because *al-janab* (اَلْجَنَبَ) means alien.[1] A tradition narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) limits neighbourhood to forty arm-lengths; while another one says, 'forty houses'. Probably the two traditions separately describe the two categories of the neighbours.[2]

The words, ''the companion at your side'', refer to the one who keeps your company remaining at your side. It covers companions in a journey as well as those who are with you at your residence and so on.

The word translated here as ''the way-farer'', literally means, ''son of the way''; it is as though nothing is known of his details exept that he is travelling on a path, and that there is none he could be related to, except the way he is proceeding on; so he is the son of the way. The phrase does not imply that he should be poor, in need of help, having no transport or provisions. The words, ''those whom your right hands possess''; refer to slaves; male and female, because they are counted here among those whom one must be good to; mostly they are referred to as those who are possessed ''by your right hands'', not as those possessed by you.

QUR'ĀN: *surely Allāh does not love him who is proud, boastful;: ''al-Mukhtāl''* (اَلْمُخْتَالُ) means haughty, prancing, lost in his conceited thoughts; a horse is called *al-khayl* (اَلْخَيْلُ) because of its prancing walk.

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[1] This interpretation is far-fetched and the proof does not support the claim. If the second phrase means ''alien neighbour'', then ''near neighbour'' should mean the neighbour who is related to you, as a coming tradition explains. Moreover, the word *''dhu 'l-qurbā''* (ذُوالقُرْبِي) has never been used in the Qur'ān for showing nearness in physical distance. (*tr.*)

[2] The two definitions could as easily mean that a relative should be treated also as a neighbour even if he lives at a distance of forty houses: while for unrelated persons neighbourhood ends at a distance of forty arm-lenghths.

But, most probably, such traditions do not aim at giving legal definitions enforceable through land measurement. They look at common usage and behaviour prevalent in society. (*tr.*)

''al-Fakhūr'' (اَلْفَخُورُ) is boastful. The two traits of pride and boastfulness are inseparable concomitants of excessive love of wealth and glory. That is why Allāh does not love a proud and boastful person, because his heart is attached to something other than Allāh. The next two verses expose these two characteristics when they say: *Those who are niggardly ...,* and, *those who spend their property* (in alms) *to show to the people ...;* the first group craves for wealth and the second for glory and fame — although the wealth and the fame are somewhat inseparable from each other.

This speech normally should have begun with exposition of their evil deeds, e.g., niggardliness, hiding the bounties received from Allāh, and other such things; but Allāh first mentioned these two adjectives to clearly show why Allāh does not love them.

QUR'ĀN: *Those who are niggardly and bid people to be niggardly ...:* It is through their wrong behaviour and bad example that they order people to be niggardly, whether they use any word to this effect or not. They are rich and wealthy; people try to attach themselves to them and therefore follow their examples; this results from the greed ingrained in human nature. In short, these rich people's niggardliness is no less commanding than their words.

How do they hide the bounties which Allāh has given them out of His grace? They behave like, and pretend to be, a needy penniless person; they are annoyed when someone asks them for some help, but at the same time are afraid to refuse lest they are attacked, and it would be more disastrous if people turned their attention to their wealth. [So the remedy is to pretend to be poor.] The adjective, 'un-believers', at the end of the verse refers to these people who hide Allāh's bounties they have received; the same is the root-meaning of the well-known *''al-kāfir''* (اَلْكَافِرُ) because he hides the truth by rejecting it.

QUR'ĀN: *And those who spend their property* (in alms) *to show to the people ...!:* That is, they spend for showing to the people. The verse proves that:

Showiness in charity or in any other good work is in fact polytheism, which shows that such a man does not believe in Allāh, because he has more confidence in people and in their appreciation.

It is also polytheism in practice, because that man does not want any reward of the hereafter for his deeds; his entire hope is to reap the fruit of his 'charity' in this world.

The person who does good deeds for showing to the people is associated with the Satan, and the Satan is an evil associate.

QUR'ĀN: *And what* (harm) *would it have done them ...:* The question arises from pity or amazement. The verse proves that refraining from spending benevolently in the way of Allāh emanates from lack of true belief in Allāh and the last day — although one may be pretending to have such belief.

The end sentence, *and Allāh knows them,* prepares the ground for the next verse. It is more in keeping with the import of this sentence to treat it as a circumstantial clause.

QUR'ĀN: *Surely Allāh does not do injustice to the weight of an atom ...*: *''al-Mithqāl''* (اَلْمِثْقَالُ = weight); *''adh-dharrah''* (اَلذَّرَّةُ) means small red ant; also a single dust particle floating in air which is hardly visible because of its smallness. The word *mithqāla dharratin* (مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ) stands in place of a cognate accusative; the meaning will be: Allāh does not do any injustice at all, not even equal in weight to an atom's.

The word *ḥasanatan* (حَسَنَةً) has also been read as *ḥasanatun* (حَسَنَةٌ). In latter case, it would mean, 'and if there is a good deed'; in the former case it denotes, 'and if that minute weight of atom is a good deed, Allāh multiplies it'. The verb, *wa in taku* (وَ اِنْ تَكُ), uses feminine pronoun either because the predicate *ḥasanatan* is feminine, or because the word *mithqāl,* being in genitive construction with *dharrah* — a feminine — has acquired feminity.

The context indicates that this verse gives a sort of reason for the preceding question. The meaning may be as follows: It is regrettable that they do not believe and do not spend in the way of Allāh. Had they believed and spent benevolently — and Allāh knows them well — He would not have done injustice to them even to the weight of an atom they had spent; Allāh would not have neglected it or left out its reward; and if it had been a good deed, He would have multiplied it.

And Allāh knows better.

QUR'ĀN: *How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness ...?:* We have described the meaning of witness to a certain extent when explaining the witnessing over deeds, in the exegesis of the verse, *... that you may be witness for the people ...* (2:143).[1] Some more details will be given in a more a propriate place.

QUR'ĀN: *On that day will those who disbelieve and disobey the Messenger ...:* The clause, ''and disobey the Messenger'' clearly refers to disobeying his administrative orders, and not the disobedience of Allāh in matters of *sharī'ah.* The clause, *the earth were levelled with them*, is an indirect allusion to death, that is, nullity of existence. A similar expression appears in the verse, *and the unbeliever shall say: ''O! would that I were dust''* (78:40).

QUR'ĀN: *and they shall not hide any word from Allāh:* It is apparent from the context that the sentence is in conjunction with, ''those who disbelieve ... [will] desire'', and it gives in a way the reason of their desire to die; that is, on that day they will be appearing before Allāh, nothing of their secrets will be hidden from Him because their total condition will be clearly seen by Him — their deeds will be present; their limbs and organs will give evidence against them; the prophets, angels and others will testify against them; and Allāh encompasses them on every side. In that situation they would desire they were non-existent, especially as they would not be able to hide any word from Allāh as their bad deeds and evil actions would be apprent for all to see.

As for the verse, *On the day that Allāh will raise them up, then they will swear to Him as they swear to you, ...* (58:18), we shall explain it later that their false swearing will be just a reflex action emanating from the habit of lying ingrained in their nature in this life; it will not be for hiding any word from Allāh — on a day when nothing of them will.be hidden from Him.

TRADITIONS

Salām al-Ju'fī narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and Abān ibn Taghlib

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān,* (Eng. transl.), vol.2, pp.153 — 160. (*tr.*)

from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), that the word, *the parents,* in the clause, *and do good to the parents,* refers to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and ʻAlī (a.s.), (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyāshī). al-ʻAyyāshī has further written: ''A similar meaning has been narrated in the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Jabalah. He says: 'It has been narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): ''I and ʻAlī are the two parents of this *ummah.*'' ' ''

The author says: al-Baḥrānī says, after quoting this tradition in his *Tafsīru 'l-burhān:* ''I say: It has been narrated also by the author of *al-Fā'iq.*''

al-ʻAyyāshī has also narrrated it through Abū Baṣīr from Abū Jaʻfar and Abū ʻAbdillāh (peace be on both): and Ibn Shahrāshūb has narrated it through Abān from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.). The meaning exponded in this *ḥadīth* is from the inner and deeper strata of the Qur'ānic realities, as we have described in the third volume, under the topic of the decisive and ambiguous verses.[1]

The father is the physical progenitor of human being, and brings him up. That is why the teacher who leads the pupil to academic perfection is called his father. In this background, personages like the Prophet and *waliyy* (the best blessings be on them) have got much stronger right to be called the fathers of the believer (who is guided by them, and enlightened by their knowlege), than the physical father whose contribution is confined to his body's genesis and bringing up. Therefore, the Prophet and the *waliyy* are the parents; and all the Qur'ānic verses exhorting the people to be good to their parents encompass these two, according to the inner Qur'ānic meaning, although the outer interpretation is restricted to the physical parents.

Abū Ṣāliḥ narrates from Abu 'l-ʻAbbās in explanation of, *and the neighbour of* (your) *kin and the alien neighbour,* that he said: ''It is the neighbour who has no relationship with you; *and the companion at your side* means the companion in journey.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyāshī).

The author says: The explanation of the neighbour cover both categories of neighbours, although it is possible to restrict it to *the alien neighbour* only. Probably the explanation of the companion with the

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān,* (Eng. transl.), vol.5, pp.46 — 98. (*tr.*)

companion in journey looks at one of its applications.

Mas‘adah ibn Ṣadaqah narrates from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad from his grandfather (peace be on them) that he said: ‘‘The Leader of the faithful (a.s.) said in a sermon describing the terror of the Day of Resurrection: ‘The mouths will be sealed so they would not speak; and will speak the hands, and will testify the legs, and will declare the skins what they had done; so they shall not hide any word from Allāh.’ ’’ (*ibid.*)

Many reports have been given through the Sunnī chains that these verses were revealed about the Jews. These may be supported by the speech (beginning from the 44th verse), that describes the behaviour of the People of the Book (and especially the Jews) and condemns them for their miserliness, and their greed in accumulation of wealth; also for their whispering campaign among the believers putting evil thoughts in their minds that they should stop benevolent expenditure in the way of Allāh; for their temptation of the Muslims to lead them away from the right course and then leaving them helpless; and thus disrupting the endeavours of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Nevertheless, such reports, more probably, merely apply the verses to a known situation, rather than describing the actual reason of revelation — as is the case with most of the reports giving reasons of revelation. That is why, in spite of their number, we have not quoted them here.

There are innumerable traditions reported from the Prophet and his progeny (blessings and peace from Allāh be on them) extolling the virtue of doing good to the parents, the relatives, the orphans and all the groups mentioned in this verse; moreover they are widely known and famous. Therefore, we are not quoting them here. A part from that, each group has been especially mentioned in various places of the Qur’ān, and it would be more appropriate to write traditions relevant to them in those places.

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاَ تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلوٰةَ وَأَنتُمْ سُكَارىٰ حَتَّىٰ
تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلاَ جُنُباً إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ
كُنتُمْ مَرْضىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لاَمَسْتُمُ
النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيداً طَيِّباً فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ
إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَفُوّاً غَفُوراً ــ ٤٣ .

O you who believe! do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know (well) *what you say, nor when you are in a state of major ritual impurity, unless* (you are) *travelling on the road — until you have washed yourselves; and if you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to clean earth, then wipe a part of your faces and your hands; surely Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving* (43).

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COMMENTARY

It was mentioned [1] under the verse, *They ask you about in-toxicants and games of chance*, ... (2:219), that there are five different verses on the subject of intoxicants; if we put all of them side by side, it will appear

[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* (Eng. transl.), vol.3, pp.282 — 286 (*tr.*).

that this verse (... *do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated* ...) was revealed after the verses, ... *you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision* ... (16:67); and, *Say: ''My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin ...''* (7:33); but before the two remaining verses: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: ''In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit.''* (2:219), and, *O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore, that you may be successful* (5:90). This was the last-revealed verse on this subject.

It may be possible in a way to arrange a different sequence for them: First 16:67, then 7:33, thereafter 2:219, fourth the verse under discussion, i.e., 4:43, and lastly 5:90. This will drastically change the description of the final and firm prohibition of intoxicants. It would indicate that the verse 7:33 forbade indecencies and sin in a vague manner, then came 2:219 definitely forbiding intoxicants; yet the Muslims found excuses to violate that order, until they were clearly told not to pray while intoxicated; thereafter came the verse 5:90, forbidding it in all conditions.

But if you ponder, you will appreciate that the former sequence is better and preferable to the latter — how can one justify this prohibition, limited to the prayer-time only, after the unambiguous and definite prohibition given in 2:219? Therefore, this verse (4:43) must have been revealed before 2:219.

Of course, if you say that praying while intoxicated means here praying lazily and sluggishly (as has been interpreted in some coming traditions), then there is nothing to argue.

As for the positioning of this verse between the preceding and following ones, it should be treated as a parenthetical speech. Of course, there is another possibility which would explain such parenthetical insertions, examples of which are not so rare in the divine Book: It could be that some verses, of one context and closely related to one another, were gradually revealed during a few days time; but before the end of the series, something happened which necessitated the revelation of one or more unrelated verses; when the series concluded, those unrelated verses would fail in between like parenthesis; although in reality it would not be

totally unrelated, would be like a side talk for removing possible misunderstanding or fulfilling an urgent need. Look for example at the following verses:

Nay! man is evidence against himself, though he puts forth his excuses. Do not move your tongue with it to make haste with it. Surely on Us is the collecting of it and the reciting of it. Therefore when We have recited it, then follow its recitation. Again on Us is the explaining of it. Nay! But you love the present life, and neglect the hereafter (75:14 — 21). Look at the position of the verses: *Do not move your tongue ... the explaining of it.*

In this background, there is no need to belabour finding some sort of connection for every verse with the preceding and following verses. Moreover, it is known that the Qur'ān was revealed peacemeal, and there is no reason why there should be such connection, except in the chapters which were revealed all at once, or in those verses whose connection with one another is self-evident.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! ... what you say,:* Prayer in this verse means mosque; that is why it goes on to prohibit entrance to those who are in a state of major ritual impurity.[1] The question arises as to why the house of prayer has metaphorically been called 'prayer'. The reply: It was necessary because of the clause, ''until you know (well) what you say''. Had Allāh said, 'do not go near mosque until you know what you say', it would have appeared disjointed, or given some other unintended meaning. The real purpose is to make them appreciate that during prayer they stand before the Most High, the Most Great God and get the honour of addressing the Lord of the worlds; it is not proper for them to become intoxicated and lose their sense with the abomination of intoxicant, not knowing what they were speaking. This meaning was more relevant to 'prayer'. But prayer is mostly offered in mosque with congregation, according to the system established by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); and also it was intended to describe the law about entry of a person in condition of major ritual impurity into mosque. Therefore, brevity demands this metaphorical use and style, as you see.

Accordingly, the words, ''until you know (well) what you say'', give

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[1] Which one gets on sexual intercourse or after ejaculation. (*tr.*)

the reason of prohibition of drinking liquor in a way the intoxication continues till beginning of prayer. In other words, We have forbidden you liquor in order that you may know what you are saying; but it is not the main purpose of the prohibition — it does not mean that do not start prayer until you know what you say, but if you know what you say you may drink.

QUR'ĀN: *nor when you are in a state of major ritual impurity, unless* (you are) *travelling on the road ...:* It will be explained under exegesis of the verse, *O you who believe! when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces ...* (5:6).

TRADITIONS

Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated ...,* that he said: ''It was before liquor was prohibited.'' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: This tradition must be taken to mean that the verse was revealed before the prohibition of liquor was clearly expounded. Otherwise, it will go against the Qur'ān. The 33rd verse of the seventh chapter had clearly forbidden sin which includes intoxicants; and the 219th verse of the second chapter explicitly says that there is great sin in liquor. It means that liquor was forbidden in Mecca before the *hijrah,* because the seventh chapter is of Meccan period [and the second chapter was the first one revealed at Medina], and everyone knows that the verse under discussion was revealed at Medina [after the second chapter].

There are several other traditions through Sunnī chains saying that this verse was revealed before the prohibition of liquor. May be all such traditions take the word intoxicated to mean lethargic.

Zurārah narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: ''Do not stand for prayer sluggishly, sleepily or sullenly, because it is a trait of hypocrisy; surely Allāh has forbidden the believers to stand for prayer while intoxicated — that is, from sleep.'' (*ibid.*)

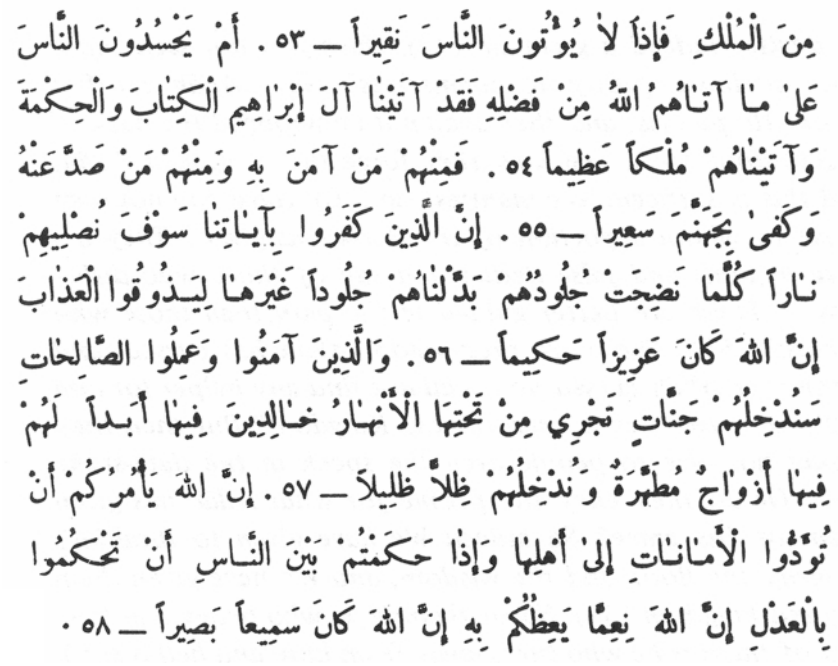
The author says: The assertion that it is a trait of hypocrisy is based

on the opening clause, *O you who believe!;* thus anyone disregarding this order is a hypocrite, not a believer. The phrase, 'that is, from sleep': May be it is an explanatory note of the narrator; or the wording of the Imām (a.s.) himself. In the latter case it will be an exposition of the inner meaning of the Qur'ān, or even the apparent one.

There are other traditions interpreting the intoxication as sleepiness. al-'Ayyāshī has narrated two such *aḥādīith* in his *at-Tafsīr;* and al-Kulaynī has reported it in his *al-Kāfī* through Zayd ash-Shaḥḥām from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), and through Zurārah from al-Bāqir (a.s.). Also al-Bukhārī has narrated in his *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* through Anas from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).

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أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيباً مِنَ الْكِتَابِ يَشْتَرُونَ الضَّلَالَةَ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ـ ٤٤ . وَاللهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ وَكَفَى بِاللهِ وَلِيًّا وَكَفَى بِاللهِ نَصِيراً ـ ٤٥ . مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ وَرَاعِنَا لَيًّا بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْناً فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاسْمَعْ وَانْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْراً لَهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلاً ـ ٤٦ . يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ آمِنُوا بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقاً لِمَا مَعَكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَطْمِسَ وُجُوهاً فَنَرُدَّهَا عَلَى أَدْبَارِهَا أَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللهِ مَفْعُولاً ـ ٤٧ . إِنَّ اللهَ لاَ يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَى إِثْماً عَظِيماً ـ ٤٨ . أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ بَلِ اللهُ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلاَ يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلاً ـ ٤٩ . أُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللهِ الْكَذِبَ وَكَفَى بِهِ إِثْماً مُبِيناً ـ ٥٠ . أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيباً مِنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجِبْتِ وَالطَّاغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَؤُلاَءِ أَهْدَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَبِيلاً ـ ٥١ . أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللهُ وَمَنْ يَلْعَنِ اللهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ نَصِيراً ـ ٥٢ . أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ


مِنَ الْمُلْكِ فَإِذاً لاَ يُؤْتُونَ النَّاسَ نَقِيراً ــ ٥٣ . أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ
عَلىٰ مٰا آتٰاهُمُ اللهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ آتَيْنٰا آلَ إِبْرٰاهِيمَ الْكِتٰابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَآتَيْنٰاهُمْ مُلْكاً عَظِيماً ٥٤ . فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ صَدَّ عَنْهُ
وَكَفىٰ بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيراً ــ ٥٥ . إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيٰاتِنٰا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ
نٰاراً كُلَّمٰا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَدَّلْنٰاهُمْ جُلُوداً غَيْرَهٰا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذٰابَ
إِنَّ اللهَ كٰانَ عَزِيزاً حَكِيماً ــ ٥٦ . وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰالِحٰاتِ
سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنّٰاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهٰارُ خٰالِدِينَ فِيهٰا أَبَداً لَهُمْ
فِيهٰا أَزْوٰاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلاًّ ظَلِيلاً ــ ٥٧ . إِنَّ اللهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ
تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمٰانٰاتِ إِلىٰ أَهْلِهٰا وَإِذٰا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النّٰاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا
بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللهَ نِعِمّٰا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللهَ كٰانَ سَمِيعاً بَصِيراً ــ ٥٨ .

Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? They buy error and desire that you should go astray from the way (44). *And Allāh best knows your enemies; and Allāh suffices as a Guardian, and Allah suffices as a Helper* (45). *Of those who are Jews* (there are those who) *alter words from their places and say: ''We have heard and we disobey''; and: ''Hear, may you not be made to hear!''; and:* ''Rā'inā''*, distorting* (the words) *with their tongues and taunting about religion; and if they had said* (instead): *''We have heard and we obey'', and ''hearken'', and* ''unẓurnā''*, it would have been better for them and more upright; but Allāh has cursed them on account of their unbelief, so they shall not believe but a few* (46). *O you who have been given the Book! believe that which We have revealed, verifying what you have, before We alter faces then turn them on their backs, or curse them as We cursed the people of the Sabbath, and the command of Allāh shall be executed* (47). *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; and whoever associates any thing with Allāh, he devises indeed a*

great sin (48). *Have you not seen those who attribute purity to themselves? Nay, Allāh purifies whom He pleases; and they shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone* (49). *See how they forge the lie against Allāh, and this is sufficent as a manifest sin* (50). *Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? They believe in idols and false deities and say of those who disbelieve: ''These are better guided in the path than those who believe''* (51). *Those are they whom Allāh has cursed, and whomever Allāh cursed you shall not find any helper for him* (52) *Or have they a share in the Kingdom? But then they would not give to people even the speck in the date-stone* (53) *Or do they envy the people for what Allāh has given them of His grace? So indeed We have given to Ibrāhīm's progeny the Book and the wisdom, and We have given them a grand kingdom* (54). *So of them is he who believes in him, and of them is he who turns away from him, and hell is sufficent to burn* (55). (As for) *those who disbelieve in Our signs, We shall make them enter fire; so oft as their skins are thoroughly burned, We will change for them other skins, that they may taste the chastisement; surely Allāh is Mighty, Wise* (56). *And* (as for) *those who believe and do good deeds, We will make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them for ever; they shall have therein pure mates, and We shall make them enter a dense shade* (57). *Surely Allāh commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge between people you judge with justice; surely Allāh admonishes you with what is excellent; surely Allāh is Seeing, Hearing* (58).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These verses expose the condition of the People of the Book, giving details of their injustice, and also their deceptions concerning the divine religion; and these are more clearly applicable to the Jews. The verses are inter-related, having the same context.

As for the last verse, *Surely Allāh commands you to make over trusts to their owners ...,* some people have said that it is of Meccan period; they think that while the whole chapter, ‘‘The Women’’, is of Medinite period, two verses are of Meccan era — this as well as the last one of the chapter: *They ask you about a decision of the law. Say: ‘‘Allāh gives you a decision ...’’* (4:176). (Vide *Majma‘u ’l-bayān.*) But the verse’s connection with the preceding ones is quite clear; and the same is the case with the last verse of the chapter, because it promulgates a law about inheritance, and inheritance was ordained at Medina.

QUR’ĀN: *Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? ...:* It has already been mentioned under verse 36 to 42 that they are somewhat connected with these ones, and that they were revealed about the Jews.

It appears from these verses that the Jews were in habit of presenting themselves as sincere well-wishers of the believers; they tempted the believers away from the right path, inciting them to niggardliness, telling them not to spend benevolently. They knew that if the Muslims followed their advice, their (believers’) endeavours would not achieve success, their efforts for advancement and progress would fail. It makes it certain that the verses were revealed about the Jews or about those who secretly talked to Jews and befriended them, then deviated from truth on their advice, tempted to niggardliness and then began telling others to be niggardly.

All this may be inferred from the words, *... and desire that you should go astray from the way. And Allāh best knows your enemies ...*

The two verses, thus, mean as follows (and Allāh knows better): We have just described to you the condition of those who avoid spending, in the way of Allāh and indulge in pride, boasting, niggardliness and showiness. Do you want to see its concrete example? Look at the Jews. They were given a portion of the book, not the whole book as they claim. Yet they buy error instead of guidance; and they love that you too should go astray. They meet you with smiling faces, appear to you as good people and pretend to be your friends and helpers. They offer proposals which sometimes might seem good to you, which your hearts might be inclined to agree to. But their only desire is to turn you away from the right path — as they have gone astray themselves. And Allāh recognizes

your enemies better than you do; and these are your enemies. Do not be deceived by their apparent good behaviour. Beware of them; do not obey their order; do not listen to their false words, nor be carried away by their sugar-coated talk. You suppose that they are your friends and helpers. Do you really need their false friendship and promised help? While Allāh suffices as a Guardian and Allāh suffices as a Helper. In presence of this Guardianship and Helper, why should you need their friendship and assistance?

QUR'ĀN: *Of those who are Jews ... and taunting about religion;: ''Min''* (مِنْ = of, from), in the phrase translated here as ''Of those who are Jews'', is explicative that gives detail of the preceding phrase, ''those to whom a portion of the book was given'', from among the Jews. Or it joins with the preceding words, ''your enemies'', from among the Jews. Also it is said that the phrase, ''Of those who are Jews'', is predicate of a deleted subject (which is understood by the attributive clause) ''alter words''; the meaning: Of those who are Jews, there is a group that alters words; or, there are those who alter words. It is not uncommon to mention an attribute and delete the noun to which it is related, Dhu 'r-Rummah says:

They remained and among them (there were those) *whose tears flowed fast,*
And there were others whose tears filled the eyes leisurely.

Allāh says that they alter words from their places. It may refer to literal alteration, i.e., they change the position of words, delete from and insert into the book, as is said about the present Torah. Or it may indicate that they misinterpreted the words of Mūsā (a.s.) and other prophets, reported in the Old Testament, giving it some unintended meaning, other than the actual one; as they misinterpreted the prophecies of Torah which referred to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and had earlier done about the prophecies referring to the Christ (a.s.), saying that the promised Messiah had not come yet; and they are waiting for him even today.

A third possibility: May be, the alteration of words from their places refer to their mischief mentioned soon after this sentence, where Allāh says: *and* [they] *say: ''We have heard and we disobey''; and: ''Hear, may you not be made to hear''; and.* ''Rā'inā'', *distorting* (the words) *with their tongues* ... In that case, these sentences will be in conjunction

with the words, ‘‘alter words’’. Alteration of words then will mean using a word in a wrong manner and wrong place. Usually when one says, ‘We hear’, it indicates obedience, and it is generally completed by saying, ‘We hear and obey’. It is totally disgraceful to say, ‘We hear and we disobey’; or to use the word, ‘We hear’, as a mockery or derision. Likewise, when one says, ‘Hear’, or ‘Listen’, it is a good manner to add, ‘May Allāh make you hear’; not ‘may you not be made to hear’, nor to say, *‘Rā‘inā’,* which reportedly had in their language the import of, ‘Hear, may you not be made to hear’.

The words: ‘‘distorting (the words) with their tongues and taunting about religion’’: *‘‘al-layy’’* (اَللَّيُّ = to twist, to distort). They twist their tongues and present falsehood in the guise of truth, commit disrespect and ridicule in the form of politeness and courtesy. The believers used to address the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) with the word, *‘‘Rā‘inā’’* (رَاعِنَا = pay attention to us) O Messenger of Allāh!’’ Their meaning: Please listen to us, so that we may fully explain what we want to say. The Jews, taking its advantage, started addressing him with the same word, *rā‘inā,* which in their language had a disrespectful connotation totally against his high status. That is why Allāh condemned them in this verse, saying, ‘‘Jews alter words from their places’’, and then explaining this alteration with examples: ‘‘[They] say: ‘We have heard and we disobey’; and: ‘Hear, may you not be made to hear’;’’ then adding as an explanatory apposition: *rā‘inā.* They commit this reprehensible deed by twisting their tongues for taunting at the true religion; as the verse says: ‘‘distorting (the words) with their tongues and taunting about religion’’. Both *maṣdars* have been put here as circumstantial clause.

QUR’ĀN: *and if they had said* (instead): *‘‘We have heard and we obey’’, and, ‘‘hearken’’; and* ‘‘unẓurnā’’, *it would have been better for them and more upright;:* It compares these words (which show religious reverence and submission to truth) with what they used to say (which was a result of twisting of tongues and taunting about religion); and declares that the former was better and more upright than the latter. But the fact was that there was no good or uprightness at all in the Jews’ words. [Then why this comparison? And why this comparative degree?]

Reply: The verse compares the good effect of the true words with what the Jews thought was a good effect of their words — although in

reality there was no good effect in it at all; thus the comparison is between the real good effect and an imaginary good effect. The meaning: If they had said, 'We have heard and we obey ...', it would have been much better and more upright than the goodness they think is achieved by them through this tonguetwisting and taunting. The style is the same as the one used in the last verse of the chapter 62 (''Friday''): *And when they see merchandise or sport they break up for it, and leave you standing. Say: ''What is with Allāh is better than sport and* (better) *than merchandise'', and Allāh is the Best of sustainers* (62:11).

QUR'ĀN: *but Allāh has cursed them on account of their unbelief, so they shall not believe but a few:* The Muslims should not entertain any hope that the Jews would ever say, 'We have heard and we obey'; because it is the word of faith and belief and these are cursed people who would not enter the fold of true faith. That is why the preceding sentence, ''and if they had said ...'', uses conditional particle, *law* (لَوْ = if) which denotes impossibility of the conditional clause.

Apparently the preposition, *bi* (بِ = on account of, with) in the clause, ''on account of their unbelief'', denotes causality; not instrumentality. [They have been cursed because of their unbelief; not that they are cursed with unbelief.] Disbelief may be removed by belief; therefore disbelief, *per se,* cannot turn into such a curse as to make belief impossible. Rather, when they disbelieved (and Allāh will describe their disbelieving ways at the end of the chapter) Allāh cursed them on account of that unbelief, with such a curse as would make them cling to their faithlessness; so they shall not believe except a few of them. (Ponder on it.)

The words, ''so they shall not believe but a few'': It has been said that, ''but a few'', is a conditional clause, that is, they shall not believe except being in small number.

Others have said that 'a few' is adjective to a deleted noun. it means: They shall not believe but a little belief. This interpretation too, like the preceding one, is acceptable, but it requires further elaboration that attachment of smallness to the 'belief' is a sort of attaching an adjective to a concomitant of its noun — they shall not believe but a belief in which the believers shall be small in number.

Some exegetes have written that ''a little belief'' means imperfect

one; accordingly, it would mean: They shall not believe but such a small quantity of belief as would be worthless — it would not rectify the believer's actions, nor purify his self, nor improve his wisdom. But this interpretation is wrong. Belief can be said to be deep-rooted or transient, perfect or imperfect — according to its various degrees. But it is never called 'little' or small in number. Therefore, this adjective cannot refer to 'belief', and especially in a book like the Qur'ān which is the most perfect in rhetorics.

Moreover, the belief mentioned in the verse refers either to the real belief rooted in heart (which is opposite of hypocrisy), or to the apparent belief which is sometimes called Islam. There is no doubt that Islam accords recognition to both types of belief, and the Qur'ānic verses explicitly accept even the latter concept. Allāh says: *and do not say to any one who offers you salutation* (peace), *you are not a believer ...* (4:94).

Apart from that, the exception has been made from the sentence, ''Allāh has cursed them on account of their unbelief ...;'' and the least degree of belief or apparent Islam was enough to justify that exception — that they should have maintained correct manners and decorum by saying, 'We have heard and we obey', as the Muslims were doing.

What did put that exegete in this error? It was because he thought that as Allāh had cursed them because of their disbelief, it must be absolutely effective; in other words, not even a few of them would ever accept Islam. That led him to say that the exception means ''but a little quantity'' of faith, that is, an insignificant belief. He thought that only in this way the sentence, ''but Allāh has cursed them on account of their unbelief'', could be correctly explained. But he did not realize that such talks — and what they describe of evil characteristics, accusations and condemnations — apply to the society *per se.* It was the Jewish society, *per se,* which was subjected to curse, wrath and other general condemnations. They will not believe, will not attain felicity and will not succeed — and even now that society is in the same condition, and will remain so upto the Day of Resurrection.

As for the exception, it refers to individuals; and it does not effect a firm order decreed against a society if a few individuals are not subjected to it. Why was this exception necessary in this declaration? Because it is the individuals who constitute a society, when taken together. When

Allāh said, ‘‘they shall not believe’’, it negated the belief from individuals — although it actually did so looking at them as a society. Still there was room for misunderstanding that the declaration covered every single member and none would ever be free from that curse. It was to remove that misconception that Allāh said, ‘‘but a few’’. The verse, therefore, runs on the line of the verse: *And if We had prescribed for them: ‘‘Kill yourselves’’, or ‘‘go forth from your homes’’, they would not have done it except a few of them* (4:66).

QUR’ĀN: *O you who have been given the Book! ... people of the Sabbath: ‘‘aṭ-Ṭams’’* (اَلطَّمْسُ = to efface, to obliterate); *‘‘al-wajh’’* (اَلْوَجْهُ = face, that part of a thing which is seen, which faces you; a man’s face is the side of head that is seen, which faces the addressee). The word is used in material as well as immaterial sense. *‘‘al-Adbār’’* is plural of *‘‘ad-dubur’’* (اَلدُّبُرُ = rear part, posterior). People of the Sabbath refers to a Jewish group which used to violate the rule of the Sabbath; therefore Allāh had cursed and transformed them. The Qur’ān says: *And ask them about the town which stood by the sea; when they exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water, and on the day on which they did not keep the Sabbath they did not come to them* (7:166). *And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, so We said to them: ‘‘Be apes, despised and hated.’’ So We made them an example to those who witnessed it and those who came after it ...* (2:65 — 66).

The preceeding verses, as you know, had exposed the condition of the Jews or a group of them; the talk proceeded to say that they were inflicted with divine curse because they were faithless towards Allāh and His Messenger and corrupted what was good in their religion. That curse covered their whole society and deprived them of the divine help for believing — except for a few of them. [Coming to that stage] now the speech is addressed to all the People of the Book, as may be seen from the words, ‘‘O you who have been given the Book’’: It invites them to believe in the Qur’ān, the revealed Book which verifies that which they have got; then it proceeds threatening them of definite infliction of divine wrath which awaits them in case they unjustifiably and arrogantly rebel against this order — alteration of faces or curse from God.

That threat is given in the words: ‘‘... before We alter faces then turn them on their backs, or curse them ...’’ Alteration of face means here changing a man’s face (with which he goes forward to obtain his life’s aims, to achieve the expected bliss and happiness). It does not mean here effacement that obliterates it, nullifying and erasing all its signs. Rather it denotes a change that will turn it to the back-side. Consequently, the more he advances on his way (going, by natural instinct, to the direction of his face), the more is he retarded backwards (because now he is facing his posterior). The more he goes ‘ahead’ to get what he thinks is good for his worldly life or religion, the more he accumulates evil and mischief. The more he progresses, the more is he retrogressed. Such a man can never succeed in his endeavours.

As for cursing them like the violators of the Sabbath, obviously it means metamorphosis, as the above-mentioned verses show that those violators were transformed into apes. Accordingly, the conjunctive, ‘or’, in ‘or curse them ...’, connotes its literal meaning of alternative. There is a difference between the two threats. The former, that is, alteration of faces, would change the life’s goals of the condemned group without affecting any substantial change in their physique. The latter, that is, curse like that of the violators of Sabbath, would change their goals of life by transmuting their body-structure from that of humans to that of animals like apes.

If these people continued in their rebellion — and they will surely do, as the end of the verse shows — they will be inflicted with one of the two punishments: Either alteration of faces or being cursed like the violators of the Sabbath. At the same time, the verse indicates that the punishment would not cover all of them. The word, ‘faces’, being a plural without definite article, does not connote all-inclusiveness. This in its turn points to another fine point: The talk threatens a people with a consequence which will in fact be inflicted to only a group of them; it was therefore more effective to keep it vague as to who would be punished; this vagueness would keep each of them trembling with fear. The description of the related misdeeds fitted every individual of that society. Therefore, no one could consider himself safe from this dire chastisement. This is a well-known style when delivering threats to a group.

Apparently the pronoun, *hum* (هُمْ = them) in ‘‘or curse them’’, refers to ‘faces’. But the Arabic pronoun is [of masculine gender, and is]

reserved for rational beings [like men, while 'faces' should take a singular feminine pronoun]. This clearly indicates that 'faces' refers to persons inasmuch as they turn towards their goals and objectives. That being the case, little credit can be given to those who interpret the alteration of faces and turning them on their backs in its literal meaning, that is, the physical faces would be turned to the backside. There is strong indication that it means alteration of psyche whereby thinking becomes crooked and reality is distorted; when he sees a truth he turns aside, but as soon as a falsehood appears he runs towards it, craves for it.

This an example of divine management when Allāh wills to show His displeasure, as He says: *And We will turn their hearts and their sights, even as they did not believe in it the first time, and We will leave them in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on* (6:110).

The above discourse makes it clear that alteration of faces in this verse refers to a sort of divine management of soul which changes its nature. Consequently the psyche is inclined towards falsehood and keeps away from truth, as far as believing in Allāh and His signs is concerned. This is supported from beginning of the verse, where Allāh says: ''... believe that which We have revealed ... before We alter faces ...''. Also it is clear from above that the curse here means metamorphosis.

Someone has said: Alteration of faces means that some people's faces will be turned towards their backs; and that it will happen in the last days of the world or on the Day of Resurrection.

COMMENT: The words, *or curse them,* goes against this interpretation, as explained earlier.

Someone else has said: This alteration indicates their being deprived of divine help in this world; they will ever remain in disgrace and misery; whenever they would proceed to an intended happiness, Allāh would change it to a mirage, an illusion devoid of good.

COMMENT: Although this explanation is not so far-fetched, the beginning of the verse does not support it, as mentioned above.

A third writer has said that it refers to their exile, and then return to the place they were exiled from. They were expelled from Ḥijāz to Syria and Palestine whence they had originally come.

COMMENT: It has been already said that the verse's beginning as well as the context points to something else.

Nevertheless, all or most of the above explanations may be combined in the following way:-

The phrase, altering of faces, means turning their hearts upside down and changing their inner self, facing from truth to falsehood; thus they shall never be able to believe in Allāh and His signs. Now, the true religion is the path without which man cannot arrive at blessings of worldly life; any one deviating from it must inevitably fall in fire-pit of corruption and mischief and stumble into abyss of destruction. Allāh says: *Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done ...* (30:41); *And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded* (against evil), *We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth; but they rejected, so We over-took them for what they had earned* (7:96).

According to these premises, if one's face is altered away from true religious realities, it would inevitably be turned away from all kinds of felicities of the worldly life. Whoever is debarred from blessings of religion will also be deprived of worldly blessings, like security of position, well-ordered safety, independence and sovereignty; in short, every thing that contributes to good life and makes a work fruitful. If there happens to be some success there, it would be to the extent the religious discipline has seeped into their societies.

QUR'ĀN: *and the command of Allāh shall be executed:* What Allāh has decreed must take place without fail; and it has already happened, as Allāh has said in several verses of His Book: They are cursed, have been inflicted with divine wrath; and enmity and hatred has been established among them upto the Day of Resurrection.

QUR'ĀN: Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; ...: It appears from the context that the verse gives the reason for the preceding order, i.e., ''believe that which We have revealed, verifying what you have, before We alter faces ...''. Thus, its connotation will be as follows: If you do not believe in it, you shall be associating

something with Allāh; but He does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him; as a result of this polytheism, you will be inflicted with His wrath and punishment; consequently, He will alter your faces by turning them to your back-side; or He will curse you. This unforgiveness will bring in its wake the worldly consequences of polytheism, i.e., alteration of faces and divine curse.

This is the difference between this verse and another one of this very chapter: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates any thing with Allāh, he indeed strays off into a remote error* (4:116). The verse under discussion (4:48) threatens with worldly consequences of polytheism, while 4:116 warns of the consequences in the hereafter. This differences is inferred from contexts, although by themselves both verses encompass both types of consequences.

Divine forgiveness or unforgiveness is not affected haphazadly or at random; it takes place according to some underlying reason — and Allāh is Mighty, Wise. He does not forgive polytheism because creation (being a divine mercy) stands on the foundation of worship and mastership. Allāh says: *And I have not created the* jinn *and the human beings except that they should worship Me* (51:56). And there is no worship, no servitude with polytheism. As for His forgiving other sins besides polytheism, it will be affected through intercession of rightful intercessors, like the prophets, the *waliyys,* the angels and the good deeds, details of which were given under the topic of intercession in the first volume.[1]

This verse does not speak about repentance, as it deals particularly with disbelief, and repentance does not combine with disbelief. Otherwise, every sin — including polytheism — is forgiven through repentance. Allāh says: *Say: ''O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the Mercy of Allāh; surely Allāh forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord ...''* (39:53 — 54).

Polytheism, in the verse under discussion, certainly encompasses 'disbelief', because disbelief too shall not be forgiven, although formally

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān,* (Eng. transl.), vol.1, pp.244 — 247 (*tr.*)

it is not called polytheism. The People of the Book are not called by the Qur'ān as polytheists, although their disbelief in the Qur'ān and the message of the Prophet was nothing other than polytheism. (Vide exegesis of the verse 221 of ch.2)[1]. The People of the Book, by not believing in what Allāh had sent down verifying what they had had in their hands, became unbelievers and they associated what was in their hands with Allāh — because Allāh had not ordered them to hold fast to their scriptures, etc., the way they did. When a believer in Mūsā (a.s.) disbelieved in 'Īsā (a.s.), he in fact disbelieved in Allāh and associated Mūsā with Him. Probably that is the reason why Allāh has used the clause, ''does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him'', instead of saying, 'does not forgive polytheists (or polytheist)'.

The proviso, ''to whomsoever He pleases'' removes a possible misunderstanding that anybody can influence the divine judgment and affect forgiveness; nobody can order or compel Allāh, the Great, the High. In many places in the Qur'ān, we find the proviso of 'Allāh's pleasure' after description of confirmed realities; and the reason in all or most of them is the same removal of possible misunderstanding. For example, Allāh says: *And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please, a gift which shall never be cut off* (11:108).

Moreover, the reason demands that not every sinner should be forgiven; otherwise, it will render all orders and prohibitions ineffectual; promulgation of *sharī'ah* will be an exercise in futility; and the regimen of spiritual advancement laid down by Allāh will be disturbed. That is why Allāh has said: ''to whomsoever He pleases''. It also shows that for every sin punishment must be given to at least some of its perpetrators; otherwise its prohibition would be futile. This observation does not go contrary to the generality of the verses of forgiveness; we are talking, not about comprehensiveness of the promise, but about its actual occurance. After all, many sins are committed by those who definitely shall not be forgiven because of polytheism or other reasons.

The meaning, therefore, is as follows:
Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, be it done by a polytheist or an unbeliever; He forgives other sins

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[1] *ibid.* vol.3, pp.295 — 302 (*tr.*)

(besides polytheism) through intercession of a good servant or a good deed; yet He is not bound to forgive every sin of this kind to every sinner; it is for Him to forgive or not to forgive; and whatever He decides is based on reason.

QUR'ĀN: *Have you not seen those who attribute purity to themselves?:* ar-Rāghib has said, '' '*az-Zakāt'* (الزَّكوة) basically denotes the growth emanating from divine blessing ... There are two ways for a man to attribute purity to himself: One is through [good] deeds; it is paiseworthy, and the verse, *He indeed shall be successful who purifies himself* [87:14], refers to it. The other is by words, e.g., attesting to another person's justice and probity. Such praise, if done for himself, is considered immoral. Allāh has clearly prohibited it: *therefore do not attribute purity to your souls* [53:32]. In this way, Allāh teaches good manners to man, because his praise for himself is repugnant in reason and *sharī'ah* both. A wise man was asked: 'What is repulsive, even if true?' He said: 'Man's praising his own self.' ''.

The verse is a part of the series describing the conduct of the People of the Book. Obviously it was the People of the Book — or a group of them — who attributed purity to themselves. Here they have not been identified as ''People of the Book'', because it is not compatible with the knowledge of Allāh's revelation to indulge in such contemptible acts. Those who persist in it have no connection with the Book or its knowledge.

This explanation is supported by their boastings quoted by Allāh in His Book: *We are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones* (5:18*); Fire shall not touch us but for a few days* (2:80). Also their claim of being Allāh's friends, as alluded to in 62:6, *Say: ''O you who are Jews, if you think that you are the friends of Allāh to the exclusion of other people ...''* The verse under discussion, thus, speaks about the Jews; and is another testimony to the fact described in the preceding verses that they are too arrogant to submit to the truth or to believe in revelation sent by Allāh; the divine curse has engulfed them from all sides; and all this is a result of their self-complacency and self-praise.

QUR'ĀN: *Nay, Allāh purifies whom He pleases:* The talk turns from their attribution of purity to themselves and rebuts it, by declaring that

purifying someone is one of the exclusive prerogatives of Allāh. A man may possibly acquire excellence and achieve a sort of spiritual superiority. But he cannot rely on it, cannot be self-complacent on its account, unless he thinks that he is totally independent and needs no help from God. This is tantamount to the claim of divinity; he associates himself with the Lord of the universe. But how can poor man, who does not control any harm or benefit for his own self, nor has any say about his death or life, be independent of Allāh in any good or excellence? Man in his own self and in all his conditions belongs exclusively to Allāh — without any exception; this includes the good he thinks he has got and all things concerning that good. Now is there anything left for man to call his own?

This vanity and conceit — which incites man to attribute purity to himself — is the self-appreciation which is a fundamental evil. Very soon such a conceited person falls in another vice, and that is pride. That pride reaches its limit when he overpowers others, subjugating the servants of Allāh. It leads to oppression and unlawfully exceeding the limit, sacrilege of inviolable matters, and plunging his hands in other people's blood, honour and properties.

This happens when only an individual is inflicted with this spiritual melady. But if it infects others and turns into a social tradition and national character, then it brings catastrophe in its wake resulting in humanity's destruction and society's corruption. It is the trait Allāh attributes to the Jews when they said: *There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way* (to reproach), (3:75).

No man should attribute to himself any praiseworthy characteristic, no matter whether the claim be true or false. It is not he who owns those characteristics for himself; they actually belong to Allāh. Allāh is the real owner of all that He has entrusted to man; it is He Who bestows superiority to whomsoever and in whatever way He pleases. It is His prerogative to purify whomsoever He pleases by bestowing on him superiority and grace; and to announce that servant's purity by extolling and praising him for his perfect virtues. He says about Ādam and Nūḥ: *Surely Allāh chose Ādam and Nūḥ* (3:33); about Ibrāhīm: *surely he was a truthful* (man), *a prophet* (19:41); and the same sentence has been used about Idrīs in 19:56. He says about Ya'qūb: *and surely he was possessed of knowledge because We had given him knowledge* (12:68); about

Yūsuf: *surely he was one of Our sincere servants* (12:24); about Mūsā: *surely he was one purified, and he was a messenger, a prophet* (19:51); about ʻĪsā: *worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near* (to Allāh) (3:45); about Sulaymān: *most excellent the servant! Surely he was frequent in returning* (to Allāh) (38:30); and the same sentence is used about Ayyūb in 38:44. Again he directs Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) to say: *Surely my Guardian is Allāh, Who revealed the Book, and He takes in hand* (the affairs of) *the good ones* (7:196); and extols him in these words: *And most surely you are on sublime morality* (68:4). Similar extolling phrases may be seen regarding a number of prophets in chapters 6, 19, 21, 37, 38 and so on.

In short, the right to purify someone is reserved for Allāh. Nobody shares it with Him; anyone trying to do it starts from injustice and ends at injustice, while Allāh purifies with truth and justice in true measure without excess or shortfall. That is why the words, ‘‘Allāh purifies whom He pleases’’, have been followed by the statement, *and they shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone,* which gives a sort of reason for above.

It appears from the context that the divine purification mentioned here refers to praise in words, to verbal attribution of excellence to good servants — although the phrase is general and, if not seen within this context, could encompass actual purification as well as the praise in words.

QUR’ĀN: *and they shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone: ‘‘al-Fatīl’’* (اَلْفَتِيْلُ) on paradigm of *‘‘al-fa‘īl’’* (اَلْفَعِيْلُ) is derived from *al-fatl* (اَلْفَتْلُ = to twist together, to entwine) and means, entwined. It is also interpreted as the husk found in the furrow of, or inside, a date-stone. It is narrated in traditions of the Imams of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.) that it is the spot on date-stone *an-naqīr* (اَلنَّقِيْرُ = tiny spot on a date-stone) *al-qiṭmīr* (اَلْقِطْمِيْرُ = pellicle enveloping a date-stone). Also it is said to mean dirt twisted worm-like with fingers. Anyhow it alludes to something utterly worthless.

The verse proves two things:-

First: No one having any excellence should be proud of it, nor should he indulge in self-appreciation. Rather it is an exclusive prerogative of Allāh, as the verse says, to purify those who deserve it. Let alone self-praise, the verse obviously indicates that one should not attribute

excellence even to other virtuous persons, except in the way Allāh has praised them. It follows that excellence is only that which Allāh has praised and extolled. Any excellence that is not recognized by religion as such is not excellence at all. It does not mean that people should ignore other persons' virtues and excellence; nor that they should not recognize others' superiority or refuse to give due respect to them. The virtues and excellence given by Allāh are among the signs of Allāh about which Allāh says: *and whoever respects the signs of Allāh, this surely is* (the outcome) *of the piety of hearts* (22:32). Accordingly, it is incumbent on an ignorant one to submit to a scholar, to accord him respect, as in this way he shall be following the truth. Allāh has said: *Say: ''Are those who know and those who do not know alike?''* (39:9). At the same time, the scholar is not allowed to brag of his knowledge or to indulge in self-praise. The same applies to all genuine human virtues.

Second: Some of our 'research scholars', following a western ideology, have written that self-reliance is a valuable human virtue. But it is something that religion does not recognize, nor does it conform to the Qur'ānic taste. What the Qur'ān teaches on this subject is reliance on Allāh, getting strength from Allāh. The Qur'ān says: *Those to whom the people said: ''Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them''; but this only increased their faith, and they said: ''Allāh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is* (He) (3:174); *that the power is wholly Allāh's* (2:165); *surely might is wholly Allāh's* (10:65). There are many verses of the same connotation.

QUR'ĀN: *See how they forge the lie against Allāh, and this is sufficient as a manifest sin:* Their self-praising — that they were children of God, and His beloveds and friends, etc. — is a lie against Allāh, as Allāh has not given them such distinction. Moreover, attribution of an excellence to oneself is in itself a lie against Allāh, even if the claim be true, (as was described above); because it is tantamount to associating oneself with Allāh, while He has no associate or partner in His Kingdom, as the Qur'ān says: *and He has not a partner in the Kingdom* (17:111).

Even if there were no evil other than its being a lie against Allāh, it would have been enough as a manifest sin. It is absolutely appropriate to call it a sin. Sin is a condemnable act which prevents man — or delays him — from achieving goodness; and this disobedience is a branch of

polytheism which keeps man away from divine mercy. The same condition prevails in polytheism which throws man into disbelief. Compare the clause under discussion with the preceding verse, where the declaration, ‘‘Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing be associated with Him, ...’’, has been followed by the clause, ‘‘and whoever associates any thing with Allāh, he devises (or, forges) indeed a great sin.’’

QUR’ĀN: *Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? They believe in idols and false deities ...: ‘‘al-Jibt’’* (اَلْجِبْتُ = translated here as idol) and *‘‘al-jibs’’* (اَلْجِبْسُ) means a thing which has no good in it. It has also been interpreted as ‘any thing that is worshipped other than Allāh’. *‘‘aṭ-Ṭāghūt’’* (اَلطَّاغُوتُ = translated here as false deity) is, like *‘‘aṭ-ṭughyān’’* (اَلطُّغْيَانُ = to exceed proper limits; oppression) *a maṣdar* which is generally used as an active particle. This too is said to mean anything which is worshipped other than Allāh. The verse points to an event in which some People of the Book had supported the unbelievers against the believers, saying that the polytheists’ path was more correct and more straight than that of the believers. They said it while they knew that the believers followed a monotheistic religion revealed in the Qur’ān which verified their own revelation; and that the polytheists believed in idols and false deities. This judgment was an acknowledgement by them that the polytheists had a share in the truth. By assigning truth to idols and false deities they had committed polytheism — they had shown their belief in those false deities which Allāh has accused them of, and then cursed them, saying: ‘‘These are they whom Allāh has cursed ...’’

This supports what has been narrated (about the cause of its revelation) that the Meccan polytheists had asked some People of the Book to adjudge between them and the believers as to whose religion was better; and they had decided in the polytheists’ favour against the believers, as will be narrated under ‘‘Traditions’’.

The verse mentions their having been given a portion of the Book, to put more emphasis on their condemnation. They were supposed to be scholars of the Book which had exposed the falsity of idols, etc.; what could be more abominable, more disgraceful for such people than believing in idols and false deities?

QUR'ĀN: *Or have they a share in the Kingdom? ... speck in the date-stone.: ''an-Naqīr''* (اَلنَّقِيْرُ) on paradigm of *fa'īl*, has the connotation of *''al-manqūr''* (اَلْمَنْقُوْرُ = tiny amount pecked from earth by a bird). Its another meaning has been written earlier under verse 49.

Some exegetes have said that the particle 'or' is unrelated to the preceding sentences. It therefore means 'rather'; and the interrogative implies refutation. The meaning: Rather, do they have a share in the kingdom? That is, they do not have any share.

Others have said that 'or' alludes to a deleted but understood clause. The meaning: Do they have more right of prophethood, or do they have a share in the kingdom? But it has been rebutted by others, saying that such deletion is allowed only in poetry, because of restrictions of meter; and there is no such limitation in the Qur'ān.

Apparently, 'or' is related; and the omitted alternative is the one to which the preceding verse (*Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given?*) points. The meaning therefore will be as follows: Do they have right to judge in any way they like, or do they have a share in the kingdom, or do they envy the people? This interpretation shows that all three questions are well-connected and the speech well-organized.

Kingdom denotes authority over material and spiritual affairs. It encompasses the 'kingdom' of prophethood, mastership and guidance, as well as that of people and property. This comprehensiveness is inferred from the preceding and following sentences. The preceding verse points to their claim that they could issue judgment against the believers; in other words, they had authority over spiritual matters. The ending clause,''But then they would not give to people even the speck in the date-stone'', refers to control over material things (or over all things including material ones). Therefore, ''the kingdom'' in the verse covers both material and spiritual authority.

The meaning, therefore, will be as follows: Do they have any share in the kingdom of prophethood, mastership and guidance, etc., which Allāh has bestowed on His Prophet? Had it been so, they, because of their miserliness and evil nature, would not have given to the people even insignificant and worthless things. It is nearer in meaning to the verse 17:100; *Say: ''If you control the treasure of the mercy of my Lord, then you would withhold* (them) *from fear of spending.''*

QUR'ĀN: *Or do they envy the people for what Allāh has given them of His grace?:* It is the last of the three alternatives. The question is addressed to the Jews refuting their statement that the religion of polytheists was better guided and more upright than that of the believers'.

In this context ''the people'' refers to the believers; and ''... what Allāh has given them of His grace'' to the prophethood, the Book and the religious knowledge and realities. But the next sentence, *So indeed We have given to Ibrāhīm's progeny the Book and the wisdom ...,* restricts the word, 'people', to the progeny of Ibrāhīm; thus ''the people'' would mean the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); because whatever divine grace, mentioned in the verse, was given to others, had come through him and by his blessings. It was already explained under the verse, *Surely Allāh chose Ādam and Nūḥ and the descendants of Ibrāhīm ...* (3:33), that ''the descendants of Ibrāhīm'' refers to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny.

There is no difficulty in using the word 'people' for a single person, as it is a usual style of allusion. You say to someone who always gives you trouble: Why do you trouble people? What have you got to do with people? By the word 'people', you mean your own self.

QUR'ĀN: *So indeed We have given to Ibrāhīm's progeny the Book and the wisdom:* The sentence makes them despair in their envy, cutting off all hopes that this divine grace might be removed from Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), that this bounty might be taken back. Allāh has already given to Ibrāhīm's descendants whatever He intended to give them of His grace, bestowed on them of His mercy as He was pleased to. Now, let them die in their desperation; their envy will not avail them anything. It shows that Ibrāhīm's descendants may mean either the Prophet and his progeny (from among the descendants of Ismā'īl) or all his descendants through Ismā'īl and Isḥāq, in order that it may include the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who was the one envied by the Jews. But it cannot mean the Children of Israel from among Ibrāhīm's descendants; otherwise, the speech will become topsy-turvy, confirming the Jews in their envy of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), or of the believers (as the Prophet was among them). Obviously it would ruin the whole argument.

Also it is obvious from this sentence, as we have written above, that the envied people are from the progeny of Ibrāhīm, and it supports the view that the word, ''the people'', refers to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). As for

the believers, not all of them were from the progeny of Ibrāhīm, nor was there any superiority for the believers of his progeny over those who were not his descendants. The verse therefore cannot be applied to the believers. Also, mere believing in, and following, the religion of Ibrāhīm does not entitle the believers to be named, ‘‘descendants of Ibrāhīm’’. Likewise, the verse, *Most surely the nearest of people to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe* (3:68), shows the nearness of the believers to Ibrāhīm, but does not make them his descendants. Rather, by referring to them as *those who followed him,* (and not as his progeny), it proves that unrelated believers cannot be called as ‘‘descendants of Ibrāhīm’’.

The Ibrāhīm’s progeny, therefore, refers either to the Prophet alone, or to him together with his (Prophet’s) progeny and his grandfather, Ismā‘īl and others like him.

QUR’ĀN: *and We have given them a grand Kingdom:* It has already been explained that, in the light of the context, the kingdom here has a comprehensive meaning which encompasses spiritual authority including prophethood and real mastership over the people’s guidance. It should be kept in mind that Allāh does not attribute grandness and greatness to worldly kingdom if it does not lead to spiritual superiority or religious excellence.

This interpretation is also supported by the fact that Allāh has not mentioned prophethood and mastership when enumerating His grace to the progeny of Ibrāhīm (*So indeed We have given to Ibrāhīm’s progeny the Book and the wisdom*). It makes it certain that the prophethood and the mastership are included in the comprehensive term, ‘‘grand kingdom’’.

QUR’ĀN: *So of them is he who believes in him, and of them is he who turns away from him:* As translated here, the contrast between the two sides is clear and needs no further elaboration. But the latter clause may also be translated as follows: and of them is he who prevents (others) from (believing in) him. In that case, it would indicate that the Jews were not satisfied with just refusing to believe in Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.); they endeavoured their utmost to hinder people from coming to the way of Allāh and believing in the revelation sent to the Prophet.

QUR'ĀN: *and hell is sufficient to burn ...:* It threatens them with burning in hell because they prevented people from believing in the Divine Book, and started the fire of mischief against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the believers.

Then Allāh describes as to how the hell is sufficient for them; He says: (As for) *those who disbelieve in Our signs, We shall make them enter fire.* It goes on giving a description of their burning which also gives its reason It is followed by the verse, *And* (as for) *those who believe and do good deeds, We will make them enter garden ...* Thus the contradistinction between the two groups — those who believe in him and those who turn away, and hinder others, from him — becomes crystal clear; showing that they are poles apart so far as the happiness and unhappiness of the life hereafter is concerned; for one group are the gardens and their dense shade; for the other, blazing fire of the hell and roasting in it — May Allāh protect us from it.

The meaning of the verses is quite clear.

QUR'ĀN: *Surely Allāh commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge between people you judge with justice; ...:* The second clause, ''and when you judge ...'', has a clear connection with the preceding verses. The divine speech in those verses revolves around the Jews' judgment that the polytheists were better guided in path than the believers. Allāh had mentioned in that verse that they were given a portion of the Book; and the Book clearly explains the divine signs and religious realities. It was a divine trust for which God had made them promise that they would teach it to people and not hide it from eligible persons.

These associations support the view that the word, 'trusts', has a wider meaning that covers material as well as spiritual trusts like true divine knowledge whose scholars are obliged to convey it to deserving persons.

In short, the Jews betrayed the divine trust they were entrusted with, i.e., they hide the knowledge of monotheism and the prophecies of Muḥammad's advent, and did not disclose them when the time came. Not only that, they perverted justice when they adjudged between the believers and the polytheists, deciding in favour of idolatry against monotheism. Because of all this perfidy, they were cursed by Allāh and it

pushed them to the blazing fire of hell. Now, the style changes from first person to third person, commanding people to hand over the trusts to their rightful owners and to do justice in judgment. ‘‘Surely Allāh commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge between people you judge with justice; ...’’

Of course, here we have extended the meaning of handing back the trust and deciding with justice; but it was done because of the context, as you have seen.

Objection: It is a deviation from the apparent meanings of trust and judgment. What one immediately understands from this verse is that it ordains two laws — obligation of handing back trusts to their owners and of a *qāḍī* to judge with justice.

Reply: General legislation cannot be restricted to the rules of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). For example, the Qur’ān has given general order making it obligatory to make over trusts and to do justice while giving judgment. A jurisprudent infers from it the laws concerning monetary trust and judgment of cases. Likewise, a scholar of theology finds in it reference to fundamentals of religion; and so on.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *ad-Dalā’il*) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘Rifā‘ah ibn Zayd ibn at-Tābūt was one of the Jewish leaders; when talking to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), he used to twist his tongue, and say: ‘Give us your ear, O Muḥammad! so that we may explain to you.’ Then he attacked Islam and criticised it. So Allāh revealed about him: *Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given?... so they shall not believe but a little’’.* (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from as-Suddī, that he said about the verse, *O you who have been given the Book! believe ...:* ‘‘It was revealed about Mālik ibn as-Sayf and Rifā‘ah ibn Zayd ibn at-Tābūt from Banū Qaynuqā‘.’’ (*ibid.*)

Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *ad Dalā’il*) have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The

Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had a talk with some great Jewish rabbis including ‘Abdullāh ibn Sūriyā and Ka‘b ibn Asad. He said to them: ‘O Jewish people! Fear Allāh and accept Islam; for, by God! you surely know that what I have brought to you is certainly true.’ They said: ‘We do not know it, O Muḥammad!’ Then Allāh revealed about them: *O you who have been given the Book! believe that which We have revealed ...,*’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: Obviously the noble verses were revealed about the Jews (among the People of the Book), as has been explained earlier. But the above-quoted reasons of revelation are no more than attempts to apply the verses to some known persons — as is the case with most of traditions purporting to give reason of revelation; and Allāh knows better.

an-Nu‘mānī has narrated through his chain from Jābir a long *ḥadīth* from al-Bāqir (a.s.), describing the uprising of as-Sufyānī, which *inter cilia* says: ‘‘And the commander of as-Sufyānī’s army will come down in a desert; and a caller will call from the heaven: ‘O desert! destroy these people.’ So they will be sunk into ground, and none will escape except three persons; Allāh will turn their faces to their back-side; and they will be from (the tribe of) Kalb. It is about them that the verse was revealed: *O you who have been given the Book! believe that which We have revealed, verifying what you have, before We alter faces then turn them on their backs, ...*’’ (*Tafsīr al-Burhān*).

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated by al-Mufīd through his chain from Jābir from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] has narrated through his chains from Thuwayr from his father that ‘Alī (a.s.) said: ‘‘No Qur’ānic verse is dearer to me than the words of [Allāh] the Mighty, the Great: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases.*’’ (*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l faqīh*).

The author says: [as-Suyūṭī] has narrated it in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* from al-Fariyābī and at-Tirmidhī (who has said that it was a ‘good’ tradition) from ‘Alī (a.s.).

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that he said: ‘‘When the verse was revealed: Say: ‘O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh, surely Allāh forgives the faults altogether ...’ [39:53], a man stood up and said: ‘And polytheism? O Prophet of Allāh!’ The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) disliked that (question); and then said: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him ...’’* (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

Ibnu’l-Mundhir has narrated from Abū Mijlaz that he said: ‘‘When the verse was revealed, *Say: ‘O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls ...’,* the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stood on the pulpit and recited it before the people. A man stood up and said: ‘And associating something with Allāh?’ [The Prophet] remained silent. [This happened] two or three times. Then this verse was revealed: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases ...* But that was included in [the chapter of] *az-Zumar* [The Companies] and this in *an-Nisā’* [The Women].’’ (*ibid.*)

The author says: It has already been explained that the verse of *az-Zumar* [39:53], in the context of the verses following it, clearly speaks about forgiveness through repentance. There is no doubt that repentance erases all sins including polytheism; and the verse under discussion [4:48] deals with something other than repentance. There is no contradiction between the two, and there is no reason to suppose that either of them abrogates or restricts the other.

There is a tradition on this verse in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān,* narrated from al-Kalbī which says: ‘‘It was revealed about certain polytheists, Waḥshī and his companions. It so happened that when he killed Ḥamzah — and he was promised emancipation in exchange of Ḥamzah’s murder, which was not fulfilled. When he came (back) to Mecca, he felt remorse for his action — he and his companions. So they wrote to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.): ‘We are sorry for what we have done; and nothing prevents us from (accepting) Islam except that we had heard you saying when you were at Mecca: *And they who do not call upon another god with Allāh and do not slay the soul which Allāh has forbidden except in*

the requirements of justice, and (who) *do not commit fornication, and he who does this shall find a requital of sin ...* [25:68]. But we have called upon another god with Allāh, and killed the soul which Allāh had forbidden, and committed fornication.Had there not been this snag, we would certainly have followed you.' Thereupon the following [two verses] were revealed: *Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed ... he surely turns to Allāh a* (goodly) *turning* (25:70 — 71)

''The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) sent these (verses) to Waḥshī and his companions. On reading it, they wrote back to him, 'This is a tough condition indeed; we are afraid that we might not do a good deed and, thus, might not be among the people of this verse.' Then the verse was revealed: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases ...* The Prophet sent it to them; they read it and (again) wrote to him, 'We are afraid that we might not be among the people (worthy) of His pleasure.' Then came down the verse: *Say: 'O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh; surely Allāh forgives the faults altogether.'* [39:53]. [The Prophet] sent it to them. When they read it, he and his companions entered into the fold of Islam, returned to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and he accepted from them [their conversion to Islam]. Then he said to Waḥshī: 'Tell me how did you slay Ḥamzah?' When he informed him, [the Prophet] said: 'Woe unto thee! Hide yourself from me.' Therefore, Waḥshī went away to Syria and remained there until he died.''

The author says: Also ar-Rāzī has quoted it in his *Tafsīr* from Ibn 'Abbās. If one ponders on the contexts of the verses which this tradition alleges the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) to go on writing to Waḥshī, he will have no doubt that the 'tradition' was certainly a forgery. The forger wanted people to believe that Waḥshī and his companions were forgiven in advance even if they were to commit every big and small sin. He picked up various Qur'ānic verses from different places, taking an excepted clause from one place, and a general one from another; while each verse has a separate context of its own, and is insepararable from its preceding and following verses with which it is interlinked, and cannot be looked at in isolation. But the forger dissected and re-arranged them in

such a way as to suit this astonishing bargaining between the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Waḥshī. An exegete has aptly commented on this tradition: ‘‘It looks as if they want to prove that Allāh, Glorified be He, was flirting with, Waḥshī!’’

The forger’s only motive was to glorify Waḥshī with an unprecedented excellence — a firm and irrevocable forgiveness which could not be affected by any sin he chose to commit, any depravity he decided to indulge in. This would result in abolition of punishments for sins; in other words, it would abrogate all system of *sharī‘ah,* freeing mankind from all responsibilities, as the Christians think. Rather it would be more ignominious, because the Christians have abolished the *sharī‘ah* in exchange of the sacrifice of a person like Jesus Christ, while this forger wants to abolish it just in compliance with Waḥshī’s desire.

This Waḥshī was a slave of Ibn Muṭ‘im; he killed Ḥamzah at Uḥud and went back to Mecca. When Ṭā’if was conquered [after the conquest of Mecca], he accepted Islam; but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told him, ‘‘Hide yourself from me.’’ He went to Syria and lived at Ḥimṣ. During the reign of ‘Umar he was employed as an account clerk, but was dismissed because of his alcoholism, for which he was flogged several times. He died during the reign of ‘Uthmān, reportedly of alcoholism.

Ibn ‘Abdi ’1-Barr has narrated through his chain from Ibn Isḥāq, from ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Faḍl, from Sulaymān ibn Yasār, from Ja‘far ibn ‘Amr ibn Umayyah aḍ-Ḍamrī that he said: ‘‘I went out (on a journey) with ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Adiyy; we passed through Ḥimṣ, and Waḥshī was there. We thought, why not go to him and ask him how he had killed Ḥamzah. We met someone while we were enquiring about him. That man said, ‘He is a man worsted by liquor; if you find him in sober condition you will find him an eloquent person who will tell you whatever you want from him; but if you find him in another condition, leave him alone.’ So we proceded until we came to him.’’ (The report continues with description of Waḥshī’s killing of Ḥamzah in the battle of Uḥud.) (*al-Istī‘āb*).

Muṭrif ibn Shakhīr narrates from ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb that he said: ‘‘In the days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), when one of us died commiting a major sin, we used to testify that he was among the inmates of fire; until this verse was revealed — then we refrained from (such)

testimonies.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

Ibnu 'l-Mundhir has narrated through al-Mu'tamar ibn Sulaymān from Sulaymān ibn 'Utbah al-Bāriqī that he said: ''Ismā'īl ibn Thawbān told us, 'I went to the mosque before the great plaque, and heard them saying: *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell;...* [4:93]. The Emigrants and the Helpers then said, ''Hell is firmly decreed for him.'' But when the verse [4:48] was revealed: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases;* they said, ''Whatever God intends; Allāh does what He pleases.'' ' '' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: Also a nearly similar tradition has been narrated from Ibn 'Umar through several chains. But there is something wrong in all these traditions. We do not think that the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in general were so ignorant as not to understand that this verse (*Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases*) adds nothing new to the verses of intercession, as was described earlier. Nor could they be oblivious of the fact that most of the verses of intercession were long ago revealed at Mecca. For example,*And those who they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (43:86). Likewise, there are verses in chapters 10, 20, 21, 34, 53 and 74; all of them are of the Meccan period and all prove intercession, as explained earlier. These verses cover all sins; they lay down only two conditions: One on the part of the candidate of intercession, that he should be following the religion approved by Allāh, that is, monotheism and rejection of polytheism; the other on the side of Allāh that He forgives whomsoever He pleases. In short, they say that divine forgiveness encompasses all sins (except polytheism) depending on the pleasure of Allāh. This is exactly what this verse says: *Surely Allāh does not forgive that ... and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases.*

Now we come to those verses which threaten one who kills a believer without legal justification, or eats interest, or misbehaves towards relatives, with abiding punishment of fire. For example, *And whoever*

kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it, and Allāh will send His wrath on him ... (4:93); about interest: *... and whoever returns* (to it) — *these are the inmates of fire; they shall abide in it* (2:275); about those who cut asunder the relationship: *... upon them shall be curse and they shall have the evil* (issue) *of the abode* (13:25). There are other verses of the same import; and all of them issue threat of evil consequences of sin and mention the hell as the recompense. Yet there is no clear declaration in them that it is a firmly-decreed punishment which cannot be changed or waived.

In short, the verse under discussion (4:48) does not contain anything more than the verses of intercession; and there was no reason for the companions to behave in the way they are reported to do. They could not have thought that the verses of major sins ordained irrevocable punishment of fire, so that they could testify for a perpetrator of a major sin that he was among the inmates of fire. Nor was it possible for them to understand from the verse 4:48 (the verse of forgiveness) what they had not already understood from the verses of intercession. How could they say that this verse had abrogated or restricted the verses of major sins?

Even one of these traditions gives the same indication. as-Suyūṭī has narrated from Ibnu ’ḍ-Ḍurays, Abū Ya‘lā, Ibnu ’1-Mundhir and Ibn ‘Adiyy, through correct chains from Ibn ‘Umar that he said: ‘‘We used to refrain from asking (from Allāh) forgiveness for perpetrators of major sins, until we heard from our Prophet (s.a.w.a.), *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases.* And he (the Prophet, s.a.w.a.) said, ‘I have saved my prayer (and) my intercession for the people of major sins of my *ummah.’* Therefore, we stopped from many things that were in our minds, and we talked and entertained hope (for sinners).’’ (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*).

This tradition apparently shows that the companions understood the same thing from the verse of forgiveness which they did from the *ḥadīth* of intercession. Yet one question remains: How was it that they understood the possibility of forgiveness for major sins from the *ḥadīth* of intercession, but had not understood the same from the Meccan verses of intercession, in spite of their numerousness, and clarity of meaning, when they were revealed years ago? I don’t know.

There is a tradition about the verse, *Have you not seen those to whom*

a portion of the Book was given? ... better guided in the path than those who believe, narrated by al-Bayhaqī (in the *ad-Dalā'il*) and Ibn ‘Asākir (in his *at-Tārīkh*)from Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh that he said, ‘‘When the affairs of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) reached the stage they did, Ka‘b ibn al-Ashraf withdrew himself and arriving at Mecca stayed there and said, ‘I will not help (anyone) against him (i.e., the Prophet) nor will I fight him.’ He was asked in Mecca, ‘O Ka‘b! Is our religion better, or that of Muḥammad and his companions?’ He replied, ‘Your religion is better and older, while Muḥammad’s religion is new.’ Then the verse was revealed about him: *Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? ...*’’ (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are various traditions giving the reason of its revelation in different ways, the soundest of which is the above-quoted one. But all agree on the basic fact, that some Jews had delivered judgment in favour of the Quraysh against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that the former’s religion was better than the Tatter’s.

ash-Shaykh has narrated through his chain from Jābir about the verse, *Or do they envy the people for what Allāh has given them of His grace?,* that al-Bāqir (a.s.) has said, ‘‘We are the people.’’ (*Tafsīr al-Burhān*)

[al-Kulaynī] has narrated through his chain from Barīd that al-Bāqir (a.s.) said in a *ḥadīth, inter alia,* about this verse, ‘‘We are the envied people.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) through numerous, nearly *mutawātir* chains, which are found in the books of Shī‘ite tradition, like *al-Kāfī, at-Tahdhīb, Ma‘āni 'l-akhbār, Baṣā'iru 'd-darajāt, at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī, al-‘Ayyāshī and others.

There are also traditions from the Sunnī chains which give the same meaning. Ibnu 'l-Maghāzilī has narrated a *marfū‘ ḥadīth* from Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Bāqir (peace be on both) that he said about this verse: ‘‘We are the people, by God!’’

as-Suyūṭī has narrated from Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and aṭ-Ṭabarānī through ‘Aṭā’ that Ibn ‘Abbās said about this verse, ‘‘We are the people, to the

exclusion of (other) people.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The same book narrates from 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Muqātil and Abū Mālik that ''the people'' means the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). We have explained that apparently ''the people'' refers to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); and that his *Ahlu 'l-bayt* are joined to him.

Ḥumrān has narrated about the verse, *So indeed We have given to Ibrāhīm's progeny the Book and the wisdom, and We gave them a grand kingdom,* that al-Bāqir (a.s.) has said: ''The Book means 'prophethood'; the Wisdom refers to 'understanding and judgment'; and the grand Kingdom is 'obedience'. (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī).

The author says: Obedience means their obedience which is obligatory on the *ummah,* as has been explained in traditions. There are a lot of *aḥādīth* giving this interpretation; some of which explain the 'obligatory obedience' as the Imāmate and Caliphate, see for example the one given in *al-Kāfī* through Barīd from al-Bāqir (as.).

The verse, (As for) *those who disbelieve in Our signs ...:* al-Qummī writes in his *at-Tafsīr* that the 'signs' are the Leader of the faithful and the Imāms, peace be on them all.

The author says: It is based on the principle of the flow of the Qur'ān.

[ash-Shaykh] has narrated through his chain from Ḥafṣ ibn Ghiyāth al-Qāḍī that he said: ''I was in the presence of the noblest of all Ja'fars, [that is] Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (peace be on both) when he was (forcibly) brought (to Kūfah from Medina) by al-Manṣūr. Then Ibn Abi'l-'Awjā', an atheist, came to him and said, 'What do you say about this verse: *so oft as their skins are thoroughly burned, We will change for them other skins, that they may taste the chastisement?* Suppose these skins had disobeyed and were therefore punished; but what about the other (skins)?' Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said, 'Woe unto thee! It is the same and (yet) it is another.' (Ibn Abi 'l-'Awjā') said, 'I do not understand this reply.' Then he (the Imām, a.s.) said, 'Suppose a man takes a brick, and breaks it; then pours water on it, kneads it and returns it to its former shape. Isn't it the same (brick) and yet another?' He said, 'Certainly. May

Allāh let (us) benefit from you!' '' (*al-Majālis*).

The author says: It has also been narrated in *al-Iḥtijāj,* through Ḥafṣ ibn Ghiyāth from him (a.s.); al-Qummī too has reported it without chains in his *at-Tafsīr.* The reply points to the fact that with preservation of the form, the matter remains the same; man's body, like its various organs and limbs, remains the same as long as the man is the same — even if there happen to be some changes in the body.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about the words of Allāh: *they shall have therein pure mates.* He said, ''Pure mates are those who do not menstruate nor do they drop excrement.'' (*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu'l-faqīh*).

It is narrated from Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm an-Nu'mānī through his chain from Zurārah that he asked Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (peace be on both) about the words of Allāh: *Surely Allāh commands you to make over trusts to their owners and that when you judge between the people you judge with justice.* (The Imām, a.s.) said, ''Allāh has commanded the Imām to hand over the trust [i.e., the imāmate] to the [next] Imām coming after him; he has no right to keep it from him. Do you not hear the words of Allāh, *and that when you judge between the people you judge with justice; surely Allāh admonishes you with what is excellent?* They are the judges, O Zurārah! [Allāh] has addressed it to the judges.''

The author says: The former part of the *ḥadīth* is narrated from the Imāms (a.s.) through numerous chains. The latter part shows that this interpretation is based on the flow of the Qur'ān; and that the verse has been revealed concerning general administration of justice and giving everyone his due right. Consequently, it is applicable also to the Imāmate as explained earlier.

A similar interpretation has been narrated [by as-Suyūṭī] from Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr, al-Fariyābī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that he said: ''It is incumbent on the Imām to judge according to what Allāh has revealed and to hand over the trusts. When he does so, then it is incumbent on people to listen to him, to obey him and to answer when they are called.'' (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

يـا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلاً ــ ٥٩ . أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالاً بَعِيداً ــ ٦٠ . وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى مَا أَنْزَلَ اللهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُوداً ــ ٦١ . فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ جَاؤُكَ يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا إِحْسَاناً وَتَوْفِيقاً ــ ٦٢ . أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَوْلاً بَلِيغاً ــ ٦٣ . وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاؤُكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللهَ تَوَّاباً رَحِيماً ــ ٦٤ . فَلاَ وَرَبِّكَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لاَ يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجاً مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيماً ــ ٦٥ . وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنِ اقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوِ اخْرُجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ

بِهِ لَكَانَ خَيْراً لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيتاً ــ ٦٦ . وَإِذاً لَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ لَدُنَّا أَجراً
عَظِيماً ــ ٦٧. وَلَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ صِرَاطاً مُّسْتَقِيماً ــ ٦٨. وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللهَ وَالرَّسُولَ
فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ
وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقاً ــ ٦٩ . ذَلِكَ الفَضْلُ مِنَ اللهِ وَكَفَى
بِاللهِ عَلِيماً ــ ٧٠ .

O you who believe! obey Allāh and the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you; then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger if you believe in Allāh and the last day; this is better and very good in the end (59). *Have you not observed those who think that they believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you? They desire to resort to the judgment of ṭāghūt* (Satan), *though they were commanded to deny him, and the Satan desires to lead them astray into a far-reaching error* (60). *And when it is said to them: ''Come to what Allāh has revealed and to the Messenger'', you will see the hypocrites turning away from you with* (utter) *aversion* (61). *But how will it be when misfortune befalls them on account of what their hands have sent before? Then will they come to you swearing by Allāh: We did not desire* (any thing) *but good and concord* (62). *These are they of whom Allāh knows what is in their hearts; therefore turn aside from them and admonish them, and speak to them effectual words concerning themselves* (63). *And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allāh's permission; and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allāh and the Messenger had* (also) *asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allāh Oftreturning* (to mercy), *Merciful* (64). *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total submission* (65). *And if We had prescribed for them:*

Kill yourselves or go forth from your homes, they would not have done it except a few of them; and if they had done what they were admonished, it would have certainly been better for them and most efficacious in strengthening (them) (66); *And then We would certainly have given them from Ourselves a great reward* (67); *And We would certainly have guided them in the straight path* (68). *And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the witnesses and the good ones; and excellent are these as companion* (69). *This is grace from Allāh, and sufficient is Allāh as the Knower* (70).

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COMMENTARY

As you may see, the verses are not without some connection with the preceding ones. Beginning from the words, *And worship Allāh and do not associate any thing with Him ...* [4:36], the whole speech is directed towards exhorting people to spend in the way of Allāh for strengthening all classes of society and fulfilling the believers' need; and condemning those who refrain, and prevent others, from discharging this obligation; then comes this call to obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority, cutting out the roots of discord and avoiding dispute and disagreement; advising them to refer all disputes — if there be any — to Allāh and His Messenger; they should guard themselves against hypocritical behaviour, and must surrender to the decisions of Allāh and His Messenger. This tenor continues until it arrives at verses calling for *jihād,* explaining its underlying reason and ordering the believers to band together in the way of Allāh. All these prepare the believers for fighting in Allāh's way, and put their internal affairs in good shape on a sound basis. Here and there one or two verses have been revealed in a parenthetical style which have no adverse effect on continuity of speech, as was pointed out under the verse 43: *O you who believe! do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated ...*

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you;:* After calling the people to worship Allāh alone, and do good to various groups of believers, and condemning those who cast aspersions on this idea or prevent others from Allāh's way, the talk again turns to the basic theme from a different angle, from which grow up other branches. It leads to reinforcing the foundation of Islamic society, as it exhorts and urges the believers to preserve their unity and to remove every type of dispute or discord by referring it to Allāh and His Messenger.

Undoubtedly, the sentence, ''obey Allāh and obey the Messenger'', paves the way for the next order to refer all quarrels to Allāh and His Messenger, although the sentence is in fact the basis of all divine laws and *sharī'ah.* It is obvious from the order, *then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger,* which emanates from this origin; then the speech repeatedly turns to the same theme, as it goes on saying, *Have you not observed those who think that they believe in what has been revealed to you ...;* then again says: *And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allāh's permission;* then says: *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them,...*

There should be no doubt whatsoever that when Allāh tells us to obey Him, it means that we must obey Him in all the realities and laws which He has sent to us through His Messenger. As for His Messenger, his orders emanate from either of his two lawful authorities: First: His legislative authority based on divine revelation other than the Qur'ān. By this authority, he teaches the people details of what is mentioned in general terms in the Qur'ān, and explains all the related matters. Allāh says: *and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to them what has been revealed to them* (16:44). Second: What he, in his wisdom, decides in administrative and judicial matters by the authourity given him by God. Allāh says: *... that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has taught* [*lit.* shown] *you;* (4:105). It is the opinion with which he used to judge between people according to the laid down judicial laws; and it is the decision he used to take in important affairs. Allāh had told him to consult the people seeking their advice: *and take counsel with them in the affair; but when you have decided, then place your trust in Allāh* (3:159). Thus the people would participate in

consultation; but the decision would be of the Prophet alone.

The above discourse shows that the Messenger's obedience has a connotation distinct from Allāh's obedience, although the Messenger's obedience is in reality the obedience of Allāh Himself, because it is Allāh who has obliged the people to obey the Messenger, as He has said: *And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allāh's permission.* People have to obey the Messenger in what he explains by divine revelation and in what he decides and orders by his divine wisdom.

It is this variation of connotation which has necessitated repetition of the order of obedience: ''obey Allāh and obey the Messenger''. (And Allāh knows better.) This repetition, however, is not for emphasis, as the exegetes have opined. Had the intention been of emphasis, it would have been more appropriate not to repeat; it would have been more to the point to say, obey Allāh and the Messenger, as it would have implied that obedience of the Messenger is one with the obedience of Allāh; after all, not every repetition shows emphasis.

However, the *''ulu 'l-amr''* (أولو الأمْر = those vested with authority) — whoever they might be — do not have the privilage of revelation; they decide and act according to what is right in their opinion; and their opinion and order must be obeyed just like the Prophet's opinion and order. That is the reason why Allāh has not mentioned them when He orders the believers to refer their disputes to Allāh and the Messenger. He says: *then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger if you believe in Allāh and the last day.* The people thus ordered are the believers, because the verse begins with the address, ''O you who believe!'' and the quarrel mentioned here must be an internal dispute among the believers. We cannot suppose that the believers would quarrel with those who are vested with authority when they are obligated to obey them. So this quarrel must be among the believers themselves, and it cannot be in matters of orders issued by those vested with authority ;[1] rather it has to be about identification of Allāh's command in a

[1] Islam's history belies the assumption that the believers would not quarrel with those vested with authority. What was the reason of all the disputes, wars, bloodshed, oppressions and tortures which have stained the

particular affair, as may be inferred from the next verses which condemn those who resort to the judgment of *ṭāghūt,* preferring it to the judgment of Allāh and His Messenger. A believer must resort in such matters to the religious laws laid down in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah;* and both the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* are final proofs in all affairs, for him who has the ability to understand the law from them. When the *ulu 'l-amr* say that this is what the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* say on this matter, all argument has to stop. When they talk, theirs is the final word, because the verse makes their obedience compulsory without any restriction or condition; and finally every affair returns to the Book of Allāh and the *sunnah.*

It shows that the people with authority — whoever they might be — have no authority to legislate a new law or to abrogate a rule established by the Qur'ān or the *sunnah.* Otherwise, it would serve no purpose to order people to refer their dispute to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* to Allāh and the Messenger, as may be inferred from the verse 36 of chapter 33: *And it is not for a believing man or a believing woman to have any choice in their affair when Allāh and His Messenger have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger, he surely strays off a manifest straying.* Allāh decides by giving a law; His Messenger decides by elaborating a divine law, giving an order or pronouncing a judgment. As for the persons vested with authority, they have the power, in executive matters, to decide according to their discretion, and in judicial and general matters, to bring to light the decisions of Allāh and His Messenger.

In short, as the *ulu 'l-amr* have no power of legislation, nor do they have any order other than that which Allāh and His Messenger have given in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* Allāh did not mention them again in

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pages of Islamic history, right from the departure of the Prophet to this day, if not the Muslims' rebellion against those vested with authority?

Of course, this premises could be justified if we said that the call, *O you who believe!* was addressed not to the whole Muslim *ummah* (as is usually the case with this phrase), but to the true believers only who might have attained a higher level of faith. But in that case, the area of the *ulu 'l-amr's* jurisdiction and authority would be reduced to such an extent as to render this order devoid of any importance. Also if common Muslims were excluded from this address, they would have committed no sin by disobeying the Imāms. (*tr.*)

connection with referral of disputes, when He said: *then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger.* Thus Allāh's obedience is in one category and that of the Messenger and those vested with authority, in another. That is why Allāh has said: ''Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you''.

Undoubtedly, the obedience, ordered by the words, ''Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger'', is general, without any condition or restriction. It proves that the Messenger cannot issue any order or prohibition contrary to Allāh's actual order or prohibition. Otherwise, making his obedience compulsory would be a contradiction in terms on the part of Allāh; far be it from His sublime presence. It necessarily follows that the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) was *ma'ṣūm* (infalible), sinless, free from error.

The same argument applies in case of the persons vested with authority. But the presence of *al-'iṣmah* (اَلْعِصْمَةُ = sinlessness) in the Messenger is independently established by proofs from the reason and the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* without depending on this verse. Apparently, it is not the case with the people vested with authority. Someone therefore could imagine that it was not necessary for these people of authority to be *ma'ṣūm,* sinless, and that the verse could be explained even without believing in their *'iṣmah.*

The argument could be put forward as follows: ''This verse ordains a law aimed at the well-being of the *ummah,* which would protect the Muslim society from internal discord and disunity. It aims at nothing more than what is found in other nations and societies. They give one of their leaders authority to manage their affairs; they pledge to obey him, and his orders are carried out. But they know that he may sometimes contravene the law or err in his judgment. So, when it is clearly known that he was going against the law, he is not obeyed; rather, his error is pointed out to him. But when there is only a possibility — without certainty — that he might be wrong, his orders are obeyed and implemented although in fact he might have decided erroneously. Yet that mistake is tolerated for the sake of maintaining the society's unity, which is more important and would compensate for such mistakes and errors.

''The case of *ulu 'l-amr* (those vested with authority) mentioned in this verse is not different from other worldly leaders in their authority. Allāh has ordered the believers to obey them. If they give an order

contrary to the Qur'ān or the *sunnah,* it would be invalid and would not be obeyed; the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'No creature is obeyed in disobedience of the Creator.' This meaning has been narrated by the Shī'ahs and Sunnīs both, and also the generality of the verse proves it. If the *ulu 'l-amr* commit a mistake, and it is definitely known to be a mistake, it would be changed to conform with the Qur'ān and the *sunnah;* but if there is no certainty of mistake, the order would be carried out as if there was no mistake. It would not do any harm to obey such an order and implement it even if in reality it was wrong, because the preservation of the *ummah's* unity and continuance of its power and prestige would compensate for such contravention of the actual divine law. It would not be unlike the established dictum of the Principles of Jurisprudence that the decisions derived from apparent proofs of jurisprudence are binding on man even if they are not in accordance with the actual divine order, although the divine order would not be changed by that man-made decision; and the contrariness would be compensated by underlying good of society.

''In short, it is compulsory to obey the *ulu 'l-amr,* even if they are not sinless, and could commit mistakes and even debauchery. They shall not be obeyed if they indulge in debauchery; they shall be returned to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* when it is known that they had deviated from them, but in all other cases, their orders shall be obeyed and their decisions enforced. There is no harm in implementing an order which does not visibly go against actual divine law (even if in reality it does) for the sake of preserving Islamic unity and for the well-being of the Muslim nation.''

COMMENT: If you ponder on what was written earlier, you will realize that this fallacy has no leg to stand on. It is possible to use this 'argument' for restricting the generality of the verse in case of debauchery, by putting forward the above-quoted Prophet's tradition, ''No creature is obeyed in disobedience of the Creator'', or some Qur'ānic verses of the same import, e.g., *Surely Allāh does not enjoin indecency* (7:28); and other similar verses. Likewise, comparable cases may be quoted for religious obligatoriness of obeying orders which are apparently binding, like obedience of the commanders of expeditions who were appointed by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), the governors

he sent to various places like Mecca or Yemen, or who were left in charge of Medina when he himself went out. Another is the authoritative nature of *rnujtahid's* ruling for his followers, and so on.

But all this cannot restrict the generality of the verses in any way. Correctness of a theory is one thing, and its being proved by apparent meaning of a Qur'ānic verse is quite another.

The verse proves obligatoriness of these *ulu 'l-amr's* obedience, without putting any restriction or condition, without attaching any proviso. Nor is there any other Qur'ānic verse to limit its generality. In short, there is nothing to show that the order ''and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you'', implies, 'obey those vested with authority from among you as long as they do not order you to commit a sin or until you are not sure that they are in wrong; but if they tell you to commit a sin, you are not obliged to obey them, and if you are sure of their mistake then correct them by directing their attention to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah.*' Certainly the Qur'ān's wording does not support this meaning.

Also we should not forget that when ordering people to obey their parents, Allāh has said: *And We have enjoined on man goodness to his parents, and if they contend with you that you should associate* (others) *with Me, of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them ...* (29:8). It should be noted that parents' obedience is much less important [and is restricted to their off-spring]; yet Allāh has attached to it such a clear and unambiguous proviso. How is it that He did not attach any such condition in the verse of obedience which deals with a fundamental religious principles, and on which depends the felicity of mankind?

Moreover, the verse has joined the Messenger and ''those vested with authority'' in this order; and mentions both under one obedience: ''Obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you''; and the Messenger cannot order sin nor can he issue a wrong judgment. If it were possible for the *ulu 'l-amr* to be wrong in an order or a judgment, it was highly essential to put suitable restriction on this order as far as the *ulu 'l-amr* were concerned. Thus the only way out is to interpret this verse in its general sense without any condition or restriction. This in its turn proves that the *ulu 'l-amr* were *ma'ṣūm,* sinless in the same way as the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) was — without any difference.

al-Amr (اَلْاَمْرُ) in the phrase, *ulu 'l-amr* the religious or temporal

affairs of the believers who have been addressed in this verse; as is supported by the verse, *and take councel with them in the affair* (3:159), or as is said in praise of the pious, *and their system is to take councel among themselves* (42:38). Although it may possibly be taken to mean order, which is opposite of prohibition, but it will be a far-fetched interpretation.

This word is qualified with the phrase, *from among you.* Obviously it is an adverbial phrase of place. That is, the *ulu 'l-amr* will be raised from among you. It is similar to the words of Allāh, *He it is who raised among the Meccans a Messenger from among themselves* (62:2); or the prayer of Ibrāhīm, *Our Lord! and raise up in them a Messenger from among themselves* (2:129); or the divine words, *if there come to you messengers from among you, relating to you My communications ...* (7:35). This explanation leaves no room for the mistaken thought (expressed by someone) that ''from among you'' indicates that those vested with authority would be normal people like us, as they would be one of us, i.e., mere believers without having the distinction of divine *'iṣmah* (protection from sins and errors).

Ulu 'l-amr, being a plural noun, shows that there must be a number of those vested with authority, and it is correct without any doubt. But obviously it is possible for them to come one after another, and the believers would be required to obey the one who manages their affairs at a given time. Thus all of them taken together will be collectively entitled to the believers' obedience, as we say, 'Pray your compulsory prayers and obey your superiors and elders.'

Strangely enough, ar-Rāzī has objected to this idea, saying that ''it would mean using a plural for singular and that is contrary to a word's apparant usage.'' It seems he had forgotten that such usage is very common in literature, and the Qur'ān itself is full of such verses. For example, *So do not yield to the rejecters* (68:8); *So do not follow the unbelievers* (25:52), *surely we obeyed our leaders and our great men* (33:67); *and do not obey the bidding of the extravagant ones* (26:151); *Maintain the prayers* (2:238); *and make yourself gentle to the believers* (15:88) and various other verses containing positive and negative statements, and having declarative as well as exclamatory sense.

It would be against the apparent meaning of a wcrd if a plural was used for only a single individual; but it is not against apparent meaning if

it is used for a group of individuals, in a way that it turns into a series of numerous orders. For example, we say, 'Honour the scholars of your town'; meaning: Honour this scholar, and honour that scholar, and so on.

Another suggestion: *Ulu 'l-amr,* who are entitled to unconditional obedience, may be a group — and may thus be referred to with plural sense. It may be an association of many persons each individual counted as a possessor of authority, inasmuch as he has influence over people and his words are obeyed. For example, army commanders, scholars rulers and community elders. The author of *al-Manār* has suggested that this refers to *ahlu 'l-ḥalli wa 'l-'aqd* (اَهْلُ الْحَلِّ وَ الْعَقْدِ = *lit.* those who tie and untie; i.e., people having influence and authority), who are trusted by the *ummah;* including scholars, military commanders, leaders in fields of commerce, industry and agriculture, as well as trade-unionists, political leaders, and chief editors of influential newspapers. This is what we mean when we say that *ulu 'l-amr* means people of influence and authority. It is a collective body of the leaders of the *ummah.*

COMMENT: The problem is that the complete verse cannot be explained in the light of this suggestion.

As you have seen, the verse proves the sinlessness of the *ulu 'l-amr;* and even those who support the above suggestion, have to admit that the verse confirms their sinlessness.

The question arises: Who among this body of influential persons is sinless? Is each of its members sinless, so that the collective body could be called sinless? Because a group is but the sum total of the individuals. But it is evident that there never was in this *ummah,* even for a single day, a group of influential people who had authority to jointly manage the Muslim's affairs and whose every member was sinless and free from error. Obviously, it is impossible for Allāh to order us to obey a group which had never existed in reality.

Or does it mean that sinlessness, a real attribute, exists in that collective body as an adjective exists in its qualified noun? Although each individual member may commit sins, and in common with all other human beings can indulge in polytheism and disobedience, and although the opinion he forms may be erroneous or may lead to sin and straying, but when the said body collectively reaches at a decision it remains safe from mistakes and errors — because the collective body is sinless. But this too is impossible. How can a real attribute, that is, sinlessness, exist

in an abstract idea, i.e., the collective body? A real attribute cannot stand in a mentally posited idea.

Or, does it mean that sinlessness of this body is attributable neither to its individual members nor to the collective body? That it only signifies that Allāh protects this body in a way it does not order any sin, nor does it arrive at a mistaken decision. Its case is not different from a *mutawātir* (اَلْمُتَوَاتِرُ) [1] information which is protected from falsity, although none of its narrators or informants is sinless, nor is this, freedom from falsity attributed to the chain of narrators when looked at as a composite group. All that it means is that a habit has been formed which prevents falsehood from seeping in that information. In other words, Allāh protects a *mutawātir* information from infiltration of falsehood. In the same way, opinion of *ulu 'l-amr* is protected from mistakes and errors, although neither the collective body nor its individual members are free from sin and mistake. Nor do they have any special quality or attribute. It is nevertheless safe from falsehood and error, like a *mutawātir* tradition. This is what sinlessness of *ulu 'l-amr* means. The verse only shows that their opinion is never confused; it is always right and in conformity with the Qur'ān and the *sunnah.* It is a special divine providence for this *ummah;* and it has been narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: ''My *ummah* will not unite on error.''

COMMENT: As for this tradition, it is totally irrelevant to this subject. Even if it is accepted as correct, it only says that the *ummah* will not unite on error. It does not say that people of influence and authority from among the *ummah* would not join hands on error. *Ummah* has its own meaning, and *ahlu 'l-ḥalli wa 'l-'aqd* has another; there is no evidence that the former means the latter. Moreover the tradition does not say that whatever they unitedly decided would be free from error; it rather says that they would not be united on error — and the two propositions are not the same.

The tradition accordingly would mean as follows: Never will the entire *ummah* unite on error concerning any matter; there will always be among them those who would be on right guidance — either all or some

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[1] *al-Mutawātir:* A tradition narrated in every stage by so many narrators as to make their collusion for a lie impossible. (*tr.*).

of them, at least the sinless one. It will correspond with the verses and traditions showing that Islam; the religion of truth, would never disappear from the earth, would continue upto the Day of Resurrection. Allāh says: *... therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have* (already) *entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it* (6:89); *And He made it a word to continue in his posterity* (43:28); *Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian* (15:9); *Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One* (41:42). There are many verses having the same connotation.

Also this is not a speciality of the *ummah* of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), because the correct traditions prove otherwise. Look at the traditions narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) through various chains of narrators which describe the division of the Jews into seventy-one sects, of the Christians into seventy-two and of the Muslims into seventy-three sects, all of which would go to hell — except one. We have quoted it in the ‘‘Traditions’’ under the verse, *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together ...* (3:103).

In short, there is no need to further discuss this tradition, because, even if its chain of narrators be free from defects, it has no relevance to the subject under discussion. We should look at the meaning of sinlessness as applied to the influential people of authority from this *ummah,* if it is they who are referred to as ‘‘those vested with authority from among you’’.

What is the genesis of *‘iṣmah* (sinlessness) of the influential people of authority among the Muslims? What makes their opinion free from error? This body of influential people which manages the public affairs is not something unique for the Muslim *ummah.* There are found in every big and small nation, and even in the tribes and clans, a number of people who have prestige and influence in their society; and who exercise power and have authority over public affairs. Look into the histories of the ancient people as well as the present nations; you will find countless instances where the people of influence and power unanimously agreed on a course of action about some very important matter and their plan was carried out. Later events sometimes showed the decision was correct; at other times it proved wrong. There is, of course, greater chance of mistake in individual decision than in a collective one; yet there is no

guarantee that a decision jointly arrived at after thorough debate and discussion will never be wrong. History and our own experience provide ample proof for it.

Now, if collective decisions of influential and powerful leaders of Muslim *ummah* are always free from mistakes and errors, we will have to find for it a cause other than the normal ones; it will have to be something supra-natural and miraculous. If so, then it would be a manifest miracle reserved for this *ummah,* which would strengthen their power, defend their land and protect them from all types of mischief that could endanger their unity. In short, such a cause would be a divinely given miracle parallel to the Glorious Qur'ān, and it would live as long as the Qur'ān lives; it would have the same relation to the practical life of the *ummah* as the Qur'ān has to its intellectual one. In that case, it was necessary for the Qur'ān to describe its boundary and area; Allāh would have mentioned it as one of His special graces for this *ummah,* as He has done with reference to the Qur'ān and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). Also, He should have explained to this group its collective responsibilities as He has done in connection with His Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Likewise, the Prophet should have given detailed instructions to his *ummah* concerning this extra-ordinary group, and more particularly to his companions; after all, they were the people who bacame *ahlu 'l-ḥalli wa 'l-'aqd* after him and took the control of the *ummah* in their hands. The Prophet should have explained about this band which is supposed to be vested with authority what was its reality? What was its boundary? How wide was the area of its jurisdiction? Would there be a single body to rule over the whole Muslim *ummah* in all public affairs? Or would there be separate bodies of *ulu 'l-amr* in different Muslim societies to rule over their lives, honour and properties?

Also, it was incumbent on the Muslims — and especially the companions — to pay more attention to it. They should have asked questions and gone into its details. They had asked about things which had no importance compared to this basic matter; they had asked about crescent, the things to be spent and war booty, as Allāh has mentioned: *They ask you about crescents* [2:189]; *They ask you as to what they should spend* [2:215]; *They ask you about spoils of war* [8:1].

So why did they never ask about it? Or was it that they had asked but it was manipulated by people and hidden from us? But this meaning was

not against the desire of the majority of the *ummah* (which follows the same system) so that we could think that they neglected and discarded it until it was completely forgotten!

Also it should inevitably have been quoted during the disputes and strifes which had repeatedly erupted after the Prophet's death. What happened to this 'reality' that it was never quoted or referred to in their argumentations and polemics, while the narrators have transmitted all their arguments word by word? Why is it not found in any speech or letter? Why was it not known to the early exegetes among the companions and their disciples until it was 'discovered' by a handful of later writers like ar-Rāzī and some who came after him?

Even ar-Rāzī has objected to this view after mentioning it. He says that it is against the composite consensus; the phrase, *ulu 'l-amr* has been explained in not more than four ways: The rightly-guided caliphs, commanders of expeditions, religious scholars and sinless Imāms. This fifth explanation goes against the above composite consensus. Then he has replied that this new explanation is in fact based on the third meaning [i.e., religious scholars]. In this way he has destroyed all that he himself had built. It is now clear that things were not like that at all; nobody ever thought it was a noble and unique divine gift to the clique of influential and powerful leaders of the Muslims, which would constitute a great miracle of Islam.

Or do they want to say that this freedom from error did not emanate from any supra-natural cause? Rather, Islam had generally trained its followers so nicely, basing its teachings on such balanced principles, that it was bound to produce this result — that the people of power and influence among this *ummah,* be-cause of this training, make no mistake in their collectively arrived at decisions and do not err in the opinions they form.

First of all, this supposition is wrong because it goes against the common sense. Perception of a whole is the sum total of the perception of its components. When each of them is liable to be wrong, the whole group cannot be safe from error and mistake.

Secondly, if the opinion of the group of influential persons is always correct and free from error, and if this extra-ordinary feature is based upon such invincible cause, then it should never fail in producing the desired result. Then what else was the cause of all this falsehood,

disturbance and mischief which has overfilled the Muslim world?

There were countless gatherings after the Prophet's death, in which influential and pwerful leaders of the Muslims collectively decided whatever they thought correct, and followed what in their opinion was the right path; but all this led them to nowhere; they went on blundering into far-reaching errors; their attempts to bring happiness to the Muslims increased only the *ummah's* misfortune and unhappiness. The society which was based on religion turned soon after the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) into an imperialism — oppressive and destructive. Let scholars make in-depth study of the disturbances and mischiefs that raised their head, since the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) departed from this world; and have a look at what followed. On every page of Islamic history they will find blood spilled, honours defiled, properties looted, religious laws ignored and divinely ordained punishments nullified. Let them look for its origin and discover its roots. Was there any effective cause other than the opinions formed and decisions taken by the powerful and influential leaders, which they had yoked the *ummah* with?

So this is the position of the most important pillar on which they want to build the structure of Islam! This is the effect of the 'opinion' of influential and powerful leaders who, they tell us, are referred to by the words, *ulu 'l-amr* (those vested with authority), and who, according to them, are free from error in their opinion!

Those who believe that *ulu 'l-amr* refers to the people of influence and power, have no escape from admitting that those people were not sinless, not free from mistakes and errors. That the *ulu 'l-amr,* like all other people could be right in some cases and wrong in the others. But inasmuch as theirs was a distinguished group, experienced in public affairs, the ratio of their mistakes was much smaller. Allāh has made their obedience compulsory. Although they could at times be wrong, but Allāh has granted indulgance to such mistakes, keeping in view the overwhelming good emanating from their management of affairs. If they issue an order or give a ruling which contravenes the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* and that order or ruling happens to be congruous with the good of the *ummah* — even if it reinterprets a religious law contrary to what was hitherto done, or changes it to bring it into line with the demands of time or inclinations of the *ummah* or conditions of the modem world — this new verdict will be followed, and religion will recognize it as good.

Why? Because religion aims only at society's happiness and advancement. This attitude is clearly seen in the way the Islamic governments behaved in the early days of Islam as well as later on. Whenever a law prevalent in the Prophet's days was changed or any system established by him discarded, the only reason given was that that law or system was in conflict with one or another right of the *ummah;* and that the good of the nation demanded that a new law should be enforced and a new system established which would satisfy people's aspirations for blessings of life. A scholar has openly written [1] that a caliph has full authority to act contrary to explicit religious laws if he thinks it to be in the best interest of the *ummah.*

Accordingly, the Muslim nation would not be any different from other civilized societies inasmuch as they all have an elected body which decides the laws of the society keeping in view the demands of the situation at a given time.

This opinion, as you see, is held by those who think that religion is a social system presented in the garb of religion. It is governed by the same factors which govern other human societies leading them on the path of evolution step by step. Islam was a high ideal which was perfectly suitable for those who lived during and near the days of the Prophet.

Islam, according to them, is only a link in the chain of human civilization — and the time has left it behind. One should not study it except in the way the archaeologists look at the artifacts from the earth.

We have nothing to discuss about the verse: *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you,* with the persons holding the above-mentioned view. That view is based on a theory which would adversely affect all fundamentals of religion and the whole system established by the Prophet's traditions, including the basic gnosis and belief, moral values and rules of jurisprudence. If we look in this light at all that was done by the companions in the days of the Prophet and during his last Illness; at the disputes and strifes they caused; at the changes they made in some laws and systems established by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); at the happenings in the days of Mu'āwiyah and the caliphs who followed him, the Umayyads, then the 'Abbāsids and then the later ones — and all things resemble one another — we shall arrive at

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[1] Aḥmad al-Amīn in *Fajru 'l-Islām.* (*Author's note*)

a stunning conclusion.

A most astonishing view has been expressed about this verse by a writer, who has opined, ‘‘The verse, *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you,* does not imply any of the things said by the exegetes — divided as they are among themselves:-

‘‘First, because the obligatoriness of *ulu 'l-amr's* obedience — whoever they might be — does not prove that they have any distinction or superiority over others. We are also obliged by religion to obey unjust oppressive rulers when there is no alternative, for the sake of warding off their evil, and those unjust rulers can never be superior to us in the sight of Allāh.

‘‘Second, because the order given in the verse is not unlike other religious commands which can be implemented only when its object is available. For example, it is obligatory to spend on poor, and forbidden to help oppressors; but it is not obligatory for us to create a poor or an oppressor in order that we could spend on him or resist from helping him, respectively.’’

COMMENT: The fallacy of these two ‘reasons’ is transparent. Add to it his supposition that *ulu 'l-amr* in the verse means rulers and kings, unsoundness of which has already been shown.

As for his first reason, he seems oblivious to the fact that the Qur'ān is full of verses forbidding obedience of the unjust, the oppressors and the unbelievers. It was impossible for Allāh to order us to obey them, after all that prohibition; and then to go a step further and join their obedience with His and the Messenger's obedience. If that obedience were allowed for the sake of one's safety, Allāh would have used words like ‘permission’, etc., as He has done in one place: *except when you guard yourself against them for fear of them* (3:28). Not that He should clearly make their obedience compulsory, which would lead to all types of horrible results.

As for the second reason, it is based on the same assumption as the first one. However, if it is supposed that their obeidence was made obligatory because they had a special status in religion, then they would be sinless, as explained earlier. And it is impossible for Allāh to oblige us to obey someone who did not exist or who was rarely found — and this too in a verse which contained the most fundamental aspect of religious

good, a factor without which the equilibrium of Islamic society could not be maintained. You have seen that the *ummah* needs *ulu 'l-amr* for the same reason it needs the Messenger for, that is, for guarding and managing the affairs of the *urnmah.* We had talked on it when discussing about the decisive and ambiguous verses [1]. Now we return to our original topic.

It is now clear that it would be meaningless to interpret the phrase: *those vested with authority from among you,* as 'the people having influence and power' (whatever meaning we give to this latter phrase). The only meaning now possible is: Those individuals from among the *ummah* who are sinless, free from error and mistake in their words and deeds, whose obedience has been made obligatory. The only way to recognize them is through clear divine affirmation, either in His own words or through His Prophet. This explanation corresponds with what has been narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that it is they.

As for the claim that *ulu 'l-amr* refers to the rightly guided caliphs, commanders of expeditions or religious scholars whose opinions and words are followed, it is rebuted on two counts:

First: The verse proves their sinlessness, and undoubtedly, none of these three groups was or is sinless — except what a group of Muslims believes about the right of 'Alī (a.s.)

Second: All these interpretations are just claims without any evidence.

Objections have been raised against the explanation that the phrase refers to the sinless Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.):

First Objection: In case this meaning were correct, it was necessary for Allāh and the Messenger to clearly identify them [to the *ummah*]; and if it were done, no two persons would have disputed about them after the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).

Reply: It is clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* like the verses of Guardianship, Purity and others; and the traditions like that of the Ark (The parable of my *Ahlu 'l-bayt* is like the parable of Noah's Ark; whoever boarded it was saved, and whoever stayed away from it was drowned); and that of the Two Precious Things (Surely I am leaving among you two precious [or weighty] things, the Book of Allāh and my

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[1] Vide *al-Mīzān* (Eng. transl.), vol.5, pp.46 — 129 (*tr.*).

offspring who are my *Ahlu 'l-bayt;* as long as you would hold fast to both of them you would never go astray after me.). These have been quoted in the discourse on ''Decisive and Ambiguous Verses'' in the third [Ar.] volume [Eng. vol.5, pp.46 — 93]. There are also traditions about the *ulu 'l-amr,* narrated through Shī'ī and Sunnī chains, some of which will be given under coming ''Traditions''.

Second Objection: Their obedience is conditional to their identification, because an order to obey them without recognizing them would be a command to do the impossible. As their obedience is conditional, this verse cannot apply to them because it is unconditional.

Reply: This objection bounces back to the objector. Every obedience [even of the people of influence and power] is conditional to their recognition. The only difference is that we may recognize the people of influence and power by ourselves without referring it to Allāh and His Messenger, while a sinless Imām can be identified only through an introducer. However the condition of recognition is equally present in both cases; so both should be contrary to the verse.

The fact is that although identification is counted as a condition, it is not like other conditions. It only means that when one is obliged to do something, he has to recognize the object of obligation and its other concomitants; but the obligation does not depend on it. If recognition were like other basic conditions which affect the obligation itself, like 'ability' for *ḥajj* or existence of water for *wuḍū',* then nobody would be obliged to do anything at all.

Third Objection: We are unable, these days, to reach a sinless Imām and learn knowledge and religion from him. Therefore, he cannot be the *ulu 'l-amr* whose obedience is obligatory for the *ummah,* because there is no way to have any contact with him.

Reply: This problem is created by the *ummah* itself, not by Allāh or the Messenger. The *ummah* opted for wrong ways and was untrue to itself. Thus the responsibility and obligation to obedience stays unchanged. Suppose a nation killed its prophet. Can they claim that now they were unable to obey him because he was no more? Morever, the objection may be directed to the objector himself, because nowadays there is not a single *ummah* in Islam in which the people of influence and power from among themselves could enforce what they would decide for it.

Fourth Objection: Allāh says, *then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger.* If *ulu 'l-amr* means a sinless Imām, it was necessary to say, 'refer it to the Imām'.

Reply: Its reply has already been given in the Commentary; and it shows that it actually means referring to the Imām.

Fifth Objection: The believers in a sinless Imām say that his obedience rescues the *ummah* from darkness of strife and evil of disagreement. But evidently the verse ordains a law related to quarrel — in spite of the existence of Imām and obedience of the *ummah.* It points to disagreement among the *ulu 'l-amr* themselves in reaching at a dicision about some event or occurance. But according to those who believe so, it is not possible to quarrel or dispute in presence of a sinless Imām, because in their views he is like the Messenger (s.a.w.a.). Accordingly, tnis sentence would be without any purpose or benefit.

Reply: Its reply too is clear from the preceding Commentary. The quarrel mentioned in the verse refers to the believers' disagreement concerning rules of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* not concerning executive orders issued by the Imām in various events and happenings. It was mentioned earlier that no one has any right to legislate a law other than Allāh and His Messenger. If the quarreling parties are capable of inferring its law from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* they have the right to do so, or they could ask the Imām about it, because he is free from error in his opinion. But if they are unable to infer it, then the only way is to ask the Imām. It is just like the days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) when his contemporaries had the option of inferring the law from the Qur'ān (if they could) or asking the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) about it; but in case they could not infer it, the only remedy was to ask him (s.a.w.a.).

As the verse shows, the *ulu 'l-amr* are just like the Messenger in obligatoriness of their obedience. As for the believers' quarrel, the verse describes the procedure to be adopted, and it makes no difference whether the Messenger be present (as the following verses show) or absent (as the unrestrictedness of the verse proves). The order to refer the matter to Allāh and the Messenger is, therefore, confined to the dispute among the believers themselves, as is shown by the word *if you quarrel;* it should be noted that Allāh has not said, if those vested with authority quarrel; nor has He said, if they quarrel. The matter will be referred, in

the presence of the Messenger, by asking him the relevant law or inferring it from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* (for those who have the ability to do so); and in his absence, the question is to be asked of the Imām, or its reply inferred as discribed above. Obviously, the sentence, *then if you quarrel about any thing ...*, is not without purpose or benefit, as the objector had claimed.

All this proves that the word, *ulu 'l-amr,* in this verse refers to some men from among the *ummah,* each of whom is similar to the Messenger in two aspects: He too is free from sin and mistake, and his obedience too is obligatory and compulsory. However, we do not say that the phrase, *ulu 'l-amr,* does not have a wider connotation according to language, or that it may not be used in a more general way if one wants to. But meaning of a word is one thing, and applying it to appropriate objects is another. For example, meaning of messenger is general, and it is used in the same meaning in this verse; yet the intended personality is of the Messenger of Allāh, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).

QUR'ĀN: *then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger ...:* It branches out from the restriction understood from the context. The proceding sentence, *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger ...,* makes obedience of Allāh and the Messenger compulsory. This obedience is in the sphere of religion which ensures erasure of every possible dispute and guarantees fulfilment of every possible need. It leaves nothing uncared for, and no referral is required to any one other than Allāh and His Messenger. The sentence, thus, implies: obey Allāh and do not obey *ṭāghūt.* This is the implied restriction which we have mentioned above.

The speech is addressed to the believers. It shows that the 'quarrel' refers to their dispute among themselves, and not to any putative quarrel between them and the *ulu 'l-amr,* nor to any supposed dispute among the *ulu 'l-amr* themselves. It is because the former, i.e., quarrel among the believers and the *ulu 'l-amr,* goes against the obligation of their obedience, and the latter, i.e., dispute among the *ulu 'l-amr* themselves, does not conform with obligatoriness of their obedience [which shows that they are always right] because in dispute one party is surely wrong. Moreover, this idea is not in accord with the verse, as it is addressed to the believers; Allāh says: ''then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it ...''.

The word, ‘thing’, is general and could possibly include all decisions and orders given by Allāh, His Messenger and *ulu ’l-amr;* yet the next words, ‘‘refer it to Allāh and the Messenger’’, show that the verse speaks about quarrel in something outside the direct responsibility of the *ulu ’l-amr.* They have full authority and control over executive matters which come within the area of their *wilāyah* (اَلْوِلاَيَةُ = guardianship; mastership), like their order to join an expedition, to fight or to make peace, and so on. The order to refer a matter to Allāh and the Messenger does not cover such things, because people are obliged to obey the *ulu ’l-amr* in these things. This sentence, therefore, is confined to religious laws only; no one, other than Allāh and the Messenger, has any authority to issue or abrogate a law. The verse somewhat explicitly shows that no one has any right to manipulate any religious law explained by Allāh and His Messenger, and *ulu ’l-amr* and others all are equal in this respect.

The proviso, *if you believe in Allāh and the last day,* puts utmost emphasis to this order, and indicates that its contravention emanates from defect in belief. The order has a direct connection with faith; its contravention would show that although the person concerned pretended to believe in Allāh and His Messenger, disbelief was hidden in his heart; and this is hypocrisy, as the following verses prove.

This is better and very good in the end. The indicative, ‘this’, points either to referring the matter in dispute or to obeying Allāh, His Messenger and those vested with authority. ‘‘*at-Ta’wīl’’* (اَلتَّأْوِيْلُ = translated here as ‘‘in the end’’) refers to the underlying good on which the order is based and which is realized when the order is carried out. Its meaning has been explained in the third volume [1], under the verse, *seeking to give it* (their own) *interpretation, but none knows its interpretation except Allāh* (3:7).

QUR’ĀN: *Have you not observed those who think that they believe in what has been revealed to you ...: ‘‘az-Za‘m’’* (اَلزَّعْمُ) means to think, to claim, no matter it conforms with reality or not. It is different from *‘‘al-‘ilm’’* (اَلْعِلْمُ = to know) which is used for a knowledge that conforms with fact. As *az-za‘m* is generally used for thoughts and claims not conforming with facts, people often think that this non-conformity is part

[1] *al-Mīzān,* (Eng. transl.), vol.5, pp.65 — 73 (*tr.*).

of its connotation; but it is not so. *''aṭ-Ṭāghūt''* (اَلطَّاغُوتُ) is a *maṣdar* in the meaning of *''aṭ-ṭughyān''* (اَلطُّغْيَانُ = to exceed proper bounds) on the paradigm of *''ar-rahbūt''* (اَلرَّهْبُوت), *''al-jabarūt''* (اَلْجَبَرُوتُ) and *''al-malakūt''* (اَلْمَلَكُوتُ); but generally it is used for active participle in exaggerated sense. The Arabs say: *Ṭaghā 'l-mā'* (طَغَي الْمَآءُ = Water overflowed the banks). Its use for man began as an extended metaphor; then it became common until it is now taken as its real meaning; it indicates his exceeding the proper limits laid down by reason or *sharī'ah. aṭ-Ṭāghūt* therefore means oppressor and tyrant, who rebels against, and discards the demands of divine worship showing hauteur against Allāh. That is why scholars say that *aṭ-ṭāghūt* refers to every one who is worshipped — other than Allāh.

The words, *what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you,* mean, what Allāh has revealed to His messengers. This expression was preferred to the phrase, 'they believe in you and in those before you', because the talk is about obligation of referring disputed matters to the Book of Allāh and its laws. It also indicates that the 'command' in the clause, *they were commanded to deny him,* refers to the order contained in divine books and revelations sent to the prophets, Muḥammad and the preceding ones, may Allāh bless him, his progeny and them all.

The opening words, ''Have you not observed'', clarify a possible query: Why has the order been given to obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority [and to refer the disputes to them]? The reply: Have you not seen how they indulge in disobedience by resorting to the judgment of *ṭāghūt?* The question reflects pity; it is a matter of pity that they were doing so, while they claimed to believe in the Books revealed to you and the other prophets; these books were sent down to judge between the people in matters they disputed about. Allāh has clearly said in the verse, *Mankind was but one nation; so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good news and warners, and He sent down with them the book with truth, that it might judge between the people in that in which they differed ...* (2:213). Yet they resort to the judgment of *ṭāghūt* in their disputes, i.e., to the judgment of those who have exceeded the limit, rebelled against divine religion and crossed the boundary of truth. They do so in spite of their being clearly ordered in these books to

deny *ṭāghūt.* Was it not enough reason for forbidding them to resort to *ṭāghūt* for judgment, that it was tantamount to discarding the books of Allāh and abrogating His laws?

The sentence at the end, *and the Satan desires to lead them astray into a far-reaching error,* shows that they did so coming under the Satan's influence and his misguidance, as he wanted to lead them into a far-reaching error.

QUR'ĀN: And when it is said to them: *''Come to what Allāh has ate, revealed and to the Messenger;''...: ''Ta'ālaw''* (تَعَالَوْا = come) is imperative of *at-ta'ālī* (اَلتَّعَالِي = to rise); *''ṣadda''* (صَدَّ = turned away). ''Come to what Allāh has revealed and to the Messenger'', means, come to the law of Allāh and to him who decides according to it.... *turning away from you with* (utter) *aversion:* The speech is addressed to the Messenger alone, although they were called not to him alone, but to him and the book together. The verse comments on those who claimed to believe in what was revealed by Allāh; they were not unbelievers that they could openly reject the Book of Allāh. Such people were in fact hypocrites, showing that they believed in what Allāh had revealed, but turning away openly from His Messenger.

It clearly proves that any attempt to differentiate between Allāh and His Messenger by accepting the order of Allāh and hesitating about the order of the Messenger is unmitigated hypocrisy.

QUR'ĀN: *But how will it be when misfortune befalls them on account of ...:* It is a warning that this turning away from the order of Allāh and His Messenger, and resorting to the judgment of someone else, i.e., *ṭāghūt,* is sure to bring misfortune in its wake, and its only cause will be this turning away from the order of Allāh and His Messenger, and that resort to the *ṭāghūt's* judgment. The words, *Then will they come to you swearing by Allāh: We did not desire* (anything) *but good and concord,* give prior information of their excuse that it was not with any bad intention that they had resorted to the *ṭāghūt's* judgment. The meaning thus will be as follows — and Allāh knows better: If they persisted in that behaviour, then how would they feel when its evil consequences overwhelmed them, and then they would rush to you swearing by the

name of Allāh that their only desire, in resorting to the judgment of other than the divine book and the Messenger, was to bring good and accord in society and removing the disagreement between the parties.

QUR'ĀN: *These are they of whom Allāh knows what is in their hearts; ...:* It is a rejection of their excuse. Allāh did not describe what was in their heart, nor did He say that their motive was bad, because the words, *turn aside from them and admonish them,* were enough to expose it.If their intention was not bad, it would have been true and good; and Allāh would not order His Messenger to turn aside from a person who spoke truth and described fact. The words, *and speak to them effectual words concerning themselves,* mean: Say to them such words as would reach their hearts and they would come to realize the evil of their activities; they should understand that it was hypocrisy which on coming in open was bound to bring Allāh's wrath and punishment to them.

QUR'ĀN: *And We did not send any Messenger but that he should be obeyed ...:* It is an all-encompassing refutation of these hypocrites' evil-doings described above: resorting to *ṭāghūt's* judgment, turning aside from the Messenger, swearing and offering excuse of having intention of good and concord. All this is, in one way or another, disobedience of the Messenger of Allāh, whether accompanied by any excuse or not. Allāh has made his obedience compulsory without any restriction or condition; He has sent him only to be obeyed by Allāh's permission. No one should imagine that it was only Allāh's obedience that was required, while the Messenger was merely one of the human beings, who was obeyed only for people's good; and if such a result could be achieved without his obedience then there was no harm in going ahead independently, leaving the Messenger aside; otherwise it would mean associating him with Allāh, and worshing him. This attitude was reflected, every now and then, in their talk with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), when he took a decision about some important matter, and someone would ask him: Is it by Allāh's order or by yours?

Therefore, Allāh has made it clear that the obligation to obey the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is all-encompassing and unconditional; it is nothing but Allāh's obedience because it is by His permission. The verse in effect says what is declared in the verse 80 of this same chapter: *whoever obeys*

the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh.

Then Allāh says that if they had returned to Allāh and His Messenger, repenting for the sin of disobeying the Messenger and turning aside from him, it would have been better than their swearing in the name of Allāh and offering lame and useless excuses which could not please the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), as Allāh would inform him of the reality behind that facade. This is the import of the second half of the verse: *and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allāh and the Messenger had* (also) *asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allāh Oft-returning* (to mercy), *Merciful.*

QUR'AN: *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement ...: ''ash-Shajr''* and *''ash-shajūr''* (اَلشَّجُورُ،اَلشَّجْرُ = to mingle, to jumble). From it are derived *''at-tashājur''* and *''al-mushājarah''* (اَلتَّشَاجُر،اَلْمُشَاجَرَة = to quarrel, to dispute), as if the claim and counter-claims are mixed up and jumbled together; the same is the root of *ash-shajar* (اَلشَّجَرُ = tree) because its branches look jumbled and mixed together; *''al-ḥaraj''* (اَلْحَرَجُ = straitness, tightness).

At first glance it appears that it is a rebuttal of the hypocrites' thinking that they believed in the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) even while resorting to the Satan's judgment. It seems to mean: This claim is not correct; they will not be counted as believers until they come to you for judgment and then do not find any straitness in their hearts when you gave your judgment. But the generality of the clause, *until they make you a judge ... total submission,* and that of the next verse, *And if We had prescribed for them ... except a few of them,* supports the view that this admonition is not restricted to the hypocrites; it covers others too inasmuch as they apparently think that mere acceptance of what Allāh has revealed including gnosis and commands constitutes true belief in Allāh, His Messenger and all that the Messenger has brought. But it is not so. True belief means total submission from the depth of one's heart as well as in appearance. How is it possible for true believers not to submit to the Prophet's order in appearance (turning aside from him and going against him) or in their inner self by feeling straitness in their hearts when that judgment goes against their wishes. Allāh has said to His Messenger, ... *that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has*

taught you (4:105). Now, if any one feels annoyed with the Prophet's judgment, he is in fact annoyed with Allāh's judgment, because it is Allāh who has made his obedience compulsory and given him authority to enforce his decisions.

If they surrendered to the Messenger's order and judgment without finding any straitness in their hearts on that account, they would have in fact surrendered to Allāh's order and judgment, whether it be a legislative one or creative. It is one of the stages of faith, on reaching which a believer attains to many superior virtues (the most prominent being submission to Allāh's order), and becomes free from many bad traits like finding staitness in heart and objecting to divine order by tongue or heart. The 'submission' required in the verse is general and comprehensive.

It is now clear that, although the wording of the verse, *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe ... with total submission,* apparently makes it restricted to the Prophet's judgment only (because it refers to their resorting to the judgment of someone else even when they were obliged to refer every dispute to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), yet its import is general and covers orders of Allāh and His Messenger both, and in matters of legislation as well as creation, as described above. Not only that. It encompasses all judgments he delivered, all systems he established and all actions he performed, because the order is general; and it is not possible for the one who truly believes in Allāh to reject, be annoyed or feel disturbed on account of a judgment, order or system that in any way emanates from Allāh or His Messenger. Otherwise, it would be, to a certain degree, associating others with Allāh. Allāh says: *And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating others* (with Him), (12:106).

QUR'ĀN: *And if We had prescribed for them ... except a few of them:* It was described under the verse, *but Allāh has cursed them on account of their unbelief, so they shall not believe but a few* (4:46), that this style indicates that the statement is applicable to the collective body of people, i.e., to the society as a whole, and that the exception only serves to remove any possible misunderstanding that it covers each and every member without sparing a single person. The exception, therefore, is rather separated than attached, or it falls between the attached and the

separated exceptions inasmuch as it has two sides.

Therefore, the sentence, ‘‘they would not have done it except a few of them’’, describes the condition of the collective body that as a society they do not obey the orders which seem unpalatable to them and which affect the things to which their hearts are firmly attached like their lives and homes; and the exception of the few has been added to remove a possible misunderstanding.

The meaning: If We had prescribed for them and ordered them to kill themselves or go forth leaving their homes and places of residence which they were emotionally attached to, they would not have done it, would have disobeyed Us. Nevertheless, as the above statement could have given an impression that there was not among them even a single true believer who would submit to the command of Allāh, this misunderstanding was removed by excepting a few of them; although the preceding statement in fact had not included them in the first place, because it had commented on the society *per se,* and had not looked at individual members except as components of that society.

It shows that the verse speaks about killing of the whole by whole group, and their collective dispersion from their villages and towns. It does not refer to individuals — that every one should kill himself or go out from his personal home. It is the same style as used in the verse, *therefore turn to your Creator* (penitently), *and kill your people* [lit.: yourselves] (2:54), because this verse too is addressed to the group, not to individuals.

QUR’ĀN: *and if they had done what they were admonished,:* The word ‘prescribed’ used at the beginning, has been changed here to ‘admonished’. It is an indication that these directives given as commands and orders are in fact pointers leading to what contains their good and bliss. They are in their essence admonitions and sympathetic guidance ordained for their good.

QUR’ĀN: *it would have certainly been better for them and most efficacious in strengthening* (them);: That is, in all matters that concerns them in this world and the next. It is because the good of the next world is inseparable from this world’s good; rather the former follows the latter. ‘‘Most efficacious in strengthening’’, i.e., strengthening their hearts and

souls with true faith, as the speech revolves around faith. Allāh has said: *Allāh strengthens those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter* (14:27).

QUR'ĀN: *And then We would certainly have given them from Ourselves a great reward;:* That is, when they got strengthened with firm faith. The vagueness of ''a great reward'' has the same implication as the unrestrictedness of ''better for them''.

QUR'ĀN: *And We would certainly have guided them in the straight path.:* The meaning of the straight path was explained in the first volume under the verse, *Guide us to the straight path* (1:6).

QUR'ĀN: *And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the witnesses and the good ones; and excellent are these as companion:* Obedience of Allāh and the Messenger has been joined in this good news although the preceding verses had spoken specifically about the Messenger's obedience and submission to his command and judgment; it is because of some intervening verses referring to Allāh, e.g., *And if We had prescribed for them ...* The obligation therefore is of obeying Allāh and obeying His Messenger; as was clearly laid down in the beginning of this topic: *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger ...*

The words, ''these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours'', show that the obedient ones would join the company of the prophets and the other favoured ones, not that they would become one of them. Those bestowed with favours are the people of ''the straight path''; and this phrase has not been attributed in the Qur'ān to any one other than Allāh, with exception of this group, as the Qur'ān says: *Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours* (1:6 — 7). In short, the obedient ones will enjoy the company of the prophets, truthful ones, etc., without becoming themselves prophet, etc. Also, the end clause, ''and excellent are these as companion'', points to this direction. It was explained earlier that the favour specifically refers to mastership and guardianship.

Coming to these four groups, the prophets are recipients of revelation

who are given news of the unseen. We know nothing more about them except what is seen of their achievements in society. Also it has earlier been described that *''ash-shuhadā' ''* (اَلشُّهَدَآءُ), when used in the Qur'ān, means witnesses of people's actions, not martyrs in the battle-field; and that the good ones are those who deserve favours from Allāh.

As for the truthful ones, the word *''aṣ-ṣiddīq''* (اَلصِّدِّيْقُ) is the exaggerative form of *aṣ-ṣidq* (اَلصِّدْقُ = truth). Truth occurs in speech as well as in acts. Truth in action means its conformity with the words, because it shows firm belief. When one is true in one's words, it gives a true picture of his inner belief without any contradiction; a word is true when it conforms with reality. As the speech itself is an action, the one who is truthful in action would not say except what he knows to be true and real. His words therefore are doubly true — the narration and the matter narrated both are true

The truthful one, who never lies, is the one who does not do except what he knows to be right, without following his desires, and does not say except what he knows to be truth, and does not think except that which is true; he sees the reality of the things, says truth and does right.

In this way the ranks are fixed: The prophets (and they are the leaders and chiefs); then the truthful ones (and they are witnesses of realities and people's deeds); then the witnesses (who are witnesses of deeds); and lastly the good ones (who are qualified to receive divine favours).

The last word, *''rafīqā''* (رَفِيْقًا = companion) is accusative of specification; and means: as companion, in the manner of a companion. That is why it has been used in singular form. Some others have said that it is a circumstantial clause and means: each of these is excellent as companion. In that case, the style is similar to that found in the verse, ... *then We bring you forth as baby* ... (22:5).

QUR'ĀN: *This is grace from Allāh, and sufficient is Allāh as the Knower:* The sentence begins with the indicative pronoun, *dhālika* (ذٰلِكَ = *lit.:* that), and that pronoun is made for distant objects; then the predicate *al-faḍl* (اَلْفَضْلُ = grace) is strengthened with the definite article *al* (اَلْ).All these literary devices signify the magnificence of the grace, as though it is the grace in its totality. The verse ends with the mention of divine knowledge, because the preceding speech describes the ranks of faith and belief, which cannot be identified except by the divine

knowledge.

It should be noted here that these noble verses have changed several times the style from first or second person to the third and vice versa without affecting the flow of speech or weakening their interlinked arrangement. The series begins addressing the believers in second person [*O you who believe*!], then talks of them in third person (*And if We had prescribed for them).* Likewise, Allāh has mentioned Himself in the first verse in third person (*obey Allāh*), then turns to first person plural (*And We did not send ...*), then at once to the third person in the same verse (*by permission of Allāh*); then again to the first person plural (*And if We had prescribed*), and finally to third person (*And whoever obeys Allāh*).

Likewise, the Messenger of Allāh has been described in the first verse in third person (*and obey the Messenger*), then addressed in the second person (*come to you*) and then turns to third person (*and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them*), then it turns again to second person (*by your Lord!*), it then turns third time to the third person (*And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger*), and finally uses the demonstrative pronoun, *ulā'ika* (أُولَئِكَ = these) with second person pronoun *ka* (كَ = you). Altogether there are ten changes here, and the reasons are not difficult to understand for anyone who ponders on the context.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Bābawayh has narrated through his chain from Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Anṣārī that he said: ‘‘When Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, sent to His Prophet, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), the verse, *O you who believe! obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you,* I said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh! We know Allāh and His Messenger; but who are those vested with authority whose obedience Allāh has conjoined to your obedience?’ (The Prophet) said: ‘They are my caliphs, O Jābir! and the Imāms of the Muslims after me. The first of them is ‘Alī son of Abū Ṭālib, then al-Ḥasan, then al-Ḥusayn, then ‘Alī son of al-Ḥusayn, then Muḥammad son of ‘Alī who is mentioned as al-Bāqir in the Torah; you will surely meet him, O Jābir! when you see him convey my *salām* (greetings) to him. Then aṣ-Ṣādiq Ja‘far son of

Muḥammad; then Mūsā son of Ja‘far; then ‘Alī son of Mūsā; then Muḥammad son of ‘Alī; then ‘Alī son of Muḥammad; then al-Ḥasan son of ‘Alī; then Muḥammad (whose name and patronym will be the same as mine) son of al-Ḥasan son of ‘Alī, the Proof of Allāh on His earth and *Baqiyyatullāh* (بَقِيَّةُ اللهِ = the one kept safe by Allāh) among His servants; he is the one by whose hands Allāh, Sublime is His remembrance, will conquer the whole world from the east to the west; he it is who will remain hidden from his followers and friends for such a long period that no one will remain firm on the belief of his *imamah* except he whose heart has been tested by Allāh for faith.’ ’’

Jābir says: ‘‘I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Will his followers get any benefit from him during his occultation?’ (The Prophet, s.a.w.a.) said: ‘Certainly, by Him Who has sent me with prophethood! they will be guided by his light and benefit from his *wilāyah* (اَلوِلاَيَةُ = love, mastership) during his occultation as people benefit from the sun when it is hidden in cloud. O Jābir! this is part of the hidden secrets of Allāh and the treasured knowledge of Allāh. So keep it hidden except from the people who deserve to know.’ ’’ *(Tafsīr al-Burhān*)

The author says: an-Nu‘mānī has narrated through his chain from Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī from ‘Alī (a.s.) a tradition of the same meaning as above. Also ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm has narrated it through his chain from Sulaym from ‘Alī (a.s.). There are other traditions narrated through Shī‘ī and Sunnī chains, describing the *imāmah* of the above Imāms together with their names; which may be seen in *Yanābi‘u ’l-mawaddah,* and al-Bahrārī’s *Ghāyatu ’l-marām* and other books.

Jābir al-Ju‘fī has said: ‘‘I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the verse, *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you.* He said: ‘The Imāms.’ ’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: al-‘Ayyāshī has narrated in his *Tafsīr* another similar tradition through ‘Umar ibn Sa’īd from Abu ’l-Ḥasan (a.s.), in which the following reply is given: ‘‘ ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the Imāms after him.’’

Ibn Shahrāshūb narrates: ‘‘al-Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.)

about it and the Imām replied: ‘The Imāms from the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).’ ’’

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣadūq through Abū Baṣīr from al-Bāqir (a.s.) in which it is said: ‘‘The Imāms from the children of ‘Alī and Fāṭimah until the Hour (of resurrection) comes.’’

Abū Masrūq has narrated a tradition from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.); he says: ‘‘I told him: ‘We have discussion with theologians and we argue against them with the words of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you;* but they say: ‘‘It was revealed about the believers.’’ And we argue against them with the words of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, *Say: I do not ask of you any recompense for it except the love for near relatives;* and they say: ‘‘It was revealed about the near relatives of the believers.’’ Thus I did not leave anything like this which came to my mind but I mentioned it (to him).’ Thereupon he said to me: ‘In that case, call them to *al-mubāhalah* (اَلْمُبَاهَلَةْ = imprecation).’ I said: ‘And how should I do it?’ He said: ‘Keep yourself good and happy for three days; keep fast; take bath; and go forth you and he to the mountains; then entwine your right hand’s fingers in his fingers; then show justice to him and begin with yourself and say: ‘‘O Allāh, the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the seven earths, the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Beneficent, the Merciful! If Abū Masrūq has rejected truth and claimed wrong, then send on him reckoning from the heaven and a painful chastisement.’’ Then turn the same imprecation on him and say: ‘‘And if he (i.e., your adversary) has rejected truth and claimed wrong, then send on him reckoning from the heaven and a painful chastisement.’’ ’

‘‘Then (the Imām, a.s.) said to me: ‘Thus it will not be long that you will see it (chastisement) in him.’ But, by Allāh, I did not find anyone who would answer to this call.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Ajlān has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said about this verse of obedience: ‘‘It is about ‘Alī and the Imāms; Allāh has put them in places of prophets except that they do not make anything lawful or unlawful.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: The exception in this tradition confirms what was written in the Commentary that according to this verse legislating a law was reserved for Allāh and His Messenger.

Burayd ibn Mu‘āwiyah has narrated that Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) recited: *‘‘Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you;* then if you fear a dispute about anything, refer it back to Allāh and the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you.’’ Then he said: ‘‘How can it be that He orders their obedience and then allows disputing with them? He (Allāh) has said it to the rebellious ones who were told, *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger.’’* (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: All that this tradition shows is that the Imām (a.s.) was explaining the verse and elaborating on it; as we have described in the Commentary. It does not mean that the Imām (a.s.) was giving a separate version of the verse, as might be misunderstood by the word, ‘recited’. A proof of what we have said may be found in the fact that different wordings have been used in other traditions [giving the same meaning, and even in the same tradition recorded in another book]. For example.

Ḥarīz has narrated from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘It was revealed, then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to Allāh and to the Messenger and to those vested with authority from you.’’ (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī). Also al-‘Ayyāshī has narrated from Burayd ibn Mu‘āwiyah from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) (and it is the same tradition which has been quoted above from *al-Kāfī*), and this narration says, *inter alia:* ‘‘Then (Allāh) said to the people, *‘O you who believe!’,* and He has gathered [in this address] all the believers upto the Day of Resurrection; *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you.* He has meant us particularly. Then if you fear a dispute about anything, refer it back to Allāh and the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you. It was revealed in this way. And how would He order them to obey those vested with authority and then allow them to quarrel with them? It was said to those who were ordered [to obey and] who were told: *Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you.’’* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

Abū Baṣīr has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘It (i.e., the verse of obedience) was revealed about ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.).’’ ‘‘I said to him: ‘People say to us, ‘‘What was to prevent Him from naming ‘Alī and his *Ahlu ’l-bayt* in His Book?’’ ’ Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said: ‘Tell them, ‘‘Verily Allāh revealed (the order of) prayer to His Messenger; but He did not name three (*rak‘ah*) or four, until it was the Messenger of Allāh who explained it; and He revealed (the order of) *ḥajj* and did not reveal, ‘circumambulate seven times’, until the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) explained it. [Likewise] Allāh revealed: *‘obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you’;* and it was revealed about ‘Alī and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (peace be on them); and he (the Messenger of Allāh, s.a.w.a.) said about ‘Alī: ‘Whoever’s master am I, ‘Alī is his master.’ Also the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘I admonish you concerning the Book of Allāh and my *Ahlu ’l-bayt;* verily I have asked Allāh not to let them be separated from each other until He brings them to the *ḥawḍ* (اَلْحَوْضُ = reservoir [of al-Kawthar]), and He has granted it to me.’ And he said: ‘Do not teach them because they are more knowledgeable than you; verily they shall never take you away from the gate of guidance and shall never let you enter the gate of misguidance.’ If the Messenger of Allāh had remained silent and not identified the people (of his *Ahlu ’l-bayt*), surely the progeny of ‘Abbās, and the progeny of ‘Aqīl and someone else’s progeny would have claimed (to be among them); but Allāh revealed in His Book: *Allāh only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! and to purify you a* (thorough) *purification* [33:33]; and ‘Alī and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and Fāṭimah (peace be on them) were the interpretation of this verse; so the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) took the hands of ‘Alī and Fāṭimah and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (blessings from Allāh be upon them) and entered them under the mantle in the house of Umm Salamah and said: ‘O Allāh! every prophet had had his precious things and his people; and these are my precious things and my people’ Umm Salamah said: ‘Am I not from your people?’ He said: ‘Verily you are (preceeding) to good but these are my precious things and people of my (house).’... (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: al-Kulaynī has narrated in *al-Kāfī,* through his chain of narrators from Abū Baṣīr from the same Imām (a.s.) a similar

tradition with minor differences in wordings.

Ibn Shahrāshūb has quoted from *at-Tafsīr* of Mujāhid that this verse [of obedience] was revealed about the Leader of the faithful [‘Alī, a.s.] when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) left him in Medina as his deputy. (‘Alī) said: ‘‘O Messenger of Allāh! Are you leaving me to look after the women and the children?’’ He [the Messenger of Allāh] said: ‘‘O Leader of the faithful! Are you not pleased that you should have the same position with me as Hārūn had with Mūsā, when (Mūsā) said to him: *‘Take my place among my people, and act well’?* Then Allāh said: *‘and those vested with authority from among you’.’’* (The Imām then) said: ‘‘ ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Allāh appointed him as the master of the *ummah’s* affairs after Muḥammad and when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) made him take his place at Medina. Thus Allāh ordered the servants to obey him (‘Alī) and not to go against him.’’ (*Tafsīr al-Burhān*).

Mujāhid has also narrated from Ibānah al-Falakī that it was revealed when Abū Buraydah complained against ‘Alī (a.s.) (*ibid.*)

A tradition has been quoted in *‘Abaqātu ’l-anwār* from *Yanābī‘u ’l-mawaddah* of ash-Shaykh Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Balkhī who quotes from *al Manāqib,* from Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī from ‘Alī (a.s.) which, *inter alia,* says: [‘Alī, a.s.] said, ‘‘The least by which a servant goes astray is that he does not know the Proof of Allāh, the Blessed, the Sublime, and His witness over His servants, whose obedience Allāh has ordered and whose love and obedience made obligatory.’’ Sulaym says, ‘‘I said, ‘O Leader of the faithful! describe them to me.’ He said, ‘(They are) those whom Allāh has joined with Himself and His Messenger, and said: *O you who believe! obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*.’ I said to him, ‘May Allāh make me your ransom! explain (it) to me.’ He said, ‘Those (about whom) the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had said in several places and his last sermon on the day when Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, took him to Himself: ‘‘Surely I am leaving among you two things, you shall never go astray after me if you hold fast to them: the Book of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, and my progeny who are my *Ahlu ’l-bayt;* because [Allāh,] the Kind, the Knower, has promised me that they shall never be separated (from each other) until they come to me at the Reservoir — like these two (saying this, the Prophet joined his index fingers together) and I do

not say ‘like these two’ (saying which he joined his index and middle fingers together); so hold fast to them both and don’t go ahead of them, otherwise you would go astray.’’ ’ ’’

The author says: Traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt,* giving similar meanings as above are very numerous. What we have presented here gives examples of all types of meanings described in traditions. Anyone wanting more details should consult collections of *aḥādīth.*

As for ancient exegetes, they are divided about the meaning of the phrase, *ulu ’l-amr.* Some say, it means the rightly guided caliphs; others say, commanders of expeditions; a third group says, the scholars. aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk has reportedly said that it refers to the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); but it boils down to the third interpretation, because reportedly he has said: ‘‘They are companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) as they were the callers (to Islam) and narrators of traditions.’, Obviously, this reasoning is based on their knowledge, and this interpretation would ultimately mean the scholars.

It should be noted that many things and various stories have been reported concerning the reason of revelation of this verse; but if one ponders on them one would be in no doubt that all of them are mere attempts by the narrators to apply the verse on one or the other view or situation. We therefore have not quoted any of them as it was of no value. You may look into *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* and *at-Tafsīr* of aṭ-Ṭabarī and other books like them for verification of this observation.

al-Barqī has narrated through his chain from Abu ’l-Jārūd that Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said about the verse, *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they ... submit with total submission:* ‘‘Submission is pleasure and satisfaction with His decree.’’ (*al-Maḥāsin*)

‘Abdullāh al-Kāhilī has said that Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ‘‘If a people worshipped Allāh alone who has no partner, and established prayer, and gave *zakāt,* and performed *ḥajj* of the House, and fasted in the month of Ramaḍān, and then said about a thing done by Allāh or by His Messenger (s.a.w.a.), ‘Why did he do this?’ Or, ‘If he had done it in another way [it would have been better]’ or felt [annoyance] in their hearts, they would become polytheists because of it.’’ Then he recited this verse, *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you*

a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total submission. Then Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ‘‘It is incumbent upon you to submit.’’ (*al-Kāfī*)

‘Abdullāh ibn Yaḥyā al-Kāhilī has narrated that he heard Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) saying: ‘‘By Allāh, if a people worshipped Allāh alone who has no partner, and established prayer, and gave *zakāt,* and performed *ḥajj* of the House, and fasted in the month of Ramaḍān, and then said about a thing done of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), ‘Why did he do this or that? or felt [annoyance] in their hearts, they would become polytheists because of it.’’ Then he recited, *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what* — Muḥammad and the progeny of Muḥammad — *have decided and submit with total submission.* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī).

The author says: There are other traditions similar to these two. The meaning given by the Imām (a.s.) extends the theme of the verse on two counts: First, that the verse covers all decisions and decrees, be they legislative or creative; Second, it makes no difference whether the decision or decree was issued by Allāh or by His Messenger.

It should be mentioned here that there are other traditions which apply the verse, *But no! by your Lord! they ... submit with total submission,* to the *wildyah* of ‘Alī (a.s.) or the *wilāyah* of the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.); they provide examples of applying a verse to one or the other of its prominent models. Certainly the verse is applicable to Allāh, His Messenger and the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt,* and it continues in them.

ash-Shaykh has narrated through his chain from ‘Alī (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘A man from the Helpers (*anṣār*) came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! I cannot bear separation from you; so much so that if I enter my home and remember you, I leave my property and come (here) for looking at you, in your love. Then I remembered that when the Day of Resurrection would come, you would be made to enter the Garden and raised to the highest level of *‘illiyyīn* (عِلِّيِّين = highest

place). Then how could I see you? O Messenger of Allāh!' Then the verse was revealed: *And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours from among the prophets, and the truthful, and the witnesses, and the good ones; and excellent are these as companion!* Thereupon the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) sent for the man and recited it to him and gave him the good news.'' (*al-Amālī,* ash-Shaykh)

The author says: This theme is also narrated through Sunnī chains in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* quoting from aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Ibn Marduwayh, Abū Nu'aym (in *Ḥilyatu 'l-awliyā'*) and aḍ-Ḍiyā' al-Maqdisī (in *Ṣifatu 'l jannah,* saying that this tradition was 'good'), all narrating from 'Ā'ishah; also quoting from aṭ-Ṭabarānī and Ibn Marduwayh both through ash-Sha'bī from Ibn 'Abbās; and through Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir from ash-Sha'bī; and through Ibn Jarīr from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr.

Ibn Shahrāshūb has narrated from Anas ibn Mālik from someone he had named from Abū Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās that he said about this verse: *''And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed favours from among the prophets* — i.e., Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) — *and the truthful* — i.e., 'Alī, and he was the first to verify — *and the witnesses* — i.e., 'Alī, Ja'far, Ḥamzah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, peace be on them.'' [1] (*Tafsīr al-Burhān*)

The author says: There are other traditions giving the same meaning.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ''Help us with piety, because whoever met Allāh with piety, would get happiness near Allāh, as Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger ...''* After reciting the verse, he said: ''So from us is the Prophet, and from us is the truthful, and from us are the witnesses and the good ones.'' (*al-Kāfī*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said: ''The believers are of two kinds: (One is) a

[1] This tradition obviously interprets the word *ash-shuhadā'* (اَلشُّهَدَآءُ) as martyrs, not witnesses. (*tr.*)

believer who fulfils the conditions Allāh had imposed on him; he will be with *the prophets, and the truthful, and the witnesses, and the good ones; and excellent are these as companions!* and he is among those who will intercede and will not need intercession (by others); and he is among those who are not inflicted with terror of this world, nor of the hereafter. (Another is) a believer who has made mistakes. He is like a green stalk, which inclines to whichever direction wind pushes it and then returns to its position. He is among those who are inflicted with terrors of this world and that of the hereafter, and he would be interceded for; and he is on good.'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ* says: ''*al-Khāmah* (اَلْخَامَة) is a green soft plant.'' The Imām (a.s.) in this *ḥadīth* points to what was described in the Commentary of the verse, *The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours* (1:7), that 'favour' means *al-wilāyah* (اَلْوِلاَيَة = love, mastership, friendship). This explanation thus corresponds with the verses, *Now surely the friends of Allāh, they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. Those who believed and were pious* (10:62 — 63). Terror of mishaps cannot reach the friends of Allāh who rely on none other than Allāh.

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يـا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوِ انفِرُوا
جَمِيعاً ـــ ٧١ . وَإِنَّ مِنكُمْ لَمَنْ لَيُبَطِّئَنَّ فَإِنْ أَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالَ قَدْ
أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيَّ إِذْ لَمْ أَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ شَهِيداً ـــ ٧٢ . وَلَئِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ
مِنَ اللهِ لَيَقُولَنَّ كَأَنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ يـا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ
مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزاً عَظِيماً ـــ ٧٣ . فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ فَيُقْتَـــلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ
فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْراً عَظِيماً ـــ ٧٤ . وَمَـا لَكُمْ لاَ تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ
وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا
أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيّاً وَاجْعَلْ
لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيراً ـــ ٧٥ . أَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيـلِ اللهِ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ
كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفاً ـــ ٧٦ .

O you who believe! take your precaution, then go forth in detachments or go forth in a body (71). *And surely among you is he who would certainly hang back! If then a misfortune befalls you he says: ''Surely Allāh conferred a benefit on me that I was not present with them''* (72). *And if grace from Allāh comes to you, he would certainly cry out, as if there had not been any*

friendship between you and him: ''Would that I had been with them, then I should have attained a mighty good fortune'' (73). *Therefore let those fight in the way of Allāh, who sell this world's life for the hereafter; and whoever fights in the way of Allāh, then be he victorious, We shall grant him a great reward* (74). *And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allāh and of the weak among the men and the women and the children,* (of) *those who say: ''Our Lord! take us out of this town, whose people are oppressors, and make for us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper''* (75). *Those who believe fight in the way of Allāh, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of the Satan. Fight therefore against the friends of the Satan; surely the strategy of the Satan is weak* (76).

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COMMENTARY

The preceding verse, as you may see, had prepared the ground for the central theme contained in these verses which stimulate and exhort the believers to fight in the way of Allāh. The believers spent their days under very perilous circumstances, when these verses were revealed, probably during the second spring of the Prophet's stay at Medina.[46] Arabs had risen against them from all around in order to extinguish the light of Allāh and demolish the slowly rising edifice of Islam. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was busy in fighting the Meccan idol-worshippers and Qurayshite friends, sending precautionary expeditions to

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[46] The *ḥadīth* of Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh al-Anṣārī about the verse of obedience (quoted in the Traditions above) clearly indicates that it was revealed well after the birth of al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) in *Sha'bān,* 4th year of *hijrah,* because it mentions al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (peace be on both) as if Jābir knew them and there was no need for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to tell him who they were.

Now, if these verses, exhorting to take precaution and to fight, were revealed in the second spring, i.e., second year of *hijrah,* it is very difficult to claim that the preceding verses had prepared the ground for these, or that both series were revealed together. (*tr.*)

various directions and raising structure of religion in the society. But that society was honeycombed with groups of hypocrites, and those internal enemies enjoyed great power and influence. On the day of Uḥud it was clearly seen that their number was not much less than half of the believers' number.[47] Those hypocrites used to upset the plans of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and waited for him to meet with some disaster. They hindered the believers from carrying out their duties, while some of the believers too were not free from spiritual disease, and who used to give various informations to their enemies. All around, Medina was ringed with Jewish tribes who deceived and misguided the believers. From old days, Arabs of Medina respected those Jews and accorded them honour. Taking its advantage, the Jews misled them with false statement and wrong advice, in order to weaken their will and nullify all their endeavours. On the other hand, they used to instigate the polytheists against the Muslims, and encourage the idol-worshippers in their struggle, telling them to remain firm in their denial and disbelief, and to harass and torture the believers who were still in Mecca.

The preceding verses aimed at nullifying the Jewish plots against the Muslims and to erase the effects of their malicious whisperings from the believers' hearts. The comment, in these verses, about the hypocrites aims at completing the believers' guidance and making them aware of the condition prevailing at that time, in order that they might have an insight into their actual position and be on guard against the hidden disease which had seeped into their society and infected a considerable population. It would also help in nullifying the conspiracies of their external enemies who had surrounded them; the light of religion would shine brightly illuminating the world, and Allāh is sure to complete His light even if polytheists and unbelievers disliked it.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! take your precaution, then go forth in detachments or go forth in a body: ''al-Ḥidhr"* (اَلْحِذْر = instrument used for precaution, e.g., arms and ammunitions); it is also said that it is a

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[47] It was mentioned in the traditions of the Battle of Uhud that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had left Medina for Uḥud with a thousand men, three hundred of whom returned with 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy (the leader of the hypocrites) and only seven hundered remained with the Prophet. (*Auth. 's note*)

maṣdar like *al-ḥadhar* (اَلْحَذَر = to be cautious). *''an-Nafar''* (اَلنَّفَر = to go forth, or proceed, towards intended destination); basically it means to be frightened; it is as though being frightened, one runs away from one place seeking refuge at the other. [The same word is used, with different prepositions, for both starting and finishing points.] *''ath-Thubāt''* (اَلثُّبَاتُ) is plural of *ath-thubbah* (اَلثُّبَّةُ) which means separate groups or bands; *thubātan* (ثُبَاتاً) in the verse, therefore, means group after group; one group departs, then the other starts separately, and so on. This meaning is supported by parallellism of the clause, ''go forth in detachments'', and, ''go forth in a body''.

The order to go forth is based on the order to ''take your precaution'', as the conjunctive *fa* (فَ = then) shows. Apparently it strengthens the view that 'precaution' refers to means of precaution. That is, it alludes to fully-fledged preparation for *jihād.* The meaning: Take your arms, make full preparation and go forth to your enemy either in separate detachments (for minor expeditions) or all together (for major battles).

Understandably, preparation and equipments would differ from one operation to another, depending on number and power of enemy. The alternatives of going forth in detachments or all togher are not meant to give option or choice to the fighters; rather it looks at the strength and number of enemies — if they are few in number, go in small detachment, but if they are numerous, then go all together.

The verse, specially in the context of the next one, *And surely among you is he who would certainly hang back,* is a warning to the believers not to let down their arms, not to slacken their efforts and not to show any laxity in the conduct of *jihād;* otherwise, their morale will go down, their zeal for raising the standard of truth will be inflicted by inertia, holding back from fighting the enemies of Allāh. In this way, they will lose the opportunity to cleanse the earth from uncleanness of disbelief and polytheism.

QUR'ĀN: *And surely among you is he who would certainly hang back!:* [The Arabic sentence is: *wa inna minkum la-man la-yubatt'ianna* = وَ اِنَّ مِنْكُمْ لَمَنْ لَيُبَطِّئَنَّ] It is said that the first *la* (لَ) is for beginning as it is attached to the subject of *inna* (اِنَّ); and the second one is for oath because it is attached to the predicate; it is a verbal clause, emphasized with *nūn* (ن) which is intensified with doubling sign. *''at-Tabṭiah''* and

''al-ibṭā' '' (اَلتَّبْطِئَة،اَلْاِبْطآءُ) both have the same meaning: to be tardy, to be late in a work.

The words, ''among you is he'', show that those who would hang back were from among the believers who have been addressed with, *O you who believe!* This view is supported also by a coming verse, *Have you not seen those to whom it was said: ''Withhold your hands'';* obviously these also were from among the believers, as the next words show, *but when fighting is prescribed for them, lo! a party of them fear men.* Then the next verse also points to it: *and if a benefit comes to them, they say: ''This is from Allāh''...* Likewise the words, *Therefore let those fight in the way of Allāh ...,* and the following verse, *And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allāh ...,* as well as the verse, *Those who believe fight in the way of Allāh ...,* prove it; all these verses aim at exhorting and urging the believers to fight, and the group of hangers back is certainly included among them, as the interlocking of the verses shows.

Apart from that, there is nothing in these verses to suggest that those tardy people were from among the hypocrites who had not believed except by tongue. Moreover, some of their words quoted in these verses show that to a certain extent there was faith and belief in their hearts; for example, *If then a misfortune befalls you he says: ''Surely Allāh conferred a benefit on me'' ...;* and, *''Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for us?''.*

Of course, some exegetes have written that the words, ''among you is he'', refers to hypocrites, and that they have been described as being 'among' the believers because they were generally counted among the believers' group. Or because they were from the same family tree, so they were from among the believers' clans or families. Or because they were joined with the believers in the laws of *sharī'ah*, e.g., their lives were protected and they inherited from believers and other rules too applied to them as they had apparently uttered the two witnesses.

But you have seen that such an explanation goes against the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān without any valid reason.

However, let us see what was the reason which had compelled them to adopt this view. It was their inordinately good opinion of all the Muslims of the early days of Islam, i.e., anyone who saw the Prophet and believed in him. But if you make an indepth study of what history has

recorded of their character and behaviour during the life-time of the Prophet and after him, this opinion would be completely shaken. This blind faith will lose its hold if you ponder on the cutting remarks the Qur'ān passes about them.

We have never heard till this day of any pure nation or group which was composed of hundered per cent pure members, all of whom were, without any exception, true believers, firmly standing on truth, never slipping even a little from the straight path (except the martyrs of Karbalā', as reports say). The believers of the early days of Islam were no exception. They too, like other human groups had all types of people among them. There were hypocrites; there were those suffering from one or the other spiritual disease; there were some who followed their desire; and others whose weakness of character was open for all to see.

The distinction of the early Muslims rests on the fact that theirs was an excellent society headed by the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); light of faith had enveloped it and rule of religion was enforced in it. This was the condition of the society, *per se;* although there were among them good as well as bad elements; and there was virtue as well as vice in their psychological make up, and the whole spectrum of mental traits and natural dispositions was found among them.

That is how the Qur'ān describes their condition and comments on their character. Allāh says: *Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, and those with him are severe against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves, you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allāh and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Torah and their description in the* Injīl; *like as seed produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them; Allāh has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward* (48:29). Mark how the verse begins with description of their collective merits and virtues in general, without attaching any restriction or proviso; but when it comes in the end to individual members of the society, the forgiveness and reward is made conditional to their belief and good deeds.

QUR'ĀN: *If then a misfortune befalls you:* i.e., if you are slain or

wounded; *he says: ''Surely Allāh conferred a benefit on me that I was not present with them'';* otherwise, I too would have suffered as they did.

QUR'ĀN: *And if grace from Allāh comes to you:* i.e., spoils or war, etc.; 'grace' refers to wealth and riches, and similar other things; *he would certainly cry out, as if there had not been any friendship between you and him: ''Would that I had been with them'':* The words portray their condition in dramatic style. After all, they are believers, and the Muslims are limbs of one body; they are joined together with the strongest band — belief in Allāh and His revelation — which controls all other relationships, be it family-tie, guardianship, pledge of allegience or friendship. But their faith is so weak that they do not feel there was any connection between them and the believers. That is why they express their wish to be present with the believers in *jihād,* as a stranger expresses his desire when he sees someone acquire some wealth: *Would that I had been with them, then I should have attained a mighty great fortune.* The weakness of their faith and belief is reflected in the high esteem they accord to spoils of war and in their counting the acquirement of worldly riches as 'a mighty good fortune'; while they treat every trouble faced by the believers — being killed or wounded or undergoing other hardships — as 'a misfortune'.

QUR'ĀN: *Therefore let those fight in the way of Allāh, who sell this world's lift ... a great reward:* ''It is said, *''sharaytu''* (شَرَيْتُ) i.e., I sold; and *ishtarayatu* (اِشْتَرَيْتُ) i.e., I bought. The meaning will be as follows: They sell this world's life in exchange for the hereafter.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The verse branches out from the preceding exhortation of *jihād* and condemnation of those who hold back from going forth for it. It urges them again to fight in the way of Allāh by reminding them that all of them were believers who had already sold their worldly life — by accepting the Islam — and bought the hereafter in exchange, as Allāh has said in another place: *Surely Allāh has bought of the believers their persons and their properties for this, that they shall have the garden* (9:111). Then it exponds the desirable benefit of that fighting, by showing that it brings in a great reward in any case: *and whoever fights in the way of Allāh, then be he slain or be he victorious, We shall grant*

him a great reward.

It makes it clear that the endeavours of a fighter in the way of Allāh are sure to bring in one of the two good results: either he will be killed in the way of Allāh or gain victory over the enemy of Allāh; and in either case he shall find a great reward from Allāh. It does not mention the third possibility, i.e., defeat and retreat; it is a hint that a fighter in the way of Allāh never retreats, never runs away.

The possibility of being slain is mentioned before that of victory, because martyrdom has much greater and more confirmed reward. A fighter who vanquishes an enemy of Allāh is certainly eligible for a great reward; but there is always a danger of forfeiture, if he committed some sins which would make his good deeds forfeit, or if he indulged in evil acts after that. But there is no such risk in martyrdom, as it is the end of this world's life and beginning of that of the hereafter. A martyr therefore is sure to get his great reward in full, while the victorious fighter in the way of Allāh may only hope to get his full reward.

QUR'ĀN: *And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allāh and of the weak among the men and the women and the children ...:* The word, 'weak', is in conjunction with the name of Allāh. The verse uses the style of questioning for spurring and invigorating the believers to fight. It reminds them that their fighting is in the way of Allāh (and the only goal of your blessed life is to attain His pleasure, and no felicity is more blissful than His nearness), and in the way of your weak men, women and children.

This verse, in fact, uses a very effective style to exhort, urge and incite the whole believing community to fight. As for the sincere pure-hearted believers, it should be enough for them that Allāh was calling them; they would stand up for truth, answer the call of their Lord and respond with all their might to the Messenger's invitation. As for other believers, if that was not enough, they should realize that, apart from its being a *jihād* in the way of Allāh, it is also a fight in the way of their own men, women and children who are suffering at the hands of the unbelievers; let them have a zealous sense of honour and partisanship and fight for those weakened fellow-religionists.

Islam initially negates every relationship through blood relation or other causes except the relationship of faith. Once a person becomes

Muslim, his/her other relationships are re-instated [in the framework of Islam]. Now it becomes incumbent on a Muslim to offer sacrifices to save his Muslim brother who is related to him through faith; also he must do so in case of his other relatives — men, women and children — if they are Muslims, as this sacrifice of wealth and life will actually be an offering in the way of Allāh [as it will be for safety of the Muslims].

Those weak ones who, being related to these believers, are a part of them, are true believers. See how they pray to Allāh, saying: *''Our Lord! take us out of this town''*. Also they are humiliated, oppressed and tortured by the polytheists; they are crying out and asking for divine help; *''Our Lord! take us out of this town, whose people are oppressors''*. The oppression mentioned here is general; also it does not say that those people were indulging in sins and were therefore unjust to themselves. The clear meaning is that the town's people were oppressing and tormenting them with various kinds of torture — as the history confirms.

Their call for help was couched in a sublime style with excellent wordings. They did not say: 'O our men!', 'O our leaders!', 'O our people!' or 'O our clan!'. Allāh says that they called their Lord and sought help from their True Master; they said: *''Our Lord! take us out of this town, whose people are oppressors''*. Then they pointed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the brave believers who were with him, saying: *and make for us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper*. They wished that they should have a guardian and a helper, but they prayed to their Lord, the True Guardian and Helper, to give them human guardian and helper.

SENSE OF HONOUR *VIS-A-VIS* BIGOTRY

Look at the divine manner manifested by the Honoured Book; and compare it with our own natural instinct — you will see a wonderful reality. No doubt, there is an instinct ingrained in human nature which inspires man to stand for the defence of things he holds dear and considers them as inviolable, like children, women, dignity, national honour and things like that. It is a dictate of nature and is the mainspring of many human actions. But this defence is sometimes praiseworthy, if it is on right course and for right cause; at other times it is blameworthy and causes infelicity and disturbance in society, if it is unjustified and

against the truth.

Islam accepts it in principle to the extent the nature demands, but it nullifies all its details. After erasing all traces of base instincts, it diverts it towards Allāh, turning it away from all worldly things. Reaching this stage, it allows it to function in many of the original situations, but moulding it in the matrix of monotheism. It urges man to have a zealous sense of honour for his men, women and children, in short for his every right — gearing it to Allāh's pleasure. Thus Islam confirms the dictate of nature, but cleanses it of pulluted desires and unhealthy emotions; it purifies it and turns it into a safe highway which man proceeds on, helped by his nature. Islam takes it out from darkness of conflict to light of concord and peace. There is no contradiction or disharmony in various parts or aspects of the sense of honour which Islam encourages man to have, and regulates its application. All share the basic characteristics of being various aspects of monotheism, and manifestation of following the truth. Accordingly, all its relevant directives and rules have turned into broad-based, lasting and comprehensive principles, without any contradiction or discordance.

QUR'ĀN: *Those who believe fight in the way of Allāh ... Satan:* It is a comparison between the believers and the unbelievers in their respective styles of fighting; or more precisely, in the two groups' motives of fighting. This comparison clearly shows the excellence of the believers' way over that of the unbelievers. The way of the believers leads to, and relies on Allāh, in sharp contrast to the unbelievers' way. This provides another motivation for the believers to fight.

QUR'ĀN: *Fight therefore against the friends of the Satan; surely the strategy of the Satan is weak:* The unbelievers by following the Satan's way have gone out from the guardianship of Allāh. Now they have no guardian or friend except the Satan who is the friend of polytheists and of those who worship other than Allāh. So, he is their friend and they are his friends.

The strategy of the Satan is weak, because it is the way of *ṭāghūt* which is against the way of Allāh, and all power and strength belongs to Allāh alone. Now, nothing is left for the way of *ṭāghūt,* that is, for the strategy of the Satan, except weakness. Allāh by expositing the weakness

of the unbelievers' way, encourages the believers to fight against them. Obviously, the statement that the Satan's strategy is weak *vis-a-vis* the power of Allāh, is not a denial of its hold on those who follow their desires.

TRADITIONS

[aṭ-Ṭabrisī] has written under the verse, *O you who believe! take your precaution ...:* ''Arms have been called 'precaution', because it is the instrument with which one guards oneself from danger.'' He has further written that this meaning is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.). Again he writes: ''It has been narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that *in detachments* means (small) expeditions, and *in a body* refers to the army.'' (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

Sulaymān ibn Khālid has narrated from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: *''O you who believe!;* He has called them believers, but they were not believers, and it is no honour (for them).'' (Then) he recited: *O you who believe! take your precaution, ...then I should have attained a mighty good reward;* then he said: ''If (all) the inhabitants of the heaven and the earth had said, 'Surely Allāh conferred a benefit on me that I was not with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)', they would have become polytheists; and when a grace from Allāh comes to the believers, he says: 'Would that I had been with them, then I would have fought in the way of Allāh.' '' (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: This theme has been narrated also by aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *Majma'u 'l-bayān,* and by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr,* from the Imām (a.s.). The polytheism in this *ḥadīth* refers to the inner polytheism, nat to the open disbelief which deprives man from the protection of Islam — and we have explained it earlier.

Ḥumrān has narrated that al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about the verse, ... *and of the weak among the men ...:* ''We are those.'' (*ibid.*)

The author says: The same book has narrated the same meaning through Sumā'ah from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), and its wording is as follows:

‘‘And as for His word, *and of the weak among the men ...,* those are we.’’ These two traditions do not aim at giving the explanation of the verse; they fit it on an obviously very apt situation; it is a painful complaint against the rebellious oppressors of this *ummah.*

[as-Suyūṭī writes:] It has been narrated by Abū Dāwūd (in his *an-Nāsikh*), Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) through ‘Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said about the (verse of the) chapter of ‘‘The Women’’: *take your precaution, then go forth in detachments, or go forth in a body:* ‘‘It was abrogated by (the verse), *And it does not beseem the believers that they should go forth all together, ...* [9:122].’’

The author says: The two verses are not mutually contradictory, so that it could be said that the latter had abrogated the former, and this non-contradictoriness is quite obvious. Even if there were any contradictoriness, it would have amounted to particularization or restriction, not abrogation.

And all praise is for Allāh.

* * * * *

AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān

BY:

al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

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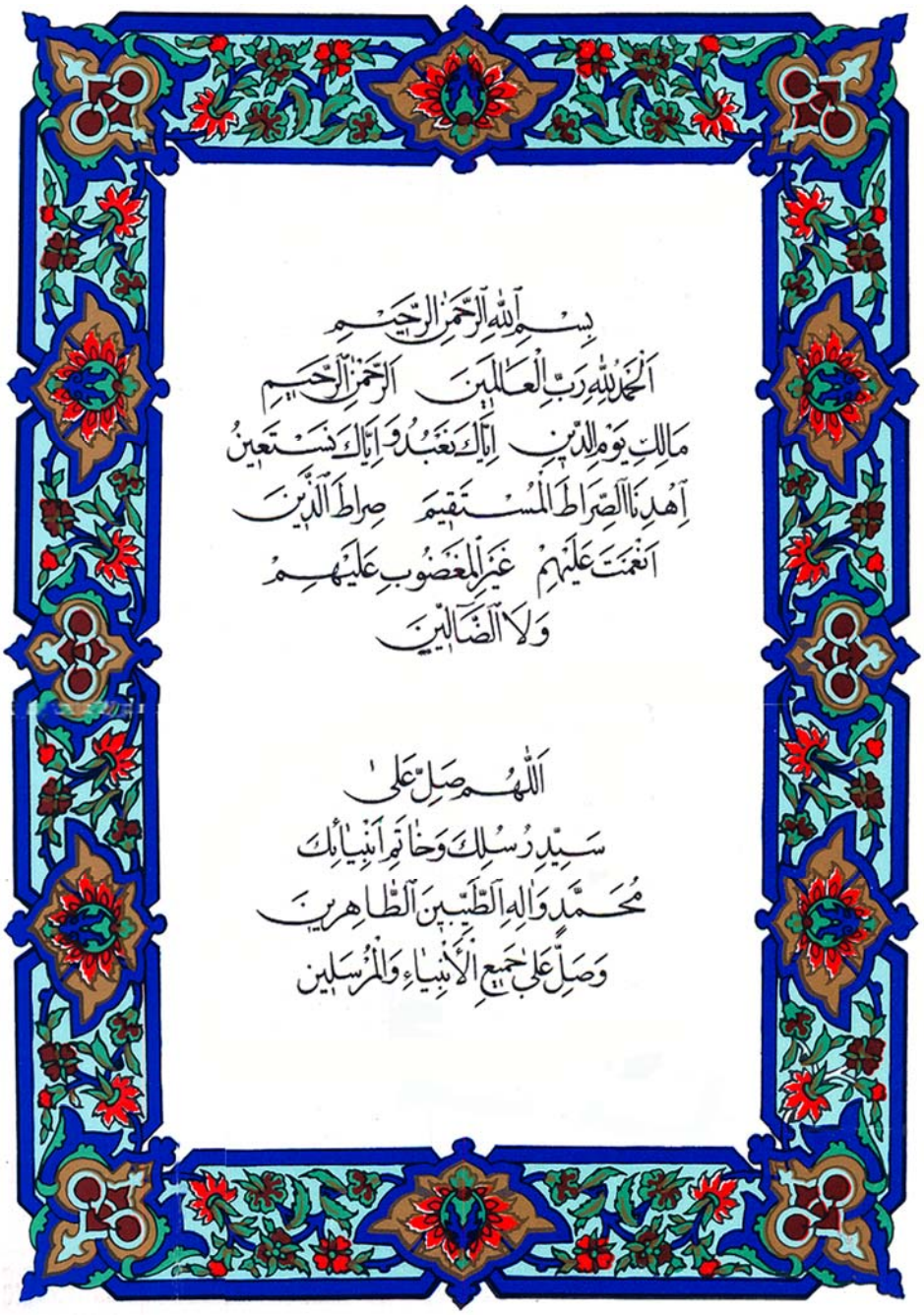
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ

اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى

سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ اَنْبِيَائِكَ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَاٰلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	’	ك	k
ب	b	ل	l
ت	t	م	m
ث	th	ن	n
ج	j	ه	h
ح	ḥ	و	w
خ	kh	ي	y
د	d	ة	ah, at
ذ	dh		(construct state)
ر	r	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	z		
س	s		
ش	sh		**Long Vowels**
ص	ṣ	آ	ã
ض	ḍ	و	ũ
ط	ṭ	ي	ī
ظ	ẓ		
ع	‘ *or* ‘		**Short Vowels**
غ	gh	ـَ	a
ف	f	ـُ	u
ق	q	ـِ	i

تصدير

١ـ العلّامة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الاسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤ ـ ١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه‌الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول‌الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢ـ اشتهر العلّامة الطّباطبائي رحمه‌الله بالعديد. من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلّامة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣ـ شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، و بعد مداولات و استشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لانّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقتر حنا على الأستاذ العلّامة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربّي، و كفاء ته الأدبّية في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلّامة الطّباطبائي رحمه‌الله هوالزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤ـ و نحن إذ ننشر (الجزء الثامن) من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة لتفسير (الميزان) و يطابق النّصف الثاني من الجزء الرابع للنّصّ العربيّ، لنرجو من الله سبحانه إن يأخذ بأيدينا و يعيننا على إعداد التّرجمة الكاملة للكتاب و نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين: (الأولى) بأسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة إلى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الا نجليزيّة، ولكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجد هماالقارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

* * *

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لا تمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى و نعم النّصير.

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الاسلاميّة

(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)

طهران ـ ايران

FOREWORD

1. al ‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) may Allāh have mercy upon him — was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān.*

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the eighth volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān.* This volume corresponds with the second half of the fourth volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allāh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of -the English translation of *al Mīzān*: One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * *

We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

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al-Mīzãn

Volume Nine

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بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوٓا۟ أَيْدِيَكُمْ
وَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُوا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ
مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ ٱلنَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ ٱللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً ۚ وَقَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَا لِمَ
كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا ٱلْقِتَالَ لَوْلَآ أَخَّرْتَنَآ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ ۗ قُلْ مَتَٰعُ ٱلدُّنْيَا
قَلِيلٌ وَٱلْءَاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَيْنَمَا
تَكُونُوا۟ يُدْرِككُّمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنتُمْ فِى بُرُوجٍ مُّشَيَّدَةٍ ۗ وَإِن تُصِبْهُمْ
حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا۟ هَٰذِهِۦ مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَإِن تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا۟
هَٰذِهِۦ مِنْ عِندِكَ ۚ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ فَمَالِ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ ٱلْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ
يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٧٨﴾ مَّآ أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَمَآ أَصَابَكَ مِن
سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِن نَّفْسِكَ ۚ وَأَرْسَلْنَٰكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٩﴾
مَّن يُطِعِ ٱلرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ ٱللَّهَ ۖ وَمَن تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴿٨٠﴾

Have you not seen those to whom it was said: "Withhold your hands, and establish prayer and pay zakāt*"; but when fighting is prescribed for them, lo! a party of them fear men as they ought to have feared Allāh, or* (even) *a greater fear, and say: "Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for us Wherefore didst thou not grant us a delay to a near end?" Say: "The provision of this world is short and the hereafter is better for him who guards* (against evil)*; and you shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone"* (77). *Wherever you are, death will overtake you, though you are in lofty towers; and if benefit comes to them, they say: "This is from Allāh"; and if a misfortune befalls them, they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allāh;" but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told* (them)*?* (78). *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself; and We have sent you* (O Prophet) *to mankind as a Messenger, and Allāh is sufficient as a witness* (79). *Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh; and whoever turns back, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them* (80).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses are connected to the preceding ones, and all together are in one context. These verses throw light on the affairs of another group of the believers of weak faith; they contain admonition and remind them that this world is transient while the blessings of the hereafter are ever-lasting; and they explain a Qur'ānic reality concerning good and evil.

QUR'ĀN: ***Have you not seen those to whom it was said*** *. . .* ***or*** **(even)** ***a greater fear***: To withhold hands implies refraining from fighting – as the killings (which are a part of fighting) are done by hands. This verse shows that the Muslims, when faced in the beginning with tyrannies and oppressions of the unbelievers, felt unable to restrain themselves and bear the oppressions with patience. They were

eager to draw sword. But Allãh ordered them to refrain from fighting; they were rather exhorted to establish the religious rites such as prayer and *zakãt*, in order to strengthen the religious tenets and faith and establish them on firm footing; only then would Allãh allow them to fight His enemies. Otherwise, the structure of religion would crumble, its pillars would fall down and all its parts would deteriorate.

Obviously, the verses blame those believers: It were they who were impatient to fight the unbelievers, and did not like to withhold their hands even at a time when they did not have any power or armaments to stand before the enemies. But when fighting was prescribed and ordained, a group among them felt terrified of the enemy (who were human beings like themselves) as they should have feared Allãh – or even a greater fear than that.

QUR'ÃN: ***and say: "Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for uṣ . . ."*** **:** Apparently, it is in conjunction with, *a part of them fear men;* this explanation looks more appropriate when we ponder on the change of tense from "fear men" (aorist tense) to "say" (which in original text is "said", i.e., past tense). Therefore, the complainants were those very people who in the beginning were so eager to fight and had claimed that they could not bear patiently all those tyrannies of unbelievers; and who at that time were told to restrain themselves.

Again, the sentence, {"Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for uṣ Wherefore didst Thou not grant us a delay to a near end?"} may be an exposition of their hidden feelings and real condition. Or, it may be a narration of their actual saying. We find many dramatic expressions in the Qur'ãn.

The "end" – i.e., death in normal way – is called "near"; it does not mean that they wanted deliverance from being killed so that they could live a little longer. Rather, it brings into open their feelings that even if they were not killed until they died a natural death, it would still be a short life and near end; so why was not Allãh willing to let them live that short period? Why did He afflict them with quick deaṭh Why did He put them in danger of being killed?

They speak in this manner because their hearts are entangled with this life – which in Qur'ãnic view is but a short provision which is going to end quickly without leaving any trace; and then will come the life hereafter which is the eternal and real life, the really good, rather better, life. That is why their views are rebutted in the words: *Say: "The provision of this world is short".*

QUR'ĀN: ***Say: "The provision of this world is short . . . the husk of a date-stone"*** **:** Allāh orders the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to reply to these people of weaker faith by exposing their misconception; by showing to them how mistaken they are in preferring this world's short life over the dignity of *jihād* and martyrdom in the way of Allāh. In short, they are expected to be pious in their belief, when compared to the hereafter, is a short provision, and the hereafter is better for pious ones who guard against evil. Therefore, they should opt for the hereafter which is better than the short provision of this world, for they are believers and on the path of piety. Do they fear that Allāh will harm them or do injustice to them? Is it for this fear that they prefer immediate provision in their hands over the promised good? They should not entertain such ideas because Allāh will never do any injustice to them even like the husk of a date-stone.

This description shows that the word, "for him who guards (against evil)", in a way puts the adjective in place of its qualified noun in order to disclose the underlying reason of this statement and asserts its applicability to the subject in hand. The implication is this – and Allāh knows better: The hereafter is better for you because you, being believers, are supposed to be the people of piety, and the piety makes one achieve the good of the hereafter. In a way, the word, "for him who guards (against evil)", is an indirect criticism of that group.

QUR'ĀN: ***Wherever you are death will overtake you, though you are in lofty towers*** **:** *al-Burūj* (اَلبرُوُج) is plural of *al-burj* (اَلبُرْج = tower). It is constructed on forts with extremely strengthened foundation, for repelling the enemy from it and with its help. Its original meaning is show, appearance; and from itis derived *al-tabarruj* (اَلتَّبَرُّج = displaying the adornments, etc.) *at-Tashyīd* (اَلتَّشْيِيدُ = setting up) is derived from *ash-shayd* (اَلشَّيْدُ = mortar), because it strenghtens and raises the building and decorates it. *al-Burūju 'l-mushayyadah* (اَلبُرُوجُ الْمُشَيَّدَة =) strong lofty edifices built on forts, into which man takes shelter from advancing enemy.

This sentence describes a reality wrapped in an example. The "lofty towers" stands for every strong edifice used as shelter against calamities. In short, it says: Death is something you cannot escape from even if you take refuge in strong shelters. Therefore, you should not think that if you were absent from battle-field or if *jihād* was not prescribed for you, you would have remained safe from death or that death could not have overtaken you. The death decreed by Allāh will surely reach you.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if a benefit comes to you, they say: "This is from Allãh;" and if a misfortune befalls them, they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allãh;" but . . .*** **:** Two more examples of their foolish talks have been quoted here, and then Allãh orders His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to give its rebuttal by describing the reality about benefit or harm which comes to a man.

The context shows that it was said by the same believers of weaker faith who are mentioned in preceding verses.

It may be based on their actual words, or an inference from their behaviour. There is nothing new in it, because Mūsã (a.s.) also was confronted with a similar accusation; as Allãh has described in the Qur'ãn: *But when good came to them they said: "This is due to us;" and when evil afflicted them, they attributed it to the ill-luck of Mūsã and those with him; surely their evil omen is only from Allãh, but most of them do not know* (7:131). The same attitude is reported, from all nations *vis-à-vis* their prophets; and this *ummah* in its dealings with its Prophet was not behind other nations. Allãh says: . . . *their hearts are all alike* . . . (2:118; moreover, they resemble most of all to the Children of Israel; and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said: "They (the Israelites) would not have entered a burrow of a lizard but you too would enter it." We have earlier quoted traditions to this effect from both sects.

Many exegetes have artfully tried to show that these verses were revealed about the Jews, or the hypocrites, or the Jews and the hypocrites together; but obviously the context rejects such interpretation.

In any case, the verse, in this context, shows that the benefit and misfortune here refer to some things which could be attributed to Allãh; but they attributed one group, i.e., benefits and good fortunes to Allãh, and the other group, i.e., harm and misfortunes to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The good fortunes and misfortunes refer to those occurrences which they were faced with when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) came to them and began raising the edifice of religion and spreading his Call through *jihãd*; so these words refer, respectively, to victory and war-booty in the encounters and battles which they won, and being slain and wounded and getting troubles in the others. They attributed the misfortunes to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) saying that it was his ill omen, or accusing him of unsound decision and mismanagement. Allãh, then, ordered His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to refute their claim in these words: *Say: "All is from Allãh."* These are the

happenings and misfortunes arranged by the highest authority of this universe, i.e., Allãh alone, Who has no partner or colleague, inasmuch as all things submit to Allãh only – and to no one else – in their existence, continuity and all forthcoming events and incidents. This is what the Qur'ãn teaches us.

Then He asks, like the one who is astonished to see their petrified understanding and dull mind: *but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told* (them), and are unable to know and grasp such a clear reality.

QUR'ÃN: ***Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself*:** It was told that: *well-nigh they do not understand what is told* (them). Therefore, now that Allãh intends to explain the reality, this verse particularly addresses the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) [in 2nd person singular] ignoring those people of low understanding. It explains the reality of good fortune and misfortune that come to a man. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is not different from others in this reality which is common to all existing things, or at least covers all human beings, believers and disbelievers, virtuous and evil, prophets and common men.

Good or beautiful are the things which man likes by nature, like health, bounties, security and comfort; and they are all from Allãh. Evil or ugly are the things which he dislikes, like disease, humiliation, poverty and mischief; all this in final analysis is caused by man, and is not attributed to Allãh. The verse, in this sense, is not very far from the verse: *This is because Allãh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition, and because Allãh is Hearing, Knowing* (8:53). This reality is not contrary to another universal fact – that all good and evil emanates from Allãh, when looked from another angle, as will be explained below.

QUR'ÃN: ***and We have sent you* (O Prophet!) *to mankind as a Messenger, and Allãh is sufficient as a witness*:** Your only distinction, bestowed by Us, is that you are Our Messenger; you are responsible for conveying Our message to them; and your prestige is of the Divine Messengership. You do not have any other status, nor do you have any power in these affairs. Consequently, you are not responsible for any good luck or misfortune coming to them. You could not bring evil to the people not can you keep any good away

from them. It is an indirect refutation of those who attributed bad luck to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said: *"This is from you"*, perceiving him as an ill omen. Then the refutation is strengthened with the words: "and Allãh is sufficient as a witness".

QUR'ÃN: ***Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allãh; and . . . :*** A new sentence strengthens and reconfirms the preceding statement: *and We have sent you to mankind as a Messenger.* It also gives the reason for the order given here: You are but Our Messenger; whoever obeys you because of Messengership *he indeed obeys Allãh and whoever turns back, so We have not sent you as a keeper over them.*

Obviously, the phrase, "Whoever obeys the Messenger", is a sort of adjective put in place of its noun, and it points to the underlying reason of this declaration, as was the case with the sentence: *and the hereafter is better for him who guards* (against evil)*; and you shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone*. Accordingly, the theme continues in the same direction, without turning from 2nd person (*and We have sent you*) to the 3rd. (*Whoever obeys the Messenger*) and again to the 2nd (*We have not sent you . . .*).

ATTRIBUTION OF GOOD AND EVIL TO ALLÃH, THE HIGH.

[*al-Ḥasanah* (اَلْحَسَنَة = good, merit, benefit, beautiful) is opposite of *as-sayyiah* اَلسَّيِّئَةُ = evil, sin, ugly, misfortune).] Probably, man first became aware of the sense of "beauty" by looking at his fellow human beings' good feature, i.e., balanced stature, well-proportioned limbs and lovely face. Then the meaning was extended to other material objects and phenomena; and finally it was used for "conformity of a thing with its natural purpose".

A human face is called beautiful when its eyes, eye-brows, ears, nose and mouth, etc. are exactly in the shape they should be, and are aligned to one another properly; This in its turn attracts the hearts and excites admiration and love.

If a thing is bereft of beauty, it is called bad, evil and ugly – various words used in different contexts. Ugliness therefore is a negative connotation as beauty is a positive one.

Then the concepts were extended to actions, abstract ideas and other characteristics found in a social set-up, keeping in view whether

they were in conformity with society's purpose or not; whether they agree with felicity of human life and its enjoyment or not. Justice is good; doing good to a deserving person is a merit; it is a virtue to educate, to train, to give good advice, etc., where it is needed. Injustice, transgression and similar things are evil and ugly. Why? Because the first group of actions is in accord with the man's felicity and happiness and enables him to enjoy fully the benefits his society offers, while the second is not so. This merit and virtue (and this evil and demerit) get their characteristics from the actions they are related to. There are some actions whose virtue is ever-lasting and perpetual, e.g., justice, because their consistency with the society's aim and purpose is enduring and permanent. Likewise, there are some perpetual demerits like injustice.

On the other hand, there are some actions whose characteristics differ from time to time, place to place and society to society. Laughter and jokes are good in friends' gatherings, but not in presence of elders; in joyous functions, not in mourning assemblies nor in mosques and other places of worship. Fornication and liquor-drinking is good in the Western societies, but evil and sin in the Muslims' eyes.

You should not listen to those who say that [ethical values are relative, and no action has inherent merit or demerit in itself. They say that] virtue and evil are always changing, they have no permanency, no endurance; they are not absolute. They give example of justice and injustice; a system which a group considers based on justice, is diametrically opposed to that which another nation calls just and fair. Flogging a fornicator is justice in Islam, but not so in the Western countries; and so on and so forth. Thus meaning of justice is not fixed and permanent.

But such people are totally confused. They do not differentiate between the meaning [of justice, for example,] and its practical application. We should have no track with people of such a low intelligence.

The fact is that man is ready to change all his social customs, at once or gradually, according to the changing circumstances of the society; but he will never agree that he is deprived of the attribute of "justice", i.e., he is called "unjust". Even if he sees a friend oppressing someone, he will try to find excuses for him [but will not admit that his friend was unjust]. This topic needs detailed discussion, but this is not the place for it, because we are in the middle of a more important discourse. Lastly, the meaning of good and evil was further extended to cover all external happenings which man is faced with in his life

owing to various factors. These are the individual or collective events, some of which agree with his expectations and conform with his individual or collective life's felicity, like health and comfort. These are called good or benefits. There are other happenings on the opposite side like calamities and sorrows, poverty or sickness, humiliation or imprisonment, etc.; and they are called evil or misfortune.

It appears from the above that when good and evil are attributed to various affairs or actions, it is done with this criterion in mind: Are these affairs or action in conformity with human perfection or felicity or not. Good and evil are two attributes which are seen in relation to human felicity. This relationship in some cases is lasting and perpetual; while in other things it is changing. For instance, monetary help is good if given to a deserving person, and bad if dished out to an underserving man.

Good is always a positive thing, while evil and ugliness has negative connotation. That is, an evil thing or action lacks the above-mentioned conformity with human felicity. Otherwise, if we ignore this conformity or non-conformity, then the thing or action by itself is one and the same without any difference whatsoever.

Earthquake and flood devastate a community; they are evil and misfortune in their eyes, but their enemies will count them as blessings and good fortune for themselves. Every general calamity, looked from the religion's view-point, is good if it visits the unbelievers, who create mischief in the earth; but the same will be seen as evil and bad if it attacks a believing and good community. Eating food is good and lawful, if it is prepared from one's own money; and the same will become evil and unlawful if it is a part of another man's property taken without his permission. Why? Because it lacks obedience to the prohibition in respect of eating other people's property without permission; or the obedience to the imperative order of restricting oneself to those things only which Allãh has allowed. Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is good and lawful if it follows marriage; and is evil and sin if it is illicit, without marriage – because the latter lacks conformity with divine commandment. In short, good is a positive aspect of things and actions, and evil is their negative aspect, although the thing or action itself is the same in both cases.

According to Qur'ãn, all that is called "thing" (except Allãh Himself) is created by Allãh. *Allãh is the Creator of every thing* (39:62); . . . *and He created every thing, then ordained for it a*

measure (25:2). The two verses show that every thing is His creation. Then Allāh says: [Allāh] *Who made good every thing that He has created* (32:7). Thus, every created thing is good, and this goodness is an integral part of creation which cannot be separated from it; if it is Allāh's creation, it is good.

Every thing has its share of beauty according to its share in creation and existence. If you ponder on the meaning of beauty, described earlier, you will understand our stand more clearly. A thing is good and beautiful if it conforms with the purpose it is intended for; and all parts of existence and all portions of this universe are consistent and in complete harmony with each other. Far be it from the Lord of the universe to create a thing whose parts lack consistency and harmony, or work against each other, as it would negate the intended purpose. Can a created thing overpower the Creator? Or, negate the purpose intended for this wonderful system which astonishes the intelligence and stuns the mind? Allāh says: *He is Allāh, the One, the Subduer* (of all) (39:4); *and He is the Supreme above His servants* (6:18); *and Allāh is not such that any thing in the heavens or in the earth should weaken Him; surely He is the Knowing, the Powerful* (35:44). Thus, nothing can overpower Allāh or weaken Him in anything He intends from His creatures and wishes about His servants.

Consequently, every good blessing in creation is attributed to Him. Likewise, every evil calamity, when seen by itself, and looked according to the basic relationship encompassing the whole creation, is attributable to Allāh – although it seems evil when looked from another angle. It is this reality which is described in some verses of the Qur'ān: *and if a benefit comes to them, they say: "It is from Allāh;" and if a misfortune befalls you, they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allāh;" but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told* (them)*?* (4:78); *But when good came to them they said: "This is due to us;" and when evil afflicted them, they attributed it to the ill-luck of Mūsā and those with him; surely their ill omen is only from Allāh, but most of them do not know* (7:131). There are other verses of the same theme.

As for misfortune, the Qur'ān attributes that of the man to the man himself. Allāh says: *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself* (4:79); *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults) (42:30); *Surely Allāh does not change the condition of a people until*

they change their own condition (13:11); *This is because Allãh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition* (8:53); there are many such verses.

In more clear words, the preceding verses show that the calamities and misfortunes too, like good fortunes, are good and beautiful in their creation. Then how do they turn into misfortunes? It is only because they do not agree with some people's, or some thing's, nature and these things or people get hurt by them. It means that Allãh had not created in these items what would agree with these people or things. It is this withholding of generosity which is considered misfortune or calamity for the people or things that get harmed by them, as is clearly seen in the verse: *Whatever Allãh grants to men of* (His) *mercy, there is none to withhold it, and what He withholds there is none to send it forth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise* (35:2).

Therefore, Allãh states that this withholding of generosity (when it is withheld), or increase or decrease in sending His mercy forth depends on the ability or capacity of the subject: How much is a person or thing able to benefit from His mercy? Allãh explains it in a similie: *He sends down water from the cloud, then the valleys flow* (with water) *according to their measure* (13:17). Also, He says: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure* (15:21). Thus, Allãh bestows a favour on a thing according to what it deserves and keeping its condition in consideration. *Does He not know Who has created? And He is the Knower of the subtleties, the Aware* (67:14).

We that blessing and affliction, tribulation and comfort from one thing to another according to its particular situation and condition, as Allãh says: *And every one has a direction to which he would turn* (2:148). Every thing turns to that direction and seeks that item which agrees with its situation.

From the above discourse you will easily understand that happiness and distress, blessing and affliction, *vis-à-vis* this man, who lives with a free will in the light of the Qur'ãnic teachings, are strongly connected to his own free will; because he is proceeding on a path which will lead him to happiness if followed properly, while deviation from it will put him in turmoil and distress. This, of course, concerns those subjects for which he has been granted free choice.

The Qur'ãn confirms this understanding. Allãh says: *That is because Allãh would never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition* (8:53). Their pure intentions and good deeds have influence on the bounty which they

have been blessed with; but when their intention is polluted with insincerity and actions tainted with evil, Allāh changes their condition by withholding His mercy from them. He says: *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults) (42:30). Their actions have a hand in the calamities and misfortunes which befall them, although Allāh pardons most of their misdeeds. Also Allāh says: *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself* (4:79).

However, you should not imagine that when Allāh revealed this verse to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.), He had forgotten the clear reality which has been stated in the verses which say: *Allāh is the Creator of every thing* . . . (39:62); [Allāh] *Who made good every thing that He has created* . . . (32:7). These verses clearly show that every thing has been created by Allāh and is good in itself. And He says: . . . *and your Lord is not forgetful* (19:64); . . . *errs not my Lord, nor does He forget* (20:52). So, the verse (*Whatever benefit comes to you* . . . [4:79]) means that: The good which comes to you – and all that comes to you is good – is from Allāh; and the misfortune which befalls you, it is misfortune for you because it does not agree with your aims and desires, although in itself it is good; you have brought it to yourself by your wrong choice and also you have asked Allāh in the same manner. Allāh is too great to initiate any evil, harm or misfortune for you.

As explained earlier, the verse is particularly addressed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), yet the meaning covers all human beings. In other words, this verse, like the other two (*That is because Allāh would never change a bounty which He has conferred* . . . [8:53]; *And whatever affliction befalls you* . . . [42:30]) looks at social affairs as well as individual matters; the human society has its own existence, will and choice distinct from individual ones.

The society is a living entity in which the past generations and ancient people are dissolved [succeeded by coming generations]; in this way, the followers are held responsible for the evil deeds of their predecessors, the living bear the burden of the dead, and the innocent share in the punishment of the wrong-doers – while in the cases of the individuals it is never allowed. We have written about this subject in the second volume of this book in the Essay on the rules governing actions.[1]

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[1] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.3, pp.251-73. (*tr.*)

Look at the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) in the battle of Uud. He was inflicted grievous wounds in the face and upper teeth, (and the Muslims too suffered great losses), and he (s.a.w.a.) was sinless prophet. If we attribute this adversity to the society – because they had disobeyed the order given by Allãh and His Messenger – it was a misfortune wrought by the society, and he (s.a.w.a.) was a part of that society. And if it is attributed to his august person, then it was a divinely ordained trial which befell him in the way of Allãh and in course of his sacred divine mission, of which he had full insight and in that case it was rather a grace of Allãh which raised his spiritual status and rank.

Likewise, whatever misfortune befalls a people is attributed to their actions from the Qur'ãnic point of view – and the Qur'ãnic view is but truth; and whatever bounty or benefit comes to them, it is from Allãh.

Of course, there are many verses which attribute the benefits to men themselves to some extent. For example: *And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded* (against evil)*, We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth . . .* (7:96); *And We made of them* Imãms *to guide by Our command as they were patient and they were certain of Our signs* (32:24); *And We caused them to enter into Our mercy; surely they were of the good ones* (21:86).

But at the same time Allãh says that nothing in His creation has power to reach its intended goal or to proceed to any good, except when Allãh gives it such power and guides it to that goal; as He says: *"Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal)*"* (20:50); *. . . and were it not for Allãh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but Allãh purifies whom He pleases . . .* (24:21). These two verses in conjunction with the preceding ones show from another angle how the good comes from Allãh, that is, the man does not possess any good unless Allãh gives it into his possession; therefore all the good is from Allãh and the evil is from the man himself. This further explains the verse: *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself.*

To sum it up, all good comes from Allãh, because every good thing is His creation and the creation is not separable from goodness; and all good is from Him, because it is good, and He is the owner of all good – others receive goodness only when He gives it into their possession. No harm, evil or misfortune is attributable to Allãh,

because evil, *per se*, is not created, and He is the Creator. So, what is misfortune? When Allāh withholds His mercy from people because of what their hands have done, it is called misfortune, calamity or evil.

As for the good and evil in the meaning of obedience and disobedience, we have discussed about its attribution to Allāh under the verse: *Surely Allāh is not ashamed to set forth any parable . . .* (2:26), in volume one of this book.[2]

If you see what other exegetes have written on this subject, you will find a great many different views, a lot of conflicting opinions and various objections that will confound you. We hope that what we have written here will be enough for one who contemplates in the words of God. Be careful to keep various aspects of this topic separate from one other, ponder on the Qur'ānic usage of the words, *good* and *evil*, *bounty* and *punishment*, and differentiate between the entities of society and individual, then you will understand this subject clearly.

TRADITIONS

It is written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* under the verse, *Have you not seen those to whom it was said: "Withhold your hands . . . ":* It is narrated by an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Ḥākim (who said that this tradition is 'correct') and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) from 'Ikrimah from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf and his group came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'O Prophet of Allāh! We did have power when we were polytheists, but since we accepted the faith, we are humiliated.' The Prophet said: 'I have been ordered to forgive (them); therefore do not fight (these) people.' When Allāh brought him to Medina, He ordered him to fight. But then they withheld (their hands). So, Allāh sent down the verse, *Have you not seen those to whom it was said: . . .?*

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Qatādah that he said about this verse: "There were some companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who were in a hurry to wage war while they were at Mecca before *hijrah*. They said to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), 'Allow us to take (our) pickaxes in order to fight these polytheists.' And we have been told that 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf was among those who had said it. But the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) forbade them to do so and said, 'I have not been ordered this.' When *hijrah*

[2] *al-Mīzān,* (Eng.), vol.1, pp.131-5. (*tr.*)

came and they were ordered to fight, those people disliked it, and did in this connection what you have heard. Then Allãh said: *Say: 'The provision of this world is short, and the hereafter is better for him who guard* (against evil)*; and you shall not be wronged the husk of a date-stone*." (*ibid.*)

Ṣafwãn ibn Yaḥyã narrated from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) that he said: "Allãh, the High, has said: 'O son of Adam! By My will you have become such that you wish and say; and by My power you discharged the duties imposed by Me (on you); and by My bounty you got power to disobey Me. *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allãh; and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself.* And it is so because I have more rights on your good deeds than you have yourself; and you are more liable to your sins than Me. And it is because I cannot be questioned concerning what I do, and they shall be questioned.'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

The author says: A slightly different version of this tradition has been quoted in volume one of this book under the verse: *Surely Allãh is not ashamed to set forth any parable . . .* (2:26), and we have discussed it there.[3]

[al-Kulaynī has narrated] through his chains from ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn al-Ḥajãj that he said: "Trial and tribulation was mentioned near Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), and how Allãh reserves it for the believer. [The Imãm, a.s.] said: 'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was asked as to who was most severely put to trial in the world. He said: "The Prophets, then the closer to perfection, and then the closer; and the believer is put to test in promotion to his faith and the merit of his deeds; he whose belief is correct and his deeds good, his trial is harder, and he whose belief is feeble and his deeds weaker, his trial is lesser".' " (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: There is the famous tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): "The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever."

It is narrated through several chains from the fifth and the sixth Imãms: "Verily when Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, loves a servant, He immerses him in tribulation thorough immersing." (*ibid.*)

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[3] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng.), vol.1, p.143. (*tr.*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: "The believer is but like the scale of a balance; the more his faith increases, the more his trouble increases." (*ibid.*)

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: "Verily Allāh takes care of a believer through trials as a man takes care of his family through gifts during (his) absence; and denies to him the world as a physician denies harmful food to a patient." (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'Allāh does not need a servant in whose property and body there is no share for Allāh.'"

ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn has narrated from his father (peace be on both) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'If a believer were to live on a mountain, Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, would surely send someone to him to annoy him, in order that He should give him [the believer] its reward.' " (*ʻIlalu 'sh-sharāiʻ*)

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: "Worries and griefs always remain with a believer until they wipe out his sins." (*Kitābu 't-Tamḥīṣ*)

The same Imām (a.s.) said: "A believer does not pass forty nights without some thing sorrowful happening to him, which reminds his Lord to him." (*ibid.*)

ʻAlī (a.s.) said: "Even if a mountain loved me it would break down." Also, he (a.s.) said: "He who loves us, the *Ahlu 'l-bayt*, should prepare for himself a cover against tribulation." (*Nahju 'l-balāghah*)

The author says: Ibn Abil-Ḥadīd says in his *Commentary of Nahju 'l-balāghah*: "It is confirmed that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had said to him [ʻAlī, a.s.]: 'No one will love you except a believer, nor will hate you except a hypocrite;' and also it is definitely known that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had said: 'Tribulation runs quicker to the believer than water to a downward slope.' These two premises together lead us to the correct conclusion that even if a mountain were to love ʻAlī, it would break down."

You should know that there are so many traditions of this theme, and they support the Commentary written above.

Ibnul-Mundhir and al-Khaṭīb have narrated from Ibn ʻUmar that he said: "We were with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) together with a group of his companions. He said: 'O people! Don't you know that I am the Messenger of Allāh sent to you?' They said: 'Certainly.' He (again) said: 'Don't you know that Allāh has revealed in his Book that whoever obeys me, he obeys Allāḥ' They said: 'Certainly. We bear witness that whoever obeys you, he obeys Allāh, and that

obeying you is a part of His obedience.' Then he said: 'So, it is a part of Allãh's obedience that you should obey me; and it is a part of my obedience that you should obey your Imãms; if they pray in sitting position, you should pray in sitting position.' "

The author says: The last sentence shows that it is obligatory to follow them completely.

* * * * *

وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا۟ مِنْ
عِندِكَ بَيَّتَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ غَيْرَ ٱلَّذِى تَقُولُ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ
مَا يُبَيِّتُونَ ۖ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ وَكِيلًا
﴿٨١﴾ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِندِ غَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا۟
فِيهِ ٱخْتِلَٰفًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَإِذَا جَآءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْنِ
أَوِ ٱلْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ وَإِلَىٰٓ أُو۟لِى
ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَنۢبِطُونَهُۥ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ
ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ لَٱتَّبَعْتُمُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٣﴾
فَقَٰتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ ۚ وَحَرِّضِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ
عَسَى ٱللَّهُ أَن يَكُفَّ بَأْسَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بَأْسًا
وَأَشَدُّ تَنكِيلًا ﴿٨٤﴾

And they say: "Obedience." But when they go out from your presence, a party of them hatch by night a plan other than what you say; and Allãh writes down what they hatch by night, therefore turn aside from them and trust in Allãh, and Allãh is sufficient as a protector (81). *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (82). *And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it; and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those among them who* (can) *draw out the truth in it would have known it, and were it not for the grace of Allãh upon you and His mercy, you would have certainly followed the*

Satan, save a few (83). *Fight then in Allãh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour; maybe Allãh will restrain the fighting of those who disbelieve, and Allãh is strongest in prowess and strongest to give an exemplary punishment* (84).

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C O M M E N T A R Y

The verses are not without some connection with the preceding ones. Apparently, they supplement the previous talk which had admonished the Muslims of weak faith. It aims at exhorting them in a manner that would open their eyes, if they pondered and reflected.

QUR'ÃN: ***And they say: "Obedience." . . . :*** Obedience is predicate of a deleted subject, as the scholars have said; and the full sentence is, 'Our business is obedience', that is, 'We obey you totally.' *al-Burūz* (اَلْبُرُوزُ = to go out); *at-tabyīt* (اَلتَّبْيِيْتُ = to hatch an evil plan by night); the phrase translated here as, *other than what you say,* may also be rendered as, other than what they say.

The verse says – and Allãh knows better: When you call them to *jihãd*, they say to you that they will obey you totally in all matters. But when they go out of your presence, they plan at night to do opposite of what they had told you or opposite of what you had told them. It is reflection on their determination to act against the orders of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). Then Allãh tells His Messenger to turn aside from them and have trust in Allãh, as He says: *therefore turn aside from them and trust in Allãh, and Allãh is sufficient as a protector.*

There is no proof that the verse speaks about the hypocrites, as some exeget have claimed; the continuation of the context shows that the talk is about the same believers of weaker faith mentioned above.

QUR'ÃN: ***Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ãn? . . . :*** It is an exhortation in the form of 'question'. *at-Tadabbur* (اَلتَّدَبُّرُ = translated here as meditation) literally means to take one thing after another. In this verse it may mean to ponder on one verse after another; or, to ponder on a verse repeatedly. However, as it aims at showing that

there was no discrepancy in the Qur'ãn, and it naturally means looking at more than one verse, the former explanation (pondering on one verse after another) seems more appropriate, although the latter cannot be ruled out completely.

It is an exhortation for them to ponder on the Qur'ãnic verses. Whenever they want to look at a revealed order, an expanded wisdom, a story, an admonition or any other themes, they must look at all the relevant verses, of the Meccan period or Medinite, the decisive and the ambiguous ; then they should put them all together to realize that there was no discrepancy or contradiction at all. Rather it will be seen that the earlier verses verify the later ones, and each confirms the other – without a trace of any imaginable discrepancy. There is no contradiction: nowhere a verse negates another, nor do they oppose one another. There is no disharmony: no two verses are asymmetrical in beauty of style or firmness of meanings and themes, because no part of it is weaker or less perfect than the other. It is a Book confirming in its various parts, oft-repeating, whereat do shudder the skins.

This total absence of discrepancy will make them believe that the Qur'ãn is a Book revealed by Allãh, and no one else. If it were from someone else, it could not avoid a lot of discrepancy. Every thing found in this universe – and especially man, who the doubters allege, has written this Book – in its very existence and by its nature is founded on constant movement and change; is always in pursuit of perfection. Every single entity in this world in its life's journey passes through different stages and acquires varying dimensions.

It is hard to find a man who does not think that today he is wiser than he was yesterday. Everyone believes that the work he has done or the opinion he has formed lately is much better and reasonable than the one he had had earlier. Even you ponder on a single but prolonged work, like a book written, a poem composed or a lecture delivered, you will find that its last portion is better than the first, or that some parts excel the others in quality.

No man is free from discrepancy and difference in his work, or even in his own self; and it is not one or two differences or contradictions, but a lot. This is a common trend running throughout the world (including man) which is governed by the laws of gradual change and general advancement towards perfection. Nothing in this creation remains in one condition for two consecutive moments; its specificity and situation constantly change.

This shows the true significance of the word 'many' in *many a discrepancy*. It is an explanatory adjective, not a restrictive one. It says: If this Qur'ãn were from someone other than Allãh, they would have found discrepancy in it, and those discrepancies would have been in a large quantity, because it is the intrinsic nature of every thing which emanates from other than Allãh. In other words, the verse negates all discrepancies, whether a few or many; not that it denies only 'numerous discrepancies' leaving the door open for a few contradictions.

In short, a meditator on the Qur'ãn will at once realize that it is a book which deals with all the affairs related to humanity. It expounds the knowledge of genesis and resurrection; creation and existence; it explains the general human virtues, and lays down the social and personal laws which encompass the whole human species and guide them in all big and small affairs; then there are stories, lessons and sermons. And all this in such an excellent and succinct style that it challenged the whole world to bring its like. [Then, this book was not written all together in a short period;] it is made up of verses which were revealed piece-meal in a long period of twenty three years, in [different times and] various conditions: at night and in day time, in heat of war and tranquility of peace, in good days and bad, in hardship and ease; [but its excellence remained unaffected]. There never was any change in its miraculous and supernatural rhetorics, nor any discrepancy in its excellent knowledge and sublime wisdom, nor in its social and personal laws. Its later parts agree with what its earlier parts had established, and its details and branches are consistent with its roots and stems.

Analyse its laws and rules and you will find them firmly based on pristine monotheism; and that monotheism when looked *vis-à-vis* divinely gifted wisdom appears in the details of *sharī'ah*. So this is the Qur'ãn.

A man, pondering on it in this manner, is bound to admit – because of his vital intelligence and natural discernment – that this book was not written by someone who was subject to change and gradual development which permeate the universe, nor was he affected by passage of time. This is nothing but the speech of Allãh, the One, the Subduer.

The verse shows that:

1. The Qur'ãn is within the reach of the normal understanding;

2. The Qur'ãn is a Book which is not liable to abrogation or nullification; it does not need any completion or refinement; no one

has any authority to judge or control it. Because, it it is subject to these things, naturally it will have to undergo change and alternation; but inasmuch as the Qur'ãn is free from discrepancy, it cannot admit any change or alternation. Consequently, it is not liable to abrogation, nullification, etc. It follows that the *sharī'ah* of Islam will continue upto the Day of Resurrection.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it*****:** *al-Idhã'ah* (الأذاعة = to publish, to spread, to announce). The verse contains a sort of condemnation and reproach to them for this rumour-mongering. The following sentence, *and were it not for the grace of Allãh upon you and His mercy, you would have certainly followed the Satan, save a few,* clearly shows that the believers were in danger of going astray because of this adverse propaganda. The danger was of disobeying the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); because this is the theme of these verses. This view is supported by the next verse where the Prophet is ordered to fight the disbelievers even if he remained alone without any helper.

All this together proves that the "news of security or fear" refers to the false rumours which the disbelievers' agents used to bring to Medina for creating disharmony and discord among the believers; and the believers of weaker faith spread it without thinking over it. This in its turn caused loss of courage and vigour in the believers. However, Allãh saved them from following those Satans who had brought such news for discouraging the believers.

These verses fit completely on the events of the Lesser Badr,[4] which was described in the chapter of "The House of 'Imrãn". The verses agree in theme with those in that chapter, as will be clear on meditation. Allãh says there: (As for) *those who responded to the call of Allãh and the Messenger* (even) *after the wound had afflicted them, those among them who do good* (to others) *and guard* (against evil) *shall have a great reward. Those to who the people said: "Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them"; but this* (only) *increased their faith, and they said: "Allãh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is* (He)*". So they returned with favour from Allãh and* (His) *grace; no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allãh; and Allãh is the Lord of the mighty grace. That is only the Satan that frightens his friends; so do not fear them, and fear Me if you are Believers* (3:172-5).

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[4] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng.), vol.7, pp.110-13 (*tr.*).

As you see, these verses describe how the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was calling the people, "after the wound had afflicted them" in the calamity of Uḥud, to come with him to meet the disbelievers, and how some people were demoralizing the believers, trying to turn them away from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and frightening them that the polytheists were gathered together against the believers. Then, the verses assert that all this was a plan of the Satan who spoke through his friends; and exhort the believers not to fear the Satan and his friends; rather they should fear Allãh if they were believers.

Ponder on these verses and then again on the verses under discussion (*And when there comes to them news of security or fear . . .*). Your will find no room for doubt that the verses under discussion too describe the same episode of the Lesser Badr. The Qur'ãn includes that episode in the list of the behaviours for which it blames the believers of the weaker faith. For example: *but when fighting was prescribed for them . . . ; "Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained fighting for uṣ" . . . and if a benefit comes to them . . . ; And they say: "Obedience".* And then it goes on to say in the same tone: "And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it."

QUR'ÃN: ***and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those among them who* (can) *draw out the truth of it, would have known it*:** Here they are not required to refer it to Allãh as was done in the preceding verse 59: *then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allãh and the Messenger if you believe in Allãh and the last day.* It is because in that verse the talk was about a disputed legislative order; and on one has any authority in that field except Allãh and His Messenger. But in the verse under discussion they are told to refer a news of security or fear, and such a news cannot be referred to Allãh and His book; the people who could decide about it were the Messenger and those in authority among them. If the news were referred to them they could find out its reality and explain to the believers whether it was true or false, right or wrong.

The knowledge [in "would have known"] means distinguishing truth from falsehood and right from wrong; it is the same connotation as is found in the verses: *that Allãh might know who fears Him in secret* (5:94); *And most certainly Allãh will know those who believe, and most certainly He will know the hypocrites* (29:11).

Istinbāṭ (اِسْتِنْبَاطْ = to draw out a talk from ambiguity to distinctness and knowledge); it is derived from *an-nabṭ* (اَلنَّبَطْ = to

gush out, to stream forth). The phrase, "those among them who (can) draw out the truth of it", may point to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and those in authority; that they may investigate the matter and find out the truth. Or, it may point to those who are required to refer it to the Messenger and the people of authority; in that case, it would mean that the believers would know the truth as shown by the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and those in authority.

According to the former interpretation (which is the obvious meaning of the verse), the verse says that the Messenger and the people of authority will distinguish the truth if they draw out the reality, that is, if they think that doing so is in the interest of the religion and society. According to the second interpretation, it will mean: Those believers who ask and are eager to know the truth of the matter will know it [from the Messenger and the people of authority].

The phrase, *ulu 'l-amr* (= أُولُوالأَمْرِ those vested with authority; those in authority) has the same connotations in the preceding verse 59: *O you who believe! obey Allãh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*. As described there, the exegetes have differed much in the explanation of this phrase; however mainly there are five interpretations. The meaning which we have mentioned here is more obvious from this verse [as is explained below].

1. The view that *ulu 'l-amr* means the leaders of the fighting detachments is not relevant here. Those leaders had no authority except over a particular band of fighters in a particular combat; they had no knowledge or authority beyond that. But the verse here talks about something much bigger and more important: Disturbance of security, spreading of fear and general fright which the polytheists caused by infiltrating spies and secret agents who spread rumours to demoralize the believers. What concern the leaders of fighting bands had with such matterș How could they explain the truth or otherwise of such news if the people referred it to them?

2. The opinion that *ulu 'l-amr* means scholars is equally irrelevant. The scholars – and in that era they were the narrators of traditions, jurisprudents, reciters of Qur'ãn and theologians – had expertise in tradition, jurisprudence, etc. But this verse speaks about matters of security and general feeling of terror; it is concerned with such news which was deeply connected with political affairs, which if ignored or wrongly handled could disturb the Muslims' lives and result in such sociological calamities which no reformer could ever put right. It could nullify the nation's endeavours in the path of its felicity; or

could rob them of their supremacy and make them prey of humiliation and degradation, or leave them to be killed or imprisoned. What expertise did the scholars – in their capacity as narrators of traditions, experts of jurisprudence or reciters of Qur'ãn and so on – have in these matters, that Allãh would order the people to refer such news to them? How could they solve such problems in the political arena?

3. The opinion that it refers to the 'rightly guided' caliphs (Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmãn and 'Alī) is more baseless. First of all, there is no proof for it in the Book of Allãh or a definitely accepted tradition. Secondly, we have a right to ask: Was the order given in this verse limited to the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)? Or, was it general – for his time as well as after him? If it was meant for his time only, then the four personalities should have been known as the people of authority o all the people and particularly to the Companions of the Prophet; but the history and traditions do not record any such especial status for them at all. In case it was valid for the post-Prophetic era too, then its validity was bound to expire after those four caliphs had passed away. If so, then the verse should have contained some indication to that effect as is the case with other verses which announce some especial rules for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); but the verse does not hint at any such limitation.

4. The interpretation of *ulu 'l-amr* as the people who 'tie and open', the influential persons, is equally out of place. Such exegetes know that there was no group, in the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), known as *ahlu 'l-ḥalli wa 'l-'aqd*, like other civilized societies which do have well-defined committees and councils, e.g. cabinet of ministers, delegations sent to conferences, etc. At that time the only rule implemented in the *ummah* was of Allãh and His Messenger. This difficulty compelled him to say that *ulu 'l-amr* were those Companions whose advice was sought and whom the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) consulted.

But, the fact remains that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) included in his consultations not only the believers but even hypocrites like 'Abdullãh ibn Abī and his band. The story of his consultation in the battle of Uḥud is well-known. How can Allãh order the believers to refer such sensitive news to such people?

Moreover, no one denies that 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn 'Awf was among those who had this status in the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and even after him. And these verses, which admonish the believers of weaker faith and put them to shame for what they had done, have begun with exposing him and his group in these words: *Have you not*

seen those to whom it was said: "Withhold your hands . . ." This tradition has been narrated by an-Nasāī (in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*), al-Ḥākim (in his *al-Mustadrak*, declaring that it is a correct tradition) and aṭ-Ṭabarī and others in their books of *tafsīr*. And the said traditions have been given under "Traditions" under the preceding verses. Keeping this in view, how can one say that the believers were ordered to refer this matter to such people?

Now, remains only the fifth interpretation which we had preferred under the verse: *obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you . . .* (4:59). [That is: The *ulu 'l-amr* are the Twelve sinless successors of the Holy Prophet, s.a.w.a.]

QUR'ĀN: ***and were it not for the grace of Allāh upon you and his mercy, you would have certainly followed the Satan save a few*****:** As stated earlier, the verses apparently point to the events of the Lesser Badr when Abū Sufyān had sent Naʿīm ibn Masʿūd al-Ashjaʿī to Medina to spread fear and fright among the people in order that they should not go forth to Badr. Hence, following of Satan means acceptance of the said news and failure to go to Badr.

In that case, the exception, "save a few", is quite in place; there is no need to strive artfully and stretch its meaning. Naʿīm had informed the Muslims that Abū Sufyān had gathered many groups and readied a huge armies; therefore the Muslims should not go out to fight against them, otherwise they (the Muslims) would be annihilated. This rumour demoralized the people and they offered many excuses for not going to Badr. Only the Prophet and a few persons nearest to him remained steadfast, and it is they who are mentioned in the exception phrase, "save a few". Most of the people had wavered and tried to avoid going out, except a few steadfast ones; then some more joined them and the group proceeded out.

This interpretation of the exception clause is supported by the earlier-mentioned context and association, and the meaning is quite clear.

The exegetes have, however, interpreted this clause in various artful ways, none of them free from distortion or misrepresentation. For example:-

1. The grace and mercy of Allāh points to the divine guidance which led them to the obedience of Allāh, His Messenger and those in authority; and the excepted 'few' refers to the good-natured pure-hearted believers. Thus, the verse means: If Allāh had not guided you

to the obedience by ordering you to refer the matter to those in authority, you would certainly have followed the Satan by falling into error and going astray, except a few good-natured believers among you who would not have deviated from truth and goodness.

COMMENT: This interpretation confines the divine grace and mercy to a certain order while there is no reason for such restriction. It is not in keeping with the Qur'ãnic style. Moreover, the verse apparently describes Allãh's favour for something which had already passed and was completed.

2. The verse means what it apparently says. The believers of weaker faith need extra grace and mercy from Allãh, although the sincere ones too cannot manage without divine care.

COMMENT: If it is its apparent meaning, then the Qur'ãn, in its sublime literary style, must have rebutted it here and now. But it has not. Allãh says: *and were it not for Allãh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure* (24:21); and He says to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who was the best of the human beings: *And had it not been that We had already established you, you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little; in that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double* (punishment) *in this life and a double* (punishment) *after death . . .* (17:74-75).

3. The divine grace and mercy means the Qur'ãn and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

4. It means the victory. The exception then is perfectly in place; because the majority stands firm on truth only when their hearts are happy as a result of victory and similar [worldly] benefits, which prove to them that God cares for them. Otherwise, if they were to taste bitter truth, then only a few believers would submit to it, that is, those only who might be having deep insight of the religion.

5. The exception, "save a few", is related to the verb, "they spread it".

6. No. It is related to the verb, "who (can) draw out the truth of it".

7. The exception is in word only; it actually has the connotation of comprehensiveness. Thus the verse actually means, 'and were it not for the divine grace and mercy, all of you would have certainly followed the Satan'. It is not unlike the verse: *We will make you recite so you shall not forget, except what Allãh pleases* (87:6-7). Because in this case too, the exception emphasises the comprehensiveness of "not forgetting".

COMMENT: All these explanations are merely literary affection and trickery.

QUR'ÃN: ***Fight then in Allãh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour . . . exemplary punishment*****:** *at-Taklīf* (اَلتَّكْلِيف) is derived from *al-kulfah* (اَلْكُلْفَه = discomfort, hardship) and means imposition of duty and responsibility, because the person concerned undergoes hardship in discharging his duties. *at-Tankīl* (اَلتَّنْكِيْل) is derived from *an-nakãl* (اَلنَّكَال = exemplary punishment). According to *Majma'u 'l-bayãn*, it means: a punishment which discourages the guilty from committing that error again and makes him into a lesson to others; in short, a punishment fear of which prevents people from doing such mischief in future.

"*Fa*" (فَ = then, so) in "Fight then in Allãh's way" signifies that the order to fight, [even alone, if necessary] is based on the sum-total of the preceding verses, that is, the people's apathy and lethargy in going forth to face the enemy. It is clearly reflected in the sentences that follow: "this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself . . . " The meaning, therefore, is as follows: As they are lethargic concerning *jihãd* and are unwilling to fight, then you, O Messenger of Allãh! should fight the unbelievers on your own; do not be disheartened because of their apathy and disobedience of the divine command; you will no be asked about their obligation, you are responsible only for your own duties. As for the others, your only responsibility is to exhort and rouse them to fight. Therefore, you go forth for fighting and at the same time rouse the believers to ardour. May be, in this way Allãh will prevent the unbelievers from fighting. The sentence, "this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself", actually means, 'except concerning your own deed'. In other words, there is in this excepted clause a deleted first construct of possessive case.

"may be Allãh will restrain . . .": I was mentioned that *'asã* (عَسي = may be) expressed hope. That hope can be found in the mind of the speaker, or the addressee, or it may arise because of the situation. As such, there is no need to assert that 'may be', when used by Allãh, denotes certainty.

Through this verse, Allãh further reviles those people who showed apathy towards *jihãd* until Allãh ordered His Prophet to go forth for fighting alone; and told him to turn aside from those sluggish people. He should not exhort them to answer the call for *jihãd*; rather

he should leave them alone. He should not be discouraged by their behaviour. His only responsibility is in relation to his own self; apart from that, he should rouse the believers to ardour – and then let him who wants answer the call, and him who wants disobey Allãh and His Prophet.

T R A D I T I O N S

[al-Kulaynī narrates] through his chains from Muḥammad ibn ʻAjlãn that he said: "I heard Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) saying: 'Allãh had put some people to shame because of their spreading [rumours], as He, the Mighty, the Great, says: *And when there comes to them news of security or fear, they spread it*. Therefore, take care not to spread [rumours].' " (*al-Kãfī*)

Also he narrates from ʻAbdul-Ḥamīd ibn Abi d-Daylam from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has said: *Obey Allãh and the Messenger and those* vested *with authority from among you*; also He has said: *and if they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those among them who* (can) *draw out the truth in it would have known it*. Thus He has returned the people to *ulu 'l-amr* from among them, ordering them (the people) to obey them (*ulu 'l-amr*) and refer all affairs to them." (*ibid.*)

The author says: This *ḥadīth* supports the explanation given by us that *ulu 'l-amr* in this verse refers to the same Imãms who were mentioned in the 59th verse.

ʻAbdullãh ibn ʻAjlãn narrates from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: *and if they had referred it ot the Messenger and to those in authority among them*, that he (the Imãm, a.s.) said: "They are the Imãms." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

The author says: This meaning has also been narrated from ʻAbdullãh ibn Jundab from ar-Riḍã (a.s.) in a letter which the Imãm (a.s.) had written about the al-Wãqifiyyah. The same meaning is narrated by al-Mufīd in *al-Ikhtiṣãṣ* from Isḥãq ibn ʻAmmãr from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.), *inter alia*, in a long tradition.

Muḥammad ibn al-Fuḍayl narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: *and were it not for the grace of Allãh upon you and His mercy*, that [the Imãm, a.s.] said: "Grace is the Messenger of Allãh and His mercy is the Commander of the Believers." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

Zurārah has narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), and Ḥumrān from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.), that they said: "Allāh's grace is His Messenger and His mercy is *al-wilāyah* (اَلْوِلاَيَة = love and obedience) of the Imāms." (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn al-Fuḍayl narrates from al-‘Abdu 'ṣ-Ṣāliḥ [the 7th Imām, a.s.] that he said: "The mercy is the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and the grace, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.)." (*ibid.*)

The author says: These traditions are based on the flow of the Qur’ān; and they explain the divine grace and mercy in terms of messengership and imāmat. These are the two connected ropes with which Allāh has rescued us from the pit of straying and the trap of the Satan. One of them is the source of bringing the Truth, while the other is the means of keeping it alive. The last tradition is more in keeping with the Qur’ānic point of view, because Allāh has named His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) 'Mercy', as He says in His book: *And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the world* (21:107).

‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd narrates through Murāzim from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "Allāh imposed a duty on the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) which He had not imposed on anyone before him; then he imposed on him to go forth all alone against all the people, even if he did not find any group to stand by him; and He had not obliged anyone before or after him to do so." Then he recited this verse: *Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself.* Then the Imām (a.s.) said: "And Allāh granted him to take for himself what Allāh has taken for himself. Thus Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it.*"[5] And likewise He has made *Ṣalawāt* for the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) (equal to) ten good deeds." (*al-Kāfī*)

Sulaymān ibn Khālid says: "I informed Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about what the people said concerning ‘Alī (a.s.): 'If he had any right then what prevented him from standing up for iṭ' (The Imām, a.s.) said: 'Verily Allāh has not imposed such duty to anyone except the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) as He says: *Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself, and rouse the believers to ardour*. So, this is not except for the Messenger; and He has said about the others: [*And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day*] *unless he turns aside for the sake of fighting or withdraws to*

[5] *Qur'ān*, 6:160 (*tr.*)

a company . . . [6]; and at that time there was no group to support him (ʻAlī, a.s.) in his affair." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

Zayd ash-Shaḥḥām narrates from Jaʻfar ibn Muḥammad (peace be on both) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) never said 'No' when he was asked for anything. If he had it, he gave it; if he did not have it, he said: 'It will be if Allāh so wishes'; and he never took revenge of any evil (done to him); and he never met any expedition but he himself was on head of it – ever since the verse was revealed to him: *Fight then in Allāh's way; this is not imposed on you except in relation to yourself*. (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are other traditions too of the same meaning.

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[6] *Qur'ān*, 8:16 (*tr.*)

مَّن يَشْفَعْ شَفَٰعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُن لَّهُۥ
نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا ۖ وَمَن يَشْفَعْ شَفَٰعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُن لَّهُۥ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا ۗ
وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ مُّقِيتًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِذَا حُيِّيتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا۟
بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَآ أَوْ رُدُّوهَآ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾
ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ لَيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ
وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾ ۞ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِى ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ
فِئَتَيْنِ وَٱللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُم بِمَا كَسَبُوٓا۟ ۚ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَن تَهْدُوا۟ مَنْ
أَضَلَّ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَمَن يُضْلِلِ ٱللَّهُ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُۥ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَدُّوا۟ لَوْ
تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا۟ فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَآءً ۖ فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءَ
حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ
حَيْثُ وَجَدتُّمُوهُمْ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٨٩﴾
إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍۭ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَٰقٌ أَوْ جَآءُوكُمْ
حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَن يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَٰتِلُوا۟ قَوْمَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ

ٱللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلَقَٰتَلُوكُمْ ۚ فَإِنِ ٱعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ
وَأَلْقَوْا۟ إِلَيْكُمُ ٱلسَّلَمَ فَمَا جَعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٠﴾
سَتَجِدُونَ ءَاخَرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا۟ قَوْمَهُمْ كُلَّ
مَا رُدُّوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱلْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكِسُوا۟ فِيهَا ۚ فَإِن لَّمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُوٓا۟ إِلَيْكُمُ
ٱلسَّلَمَ وَيَكُفُّوٓا۟ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ وَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ
ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ ۚ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكُمْ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَٰنًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٩١﴾

Whoever intercedes a good intercession shall have a share of it, and whoever intercedes a bad intercession shall have the responsibility of it; and Allãh controls all things (85). *And when you are greeted with greeting, greet with a better* (greeting) *than it or return it; surely Allãh takes account of all things* (86). *Allãh, there is no god but He – He will most certainly gather you together on the Resurrection Day, there is no doubt in it; and who is more true in word than Allāḥ* (87) *What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties about the hypocrites, while Allãh has made them return* (to unbelief) *for what they have earned? Do you wish to guide him whom Allãh has forsaken to stray? And whomsoever Allãh forsakes to stray, you shall by no means find a way for him* (88). *They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be* (all) *alike; therefore take not friends from among them until they migrate in Allãh's way; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper* (89). *Except those who reach a people between whom and you there is a covenant, or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allãh had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they would have certainly fought you; therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allãh has not made for you a way against them* (90). *Shortly you will*

find others who desire that they should be safe from and secure from their own people; as often as they are sent back to the mischief they get thrown into it headlong; therefore if they do not withdraw from you, and (do not) *offer you peace and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them; and against these We have given you a clear authority* (91).

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COMMENTARY

The verses are connected with the preceding ones, as these are concerned with the order of fighting against a particular group of polytheists – the double-faced among them. On meditation it is seen that they were revealed about some polytheists who claimed to accept Islam in presence of the believers, and then they returned to their homes and joined the polytheists in disbelief. [When a chance came to fight them], the believers were divided; one group said that they should be fought against, while the other opposed it and interceded for them because they had accepted Islam. But Allãh offers them only two alternatives: they should [leave their original place and] migrate to medina otherwise they should be struck at. Then He warns the believers against interceding for such people.

Such people will be repeatedly followed by others like them; all of them will be required to offer peace to the Muslims; if they fail to do so, they should be fought. This is the main theme, for which the ground is paved by describing the condition of intercession in one verse, and offering of greetings in another, as it is relevant to offering of peace.

QUR'ÃN: ***Whoever intercedes a good intercession . . . :*** *an-Naṣīb* (اَلنَّصِيْبُ) and *al-kifl* (اَلْكِفْل) both have the same meaning, that is, share [although we have translated the latter as 'responsibility']. Intercession is a sort of mediation aimed at making up a deficiency or gaining a benefit out the desire defect. Therefore, it cannot escape its responsibility, and will have to share the blame or reward of the thing interceded for. The interceder will have his share of good or evil resulting from the intercession. That is why Allãh says: *Whoever intercedes . . . shall have the responsibility of it*.

By mentioning this reality, Allãh reminds the believers and warns them to be careful when interceding for someone. They should refrain if the subject of intercession was undesirable and likely to cause evil and mischief. For example, some believers had interceded on behalf of the double-faced polytheists that they should not be attacked. Those interceders should have realized that if a small evil is left unopposed and allowed to grow and spread, it would result in such a great evil that no one would be able to stand against it and it would destroy the tilth and the stock. The verse therefore contains a prohibition of bad intercession, that is, intercession of those indulging in oppression and transgression, hypocrisy and polytheism – in short for those who create mischief on the earth.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when you are greeted with a greeting . . . :*** A greeting should be returned with a better or a similar greeting. It is a general order covering all greetings; but in this context it is applicable to the greeting of peace which might be addressed to the Muslims, as the following verses show.

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh, there is no god but He – He will most a certainly gather you . . . :*** Its meaning is clear. It gives a sort of reason to the orders given in the preceding two verses: Adhere to the order given to you regarding good and bad intercession; and do not ignore the greetings offered to you, by turning aside or rejecting it; because a day is sure to come when Allãh will gather you all and reward or punish you for acceptance or rejection of His commandments.

QUR'ÃN: ***What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties about the hypocrites, while Allãh has made them return* (to unbelief) *for what they have earned? . . . :*** *al-Fi'ah* (اَلفِئَةْ = group, party); *al-irkãs* (اَلأركاسُ = to return). The theme shows that the verse in a way branches out from the preceding one which had paved the way for it, that is, *Whoever intercedes a good intercession . . .* The meaning will be as follows: As a bad intercession makes the interceder share in its bad effects, then what has happened to you, O believers, that you have become divided into two groups regarding the double-faced polytheists? Why are you disputing among yourselves? One party says that those polytheists should be fought against, while the other intercedes for them and exhorts the believers not to fight. This latter group wants you to leave the tree of mischief alone; not

realizing that the tree will go on growing with the polytheists' growth, and will bear fruit when those polytheists become stronger. The fact remains that Allāh has let them return to straying after they had got out of it; it was done as a punishment for what they had earned of evil deeds. Do you want – through your intercession – to guide those whom Allāh has left to go astray? But whosoever is left by Allāh to go astray, cannot get to the path of guidance.

The sentence, *And whomsoever Allāh forsakes to stray, you* [2nd person singular] *shall by no means find a way for him*, is addressed directly to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), instead of the believers; it is intended to show that those Muslims who had interceded on behalf of the double-faced polytheists were not capable of understanding this speech property; otherwise, they would not have interceded. That is why Allāh has turned away from them and addressed the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), who had true and clear knowledge of these realities.

QUR'ĀN: ***They desire that you should disbelieve . . . or a helper*****:** It is a further explanation of the words, *while Allāh has made them return* (to disbelief) *for what they have earned? Do you wish to guide him whom Allāh has forsaken to stray*? The meaning: They disbelieved, and then went further in disbelief, until now they wish you to join them in their disbelief, so that you too might become like them. Then Allāh forbids the Muslims to take friends from among them except when they leave their homes and migrate in the way of Allāh. If they fail to do so, then your only duty towards them is to seize them and kill them wherever they are found; the believers must refrain from befriending them or seeking their help. The clause, "but if they return back", indicates that the believers must ask them to migrate; if they migrated then they should be taken as friends, otherwise they are to be killed.

QUR'ĀN: ***Except those who reach a people . . . for you a way against them*****:** Allāh has excepted two groups from the above order (*if they turn back then seize them and kill them wherever you find them*). One: Those who reach a people who have made a covenant with the Muslims. Two: Those disbelievers who find themselves in a dilemma; they do not like to fight the Muslims, nor do they relish the idea of fighting against their own people. Thus they withdraw from the believers and offer them peace; they are neither with the believers nor against them. These two groups are excepted from the above order.

QUR'ÃN: ***Shortly you will find others . . . against these We have given you a clear authority***: It is a forecast that shortly you will face another group, like the second excepted one. They will try to be safe from you as well as from their own people. But Allãh tells the believers that those people are hypocrites; no trust should be put in their covenants or their offer of peace. That is why Allãh has changed the two positive conditions imposed on the former group (*if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace*) with the negative conditions for this latter one: *if they do not withdraw from you, and* (do not) *offer you peace and restrain their hands*. It is a sort of warning that the believers should remain on guard against them. The meaning is clear.

ON GREETINGS

The peoples and nations, civilized and uncivilized, developed and less developed, all have their own ways of greetings used when one person meets another; these greetings take various forms: there is nodding of head or bowing it, raising hand in various ways, removing the hat and many similar gestures. It all depends on different factors active in the society, concerned.

Look at different forms of greetings found in various societies, and you will find that all of them demonstrate a sort of submission, self-abasement and degradation, offered by a lowly person to an august personality, by a plebeian to a high-bred, by an obedient follower to the one in authority, by a slave to his master. In short, all these customs are relics of the slavery system which has prevailed throughout the world from the early primitive ages in one form or the other. That is why these greetings are always offered by a follower to his leader, and a subordinate to his superior. This, in short, is a result of idolatry nurtured by the system of slavery.

As you know, the most important aim of Islam is to erase idolatry and every rite resulting from or based on it. That is why Islam has initiated a system of greeting free from such defects, in contrast to the relics of idol-worship and slavery. The Islamic greeting offers peace to the greeted one. It offers him safety from transgression against his rights, and assures him that he has nothing to fear from the greeter concerning his natural freedom bestowed on him by the Creator. Obviously, it is the first requirement of a social order based on mutual cooperation that the individual members should feel secure

and safe from one another as far as their lives, honour and properties are concerned. Every social trouble emanates from one of these three factors .

This is the *as-salãm* (السَّلامُ = peace, greeting) which Allãh has prescribed for the people when they meet each other. He says: *So when you enter houses greet your people with a salutation from Allãh blessed* (and) *goodly* (24:61); *O you who believe! do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates; this is better for you, that you may be mindful* (24:27). Allãh has taught His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) to greet the believers – although he is their Chief: *And when those who believe in Our signs come to you, say: "Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself, . . . "* (6:54); and also ordered him to offer peace to the others: *So turn away from them and say, "Peace!" for they shall soon come to know* (43: 89).

Greeting, by offering 'peace', was common in pre-Islamic Arabia, as is seen in the poetry and other forms of literature transmitted from them. *Lisanu 'l-'Arab* says: "The Arabs in pre-Islamic days greeted each other in various ways: one said to one's companion: 'Good morning to you', and 'You be safe from desdain'; also it was said: 'Peace be on you'; in a way it was a symbol of mutual peace and a declaration that there was to be no fighting between them: Then Allãh sent Islam to them and they were told to use only the 'Peace' formula for greeting, and ordered to say it loudly."

At the same time, Allãh mentions it several times in the stories of Ibrãhīm (a.s.). It provides an evidence that this was, like *hajj*, etc., a relic of the pure religion of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) among the Arabs. Allãh describes him as saying to his father [i.e., uncle]: *He said:"Peace be on you! I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; . . ."* (19:47). Also He says: *And certainly Our messengers came to Ibrãhīm with good news. They said: "Peace!" " Peace," said he . . .* (11 :69). This story is narrated in more than one place in the Qur'ãn.

Allãh has taken it as His own greeting and used it in various places in His book: *Peace be on Nūḥ in all the worlds* (37:79); *Peace be on Ibrãhīm* (37:109); *Peace be on Mūsã and Hãrūn* (37:120); *Peace be on Ilyãsīn* (37:130); *And peace be on the messengers* (37:181).

Then Allãh says that it is the greeting of the honoured angels: *Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: "Peace be on you! . . . "* (16: 32); *. . . and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate: "Peace be on you,"* (13:23-24) And the same will be the

greeting of the people of the Garden: *and their greeting in it shall be: "Peace,"* . . . (10:10); *They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse except the word: "Peace, peace!"* (56:25-26).

T R A D I T I O N S

It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* under the verse, And when you are greeted . . . : 'Alī ibn Ibrãhīm has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* from the two Truthful ones [the 5th and the 6th Imãms, a.s.] "In this verse, greeting means 'Peace' and other [acts of] kindness."

[al-Kulaynī narrates] through his chains from as-Sakūnī that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said: 'To offer (greeting of) peace is an [act of] voluntary righteousness, and to give its reply is obligatory.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

Jarrãḥ al-Madãinī narrates from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "A younger should offer greeting to an elder; a walker to the sitter and a small group to the bigger one." (*ibid.*)

'Uyaynah[7] narrates through Mus'ab from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "A small group should begin salutation to the bigger one; a rider to the walker; riders of mulea to the rideras of donkeys and the riders of horses to the riders of mules. (*ibid.*)

Ibn Bakīr narrates from one of his fellows from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he heard him saying: "The rider salutes the walker, and the walker (salutes) the sitter; and when [two] groups meet, the smaller one salutes the bigger one; and when one person meets a group, he will offer greeting to the group." (*ibid.*)

The author says: A nearly similar tradition has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from al-Bayhaqī from Zayd ibn Aslam from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) said: "When a group passes by [another] group, it is enough if one of them offers greeting; and if greeting was offered to a group then it is sufficient if one of them replies." (*al-Kãfī*)

ash-Shaykh narrates through his chains from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he said: "I visited Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and he was praying; so I said: 'Peace be on you;' he said: 'Peace be on you; ' then I said; 'How do you do?' But he [the Imãm, a.s.] remaind silent [i.e., did not reply]. When he finished the prayer, I said: 'Should one reply to the salutation

[7] 'Anbasah

when one is praying?' He said: 'Yes, in the same words he was saluted with.'" (*at-Tahdhīb*)

Manṣūr ibn Ḥãzim narrates from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "When a man salutes you and you are praying, you will return [the same words] as he had used (but) in a low voice." (*ibid.*)

[aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates] through his chains from Masʻadah ibn Ṣadaqah from Jaʻfar ibn Muḥammad from his father (peace be on both) that he said: "Do not greet the Jews, nor the Christians, nor the Fire-worshippers, nor the idol-worshippers; (greet) neither (those who are sitting) on tables where liquor is being used, nor on the people (playing) chess and backgammon; (salute) not an effeminate person, nor a poet who slenders married women; (you should) not greet one who is praying because he is unable to return (your) greeting (inasmuch as greeting a Muslim is a voluntary good act while to return it is obligatory); (likewise, do not greet) an interest-eater, nor a man sitting for evacuating the bowels, nor a person who is in Turkish bath, nor a sinful person who manifests his sins." (*Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of the above-quoted themes. The preceding commentary sufficiently explains the traditions. 'Peace' as a greeting announces that there is peace, security and safety extended between the two parties on the basis of equality and balance, and that neither wants to overpower the other. Of course, the traditions guide that a younger should salute his elder; a smaller group or a single man should greet a larger group; but it is not against the principle of equality; it only shows that everyone is bound to respect the others' rights. Islam does not want people to neglect others' rights, or ignore the virtues and excellent found in others. On the contrary, it has ordered its followers to pay respects to those who are more virtuous, and to recognize the rights of the right-holders. At the same time Islam does not allow a virtuous person to be proud of his virtues or to think himself as superior to others, or to transgress the limit by showing arrogance or haughtiness against fellow human beings. Because, such behaviour would disturb the balance between various sections of the society.

The prohibition of saluting some groups is based on the Qurʼãnic injunction against befriending them or inclining towards them. Allãh says: *do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends* (5:51); *do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends* (60:1); *and do not incline to those who are unjust* (11 :113) .

Of course, some times it appears in the interest of Islam to go near some unjust people with an aim to convey the message of religion or to make them hear the word of truth; and then it becomes necessary to greet them in order to establish good rapport with them. For instance, Allãh has told the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): *So turn away from them* [the unbelievers] *and say, "Peace!"* . . . (43:89). Also, He praises the believers in these words: . . . *and when the ignorant address them, they say: "Peace."* (25: 63).

It is narrated that a man said to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): "Peace be on you." He (the Prophet) said: "And on you be peace and mercy of Allãh." Then another man said: "Peace be on you and mercy of Allãh'; and (the Prophet) said: 'And on you be peace and mercy of Allãh and His blessings." Then a (third) man said: "Peace be on you and mercy of Allãh and His blessings"; and (the Prophet) said: "And on you?" That man said: "You decreased me (i.e. shortened the reply to my greeting); then where is the word of Allãh: *And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better* (greeting) *than it*¸ The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: 'You did not leave for me anything to add, so I returned to you the like of it.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, aṣ-Ṣãfī)

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Aḥmad (in *az-Zuhd*) , Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, aṭ-Ṭabarãnī and Ibn Marduwayh through good chain from Salmãn al-Fãrisī.

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said: "The Commander of the Believers (a.s.) passed by a group and greeted them. They said: 'On you be peace and mercy of Allãh and His blessings and His pardon and His pleasure.' The Commander of the Believers (a.s.) said to them: 'Do not take us beyond that which the angels had said to our father, Ibrãhīm; they had said: *The mercy of Allãh and His blessings be on you, O people of the house* (11:73)'" (*al-Kãfī*).

The author says: It indicates that the *sunnah* in complete greeting (i.e., the words of the greeter, 'Peace be on you and the mercy of Allãh and His blessings') is taken from the pure religion of Ibrãhīm (a.s.), and it supports what we have written earlier that the greeting with 'Peace' is a part of the religion of Ibrãhīm (a.s.).

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s,) said: "The completion of greeting for a resident is to shake hands, and completion of salutation for a traveller is to embrace." (*ibid.*)

The Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) said: "When one of you sneezes, say: 'May Allāh have mercy on you', and he should reply: 'May Allāh forgive you and have mercy on you.' Allāh, the Sublime, says: *And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with better* (greeting) *than it* . . ." (al-Khiṣāl)

"A maid brought a bouquet of flowers to al-Ḥasan (a.s.). He said to her: 'You are freed for the sake of Allāh. 'Someone told him something about it. He (a.s.) said: 'Allāh, the High, has taught us manners and said: *And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better* (greeting) *than it* . . . And better than it (flower bouquet) was her emancipation.'" (*al-Manāqib*)

The author says: As you see, these traditions extend the meaning of 'greeting' in this verse.

It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*, under the verse: *What is the matter with you, then, that you have become two parties* . . . ; that commentators differed in opinion as about whom this verse was revealed. It is said that it was revealed about a group who came to Medina from Mecca and pretended before the Muslims that they were believers. Then they returned to Mecca claiming that Medina's [climate] was unhealthy; and at Mecca they showed polytheism. Later they travelled with the merchandise of the polytheists to Yamāmah. The Muslims wanted to fight them, but then they differed among themselves. Some said: "We should not do so because they are believers." Others said: "They are polytheists." Therefore, Allāh revealed this verse. aṭ-Ṭabrisī says that it has been narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) .

It is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī under the verse: *They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved* . . . : "It was revealed about two tribes, the Ashja' and Banū Ḍamrah. It happened that when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) proceeded to Ḥudaybiyyah, he passed by their places. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had concluded a truce with Banū Ḍamrah and made an agreement with them. The companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'O Messenger of Allāh: Here are Banū Damrah nearer to us, and we are afraid they might attack Medina violating [our agreement,] or help the Quraysh against us; so [it would be prudent] if we begin with them.' The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Never. Surely they are the most dutiful of Arabs towards parents, the best to join relationships and the strictest in keeping a promise among them.'

The place of the Ashja‘ was nearer to that of Banū Ḍamrah – and they were a clan of Kinãnah. There was an alliance between the Ashja‘ and Banū Ḍamrah for mutual care and security. There came drought in the area of the Ashja‘ while that of Banū Ḍamrah was green. Therefore, the Ashja‘ proceeded towards Banū Ḍamrah. Hearing this, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) prepared to go to the Ashja‘ for fighting, because of the agreement that he had with Banū Ḍamrah [and he wanted to defend them from the Ashja‘]. Then Allãh revealed: *They desire that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might be* (all) *alike; therefore take not friends from among them until they migrate in Allãh's way; but if they turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them, and take not from among them a friend or a helper.'*

"Then Allãh excepted the Ashja‘ and said: *Except those who reach a people between whom and you there is a covenant, or who come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allãh had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they would have certainly fought you; therefore if they withdraw from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allãh has not made for you a way against them.*

"The area of the Ashja‘ comprised of al Bayḍã’, al-Ḥill and al-Mustabãḥ, and they had reached in vicinity of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). They were frightened because of this proximity to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) that he might send someone to fight them, while the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was apprehensive that they might attack his outer regions. Therefore, he thought of proceeding towards them. When he was thinking about it, the Ashja‘ came and descended at the reef of Sala‘ – their chief was Mas‘ūd ibn Rujaylah and they were seven hundred strong. It was in the month of Rabī‘u '1-Awwal, 6 A.H. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) called Usayd ibn ḤuṢayn and said to him: 'Go with some of your companions to find out why the Ashja‘ have come here.'

"Usayd went out with three of his companions and stood before them [the Ashja‘] and asked: 'What has brought you here?' Mas‘ūd ibn Rujaylah, the Chief of the Ashja‘, went towards Usayd and greeted him and his companions. Then the Ashja‘ said: 'We have come to make an agreement with Muḥammad.' Usayd returned and informed the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: "They were afraid that I might fight then; therefore they wanted peace between me and them.' Then he sent to them ten camel-load of

dates, and said: 'It is a good thing (to send) present before (a serious) work.' Thereafter he went to them and said: ‘O people of Ashja‘! what has brought you here?' They said: 'Our home is near you, and there is none in our nation [i.e., tribe] smaller in number than us; so we were disturbed at the thought of fighting you because we are in close proximity to you; and also we were disturbed at the thought of fighting our own tribe because of the smallness of our number among them; therefore we have come to conclude an agreement with you.' The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) accepted it and made an agreement with them. They stayed there that day and then returned to their area. It was about them that the verse was revealed: *Except those who reach a people between whom and you there is a covenant . . . then Allãh has not made for you a way against them."*

al-Faḍl Abu 'l-‘Abbãs narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: *or who, come to you, their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people,* that he said: "It was revealed about Banū Mudlij; because they came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said: 'Our hearts are not ready to bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allãh; therefore we are not with you nor with our people, [i. e., tribe] against you.'" al-Faḍl says: "I said: 'How did the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) treat them? [The Imãm, a.s.] said: 'He entered into a truce with them, until he is finished with [other] Arabs; then he would invite them [to Islam]; if they accepted [then well and good]; otherwise, he would fight them.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

Sayf ibn ‘Umayrah says: "I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about [the verse], . . . *hrinking from fighting you or fighting their own people; and if Allãh had pleased, He would have given them power over you, so that they would have certainly fought you.* He said: 'My father used to say: "It was revealed about Banū Mudlij; they remained neutral, so they did not fight the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and were not with their people.'" I said: 'Then what did he do with them?' He said: 'The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) did not fight them, until he finished with his enemy; then he threw it at them in the same way.'" (*at Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyãshī)

It is narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said: "The words of Allãh, *a people between whom and you there is a covenant,* refers to Hilãl ibn ‘Uwaymir as-Salamī; he made a covenant with the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) on behalf of his people; and he said during that covenant: 'On the condition that we do not frighten whoever comes to us [from you], O Muḥammad! and you do not frighten whoever comes to you [from us].' So Allãh forbade standing

against someone with whom agreement was made." (*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: These and nearly similar themes have been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*, through various chains from Ibn 'Abbãs and others.

Also, it is written therein: Abū Dãwūd (in his *an-Nãsikh*) , Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, an-Naḥḥãs and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Ibn 'Abbãs regarding the verse: *Except those who reach a people . . . ,* that it was abrogated by the verse of the chapter of "Repentance": *So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them . . .* [Qur'ãn, 9:6].

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وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَن يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَـًٔا ۚ وَمَن قَتَلَ
مُؤْمِنًا خَطَـًٔا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰٓ
أَهْلِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن يَصَّدَّقُوا۟ ۚ فَإِن كَانَ مِن قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَّكُمْ
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ وَإِن كَانَ
مِن قَوْمٍۭ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَـٰقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ
إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهِۦ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ
فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَكَانَ
ٱللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٩٢﴾ وَمَن يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا
مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَآؤُهُۥ جَهَنَّمُ خَـٰلِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ
ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُۥ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُۥ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٣﴾ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا
ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا۟ وَلَا تَقُولُوا۟
لِمَنْ أَلْقَىٰٓ إِلَيْكُمُ ٱلسَّلَـٰمَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا ۚ تَبْتَغُونَ
عَرَضَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ ٱللَّهِ مَغَانِمُ كَثِيرَةٌ ۚ

كَذَٰلِكَ كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَتَبَيَّنُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٤﴾

And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer except by mistake, and whoever kills a believer by mistake, he should free a believing slave, and blood-money should be paid to his people unless they remit it as alms; but if he be from a tribe hostile to you and he is a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (suffices); *and if he is from a tribe between whom and you there is covenant, the blood-money should be paid to his people along with the freeing of a believing slave; but he who does not find* (means to do this) *should fast for two months consecutively, a penance from Allãh, and Allãh is Knowing, Wise* (92). *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell; he shall abide in it and Allãh will send His wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a great chastisement* (93). *O you who believe! when you march forth (for fighting) in Allãh's way, make investigation, and do not say to any one who offers you* (salutation of) *peace: "You are not a believer' coveting the goods of this world's life. But with Allãh there are abundant gains; you were such before, then Allãh conferred* (His) *grace on you; therefore make investigtion; surely Allãh is aware of what you doff* (94).

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C O M M E N T A R Y

QUR'ÃN*: And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer except by mistake:* *al-Khaṭã'* (اَلخَطأ = mistake) has no elongation; to read it with elongation (*al-khaṭa'*) is wrong; here it gives a meaning opposite of 'intentionally', as the following verse (*And whoever kills a believer intentionally* . . .) shows.

"It does not behove" in this verse denotes negation of demand or requisition. In other words, it says: When a believer enters the

sanctuary of faith and belief, there remains in him nothing to demand the killing of another believer who like himself is within the same sanctuary, except if it happens without his intention. Thus the exception is joined, not isolated. The meaning in simple words is as follows: A believer does not want to kill a believer, *per se*; he cannot think of killing him knowing that he too is a believer. There are other verses like this sentence in the same style and the same negation of requisition. For a example: *And it is not for any man* [lit: It does not behove a man] *that Allãh should speak to him . . .* (42:51); *it is not possibe for you* [lit: it does not hehove you]; *that you should make the trees thereof to grow . . .* (27:60); *but they would not believe* [lit: it would not behove them to believe] *in what they had rejected before* (10:74) ; and other similar verses.

All the same, the verse indicates a legal prohibition in the form of a statement. That is: Allãh has never allowed, nor will He ever allow, that a believer should kill another believer. He has made it unlawful except in the case of unintentional killing, inasmuch as the killer did not have any intention of killing a believer; therefore the unlawfulness is not applicable there. It could happen if, for example, he had no intention of killing at all, or if he thought that the victim was an unbeliever whose killing was justified.

Some exegetes have said that the said exception was isolated. According to them, if it is taken as a joined and real exception it would mean that unintentional killing is ordered or allowed. However, it has been explained above that its only significance is removal of prohibition from unintentional killing; not that such killing was allowed. There is no difficulty in accepting this interpretation, and the exception is therefore real and joined.

QUR'ÃN: ***and whoever kills a believer by mistake . . . remit it as alms*****:** *at-Taḥrīr* (اَلتَّحْرِيْرُ = to free a slave); *ar-raqabah* (اَلرَّقَبَةُ = neck; used metaphorically for slave); *ad-diyah* (اَلدِّيَةُ = blood-money; indemnity for bodily injury). It is incumbent (*wãjib*) upon a believer, if he kills a believer unintentionally, to emancipate a believing slave and pay blood-money to the victim's heirs. However, if the victim's heirs leave the blood-money and remit it then it is waived and the killer is not obliged to pay it.

QUR'ÃN: ***but if he be from a tribe hostile to you . . .*** **:** The pronoun,'he', refers to the slain believer; hostile tribe means the

unbelievers who fight the Muslims. If the person slain by mistake was a believer but his heirs were hostile unbelievers, the obligation to free a believing slave will remain in place, but there will be no payment of blood-money, because a fighting unbeliever does not inherit any thing a believer.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if he is from a tribe between whom and you there is a covenant . . .*** **:** As the context shows, in this sentence too the pronoun, '*he*', refers to the slain believer. 'Covenant' refers to agreement, whatever its nature; it includes the agreement of *adh-dhimmah* (اَلذِّمَّة) [by which an unbeliever puts himself under the protection of the Muslims]. Meaning: If the slain believer is from a tribe which has an agreement with the Muslims, the killer is required to pay blood-money together with freeing a slave. In this sentence, payment of blood-money is mentioned first to emphasize the importance of compliance with the agreement.

QUR'ÃN: ***but he who does not find . . . should fast for two months consecutively*****:** That is: he who is unable to free a slave – as it is the nearest item before this clause – *must fast for two consecutively.*

QUR'ÃN: ***a penance from Allãh . . .*** : This order of fastisg is a penance and mercy from Allãh for the person who does not have means to free a slave; and this fits with lightening burden. This order lightens the burden of the believer who financially incapable of freeing a slave.

Also, it is possible to take the 'penance' as a description of the whole laid down reparations beginning from: *he should free a believing slave*. Thus the meaning will be as follows: The prescription of these various reparations for a believer who kills another believer by mistake is a divine providence and penance for cleansing the killer from that filth. He should therefore be cautious and should not carelessly indulge in killing. It is like the words of Allãh: *And there is life for you in the* (law of) *retaliation* (2:17)

At the same time it is a divine providence and penance for the society, because through this reparation their loss of one free man will be made up with addition of another free person, and the financial loss of the slain believer's family will be made up with the blood-money.

It is clear from the above that Islam deems freedom as life and looks at slavery as a sort of murder; also in its eyes a complete

indemnity equals the average earning of a man. This topic will be dealt with in detail somewhere else.

The definitions and exact designation of unintentional and intentional killings, emancipation, indemnity, family of the slain person, and agreement, etc., as mentioned in this verse, may be found in *sunnah*. For further details see the books of *fiqh* (jurisprudence).

QUR'ÃN: ***And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell; . . .*** : *at-Ta'ammud* (اَلتَّعَمُّدُ = intention of an act with its specific aspect). Every intentional act must be having a specific aspect; and it is possible for an act to have more than one aspect. It is therefore possible that a single act may be intentional from one angle and unintentional from the other. Let us say that a hunter fires at an indistinct shape thinking that it was an animal, while in fact it was a man, in this case, if that man is killed, the act will be called intentional and wilful hunting but unintentional killing of the man. Likewise, if he beats a child with a stick for teaching him good manners and the child dies of the blow, it will be an unintentional killing. Consequently, killing a believer intentionally means that the killer had the intention of killing the believer, knowing that the blow or fire would kill him and realizing that the viction was a believer.

Allãh has spoken very harshly concerning the punishment of the person who wilfully kills a believer and declared that he would abide in hell for ever. But the verses, *Surely Allãh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases* (4:48); and, *surely Allãh forgives the faults altogether* (39:53), may restrict to a certain extent the theme of the verse under discussion. Although it threatens the punishment of ever-lasting fire, it does not indicate an irreversible and final decree; therefore it may be forgiven through repentance or intercession.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! when you march forth*** **(for fighting)** ***in Allãh's way, make investigation, . . .*** : *aḍ-Ḍarb* (اَلضَرْبُ) in this context means marching, travelling; the qualifying phrase, "in Allãh's way," shows that it means marching forth for *jihãd*. *at-Tabayyun* (اَلتَّبَيُّن = to distinguish); here it means to differentiate between believer and unbeliever, as the next sentence shows: *and do not say to any one who offers you* (salutation of) *peace: "You are not a believer."* Offering peace means offering the salutation of the believers, i.e., peace. Some reciters have recited it *as-salãm* (اَلسَّلَمُ = submission; surrender).

Coveting the good of this world's life, indicates greed of riches and war-booty. *But with Allãh there are abundant gains*: *al-Maghãnim* (اَلْمَغَانِمُ) is plural of *al-maghnam* (اَلْمَغْنَم = gain, war-booty). What is with Allãh is more excellent than this world's benefits; because, the hereafter's gains are limitless and ever-lasting; you should therefore look forward to it.

QUR'ÃN: ***you were such before, then Allãh conferred*** **(His)** ***grace on you, therefore make investigation; . . .*** : You too, before entering the fold of Islam, had the same tendency, i.e., were covetous of the worldly riches and booties; then Allãh bestowed His favour and grace on you; as a result, you turned from this world's gains towards the abundant gains of the hereafter, which is with Allãh. In this background it is incumbent upon you to investigate and distinguish a believer from unbelievers. The order to investigate properly is repeated here for emphasis.

The verse obviously shows that there had actually occured a killing of a believer. It contains admonition, but does not indicate that it was an intentional killing. Apparently someone among the believers had killed by mistake someone (from among polytheists) who had greeted him with peace. The said believer was not sure that the greeter was really a Muslim; he thought that he was using that salutation and presenting himself as a believer only to save his life. The verse admonishes the killer that Islam only looks at the appearance; the reality inside the hearts is known only to Allãh, the Subttle, the Knower.

According to the above explanation, the clause: *coveting the goods of this world's life*, is an allusion to the state and condition of the people concerned. It means: Your behaviour in killing someone who presents himself as a Muslim, without looking properly into his credentials, without investigating whether his claim was right, resembles the behaviour of a person who covets riches and booties, and kills a believer who announces his belief, on petty unacceptable excuses. Of course, all the believers did have the same tendency before they accepted Islam; their only objective at that time was the riches of this world. But now they have been favoured with true faith and Allãh has shown them the right path. Now they should have investigated properly before taking any action. They must discard the behaviour of the days of ignorance and cleanse themselves of all its motives.

TRADITIONS

It is reported in ad-*Durru 'l-manthūr*, under the verse, *And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer except by mistake:* Ibn Jarīr has narrated from ‘Ikrimah that he said: "al-Ḥārith ibn Yazīd ibn Nubayshah (from the tribe of Banū ‘Āmir ibn Luw’ayy), in company of Abū Jahl, used to torture ‘Ayyāsh ibn Rabī‘ah. Then he [accepted Islam and] went forth migrating to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). [When hereached near Medina], ‘Ayyāsh saw him at al-Ḥarrah and attacked [and killed] him with sword, thinking that he [al-Ḥārith] was still an unbeliever. Then [‘Ayyāsh] came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and informed him. Thereupon, the verse was revealed: *And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer aceept by mistake . . .* The Prophet recited it to him and said: 'Stand up and free [a believing slave].'"

The author says: This theme has been narrated throug other chains too. Some of them say that ‘Ayyāsh had killed him at Mecca on the day Mecca was conquered; ‘Ayyāsh, who till then was imprisoned by the polytheists who tortured him, came out [of prison], and met al-Ḥārith who by that time had accepted Islam although ‘Ayyāsh didn't know it. So ‘Ayyāsh killed him there at that time. But the report of ‘Ikrimah seems more probable and more in keeping with the time of the revelation of the chapter,"The Women".

Ibn Zayd says that the verse was revealed about Abu 'd-Dardā’. He was in an expedition; and went to a gorge to relieve nature. There he saw a man with his sheep. [Abu 'd-Dardā’] attacked him with sword; he said, 'There is no god except Allāh'; but Abu 'd-Dardā’ killed him and brought his sheep to his group. Then some doubt occured in his mind, and he came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and informed him. Thereupon this verse was revealed. (*at-Tafsīr*, aṭ-Ṭabarī)

Another report quoted in *ad-Durru '1-manthūr*, and transmitted by ar-Rūyānī, Ibn Mandah and Abū Nu‘aym from Bakr ibn Ḥārithah al-Juhanī narrates al-Juhanī’s claim that it was revealed about him and he tells a story similar to that of Abu ’d-Dardā’. However, all these traditions are merely attempts to fit the verse on some events or episodes.

al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa‘īd narrates through his chain from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Wherever emancipation of slave is prescribed, [freeing of even] a child suffices, except in reparation of killing, because AlIāh, the High,

says, *he should free a believing slave*; it means a slave who has accepted Islam, that is, has reached the age of responsibility [i.e.,has attained maturity] . . . '" (*Tahdhību 'l-aḥkãm*)

Mūsã ibn Ja'far (a.s.) was asked: "How should a believing slave be recognizeḍ" He said: "According to birth." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) was asked about a Muslim [living] in a land of polytheists who was killed by Muslims, and the leader [of the Muslims] came to know of it afterwards. He (a.s.) said: "He should free in his place a believing; slave; and it is the word of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *but if he be from a tribe hostile to you . . .* " (*Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*).

The author says: A similar *ḥadīth* is narrated by al-'Ayyãshī. The word of the Imãm (a.s.), "should free in his place", indicates that the emancipation aims at adding a free Muslim to take the place of the free Muslim who was killed, as we have written earlier. Also it may be inferred from it that the underlying reason of prescribing the emancipation as atonement of some other sins is to add a free person who has not committed any sin to fill the gap of the one who has gone out of the line as a result of that sin.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) has said: "If a man is required to fast for two months consecutively, and he breaks the fast or becomes sick during the first month, he will have to repeat the fast; but if he has fasted the first month and also fasted a few days from the second month, and then is prevented from continuing because of some genuine cause, then he will have to repay the remaining days [only]. (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: That is, he will fast only the number of the days he could not fast from the second month. The ruling is inferred from the word, *consecutively*.

The same Imãm (a.s.) was asked: "Does a believer who intentionally killed a believer have [a chance of] repentence?" He said: "If he had killed him because of his belief, then there is no repentance for him; but if he had killed him in anger or because of some worldly matter, then his repentance is that he should undergo retaliation [i.e., he should be killed in retribution;] and if he is not recognized [i.e., if people do not know the identity of the killer,] he should himself go to the heirs of the killed believer and own his [guilt of] killing their relatives; then if they forgive him and do not kill him, he should pay them the blood-money, emancipate a [believing] slave, fast two months consecutively and feed sixty needy persons – all this for

repenting [and returning] to Allāh, the Mighty, the Great." (*al-Kāfī; at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

[ash-Shaykh narrates] through his chains from Abu 's-Safātij that Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) said about the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell*: "His recompense is hell if Allāh meted out the punishment to him." (*Tahdhību 'l-aḥkām*)

The author says: The same meaning has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from aṭ-Ṭabarānī and others from Abū Hurayrah from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The above traditions contain many fine points we have already mentioned in the Commentary. There are many traditions on killing and its retribution which may be seen in the books of traditions.

[aṭ-Ṭabrisī] says about the verse: *And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell*, that it was revealed about Muqīs ibn Ḍabābah al-Kinānī. He found his brother, Hishām, killed in [the place of] Banu 'n-Najjār; he described it to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), who sent Qays ibn Hilāl al-Fihrī with him and said to him: "Tell Banu 'n-Najjār, 'If you know the killer of Hishām, surrender him to his brother in order that he may avenge himself, and if you do not know him then pay him his blood-money.'" al-Fihrī conveyed the message and they paid the blood-money. When he was returning with al-Fihrī, the Satan tempted him and said: "You achieved nothing. You took your brothers? blood-money and it will be a disgrace for you. Kill him who is with you, and it will be a life for a life and the blood-money will be an extra [bonus]."Thereupon he struck al-Fihrī with a rock and killed him; and rode a camel and returned to Mecca as an unbeliever; and recited (a poem, in which) he said:

I killed Fihrī in his (Hishām's) *retaliation while I was given his blood-money too,*
By the leaders of Banu 'n-Najjār, the noble and beautiful;
Thus I got my revenge and lied down on pillow,
And I was the first to return to the idols.

Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "I shall not grant his safety, neither in the sanctuary nor outside it." It has been narrated by aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk and a group of exegetes. (*Majmaʻu 'l-bayān*)

The author says: A nearly similar tradition is narrated from Ibn ʻAbbās, Saʻīd ibn Jubayr and others.

It is written in *at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī about the verse: *O you who believe! when you march forth* (for fighting) *in Allãh's way* . . . : "It was revealed when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) returned from the expedition of Khaybar and sent Usãmah ibn Zayd with some horsemen to some Jewish villages in vicinity of Fadak in order that he might call them to lslam. There was, in one of the villages, a man called Mirdãs ibn Nahīk al-Fadakī. When he heard of the horsemen of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), he gathered his family and property at the side of the mountain and came forward, saying: 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allãh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allãh.'Usãmah ibn Zayd passed by him, and speared him to death. When he came back to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), he informed him of it. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said to him: 'You killed a man who was bearing witness that there was no god except Allãh and that I was the Messenger of Allãḥ' He said: 'O Messenger of Allãh! he had said it only to save his life.' The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Neither did you remove the covering from his heart [to see what was inside it], nor did you accept what he said by his tongue, nor did you know what was inside his soul!' Usãmah then swore an oath that after that he would never kill any one who bore witness that there was no god except Allãh and that Muḥammad was the Messenger of Allãh. Therefore, he did not join the Commander of the Believers in his battles. It was about this incident that the verse was revealed: *and do not say to any one who offers you* (salutation of) *peace: "You are not a believer," coveting the goods of this world's life* . . . "

The author says: The same story has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarī in his *at-Tafsīr* from as-Suddī. *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* quotes several other traditions describing why this verse was revealed; some of them say that the event concerned Miqdãd ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī; others mention Abu 'd-Dardã'; yet others, the name of Muḥlim ibn Juthãmah; while some others have left the story vague without mentioning the name of the killer or the killed. Be as it may, the history books mention the oath of Usãmah ibn Zayd and the excuse he offered to 'Alī (a.s.) for remaining aloof from his battles. And Allãh knows better.

لَّا يَسْتَوِي ٱلْقَٰعِدُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُو۟لِى ٱلضَّرَرِ وَٱلْمُجَٰهِدُونَ
فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُجَٰهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ
وَأَنفُسِهِمْ عَلَى ٱلْقَٰعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ وَفَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ
ٱلْمُجَٰهِدِينَ عَلَى ٱلْقَٰعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَٰتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً
وَرَحْمَةً ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَوَفَّىٰهُمُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ
ظَالِمِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا۟ فِيمَ كُنتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا۟ كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ
قَالُوٓا۟ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ ٱللَّهِ وَٰسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا۟ فِيهَا ۚ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ مَأْوَىٰهُمْ
جَهَنَّمُ ۖ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ إِلَّا ٱلْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ ٱلرِّجَالِ
وَٱلنِّسَآءِ وَٱلْوِلْدَٰنِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾
فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَسَى ٱللَّهُ أَن يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾
۞ وَمَن يُهَاجِرْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ مُرَٰغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً
وَمَن يَخْرُجْ مِنۢ بَيْتِهِۦ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ ٱلْمَوْتُ
فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُۥ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

The holders back from among the believers, not having any injury, and those who strive hard in Allãh's way with their property and their persons are not equal; Allãh has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel the holders back in rank, and to each Allãh has promised good; and Allãh has distinguished the strivers above the holders back (by) *a great recompense* (95)*:* (High) *degrees from Him and pardon and mercy, and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (96). *Surely* (as for) *those whom the angels cause to die while the are unjust to their souls they shall say: "In what state were you?" They shall say: "We were weak in the earth." They shall say: "Was not Allãh's earth vast* (enough), *so that you should have emigrated therein?" So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort* (97)*; Except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way* (to escape) (98)*; So these, it may be, Allãh will pardon them, and Allãh is Pardoning, Forgiving* (99). *And whoever emigrates in Allãh's way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources; and whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allãh and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his reward is surely incumbent upon Allãh, and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (100).

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C O M M E N T A R Y

QUR'ÃN: ***The holders back from among the believers . . . are not equal*:** *aḍ-Ḍarar* (= اَلضَّرَرُ the damage and defect in body) which prevents one from participating in *jihãd* and fighting, e.g., blindness, lameness and sickness. Striving hard with their property means spending it in the way of Allãh in order to gain victory over the enemies of the religion; striving with their persons denotes fighting in Allãh's way.

The phrase: *and to each Allãh has promised good*, indicates that the verse is speaking about those holders back who had not gone forth for *jihãd* at a time when their participation was not very vital – because a sufficient number of warriors had already joined the Islamic

force. Accordingly, the verse aims at encouraging and exhorting the believers to participate in *jihād*, to hasten to it and hurry in joining it.

As a further proof, see that Allāh has exempted from *jihād* those who are not physically fit; then He says that the holders back [with exception of the unfit ones] are not equal to the fighters – yet the fact remains that the physically unfit ones too are not equal to the fighters in the way of Allāh. [So, why this exception?] We may say that Allāh will compensate their inability because their intention was good. Even then, the fighting, and martyrdom or victory over the enemies of Allāh are really great distinctions for those who fight in the way of Allāh over the non-participators.

In short, the verse serves to exhort and encourage the believers and re-awaken their spirit of faith in order that they should hasten and race towards good deeds and excellence.

QUR'ĀN: ***Allāh has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel the holders back in rank, . . .*** **:** The sentence gives the reason why the two groups are not equal; that is why there is no conjunction etc., attached to it. *ad-Darajah* (اَلدَّرَجَةْ = degree, rank); *ad-darajāt* (اَلدَّرَجَاتُ = rank after rank; degree after degree). As for the phrase, *and to each Allāh has promised good*, it may refer to the two groups of the holders back and the strivers, or to all the three groups: the holders back without any injury, the holders back because of an injury and the strivers in the way of Allāh. The word, "good", is an adjective whose related noun is omitted; it may mean good outcome, good recompense or similar things. This sentence is put here to remove a possible misunderstanding: A holder back from among the believers – hearing the preceding declaration – could have thought that now he had nothing to his credit and that his faith and all other good deeds were now of no value at all. Allāh assures them that to each of them He has promised good.

QUR'ĀN: ***And Allāh has distinguished the strivers above the holders back*** **(by)** ***a great recompense:*** **(high)** ***degrees from Him and pardon and mercy . . .*** : This distinction and excellence explains in detail the distinction mentioned above. Also it contains another important message: The believers should not remain content with the good promise offered by the phrase: *and to each Allāh has promised good*; they should not be indolent in striving in the way of Allāh, should not neglect their duty in putting utmost effort to raise the word

of truth and to erase the falsehood, because the strivers have been granted considerably great excellence and distinction above the holders back; they shall get very high degrees of forgiveness and mercy.

The verse contains a remarkable style:-

First: The "strivers" have been qualified initially with the phrase: *in Allãh's way with their property and their persons*; then it has come down to, *with their property and their persons*; and finally they are mentioned without any qualification or restriction.

Second: Their distinction is described first in singular, rank or degree and then it goes to plural, "degrees from Him."

Why?

As for the qualifications of the strivers, the verse aims at description of the distinction and excellence of *jihãd* on holding back. *Jihãd* can only be of any value if it is done in the way of Allãh, not in the way of one's desires, by giving away the most precious thing, i.e., wealth and property, and sacrificing what is even dearer than that, i.e., one's person and life. That is why at the first opportunity it was fully explained with all details, *those who strive hard in Allãh's way with their property and their persons*, so that no room is left for any misunderstanding or doubt. When it was said, *Allãh has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel . . .* there was actually no need to mention any qualifying phrase, because every thing had already been clarified; but as the sentence was to be followed by the phrase, *and to each Allãh has promised good*, it was appropriate to explain the reason of excellence and distinction, (i.e., spending the wealth and sacrificing the life in spite of their attraction); that is why only these two factors were used to qualify the strivers. When the time came to say, "and Allãh has distinguished the strivers above the holders back (by) a great recompense," there was no need to mention any attribute at all; not even partially. As for the change of singular 'rank' or 'degree' to the plural 'degrees', in the first, (*Allãh has made the strivers . . . to excel the holders back in rank*) the word *darajah* (دَرَجَةً = rank, degree) is accusative of specification, and it only describes that the excellence is in rank and degree, without going into detail as to whether the said degree is one or more. On the other hand, when it says: "and Allãh has distinguished the strivers . . . (by) a great recompense: (High) degrees from Him", the word, 'distinguished', implies bestowal, and the word, "(High) degrees", is in explicative apposition to the preceding "a great recompense", or stand for it. The meaning: Allãh, has given the strivers a great recompense,

distinguishing them over the holders back by a great reward, that is, the high degrees from Allãh. In short, the speech mentions at first only that the strivers excel the holders back in rank, without saying whether the rank is one or more; while the next sentence says that it is not a single rank, rather there are many degrees and ranks, and that it is the great recompense given to the strivers.

On a cursory glance, it may look as if there was some contradiction in mentioning the rank or degree in singular and then in plural. But the above explanation may remove any such misunderstanding. Many other exegetes have tried to explain this apparent contradiction, but almost all their explanations seem far-fetched. For example:

1. The singular describes their excellence over the holders back who are unfit to fight, while the plural shows the excellence over those not having any injury;

2. The singular indicates the worldly benefits, e.g., war-booty and high prestige etc., while the plural points to the ranks of the hereafter, which surely are much superior, as Allãh says: *and certainly the hereafter is much greater in respect of degrees.* (17:21)

3. The singular 'rank' shows their status in presence of Allãh which is a spiritual reality, while the plural indicates the grades of the Garden and its high ranks which is a phenomenal affair.

You may see for yourself that there is nothing in the Qur'ãnic text to support any of these explanations.

In the phrase, "(High) degrees from Him," the pronoun 'Him' refers to Allãh, and this explanation is supported by the next words, "and pardon and mercy", assuming that these words describe the degrees, and obviously pardon and mercy comes from Allãh. Alternatively, the pronoun may relate to the "great recompense" preceding it. [In this case, the translation will be changed to `High degrees from it.']

The words, "and pardon and mercy", obviously describe the high degrees; the degrees, i.e, the ranks bestowed by Allãh, whatsoever their nature, are manifestation of divine pardon and mercy; and it has already been explained somewhere that the mercy, i.e, divine bestowal of bounties, depends on removal of all impediments and obstacles which might prevent one from receiving those bounties – and this removal of obstacles is the pardon. Now, each level of divine bounty and favour and each rank and status [is mercy in itself, but it also prepares man to receive still higher rank; in this way] it is 'pardon' when seen in relation to the next higher rank. It

is therefore perfectly right to say that the ranks of the hereafter – whatever their nature – are divine pardon and mercy. In most places where mercy, bounty or similar realities are mentioned in the Qur'ãn, it is usually joined with pardon and forgiveness. For example: *they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward* (5:9); *and forgiveness and an honourable sustenance* (8:4); *they shall have forgiveness and a great reward* (11:11); *and forgiveness from Allãh and* (His) *pleasure* (57:20); *and forgive us and have mercy on us* (2:286) . There are many such verses in the Qur'ãn.

The verse ends on the words: *and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful.* Its appropriateness with the theme of the verse in quite clear, particularly as it ends on "pardon and mercy".

QUR'ÃN: ***Surely*** **(as for)** ***those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls***: *Tawaffãhum* (تَوَفَّاهُمُ) translated here as "cause to die" is in aorist tense; in that case its original form is *tatawaffãhum* (تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ) from which one "ta" (تَ) has been removed for easy pronunciation. The complete form is given in 16:28: *Those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to themselves. Then would they offer submission.*

Alternatively the verb may be taken as a past tense.

As evidenced by this latter verse, the injustice mentioned here refers to the harm they had inflicted on themselves by turning away from the divine religion and neglecting to establish its practices – all because they lived in the midst of unbelievers, among polytheists, and had no means of learning the religion's tenets and implanting what the belief in Allãh's lordship demands. This may be clearly seen from the words: *they shall say: "In what state were you?" They shall say: "We were weak in the earth",* . . . [Read upto the end of the verse 100.]

Allãh has explained the adjective, 'unjust', (used without a qualifying word) in these words: . . . *the curse of Allãh is on the unjust who hinder* (people) *from Allãh's way and seek to make it crooked* . . . (7:44-45; 11:18.-19). These verses define the injustice as turning away from Allãh's way and seeking to make it crooked and altered. This definition fits on the theme of the verse under discussion.

QUR'ÃN: ***they shall say: "In what state were you"*** **:** That is: What was the state and condition of your religion? *ma* (مَ) [in *fīma* فِيْمَ = in what] is the shortened form of *mã* (مَا = what) .

The verse points in a general way to the 'questioning in grave' as the traditions say: that the angels ask the dead person about his religion, This phenomenon is described also in another place: *Those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to themselves. Then would they offer submission: "We used not to do an evil." Aye! Surely Allāh knows what you were doing, Therefore enter the gates of hell, to abide therein; so certainly evil is the dwelling place of the proud. And it is said to those who are pious: "What is it that your Lord has revealed?" They say: "Good . . ."* (16 : 28-30).

QUR'ĀN: ***They shall say: "We were weak in the earth." They shall say: "Was not Allāh's earth vast*** **(enough)*****, so that you should have emigrated therein?" . . .*** **:** The angels' first question. *In what state were you?* was an enquiry about their religious condition; but the position of the unjust persons in that respect was not satisfactory; therefore they, instead of giving direct answer, tried to explain the reason of their objectionable condition: that they lived in a place, [country or town] where they could not obey the dictates of religion, because its inhabitants were powerful polytheists who oppressed them and prevented them from learning the rules of *sharī'ah* and acting upon them.

But their weakness – even if their claim was right – emanated from their abiding under the polytheists' sway, in a land under their domination. The enemies had no control or authority outside their boundary. Therefore, these 'weak' people were not really weak; they could easily have changed their condition by emigrating from that place. That is why the angels refuted their claim of weakness, reminding them that Allāh's earth was vast enough for them to go forth and be free from the polytheists' oppression; it was not beyond their power to leave the land of oppression and emigrate to some other place. They actually were not weak people as they could have removed the fetters of oppression from themselves. It was their own wrong choice which had put them in that bad state.

The question, "Was not Allāh's earth vast (enough) so that you should have migrated therein?" is for reprimand and rebuke, as is the first question, "In what state were you?" Alternatively this first question could be just an enquiry, because in the verses 28-30), of chapter 16 the same question has been addressed to the unjust and the pious ones. But in any case the second question is for reprimand.

The angels called the earth "Allāh's earth"; it may be a pointer to the fact that Allāh first gave this vastness to the Earth, and it was

Iater that He called them to the faith and good deeds. The same idea may be inferred from the verse coming at the end: *And whoever emigrates in Allãh's, way he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources*.

As the earth has been described as 'vast', the preposition 'in' has been used for emigration: "so that you should have emigrated therein," i.e., migrated from one of its places to another. Had it not been vast enough, the phrase would have been, emigrated *from* it.

Then after this questioning, Allãh judged their cas e and said: *So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort*.

QUR'ÃN: ***Except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way*** **(to escape)**: The exception is isolated. Allãh calls this group weak and their weakness is explained in this very verse. It proves that the previously mentioned unjust people were not weak because they could liberate themselves from the fetters of oppression by emigrating from that land. Weak in reality are these people mentioned in this verse. To mention them with such detail, "the men and the women and the children" makes the divine order clearer and removes all possible misunderstandings. *Ḥīlah* (حِيْلَةً = translated here as 'means') is derived from *al-ḥaylulah* (اَلْحَيْلُوْلَةُ = to interpose, to come between); then it was used for a device which comes between a person and his goaI; it is mostly used for what is done secretly and for objectionable activity – artifice, ruse, subterfuge. Its root contains a connotation of change, as ar-Rãghib has written in his *Mufradãtu '1-Qur'ãn*.

The meaning: These people are unable to do anything to avert from themselves the oppression perpetrated against them by the polytheists; they cannot find a way to get out from the enemies' clutch. The 'way' in this context means the real path (e.g., the way to Medina for the intending emigrants from Mecca) as well as the metaphorical way, i.e., every means which could free them from the polytheists' hands and put an end to their oppression and tyranny.

ON THE "WEAK ONES"

The verse shows that ignorance of religious tenets is a valid excuse in Allãh's eyes, provided it is caused by such inadequacy and

weakness which were not contributed to by the ignorant person himself.

Allāh says that ignorance of religion and inability to establish religious rites and tenets is an inequity which will not be forgiven by Him. Then He makes an exception of the weak persons and accepts their plea of 'weakness', and defines that weakness in a way which includes others too: that is, they are unable to avert the danger from themselves. Now, this inability manifests itself in two ways:

One: A man lives in a place where he does not have access to religious knowledge because there is no scholar there who could teach him the necessary details; or he is unable to act according to *sharī'ah* because the enemies forcefully prevent him from it and put him under unbearable torture and oppression; and he cannot leave that place to emigrate to a Muslim land and join his fellow Muslims. As a result, this inability may emanate from weakness of mind, sickness physical handicap, lack of money or other such factors.

Two: A man is oblivious of the established truth of the religion and its tenets, and his thoughts have not led him to it, but at the same time he has no enmity towards truth, is not averse to it at all; if he knew the reality he would have readily accepted it; but the truth has remained hidden from him because of some factors [and, therefore, he does not know it].

This too is a 'weak' person who does not have a means and does not find a way to escape from his ignorance – not because of any enemies who might be threatening him from all sides with swords and spears – but because of other factors which have overpowered his thinking and put him under oblivion. Obviously, with this oblivion he has no power and with this ignorance he cannot find a way to the truth.

This explanation is based on the generality of the verse which shows that the given cause is unrestricted [and covers cases of unavoidable ignorance and oblivion]. The theme is supported by some other verses too. For example: *Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it is* (the evil of) *what it has wrought* (2:286). Obviously, a thing, which one is unaware of, is beyond one's ability in the same way as is a thing which one is forcefully prevented from.

This verse of the second chapter absolves one from responsibility in cases of lack of ability, and at the same time lays down a criterion for distinguishing a genuine inability from a false one. That is, the man should not have contributed towards that

inability; if his total or partial ignorance of religion emanates from his own negligence or wrong choice then he should be held responsible for it. In other words, it is he who has committed that sin. On the other hand, if that ignorance is caused – not by his own actions – but by some factors beyond his power, then it cannot be attributed to his own choice – he cannot be accused of committing a sin, or of being arrogant; he has not opposed the truth nor has he rejected it intentionally. In short, for him is what he has earned, and upon him is what he has wrought.

It appears from the above, that a 'weak' person is empty-handed. There is nothing for or against him in his account, because he has not earned anything. His judgement is in the hands of his Lord. This is clear from the next verse: *So these it may be, Allãh will pardon them and Allãh is Pardoning, Forgiving*; and from the verse 106 of ch. 9: *And others are made to await Allãh's command, whether He will turn to them* (in mercy)*; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise*. And His mercy is ahead of His wrath.

QUR'ÃN: ***So these, it may be, Allãh will pardon them, . . .*** : The weak ones have not earned any sin, because they were unable to remove their ignorance. Yet, as explained before man's affairs are either good or evil, and it is enough for one's infelicity if one does not earn good for himself. Man, whether he is good, evil or just empty-handed, can never be free from the need of Allãh's pardon and forgiveness; it is this divine pardoning which erases the traces of evil and infelicity. That is why Allãh has offered them here a hope of pardon.

First the hope is offered to them of being pardoned, and it is immediately followed by the declaration: *and Allãh is Pardoning, Forgiving*. It makes it almost definite that the divine forgiveness will cover them [on the day of judgement], as they have been separated, through exception, from the unjust ones who have been threatened that their abode is hell and it is evil resort.

QUR'ÃN: ***And whoever emigrates in Allãh's way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant*** **resources:** ar-Rãghib has written: "*ar-Raghãm* (اَلرَّغَام = fine dust or soil); [they say] his nose fell in the dust, or someone rubbed his nose in dust; it is an idiom to show displeasure. A poet says:

When those noses are rubbed in dust, I do not (try to) *please them,*

No do I seek their pardon; rather I increase their displeasure.

As the word is placed in opposition to seeking pleasure, it shows that rubbing nose in dust means to enrage, to embitter. That is why it is said: May Allãh rub his nose in dust [i.e., May Allãh cause him to be indignant]; *arghamahū* (اَرْغَمَهُ = he made him angry); *rãghamahu* (رَاغَمَهُ = They both tried to spite each other); then *al-murãghamah* (اَلْمُرَاغَمَةُ) was taken to mean "to quarrel with each other". Allãh says: "He will find in the earth many a *murãghaman* (مُرَاغَمًا)", that is, ways and paths which he might use and if he saw something undesirable he would feel indignant; as you say: "I was displeased to so-and-so from such and such, [i.e., I did not like that thing so I turned to so-and-so to express my displeasure]."

The meaning is therefore as follows: And whoever emigrates in Allãh's way (i.e., seeking His pleasure by full involvement with religion in theory and practice), he will find in the earth many places, so that if someone prevents him in one place from following the religious tenets he would turn and emigrate to another place, thus rubbing the adversary's nose in dust and letting him be embittered and angry. [It is to convey this connotation that we have translated *murãghaman* as place of refuge.] And he will find abundance of resources in those new places.

Earlier, the angels had asked: *Was not Allãh's earth vast* (enough)*, so that you should have emigrated therein?* As the verse under discussion is based on it, it would apparently look appropriate to say, 'And whoever emigrates, he will find in the earth abundant resources.' But as Allãh has added "many a place of refuge", and this refuge was of importance to a person who wanted to proceed in the way of Allãh, the migration too was qualified by the phrase, "in Allãh's way"; thus the whole verse is perfectly integrated and well-adapted to the main theme, i.e., admonishing the believers living in polytheists' midst, exhorting them to emigrate in the way of Allãh, and assuring them of abundant, resources if they emigrated.

QUR'ÃN: ***and whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allãh and His Messenger . . . Forgiving, Merciful*****:** Emigration to Allãh and His Messenger stands for emigrating to the place of Islam, where one can learn the Book of Allãh and the *sunnah* of His Messenger, and act accordingly. The phrase: "death overtakes him", is an extended metaphor alluding to occurrence of death or sudden death. 'Overtaking' creates a mental image of a person pursuing

another until he catches up with him. Likewise, the words, "his reward is surely incumbent on Allãh", literally mean, his reward has surely fallen on Allãh; this too is an extended metaphor alluding to the meaning given in the translation. There is certainly good reward and abundant recompense offered to the servant; and Allãh will deal with him in His divinity, for Whom nothing is difficult, nothing is formidable; whatever He wills happens; and whatever He promises is fulfilled. The speech ends on the phrase, "and Allãh is forgiving, Merciful". It emphasizes the good promise to assure them of full reward and recompense.

In these verses, Allãh has divided those who claim to be believers into various groups according to their residence in the place of Islam or that of polytheism; and has described the appropriate recompense for each. The aim is first to admonish and warn, then to encourage and exhort them to emigrate to the land of Islam and assemble therein in order to strengthen the Islamic society. Thus they shall be able to unite and cooperate with each other in righteousness and piety, to bring up the word of truth and raise the standard of *tawḥīd* and flag of the religion.

The first main group was of the believers who lived in the land of Islam: among them were those who strived hard in the way of Allãh with their property and their souls. Then there were those who held back without any injury or disability; and finally those who held back because of disabling injury. Allãh promised good to each sub-group, but He made the strivers to excel the holders back in ranks.

Another main group is of those who stayed in the land of polytheism; it is an unjust group which does not emigrate in the way of Allãh; its abode is the hell and it is an evil resort. There is another sub-group of truly weak man, women and children, which is not unjust, they have no means nor do they find any way to escape; and lastly there are those who were not weak, they went forth from their houses emigrating to Allãh and His Messenger, but were overtaken by death; their reward is surely incumbent upon Allãh.

The verses, with all the classifications, are applicable to the Muslims in all eras and periods, although, to begin with, they were revealed to describe the Muslims' condition in Arabia during the Prophet's time between his' emigration to Medina and the conquest of Mecca. The land was divided in those day in two parts:

1. *Dãru 'l-Islãm* (دَارُالاسْلام = the House of Islam) that is, Medina and the neighbouring regions, dominated by the Muslims (who had complete freedom to observe their religion). Of course, there were

some polytheists and followers of other religions too in that land, but they did not interfere with the Muslims because of various agreements, etc., they had with them.

2. *Dāru 'sh-shirk* (دَارُالشِرْك = the House of polytheism) that is, Mecca and its neighbouring regions, dominated by the polytheists who persisted in idol-worship and prevented those Muslims who lived in their midst from following their religion; they oppressed and tortured those Muslims and put them under utmost pressure hoping to turn them away from Islam.

The principle laid down in these verses provides guidance to the Muslims for all times to come. A Muslim is required to live in a place where he can acquire the knowledge of Islamic tenets and beliefs, can perform religious ceremonies and follow the *sharī'aḥ*s commands and rules. He must emigrate from a country where he is unable to learn religion's realities and finds no way to live according to Islamic principles. It makes no difference whether today that country is called *Dāru 'l-Islām* or *Dāru 'sh-Shirk*, because these days the names have changed, the actual meanings have been discarded, religion is just a citizenship and Islam merely a name – without caring whether one called Muslim actually believes in its reality and follows its rules or not.

But according to the Qur'ān, results emanate from the reality of Islam, not its name; and it obliges the Muslims to follow the spirit of its rules, not merely the letters. Allāh says: *This shall not be in accordance with your vain desires nor in accordance with the vain desires of the People of the Book; whoever does evil he shall be required with it, and besides Allāh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper. And whoever does good deeds whether male or female, and he is a believer – these shall enter the garden and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly* (4:123-124). *Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve* (2: 62).

TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he

said: "A group of Meccans had accepted Islam, but they kept it secret. The polytheists brought them out [i.e., forced them to come out] with them on the day of Badr; some were afflicted, other were killed. The Muslims said: 'These our companions were Muslims and were forced; so let us pray for their forgiveness.' Then the verse was revealed: *Surely* (as for) *those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls . . .* " He further said: "This verse was then written to those Muslims who were still at Mecca, that they had no excuse (to remain there). So they came out, but the polytheists over-took and harried them [so they returned to Mecca]. Then was revealed the verse: *And among men is he who says: "W e believe in Allãh;" but when he is persecuted in* (the way of) *Allãh, he thinks the persecution of men to be as the chastisement of Allãh; . . .* (29:10) The Muslims wrote it to them; so they were afflicted with grief and lost hope of every good. Thereupon the verse was revealed: *Yet surely your Lord, with respect to those who emigrate after they are persecuted, then they struggle hard and are patient, surely your Lord after that is Forgiving, Merciful* (16:110). The Muslims again wrote to them about it that Allãh has made for you a way out, so come away (from Mecca). They came out, the polytheists (again) overtook them, but the Muslims (this time) fought with them until was saved who was saved and was killed who was killed." (ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥãtim have narrated from aḍ-Ḍaḥḥãk about this verse that he said: "They were some hypocrites who remained behind the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) at Mecca and did not emigrate with him to Medina; thereafter they came out with Qurayshite idol-worshippers to Badr, and were afflicted in the battle with [other polytheists]. Then Allãh revealed this verse about them." (*ibid.*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn Zayd about this verse that he said: "When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was sent and the (true) faith appeared and spread, hypocrisy too spread side by side. Some people came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said: ‘O Messenger of Allãh! If we were not afraid of these people that they would torment us and would do and do [unbearable things to us], we would have accepted Islam [openly]; nevertheless we bear witness that there is no god except Allãh and that you are the Messenger of Allãh.' They used to say this to him. When the day of Badr came the polytheists stood up [to fight] and said: 'No one will remain behind from us but that we shall demolish his house and seize his property.' [Hearing it,] those people too went forth (with polytheists) who used to say those words

to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); some of them were killed; some others were taken prisoners."

Then (Ibn Zayd) said: "As for those who were killed, they were those about whom Allāh has said: *Surely* (as for) *those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls . . . Was not Allāh's earth vast* (enough) *so that you should have emigrated therein* – leaving these oppressors behind? *So these it is whose abode is hell and it is an evil resort*.

"Then Allāh excused those with genuine inability and said: *Except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way* where they can head to; if they went forth they would be destroyed, *so these it may be Allāh will pardon them* their staying in the midst of idol-worshippers.

"As for those who were captured, they said: 'O Messenger of Allāh: you know that we used to come to you and bear witness that there was no god except Allāh and that you were His Messenger; yet we had to come out with these people fearing (their reprisals)' Allāh said: *O Prophet! say to those of the captives who are in your hands: "If Allāh knows anything good in your hearts He will give to you better than that which has been taken away from you and will forgive you* the misdeed you have done"; i.e., your coming out with the polytheists against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) . . . *And if they intend to act unfaithfully towards you, so indeed they acted unfaithfully towards Allāh before* – when they joined the polytheists in coming out – *but He gave* (you) *mastery over them.*" (8:70-71)

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from 'Ikrimah about the verse, Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls . . . and it is an evil resort, that he said: "It was revealed about Qays ibn al-Fākih ibn al-Mughīrah al-Ḥārith ibn Zam'ah ibn al-Aswad, Qays ibn al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, Abu 'l-'Āṣ ibn Munabbih ibn al-Ḥajjāj and 'Alī ibn Umayyah ibn Khalaf." He further said: "When the polytheists of Quraysh and their followers went forth to protect Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb and the caravan of the Quraysh from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his companions and also intending to take revenge of what they had suffered at Nakhlah; they took with them some youths who were unwilling (to join them as) they had (secretly) accepted Islam. They faced the Muslims at Badr without prior rendezvous. So (those youths) were killed at Badr while they were *kāfir*s and have

turned away from Islam; and they were those we have named above." (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are a lot of traditions, from the Sunnī sources, of the same theme. Apparently all these are attempts to apply the verses to some suitable incidents, yet it is a good application. The most important information gleaned from these traditions as well as from meditating on the said verses is the existence of hypocrites in Mecca [even] before *hijrah* as well as after it. This fact has a direct bearing on discussion about the hypocrites as will be seen in the chapter of' "Repentance", God willing.

Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Ibn ʻAbbās that he said: "There was a man, Ḍamrah from Banū Bakr, who was [very] sick. He told his people, 'Take me out of Mecca, because I find it hot (here). 'They said: 'Where should we take you to?' He indicated with his hand towards the way of Medina. They took him out but he expired at (only) two miles from Mecca. Then this verse was revealed: *And whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allāh and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him . . .* " (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are many traditions of similar theme, but there is much discrepancy about identity of the believer who expired in the way. Various traditions name him as Ḍamrah ibn Jundab, Aktham ibn Ṣayfī, Abū Ḍamrah ibn al-ʻĪṣ az-Zurqī, Ḍamrah ibn al-ʻĪṣ al-Laythī and Jundaʻ ibn Ḍamrah al-Jundaʻī. Some traditions say that it was revealed about Khālid ibn Ḥizām who went out intending to emigrate to Ethiopia, and was bitten by a snake on the way and died.

Some traditions narrate from Ibn ʻAbbās that it was Aktham ibn Ṣayfī. The narrator asked him: "Then where is al-Laythī?" Ibn ʻAbbās said: "It was before al-Laythī, and it is particular (and) general."

The author says: That is, the verse was revealed for Aktham in particular, then it is applied to others in general. It may be gleaned from the traditions that three Muslims had met their death while on their way to *hijrah*: Aktham ibn Ṣayfī, al-Laythī and Khālid ibn Ḥizām. But [it is difficult] to pinpoint as to whom the verse was revealed about; and the traditions are probably the narrators' attempts to apply the verse to this or that person.

Zurārah says: "I asked Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) about the *mustaḍʻaf* اَلْمُسْتَضْعَف = weak, weakened). He said: 'He is the one who does not

have a means to disbelief (that he may disbelieve), nor does he find a way to belief; he is unable to believe and unable to reject (the belief); among them are the children as well as those men and women whose understanding is like that of the children; they are freed from responsibility." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: The tradition is extensively narrated from Zurãrah; al-Kulaynī, aṣ-Ṣadūq and al-ʻAyyãshī have narrated it from him through numerous chains.

al-Kulaynī narrated through his links from Ismãʻīl al-Juʻfī that he said: "I asked Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) about the religion which no one can afford to be ignorant of. He said: 'The religion is spacious, but the Khãrijites, as a result of their ignorance, have cramped it for themselves.' I said: 'May I be your ransom! should I then relate to you the religion which I follow? He said: 'Yes.' So I said: 'I bear witness that there is no god except Allãh, and Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger; and I acknowledge (and believe in) what he has brought from Allãh, the High; and I love you and I keep away from your enemies and those who oppressed you and [wrongfully] became your rulers and usurped your rights.' He said: 'By Allãh you have not overlooked anything. It is, by Allãh! the [religion] we are on.' Then I said: 'Can someone not knowing this matter be saved?' He said: '[None] except the weak ones.' I said: 'Who are they?' He said: 'Your women and your children.' Then he said: 'Had you seen Umm Ayman? I bear witness that she was from the people of the garden, but she did not know [in such detail the religion] you are on.'" (*ibid.*)

Sulaymãn ibn Khãlid narrates that he asked Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) about the weak ones. The Imãm (a.s.) said: "A simple-minded woman in her private room; a slave-girl that you tell her to pray and she prays, she does not know except what you tell her; a foreign slave who does not understand except what you tell him; an aged old man; a child, a small boy: these are the weak ones. But a thick-necked man, disputatious (and) antagonist, who deals in sale and purchase, whom you cannot tire in anything: Will you say, he is weak? No; by no means." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyãshī)

Sulaymãn has narrated from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that he said about this verse: "O Sulaymãn! In these weak ones there are those who have thicker necks than yours. Weak are the people who fast and pray, keep their stomachs and genitals away [from forbidden things]; they do not believe that the right is with our adversaries; they are holding the tree's branches; these are that Allãh may pardon them if they keep the hold

of the tree's branches and know those. Then if Allãh pardons them it will be by His mercy, and if He punishes them it will be because of their error." (*Maʻãni 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: The words, "they do not believe that the right is with our adversaries", mean that they do not have ill-feelings towards us, or that such ideas are not based on their own negligence, as is clear from the following traditions.

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) has said that weak ones are of many kinds, differing among themselves; and anyone among the People of the *Qiblah* (i.e., Muslims) who is not immical to us, is *mustaḍʻaf*, weak. (*ibid*.)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said explaining this verse: " '*who have not in their power the means'* to our enmity, so that they could have got ill-feelings [towards us], *'nor can they find a way'* to the truth, that they could come on the right path; they will enter the garden because of their good deeds and their abstaining from the unlawful things forbidden by Allãh, but they will not get the rank of the righteous ones." (*ibid.*; *at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

Ḍurays al-Kunãsī narrates that he said to Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.): "May I be made your ransom! What is the condition of those who believe in the One God and the prophethood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), who have committed sins and die without believing in an imãm and do not know about your love and obedience?" He said: "As for these, they shall remain in their graves, and not come out; whoever (among them) had done good deeds and did not show any animosity [towards us], a tunnal will be opened for him to the garden which Allãh has created in the west; thus refreshing breeze will continue reaching him in his grave upto the Day of Resurrection until he comes before Allãh; He will take account of his good and evil, then he will go either to the paradise or to the fire. These are they who depend on the decision of Allãh. "Then he (a.s.) said: "And likewise is done to the weak ones, the idiots, the children and the minor children of the Muslims. And as for [our] antagonists among the People of the Qiblah, a tunnel is dug for them to the fire which Allãh has created in the east, and will reach to him the flames, sparks, smoke and the hell's out-bursts upto the Day of Resurrection; then their destination is the hell." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) narrates from his father, from his and father, from ʻAlī (a.s.) that he said: "Surely the Garden has eight gates: from one gate will enter the Prophets and the Truthful ones; from another

gate will enter the Witnesses and the Good servants; and from five gates will enter our Shī‘ahs and lovers; . . . and from [the eighth] gate will enter all the Muslims who bear witness that there is no god but Allãh and in whose heart there is not an atom's weight of animosity towards us, the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.). (*al-Khiṣãl*)

Ḥumrãn narrates: "I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the word of Allãh: *Except the weak ones*. He said: 'They are the People of *al-wilãyah* (اَلوِلاَيَة = friendship, authority, power, guardianship.)' I said: 'Which *wilãyaḥ*' He said: 'It is not the wilãyah in religion, but the *wilãyah* in marrying each other, inheriting from each other and mixing with each other; they are neither believers nor *kãfir*s, they are the ones made to await Allãh's command." (*Ma‘ãni 'l-akhbãr; at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: It refers to the verse: And others are made to await Allãh's command, whether He will chastise them or whether He will turn to them (in mercy) . . . (9:106)

‘Alī (a.s.) said: "The name of weakness is not used for him to whom the proof has reached, and his ears heard it and his heart understood it." (*Nahju 'l-balãghah*)

al-Kãẓẓim (a.s.) was asked about the weak ones. He (a.s.) wrote: "The weak is he to whom proof has not been conveyed and who is unaware of [religious] difference. But he is no more weak once he knew the difference." (*al-Kãfī*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) was asked: "What do you say about the weak oneṣ" He replied in a dismayed manner, 'Have you left anyone who could be called weak? Where are the weak oneṣ Because, by Allãh! this affair of yours [i.e., Shī‘ite faith] has been taken by ladies in their boudoirs to other ladies, and have discussed it the water-carriers in the streets of Medina." (*ibid.*)

‘Umar ibn Isḥãq says: "Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) was asked as to what was the definition of the weak which has been mentioned by Allãh. He said: 'He who does not properly recite any of the Qur’ãnic chapters, while Allãh has created it in such a way that no one should fail to recite it properly.'" (*Ma‘ãni '1-akhbãr*)

The author says: There are several other Traditions; but what has been quoted above covers all the themes mentioned therein. Although the traditions apparently seem to differ with one another, yet if we overlook the particulars which throw light on various degrees of weakness, all of them jointly prove one fact which the generality of

the verse shows: that weakness means not finding one's way to the right path – without any negligence on one's own part.

* * * * *

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ
فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَقْصُرُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ
أَن يَفْتِنَكُمُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ كَانُوا۟ لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠١﴾
وَإِذَا كُنتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ
مِّنْهُم مَّعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوٓا۟ أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۖ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا۟ فَلْيَكُونُوا۟
مِن وَرَآئِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَآئِفَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ لَمْ يُصَلُّوا۟
فَلْيُصَلُّوا۟ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا۟ حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۚ وَدَّ ٱلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا۟ لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ
عَلَيْكُم مَّيْلَةً وَٰحِدَةً ۚ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن كَانَ بِكُمْ
أَذًى مِّن مَّطَرٍ أَوْ كُنتُم مَّرْضَىٰٓ أَن تَضَعُوٓا۟ أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ ۖ
وَخُذُوا۟ حِذْرَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٠٢﴾
فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ فَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ قِيَٰمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ
جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا ٱطْمَأْنَنتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ

كَانَتْ عَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَٰبًا مَّوْقُوتًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوا۟
فِى ٱبْتِغَآءِ ٱلْقَوْمِ ۖ إِن تَكُونُوا۟ تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا
تَأْلَمُونَ ۖ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ ۗ
وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer, if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress; surely the unbelievers are your open enemy (101). *And when you* (O Prophet!) *are among them and establish the prayer for them, let a party of them stand up with you, and let them take their arms; then when they have prostrated themselves let them go to your rear, and let another party who have not prayed come forward and pray with you, and let them take their precaution and their arms;* (for) *those who disbelieve desire that you may be inattentive to your arms and your luggage, so that they may then turn upon you with a sudden united attack; and there is no blame on you, if you are troubled by rain or if you are sick, that you lay down your arms, and take your precaution; surely Allãh has prepared a disgraceful chastisement for the unbelievers* (102). *Then when you have finished the prayer remember Allãh standing and sitting and reclining; but when you are secure, keep up prayer; surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers* (103). *And be not weak-hearted in pursuit of the enemy; if you suffer pain, then surely they* (too) *suffer pain as you suffer pain, while you hope from Allãh what they do not hope; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise* (104).

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COMMENTARY

The verses ordain the prayer of fear and shortened prayer in journey, and they end on exhortation of the believers to pursue the

polytheists; they are well-connected with the preceding verses which dealt with *jihād* and its various aspects.

QUR'ĀN: ***And when you journey in the earth there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer*** **:** *al-Junāḥ* (اَلْجُنَاح = sin, impediment, renunciation); *al-qaṣr* (اَلْقَصْر = shortening of prayer). [aṭ-Ṭabrisī] has said in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*: "The root *q-ṣ-r* when used for prayer comes in three stems: The base stem, *qaṣara* (which has been used in the Qur'ān), *qaṣṣara* (the stem, *taf'īl*) and *aqṣara* (the stem, *if'āl*)."

Meaning: When you are in journey then there is no ipediment or sin for you if you shorten the prayer. The phrase, "there is no blame on you", apparently shows permission only, but the context points to obligation and incumbency; as is seen in the verse: *Surely the Ṣafā and the Marwah are among the signs of Allāh; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs* 'umrah *thereof there is no blame on him to go round them both* (2:158); although *aṭ-ṭawāf* (اَلطَّوَاف = to go round) is *wājib* (compulsory). The reason why this expression shows obligation is that the position here is that of legislation, and it is enough in this place just to disclose that a certain order has been laid down; there is no need to explain all its aspects and particulars in acomprehensive manner. To a certain extent the same is the position of the verse: *and that you fast is better for you if you know* (2:184)

QUR'ĀN: ***if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress; . . .*** **:** *al-Fitnah* (اَلْفِتْنَة = translated here as causing distress) is used for numerous meanings; however when the Qur'ān uses it in connection with disbelievers and polytheists, it refers to the atrocities, like murder, torture, etc., which they inflicted on the Muslims; and the context too points to this meaning, i.e., if you fear that the enemies will attack you putting you to the sword.

This clause is a proviso, limiting the preceding order: *there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer*. It shows that shortening of prayer was ordained when there was a fear of disbelievers' mischief. As a second step the rule was extended to all cases of legal journey even if there was no fear. It means that the Qur'ān explained one case where this law was to be applied, and the *sunnah* of the Prophet described all other situations and cases will be seen in the Traditions.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when you*** **(O Prophet!)** ***are among them . . . and let them take their precaution and their arms***: It explains how to perform prayer of fear. The verse is addressed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) supposing him to be the *imãm* of that prayer; the order is thus explained through an example – it makes the rule clearer in a fewer words and beautiful style; "and establishing the prayer for them" refers to congregational prayer; "let a party of them stand up with you" points to their standing behind the Prophet following him in the prayer; and it is they who are required to take their arms with them; "when they have prostrated themselves . . . " means, when they have prostrated and completed their prayers, they should go to the rear to take the place of those who have not prayed yet, enabling them to come forward and pray with you and this second group too should "take their precaution and their arms".

The meaning then is as follows – and Allãh knows better: When you, O Messenger of Allãh! are among them, and the situation is fraught with danger, and you establish the prayer for them, i.e., the congregational prayer with you as its leader, then the whole group should not join in the prayer together; only a party of them should stand behind you for prayer (taking their arms with them) and the other group should protect them and guard their possessions; when those who are praying behind you finish their *sajdah* and their prayer, they should go to the rear to relieve those who were uptil now protecting them and guarding their possessions. Now, this second group who have not prayed yet should come and join you in the prayer, and they too should take their precaution and their arms with them.

Another party who have not prayed: *aṭ-Ṭãifah* (اَلطَّآئِفَة = party, group) is of feminine gender, but it refers here to those who are able to fight, i.e., men; the feminine adjective *ukhrã* (أُخْرٰي = another) agrees with the noun *ṭãifah* which it refers to, while the masculine pronouns in "have not prayed" etc., look at the people described.

The words, "take their precaution and their arms" contain an interesting metaphor, as it treats "precaution" as a sort of arms for defence, using the verb 'take' for both.

QUR'ÃN: (for) ***those who disbelieve desire that you may be inattentive to your arms and your luggage, so that they may turn upon you with a sudden united attack*****:** It gives the reason for the above law; its meaning is clear.

QUR'ÃN: ***and there is no blame on you . . . a disgraceful chastisement for the unbelievers*****:** The rule is further relaxed for those who are troubled by rain or are sick, that they may lay down their arms; however it is very much emphasized that they should take their precaution, and not be inattentive to the unbelievers, because they are on the look out for the weak points of the Muslims.

QUR'ÃN: Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allãh standing and sitting and reclining: *Qiyãman* قِيَامًا = standing) and *qu'ūdan* (قُعُودًا = sitting) are either plurals or verbal nouns, and in either case they are circumstantial clauses; the same applies to 'reclining'. These words emphasize that the believers should continuously remember Allãh, in all conditions and in every place.

QUR'ÃN: ***but when you are secure, keep up prayer***: As the context shows, the clause, "when you are secure", is in opposition to: *when you journey in the earth,* and thus obviously means, when you return to your homes. Accordingly, "keep up prayer" would mean to pray full 4 *raka'ãt*; because the prayer of fear and danger was called "shortened prayer"

QUR'ÃN: ***surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers*** **:** *al-Kitãbah* (اَلكِتَابه = writing, traslated here as ordinance) implies obligatorness and imperativeness, as Allãh says: . . . fasting is prescribed (lit.: written) for you as it was prescribed for those before you (Qur'ãn, 2:183). *al-Mawqūt* (اَلمَوْقُوت = timed), shows that prayer is an obligation prescribed for fixed times to be established at known intervals.

Apparently, timeliness of prayer implies its permanence and imperetiveness – it mentions a requirement (of time) to imply the obligatory (prayer). When it says that prayer is a timed ordinance, it means that it is an obligation, confirmed and permanent, not subject to any change; it cannot be avoided or waived at any time. The adjective, 'timed', if taken in its literal meaning has no relevance to the context, because the preceding statements have no connection with prayer being a timed ordinance; while this sentence is meant to explain the reason for the preceding one, that is, *when you are secure keep up prayer*. Thus apparently, 'timed' means a firm obligation which can never be waived; it is unalterable and can never be replaced by any alternative, unlike the fast which some times is changed to redemption.

QUR'ÃN: ***And be not weak-hearted in pursuit of the enemy; . . . :*** *al-Wahn* (اَلْوَهْن = weakness); *al-ibtighã'* (اَلْاِبْتِغَآء = pursuit) , *al-alam* (اَلْاَلَم = pain, to suffer pain); the clause: *while you hope from Allãh what they do not hope*, is a circumstantial one. You and your enemies both equally suffer pain, so you are not in a worse position than your enemies; rather you are in a more pleasant and comfortable condition, inasmuch as you expect victory over them and hope for forgiveness from your Lord who is your guardian; as for your enemies, they have no guardian, nor do they entertain any hope to cheer themselves or which could incite them to work energetically and push them towards their goal. And Allãh knows what is beneficial to His servants; He is Wise in His orders and prohibitions.

T R A D I T I O N S

According to *Tafsīr* of al-Qummī, the verse (prescribing the prayer of fear) was revealed when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was proceeding towards Ḥudaybiyyah, en route to Mecca. When the Quraysh heard the news, they sent Khãlid ibn al-Walīd with two hundred horses to encounter the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). He hindered the (progress of the) Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) on the mountains. Somewhere on the way, the time of *ẓuhr* prayer came, Bilãl said the *adhãn*, and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) led the people in the prayer. Khãlid ibn al-Walīd then said: "If we had attacked them when they were praying, we would have got them, because they do not break their prayer. However, now the time of their another prayer is approaching which they love more than their eye-sight; and when they start that prayer we shall raid them. Then Jibrīl (Gabriel) brought to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) the (verses of) prayer of fear: And when you are among them . . .

Majma'u 'l-bayãn says about the verse, and there is no blame on you, if you are troubled by rain . . . , that it was revealed when the Prophet was at 'Usfãn and the polytheists at Ḍajnãn; both parties stopped there; and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prayed *ẓuhr* with the Muslims with perfect *rukū'* and *sujūd;* then the polytheists wanted to attack them; and some of them said: "[Although we missed this chance] they will pray another prayer [i.e., *'aṣr*] which is dearer to them from this one." Then Allãh revealed to the Prophet this verse,

and he prayed the *'aṣr* with them as the prayer of fear. And this was the reason why Khãlid ibn al-Walīd accepted Islam.

Abū Ḥamzah [ath-Thumãlī] has written in his *Tafsīr* that the Prophet (s.a.w.a,) went to fight Banū Anmãr, and Allãh vanguished them and the Muslims captured the enemy's children and property. Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims alighted; not a single enemy was in sight; so they laid down their arms; the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) went away to relieve himself (and he too had laid down his arms), and he went so far that a [dry] valley sheltered him from his companions. By the time he was finished the river-bed was flowing copiously and the rain was coming down; the flowing valley came between him and his companions. He sat down under a tree. Then al-Ghawrath ibn al-Ḥãrith al Muḥãribī saw him, and his companions said to him: "O Ghawrath! (Look,) here is Muḥammad, separated from his companions." He said: "May Allãh kill me if I don't kill him." He came down the hill with a sword; and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) did not notice him until he stood over him with his unsheathed sword in hand. He said: "O Muḥammad! Who will now protect you from me?" The Messenger (s.a.w.a.) said: "Allãh." [All of a sudden] the enemy of Allãh fell down on his face. Now, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) stood up and took his sword, and said: "O Ghawrath! Now, who will save you from me?" He said: "No one." The Messenger of Allãh said: "Do you bear witness that there is no god but Allãh, and that I am the servant of Allãh and His Messenger?" He said: "No. But I promise that I'll never fight you nor will ever help any enemy against you." Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a,w.a.) gave his sword back to him. [Seeing this magnanimity,] Ghawrath said to him: "By Allãh! you are certainly better than me." He (s.a.w.a.) said: "I am more entitled to it,"

Then Ghawrath went back to his companions. They said: "O Ghawrath! We saw you standing over his head with sword, then what prevented you from [killing] him?" He said: "Allãh. I inclined towards him with the sword to kill him; then I don't know who it was that pushed me between my shoulders, and I fell down on my face; my sword fell down and Muḥammad took it before I could reach it." Then the valley calmed down and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) went to his companions and told them what had happened; and recited before them: and there is no blame on you if you are troubled by rain . . . (*ibid.*)

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated through his chains from 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Abī 'Abdillãh from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that he said: The

Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prayed with his companions in the battle of Dhãtu 'r-Riqã‘; and he divided them in two groups; he told one group to stand before the enemy and the other stood [praying] behind him; so he said *takbīratu 'l-iḥrãm*, and they said too, and he recited and they listened, then he did *rukū‘* and they did, and he did *sajdah* and they did; thereafter, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) continued in his prayer standing [in the second *rak‘ah*] while the companions prayed their second *rak‘ah* individually and said *salãm*. Then they rushed to their companions and stood before the enemy, and their companions came and stood behind the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and he said *takbīr* and they said too, and he recited and they listened, and he did *rukū‘* and they did, and he did *sajdah* and they did; then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) sat down and recited *tashahhud* and *salãm*; and they stood up and completed the [second] *rak‘ah* by themselves and then recited [*tashahhud* and] *salãm*. And Allãh had said to his Prophet: *And when you are among them and establish the prayer for them . . . . . surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers.* And this is the prayer of fear about which Allãh had ordered His Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

He (a.s.) also said: One who leads (his) people in *maghrib* in prayer of fear, will pray one *rak‘ah* with the first group and two *raka‘ãt* with the second one . . . (*Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*)

ash-Shaykh has narrated through his chains from Zurãrah that he said: "I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) about the prayer of fear and the prayer of journey, will both of them be shortened? He said: 'Yes; and the prayer of fear is more deserving to be shortened than the prayer of journey in which there is no fear.'" (*Tahdhību 'l-aḥkãm*)

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chains from Zurãrah and Muḥammad ibn Muslim that they said: "We said to Abū Ja‘far (a.s.): 'What do you say about prayer in journey? How is iṭ and how many [*raka‘ãt*]?' He said: 'Verily Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer; accordingly, shortening of prayer during journey is compulsory, as is completing it when in presence [i.e., when not in journey].'" They said: "But Allãh only says; *there is no blame on you*; He did not say: 'Do it'; how can it convey the connotation of obligatoriness like that of praying full prayer in presence?" He (a.s.) said: "Has not Allãh said: *Surely the Ṣafã and the Marwã are among the signs of Allãh; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs ‘Umrah thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both* [2:158]? Don't you see that *ṭawãf* [i.e., *sa`y*] between the two is

wãjib? It is because Allãh has mentioned it in His Book, and His Prophet had done it. Likewise, shortening of prayer during journey is a thing which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had done [and] Allãh has mentioned it in His Book." Then we said to him: "Then a person who prayed four (*raka'ãt*) in journey, should he repeat (that) prayer or noṭ" (The Imãm) said: "If the verse of shortening (of prayer) was read and explained to him, and yet he prayed four (*raka'ãt*), he will repeat it [i.e., will repeat praying two *raka'ãt*]; and if the verse was not read before him and he did not know it, then there is no repetition. And all *wãjib* prayers during journey are two *raka'ãt* except *maghrib*, as it is three *raka'ãt*, (and) there is no shortening in it; the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) left it three *raka'ãt* in journey and in presence . . . " (*Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*)

as-Suyūṭī writes: Ibn Abī Shaybah, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Dãwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasãī; Ibn Mãjah, Ibnu 'l-Jãrūd, Ibn Khuzaymah, aṭ-Ṭaḥãwī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnul-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, an Naḥḥãs (in his *an-Nãsikh*) and Ibn Ḥibbãn have narrated from Ya'lã ibn Umayyah that he said: "I asked 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭãb about the verse: *there is no blame on you that you shorten the prayer, if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress*, [is it valid now when] the people are secured and safe? ' 'Umar said to me: 'I too was wondering about it as you do, so I asked the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) about it and he said: "It is a charity which Allãh has bestowed upon you, so you should accept His charity."'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd, an-Nasãī, Ibn Mãjah, Ibn Ḥibbãn and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Umayyah ibn Khãlid ibn Asad that he asked Ibn 'Umar: "Do you think that the prayer should be shortened in journey? Surely we do not find it in the Book of Allãh; all that is mentioned therein is the prayer of fear." Ibn 'Umar said: "O my nephew: Surely Allãh sent Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and we did not know anything; so we do only as we saw the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) doing; and the shortening of prayer in journey is the system established by the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.)." (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, at-Tirmidhī (who has said that it is correct) and an-Nasãī have narrated from Ibn 'Abbãs that he said: "We prayed with the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) between Mecca and Medina two *raka'ãt* while we were safe and had no fear of anything." (ibid.)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim, Abū Dãwūd, at-Tirmidhī and an-Nasãī have narrated from Ḥãrithah ibn Wahb al-Khuzã'ī that he said: "I prayed with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) *ẓuhr* and

'aṣr at Minã two *raka'ãt*, with most numerous multitude of people and in most secured condition." (*ibid*.)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Dãwūd ibn Farqad that he said: "I asked Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) about the word of Allãh, *surely prayer is a timed ordinance*. He said: '[It means] firm ordinance; however if you make haste a little or delay a little it will do you no harm, provided you do not neglect it altogether, because Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: . . . *neglected prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will certainly meet perdition'"* (19:59) (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: It is an indication that *wãjib* prayers have some latitude so far as their timings are concerned, as other traditions show.

Muḥammad ibn Muslim narrates from the fifth or the sixth Imãm (a.s.) that he said about the *maghrib* prayer in the journey: "Do not leave if you are delayed for some time; then you may pray it when you wish to pray the *'ishã'*; and if you wish you may continue the journey for sometime until the reddish colour [on the horizon] goes away. Surely, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had prayed *ẓuhr* and `aṢr together and *maghrib* and *'ishã'* together, and he used to delay and advance. Allãh, the High, has said: *surely prayer is a timed ordinance*, [and by this expression] He only meant that it was obligatory for the believers, He did not mean anything else. Otherwise, if it meant what they say, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) would not have prayed like this, and he was most knowledgeable and had all the information; and he was as they say; and if it [i.e., always praying separately] were good, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) would certainly have ordered it.

"And in the battle of Ṣiffīn, people, including the Commander of the Believers (a.s.), could not pray *ẓuhr*,*'aṣr*, *maghrib* and *'ishã'* and 'Alī, the Commander of the Believers (a.s.) ordered them and they said *Allãhu akbar*, and *lã ilãha illa 'llãh*, and *subḥãna 'llãh* on foot and horse, because Allãh has said: *But if you are in danger, then* (say your prayer) on foot or on horse-back [2:239].

"So 'Alī (a.s.) ordered them [to do so] and they did." (*at-Tafsīr*. al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: These traditions, as you see, agree with the preceding Commentary. There are very many traditions of this meaning, and especially from the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), but we have quoted only a few of them as example. Of course, there are some other

traditions from the Sunnī sources which oppose it, but they themselves contradict each other. However, to review those traditions and have a look at all *aḥãdīth* describing the prayer of fear in particular and prayer during journey in general, is in the domain of Islamic Jurisprudence, not of *tafsīr*.

It is written in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī that the word: And be not weak-hearted in pursuit of the enemy . . . , is in conjunction with the verse 139 of the chapter of "The Family of ‘Imrãn": *If a wound has afflicted you, a wound like it has also afflicted the* (unbelieving) *people* . . . And we have explained there the reason why that verse was revealed.

* * * * *

إِنَّآ أَنزَلۡنَآ إِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ بِٱلۡحَقِّ لِتَحۡكُمَ بَيۡنَ
ٱلنَّاسِ بِمَآ أَرَىٰكَ ٱللَّهُۚ وَلَا تَكُن لِّلۡخَآئِنِينَ خَصِيمٗا ﴿١٠٥﴾
وَٱسۡتَغۡفِرِ ٱللَّهَۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورٗا رَّحِيمٗا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَا تُجَٰدِلۡ
عَنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخۡتَانُونَ أَنفُسَهُمۡۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ
خَوَّانًا أَثِيمٗا ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَسۡتَخۡفُونَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَا يَسۡتَخۡفُونَ
مِنَ ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمۡ إِذۡ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرۡضَىٰ مِنَ ٱلۡقَوۡلِۚ وَكَانَ
ٱللَّهُ بِمَا يَعۡمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ هَٰٓأَنتُمۡ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ جَٰدَلۡتُمۡ
عَنۡهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَا فَمَن يُجَٰدِلُ ٱللَّهَ عَنۡهُمۡ يَوۡمَ
ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ أَم مَّن يَكُونُ عَلَيۡهِ وَكِيلٗا ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَمَن يَعۡمَلۡ
سُوٓءًا أَوۡ يَظۡلِمۡ نَفۡسَهُۥ ثُمَّ يَسۡتَغۡفِرِ ٱللَّهَ يَجِدِ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٗا
رَّحِيمٗا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَمَن يَكۡسِبۡ إِثۡمٗا فَإِنَّمَا يَكۡسِبُهُۥ عَلَىٰ نَفۡسِهِۦۚ
وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمٗا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَن يَكۡسِبۡ خَطِيٓـَٔةً أَوۡ إِثۡمٗا
ثُمَّ يَرۡمِ بِهِۦ بَرِيٓـٔٗا فَقَدِ ٱحۡتَمَلَ بُهۡتَٰنٗا وَإِثۡمٗا مُّبِينٗا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَوۡلَا

فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ لَهَمَّت طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَن
يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّآ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِن
شَىْءٍ ۚ وَأَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ
مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ ۚ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾
۞ لَّا خَيْرَ فِى كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَىٰهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ
أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَٰحٍۭ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ
ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَن
يُشَاقِقِ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ٱلْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ
سَبِيلِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِۦ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِۦ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَآءَتْ
مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ
ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًۢا بَعِيدًا
﴿١١٦﴾ إِن يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ إِنَٰثًا وَإِن يَدْعُونَ
إِلَّا شَيْطَٰنًا مَّرِيدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَّعَنَهُ ٱللَّهُ ۘ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ
مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَلَأُضِلَّنَّهُمْ وَلَأُمَنِّيَنَّهُمْ
وَلَءَامُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيُبَتِّكُنَّ ءَاذَانَ ٱلْأَنْعَٰمِ وَلَءَامُرَنَّهُمْ
فَلَيُغَيِّرُنَّ خَلْقَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَّخِذِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ وَلِيًّا
مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٩﴾

يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمَنِّيهِمْ ۖ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢٠﴾
أُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَحِيصًا ﴿١٢١﴾
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ وَعْدَ
اللَّهِ حَقًّا ۚ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا ﴿١٢٢﴾ لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيِّكُمْ
وَلَا أَمَانِيِّ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ۗ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ
وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ
يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَمَنْ
أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ
مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا
فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٢٦﴾

Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allãh has shown you; and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous (105). *And ask forgiveness of Allãh; surely Allãh is forgiving, Merciful* (106). *And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls; surely Allãh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful* (107). *They hide themselves from men and*

do not hide themselves from Allāh, and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not, and Allāh encompasses what they do (108). *Behold! You are they plead for them in this world's life, but who will plead for them with Allāh on the Resurrection Day, or who shall be their protector?* (109). *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allāh, He shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful* (110). *And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allāh is Knowing, Wise* (111). *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin* (112). *And were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allāh's grace on you is very great* (113). *There is no good in most of their secret counsels except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people; and whoever does this seeking Allāh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward* (114). *And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We will turn him to that to which he has* (himself) *turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort* (115). *Surely Allāh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates any thing with Allāh, he indeed strays off into a remote error* (116). *They do not call besides Him on any thing but females, and they do not call on any thing but a rebellious Satan* (117). *Allāh has cursed him; and he said: "Most certainly I will take of Thy servants an appointed portion* (118). *And most certainly I will lead them astray and exist in them vain desires, and bid them so that they shall slit the ears of the cattle, and most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allāh's creation;" and whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allāh he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss* (119). *He gives them promises and excites vain desires in them; and the Satan does not promise them but to deceive* (120). *These are they whose abode is hell, and they shall not find any refuge from it* (121). *And* (as for) *those who believe and do good, We will*

make them enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein for ever; (it is) *a promise of Allãh, true* (indeed)*; and who is truer of word than Allãḥ* (122). (This) *shall not be in accordance with your vain desires not in accordance with the vain desires of the People of the Book; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides Allãh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor helper* (123). *And whoever does from good deeds whether male or female and he* (or she) *is a believer – these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly* (124). *And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allãḥ And he is the doer of good* (to others) *and follows the faith of Ibrãhīm, the upright one, and Allãh took Ibrãhīm as a friend* (125). *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's; and Allãh encompasses all things* (126).

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C O M M E N T A R Y

Ponder on these verses and you will realize that all are revealed in one context. They exhort one to adhere to justice in judgement and admonish a judge not to incline towards wrong-doers in his decision, as it would be an injustice to the rightful party.

This is done by pointing to some incidents which had happened at the time of their revelation; then they discuss relevant religious realities, telling the Muslims to adhere and abide to them; in this process, they remind the believers that religion is a reality, not only a name; what is important is putting it into practice, not just calling oneself a Muslim.

Obviously, it was that incident to which the Qur'ãnic words refer: *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin.* It clearly shows that there was some such crime which could be attributed to someone else, like theft, murder, plunder or damage, etc., and there was a possibility that the perpetrators would try to mislead the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in his judgement, but the verses assure the Prophet that Allãh was there to protect him.

Apparently, it was the same incident to which the preceding verses refer, as it is clear from the words: . . . *and be not an advocate*

on behalf of the treacherous . . . They hide themselves from men . . . Behold! you are they who plead for them in this world's life. Treachery and perfidy is obviously used for breach of trust, when one embezzles or meddles with something given to him in trust; but the context of the words, *surely Allāh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful. They hide themselves from men . . .* shows (as will be explained later) that they refer to treachery concerning theft, etc. It is because all the believers are like one soul, and all are responsible to look after a property belonging to one of them – they have to guard it and keep it secure; in this background, if one embezzles or steals it, it is tantamount to being unfaithful to one's own self.

Meditation on the verses shows that probably someone had committed the theft, the matter was brought to the Prophet's notice, but the thief accused someone else who had nothing to do with the crime, then the relatives of the thief urged the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to give judgement in their favour against the innocent one; but these verses were revealed and Allāh exonerated the accused from their false allegation.

Thus, the verses squarely fit the event narrated concerning their revelation when Abū Ṭu'mah ibn al-Ubayriq had committed the theft, although, as we have repeatedly said, the traditions giving the reasons of revelation, most of the times, are mere attempts to fit the narrated stories on pertinent verses.

The verses prove authoritativeness of the Prophet's judgement, and his sinlessness as well as some other realities which, God willing, will be explained later.

QUR'ĀN: ***Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has shown you*** **:** Judging between people, apparently, means hearing the cases of their disputes and contentions – the matters dealt by judiciary – and removing their discord through the judgement. This verse says that judging between people was the main objective for which the Book was revealed. This theme squares with the verse 2:213, which says: *Mankind was but one people; so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed . . .*

The verse under discussion (*Surely We have revealed the Book to you . . .*) in its particularity is like the other (*Mankind was but one people . . .*) in its generality; and it further shows that the right ot

judge was given to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and that his opinion and view had been stamped with divine authority. Arriving at a judgement, after looking into often-conflicting arguments of the parties concerned, invariably compels a judge to exercise his mental power and form an opinion based on his knowledge of abstract laws and regulations governing the issues at hand. It is one thing to have the knowledge of the laws of jurisprudence and the rights of various people, and quite another to arrive at a definite decision as to which rule is applicable to a particular issue. It all leads us to believe that the word, *arãka* (اَرَاكَ = translated here as "has shown you") in the clause, "that you may judge between the people by means of that which Allãh has shown you", actually means creation of opinion in his mind and leading him to correct decision, rather than teaching him abstract laws and general rules.

The verse in this context means: Surely Allãh has revealed the Book to you and taught you its laws and regulations; and then has allowed you to exercise your opinion which He has created in you in order that you may judge between the people and thus dispel their strife and dispute.

QUR'ÃN*: and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous* : The sentence is in conjunction with the preceding one, which, although a declarative one, has the sense of an imperative; the meaning thus will be as follows: Judge between them and do not be an advocate of the treacherous. *al-Khaṣīm* (اَلْخَصِيْم = advocate) is the one who speaks in favour of a claim, etc. The sentence orders the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) not to defend the treacherous and dishonest ones, as it would result in nullification of the right of the rightful claimants.

The order to judge between them is unrestricted and general; therefore the second order (which is in conjunction with it) gives the connotation that treachery and dishonesty too refers to general transgression against the others' rights, that it is not restricted to breach of trust only. (Of course, sometimes a particular clause may be placed in conjunction with a general one because of some special reasons, but there is no such reason here at all. We shall further explain it later on.)

QUR'ÃN: ***And ask forgiveness of Allãh; surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful*:** [The literal meaning of *al-istighfãr* (اَلْاِسْتِغْفَار) is to want to hide, although here it has been as usual translated as asking

forgiveness. However, in this context it has been used in the literal meaning; and] apparently it tells the Prophet to ask Allãh to keep in him under cover the natural human tendency of inclining towards desire or violation of others' rights. It has repeatedly been explained that *al-'afw* (اَلْعَفْوُ) and *al-maghfirah* (اَلْمَغْفِرَةُ) are used in the divine speech for various connotations, all of which may be combined under the heading "moving away somehow from truth or justice".

The meaning, therefore, is as follows: Do not be advocate of the treacherous, nor be inclined to them; ask Allãh to help you in this endeavour, and protect you from defending their treachery and keep you free from coming under the influence of desire. This meaning is clearly understood when we look at a latter verse which says: *And were it not for Allãh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way.* It clearly says that they cannot harm the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) even if they tried their utmost to arouse his feelings in order that he might opt for injustice and neglect the justice. They can never succeed in this endeavour, because the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was under divine protection from such harmful influence, and Allãh was guarding him [in his words and actions]; he did not commit injustice in his judgements, and was not liable to partiality; nor did he follow his desires. It would certainly be a gross injustice and a reprehensible misdeed if one was to differentiate, when sitting for judgement, between strong and weak, friend and foe, believer and unbeliever, near and far. In this context, the Prophet was ordered to "ask forgiveness" not because he had committed any sin which could have brought evil consequences, nor does it show that he was about to do any such improper thing. It only says that the Prophet should ask Allãh to give him power to subjugate his desires; and undoubtedly he was always in need of such divine protection and was never independent of Allãh, although he was *ma`ṣũm* (protected); and Allãh does what He wills.

This 'protection' covers all that comes under the headings of obedience and disobedience, all actions for which one may be praised or blamed. But it does not cover actual happenings. In other words, the verses show that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was protected from following his desires and inclining towards falsity. But they do not prove whatever judgement a judge gives, based of the rules and regulations enacted for judicial procedures (e.g., the claimant's responsibility is to bring the proof, and the defendant has only to deny

on oath) invariably always agree with reality and truth, or that this procedure always gives victory to the rightful person and brings defeat to the wrongful party. Nor do the laid down rules always lead to truth and justice. These procedures and regulation are meant to distinguish between truth and falsity in most of the cases, but not always; and what applies to majority of the cases only, cannot be deemed to apply to all cases.

It becomes clear from the afore-said explanations where an exegete has gone wrong. He says that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was ordered to ask forgiveness of Allãh, because he had intended to defend and protect that treacherous man (mentioned in the verse), as that man's people had requested the Prophet to be his advocate against a Jew. But this exegesis is wrong, because that putative intention would show that he had come under their reprehensible influence, while Allãh says that they could not influence him in any harmful manner.

QUR'ÃN: ***And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls . . .*** **:** It is said that unfaithful action has been linked to "their souls" because in the end its evil consequences turn back to the souls. Alternatively, it may count every sin as a treachery against one's own soul, as it has been counted as an injustice against it. Also Allãh says: *Allãh knew that you were acting unfaithfully towards your souls* (2:187).

If we look at this verse in conjunction with other Qur'ãnic realities that all the believers are like one soul, and one's property in a way belongs to the whole group inasmuch as all are responsible to guard and protect it against loss and waste, then possibly it may be inferred from this verses that a believer usurping or stealing another's property, in fact, acts unfaithfully towards his own soul, his own self.

The divine words: *surely Allãh does not love him who is treacherous, sinful,* shows that those transgressors persistently indulged in their treachery. It is further emphasized by the word, *athīmã* (اَثِيْمًا) which, being an adjective with force of a noun, shows that they were deep-dyed in sins. Even the clause, "act unfaithfully to their souls", alludes to their continued faithlessness; the same is the implication of the adjective, 'treacherous', which has been used [in 4:105], rather than the phrase, "those who act unfaithfully". (The latter has been used in 8:71 where it says: *so indeed they acted unfaithfully towards Allãh before, but He gave* [you] *mastery over them.*)

It appears from these associations among others that the verse, in context of the reason of its revelation, means as follows: Do not be

an advocate on behalf of these people and do not defend them, because they are persistent in their treachery, deep-dyed in unfaithfulness, submerged in sins and transgressions; but Allāh does not love treacherous and sinful persons. This connotation supports the stories that the verses were revealed about Abū Ṭu'mah ibn al-Ubayriq, as will be seen in Traditions

Apart from that story, the verse gives the following guidance: While sitting for judgement, do not support those who persistently indulge in treachery and perfidity; because Allāh does not like treacherous and sinful people. As He dislikes big treacheries, He also dislikes small ones. If it was possible for Allāh to like small treachery, it would have been possible to like big ones too. As it is, Allāh forbids to defend and support small treachery as He forbids supporting big treachery. Of course, if one acted unfaithfully in one case, and later lodged a case about another matter in which he was on right, then the verse does not forbid to defend him, and such advocacy and support is not covered by the sentence: *and be not an advocate on behalf of the treacherous*.

QUR'ĀN: ***They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allāh, . . .*** **:** This is one more indication that the verses 105 to 126 were revealed in one context regarding a particularly event and that is the one alluded to in the verse: *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent . . .* (4:112). Obviously, hiding can only be tried for deeds like theft, etc., blame for which could be laid at the other's door. It shows that the event mentioned in the verse under discussion and the preceding one is the same which is described in 4:112.

No one can hide oneself from Allāh, because nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Him. Consequently, its opposite, i.e., not hiding from Allāh, too is a compulsory thing, beyond the orbit of man's power. As such one cannot be blamed or shamed for it as the verse seems to imply. However, "hiding himself" here is apparently an indirect allusion to "feeling shy". That is why the clause, "and [they] do not hide themselves from Allāh", is followed by the clause, "and He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not". It exposes their conspiracy which they hatched at night in order that they could deny before the people any involvement in it, and during which they talked what was not pleasing to Allāh. Then the verse goes on to declare, "and Allāh encompasses what they do". It shows that Allāh encompasses them in all conditions,

including the time when they committed the crime. These two provisos describe a general condition after the specific restriction; and actually give at first a particular reason why they cannot hide from Allãh, and then describe a general reason.

QUR'ÃN: ***Behold! You are they who plead for them in this world's life, but who will plead for them with Allãh . . .*** **:** The question shows futility of people's pleading for the treacherous ones; such pleading, even if of any use, may help them only in this life, which has no value in the eyes of Allãh. But who will plead for them or argue on their behalf in the life hereafter, which is particularly honoured in Allãh's presence, and where they will really need some advocate to support their cause? There will be no one then to look after their affairs or to explain away their misdeeds.

QUR'ÃN: ***And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, . . .*** **:** It is an exhortation to those treacherous persons to return to their Lord and ask His forgiveness. This placing of evil and injustices as two alternatives and ascending from evil to injustice may reflect on the fact that evil is done to others while injustice is ascribed to one's own soul. Or it may be because evil is less serious than injustice – not unlike a small sin *vis-à-vis* a great sin. And Allãh knows better.

This and the following two verses all together throw light on the same theme, i.e., description of the sin resulting from a man's action; and each in its turn looks at a particular aspect of the sin:-

This (first) verse explains that when a man commits a sin, it is his own soul which is held responsible for it and it is recorded in his scrolls of deed. However, he still has been given an opportunity to return to Allãh and beseech Him for forgiveness. If he does so, he will find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful.

The next verse reminds man that the sin he commits affects his own soul; and it cannot be transferred to another person, by means of false accusation, etc.

The third verse explains that if, after committing a fault or sin, he accuses an innocent person for it, that accusation will be a new sin or crime, over and above the original one.

QUR'ÃN: ***And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise*** **:** As explained above, this verse is connected with the next one, and as such is a sort of preamble to it. The clause, "he only commits it against his own soul", focuses the responsibility on the perpetrator, and admonishes those who, after

committing a crime, try to put the blame on the others. The meaning therefore is as follows: Whoever commits a crime, he does so against his own soul, and it is not written in someone else's account; it is he who has done it, not the other man, even if he accuses that man of it, and even if that another man had undertaken to carry that load on his shoulders. Allāh is Knowing, He knows that the sin was done by this sinner, and not by that accused man; and He is Wise, He does not hold responsible for a sin except that actual sinner, and does not put the burden of a crime except on the actual criminal. Allāh says: . . . *for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it* (the evil of) *what it has wroght* . . . (2:286); . . . *and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another* . . . (6:164); *And those who disbelieve say to those who believe: "Follow our path and we will bear your wrongs." And never shall they be the bearer of any of their wrongs; most surely they are liars* (29:12).

QUR'ĀN: ***And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin*** **:** ar-Rāghib says in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān* : "When one wants to do one thing and inadvertently does another, it is said, he did a mistake; and if it happens as he had intended, it is said, he has found [his target]. Also if he does something not good, or intends to do something unworthy, he is said to have done a mistake. That is why they say in Arabic: 'He found (i.e., did) the mistake [which he wanted to do]; he missed the right [which he wanted to do]; he found the right; he missed the error or mistake.' Thus the word is used for opposite meanings, and one must ponder before deciding its intended connotation."

Again he says: "*al-Khaṭī'ah* (اَلْخَطِيْئَة = mistake, fault) and *as-sayyi'ah* (اَلسَّيِّئَة = evil, sin) have nearly similar connotations. But *al-khaṭīah* is mostly used when the result that appeared was not the one actually intended; for example , one fires at a wild animal and kills a man, or drinks liquor and commits a crime while intoxicated. Now, the cause of that effect can be either lawful or unlawful. If the cause was unlawful, like drinking liquor, the resulting effect or crime cannot be pardoned; however if it was lawful, like firing at a wild animal, [it might be dealt with leniently]. Allāh says: *there is no blame on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, but* (concerning) *that your hearts do purposely* (blame may rest on you) [33:5]; and He has said [in the verse under discussion]: *And whoever commits a fault or a*

sin. Therefore, *al-khaṭīah* (fault), here means that mistake which just happened inadvertently."

I think that the word, *al-khaṭīah*, is an adjective which, because of frequent use, does not need any noun. In this respect it is similar to *al-muṣībah* (اَلْمُصِيْبَة = misfortune), *ar-raziyyah* (اَلرَّزِيَّة = tradgedy) and *as-salīqah* (اَلسَّلِيقَة = inborn disposition) inasmuchas all these are adjectives but are used as nouns. The paradigm, *fa'īl* (فَعِيْل) shows the stocking up and permanency of the root-word; thus *al-khaṭīah* is an action in which *al-khaṭã'* (اَلْخَطّاء = mistake) is permanently settled down; while *al-khaṭã'* refers to an unintended mistake like manslaughter. This was the original meaning. Then it was extended to include those actions which a man would not do if he had not lost his natural uprightness. This extended meaning covers every disobedience and its effect. Thus *al-khaṭīah* is that action or its effect which was done inadvertently (and it will not be called a disobedience) or which one should not have intended (and it will be counted as a disobedience or its effect).

Allãh has ascribed *al-khaṭīah* (fault) in this verse to *al-kasb* (اَلْكَسْب = earning; translated here as 'commits'). Therefore, it must mean the fault which is a disobedience. As such, it means the fault done intentionally; although it was an action which a right-minded man should not have intended.[8]

It was explained under the verse 2:219: (*Say: "In both of them is a great sin . . . "*) that sin is an action whose evil consequences deprive man of many good and virtues, e.g., drinking liquor, gambling, stealing – the evils which prevent man from acquiring this life's good, and degrade him in the society to such an extent that people do not place any trust in him and do not believe him.[9]

The verse under discussion mentions fault and sin as alternatives and ascribes both to 'earning', that is, wilful action (*And whoever commits a fault or a sin*). Clearly both have been used in their particular meanings. Thus the meaning will be as follows: Whoever commits a fault whose effect is perpetual (like, unlawful murder or theft) and then puts its blame on an innocent man, then certainly he has burdened himself with a fresh calumny and another clear sin.

The word *ar-ramiyy* (اَلرَّمِي = translated here as 'accuses') literally means shooting an arrow; and the liability of the sin of

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[8] Here the author rebuts the last part of ar-Rãghib's explanation. (*tr.*)
[9] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng. transl.), vol.3, p.280.

calumny is described as being burdened with it. The two together present a fine metaphor: The false accuser shoots the arrow at the innocent victim and kills him; and this crime burdens him with a load which he cannot throw away and which prevents him from every good throughout his life.

From the preceding explanations, it may easily be understood why in these verses disobedience has been variously named sin, fault and evil, or injustice, treachery and misleading. Each word perfectly fits the context where it is placed.

QUR'ÃN: ***And were it not for Allãh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you*** **:** The context shows that this design of theirs to mislead the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) refers to their attempts to urge him to defend and support those whom Allãh has named in the beginning as "the treacherous". Obviously this group is the same whom Allãh has addressed in these words: *Behold! you are they who plead for them in this world's life . . .* This fits on the people of Abū Ṭu'mah, as will be described later.

QUR'ÃN: ***and they do not mislead but their own souls and they shall not harm you in any way*** **:** The two sentences taken together clearly show that their attempt to mislead the Prophet, harms their own souls only; it does not affect him in any way. They have mislead themselves through their evil designs; it is nothing but a sin and every sin is delusion.

This expression also has another connotation, given in the exegesis of chapter 3, verse 69: *and they lead not astray but themselves, and they do not perceive*.[10] But that connotation is not fit in this context.

The verse says: *and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allãh has revealed to you the Book*; it absolutely dismisses their ability to harm the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); it appears to be qualified by the clause: *and Allãh has revealed to you the Book*, which is a circumstantial clause related to the pronoun 'you' in the preceding clause. Thus, it totally rebuts the idea that anyone can harm the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in any way whether in knowledge or action.

QUR'ÃN: ***and Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know*** **:** As pointed out above

[10] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng. transl.) vol.6, pp.107-9 (*tr.*)

it gives the reason why they cannot harm the Prophet in any way. Or may be it shows the reason of the full statement, *and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way.* In any case, this revelation of the Book and this teaching of the Wisdom is the reason why their attempts to mislead the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) can never succeed. This is the foundation of his al-'iṣmah (اَلْعِصْمَة = sinlessness, infallibility).

THE MEANING OF *AL-'IṢMAH*

The verse apparently shows that the basic factor from which *al-'iṣmah* emanates is a sort of knowledge which prevents the knower from indulging in sin and mistake. In other words, knowledge prevents one from going astray. Likewise, all good characteristics, like bravery chastity and generosity are the forms of knowledge which are deep rooted in psyche and create their effects and at the same time prevent one from indulging in their opposites like cowardice or rashness, lack of desire or greed, miserliness or extravagance.

Although beneficial knowledge and perfect sagacity keep one clean and prevent his falling in quagmire of depravity or being soiled with filth of sins, (as we see in the people who have knowledge and wisdom, and steeped in piety and religion). However, it is such a cause as brings its effects most of the times but not always. The same is the case with all material and natural causes which are found in the universe. Look at anyone who is perfect in any field; you will find that his perfection does not protect him from mistake always and without any fail. It is a common trait of all causes which we see and observe.

The reason is that man possesses various powers of consciousness and at times some of them push the others to the back of the mind and man becomes oblivious of those factors. A man with faculty of piety will not be inclined to follow base desires as long as he is conscious of the virtue of his piety; but a time may come when the fire of desire is inflamed and he being tempted by that desire becomes oblivious of the virtue of piety or his consciousness of piety becomes weak, and he commits what piety would never tolerate and indulges in base desires. The same is the case with all conscious causes found in man. Otherwise, man will never deviate from the effects of any of these causes as long as the cause remains intact. In short, whenever man goes against the dictates of virtue, it happens

because some causes overpower the others and man forgets dictates of virtue. But as for this faculty which is called the power of *al-'iṣmah* it is a conscious cause emanating from knowledge which can never be overpowered. Had it been like other consciousness and comprehensions, it could have sometimes failed and deviated from the right path. This knowledge is not like other knowledge and comprehensions which we are familiar with and which can be acquired and learned from teachers.

Allãh has pointed to this unique knowledge in this talk addressed particularly to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when he says: *and Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom and He has taught you what you did not know*. It is an exclusive talk which we cannot properly understand because we have not tasted this type of knowledge and consciousness. However, if we look at some of the Divine speeches – for example: *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Jibrīl – for surely he brought it down to your heart by Allãh's command . . ."* (2:97). *The faithful spirit has descended wit it upon your heart that you may be of the warners in plain Arabic language* (26:193-5) – we will clearly see that this sending down of the Book is rooted in knowledge. Some other verses show that this sending down of the Book refers to revelation and talking as may be seen in the following verses: *He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you and that We enjoined upon Ibrãhīm and Mūsã and 'Īsã . . .* (42:13); *Surely, We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him . . .* (4:163); *". . . I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me . . ."* (6:50); *". . . I only follow what is revealed to me from my Lord . . . "* (7:203).

It is inferred from these various verses that *al-inzãl* (اَلْاِنْزَال = sending down) means revelation of the Book and the Wisdom – and it is a sort of divine teaching to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Nevertheless, the teaching referred to by the words: *and He has taught you what you did not know,* is something quite different from the teaching through revelation of the Book and the Wisdom; the verses deal with the judicial decisions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in various events and in the litigations which are brought to him for judgement, and that judgement is given by his own opinion. It has nothing to do with the Book and the Wisdom – although it depends on them – it is the result of his own view and opinion.

It appears from the above that the sending down and the teaching in the words: *and Allãh has sent down to you the Book and Wisdom and He has taught you what you did not know*, refer to two categories of knowledge: one, teaching through revelation and sending of the faithful spirit to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); two, teaching through inspiration created in the heart and the secret divine thought without the agency of any angel. This is what is supported by the traditions which have come to us about the prophetic knowledge. Therefore, the sentence: *and He has taught you what you did not know*, means: Allãh has given you a particular knowledge which you could never get through the normal means which help man in learning acquired knowledge; that particular knowledge is given only by Allãh to His chosen ones.

Clearly, this Divine gift which we call *al-'iṣmah* is a sort of knowledge and consciousness which is totally different from all other types of knowledge inasmuch as this knowledge is never overpowered by any other faculty; rather it overpowers all other faculties and uses them according to its own wisdom. In this way, it fully protects the holder of *al-'iṣmah* from going astray and committing mistakes. It has come in the traditions that the Prophet and the Imãms do have a spirit which is called the Holy Spirit; and it supports them and protects them from sin and mistake. It is this Spirit which is mentioned in the verse: *And thus did We reveal to you a Spirit by Our command. You did not know what the Book was nor* (what) *the faith* (was), *but We made it a light guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants* (42:52). (This meaning may be inferred if we take the apparent meaning of the verse that a guiding Spirit was sent to the Prophet, s.a.w.a.) Similarly there is the verse: *And We made them Imãms who guided* (people) *by Our command and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of the prayer and the giving of the alms and Us* (alone) *did they worship* (21:73). We shall explain in its place the meaning of this verse, God willing, that it refers to the support given by the Holy Spirit to the Imãms for doing good and worshipping Allãh.

The above explanations also show that the Book mentioned in the verse: *and Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom and has taught you what you did not know*, refers to the revelations sent for removing the peoples' conflicts; as was mentioned in the verse: *Mankind was but one people; so Allãh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in*

which they differed . . . (2:213), as was explained in the second volume of this book.[11]

The wisdom mentioned in the verse refers to all Divine cognition sent through revelation which were beneficial for this world and the hereafter. The sentence: *and He has taught you what you did not know*, refers to something totally different from general cognition obtained from the Book and the Wisdom.

The above explanations show the shortcomings of some exegetes regarding exegesis of this verse. Some have taken the Book as the Qur'ān and the Wisdom as the commandments found in it and have said that: *what you did not know* refers to the *sharī'ah* and the knowledge of the unseen. Others have explained the Book and the Wisdom as the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and *what you did not know* as the *sharī'ah* and the stories of the previous prophets and other such informations. There are other such explanations; but what we have written in the explanation shows how weak such other explanations are.

QUR'ĀN: ***and Allāh's Grace on you is very great*** **:** It reminds the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) of the Divine favours.

QUR'ĀN: ***There is no good in most of their secret counsels except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people***: ar-Rāghib has said: "*Nājaytuhu* (نَاجَيْتُهُ = I wispered in his ear). Its literal meaning is that you remain alone with him in a *najwah* (نَجْوَه = rising ground)." Thus *an-najwā* (اَلنَّجْوي) means secret counselling, whispered talk. Sometimes the word is used for conspirators or whisperers themselves. Allāh says: when they take counsel secretly (17:47).

The talk, "there is no good in most of their secret counsels", reverts to the preceding sentence, *when they meditate by night words which please him not,* because all these verses are connected together. Here it condemns all secret consultations whether they are done at night or in daytime. The statement that "there is no good in it" covers all secret counselling or plotting even if it is not done during night time. The same is the coming words: *whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger;* Allāh did not say, whoever whispers secretly to become

[11] *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.3, pp.167-227.

hostile to the Messenger, because the described order is for acting hostilely, no matter whether it is done after secret whispering or not.

The exception, "except (in his) who enjoins charity . . . " is isolated. The meaning: but whoever orders charity or goodness there is some good in his order. Secret counselling to do good work has been called enjoinment and order; it is a metaphorical expression. Allãh has mentioned three good works which secret whispering enjoins: charity, goodness and reconciliation between the people. Charity is a part of goodness, yet Allãh has mentioned it separately because it is the most perfect and prominent example of goodness and by nature it entails secret consultation.

QUR'ÃN: ***and whoever does this seeking Allãh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward*** **:** It categorises secret counselling describing how it may earn good reward or punishment. It shows what goodness is found in good secret counselling and as for the objectionable counselling, why it is not good.

In short, it shows that those who indulge in secret whispering are of two types: One, there are those who do it seeking Allãh's pleasure; he calls to goodness or strives to bring reconciliation between people seeking nearness to Allãh, and Allãh will surely give him a great reward; two, there are others who plan secretly acting hostilely to the Messenger and following a way other than that of the believers. His recompense is that Allãh leaves him into what he himself has chosen, makes him enter hell and it is an evil resort.

QUR'ÃN: ***And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers We will turn him to that to which he has*** **(himself)** ***turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort . . . :*** *al-Mushãqqah* (اَلْمُشَاقَّه = acting hostilely) is derived from *shiqq* (شِقٌّ = a part removed from a whole). Thus, *al-mushãqqah* and *ash-shiqãq* (اَلشِّقَّاق) show that you are in the opposite side of your fellow's. It is a metaphorical way to describe difference and disagreement. Acting hostilely to the Messenger after manifestation of the guidance means acting against the Messenger and indulging in his disobedience. Therefore, the phrase, "and follows other than the way of the believers", further explains hostility to the Messenger. The way of the believers means obeying the Messenger because his obedience is the obedience of Allãh. Allãh says: whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allãh (4:80).

The believers are united in the belief and their way is the unity on the obedience of Allāh and His Messenger – you may say in short "the obedience of His Messenger". This preserves the unity of their way as Allāh has said: *But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom the communications of Allāh are recited and among you is His Messenger? And whoever holds fast to Allāh he indeed is guided to the straight path. O you who believe! fear Allāh with the fear which is due to Him and do not die unless you are Muslims. And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided . . .* (3:101-3).We have explained this verse in volume three of this book.[12] Also Allāh has said: *And* (know) *that this My Path, the Right one, therefore follow it, and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will lead you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard* (against evil) (6:153). As the way of Allāh is the way of piety, the way of guarding against evil, and the believers are called to that way; so when they unite on that way they will cooperate with one another in piety. Allāh says: *. . . and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression . . .* (5:2). The verse, as you see, forbids the believers to disobey Allāh and to create friction in the Islamic Society; and this is what we have explained about the way of the believers.

The meaning of the verse (*and whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that Guidance has become manifest to him and follows other than the way of the believers*) is similar to the verse which says: *O you who believe! when you confer together in private, do not give to each other counsel of sin and revolt and disobedience to the Messenger, and give to each other counsel of goodness and piety . . .* (58:9).

The phrase, "We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned", means that We will let him continue in the behaviour he has chosen for himself and will let him follow other than the way of the believers; as Allāh says: *All do We aid – these as well as those – out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:20).

"and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort": the conjunction, 'and' shows that the whole episode, that is, turning him to his own chosen way and sending him to hell is a single Divine order, some parts will be implemented in this world (letting him proceed to

[12] *al-Mīzān*, (Eng. transl.), vol.6, pp.271-8.

his chosen path) and some will appear in the life hereafter and that is sending him to hell; and it is an evil resort.

QUR'ÃN: ***Surely Allãh does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allãh, he indeed strays off into a remote error*** **:** Apparently, the verse explains the reason of the preceding statement: *We will turn him to that to which he has* (himself) *turned and make him enter hell*; because all these verses are interconnected. This verse proves that being hostile to the Messenger is the same as associating something to Allãh, and Allãh surely does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him. The same idea may be inferred from the following verses of ch.47: *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allãh's way and oppose the Messenger after that guidance has become clear to them cannot harm Allãh in any way, and He will make null their deeds* (32). *O you who believe! Obey Allãh and obey the Messenger and do not let your deeds be forfeited* (33). *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allãh's way, then they die while they are unbelievers, Allãh will by no means forgive them* (34). Apparently, the verse 34 gives the reason of the order given in verse 33 regarding obedience of Allãh and of His Messenger. Clearly, disobedience to Allãh and His Messenger is a disbelief which will never be forgiven; in other words, it is nothing but polytheism.

The addition of the phrase, "and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases", aims at completing the talk; also it shows how great is this cursed sin, that is, hostility to the Messenger. We have explained shortly this verse at the end of the volume four.[13]

QUR'ÃN: ***They do not call besides Him on any thing but females*****:** *al-Inãth* (اَلْاِنَاث) is plural of *al-unthã* (اَلْاُنْثي = female). They say in Arabic, *anatha 'l-ḥadīd* (اَنَثَ الْحَدِيْد = the iron became soft). *Anatha 'l-makãn* (اَنَثَ الْمَكَان = the place brought out its vegetation fast). This word shows the idea of passibity, of being influenced, and that is why a female is called *unthã*. This verse describes the idols and all those who are worshipped besides Allãh as females, because all of them are manipulated and influenced by man; they have no power to affect any thing which their worshippers expect from them. Allãh says: *Surely those whom you call upon besides Allãh cannot create a fly, though*

[13] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.250-3.

they should all gather for it, and should the fly snatch away anything from them they could not take it back from it, weak are the invoker and the invoked. They have not estimated Allãh with the estimation that is due to Him; most surely Allãh is Strong, Mighty (22:73-74). Also He says: *And they have taken besides Him gods who do not create anything while they are themselves created and they control not for themselves any harm or profit, and they control not death, not life, nor raising* (the dead) *to life* (25:3).

Apparently, the femininity points to utter passivity which is the characteristic of a created thing *vis-à-vis* the Creator. This interpretation is better than the one which some people have written that the word females refers to Lãt, ‘Uzzã and Manãt, etc. every tribe had its own idol which was called goddess of that tribe; it was said either because their names were of feminine gender or because they were made of inanimate matters, which are generally given feminine gender. But this interpretation does not conform with the exclusivity which is found in the verse, "they do not call besides Him on anything but females", because among those who are worshipped besides Allãh there are some males like the Jesus Christ, Barahma and Buddha.[14]

QUR’ÃN: *and they do not call on anything but a rebellious Satan* : *al-Marīd* (اَلْمَرِيْدُ = stripped of every good; naked). al-Bayḍãwī has said: "*al-Mãrid* (اَلْمَارِد) and al-marīd: he who is unrelated with any good. The root word denotes touching and that is why they say *ṣarḥun mumarrad* (صَرْحٌ مُمَرَّد = plastered castle), *ghulãmun amrad* (غُلَامٌ اَمْرَد = beardless boy), *shajaratun mardã’* (شَجَرَةٌ مَرْدَآء = leafless tree)."

Apparently, this sentence explains the preceding one; 'calling' metaphorically denotes worshipping because worship had spread among people for calling the deity to fulfil their needs. Allãh has given to obedience the name of worship as He says: *Did I not charge you, O Children of Adam! that you should not serve the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should serve Me! this is the right way* (36:60-61). The sentence denotes that when they worship anything other than Allãh they actually worship and call the rebellious Satan because it is done in obedience to his suggestion.

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[14] Barahma is a mythical figure; and Buddha is not worshipped as God because Buddhism doesn't have any concept of Divinity. Rãmã and Krishnã would serve as better example.

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh has cursed him*** **:** *al-La'n* (اَللَّعْن = to keep away from mercy). It is another adjective for the Satan and describes the reason of the previous adjective, 'rebellious'.

QUR'ÃN: ***and he said: "Most certainly I will take of Thy servants an appointed portion*****:** It points to what Allãh has quoted from the Satan's claim: *Then by Thy Might I will surely lead them astray, all, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones* (38:82-83). The phrase, "of Thy servants", confirms that those who go astray are even then Allãh's servants. They cannot discard this servitude; He is their Lord who will decide about them whatever He pleases.

QUR'ÃN: ***And most certainly I will lead them astray and excite in them vain desires, and bid them so that they shall slit the ears of the cattle, and most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allãh's creation;" and whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allãh he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss*** **:** The phrase, "they shall slit the ears of the cattle", describes the custom of the Arabs in the days of Ignorance when they used to slit the ears of a particular type of she-camel and bullocks to make their meat unlawful for eating. All the customs mentioned in the verse are errors and straying. First, it is said that Satan will lead them astray; it is a general statement; then some examples of that straying are given for putting more emphasis on them. The Satan says: "Most certainly I will lead them astray by making them worship other than Allãh and encouraging them to commit sins. I will excite in them vain desires which will divert their attention from their obligations and duties. I will bid them to slit the ears of the cattle and exhort them to make unlawful what Allãh has made lawful, and I will order them so that they shall alter Allãh's creation." This last phrase may denote castration and various types of mutilations as well as sodomy and lesbianism.

Possibly, alteration of Allãh's creations may connote going against the natural law and discarding the upright religion. Allãh says: *Then set your face upright for religion in the right state – the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allãh's creation; that is the right religion* (30:30).

When one calls the Satan, that is, obey his commands, Allãh counts it as taking the Satan for a guardian, as He says: "And whoever takes the Satan for a guardian rather than Allãh he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss." It should be noted that Allãh has not said: Whosoever

the Satan is his guardian; because the previous verses have clearly shown that the guardian is Allāh alone and no one else has any guardianship on anything even if someone takes him as his guardian.

QUR'ĀN: ***He gives them promises and excites vain desires in them; and the Satan does not promise them but to deceive. These are they whose abode is hell, and they shall not find any refuge from it*** **:** The context shows that it gives the reason to the preceding verse, *he indeed shall suffer a manifest loss.* What loss can be more manifest than the one who changes real happiness and perfection of creation with false promises and imaginary desires. Allāh says: *And* (as for) *those who disbelieves, their deeds are like the mirage in a desert, which the thirsty man deems to be water, until when he comes to it he finds it to be naught, and there he finds Allāh, so He pays back to him his reckoning in full; and Allāh is quick in reckoning* (24:39). The promises refer to direct Satanic temptations and desires spring up from those temptations whose imaginary beauties enrapture the mind. That is why Allāh says, "and the Satan does not promise them but to deceive". It should be noted that the Satanic promise has been called deception but not the desires.

Then their end result is described in the next verse: "These are they whose abode is hell, and they shall not find any refuge from it". *Maḥīṣ* (مَحِيْص = the place to escape; translated here as refuge).

QUR'ĀN: ***And*** **(as for)** ***those who believe and do good, We will make them enter into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever;*** **(it is)** ***a promise of Allāh, true*** **(indeed)*****; and who is truer of word than Allāḥ*** **:** This describes the believers' position to complete the picture by giving a clear contrast with the unbelievers'. In the verse, pronouns have changed from second person plural to the third person. The reason is that Allāh wants to show the importance of the situation and its greatness by using the proper name, Allāh, instead of pronouns of second plural.

There is one more fine point in the phrase, "We will make them enter into gardens"; it indicates that soon they will be present before God Almighty and He will not conceal Himself from His believing servants as He is their guardian.

"And who is truerof word than Allāḥ": It presents a contrast with what has been said in the preceding verse about the Satanic

promises that it is nothing but deception while Allãh's promise is a reality and His words true.

QUR'ÃN: (This) ***shall not be in accordance with your vain desires nor in accordance with the vain desires of the People of the Book; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides Allãh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor helper*** **:** The talk returns to the topic it had started with. It gives in short the conclusion of the detailed speech. It has been narrated about the actions and speeches of some believers who insisted before the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he must take their side, and help them against their opposite parties in their mutual conflict and litigation. It shows that they thought that by believing in Allãh and His Messenger they had done a favour to Allãh and established a right over the Prophet, by which Allãh and His Messenger were obliged to take their side and give judgement in their favour, no matter whether they are on right or on wrong, and whether that judgement would be just or unjust. It is the same phenomenon which we find in the followers of the leaders of error and the retinues of oppressive rulers; each of them, while humiliating himself before the leaderand obeying him, thinks that by attaching himself to the leader he has done a favour to him; as a result he believes that he has a right on his leader because of which the leader must protect his interests and compulsorily give him precedence over others.

Also, the People of the Book entertained the same ideas as Allãh narrates in His Book about them: *And the Jews and the Christians say: "We are the sons of Allãh and His beloved ones"* (5:18). Also He says: *And they say: "Be Jews or Christians, you will be on the right course"* (2:135). Again He says: *This is because they say: "There is not upon us in the matter of the unlearned people any way* (to reproach)*"* (3:75).

Allãh has refuted such ideas of that group of believers and joined them with the People of the Book. Allãh has called these assumptions vain desires, because like the desires, these presumptions are merely imaginary forms which have no reality outside the mind. Allãh tells them: 'O group of the Muslims! It is not going to be in accordance with your vain desires nor with the vain desires of the People of the Book; it all depends on deeds; if your deeds are good you will get good reward and if evil, then evil.' The evil has been mentioned in the verse before the good deeds because they had committed great sins. "Whoever does evil he shall be requited with it and besides Allãh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor

helper": The sentence begins without any conjunction. It means it is a separate speech; and in a way gives reply to the following unasked question: If entering into the fold of Islam and true belief does not bring every good to a man and does not protect his interests in life then what is the way and where will the man go? And the same is the situation in Judaism and Christianity. In reply Allãh declares: "Whoever does evil he shall be requited with it and besides Allãh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor helper; and whoever does from good deeds, . . . "

The verse, "he shall be requited with it", is general and covers worldly punishments prescribed by the Islamic laws, like retaliation for criminals, cutting of fingers for thief and stoning or whipping for fornicator, etc., as well as the punishments in the hereafter which Allãh has promised in His Book and through His Prophet.

This generality fits perfectly with the occasion of the revelation of these verses. It has been described that the verses were revealed concerning a theft which some Muslims had committed and had accused a Jew or a Muslim for it and then insisted before the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he should give judgement against the accused.

The words, "neither a guardian nor helper", are also general. No guardian or helper can avert a punishment of a crime from the culprit; even the Prophet or Imãm and the honour of Islam and religion cannot help in this matter. The punishment prescribed by Allãh cannot be removed from the does of the evil by anyone. Also, it covers guardian and helper who would be able to remove from him the punishment in the hereafter except what the next verse mentions.

QUR'ÃN: ***And whoever does from good deeds, whether male or female, and he*** **(or she)** ***is a believer – these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly*** **:** This is the other alternative which describes the recompense of the doer of good deeds, that is, the garden. In this verse, Allãh has attached a condition which restricts the recompense; and on the other side has given latitude which has expanded the circle of reward. It is the condition of being rewarded with the garden that the doer of a good deed should be a believer, because the reward stands face to face with good deed and an unbeliever has no good deed to his credit. Allãh says: . . . *and if they had set up others* (with Him) *certainly what they did would have been forfeited* (6:88). Also, He said: *These are they who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become null, and*

therefore We will not set up a balance for them on the Day of Resurrection (18:105).

On the other hand, Allãh has said, "And whoever does from good deeds", the word 'from' indicates a part, and it means whoever does some of the good deeds. This expands the circle of the promise of the garden. If Allãh had said: 'and whoever does good deeds' and the context requires precise description of the recompense – it would have meant that the garden was for a believer who performed all good deeds; but the Divine Grace has spread the good reward for every believer who performs some good deeds and if he has left any good deed undone or committed any sin, Allãh will make it up through repentance or intercession, as He has said: *Surely Allãh does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases;* . . . (4:116); we have explained in detail about repentance while explaining the words of Allãh: *Repentance with Allãh is only for those who do evil in ignorance* . . . (4:17) in the fourth volume[15]; and about intercession under the verse: *And be on the guard against a day when one soul shall not avail another in the least,* . . . (2:48) in the first volume of this book[16].

> Then Allãh says: "whether male or female"; the Divine Decree covers males and females both without any difference of gender. This is totally opposite to the pretensions of ancient people of various religions and communities like India, Egypt and all the idol worshippers. They believed that whatever good deed the womenfolk did it was not credited to their account and they did not get any reward for their virtuous deeds. The same was the ideology of Judaism and Christianity: that all honour and respect is reserved for the men; and the women are disgraced in the eyes of Allãh; there are shortcomings in their creation and they will not get full reward for their deeds. The Arabs' thinking was not much different from these superstitions. Therefore, Allãh has made both sexes equally deserving for His Grace and said, "whether male of female".

Probably, it is for this reason that the sentence, " . . . these shall enter the garden" is followed by, "and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly". The first sentence shows that the women do have their

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[15] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.54-77.
[16] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng. transl.), vol.1, pp.221-249.

shares in the good reward like the men; and the second sentence shows that there shall be no excess or shortfall between their shares in quantity; as Allāh has said: *so their lord accepted their prayer: "That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other . . . "* (3:195).

QUR'ĀN: ***And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allāh. And he is the doer of good*** **(to others)** ***and follows the faith of Ibrāhīm, the upright one, and Allāh took Ibrāhīm as a friend. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh encompasses all things*** **:** It appears that this is a reply to an unspoken question: If the Islam of a Muslim or belief of the People of the Book has no effect in bringing the good to him and to protect his interest – in short, when belief in Allāh and His signs is worthless and its existence and non-existence make no difference – then what is the honour of Islam? Or the privilege of faiṯ

The reply is given that the religion's honour is a fact without any doubt. It cannot be doubted nor any wise man can be oblivious of its goodness. This ideal is hidden in the phrase, "And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely to Allāḥ" The question takes it for granted that there is goodness in the religion. Man cannot get himself freed from religion and the best of the religion is to submit oneself entirely to Allāh who is the Owner of whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Man has to surrender himself to Allāh and worship Him; also he should follow the faith of Ibrāhīm, the upright one, because that is the natural religion. And Allāh took Ibrāhīm as a friend; Ibrāhīm was the first to submit himself entirely to Allāh doing good to others and following the upright religion.

Nevertheless, no one should entertain the idea that the Divine friendship is like the friendship found between man and man which overshadows all right and wrong and opens for them the door of recklessness and despotism. Allāh is the owner, not the owned, He encompasses all things and is not surrounded. He is not like the rulers, presidents and kings because when they get any authority over their servants or subjects, they hand over something of their own freedom in its lieu to the public. They overpower some groups with help of some others and rule over one people with help of the other people; when a time comes where their will is opposed by the public's will then they cannot hold their ground, they fall down and their helplessness is clearly seen by one and all.

It is to describe this idea that the speech ends with the verse, "And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh encompasses all things".

T R A D I T I O N S

It is narrated by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr* that all these verses were revealed about a group of the Helpers from Banū Ubayriq. There were three brothers, all hypocrites; Bashīr, Bishr and Mubashshir. They dug a hole in the wall of the uncle of Qatãdah ibn an-Nu‘mãn – and Qatãdah was a *badrī*[*] – and stole food grain which he had stored for his family together with a sword and coat of mail.

Qatãdah complained about it to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said "O Messenger of Allãh, some people dug a hole in the wall of my uncle and took away the food grain he had saved for his family and a sword and a coat of mail, and they are the people of a bad family." A believer man, Lubayd ibn Sahl, was with them when they were planning (the theft). Banū Ubayriq said to Qatãdah, "This is the work of Lubayd ibn Sahl." This news came to Lubayd's ears, he took his sword and went to them and said, "O Banū Ubayriq! Do you accuse me of the theft while you are more deserving for it? You are hypocrites, you lampoon the Messenger of Allãh and ascribe the poems to the Quraysh. You must prove this (accusation), otherwise I will fill my sword with your blood." So, Banū Ubayriq talked with him in a friendly way and said to him, "You go back, may Allãh have mercy on you; because you are free from this claim."

Now, Banū Ubayriq approached a man from their clan, Usayd ibn ‘Urwah by name; he was a good eloquent speaker. He went to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said, "O Messenger of Allãh! Qatãdah ibn an-Nu‘mãn singled out a family of our clan, a distinguished people of high regard and good family tree, and he accused them of theft and charged them of what they are innocent of[17]

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[*] i.e., one who participated in the battle of Badr with the Holy Prophet of Islam (*ed.*).

[17] & [11] The next *ḥadīth,* narrated by same Qatãdah, is almost identical to this one, with one difference: These two sentences, in the next narrative, end with the proviso, "without evidence of proof." That crucial phrase makes it clear why the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) listened to Usayd (Usayr) and why he admonished

Hearing this, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was grieved. Then Qatādah came to him, and looking at him the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "You pointed out a distinguished family, a people of high honour and good family tree, and you accused them of theft"[18]. (In this way) he admonished him severely. Qatādah was grieved because of it and went back to his uncle and said, "Oh, would that I had died and not spoken to the Messenger of Allāh (in this matter); because he has talked to me in a way I did not like." His uncle said, "Allāh is He Whose help to be sought."

Then Allāh sent down these verses to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about this incident: *Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth . . . when they meditate by night words which please Him not*. al-Qummī says: The word, 'words', here means deeds. Allāh has used the word to indicate action: *Behold: You are they who plead for them in this world's life . . . And whoever commits a fault or sin then accuses of it one innocent*; al-Qummī said: Lubayd ibn Sahl – *he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin*.

The same *tafsīr* narrates: Abu 'l-Jārūd narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.): "Some people from the near relatives of Bashīr said: 'Let us go to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), so that we should talk to him about our fellow or explain to him that our fellow is innocent.' When Allāh revealed: *They hide themselves from men and do not hide themselves from Allāh . . . who shall be their protector?* Then the clan of Bishr turned on him and said: 'O Bishr, seek forgiveness from Allāh and repent to Him from the sins.' He said: 'I swear by whom I swear that nobody stole it except Lubayd.' Then the verses were revealed: *And whoever commits a fault or a sin then accuses of it one innocent he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin*.

Then Bishr renounced Islam and fled to Mecca and Allāh revealed about the group who had come to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to plead for Bishr: *And were it not for Allāh's Grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you, and they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allāh's grace on you is very great*. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

Qatādah. It was because Qatādah had not offered any evidence or proof for his case and his claim was untenable from legal point of view. (*tr.*)

as-Suyūṭī writes: at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and al-Ḥãkim (who said that this tradition is correct) have narrated from Qatãdah ibn an-Nu‘mãn that he said: "There was a family in our clan who were called Banū Ubayriq – Bishr, Bashīr and Mubashshir. Bishr was a hypocrite. He used to compose poems satirizing the companions of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and then ascribe it to some other Arabs. He used to say: 'That man has said this and this and that man has said so and so.' But when the companions of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) heard that poem, they used to say, 'By Allãh! no one has said this poem except this wretched one himself. Then he (Bishr) said: 'What! whenever people say some poem they join together and say Ubayriq's son has said it!'"

(Qatãdah) said: "They were a needy poor family before Islam and in Islam. The usual food of the people of Medina was dates and barley. If a man was well to do, and a caravan came from Syria loaded with while flour, that man would buy some of it and reserve it for himself. The other members of the family had to be content with date and barley. So, a loaded caravan arrived from Syria and my uncle, Rufã‘ah Ibn Zayd, purchased a bag of the white flour and kept it in his attic room; and in that room were his arms – two coats of mail and two swords and things connected with them. Someone sneaked in the darkness of the night and dug into the wall of the attic and took the food and arms. In the morning, my uncle, Rufã‘ah, came to me and said, 'O my nephew! do you know that someone sneaked to us during night and my attic has been dug into and they took our food and our arms!'"

He (Qatãdah) continues: "We inquired in the neighbourhood and asked the people. Somebody told us, 'We did see Banū Ubayriq lighting fire in the night and we are sure that it was lit only to bake some of your flour.' When we were inquiring in the neighbourhood, Banū Ubayriq told us, 'By God! we don’t think any one has done it except Lubayd ibn Sahl' – he was a man of our clan who was a Muslim of good character. When Lubayd heard it, he raised his sword and went to Banū Ubayriq and said, 'What! I steal? By God! you should prove this accusation or the sword will mingle in your body.' Then they said, 'Go away, O man! By God! you are not the thief.' We continued our investigation in the neighbourhood until we were sure that these Banū Ubayriq were the thieves. Then my uncle said to me, 'O my nephew, if you only go to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and inform him about it.'"

Qatādah said: "I came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, a family among us, a loathsome people went to my uncle, Rufā'ah ibn Zayd, and dug a hole in his attic and took away his arm and food. They should return to us our arm. As for the food, we don't want it.' The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'I will look into this matter.' When Banū Ubayriq heard about it, they went to a man of their clan who was called Usayr ibn 'Urwah, and they told him of this development, and some people of the neighbourhood also joined them. Now, they went to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Qatādah ibn an-Nu'mān and his uncle proceeded against one of our families who are Muslims of good character, and they have accused them of theft without any evidence of proof.'"

Qatādah continues: "Then I came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and talked to him. He said, 'You have proceeded against a family who have been described (to me) as Muslims of good character and you have accused them of theft without evidence of proof.'"

Qatādah says: "I came back and I wished that I would have lost some of my wealth but had not talked to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) about it. Then my uncle, Rufā'ah, came to me and asked, 'O my nephew, what (progress) have you made?' I informed him of what the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had told me. My uncle said, 'Allāh is He Whose help to be sought.'"

Without any delay, the verses were revealed: *surely we have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allāh has shown you; and be not advocate on behalf of the treacherous*, i.e., Banū Ubayriq. *And ask forgiveness of Allāh*, i.e., from what you had said to Qatādah, *surely Allāh is forgiving, merciful*. *And do not plead on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls . . . then asks forgiveness of Allāh, He shall find Allāh Forgiving, Merciful.* i.e., if they ask forgiveness of Allāh, He will forgive them. *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin* – it refers to their accusation of Lubayd. *And were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, a party of them had certainly designed to mislead you* – i.e., Usayr ibn 'Urwah and His companions. *And they do not mislead but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allāh's grace on you is very great. There is no good in most of their secret counsels except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or*

goodness or reconciliation between people; and whoever does this seeking Allãh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward. When the verses were revealed the arms were brought to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and he returned them to Rufã'ah.

Qatãdah said, "When I brought the arms to my uncle – he was of old age and I used to think that his faith was weak – when I brought the arms to him, he said, 'O my nephew, this is the path of Allãh: Then I understood that his Islam was correct.'"

When the verses were revealed, Bishr went (to Mecca) and joined the polytheists. He stayed with Sulãfah bint Sa'd. Then Allãh revealed the verses: *And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We will turn him to that to which he has* (himself) *turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort. Surely Allãh does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allãh, he indeed strays off into a remote error.* When he stayed with Sulãfah, Ḥassãn ibn Thãbit shot at her some lines of poetry. She took his (i.e., Bishr's) baggage and putting it on her head, went out and threw it in the open valley and said, "You have brought to me the poem of Ḥassãn as gift! You were never to bring any good to me." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This theme is narrated through other chains of narrators also.

The same author writes: Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn Zayd about this verse: He said: "There was a man who stole an iron coat of mail and sword during the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and put the blame on a Jew. The Jew said, 'By God! I have not stolen it O Abu 'l-Qãsim! but it has been (wrongly) attributed to me.' There were some neighbours of the thief who claimed that he was blameless and they too accused the Jew. Also they said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! Surely, this Jew is a wicked person. He does not believe in Allãh, nor in your prophethood.' This continued until the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) spoke to the Jew on this matter.

"Thus, Allãh censored the Prophet and revealed: *Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allãh has shown you; and be notan advocate on behalf of the treacherous. And ask forgiveness of Allãh* – about what you have told that Jew – *Surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful*. Then Allãh turned to his neighbours and said: *Behold! You*

are they who plead for them in this world's life; but who will plead for them with Allãh on the Resurrection Day or who shall be their protector? Then Allãh gave them a chance of repentance and said: *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allãh, he shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise* – Why have you involved yourselves, O people! in this man's error pleading on his behalf? *And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent* – even if he is a polytheist: *he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin . . . And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger after that gudiance has become manifest to him and follows other than the way of the believers, We will turn him to that to which he has* (himself) *turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort*. But he refused to avail himself of the repentance which Allãh had offered to him. He went to the polytheists at Mecca. There, he dug hole in a house with intention of theft and the house fell down upon him and he was killed." (*ibid.*)

The author says: This meaning too is narrated through many chains of narrators with minor differences among them.

The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said, "There is no servant who committed a sin then stood up and performed *wuḍū'* and asked forgiveness of Allãh from his sin but it shall be incumbent on Allãh to forgive him, because He says: *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allãh, he shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful.*"

Also he (s.a.w.a.) has said, "Verily Allãh puts the servant in suffering (though He loves him) in order to hear his entreaties." Also he (s.a.w.a.) has said, "Allãh was not to open the door of prayer and shut the door of its acceptance, because He says: *Call Me, I will answer to you.* And He was not to open the door of repentance and shut the door of forgiveness, while He says: *And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allãh, he shall find Allãh Forgiving, Merciful.*" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

'Abdullãh ibn Ḥamãd al-Anṣãrī narrates from 'Abdullãh ibn Sinãn, that he said: Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) said, "Backbiting is that you say about your brother what is (actually) found in him but Allãh has kept it hidden. But if you say what is not in him, then it comes under the words of Allãh: *. . . he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest sin.*" (*ibid.*)

al-Qummī writes under the verse: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels* . . . : "My father has narrated to me from Ibn Abī ‘Umayr from Ḥammād from al-Ḥalabī from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said, 'Verily, Allāh has made *at-tamaḥḥul* obligatory in the Qur’ān.' I asked, 'And what is *at-tamaḥḥul*, may I be made your ransom!?' He said, 'That you should maintain a brighter face than that of your brother (in faith), and have an intent look on him (i.e., you should not turn away your face from him when he consults you); and this is the word of Allāh: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels.*'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chains from ‘Abdullāh ibn Sinān from Abu 'l-Jārūd that he said, "Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) said, 'When I narrate any *ḥadīth* to you, you should ask me (its proof) from the Book of Allāh. Then he said in some of his talks, 'Verily the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has prohibited much talking, squandering the property and too much questioning.' He was asked, 'O son of the Messenger of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness nad reconciliation between people;* and He says: *And do not give away your property which Allāh has made for you a* (means of) *support to the weak of understanding* (4:5); and He says: *O you who believe! do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, . . .* (5:101). (*al-Kāfī*)

Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abdi ‘l-Ḥamīd narrates through some reliable persons from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about the verse: *There is no good in most of their secret consels except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people*, that goodness means giving loan. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyāshī)

The author says: al-Qummī also has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* through the same chain and this meaning has also been narrated through Sunnī chains of narrators. In any case, it is based on the flow of the verse and description of a relevant example.

as-Suyūṭī writes: Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasāī, Ibn Mājah and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Sufyān ibn ‘Abdillāh ath-Thaqafī that he said, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! give me an order I should hold fast to it in Islam.' He (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Say: "I believe in Allāh," then remain steadfast to it.' I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! What is the most dreadful thing you fear about me?' He said, 'This.' (and the Messenger of Allāh [s.a.w.a.] caught the tip of his own tongue)." (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are very numerous traditions condemning excessive talks and praising the silence in the books of the Shī'īs and the Sunnīs.

The same book says: Abū Naṣr as-Sijizzī has narrated in *al-Ibānah* from Anas that he said, "A bedouin came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); the Prophet said to him, 'O bedouin! Verily Allāh has revealed to me in the Qur'ān: *There is no good in most of their secret counsels except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people, and whoever does this seeking Allāh's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward.* O bedouin! the mighty reward is the paradise.' The bedouin said, 'Praise be to Allāh who guided us to Islam.'" (*ibid.*)

The same book writes about the words of Allāh: *And whoever acts hostilely to the Messenger* . . . : at-Tirmidhī and al-Bayhaqī (in his *al-Asmā' wa 'ṣ-Ṣifāt*) have narrated from Ibn 'Umar that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) has said, 'Allāh will never gather this *ummah* on error and Allāh's hand is on the *jamā'ah,* and whoever separates (from it) he separates (for entering) into hell.'" (*ibid.*)

Also at-Tirmidhī and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said, "Allāh will never gather my *ummah* (or, this *ummah*) on error and Allāh's hand is on *jamā'ah.* (*ibid.*)

The author says: The tradition is well known and al-Hādī (a.s.) has narrated it from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in his letter to the people of Ahwāz as has been quoted in vol.3 of *Biḥāru 'l-anwār*. The meaning of this tradition has been explained in the preceding commentary.

Ḥarīz has narrated from some of our companions from the fifth and sixth Imām (a.s.) that he said, "When the Commander of the Believers (s.a.) was in Kūfah, the people came to him and said, 'Appoint for us an imām who will lead us (in *tarāwīḥ*) in the month of Ramaḍān.' The Imām (a.s.) said, 'No' and forbade them to pray it with the *jamā'ah*. When night came, they began saying, 'Weep in Ramaḍān, alas for Ramaḍān.' Then al-Ḥārith al-A'war came to the Imām (a.s.) with some people and said, 'O Commander of the Believers, people are raising a hue and cry and they have not liked your talk.' At this juncture, the Imām (a.s.) said, 'Leave them to do what they like. Whoever wants should lead them in prayer.' Then he recited: *Whoever follows other than the way of the believers, We will*

turn him to which he has (himself) *turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort."* (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

It is written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* about words of Allãh, the Almighty: *and who is truer of word than Allãḥ*: al-Bayhaqī has narrated in *ad-Dalãil* from 'Uqbah ibn 'Ãmir (*inter alia* describing the journey of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) to Tabūk):

"Then (the Messenger of Allãh [s.a.w.a.]) arrived at Tabūk and praised Allãh and glorified Him as is His due, and then he said, (after the praise of Allãh): 'Verily the most truthful talk is the Book of Allãh; the most reliable grip is the word of piety; the best of the religions is the religion of Ibrãhīm; the best custom is the custom of Muḥammad; the noblest talk is the remembrace of Allãh; the best story is this Qur'ãn; the best affair is the determined one and the worst affairs are the innovated ones; the most excellent guidance is that of the Prophets; the noblest death is martyrdom; the darkest blindness is going astray after guidance; the best knowledge is that which gives benefit; the best guidance is that which is acted upon; the most evil blindness is the blindness of the heart; upper hand is better than the lower hand,[19] that little which satisfies is better than the abundance which makes one forgetful; the worst apology is (the one offered) when death arrives; the worst remorse is the one (shown on) the Day of Resurrection. Some people don't come to prayer except near the end and some don't remember Allãh but they talk nonsense; the biggest sin is the lying tongue; the best wealth is one's self reliance; the best provision is the piety; the pinnacle of the wisdom is the fear of Allãh, the mighty, the Great; the best thing established in the hearts is certainty. To entartain doubt is a sort of disbelief; to lament for dead is an act of the *jãhiliyyah* (Ignorance); embezzlement is altogether in the hell; hoarded treasure is (the instrument of) branding with the fire; poetry is among the musical instruments of Satan; wine is the vessel of sin; women are the snares of Satan; youth is a branch of lunacy; the most evil earning is interest; and the most wicked food is the property of the orphan. The blissful is he who learns lesson from (conditions of) the others; wretched is the one who becomes wretched in the womb of his mother; the resort of every one of you is a place of four arms (grave); the affairs (are decided) by their ends; the worst thinking is that of falsity. Everything which is to come is near; to abuse a believer is immorality; to fight him is disbelief; eating his flesh (backbiting him) is the disobedience to Allãh; and the sanctity of

[19] i.e., the hand that gives is better than the hand that receives. (*tr.*)

his property is like that of his blood. He who (falsely) sears by Allāh, He will refute him; he who forgives will be forgiven; he who pardons, Allāh will pardon him; he who controls his anger, Allāh will give him good reward; he who is patient in misfortune, Allāh will recompense him. He who hankers for good reputation, Allāh makes him disreputable. He who keeps patience, Allāh multiplies (the reward) for him. He who disobeys Allāh, He will give him punishment. O Allāh! forgive me and my *ummah* (he said it three times); I seek pardon of Allāh for me and for you.'"

Muḥammad ibn Yūnus has narrated through some of his companions from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.); also Jābir has narrated from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.), about the words of Allāh: *And most certainly I will bid them so that they shall alter Allāh's creation*, that the Imāms said, "Allāh's creation means the commandments of Allāh." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

In the same book, Jābir narrates from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) about the same words of the Qur'ān that he said, "It is Allāh's religion".

The author says: Both traditions give the same meaning and it is as we have explained in the Commentary that Allāh's creation means the natural religion.

The words of Allāh: *And bid them so that they shall slit the ears of the cattle*, have been explained in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayān* that they will cut the ears from its base; and it is written there that this meaning has been narrated from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.).

Muḥammad ibn Muslim narrates from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, "When the verse was revealed: *whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it*, some companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'How hard is this verse!' the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to them, 'Are not you afflicted in your properties, your offsprings and in yourselveṣ' They said, 'Certainly.' He (s.a.w.a.) said, '(This is) through which writes good deeds for you and erases the bad deeds.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

The author says: This meaning is narrated through many chains from the companions in the Sunnī books of traditions.

as-Suyūṭī writes: Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim and at-Tirmidhī have narrated from Abū Saʻīd al-Khudrī that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'No believer is afflicted by hardshipor sickness, grief or sorrow, trouble or sadness – even a thorn which

pricks him – but Allãh grants remission to his faults.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This theme has been narrated through numerous chains from the Prophet and the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated through his chains from al-Ḥusayn ibn Khãlid that Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍã (a.s.) said, "I heard my father narrating from his father (a.s.) that he said, 'Surely Allãh took Ibrãhīm as a friend because he never returned anyone (empty handed) and never asked anyone (for his needs) other then Allãh, the mighty, the Great.'" (*'Uyūnu 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: This is the most correct tradition about the meaning of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) as the friend of Allãh because it fits perfectly with the literal meaning of the word; اَلْخُلَّة (*al-khullah*) means need; therefore your *khalīl* (friend) is the one who asks his needs only from you. And there are other narrations giving other reasons for his title.

* * * * *

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي ٱلنِّسَآءِ ۖ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ
فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي ٱلْكِتَٰبِ فِي يَتَٰمَى ٱلنِّسَآءِ
ٱلَّٰتِي لَا تُؤْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَن تَنكِحُوهُنَّ
وَٱلْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ ٱلْوِلْدَٰنِ وَأَن تَقُومُوا۟ لِلْيَتَٰمَىٰ
بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۚ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾
وَإِنِ ٱمْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنۢ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِمَآ أَن يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا ۚ وَٱلصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ ۗ وَأُحْضِرَتِ
ٱلْأَنفُسُ ٱلشُّحَّ ۚ وَإِن تُحْسِنُوا۟ وَتَتَّقُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَن تَسْتَطِيعُوٓا۟ أَن تَعْدِلُوا۟
بَيْنَ ٱلنِّسَآءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا۟ كُلَّ ٱلْمَيْلِ
فَتَذَرُوهَا كَٱلْمُعَلَّقَةِ ۚ وَإِن تُصْلِحُوا۟ وَتَتَّقُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَإِن يَتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ ٱللَّهُ كُلًّا
مِّن سَعَتِهِۦ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي

ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ
مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ وَإِن تَكْفُرُوا۟ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ
مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾
وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٣٢﴾
إِن يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِـَٔاخَرِينَ ۚ وَكَانَ
ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَّن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ ٱلدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ
ٱللَّهِ ثَوَابُ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ سَمِيعًۢا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٤﴾

And they ask you a decision about women, say: "Allãh makes known to you His decision concerning them, and that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them, and concerning the weak among children, and that you should deal towards orphans with equity; and whatever good you do, Allãh surely knows it" (127). *And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertation on the part of her husband, there is no blame on them, if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better, and avarice has been made to be present in the* (people's) *minds; and if you do good* (to others) *and guard* (against evil)*, then surely Allãh is aware of what you do* (128). *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish* (it)*, but be not disinclined* (from one) *with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspense; and if you effect a reconciliation and guard* (against evil)*, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (129). *And if they separate, Allãh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness, and Allãh is Ample-giving, Wise* (130). *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you and*

(We enjoin) *you too that you should be careful* (of your duty to) *Allãh; and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's and Allãh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy* (131). *And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh is sufficient as a protector* (132). *If He pleases, He can make you pass away, O people! and bring others; and Allãh has the power to do this* (133). *Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allãh is the reward of this world and the hereafter; and Allãh is Hearing, Seeing* (134).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These verses are in conjunction with the ones in the beginning of the chapter which cover the subjects concerning women like marriage, prohibited degrees and inheritance, etc. Keeping it in view, it appears that these verses were revealed after those previous ones when the people asked the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) about the affairs affecting the women. The verses in the beginning of the chapter had resurrected the rights of women in property and social interactions, etc., which the people had previously killed.

Allãh orders the Prophet to tell them in reply to their various queries that the laws establishing their rights on men are Divine decisions about which the Prophet has no say; not only that, but what is recited to them in the Book about the female orphans is also Divine order in which the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has no say; not only that, but Allãh orders them to deal with all the orphans with equity. Then come some rules concerning the discord and dispute between a woman and her husband which are generally found in every society.

QUR'ĀN: ***And they ask you a decision about women, say: "Allãh makes known to you His decision concerning them*****:** ar-Rãghib has said: "*al-Futyã* and *al-fatwã* (اَلْفُتْيَا ، اَلفَتْوي) means reply to difficult rullings; and they say: 'I asked him a decision so he replied to me in this way'."

It is understood from various usages of this word that it means a man's reply concerning difficult affairs according to his opinion based

on his *ijtihãd*; or means the opinion itself concerning difficult matters, as is seen from this verse where *al-fatwã* has been attributed to Allãh.

Although this verse may possibly be explained in various ways (based on different analyses of the full verse); yet, if we join this verse to those in the begining of the chapter which are also concerned with women's problems, it will be seen that this verse was revealed after those first ones. It means that their enquiries were concerned in a general way with the laws regarding women which Islam had legislated with which the people were not familiar in the days of *jãhiliyyah*; those laws were exclusively concerned with women's rights regarding inheritance and marriage. Those questions were not about the orphan girls as this subject is not general; it is limited to a certain group and the rule about them has been laid down by the next sentence: *And that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them*. In short, the enquiry was about those things which cover the whole womenfolk , e.g., inheritance.

Consequently, the words: "Say: 'Allãh makes known to you His decision concerning them . . . ", refers to verses in the beginning of the chapter and shows that decision is reserved for Allãh and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) doesn't have any authority in this respect. The meaning is: They ask you to give them your decision concerning the women. Say: The right to give decision belongs to Allãh and He has given you His decision when He revealed the verses at the beginning of the chapter.

QUR'ÃN: *"And that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them, and concerning the weak among children*: As described above, the context shows that the rules for female orphans and the weak children has been added here because they have some link with the rules concerning women. Obviously, they were not included in their original enquiry which was limited to the women's affairs only. The sentence, "and that which is recited to you", is in conjunction with the pronoun , "them", preceding it; such conjuction has been allowed by al-Farrã', although other grammarians do not agree with him. Accordingly, the verse, "and that which is recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans . . . " refers to those rules and ideas which were revealed at the beginning of the chapter. *at-Tilãwah* (اَلتِّلاوَة = recital) denotes recital of the words as well as description of the meaning of the words. The meaning is: Say:

'Allāh makes known to you His decision about the laws which are recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans.

Some people take the word *aliftā'* in the meaning of explanation. According to them the meaning will be: Say: 'Allāh explains to you that which is recited to you in the Book.'

Many people have given various other constructions to these two sentences, but none of them is free from arbitrariness and inaccuracy which are not suitable for the Divine speech. For example, someone has said that the phrase, "that which is recited to you", is in conjuction with the name, 'Allāh'; or with the implied pronoun in the phrase, 'makes known'. Some have said that it is in conjuctionwith, 'women', in the first sentence which says: *a decision about women*. Another one has said that the word, 'and', in 'and that which is recited', begins a new sentence, it has no connection with the preceding verse; according to them, "that which is recited to you", is the subject and, "in the Book", is its predicate. Still, others have said that '*wa'* in the verse *'wa mā yutlā 'alaykum'* is for oath and the verse concerning female orphans explains the words concerning them in the preceding sentence. According to him, the meaning will be: Say: 'Allāh makes known to you His decision – I swear with that which is recited to you in the Book – concerning female orphans . . . ' There is no need to point out the absurdities of these explanations.

"Whom you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them": The speech describes the female orphans and points to their deprivations which were the main cause why Allāh laid down the rules which were revealed earlier. Those just rules abrogated the prevalent customs and removed the hardships which the women were suffering. It was their custom that they used to take female orphans as their wards together with their properties; if she was beautiful, they married her and enjoyed both her beauty and her property. If, on the other hand, she turned out to be ugly or of plain features, they would not themselves marry her nor would they allow her to marry another man. In this way, they appropriated her property.

It shows that:

First: The words of Allāh, "what is appointed for them", refer to the natural demands ingrained in the creation and that is the Divine Decree. The creation and the ingrained instincts pave for the human beings the path of their lives. It is that decree which has been appointed for him/her and tells him/her to marry when he/she reaches a certain age and which gives him/her the freedom to manage his/her

property the way he/she likes. To prevent him/her from marrying or from managing his/her own property is depriving him/her from what Allãh has appointed for him/her at the beginning of the creation.

Second: "while you desire to marry them": It actually means, 'while you are averse to marry them'. Therefore, the preposition *'an* (عَنْ = off, away from) is omitted but understood here. This omission is understood from the preceding phrase, "whom you do not give what is appointed for them", and the following words, "and concerning the weak among children".

"the weak among children" is in conjuction with, "female orphans". They used to neglect orphaned children and deprive them from inheritance on the pretext that they were unable to ride and could not fight in defence of the women.

QUR'ÃN: ***"and that you should deal towards orphans with equity*** **:** This is in conjuction with, *His decision concerning them*. The meaning is: Say: 'Allãh makes known to you His decision that you should deal towards orphans with equity. This widens the circle of this rule from a limited group, that is, female orphans and weak children to all the orphans and in all their affairs, be it their property or other matters.

QUR'ÃN: ***"and whatever good you do, Allãh surely knows it"*** **:** It is a reminder to them that the rules which Allãh has imposed on them about the women and the orphans are for their own good and Allãh knows it. This encourages them to act on these rules because it is for their own good; and also warns them against disobeying the rules because surely Allãh knows what they do.

QUR'ÃN: ***And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband, there is no blame on them, if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better; and avarice has been made to present in the*** **(people's)** ***minds; and if you do good*** **(to others)** ***and guard*** **(against evil),** ***then surely Allãh is aware of what you do*** **:** This subject was not included in their enquiry but it has a sort of relevance with it, just like the order coming in the next verse: *And you have it not in your power to do justice*.

The order is given when the woman feels fear of mistreatment or desertion – and not the actual appearance of mistreatment or desertion – because attempts of reconciliation should be undertaken as soon as some symptoms and signs of ill-usage raise their head. The

context shows that reconciliation here should take place when the wife forgoes some or all of her metrimonial rights in order to affect love, accord and genial relations for avoiding separation; and reconciliation is better.

"and avarice has been made to be present in the (people's) minds": *ash-Shuḥḥ* (الشُّحُّ = miserliness, avarice); it means that avarice has been ingrained in the human nature in order to guard his interests and avoid loss. Thus, every person looks after his own interest; a woman does not want to leave any of her matrimonial rights like dress, maintenance, accomodation and conjugal relationship; and the man does not show any affection and harmony when he wants to separate from the wife and does not like living with her. Therefore, there is no blame on them if they affect a reconciliation between them by forgoing some of their rights.

"and if you do good (to others) and guard (against evil) then surely Allãh is aware of what you do": It is an admonition to men that they should not deviate from the path of doing good and avoiding evil; they should always keep in mind that Allãh knows whatever they are doing; they should not oppress the women in domestic life and should not make them so frustrated that they forego their due rights just to keep peace in the family.

QUR'ÃN: ***And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish*** **(it),** ***but be not disinclined*** **(from one)** ***with total disinclination . . .*** **:** It gives further explanation of the order given in the beginning of the chapter where it was said: *But if you fear that you will not do justice* (between them)*, then* (marry) *only one.* The same ideal of justice is seen in the preceding verse where it says: *And if you do good* (to others) *and guard* (against evil) *then surely Allãh is aware of what you do*. Obviously, this preceding verse contains a shade of threatening. Thus, man is bewildered as to how to affect real justice between the wives. Justice is the exact middle between the two extremes and to pinpoint it exactly is extremely difficult; especially so, because the relationship between the spouses is that of love and one does not have much control on the inclinations of the heart. Therefore, Allãh explains here that justice between the wives in its true sense – to stand exactly in the middle of the extremes – is beyond human power even if one may wish it. What a man is obliged to do is that he should not be totally inclined to one of them, leaving the other one as it were in suspense; that is, she does not feel as if she has a husband because she gets no attention from him, nor is

she free of marriage so that she may marry someone else and go her own way. It is *wãjib* (necessary) on the husband to do justice between his wives, that is, he should treat all of them in equal manner and should fulfiltheir rights without excessiveness. And it is *sunnah* for him to do good to all of them without showing any dislike to any of them and without subjecting any of them to ill-treatment; this was the behaviour of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) with his wives.

The proviso, "but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination, so that you leave her as it were in suspense", proves that the preceding sentence: *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish* (it)*,* doesn't mean that man cannot do justice between his wives at all, as some people have thought. And joining this misconception with the divine words: *but if you fear that you will not do justice* (between) *them, then* (marry) *only one*, they have claimed that Islam does not allow polygamy!

The proviso clearly shows that what has been negated is the real justice in which there is no excess at all and man stands in the exact middle; and what is allowed and made lawful is the practical justice in which minor inclinations are tolerated. Apart from that, the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet and the polygamy practised before the eyes of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), as well as the custom prevalent among the Muslims without any break since that time is enough to remove such erroneous impressions. Apart from that, to think that the divine words: *then marry such* (other) *women as seen good to you, two and three and four*, are merely imaginary suppositions which have no practical application, will bring down the Divine words to the level of a riddle.

It should be noted that the words: *And if you affect a reconciliation and guard* (against evil)*, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful*, encourage the men with emphasis that whenever any signs of discord and dispute appear, they should try to bring reconciliation; then it goes on to say that it is a part of piety and with piety comes divine forgiveness and mercy. In the preceding verse, it was stated that reconciliation is better and they were exhorted to do good and guard against evil; then comes this verse which puts emphasis over emphsis.

QUR'ÃN: ***And if they separate, Allãh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness, and Allãh is Ample-giving, Wise.*****:** If the man and the woman separate by divorce, Allãh will make them both free from want out of His amplenes. Making them free from want

in this context means that Allāh will give them this freedom in all matters connected with matrimony, like harmony, intimacy and the wife's maintenance and clothing, etc. Allāh has not reserved either party for the other one; so, it is not that if they separate from each other, they will not get another spouse in their long life; rather it is a natural custom which is wide-spread among all the human beings and everyone by nature is inclined to marry.

The words: "and Allāh is Ample-giving, Wise. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's", give the reason of the statement "Allāh will render them both free from want out of His Ampleness".

QUR'ĀN: ***And certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you and*** **(We enjoin)** ***you too that you should be careful*** **(of your duty to)** ***Allāh; . . .*** **:** It puts emphasis on the call addressed to them that they should pay special consideration to piety in all the stages and in every situation of their matrimonial life. It also shows that going against piety is being ungrateful to Divine favours; the piety which is acquired by Allāh's obedience proves one's gratefulness to Divine favours. Alternatively, we may say that it is only because of disbelief that one discards Allāh's fear: it may be open disbelief (as in the case of unbelievers and polytheists) or hidden disbelief (as in the case those believers who indulge in Allāh's disobedience).

The above explanation makes clear the words of Allāh, *and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy.* The meaning is: If you do not remember what We have enjoined you and those who were before you and if you neglect this order and do not acquire piety – and it is disbelief in Allāh or emanates from disbelief in Allāh – it will not harm Allāh at all. Allāh is not in need of you or of your piety, and surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's, and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy.

Question: Why have the words: *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allāh's,* repeated three times in three consecutive verseș

Reply: In the first instance, it explains the reasons of preceding sentence: *and Allāh is Ample-giving, Wise.* The second instance is a response to the conditional clause: *and if you disbelieve.* It means, if you disbelieve, then Allāh is not in need of you; it is made more clear by the ending phrase: *and Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praise-worthy*. The

third sentence starts a new topic and gives a sort of reason to the Divine words: *If He pleases, He can make you pass away.*

QUR'ÃN: ***And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allãh's, and Allãh is sufficient as a protector*** **:** We have repeatedly explained the meaning of the ownership of Allãh. He is the Protector who manages His servants' affairs and enough is He as a protector. He does not need any help in His work. If He was not pleased with the deeds of a people and was angry with their behaviour, He could easily make them pass away and bring other people in their place, or He could pull them behind and let others go ahead of them. This meaning, which is pointed out by the context, establishes a connection between this verse and the next one: *If He pleases, He can make you pass away O people!*

QUR'ÃN: ***If He pleases, He can make you pass away, O people! and bring others; and Allãh has the power to do this*** **:** The preceding verse gives a clarion call for adherence to piety which Allãh has enjoined this *ummah* and those who were before them from the People of the Book. In this context, it is clear that the declaration that Allãh does not need anything is closely related to the order of piety. The meaning, therefore, will be like this: Allãh has enjoined you all to adhere to piety, so be careful or your dutytowards Allãh. If you disbelieve, then Allãh is Self-sufficient and He is the Owner of everything. He can manage it in any way He pleases, and for any purpose He pleases. If He pleases that He should be worshipped and people should adhere to piety but you did not follow His commands in a proper way, then Allãh has the power to keep you behind and let others to precede you. Those people will do what Allãh is pleased with; and clearly Allãh has power to do so. Accordingly, the verse describes the possibilty of exchanging unpious people with the pious ones. al-Bayḍãwī has narrated a tradition in his *tafsīr* that when this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) patted his hand on the back of Salmãn and said, " Surely they are his people." This tradition supports the meaning given by us; and you should ponder on it.

Some exegetes have said that probably it means: If Allãh pleases, He will destroy you all and bring other people in your place or other creation in place of human beings. But this meaning is not supported by the context. Of course, this explanation could be given for the verse: *Do you not see that Allãh created the heavens and the*

earth with truth. If He pleases He will take you off and bring a new creation. And this is not difficult for Allāh (14:19-20).

QUR'ĀN: ***Whoever desires the reward of this world, then with Allāh is the reward of this world and the hereafter; and Allāh is Hearing, Seeing.*:** It is another statement which exposes the error of him who discards piety and neglects Divine enjoinment, thinking that he only needs this world's reward and booty. In fact, such a person has fallen into confusion, because the reward of this world and of the fereafter, both are with Allāh, and in His hand. So, why should a man concentrate on the lower item of the two? Why should he not strive for the higher reward or both of them together? This meaning has been given by others; but more apparently, the meaning is this, and Allāh knows better: Surely the reward of this world and the hereafter and the felicity of both together is with Allāh. Therefore, man should strive to be nearer to Him, even he who wants only the reward and felicity of this world, because man cannot achieve felicity without fear of Allāh and piety which can be obtained only through the Divine religion which He has ordained. Religion is the exclusive path to the real felicity and happiness. How can one get any reward unless Allāh gives and issues it to him, and Allāh is Hearing, Seeing.

T R A D I T I O N S

as-Suyūṭī says: Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr that he said: "Inheritance was not given except to a matured man who could manage and look after the property; children and women were not given any share in inheritance. When the verses of inheritance were revealed in the chapter of 'The Women', it proved very difficult to the people. They said, 'What! will a child inherit one who cannot manage the property? and the women who are exactly in the same position? will they inherit as a man inherits' They hoped that something will come down from the heavens to rectify the situation. They kept waiting. When they saw that nothing was happening, they said, 'If it was established then it would become an unavoidable obligation.' So, they decided to enquire further. They asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); then Allāh sent down the verse: *And they ask you a decision about women, say, 'Allāh makes known to you His decision concerning them, and that which is recited to you in the Book*

concerning female orphans who you do not give what is appointed for them while you desire to marry them . . . '" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

'Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from Ibrãhīm that he said about this verse: "If an orphaned girl was ugly, they did not give her anything from the inheritance and prevented her from marrying until when she died, they would take her inheritance. Therefore, Allãh revealed this verse." (*ibid.*)

The author says: These connotations have been narrated from numerous Shī'ī and Sunnī chains, some of which was given at the beginning of the chapter.

The words: *whom you do not give what is appointed for them*, mean what has been appointed for them in inheritance. aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said that this meaning is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.). (*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

al-Qummī has said that the verse: *If a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband . . .* , was revealed about the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah. She was the wife of Rãfi' ibn Khadīj, and her age had advanced. He married another young woman and she looked more attractive to him than the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah. So, she said to him: "Don't I find you turning away from me and preferring her?" Rãfi' said: "She is a young woman and is more attractive. If you wish, you may agree on this arrangement that she is given two or three days with me, and you have one day." The daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah refused. So, he gave her one divorce. Then he gave her another divorce. Still, she said, "By Allãh, I will never agree unless you treat both of us in equal manner." (Allãh says: *and avarice has been made to be present in the* (people's) *minds.*) And the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Maslamah was not ready to forgo her share and persisted in her demand. Then Rãfi' told her that either she should agree or he would give her the third divorce. She did not like separation from her husband and agreed. She effected the reconciliation as described. So, Allãh said: *there is no blame on them if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better*. When she agreed and settled down, he could not do justice between them. Then the verse was revealed: *and you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you many wish* (it)*, but be not disiclined* (from one) *with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspense*. It is not proper that you should attend to one wife and leave the other in suspense as though she is neither a widow nor married. When the

woman agrees and accepts the terms which the husband had offered for reconciliation, then there is no blame on the husband or the wife to live according to the agreed terms. If she does not agree to forgo any of her rights, then he should either treat them equally or divorce her. There is no third alternative. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Mãlik, ‘Abdu 'r-Razzãq, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-Ḥãkim(who has confirmed this tradition as correct).

as-Suyūṭī has said: "aṭ-Ṭayãlisī, Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn Rãhawayh, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib that he was asked about this verse, and he said: "It is about a man who has two wives; one has become old or is ugly; so he wants to separate from her; she offers a compromise that he should remain with her for one night and with the other one several nights and should not divorce her. As long as it is done on her own free will, there is no difficulty in it. If she returns, he will treat both of them equally." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "I asked the Imãm about the words of Allãh: *And if a woman fears ill-usage or desertion on the part of her husband*. The Imãm said, 'It is about a woman who is married to a man and he dislikes her and says to her, "I want to divorce you." She says to him, "Don't do it, I hate that you should make me an object of ridicule in the society. Instead, take away my night and do with it whatever you want. If there is any other thing, that will also be given to you and let me be." This is the meaning of the words of Allãh: *there is no blame on them if they effect a reconciliation between them,* and this is the reconciliation.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning narrated in *al-Kãfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyãshī.

al-Qummī narrates about the Divine words: *and avarice has been made to be present in the* (people's) *minds*, that he said, "Avarice is ingrained in nature; some things she chooses to keep, some things she forgoes." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

Hishãm ibn Sãlim narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish* (it), that he said, "It refers to love." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyãshī)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Nūḥ ibn Shu‘bah and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan that they said, "Ibn Abi 'l-‘Awjã’ asked Hishãm ibn al-Ḥakam and said, 'Is not Allãh Wise?' He said, 'Certainly; He is the Most Wise.'He said, 'Then tell me about the Divine words: *then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice* (between them)*, then* (marry) *only one.* Is it not a decisive order?' He said, 'Certainly.' Then he said, 'Now, tell me about the Divine words: *And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish* (it)*, but be not disiclined* (from one) *with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspenses.* Does a wise one talk like thiṣ' Hishãm could not reply. So, he went to Medina to Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.). The Imãm (a.s.) said, '(You have come) when it is neither the time of *ḥajj* nor of *‘umrah!'* Hishãm said, 'Yes, may I be made your ransom! I have come for a problem which has kept me worried. Ibn Abi 'l-‘Awjã’ asked me a question and I could not reply him.' The Imãm (a.s.) said, 'What is that ?' Hishãm narrated the full story.

"Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) said to him, 'As for the verse: *then marry such* (other) *women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice* (between them) *then* (marry) *only one,* it speaks about the maintenance; and as for the verse: *And you have not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish* (it)*, but be not disinclined* (from one) *with total disinclination; so that you leave her as it were in suspense,* it speaks about love.'

"When Hishãm went to Ibn Abi 'l-‘Awjã’ and told him the reply, he said, 'By Allãh, it is not from you.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: A similar *ḥadīth* has been narrated from al-Qummī which says: An atheist asked Abū Ja‘far al-Aḥwal exactly the same question. He went to Medina and asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) for the reply and the Imãm (a.s.) replied him exactly in the same way. Abū Ja‘far returned to the man and gave him the reply, on hearing which he said, "This you have brought from Ḥijãz."

aṭ-Ṭabrisī explains the Qur’ãnic words: *so that you leave her as it were in suspense,* in this way: You leave the one you are disinclined towards her as if she is neither married to a husband nor is free from marriage. He has said that this meaning is narrated from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.). (*Majma‘u 'l-bayãn*)

The same book states about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he used to distribute (provisions, time, etc.) among his wives, and then used to pray: "O Allāh! This is my distribution of the things which I possess; do not blame me for the thing which you do possess and I do not." (*ibid.*)

The author says: This tradition has been narrated in Sunnī books through several chains. The phrase, "which you do possess and I do not", refers to the love. Yet there is something wrong in this tradition. Allāh is far above blaming someone for some thing not in his possession, not in his control. He Himself has said: *Allāh does not lay on any soul a burden except to the extant to which He has granted it* (66:8); and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was fully cognizantof His Lord's dignity to ask Him to bring into existence a thing already existing.

al-Kulaynī has narrated through his chain of narrators from Ibn Abī Laylā that he said: "Narrated to me ʻĀṣim ibn Ḥamīd and said, 'I was with Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) when a man came to him and complained of his poverty. The Imām (a.s.) ordered him to get married. ʻĀṣim said that (after that) the man's poverty became more serious; so he came to Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.). The Imām (a.s.) enquired about his condition; and he said that the poverty had increased. The Imām (a.s.) said, 'Now, separate (from her).' So, he divorced her. ʻĀṣim reports that he again came to the Imām (a.s.) who asked him how did he do. He said, 'I have become rich and my condition is very good.' Then Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) said, 'I told you to do two things which Allāh had ordered. Allāh has said: *And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allāh will make them free from want out of his grace; and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing* (24:32). And He has also said: *And if they separate, Allāh will render them both free from want out of His ampleness* (4:130).

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يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُونُواْ قَوَّٰمِينَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ شُهَدَآءَ لِلَّهِ
وَلَوْ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ ٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا
أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَٱللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ۖ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ ٱلْهَوَىٰٓ أَن تَعْدِلُواْ ۚ وَإِن
تَلْوُۥٓاْ أَوْ تُعْرِضُواْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allãh's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) *parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allãh is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow* (your) *low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allãh is aware of what you do* (135).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allãh's sake*****:** *al-Qisṭ* (اَلقِسْط = justice). To stand with justice means to enforce it, to maintain it. Maintainers of justice are those who fully and perfectly establish justice without deviating from, or inclining against, it because of some low desire or sentiment, fear, or greed, or other such factors.

This virtue is the most perfect cause and nearest factor for following the truth and protecting it from getting lost. One of its corollaries is adherence to truth in giving evidence.

This verse has been revealed to describe the rule of evidence, but it has started with talk of justice, and then it proceeds to the rule of evidence. In other words, first a general ideal has been described and then it focuses on one of its aspects. It is as though it says: 'You should be bearers of witness for Allãh's sake but it will be difficult for you unless you become maintainers of justice.' So, you should be maintainers of justice in order to become bearers of witness for Allãh's sake.

The words, "bearers of witness for Allãh's sake", show the purpose of the action; bear witness so that your witness should be for Allãh, as Allãh has said: *And give testimony for Allãh* (63:2). An evidence will be for the sake of Allãh when it is given in truth for the sake of demonstrating the truth and reviving it, as is clear from the sentence: *therefore do not follow* (your) *low desires, lest you deviate.*

QUR'ÃN: ***though it may be against your ownselves or*** **(your)** ***parents or near relatives*** **:** Even if the evidence goes against your own interest or against the interest of your parents or near relatives, it should not prompt you to alter the evidence or hide it. Giving evidence against oneself or against one's parents or relatives means that the evidence, when given, will harm the testifier or hsi parents or relatives. It makes no difference whether the party which would suffer damage is the one against whom the evidence is given directly; for example, if there is a case between his father and someone else and he testifies against his own father; or the damage may reach them indirectly.

QUR'ÃN: ***If he be rich or poor, Allãh is nearer to them both in compassion*****:** The dual pronoun of "them both" refers to "rich or poor" because the same person can be rich at one time and poor at another; thus the conjunction, 'or' brings the two alternatives together just for describing the situation. There is no plurality in actual fact. This is what has been described by some exegetes. The meaning: Allãh is nearer to the rich in his wealth and to the poor in his poverty. What the verse emphasises is that the wealth of the rich should not cause you to deviate from the truth and incline to him; nor should the poverty of the poor incite you to try to better his condition by twisting the truth in his favour. You should bear witness for the sake of Allãh and then leave Him to look at the rich and the poor. He is nearer to them and more Merciful to to their condition. It is a reflection of His Mercy that He has obliged you to follow the truth compulsorily and has enjoined you

to maintain the justice; when the justice is maintained and the truth becomes manifest, then the humanity will enjoy felicity and it will strengthen the rich and improve the condition of the poor.

A rich or poor may benefit in one or two cases from an evidence which is twisted or hidden, but in the long run it makes the truth feable and the justice dead. It gives life to oppression and strengthen to falsehood and injustice; and this is the incurable disease which destroys the humanity.

QUR'ÃN: ***therefore do not folow*** **(your)** ***low desires, lest you deviate*****:** There is a danger that you will deviate from truth and justice by following your low desire and by not giving the evidence for the sake of Allãh. The words, "lest you deviate", describe the reason of this order. It may also be translated as, do not follow your low desires to deviate from truth.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allãh is aware of what you do*****:** Swerving with evidence means twisting it, and turning aside means not giving evidence and hiding it.

Some people have recited this sentence "*wa in talū*" (وَاِنْ تَلْوٗ); in that case, the meaning will be, if you are given responsibility of giving evidence and you fulfil it or turn aside; in both cases, surely Allãh is aware of what you do and He will give you its recompense.

T R A D I T I O N S

Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) has said, "A believer has seven rights on another believer. The most obligatory of them is that the man should tell truth, even if it goes against his own self or against his parents, he should not deviate from truth for their sake." Then the Imãm (a.s.) recited: *therefore do not follow* (your) *low desires, lest you deviate, and if you swerve or turn aside,* from the truth. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

The author says: This tradition generalises the meaning of evidence to include general truthfulness. aṭ-Ṭabrisī says: It is said that the last phrase means: If you change the evidence or hide it; and he has said that it is narrated from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.).

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يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ
ءَامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِي نَزَّلَ
عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنزَلَ مِن قَبۡلُۚ وَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ
بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ
ضَلَٰلَۢا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ثُمَّ كَفَرُواْ ثُمَّ ءَامَنُواْ
ثُمَّ كَفَرُواْ ثُمَّ ٱزۡدَادُواْ كُفۡرٗا لَّمۡ يَكُنِ ٱللَّهُ لِيَغۡفِرَ لَهُمۡ وَلَا لِيَهۡدِيَهُمۡ
سَبِيلَۢا ﴿١٣٧﴾ بَشِّرِ ٱلۡمُنَٰفِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمۡ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٨﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ
يَتَّخِذُونَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ أَوۡلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَۚ أَيَبۡتَغُونَ
عِندَهُمُ ٱلۡعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ ٱلۡعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعٗا ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَقَدۡ نَزَّلَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ فِي
ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ أَنۡ إِذَا سَمِعۡتُمۡ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ يُكۡفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسۡتَهۡزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا
تَقۡعُدُواْ مَعَهُمۡ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُواْ فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيۡرِهِۦٓۚ إِنَّكُمۡ إِذٗا مِّثۡلُهُمۡۗ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ جَامِعُ ٱلۡمُنَٰفِقِينَ وَٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾
ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَرَبَّصُونَ بِكُمۡ فَإِن كَانَ لَكُمۡ فَتۡحٞ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ قَالُوٓاْ أَلَمۡ

نَكُن مَّعَكُمْ وَإِن كَانَ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوٓا۟ أَلَمْ نَسْتَحْوِذْ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعْكُم مِّنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ فَٱللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ
ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۚ وَلَن يَجْعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ عَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾
إِنَّ ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ يُخَٰدِعُونَ ٱللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَٰدِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوٓا۟ إِلَى
ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ قَامُوا۟ كُسَالَىٰ يُرَآءُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ ٱللَّهَ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ مُّذَبْذَبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ لَآ إِلَىٰ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَلَآ إِلَىٰ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ ۚ
وَمَن يُضْلِلِ ٱللَّهُ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُۥ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟
لَا تَتَّخِذُوا۟ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ أَتُرِيدُونَ
أَن تَجْعَلُوا۟ لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَٰنًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾ إِنَّ ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ
فِى ٱلدَّرْكِ ٱلْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ وَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾
إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُوا۟ وَأَصْلَحُوا۟ وَٱعْتَصَمُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا۟
دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ مَعَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ ٱللَّهُ
ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَّا يَفْعَلُ ٱللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ
إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾

O you who believe! believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the Book which He has revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before; and whoever disbelieves in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error (136). *Surely* (as for) *those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them in the* (right) *path* (137). *Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement* (138). *Those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than believers. Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allāh* (139). *And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allāh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; surely Allāh will gather together the hypocrites and the unbelievers all in Hell* (140). *Those who wait for* (some misfortune to befall) *you; then if you have a victory from Allāh they say: "Were we not with you?" And if there is a chance for the unbelievers, they say: "Did we not acquire the mastery over you and defend you from the believerṣ" So Allāh shall judge between you on the Day of Resurrection; and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers* (141). *Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allāh, while He is deceiving them, and when they stand up for prayer, they stand up sluggishly; they do it only to be seen of men and od not remember Allāh save a little* (142). *Wavering between that* (and this), (belonging) *neither to these nor to those; and whomsoever Allāh causes to err, you shall not find a way for him* (143). *O you who believe! do not take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; do you desire that you should give to Allāh a manifest proof against yourselveṣ* (144). *Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire, and you shall not find a helper for them* (145). *Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh; these are with the believers, and Allāh will grant the believers a mighty reward* (146). *Why should Allāh chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allāh is the Appreciator, Knowing* (147).

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C O M M E N T A R Y

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! believe in Allãh and His Messenger and the Book which He revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before*** **:** The believers have been ordered to believe again. The second belief is related to the objects detailed, that is, believing in Allãh and His Messenger and the Book; and they have been threatened if they did not believe in each of these realities. In short, the believers are told to spread their belief to include the details of these realities as they are the matters of belief which are interrelated and one leads to another. Allãh, there is none to be worshed except Him. His are the beautiful names and lofty adjectives. His Knowledge and Power was the reason that He created the creatures and guided them to their true destination and felicity; and then He will revive them for the day of recompense. This could not be effected without sending the messengers, to bring good news and warn, and sending down the Books which would decide among them in what they had differed, and to explain to the people the realities of genesis and resurrection, as well as the fundamentals of *sharī'ah* and laws.

Belief in any of these realities cannot be complete unless one believes in all of them without exception. To reject some of them and adhere to some others is disbelief or hypocrisy – depending on whether the partial rejection was shown to others or kept secret. It is an aspect of hypocrisy that the believer takes a path which would lead him to reject some of these realities, e.g., if he separates from the society of the believers and goes nearer to unbelievers' society and befriends them, and confirms them in some of their accusations which they direct against the belief and the believers; or the objections or mockery which they lay down against the truth. That is why Allãh has described in the next verses the hypocrites' condition and threatened them with painful chastisement.

The meaning which has been given above is clear from the verse. It is more appropriate than what some other exegetes have written that the words of Allãh, "O you who believe! believe", means: O you who believe apparently by acknowledging the truth of Allãh and His Messenger, believe in your heart also in order that your appearance conforms with your inner self. The same is the case of

another one's exegesis that the order to believe again means remain steadfast in your belief. Likewise, our exegesis is more relevant than what some others have said that the verses were addressed to the believers among the People of the Book, that is, O you who believe from among the People of the Book! believe in Allāh and His Messenger, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), and the Book which He has revealed on His Messenger, i.e., Qur'ān. These themes may be correct in themselves but the context of the speech rejects them and the last explanation is the worst.

QUR'ĀN: ***and whoever disbelieves in Allāh and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error*** **:** The preceding part of the verse (*O you who believe! believe . . .*) was a call to the believers to combine all the mentioned realities in belief, showing that the parts of this total are interrelated and none of them can be separated from the others. Now, those parts of the belief are mentioned again, but here, the conjuctive, 'and', is used in the meaning of 'or'. The meaning: Whoever disbelieves in Allāh or His angels or His Book or His Messengers or the last day – whoever disbelieves in any of these essential parts of belief, he indeed strays off into a remote error.

The conjuctive, 'and', doesn't mean that all these ingredients taken together will form one object of faith. In other words, it does not mean that when one disbelieves in all these realities taken together then he will stray off into a remote error. Moreover, the Qur'ānic verses in several places declare that whoever disbelieves in any one of these, will be a disbeliever.

QUR'ĀN: ***Surely*** **(as for)** ***those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them in the*** **(right)** ***path*** **:** If we look at this verse alone, separate from the preceding and the following verses, it will show how Allāh will give recompense to the apostates who repeatedly renounce the faith. They believe then disbelieve, then again believe, then disbelieve and then increase in their disbelief. Allāh threatens if their condition remains like that – that He will never forgive them nor guide them in the right path. He should not hope to receive Divine Mercy at all because he is not firm in true belief and treats the Divine commandment like a plaything. Whoever is in such a condition, his profession of belief is merely a show which will never

be accepted. If they had seriously believed, then they would have been covered with Divine forgiveness and guidance. When one truly repents by believing in Allãh, Allãh never rejects His repentance and faith as He has promised His servants. We have explained this subject under the verse: *Repentance with Allãh is only for those who do evil in ignorance* . . . (4:17), in volume four[20] of this book. The verse declares that normally and naturally such people are totally deprived of the Divine Mercy. But there can be exceptions if someone truly believes and remains steadfast in the true faith – in rare cases. Allãh says: *How shall Allãh guide a people who disbelieve after their believing, and they have borne witness that the Messenger was true, and clear arguments had come to them? And Allãh does not guide the unjust people . . . Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful. Surely those who disbelieve after believing, then increase in unbelief, their repentance shall never be accepted, and these are they that have gone astray* (3:86-90).

As you see, the verses have made exception of those who disbelieve after believing and says that Allãh will not forgive them nor guide them to the right path. Then He again declares non-acceptance of the repentance of those who increase in their disbelief. Such people disbelieve after believing and after bearing witness that the Messenger was true, and clear arguements had come to them and yet they became apostates. This apostacy is based on obstinacy and stubborness, and increase in this disbelief proves that this obstinacy and insolence has taken deep roots in their hearts; and oppression and arrogance has taken their souls in their clutch. Now, returning to Allãh and repentance is normally not expected from such a person.

This meaning is understood if we take the verse alone, separately. But all these verses together are apparently revealed in a single context and are interrelated.

Accordingly, the words, "Surely as those who believe then disbelieve . . . ", give the reason for the preceding sentence: *whoever disbelieve in Allãh and His angels and His books and His Messengers and the last day, he indeed strays off into a remote error.* Thus, both verses will have one application, that is, he who disbelieves in Allãh and the angels, the Divine Books, the messengers and the last day is the one who believes then disbelieves, then again believes, again disbelieves, and then increases in disbelief. Also he will be among the

[20] *al-Mīzãn*, (Eng. transl.), vol.8, pp.64-74. (*tr.*)

hypocrites about whom Allāh declares in the next verse onwards: *Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement* .

Keeping it in view, the explanations of the Divine words: "Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve . . . ", will change according to the explanations given for the first verse: *O you who believe! believe in Allāh and His Messenger* . . . , as we have mentioned earlier.

If the first verse is taken to mean that you should believe in Allāh and His Messenger in your heart as you have believed in them in appearance, then the belief, then disbelief, then again belief, then disbelief will show the situation of the hypocrites, as their condition and behaviour keeps changing continuously; when they meet the believers they say one thing and on meeting disbelievers, they speak its opposite.

If the first verse means that you should be steadfast on the belief which you have acquired, then the belief, then disbelief and so on will mean apostasy after apostasy.

If it is said that the verse calls the People of the Book to believe in Allāh and His Messenger, then the belief, then *kufr*, and so on will refer to their believing in Mūsā (Moses), then disbelieving in him by worshipping the calf, then believing in ‘Uzayr (Ezra) or in Jesus, then disbelieving in him, then increasing in disbelief by rejecting Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and what he had brought from Allāh.

And if the first verse means to spread your overall belief to cover the detailed realities, as we have said, then the words, "Surely (as for) those who believe, then disbelieve . . .", will show its reason which will perfectly fit the condition of the hypocrites who are discussed soon after that; one of whose characteristics is described in these words: *Those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than believers.* Obviously, he who remains in close contact with unbelievers separated from the believers' society, cannot avoid visiting their gatherings and being intimate to them, joining their conversations and confirming some of their talks which Allāh is not pleased with; because they ascribe to the true religion and the leaders of the religion calumnies and vilifications, making a mockery of them. Such a man when meets the believers and joins in any of their religious functions shows himself as a believer; and when he meets unbelievers and confirms some of their false assertions, becomes an unbeliever. At one time he is a believer, and at another, he is an unbeliever. He continues in this manner until when this characteristic takes firm roots, he increases in disbelief. And Allāh knows better.

His everchanging condition and instability of mind destroy his chance of repentance; because even if at times he feels remorse on his misdeeds, he doesn't remain firm in that remorse too. Of couse, if he repents and remains steadfast in his repentance in a way that the changing situations cannot shake it and desires cannot bend it, then his repentance will be acceptable. And it is for this reason that Allãh has put some tough conditions for acceptance of repentancefrom such a hypocrite in order that there remains no room for any change or deviation: *Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh . . .*

QUR'ÃN: ***Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement. Those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than believers*** **:** It is a threat to the hypocrites; Allãh describes them as having the unbelievers as guardians rather than believers. This condition is a bit general and is not restricted to the hypocrites who in their hearts had never believed and were only making a show of belief; because a group of true believers also were afflicted with this malady. They enjoyed friendship of unbelievers, or were cut off from the believers' society. Even in the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) some believers had secret contacts with unbelievers and were on intimate terms with them.

It suports to a certain extent the view that the hypocrites mentioned in this verse were actually a group of the believers who had taken unbelievers as their friends and guardians in preference to the believers. It is further supported by the apparent meaning of the next verse: *And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them.* This verse, in fact, is a threat to the hypocrites but is addressed to the believers. Moreover, this view is strengthened by the description of their condition in their hypocrisy where Allãh says: *. . . and do not remember Allãh save a little*; as this sentence confirms that they used to remember Allãh although very little. This could not be said about the hypocrites who had not believed in their hearts at all.

QUR'ÃN: ***Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allãh*****:** It is an interrogative in the sense of negative, and the reply, then surely all honour is for Allãh", confirms the negative sense. The honour emanates from kingdom and kingdom belongs to Allãh only: *Say: "O Allãh! Master of the Kingdom! Thou givest the kingdom*

to whomsoever Thou pleasest and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou pleasest, and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest" (3:26).

QUR'ÃN: ***And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; . . .*** **:** It points to what was revealed in the chapter of "The Cattle": *And when you see those who enter into false discourses about Our communications withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse, and if the Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people* (6:68). The chapter of "The Cattle" was revealed in Mecca while "The Women" was revealed in Medina. The verse 6:68 uses second person singular pronouns. It proves that some Qur'ãnic speeches were addressed directly to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) but they were meant for the whole *ummah*. The sentence, "Surely you would be like them", gives the reason of this prohibition: We have forbidden you because if you would sit with them in this situation you would become like them and "Surely Allãh will gather together the unbelievers and the hypocrites all in hell".

QUR'ÃN: ***Those who wait for (some misfortune to befall) you; then if you have a victory from Allãh, they say: "Were we not with you?" And if there is a chance for the unbelievers, they say: "Did we not acquire the mastery over you and defend you from the believerş"*** : *at-Tarabbuṣ* (اَلتَّرَبُّص = waiting); *al-istiḥwãdh* (اَلِاسْتِحْواذ = mastery, over-coming). This describes another characteristic of these hypocrites: they have preserved the contact with both parties ⇦ the believers and the unbelievers. They seek to profit from both groups and try to take advantage from whoever is in a better position. If the believers are victorious, they say: "Were we not with you?" Therefore, we are entitled to have a share in whatever you have gathered as booty, etc. If the unbelievers get some chance, they say: "Did we not acquire the mastery over you and defend you from the believerş" i.e., we stopped you from believing in what the Muslims do believe. Therefore, we are entitled to a part of whatever you have got; we have done a favour to you as we provided you with this chance.

It is said: The believers' triumph has been called victory because that is what Allãh has promised them; and the unbelievers'

success is described as a chance to show its insignificance; because whatever the interim success, in the end, Allãh has promised the believers that they will be victorious and that Allãh is their guardian. Probably it is for this reason that the victory has been ascribed to Allãh but not the chance.

QUR'ÃN: ***So Allãh shall judge between you on the Day of Resurrection; and Allãh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers*** **:** The verse is addressed to the believers although the judgement will cover the hypocrites and the unbelievers as well. The sentence, "and Allãh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers", means that the judgement on that day will be in favour of the believers and against the unbelievers; and this reality will never change. This deprives the unbelievers of any hope because on the last day the believers will be triumphant over the unbelievers.

Possibly the declaration, that the unbelievers will not be given a way against the believers, covers both worlds – this and the hereafter – because the believers will always be victorious as long as they adhere to the demands of their faith. Allãh says: *And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers* (3:139).

QUR'ÃN: ***Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allãh while He is deceiving them*****:** *al-Mukhãda'ah* (اَلْمُخَادَعَة) denotes continuous or intensified deception, because in Arabic, when some letters are added in a root word the meaning also increases. The words, "while He is deceiving them", describes the condition, that is, they are trying to deceive Allãh while He is deceiving them. In short, these people, with their hypocritical deed – pretension of faith, remaining near the believers and attending their gatherings – want to deceive Allãh, i.e., the Prophet and the believers; and their intention is to seek benefits from them through their unreal belief and deeds. They do not understand that it is Allãh Who is deceiving them by leaving them free to commit these deeds, without putting any hinderance against them; it is their requital because of their impure intentions and wicked deeds. So, when they try to deceive Allãh it is actually Allãh who is deceiving them exactly through the showy deeds and bad faith.

QUR'ĀN: ***and when they stand up for prayer, they stand up sluggishly: they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allāh save a little*** **:** It is another characteristic of the hypocrites. When they stand up to pray, they do so sluggishly and for showing the people. The prayer is the best act of worship through which Allāh is remembered. If their hearts had been inclined to their Lord with true belief, they would not have felt sluggish and dispirited; they would have prayed with full attention and true remembrance of Allāh; they would not have done it merely to be seen by people, rather they would have remembered Allāh very often as happens when the heart is inclined to someone.

QUR'ĀN: ***Wavering between that*** **(and this), (belonging)** ***neither to these nor to those; . . .*** **:** aṭ-Ṭabrisī has explained in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* that this word denotes setting in pendulous motion, as when a thing is suspended in air and is moved to and fro. A thing is called *mudhabdhab* when it moves between two extremes without having any attachment to either. This is exactly the characteristic of hypocrites. They move between belief and disbelief, they belong exclusively neither to the believers like the true Muslims nor to the disbelievers like open infidels.

The sentence, "and whomsoever Allāh causes to err, you shall not find a way for him", gives the reason of the preceding discription of pendulous motion. The reason why they move to and fro, without adhering to any side, is that Allāh has made them go astray from the path and now they cannot find the true path.

QUR'ĀN: ***O you who believe! do not take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; . . . and you shall not find a helper for them***: *as-Sulṭān* (اَلسُّلطان = proof); *ad-darak* and *ad-dark* (اَلدَّرْكُ ، اَلدَّرَك): ar-Rāghib has said: "*ad-Dark* is synonymous with *ad-darj* (اَلدَّرَج = stair-case), but *ad-darj* is used to describe ascending steps while *ad-dark* is used for descending. That is why we see that the ranks of the Garden are called *ad-darajāt* (اَلدَّرَجَات = ranks) and the stages of the Fire; *ad-darakāt* (اَلدَّرَكَات = stages); also because there is an idea of descending down in the hell, it is called *al-hāwiyah* (اَلْهَاوِيَة = infernal depth) [which is derived from *hawā* = to fall down]."

The verse, as you see, forbids the believers to establish friendship with unbelievers in preference to the believers' friendship; and the next verse gives its reason by a severe threat which is

addressed to the hypocrites. The reason is that Allãh counts such friendship as hypocrisy, and warns the believers from indulging in it.

The context shows that these two verses give the sum total of the preceding speech. This makes us almost certain that the previous verses had exposed the condition of those believers whose faith was weak and hearts diseased; and therefore the verses called them hypocrites. Or at least such believers are joined with the hypocrites in those verses. Then it admonishes the believers that they should not go near that line, otherwise they would make themselves liable to displeasure of Allãh. They should not give Allãh any proof against themselves; otherwise He will leave them, to go astray and put them in deception, leaving them oscillating in this life. Then He will join them with unbelievers in the hell and put them in the lowest stage of the Fire; there will be no connection between them and anyone who could help them or intercede for them.

These two verses clearly show two things:-

First: Leaving someone to go astray, deceiving him and any such display of Divine displeasure emanates from clear proof which the people's deeds provide against them. These humiliations and degradations are decreed as recompense of their actions. The Divine Majesty is too high to initiate any evil or misfortune for them without there being a reason for it from their side. Therefore, the sentence, "do you desire that you should give to Allãh a manifest proof against yourselveș", has the same connotation as the words: *He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26).

Second: In the hell, people are divided in various stages which differ in lowliness and ignominy. Naturally, their chastisement goes increasing according to the lowliness of their grade which Allãh has named descending stages. [The lower the stage, the harsher the torture.]

QUR'ÃN: ***Except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh; . . .*** **:** This is an exception from the threat given to the hypocrites in the preceding verse: *Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire . . .* It follows that these people have separated from the hypocrites and joined the believers. That is why the exception is followed by these words, "these are with the believers"; and then the reward of all the believers has been mentioned together, "and Allãh will grant the believers a mighty reward."

This group, excepted from the hypocrites, has been described with several difficult characteristics without which the hypocrisy cannot be uprooted. It begins with repentance, that is, returning to Allāh; this returning and repentance will be of no value unless they rectify all that has gone bad in their thoughts and deeds. Even this rectification will not avail them anything until they adhere to Allāh; in other words, until they follow the Divine Book and the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.); because there is no path leading to Allāh except that which He has laid down Himself, all other paths are those of Satan. This adherence too will not benefit them unless they are sincere in their religion to Allāh, because polytheism is such a sin which can never be forgiven. When they have repented and amended every defect in their character, have held fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh, then they will be true believers without any taint of polytheism. Then they will be protected from hypocrisy and will be guided aright. Allāh says: *Those who believe and mix not their faith with inequity, those are they for whom is security and they are* (the ones) *guided aright* (6:82).

The context shows that the word, 'believers', refers to pure believers who are sincere in their faith. They have been introduced by the attributes, "those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allāh and are sincere in their religion to Allāh". These virtues cover all the details which Allāh has counted in His Book as the believers' characteristics and attributes. For example, see the following verses:-

> *Indeed successful are the believers, those who in their prayers are humble and those who keep aloof from what is vain* (23:1-3).
>
> *And the servants of the Beneficient* (Allāh) *are they who walk on the earth humbly; and when address them the ignorants, say they: "Salām* (Peace)*". And those who pass the night in prostrating unto their Lord and standing* (25:63-64).

This is what the Qur'ān means when it uses the word, 'believer', without any condition and without any association which would give it another shade of meaning.

Allāh has said,"These are with the believers", rather than saying, "these are among the believers". The reason is that as soon as these qualifications are found in them they are attached to the believers; but they would not be a part of the believers until these characteristics firmly take roots in their hearts.

QUR'ĀN: ***Why should Allāh chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allāh is the Appreciator, Knowing.*****:** Apparently, this

verse too, like the preceding speech, is addressed to the believers. They have been addressed in these words as if they were devoid of belief, as speakers use this style in such talks.

The verse indicates that Allãh has no need to chastise them.

Had they not invited the punishment by discarding gratitude and faith, there was nothing from the side of Allãh to inflict them with chastisement. Allãh gets no benefit from their punishment nor does He get any harm by their existence, so that He should be inclined to punish them. The meaning, therefore, is: There is no reason why you should be punished if you express your gratitude for the favours Allãh has bestowed on you by giving Him His due rights and if you truly believe in Him; and Allãh appreciates virtues of him who thanks Him and believes in Him; and He is All-knowing and puts everything in its proper place.

This verse shows that the chastisement which covers some people emanates from their side, not from Allãh's side. Likewise, all the things which invite punishment, like going astray, polytheism and sins and errors, do not originate from Allãh; they are done by the people themselves. If any of these things had originated from Allãh, then the resulting punishment also would have been from Allãh, because the effect is related to its cause.

T R A D I T I O N S

Zurãrah, Ḥumrãn and Muḥammad ibn Muslim have narrated from Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: *Surely as for those who believe, then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief,* that they said, "It was revealed about 'Abdullãh ibn Abī Sarḥ, whom 'Uthmãn had sent to Egypt as Governor. Then his disbelief increased until not an iota of belief remained in him." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)[21]

Abū Baṣīr has said: "I heard him (Abū 'Abdillãh, a.s.) saying about this same verse: 'Whoever believes that intoxicant is unlawful and then drinks it, and whoever believes that fornication is unlawful

[21] Obviously this explanation is based on the principle of the "flow of the Qur'ãn". (*tr.*)

and then does it and whoever believes that *zakāt* is *wājib* (obligatory) and does not pay it (are included in this verse)." (*ibid.*)

The author says: This *ḥadīth* generalizes the verse to cover all stages of disbelief, one of which is neglecting the obligatory com-mandments and committing forbidden things. It somewhat supports what we have written in the Commentary.

Muḥammad ibn al-Fuḍayl narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *And indeed we have revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allāh's communications disbelieved in or mocked at, . . . surely then you would be like them*, that he said, "When you hear a man denying the truth, refuting it and disparaging the people of truth, then stand up from near him and do not sit with him." (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are other traditions too of the same meaning.

Abu 'ṣ-Ṣalt al-Harawī narrates from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers*, that he said: "Allāh says that He will by no means give the unbelievers a proof against the believers. Allāh has given us the news about the unbelievers who killed their prophets without any right, yet in spite of their killing them, Allāh had not given them any proof against his prophets." (*ibid.*)

as-Suyūṭī writes: "Ibn Jarīr has narrated from ʻAlī [a.s.] about the words of Allāh: *and Allāh will by no means give the unbelievers a way against the believers*, that he said, 'In the hereafter.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: It has been explained that the context apparently points to the hereafter; but if the sentence is taken separately, on its own, it may be generalised to cover the proof in this worl.

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain of narrators from al-Ḥasan ibn Faḍḍāl that he said, "I asked ʻAlī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allāh, while He is deceiving them.*

"The Imām (a.s.) said, 'Allāh does not deceive; rather He gives them recompense of their deception.'" (*`Uyūnu 'l-akhbār*)

Masʻadah ibn Ziyād narrates through Jaʻfar ibn Muḥammad (a.s.) from his father (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was

asked, "In what lies the salvation tomorrow?" He (s.a.w.a.) said, "Salvation is that you should not deceive Allãh, lest He deceives you; because whoever deceives Allãh, He will deceive him and will take off the *īmãn* (faith) from him; and (the man) deceives his own self, had he but known it." Again, it was said to him (s.a.w.a.), "How does one deceive Allãḥ" He said, "He performs what Allãh has ordered him to, but his aim is (to please) someone other than Allãh. Therefore, be on guard against dissimulation, because it is associating someone with Allãh. Surely, a dissimulator will be called on the Day of Resurrection with four names: O *kãfir*, O debauchee, O treacherous, O profligate! your deeds are forfeited, your recompense is nullified; there is no share for you today; you seek your recompense from him you were doing for." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyãshī)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Abu 'l-Maʻzã al-Khaṣṣãf that he said, The Commander of the Believers (a.s.) said, "Whoever remembers Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, in secret, He remembers Him most often. Verily, the hypocrites used to remember Allãh openly but did not remeber Him in secret; therefore, Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, said: *they do it only to be seen of men and do not remember Allãh save a little".* (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: This is another fine meaning for scantiness of remembrance of Allãh.

Ibnu 'l-Mundhir has narrated from ʻAlī [a.s.] that he said, "No deed is small with piety, and how can that be small which is accepted." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This too is a fine meaning and in reality it goes back to what has been described in the preceding tradition.

Muslim, Abū Dãwūd and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Sunan*) have narrated from Anas that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'That is the prayer of a hypocrite; he remains sitting and looking at the sun until when it reaches between the two horns of Satan, he stands up and pecks (on the earth) four times and does not remember Allãh in it except a little.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: This is another meaning of paucity of remembrance because such a worshipper merely turns towards Allãh by standing for prayer and does not get time to remember Allãh while it was possible for him to submerge himself in His remembrance with presence (of heart) and tranquility.

The sun reaching between the two horns of Satan is a metaphor which denotes its nearness from the western horizon. It is as though the day and the night are two horns of satan with which he rams human beings.

'Abd Ibn Ḥamīd, al-Bukhārī (in his *Tārīkh*), Muslim, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn 'Umar that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'The likeness of a hypocrite is that of a wandering goat between two flocks, once it goes to this and once to that; it doesn't know which to follow.'" (*ibid.*)

'Abdu 'r-Razzãq, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn 'Abbãs, that he said, "Wherever the word *sulṭãn* occurs in the Qur'ãn, it means 'proof." (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Marwazī (in *Zawãidu 'z-zuhd*) and Abu 'sh-Shaykh ibn Ḥibbãn have narrated from Makḥūl that he said, "I have been told that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, 'No servant remains sincere to Allãh for forty mornings but the springs of wisdom appears fro his heart on his tongue.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: This tradition is a famous one and has been narrated in the same words or with the same meaning through other chains of narrators.

al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī has narrated in *Nawãdiru 'l-uṣūl* from Zayd ibn Arqam that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Whoever sincerely says, *Lã ilãha illa 'llãh*, will enter the Garden.' It was said to him, 'O Messenger of Allãh, what is its sincerity? He said, 'That it prevents him from unlawful things.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: This tradition's meaning is narrated through numerous chains of narrators in the collections of *aḥãdīth* (traditions) of the both sects from the Prophet and the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt*, may Allãh's mercy and blessings be on them. And, God willing, we shall quote most of its narrated words in some appropriate place.

Many traditions have been written under these verses showing diverse and different reasons of their revelation; we have not quoted them here because apparently they are based on the flow of the Qur'ãn, which the people have used to fit the verses on some likely events. And Allãh knows better.

* * * * *

لَّا يُحِبُّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْجَهْرَ بِٱلسُّوٓءِ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَن ظُلِمَ ۚ وَكَانَ
ٱللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٨﴾ إِن تُبْدُوا۟ خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا۟ عَن
سُوٓءٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا ﴿١٤٩﴾

Allãh does not love open utterance of evil in speech except (by) *one to whom injustice has been done; and Allãh is Hearing, Knowing* (148). *If you do good openly or do it in secret or pardon an evil, then surely Allãh is Pardoning, Powerful* (149).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh does not love open utterance of evil in speech except (by) one to whom injustice has been done; . . .*** **:** [*al-Jahr* (اَلْجَهْرُ = loudly speaking; translated here as 'open utterance')]. ar-Rãghib has said under the root *j-h-r* [جهر]: "It is used for excessive manifestation of a thing before the sense of sight or hearing. As for the sight, it is said: 'I saw him openly'; Allãh, the Sublime, says: '*O Mūsã! We will not believe in you until we see Allãh manifestly'* (2:55); They said: 'Show us Allãh manifestly' (4:153) . . . As for hearing, Allãh says: Alike (to Him) among you is he who conceals (his) words and he who speaks openly" (13:10).

as-Sū' (اَلسُّوْء = evil); evil speech – every talk which hurts the feeling of the person about who it is said; for example, cursing him

and abusing him and accusing him of some bad characteristics, no matter whether those defects are really found in him or not. Allāh does not love that these things should be loudly announced and spoken. It is known that Allāh is free from love and hate, which is found in human beings and many animals; however, as our commandments and prohibitions naturally emanate from love and hate, Allāh metaphorically uses the words, love and hate, to describe His pleasure and displeasure, His commandment and prohibition.

Therefore, the words, "Allāh does not love open utterance of evil in speech", metaphorically show legislation covering both prohibition and dislike.

The phrase, "except (by) *one to whom injustice has been done",* is isolated exception. It means that it is alright for the one who is oppressed and to whom injustice has been done, to loudly speak evil about the opressor regarding the injustice done to him. This context shows that he is allowed to utter evil publicly to describe the injustice done to him and to expose the bad character of the oppressor which led him to that injustice. However, there is no indication here that he can speak loudly about other things which are not found in the oppressor or which have no connection with this praticular oppression.

The exegetes have differed in explanation of "evil in speech"; some say that it means cursing; others say that it is a description of his oppression and injustice, etc.; the fact is that all these things are included in this phrase which is unrestricted. Therefore, there is no reason why it should be restricted to certain types of evil talk.

The words, "and Allāh is Hearing, Knowing", emphasize the prohibition understood from "Allāh does not love open utterance of evil in speech". In other words, it is not allowed for the one to whom injustice has not been done to speak loudly evil words about someone because Allāh is the Hearing Who hears every word, and Knowing Who knows what one is doing.

QUR'ĀN: ***If you do good openly or do it in secret or pardon an evil, then surely Allāh is Pardoning, Powerful*** **:** The verse has some relation with the preceding one because it implies manifestation of good words showing gratitude for a favour which someone has done to you, and also shows merit of forgiveness of an evil, so that you should not utter evil words against your oppressor.

Doing good openly means manifesting it clearly whether it is manifested in deed – for example, showing that one is spending on

some deserving person; likewise, other good deeds; as this showing arouses in other people the desire to do good and strengthens the religion – or in words, like openly thanking the benefactor and mentioning him with good attributes, as it would incite other well to do persons to follow the suit.

Keeping the good work secret is also commendable, because it keeps one away from dissimulation and nearer to sincerity, as Allãh has said: *If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to poor, it is better for you; and this will remove from you some of your sins* (2:271).

Pardoning an avil is to cover it in words – that he does not describe his oppressor for his oppression, does not disgrace him before the people and does not speak openly against him – and in deed, that he should not confront him with similar mistreatment for retribution, even when *sharī'ah* allows him to do so. Allãh has said: *whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you; and fear Allãh* (2:194).

If you pardon an evil, you will acquire an attribute from the Divine attributes of perfection – He pardons His servants although He has power to punish them. Doing good deed openly or in secret, that is, doing favour to the needy in all conditions is also among the Divine attributes because He is Allãh.

T R A D I T I O N S

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said: "Allãh does not like abusing while seeking someone's aid except the one to whom injustice has been done; he is allowed to seek help against the oppressor in the matters in which seeking help is allowed by religion." He says that it is narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.). (*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

Abu 'l-Jãrūd narrates from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "*Open utterance of evil in speech* means describing a man with the defects which are found in him." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

Another *ḥadīth* explains this verse in this way: If a man came to you and he spoke ascribing to you such merit, praise and good deeds which you do not have, then do not accept it from him and refute him; because he has done injustice to you. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

al-Faḍl ibn Abī Qurrah narrates from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: *Allãh does not love open utterance of evil in*

speech except (by) *one to whom injustice has been done,* that he said, "Whoever invited some people for feast and did not serve them properly, he is among those who do injustice; and there is no blame on them in whatever they say about him." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyãshī)

The author says: It has been narrated in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn* from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) as a *mursal ḥadīth;* also it has been narrated through Sunnī chains from Mujãhid. However, these traditions clearly show that the verse is general and not restricted, as we have shown earlier.

* * * * *

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكۡفُرُونَ
بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن يُفَرِّقُواْ بَيۡنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ
وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤۡمِنُ بِبَعۡضٖ وَنَكۡفُرُ بِبَعۡضٖ وَيُرِيدُونَ
أَن يَتَّخِذُواْ بَيۡنَ ذَٰلِكَ سَبِيلًا ١٥٠ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ
حَقّٗاۚ وَأَعۡتَدۡنَا لِلۡكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٗا مُّهِينٗا ١٥١ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ
بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَلَمۡ يُفَرِّقُواْ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّنۡهُمۡ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ سَوۡفَ
يُؤۡتِيهِمۡ أُجُورَهُمۡۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورٗا رَّحِيمٗا ١٥٢

Surely those who disbelieve in Allãh and His messengers and desire to differentiate between Allãh and His messengers, and say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in others"; and desire to take a way between (this and) *that* (150). *These it is that are truly unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement* (151). *And those who believe in Allãh and His messengers and do not differentiate between any of them; they* (are those whom) *He will grant them their recompense; and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (152).

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COMMENTARY

Now, the talk turns to the People of the Book describing the reality of their disbelief and explaining some of their injustices, sins and scandalous talks.

QUR'ĀN: ***Surely those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers . . . We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement*** **:** These are the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians; the Jews believe in Mūsā and 'Īsā and Muḥammad while the Christians believe in Mūsā and 'Īsā and disbelieve in Muḥammad – Allāh's mercy be on all of them. These people think that they believe in Allāh and in some of His messengers and disbelieve in only a few of them; but Allāh has clearly stated that they are disbelievers in Allāh and all His messengers. Therefore, it was necessary to explain the all-encompassing sentence, "Surely those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers". This explanation is given in the next phrase which is given as explicative apposition, "and desire to differentiate between Allāh and His messengers, and say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in others". This phrase is self-explanatory. They are disbelievers in Allāh and His Messengers because when they say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in others", they actually want to diffentiate between Allāh and His messengers; when they disbelieve in some of His messengers although he has been sent by Allāh, they are rejecting the Divine choice; thus rejection of any messenger is rejection of Allāh's Divinity.

Again it is explained with another explanatory conjuctive, "and desire to take a way between (this and) that". They want to chart out a way between two opposites: believing in Allāh and all His messengers and disbelieving in Allāh and all His messengers; and that middle way is believing in some and rejecting some others. However, the only way to Allāh is to believe in Him and all His messengers together. A messenger in his capacity of messengership has no authority over his ownself or on his mission; everthing is done under Divine guidance. To believe in him is to believe in Allāh and to reject him is to reject Allāh.

Disbeliving in some and believing in others together with Allāh is an attempt to differentiate between Allāh and His messengers. In this way, they want to make the messenger indifendent, unrelated to Allāh. According to the, belief in the prophet has no connection with the belief in Allāh and rejection of a prophet is unconnected with

disbelief in Allãh; the messenger is accordingly marginalised and removed from his central position. How can one be called a messenger if believing or disbelieving in him is unrelated to belief or disbelief in Allãh.

Now, it is clear without any doubt that believing in such a messenger is tantamount to ascribing someone to Allãh, the great, the High. That is why Allãh, after describing their attempt to believe in some and disbelieve in others, in order to differentiate between Allãh and His messengers and to find a via media, says that, "These it is that are truly unbelievers", and then threatens them saying, "and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement".

QUR'ÃN: ***And those who believe in Allãh and His messengers and do not differentiate between any of them; they*** **(are those whom)** ***He will grant them their recompense; and Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful*** **:** After exposing the disbelief of those who differentiate between Allãh and His messengers, ans stating that they were disbelievers in Allãh and all His messengers, now Allãh describes those who stand opposite to them, that is, those who believe in Allãh and all His messengers without any differentiation. This completes the division of the people in two groups. We find in the second and third verses that the pronouns describing Allãh have been changed from first person plural to third person singular; first it was said: *and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement,* and now it says, "they (are those whom) He will grant them their recompense". Probably, ascribing award of punishment to first person shows that it would surely happen; this certainty is not so clear in third person pronoun; and the same reason justifies the change of pronoun in the second verse. The verse is addressed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and contains good tidings. The Prophet knows that Allãh would surely fulfil His promise and this recompense is certain to be awarded.

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يَسْـَٔلُكَ أَهْلُ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ
أَن تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَٰبًا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۚ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا۟
مُوسَىٰٓ أَكْبَرَ مِن ذَٰلِكَ فَقَالُوٓا۟ أَرِنَا ٱللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ
ٱلصَّٰعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ۚ ثُمَّ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ ٱلْعِجْلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ
ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَن ذَٰلِكَ ۚ وَءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَٰنًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥٣﴾
وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ ٱلطُّورَ بِمِيثَٰقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمُ ٱدْخُلُوا۟ ٱلْبَابَ سُجَّدًا
وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا۟ فِى ٱلسَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَٰقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾
فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَٰقَهُمْ وَكُفْرِهِم بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ ٱلْأَنۢبِيَآءَ
بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ ۚ بَل طَبَعَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ
فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ
بُهْتَٰنًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا ٱلْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ
رَسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ
ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ لَفِى شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا لَهُم بِهِۦ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا ٱتِّبَاعَ ٱلظَّنِّ ۚ

وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَل رَّفَعَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا
﴿١٥٨﴾ وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ إِلَّا لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِۦ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِۦ ۖ وَيَوْمَ
ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾ فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟
حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَٰتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ
كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَأَخْذِهِمُ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ وَقَدْ نُهُوا۟ عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَٰلَ ٱلنَّاسِ
بِٱلْبَٰطِلِ ۚ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ لَّٰكِنِ
ٱلرَّٰسِخُونَ فِى ٱلْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ
أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ ۚ وَٱلْمُقِيمِينَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ ۚ وَٱلْمُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ
وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٦٢﴾
۞ إِنَّآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ كَمَآ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ وَٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ ۚ
وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَٱلْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَىٰ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَٰرُونَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ ۚ
وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُۥدَ زَبُورًا ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَٰهُمْ عَلَيْكَ
مِن قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَّمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۚ وَكَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ
تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾ رُّسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ
لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ حُجَّةٌۢ بَعْدَ ٱلرُّسُلِ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا
﴿١٦٥﴾ لَّٰكِنِ ٱللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ إِلَيْكَ ۖ أَنزَلَهُۥ بِعِلْمِهِۦ ۖ

وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٦﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا۟ وَصَدُّوا۟ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا۟ ضَلَٰلًۢا بَعِيدًا
﴿١٦٧﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَظَلَمُوا۟ لَمْ يَكُنِ ٱللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا
لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقًا ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۚ
وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿١٦٩﴾

The People of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; so indeed they had demanded of Mūsã a greater thing than that, for they said: "Show us Allãh manifestly"; so the lightning seized them on account of their injustice. Then they took the calf (for a god) *even after clear signs had come to them, but We pardoned this; and We gave to Mūsã a clear authority* (153). *And We lifted the mountain over them at their covenant, and We said to them: "Enter the door prostrating"; and We said to them: "Do not exceed the limits of the Sabbath"; and We took from them a firm covenant* (154). *Therefore, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelief in the communications of Allãh and their killing the prophets unjustly and their saying: "Our hearts are covered"; Nay! Allãh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a little* (155). *And for their disbelief and for their having uttered against Maryam a griveous calumny* (156). *And for their saying: "Surely we have killed the Messiah, ʻĪsã son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allãh"; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so* (like ʻĪsã); *and most surely those who differ therein are only in doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture; and certainly they killed him not* (157). *Nay! Allãh raised him up to Himself; and Allãh is Mighty, Wise* (158). *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he* (ʿ Ísã) *shall be a witness against them* (159). *Wherefore for the inequity of those who are Jews, We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them, and for their*

hindering many from Allãh's way (160). *And for their taking interest, though indeed they were forbidden it, and their devouring the property of people wrongfully; and We have prepared for the unbelievers from among them a painful chastisement* (161). *But the firmly rooted in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayers and those who give the* zakãt *and the believers in Allãh and the Last Day, these it is whom We will give a mighty reward* (162). *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ, and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl and Isḥãq and Ya'qūb and the tribes, and 'Īsã and Ayyūb and Yūnus and Hãrūn and Sulaymãn, and We gave to Dãwūd Zabūr* (163). *And* (We sent) *messengers We have mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you; and Allãh addressed His word to Mūsã directly speaking* (164). (We sent) *messengers as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have an argument against Allãh after the* (coming of) *messengers; and Allãh is Mighty, Wise* (165). *But Allãh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His Knowledge; and the angels bear witness* (also); *and sufficient is Allãh for a witness* (166). *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve and hinder* (men) *from Allãh's way they indeed have strayed off into a remote error* (167). *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve and act unjustly, Allãh will not forgive them nor guide them to a path* (168), *except the path of Hell, to abide in it forever, and this is easy to Allãh* (169).

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COMMENTARY

The verses describe the demand of the People of the Book that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) should bring down to them a book from heaven, because they were not satisfied by the piecemeal revelation of the Qur'ãn through Gabriel, and then replies to it.

QUR'ÃN: ***The People of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; . . .*** **:** "The People of the Book" refers to the Jews and the Christians, as is known from the Qur'ãnic style in such places. It means that the demand had come from both groups and not only the Jews.

Of course, the injustice and the crimes enumerated in these verses were exclusively committed by the Jews; for example, the demand to see Allãh, the worship of the calf, breaking the covenant when the mountain was raised over their heads and when they were ordered to do *sajdah* (prostration) and prohibited to cross the limits of the sabbath and things like that. But both groups had grown from the same root, that is, the tribe of Isrã'īl to whom Mūsã and 'Īsã (a.s.) were sent (although the mission of 'Īsã [a.s.] spread after his being raised to the heaven to the non-Israilites like Rome, Arabia, Ethiopia and Egypt, etc.) and the injustice done to 'Īsã by his people was not less than the injustice done by the Jews to Mūsã (a.s.).

As the two groups had a common root and the injustice described was done by the Jews only when the time came to describe their punishment, Allãh mentioned only the Jews as He says: *Wherefore for the inequity of those who are Jews, We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them.* And it was because of this common root that the list of the Messengers described later includes 'Īsã (a.s.) too like Mūsã (a.s.); if the talk were reserved to the Jews only, this could not be justified. Also, it is for this reason that after these verses it has been said: *O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak* (lies) *against Allãh, but* (speak) *the truth; the Messiah, 'Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh.*

In short, the demand had come from the People of the Book together and the speech is addressed to them both, because they share the national trait, that is, despotism, speaking lies, recklessness and disregard of agreements and covenants. The talk covers both in common characteristics but when any group deserves some special comment, it is mentioned separately.

They had asked the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) to bring down to them a book from heaven. Obviously, they had not asked it before the Qur'ãn was revealed and recited before them. This event had taken place in Medina and they had heard the Qur'ãn as much as was revealed at Mecca and the parts which were revealed at Medina upto that time. Yet, they were not satisfied that it was a sufficient proof of his Prohethood; they were not prepared to count it as a Divine Book,

although the Qur'ãn had been sent armed with the challenge and the claim of its miraculousness, as we see in the chapters of "The Night Journey", "Yūnus", "Hūd" and "The Cow", all of which were revealed before this chapter of the "Women".

Clearly, their asking for bringing down a book from the heaven (when they were witnessing the Qur'ãnic revelation), was merely a foolhardy demand which could not come except from a person who stubbornly refuses to submit to the truth and does not follow the reality. Such a person talks irrationally and raves without thinking, as his desires overpower him; he doesn't stand on any firm grond nor does he feel constrained by any limit. This arrogance was not unsimilar to that which the Quraysh had adopted as soon as the Qur'ãnic revelations began and its mission became known; as Allãh quotes them as saying: *Why is not a sign sent to him from His Lord?* (10:20), *or you should ascend into heaven, and we will not believe in your ascending until you bring down to us a book which we may read* (17:93).

It was in this background that Allãh has replied to their demand.

First: These are a people gone far in their ignorance and straying. They do not desist from any injustice, however great it might be; from disbelief and rejection of truth even when clear proofs have come to them; nor from breaking the covenants however sacred they might be; nor do they avoid falsehood, wrong accusation or any type of injustice. A man of such characteristics does not deserve that his demand be granted or his proposal accepted.

Second: The Book which Allãh has sent down, that is, the Qur'ãn, contains in itself the witness of Allãh and His angels. Moreover, it offers challege after challenge in its noble verses.

Continuing the reply, Allãh says: *so indeed they had demanded of Mūsã a greater thing than that,* that is, greater than what they are asking you, to bring down to them a book from heaven: *for they said: "Show us Allãh manifestly",* that is, show Him to us clearly so that we see Him with our eyes; this was the peak of ignorance, delirium and transgression; *so the lightening seized them on account of their injustice.* The story is mentioned in the chapter of "The Cow" (vrs. 55-56) and that of "The Elevated Places" (vr. 155).

Then Allãh says: *Then they took the calf* (for a god) *even after clear signs had come to them,* they indulged in this idol-worship when its falsity was clearly shown to them and it was explained to them that Allãh is far from the taint of corporal traits and transience; and this was the most henious ignorance: *but We pardoned this; and We gave*

to Mūsã a clear authority. Mūsã (a.s.) had ordered them in this connection to repent to Allãh by killing each other; they started doing it but Allãh pardoned them before the killings had taken toll of them all; and this is what pardon means in this verse. He gave Mūsã (a.s.) clear authority inasmuch as his orders were implemented on them and on as-Sãmirī and his calf. This story is mentioned in the chapter of "The Cow" (vr. 54).

Then Allãh says: *And We lifted the mountain over them at their covenant.* It was the covenant which Allãh had taken from them and then raised the mountain over them. The story has been described twice in the chapter of "The Cow" (vrs. 63 & 93). Further, Allãh says: *and We said to them: "Enter the door prostrating"; and We said to them: "Do not exceed the limits of the Sabbath"; and We took from them a firm covenant*. The two stories are mentioned in the chapter of "The Cow" (vrs. 58-65) and the chapter of "The Elevated Places" (vrs. 161-163). Probably, the covenant mentioned here is related to these two stories as well as others, because the Qur'ãn repeatedly mentions making the covenant with them, as Allãh says: *And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship* (any) *but Allãh; . . . "* (2:83); *and when We made a covenant with you: "You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities"; then you gave a promise while you witnessed* (ibid.: 84).

QUR'ÃN: ***Therefore, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelif in the communications of Allãh . . . :*** *Fa* (فَ = therefore). This particle shows that the coming statement has resulted from the preceding ones. "For their breaking their covenant" refers to their crimes mentioned after a few verses. These verses aim at describing the humiliating recompense which Allãh has reserved for them in this world and the hereafter. They also describe some of their evil characteristics not mentioned before.

The words of Allãh, "Therefore for their breaking their covenant", refers together to their breaking the covenant, some of which have been mentioned in the Qur'ãn and some have not. "And their disbelief in the communications of Allãh", refers to their various types of disbelief which they committed during the life of Mūsã (a.s.) and after him. The Qur'ãn has described several instances of it including the two mentioned in the beginning of the verses, that is: *So indeed they had demanded of Mūsã a greater thing than that, for they said: "Show us Allãh manifestly",* and: *they took a calf* (for a god)

even after clear signs had come to them. These two instances of their disbelief were described before other things in the beginning, but have been put here after the description of their breaking the covenant; because the context is different. Beginning of the verses mentions their demand to bring down a book from heaven and it was more relevant to follow it with their asking something greater than that and their worshipping the calf. But the verse under discussion describes their recompense for their evil deeds after their accepting the call to the truth; and in this context beginning the speech with description of their breaking their covenant was more appropriate.

The phrase: *and their killing the prophets unjustly*, points to Zakariyyã, Yaḥyã and other prophets whom the Qur'ãn has mentioned without naming. Then Allãh says: *and their saying: "Our hearts are covered"* : *Ghulf* (غُلف) is plural of *aghlaf* (اَغْلف = under cover) which prevents it from listening to the prophetic call and accepting the truth. They uttered this sentence in order to reject the call and at the same time putting the responsibility of that rejection on Allãh. In a way they claimed that their hearts were put under cover by Allãh, or that they could not hear any call except that of Mūsã, and all this was beyond their choice and authority. That is why Allãh has refuted their claim by saying: *Nay! Allãh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a little*. Thus, it is explained that the refusal of their hearts to listen to the true call is connected to the Divine creation, but not in the sense which they were claiming that they had no hand in it. Rather, Allãh has done it to them because of their disbelief and denial of truth, and consequently these people will not believe except a few of them. We have described in detail about this exception; they were afflicted with this Divine retribution as a society and nation. The whole group taken together is under that punishment and their hearts have been sealed and it is impossible for that society to believe in the Prophet, although a few of them may enter into the fold of Islam.

QUR'ÃN: ***And for their disbelief and for their having uttered against Maryam a griveous calumny*** **:** It refers to their calumny against Maryam (a.s.) that 'Īsã (a.s.) was a product of fornication. It is disbelief and false accusation all together; and 'Īsã (a.s.) had talked to them soon after his birth and said: *"Surely I am a servant of Allãh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet."* (19:30).

QUR'ÃN: ***And for their saying: "Surely we have killed the Messiah, 'Īsã son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allãh;" and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so*** **(like'Īsã):** It was described in the stories of 'Īsã (a.s.) in ch.3 that they had different versions concerning his killing: whether it was by crucifixion or some other means. Allãh first mentions their claim of killing the Messiah, then refutes their claim joining the killing and crucifxion together; probably this mode has been adopted for total refutation, in order to remove all possible doubts; crucifixion is a special method of torture but it does not necessarily lead to killing and when killing is mentioned, crucification doesn't come into mind. [Therefore, refuting killing and crucifixion together refutes the idea of 'Īsã's death altogether.]

If only the killing were refuted, it was possible to say that they had not killed him in normal way, that he could have been killed by crucifixion. That is why Allãh added after "they did not kill him" the words, "nor did they crucify him" to make the meaning utmost clear. Then He says explicitly that 'Īsã (a.s.) did not die on their hands, neither by crucifixion nor in any other way; rather it appeared to them so. They caught another person in place of the Messiah and killed him or crucified him. This could have happened easily in those circumstances; in such a rioteous and barbaric mobs often the actual target slips away and some other person is held and beaten up. He was arrested by the Roman soldiers who had no full prior knowledge of his features and conditions; it was possible for them to catch someone else in his place. Moreover, there are traditions saying that Allãh had put his likeness on another personwho was caught and killed in his place.

Some research scholars of history have written that the historical stories recorded about 'Īsã (a.s.) and the events connected with his call as well as the stories of his contemporaries among the rulers and preachers fit completely on two persons, both named the Messiah, and the time gap between them is of more than 500 years. The earlier one was the true Messiah but he was not killed and the later one was the false Messiah who was crucified. According to that scholar it is doubtful whether the present Christian calendar is correct. In that case, what the Qur'ãn mentions as 'appearance' would refer to

the similarity of the Messiah, `Īsã son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allãh, with the crucified Messiah.[22]

And most surely those who differ therein, that is, differ about ‘Īsã or about his killing: *are only in doubt about it,* that is, they are ignorant of his affairs, *they have no knowledge respecting it; but only follow a conjecture,* that is, they surmise according to what they have been told by others without firm knowledge: *and certainly they killed him not,* it may also be translated as: 'they did not kill him, I give you the confirmed news'.

Someone has said that the pronoun 'him' in "they did not kill him" refers to knowledge in the preceding sentence, that is, they did not kill the knowledge certainly; according to the dictionary killing of knowledge means purifying it from doubt and suspicion. Some others have said that the pronoun refers to conjecture, that is, they did not verify their conjecture. These meanings are very strange and the Qur’ãnic words do not tolerate them.[23]

QUR’ÃN: ***Nay! Allãh raised him up to Himself; and Allãh is Mighty, Wise*** **:** Allãh has narrated this story in the chapter of "The Family of ‘Imrãn" where He says: *And when Allãh said: "O ‘Īsã! I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me"* (3:55). So, this verse mentions first his being taken away and then his being raised.

The context of the verse refutes their claim that they had killed and crucified ‘Īsã (a.s.). Rather he was protected from murder and crucifixion. Also, it is clear that the one about whom the claims of murder and crucifixion were made (i.e., ‘Īsã, [a.s.] with his body) was the one whom Allãh raised to Him and saved him from their conspiracy. In short, ‘Īsã (a.s.) was raised up with his body and soul together. It was not that he had died and then his soul was raised to Allãh, because the context of the verse doesn't agree with such a hypothesis; the adverb, 'rather', would be meaningless if it were to show that his soul was raised up after death, because such raising up could happen even after his murder or natural death.

This raising up was a sort of rescue with which Allãh saved him from their hands. [This verse by itself does not make it clear] whether

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[22] Such hypothesis is not worthy of attention and should not be included in a serious book like ours. (*tr.*)

[23] Such far-fetched meanings serve only to create confusion in the minds of the readers. (*tr.*)

he had died at that time a natural death or by some means other than murder and crucifixion or was alive and Allãh had given him perpetual life in a way we do not know.It was not impossible for All`ah to give death to ‘Īsã (a.s.) and then raise him and protect him; or He could preserve his life in some extra-natural way.[24] This phenomenon is not different from other events described in the Qur’ãn regarding ‘Īsã's miracles concerning his birth and his life among his people as well as the miracles of Ibrãhīm, Mūsã, Ṣãliḥ, and others. All that is in the same category; the Book of Allãh confirms those happenings so clearly that they cannot be ignored. Of course, some people had tried to reinterprete those miracles thinking that such supernatural events would nullify the general system of the cause and effect; in the first volume of this book, we have discussed in detail the phenomenon of miracle and supernatural events.[25]

However, the next verse proves or points that ‘Īsã (a.s.) is alive and has not died yet.

QUR’ÃN: ***And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he*** **(‘Īsã)** ***shall be a witness against them*** **:** The third person singular pronouns in "believe in him" and "he shall be" refer to ‘Īsã (a.s.). As for the pronoun in "before his death" there are various interpretations:

Some people have said: The pronoun refers to 'one' in "one of the People of the Book", meaning: each and every one among the People of the Book will believe in ‘Īsã (a.s.) before that one dies. It will become clear to him just before his death that ‘Īsã was the Messenger of Allãh and His servant; even though that faith at that time will not benefit him at all, and ‘Īsã will be a witness over them all on the Day of Judgement. It makes no difference whether they believed in him in a way that was beneficial to them or at a time when it was of no avail like believing at the time of death.

If we say that the pronoun "before his death" refers to ‘Īsã (a.s.), it would support what has been narrated in some traditions that ‘Īsã is

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[24] This statement does not agree with the above explanation that the same one -‘Īsã with his body and soul- who was claimed to have been killed and crucified was the one who was raised up. There was no need, after that clear and categorical declaration, to insert here these speculative possibilities and confuse the readers. (*tr.*)

[25] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.1, pp.106-127 (*tr.*)

alive, has not died and that he will come down before the Day of Resurrection and then the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, will believe in him. But this interpretation particularizes, without any reason, the generality of the phrase, "and there is not one of the People of the Book". But according to this explanatio, the verse would mean that only those People of the Book would believe in ʻĪsã who would be present when he would come down from the heavens, while all others who came and went after his being raised and before his coming down would not believe in him. This restricts without any reason the general meaning of the verse.

However, some have opted for this explanation and said that the pronoun refers to ʻĪsã (a.s.) and points to their belief in him at the time of his coming down from heaven in the last days. This view relies on a tradition as we have mentioned above.

But the verse with its two parts clearly shows that ʻĪsã (a.s.) will be a witness on all of them on the Day of Resurrection as will all of them believe in him before death. And Allãh has quoted the speech of ʻĪsã regarding this evidence in a particular way: *And I was a witness over them so long as I was among them; when You did take me up You were the watcher over them and You are witness over all things* (5:117). In this verse, ʻĪsã limits his evidence for the period when he was alive among them before his being taken away, and the verse under discussion says that he would be a witness over all tose who could believe in him; now if all would believe in him it means that he would not die but after all of them. This brings us to the second interpretation, that is, he is alive until now and he will return to them again so that they could believe in him. Utmost that can be said is that the one who will not be present when he will return to them second time will believe in him at the time of his death and the one who will be present at that time will have to believe in him whether willingly or under compulsion.

This verse coming after the Divine words: *and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so* (like ʻĪsã); . . . *Rather Allãh raised him up to Himself, and Allãh is Mighty, Wise*, indicates that ʻĪsã has not died and is still alive; because there seems no useful purpose in saying that all of them would believe in him under compulsion. This supports the view that their believing in ʻĪsã before death refers to their believing in him before ʻĪsã's death.

However, there are other verses which apparently go somehow against it. For example: *And when Allãh said: O ʻĪsã! I am going to take you away completely and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify*

you of those who disbelieve, and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection (3:55). It shows that some disbelievers in ʻĪsã will continue upto the Day of Resurrection. Also, the verse: . . . *and their saying: "Our hearts are covered"; Nay! Allãh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelieve, so they shall not believe except a little",* shows that it is an affliction written against them, and their society, as a Jewish society, will not believe upto the Day of Resurrection. Also, the verse: *And I was a witness over them so long as I was among them; when You did take me up You were the watcher over them* (5:117), shows that they will be continuing after ʻĪsã (a.s.) was taken away completely.

However, the fact is that these three verses do not go against the idea of ʻĪsã (a.s.) being alive. The verse: . . . *and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the Day of Resurrection*, doesn't say that they would continue upto the Day of Resurrection with their identity as the People of the Book. Likewise, the Divine words: *Nay! Allãh has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not believe except a little*, only says that the true belief will not be accepted by all of them together and if at sometime they believed, that belief would cover only a few of them. Moreover, if the verse, "And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death", shows that they would believe in him before his death, it only mentions the belief, *per se;* it does not say that it would be an acceptable belief.

Likewise, the verse: *When You did take me up You were the watcher over them*, refers to the people, not to the Christians or the People of the Book, because the verse begins with these words: *And when Allãh will say: "O ʻĪsã son of Maryam! did you say to the people, take me and my mother two gods beside Allãḥ"* (5:116). Apart from that, ʻĪsã (a.s.), as one of the *ulu 'l-ʻazm* Messengers, was sent to all the people, and when he will give evidence over their deeds it would cover the Israelites as well as others, whether they believed in him or continued as unbelievers.

In short, the verses, seen in their context and in conjuction with other related verses, show that ʻĪsã (a.s.) did not die; he was not killed nor crucified nor did he die a natural death as we have mentioned earlier and we have written on this subject under the verse: *O ʻĪsã! I am going to take you away completely* . . . (3:55) in the third volume of this book.[26]

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[26] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.6, pp.33-39. (*tr.*)

A very strange explanation has been given by az-Zamakhsharī in *Tafsīru 'l-kashshãf*. He says: "This verse could possibly be interpreted in this way that there is none among all the People of the Book but he will believe in ‘Īsã (a.s); Allãh will give them life in their graves at the time of coming down of ‘Īsã (a.s.) and will inform them of his coming down and why he has come; so they will believe in him when their believing will give them no benefit. Is it not the belief of *ar-raj‘ah* (اَلرَّجْعَة = partial return)?"

There are some other unsound explanations written for this verse:

1. az-Zajjãj appears to think that the pronoun, "before his death" refers to the individual man of the Book. In other words, all of them unitedly say that we believe in that ‘Īsã (a.s.) who will appear in later days. It is a riduculous interpretation because the verses describe their claim of killing and crucifying ‘Īsã (a.s.) and refutes that claim. It does not deal directly with their disbelief in ‘Īsã (a.s.) and it has no connection with their accepting that the Messiah will appear in the later days to revive and restore the honour of the Israeli nation. Moreover, if that were the intended meaning, there was no need to say "before his death" because the meaning would have been clear without this phrase, and the same would be the case with the sentence. *And on the day of Resurrection he* (‘Īsã) *shall be a witness over them,* because there would be no need for such a statement at all.

2. Some exegetes have said that the verse means: and there is no one of the Book but he must certainly believe in Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) before the death of that man of the Book.

It is just like the previous explanation in absurdity, because there was no mention of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) in the preceding verses, so that the pronoun could refer to him; nor is this interpretation relevant to the theme of the verses. So, it is a claim without any proof. Of course, this meaning has been given in some traditions as we will read in the coming traditions but that is on the principle of the Qur'ãn as we shall describe; and such applications have been given very often in traditions as is known to everyone who looks minutely in such traditions.

QUR'ÃN: ***Wherefore for the inequity of those who are Jews, We did forbid them those good things which had been made lawful for them, . . .*** **:** "Wherefore" shows that the coming statement is a result of what has been described so far. "Inequity" has been used as a common noun to show the greatness of their injustice or to cover it in

vagueness (becuae no important purpose depends on indentifying their inequities). This one word refers to some of their transgressions and inequities mentioned earlier. It doesn't refer to all the inequities mentioned above but only to some of them. Allāh had forbidden some of the good things to them because of that inequity, and it was forbidden in the *sharī'ah* of Mūsā which was revealed in the Torah; while some of the inequities were committed by them long after Mūsā, for example, slandering Maryam (a.s.), etc. That is why we have said that the word, 'inequity', refers to some of their great transgressions because of which some good things were forbidden to them after they had been made lawful.

The verse goes on to say: *and for their hindering many from Allāh's way.* it refers to their repeated deviation from the way of Allāh: *And for their taking interest, though indeed they were forbidden it, and their devouring the property of people wrongfully.*

QUR'ĀN: ***And We have prepared for the unbelievers from among them a painful chastisement*** **:** It is in conjuction with: *We did forbid them.* Because of their inequities, they had attracted two punishments from Allāh; one in this world which affected all of them and that was the forbidding of some previously legalised good things; the other concerns the life hereafter which is reserved for the unbelievers among them and that is a painful chastisement.

QUR'ĀN: ***But the firmly rooted in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayers and those who give the*** **zakāt** ***and the believers in Allāh and the Last Day, these it is whom We will give a Mighty reward*** **:** It is a sort of exception and emendation separating some persons from the People of the Book. "The firmly rooted in knowledge" and "the believers" are the subject and "believe" is predicate; "among them" is connected with "the firmly rooted in knowledge" and "among" shows partialness.

Apparently, the word "the believers" too has a connection with "among them". thus the meaning will be: but the firmly rooted in knowledge and the true believers from among the People of the Book believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you. This meaning gets support from the next verse which says: *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ . . .* Apparently, the verse wants to say that they have believed in you because they have realised that your prophethood and the revelation

which We have sent to you is similar to the revelation which was brought to them by the previous prophets of Allãh, Nūḥ and the prophets after him, and the prophets from the progeny of Ibrãhīm and progeny of Ya‘qūb and the others whose stories we have not told you and there is no difference between these revelations.

You will appreciate that this meaning is more appropriate for the believers among the People of the Book than for the believers from the Arabs about whom Allãh has said: *That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless* (36:6).

"And those who keep up prayers" is in conjuction with "the firmly rooted in knowledge", but unlike the "firmly rooted" it is in accusative case to emphasize their praise. Likewise, "those who give the *zakãt*" is in conjuction with the same. "The believers in Allãh and the Last Day" is the subject and "these it is whom We will give a mighty reward" is its predicate. In the Qur’ãn of Ibn Mas‘ūd, "those who keep up prayers" was in nominative case and according to that, all the four adjectival phrases would be the subject, and "these it is whom We will give a mighty reward" its predicate.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said in *Majma‘u 'l-bayãn* : "The grammarians have differed as to why 'those who keep up prayers' has been revealed in accusative case. Sībawayh and the scholars of Baṣrah have said that it is meant so to describe their praise." [Then after mentioning some other interpretations, he says:] "There is a narration of ‘Urwah from ‘Ā’ishah that he asked her about the Divine words, 'those who keep up prayers', and, *the Sabeans* [5:69], and, *these two are certainly two sorcerers* [20:63], and she said, 'O my nephew! this is the work of the scribes; they made mistakes in writing'. And there is a narration from some of them [‘Uthmãn] that, 'there are some [ungrammatical] words in the Book of Allãh and the Arabs will soon correct it by their tongues.' And some of them has said that the phrase: 'those who keep up prayers' was in the nominative case in the Qur’ãn of Ibn Mas‘ūd. But such reports are not worthy of attention; the companions could not teach the people wrong recitals because they were the leaders and had learnt the words of the Qur’ãn from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)."

The phrase, "but the firmly rooted in knowledge", is the exception from the People of the Book. As we have explained earlier, their demand from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he should bring down to them a book from heaven meant that what the prphet had brought to them – the Book and the Wisdom – which confirmed the Divine communications revealed to the Prophets and Messengers before him, was not enough to attract them to the truth and prove its veracity,

while in reality the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had not brought to them but what the prophets before him had brought to their people and he lived among them and with them exactly as they had lived among and with their people. Allāh says: *Say: "I am not first of the Messengers . . ."* (46:9); *And We did not send before you any but men to whom We sent revelation, so ask the followers of the Reminder if you do not know. And We did not make them bodies not eating the food, and they were not to abide* (for ever) . . . *certainly We have revealed to you a Book in which is your good remembrance; what! do you not then understand?* (21:7-10).

Thus, Allāh describes about those People of the Book that they do not have a disposition to follow the truth nor they are firm in their views; they have no determination nor any opinion. There were many clear signs which they neglacted and many calls to the truth from which they hindered the people. Of course, those among them who are firmly rooted in knowledge (because of their firmness in their knowledge and the calrity of the truth before their eyes), and likewise, those who are true believers among them (because they are disposed to follow the truth), these two groups of people believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, as they have found out that what has been revealed to you is similar to what was revealed to all the prophets before you – Nūḥ and other prophets who came after him.

It appears from the above that:

First: The reason why those People of the Book who followed the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) have been given the adjectives "firmly rooted in knowledge", and "the believers". The previous verses have adversely commented on the People of the Book that they are not firmly rooted in what they have known, are not firm on any truth even if it was entrusted to them with very firm covenants, and they do not believe on the communications of Allāh and hinder people from them even when clear proofs have come to them. In this backdrop, these people whom Allāh has excepted are firmly rooted in knowledge and true believers.

Second: The reason why the previously revealed Books have been mentioned with the Qur'ān in the phrase, "believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you". The purpose is to show that there is no difference between the two revelations.

Third: The Divine words in the coming verse: *Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him",* describe the reason of the belief of these believers.

QUR'ÃN: ***Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the Prophets after him, . . .*** **:** As we have said just now, it gives the reason for their belief. The meaning: They have believed in what has been revealed to you because We have not given you any new thing, new claim or new aspect which was not found with the previous prophets. The whole affair runs on one system without any difference. We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him. Nūḥ was the first prophet to come with the Book and a *sharī'ah*. It is the same as We revealed to Ibrãhīm and later to his progeny. These People of the Book know them and understand how they were sent and how they called their people to the Right Path; some were given a Book as Dãwūd was given Zabūr [Psalms] which was a prophetic revelation. Mūsã was addressed directly and that was another type of prophetic revelation; and there were others like Ismã'īl, Isḥãq and Ya'qūb who were sent without any Book and they too received prophetic revelations.

Whatever their peculiarities, all of them were messengers giving good news of Divine reward and warning against Divine punishment. Allãh had sent them to complete His proof against the people, as they were to explain what was beneficial for them in this life and the hereafter and what was harmful, in order that the people should not have any proof against Allãh after coming of the messengers.

QUR'ÃN: ***the tribes, . . .*** **:** It was explained under the verse: *and Ya'qūb and the tribes* (3:84) that the word refers to the prophets from the progeny of Ya'qūb.

QUR'ÃN: ***and We gave to Dãwūd Zabūr . . .*** **:** It is said that the word *az-Zabūr* means 'the written'; they say *Zabarahu* (زَبَرَهُ = he wrote it), thus az-Zabūr is synonymous with *al-mazbūr* (اَلْمَزْبُوْرْ = the written).

QUR'ÃN: (We sent) ***messengers as the givers of good news and as warners, . . .*** **:** As translated, the word "messengers" is the object and "givers of good news and warners" are its adjectives. It may also be translated as: The messengers, the givers of good news and the warners; in which case all three words will be circumstancial words.

In ch.2 vr.213 (in vol.2)[27], we have extensively discussed the meaning of sending of the messengers and completion of proof by Allāh against the people, and that the reason alone is not sufficient to guide the people on the right path unless the prophets are sent with Divine Laws.

QUR'ĀN: ***and Allāh is Mighty, Wise*** **:** When unlimited power and unlimited wisdom is reserved for Allāh, then it is impossible for anyone to prevail over Him in argument. Rather, the conclusive proofs are with Him. Allāh says: *Say: "Then Allāh's is the conclusive argument"* (6:149).

QUR'ĀN: ***But Allāh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His Knowledge; and the angels bear witness*** **(also)*****; and sufficient is Allāh for a witness*** **:** It is sort of isolated exception from the rejection of their demand that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) should bring down to them a Book from the heaven. What Allāh has described in refutation of their demand beginning with: *So indeed they had demanded of Mūsā a greater thing . . . ,* means that their demand has been rejected. The reason for the rejection is that whatever has been brought by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) through the Divine Revelation is certainly not different from the revelations brought by all other prophets. Whoever claims that he believes in what was brought by those prophets is duty – bound to believe in what has been brought by this prophet – without any difference. Now, Allāh adds that He bears witness by what He has revealed to His Prophet and the angels bear witness too and Allāh is sufficient for a witness. The item witnessed is that "He has revealed it with His knowledge". Merely coming down from the heavens was not sufficient to prove the claim because it could have been done through satanic agencies. The Satan could have polluted the affairs of Divine guidance by opening in front a wrong path in place of the right one; or he could have mixed some falsity in the Divine revelation to confuse the minds. Allāh has pointed to such pollution by refuting it in these words: *The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses as a messenger; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him, so that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them, and He records the number of all things* (72:26-28).

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[27] *al-Mīzān*, (Eng.), vol.3, pp.167-227 (*tr.*)

Also, Allãh says: . . . *and most surely the Satans inspire their friends* . . . (6:121). In short, giving witness for coming down of, or sending down the Book, still leaves the claim somewhat in ambiguity; but the words, "with His Knowledge", make the meaning crystal clear, and show that Allãh has revealed it to His Messenger, and He knew what He was revealing; He encompasses him and protects him from deception of the Satan.

This witness is for revelation and revelation was through the angels, as is clear from the words of Allãh: *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel: for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allãh's command . . . "* (2:97); and He has said describing this honoured angel: *Most surely it is the Word of an honoured Messenger, the possessor of strength, an honourable place with the Lord of the Dominion, One* (to be) *obeyed, and faithful in trust* (81:19-21). The adjective, "one (to be) obeyed", shows that there are other angels under his command and it is they who are mentioned in ch.80, vrs.11-16: *Nay! Surely it is an admonishment. So let him who pleases mind it; in honourable books, exalted, purified in the hands of* (Our) *ambassadors, noble, virtuous.* In short, as the angels were the means of bringing the revelation to the Prophet, so they too are witnesses like Allãh and Allãh is sufficient as a witness.

To see how Allãh has borne witness for the Qur'ãn, we should look into the verses which have thrown challenges to the adversaries. For example: *Say: "If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'ãn, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others"* (17:88); *Do they not then meditate on the Qur'ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy* (4:82); *Say: "Then bring a chapter like this and invite whom you can besides Allãh, if you are truthful."* (10:38).

QUR'ÃN: *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve and hinder* (men) *from Allãh's way they indeed have strayed off into a remote error* : The preceding verses have described the convincing argument for the messengership of His Messenger showing that his Book was revealed from Allãh; also that it is the same sort of revelation that was sent to the prophets before him, and that it is accompanied by the witness of Allãh and His angels, and enough is He for a witness. Now, this verse establishes the error of those who disbelieve in Him and hinder others even if they are from the People of the Book.

The speech started with the topic of revelationof the Book from Allāh. Now, the word, 'Book', has been changed to Allāh's way (*hinder men from Allāh's way*). This simple change has beautifully abbreviated a lengthy premises. It is as though it says: Surely, as for those who disbelieve and hinder men from this Book and from the revelation it contains, they are the disbelievers who hinder people from Allāh's way, and those who disbelieve and hinder men from Allāh's way . . .

QUR'ĀN: ***Surely*** **(as for)** ***those who disbelieve and act unjustly, Allāh will not forgive them nor guide them to a path, except the path of hell, to abide in it forever, and this easy to Allāh*** **:** It re-emphasizes the reality mentioned in the preceding verse. Accordingly, injustice would point to their hindering men from the way of Allāh as is clear in this context. Also, possibly this verse gives the reason of their straying into a remote error. The meaning is clear.

T R A D I T I O N S

It is narrated in *Tafsīru 'l-burhān* under the Divine words: *and for their having uttered against Maryam a grivious calumny,* from Ibn Bābawayh through his chain from ʻAlqamah that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, *inter alia,* in a *ḥadīth* : "Did not they ascribe to Maryam bint ʻImrān that she was pregnanted by a carpenter named Yūsuf?"

al-Qummī writes under the words of Allāh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death.* "Narrated to me my father, from al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad, from Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd al-Minqarī, from Abū Ḥamzah, from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab that he said, 'al-Ḥajjāj said to me, "O Shahr! one verse of the Book of Allāh has fatigued me." I said, "O Amīr! which verse is iṭ" He said, "The verse: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death.* By Allāh! certainly I sentence a Jew or a Christian and he is beheaded. And I stare at him but I don't see him moving his lips until he dies." I said, "May Allāh ameliorates the Amīr! This verse doesn't mean what you have interpretated." He said, "How is iṭ" I said, "Surely ʻĪsā will come down to this world before the Day of Resurrection. Then no follower of any religion, Jew or non-Jew, will remain but he would believe in him before his death and he will pray behind al-Mahdī." He said, "Woe unto thee! From where did you get it, and whence have

you brough iṭ" I said, "Narrated it to me Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭãlib (a.s.)." He said, "By Allãh! you have brought it from a pristine spring."'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

as-Suyūṭī writes: Ibnu ’l-Mundhir has narrated from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab that he said, "al-Ḥajjãj said to me, 'O Shahr! There is a verse in the Book of Allãh that whenever I read it, something happens against it in my mind. Allãh has said: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death;* and prisoners are brought before me and I kill them but I do no hear them saying anything.' I said to him, 'This has not been explained to you in a correct way. When a Christian dies, the angels hit from the front and from behind and say: "O wicked! The Messiah about whom you believed that he was god or son of god or one of the three persons is (in fact) servant of Allãh, His Spirit and His Word." So, he believes when his belief would not benefit him at all. And when a Jew dies, the angels hit him from the front and from behind and say: "O wicked! The Messiah whom you thought that you had killed him is (in fact) the servant of Allãh and His Spirit." So, he believes in ʻĪsã when that belief would not benefit him at all. At the time of coming down of ʻĪsã, the living People of the Book will believe in him as their dead ones had believed.' He said, 'From where have you taken iṭ' I said, 'From Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī.' He said, 'Surely you have taken it from its mine.'" Then Shahr said, "By Allãh! No one had narrated it to me except Umm Salamah; but I liked to irritate him." (*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has also narrated it in abbreviated form from ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibnu ’l-Munthir, from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab, from Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭãlib (and that is Ibnu 'l-Ḥanafiyyah). Apparently, Shahr ibn Ḥawshab had narrated from Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī but the later narrators differed in identification whether it was Ibnu 'l-Ḥanafiyyah or al-Bãqir (a.s.). However, as you see the tradition supports the explanation we gave earlier for this verse.

as-Suyūṭṭī says: Aḥmad, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim and al-Bayhaqī (in *al-Asmã’ wa 'ṣ-ṣifãt*) have narrated that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, "How will your condition be when the Son of Maryam will descend among you and your Imãm will be from among you?" (*ibid.*)

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said: The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said, "It is not far that will

descend among you the son of Maryam, a just ruler; he will kill Dajjãl and the pig, and will break the cross, and will remove the *jizyah* and will take over the property and there will be one *sajdah* for Allãh, the Lord of the worlds. Read if you want: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death,* before the death of ‘Īsã son of Maryam." (Abū Hurayrah repeated this phrase three times) (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are nearly *mutawãtir* traditions describing descension of ‘Īsã (a.s.) at the time of the appearance of al-Mahdī (a.s.) from the Sunnī chains of narrators and likewise, from the Shī‘ī chains from the Prophet and the Imãms of the *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.).

al-Ḥãrith ibn Mughīrah narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he* (‘Īsã) *shall be a witness over them* that he said, "It means the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: Its apparent meaning goes against the apparent context of the verses which deal with the affairs of ‘Īsã (a.s.). Yet, it is possible to justify it on the principle of the flow of the Qur’ãn. Then the meaning will be as follows: When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was sent and he brought a Book and a *sharī‘ah* which abrogated the *sharī‘ah* of `Isã (a.s.), then it was incumbent on all the People of the Book to believe in him, and the belief in Muḥammad included the belief in ‘Īsã and other preceding prophets. Now, if a man of the Book comes to realize at the time of his death after the advent of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) that ‘Īsã (a.s.) was true messenger then that realization will come together with the realization of the veracity of Muḥammad's messengership. In this way, a man of the Book would only be counted as believing in ‘Īsã (a.s.) if he believed in Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) in the first place and in ‘Īsã (a.s.) as a secondary matter. It is Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), after the advent of Islam, in whom every man of the Book should believe in reality and it is he who will be a witness over them on the Day of Resurrection although, ‘Īsã (a.s.)'s position is similar to this and there is no contradiction in both beliefs; and the following tradition somewhat shows the same meaning.

Ibn Sinãn narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) concerning the words of Allãh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, he* (‘Īsã) *shall be a witness over them,* that he said, "The

belief of the People of the Book will be for Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)." (*ibid.*)

Jãbir narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said concerning the same verse, "There is no one from all the religions but, when dying, he certainly sees the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the Commander of the Believers (a.s.), be he from the ancient ones or the later (people)." (*ibid.*)

The author says: Obviously, the tradition is based on the flow of the Qur'ãn. Apart from that, the tradition does not say clearly that what the Imãm (a.s.) had mentioned was as an exegesis of the verse; there is a possibility that it was a separate matter which the Imãm described when speaking on this verse. We may find such examples in the traditions.

al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar said, "I asked Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: *And there is not one of the People of the Book but he must certainly believe in him before his death.* The Imãm (a.s.) said, 'This verse was revealed especially about us. No one from the progeny of Fãṭimah dies and departs from this world until he acknowledges the Imãm and his Imãmate; as the sons of Ya'qūb acknowledged (the superiority of) Yūsuf when they said: *"By Allãh! Allãh has certainly chosen you over us."* [12:91].'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: The tradition is a solitary one and it is *mursal.* There are other traditions of the same meaning which have been narrated under the words of Allãh: *Then We made inheritors of the Book those whom We chose from among Our servants; and of them is he who causes himself to suffer a loss, and of them is he who follows the middle course, and of them is he who is the foremost in goodness by Allãh's permission: This is that which is the greatest excellence* (35:32); and we shall write there on this topic in detail, God willing.

Zurãrah and Ḥumrãn have narrated from Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that they said: *"Surely We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him.* Thus every revelation was gathered for him (Muḥammad, s.a.w.a.)." (*ibid.*)

The author says: Apparently, it means that the revelation sent to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was not unfamiliar to them which would have caused deviation from the path and difference in the prophetic call. It doesn't mean that every revelation sent to every prophet with all its peculiarities was sent to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.),

because such a notion has no meaning. Nor does it mean that the revelation sent to him is so comprehensive that all previous *sharī'ah*s are included in it, because the topic of the verse is unrelated to this them. The following tradition supports the meaning given by us.

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chains from Muḥammad ibn Sãlim that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said, "Allãh said to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.): *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him;* and every prophet was ordered (to follow) the way and (the good) custom." (*al-Kãfī*)

Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumālī narrates from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said, "And there were between Adam and Nūḥ prophets unknown and manifest and for this reason, they were not mentioned in the Qur'ãn, they were not named as the manifest prophets have been named and this is the meaning of the words of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *And messengers We have mentioned unto you, and Allãh spoke to Mūsã; directly discoursing* [4:164]. It means that I have not named the hidden prophets as I have named the manifest ones." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: This tradition has been narrated in *al-Kãfī* from 'Alī ibn Ibrãhīm, from his father, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl, from Abū Ḥamzah, from Abū Ja'far (a.s.); and that tradition says: "There were among the prophets who remained concealed and that is why they were not mentioned in the Qur'ãn, they were not named as were named the manifest prophets; and this is the word of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *And messengers We have* (already) *mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you.*" It means that I have not named the hidden prophets as I have named the manifest ones. In any case, the tradition means to say that Allãh did not mention the stories or the names of those prophets who had remained unknown, while He has mentioned the stories of some of the well-known prophets and named some of them. The words "It means that I have not named the hidden prophets . . . " could possibly be from the narrators.

Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumālī says, "I heard Abū Ja'far (a.s.) saying: *'But Allãh bears witness by what He has revealed to you* about 'Alī, *that He has revealed it with His knowledge; and the angels bear witness* (also)*; and sufficient is Allãh for a witness.*'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: al-Qummī has narrated this theme in his *at-Tafsīr* through his chain of narrators from Abū Baṣīr, from Abū

‘Abdillãh (a.s.). It is based on the flow of the Qur’ãn and applies the verse on a proper example; because there are in the Qur’ãn verses which were revealed concerning the *wilãyah* of ‘Alī (a.s.). It doesn’t want to say that there was alteration in the Qur’ãn; nor can it be taken to be a particular recital of this verse by the Imãm (a.s.).

Likewise, it has been narrated in *al-Kãfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyãshī from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) and in *at-Tafsīr* of al-Qummī from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that they recited: *"Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve and do injustice* to the progeny of Muḥammad (usurping) their right, *Allãh is not going to forgive them;* (4:168)." Also it has been narrated in *Majma‘u 'l-bayãn* from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allãh: *"Surely, the Messenger* (Muḥammad) *has come to you with truth,* that is, with the *wilãyah* of him whose *wilãyah* Allãh has ordered. All these traditions are to be interpreted like the previous one.

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يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدۡ جَآءَكُمُ
ٱلرَّسُولُ بِٱلۡحَقِّ مِن رَّبِّكُمۡ فَـَٔامِنُواْ خَيۡرٗا لَّكُمۡۚ وَإِن تَكۡفُرُواْ
فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمٗا ١٧٠
يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغۡلُواْ فِي دِينِكُمۡ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ
عَلَى ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلۡحَقَّۚ إِنَّمَا ٱلۡمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ رَسُولُ
ٱللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُۥٓ أَلۡقَىٰهَآ إِلَىٰ مَرۡيَمَ وَرُوحٞ مِّنۡهُۖ فَـَٔامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ
وَرُسُلِهِۦۖ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ ثَلَٰثَةٌۚ ٱنتَهُواْ خَيۡرٗا لَّكُمۡۚ إِنَّمَا ٱللَّهُ إِلَٰهٞ
وَٰحِدٞۖ سُبۡحَانَهُۥٓ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٞۘ لَّهُۥ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ
وَمَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ وَكِيلٗا ١٧١ لَّن يَسۡتَنكِفَ
ٱلۡمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبۡدٗا لِّلَّهِ وَلَا ٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ ٱلۡمُقَرَّبُونَۚ
وَمَن يَسۡتَنكِفۡ عَنۡ عِبَادَتِهِۦ وَيَسۡتَكۡبِرۡ فَسَيَحۡشُرُهُمۡ
إِلَيۡهِ جَمِيعٗا ١٧٢ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ
فَيُوَفِّيهِمۡ أُجُورَهُمۡ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضۡلِهِۦۖ وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ

ٱسْتَنكَفُوا۟ وَٱسْتَكْبَرُوا۟ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٧٢﴾ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِۦ ۖ وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ٱسْتَنكَفُوا۟ وَٱسْتَكْبَرُوا۟ فَيُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۙ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٧٣﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُم بُرْهَٰنٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱعْتَصَمُوا۟ بِهِۦ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِى رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ صِرَٰطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾

O people! Surely the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, therefore believe, (it shall be) *good for you; and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and the earth is Allãh's; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise* (170). *O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion and do not speak about Allãh except the truth; the Messiah, ʻĪsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh and His Word which He conveyed to Maryam and a spirit from Him; believe therefore in Allãh and His messengers, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allãh is only one God: far be it from His glory that He should have a son; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; and Allãh is sufficient for a Protector* (171). *The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allãh, nor do the angels who are near to Him, and whoever disdains His worship and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself* (172). *Then as for those who believe and do good, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace; and as for those who disdain and are proud, He will chastise them with a painful chastisement. And they shall not find for themselves besides Allãh a guardian or a helper* (173). *O people! Surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light* (174). *Then as for those who believe in Allãh and hold fast by Him, He will cause them to enter into His mercy and grace and guide them to Himself on a straight path* (175).

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C O M M E N T A R Y

In previous section Allãh had rebutted their demand to His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) that he should bring to them a book from the heaven; and clearly stated that the Messenger has come with truth from his Lord, and the Book which he has brought from Him was a convincing proof in which there was no doubt. Consequently, it was perfectly right to call in this section all the people to believe in the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the Book brought by him.

It was also described that all His messengers and prophets, including ʻĪsã (a.s.), were sent on one pattern, with similar framework and comparable religion; and that was the pattern of revelation from Allãh. It was but natural that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) should call the Christians (being the People of the Book and revelation) not to exceed the limit in their religion; rather they should join hands with all other monotheist believers by believing about ʻĪsã (a.s.) what they and others do believe about other prophets: that they were the servants of Allãh and messengers to His creation.

Allãh has begun this section of His speech by calling all the people to believe in His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) because the previous section had clearly described the truth of his prophethood when He has said: *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him . . .*

Then He calls them not to exceed the limit concerning ʻĪsã (a.s.) because ʻĪsã's status has been described in the above verses.

Then He calls them to follow His Book, that is the Honoured Qur'ãn, because it was described clearly in the last part of the previous section: *But Allãh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His knowledge . . .*

QUR'ÃN: ***O people! Surely the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, therefore believe,*** **(it shall be)** ***good for you*** **:** It is addressed to all the people, be they the People of the Book, or others, and it branches out from the previous speech addressed to the People of the Book. Now, the talk is addressed to the whole mankind because the Prophet's messengership was all-encompassing and the belief in the Messenger was incumbent for all.

The phrase, *khayran lakum* (خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ = translated here as: [it shall be] good for you) is grammatically the circumstantial clause of the

verb 'believe'. It is a concomitant condition and would literally means: believe as it is inseparable virtue of belief that it is good for you.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if you disbelieve, then surely whatever is in the heavens and the earth is Allãh's; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise*** **:** If you disbelieve, that disbelief will not increase anything to you nor decrease anything from Allãh. Everything that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allãh. It is impossible for anyone to take away anything from Allãh because it exclusively belongs to Him. All that is in the heavens and the earth is by nature a property of Allãh who has no partner or colleague. To say that a thing exists, is exactly the same as saying that it belongs to Allãh. How can a thing be removed from Allãh's Ownership as long as it existș

This verse is a comprehensive and all-encompassing speech; the deeper you contemplate it, the finer the points come before your eyes; and a comprehensive and wonderous vists appears before you. When you will look at the comprehensive Ownership of Allãh which covers the things and their effects, you will find out wonderful connotations of belief and disbelief, obedience and disobedience. It will do you good to ponder on it more and more.

QUR'ÃN: ***O People of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion and do not speak about Allãh except the truth; . . .*** **:** Apparently, it is addressed to the Christians because it describes the affairs of the Messiah (a.s.). They have been addressed with the words "People of the Book" which is a common adjective covering Jews and Christians both. But it was preferred because their being among the People of Book demands that they should not exceed the limit of what Allãh has revealed and explained in His Books, and one of the things described therein is that they should not speak about Allãh except the truth.

Also, it could be an address to both the Jews and the Christians because the Jews too were not different from the Christians in their exceeding in religion and speaking about Allãh other than truth , as Allãh has said: *And the Jews say: "`Uzayr is the son of Allãh!"* (9:30). Also, He says: *They have taken their scholars and their monks for Lords besides Allãh* (9:31); *Say: "O People of the Book! come to a word, common between us and you . . . and* (that) *some of us shall not take others for Lords besides Allãh* (3:64).

In view of this interpretation, the words: *the Messiah, 'Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messsenger of Allãh . . .* narrows the talk after its

generality, by addressing a particular group of the audience regarding its particular straying. However, this view does not correspond with the context: The words, "the Messiah, ‘Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh . . . ", give apparently the reason for the preceding clause, "do not exceed the limits in your religion". [As the two sentences are connected together, it follows that the verse is addressed to the Christians only.] The title, "the Messiah", has been further explained with the words, "‘Īsã son of Maryam"; this explicit mention of his and his mother's names prevents the word, Messiah, to be explained or applied to some other person. Also, it proves that he was a human being, created, like any human being born of his mother. *and His Word which He conveyed to Maryam:* it explains the meaning of the 'word'; he was the word 'Be', which was conveyed to Maryam. His creation had not taken place through normal causes like marriage and father. Allãh says: *Allãh creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it: "B" and it is* (3:47). In fact, everything is the word of Allãh; however, other things come into being through the agency of normal cause, while ‘Īsã (a.s.) was born without some of the normal causes. That is why he was called "the Word". *and a spirit from Him:* The spirit is from the command. Allãh says: *Say: "The soul is from the command of my Lord . . . "* (17:85); as ‘Īsã (a.s.) was the creative word, "Be" and it is a command, therefore, he was called "the spirit". We have discussed this verse in detail in the third volume of this book.[28]

QUR’ÃN: ***believe therefore in Allãh and His messengers, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allãh is only one God*** **:** It is based on the beginning clauses and springs from the words: *the Messiah, ‘Īsã son of Maryam is only a Messenger of Allãh.* In this situation, you are obligated to believe in the prescribed way, that is, belief in Allãh and His Lordship and His messengers (including ‘Īsã [a.s.]) and their prophethood. "and say not, Three." Desist from the belief in trinity. This desistance or this belief in Allãh and His messengers and rejection of trinity is good for you. "Three" refers to the three persons of trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. We have discussed it in detail in the third chapter, "The Family of ‘Imrãn".

QUR’ÃN: ***far be it from His glory that He should have a son; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; . . .*** :

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[28] *al-Mīzãn,* (Eng.), vol.6, p.12. (*tr.*)

Subḥãna (سُبْحَانَ = translated here as "far be it from His glory"). Grammatically, it is a cognate accusative for emphasis, with its verb, *usabbiḥu* (اُسَبِّحُ = I glorify) omitted but understood; "that He should have a son" is attached to that accusative case. The meaning is: I glorify Him to the utmost degree that He should have a son. This is a paranthetical clause for acknowledging the glory of Allãh. "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His". It could be circumstantial clause or an independent sentence. Anyhow, it gives the proof why Allãh has no son. A son resembles the father in the origin of his person and existence and development of his body. When all that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allãh in its person and effects, and when He manages everything alone, then nothing in the universe can resemble Him. Consequently, nothing can be called "His offspring".

The connotation is that no existing thing can be called Allãh's son; as such, the words, "whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth", are an extended metaphor to show that everything other than Allãh belongs to Him. (The heavens and the earth themselves are included in this argument while they are not <u>in</u> the heavens or <u>in</u> the earth.

This verse contains imperative and prohibitive orders and gives a comprehesive guidance to their good in this world and the hereafter. That is why the speech ends with the words: *and Allãh is sufficient for a Protector.* He is your guardian, manages your affairs, guides you to what is good for you and calls you to the straight path.

QUR'ÃN: ***The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allãh, nor do the angels who are near to Him*** **:** It is another argument for refutation of divinity of Messiah (a.s.), no matter whether he is supposed to be son of God or one of the three persons of God. The Messiah is a servant of Allãh and he by no means disdains worshipping Allãh; even the Christians do not deny it as the Gospels found with them explicitly say that he was worshipping Allãh; and it is unimaginable that a son who is similar to his father in origin and make-up would worship him; nor that he would worship his own self; nor for one of the three persons of trinity to worship the other two when he is equal in rank to them. We have already explained it while describing the affairs of ʻĪsã (a.s.) in the third chapter, "The Family of ʻImrãn".

The words, "nor do the angels who are near (to Him)", extend the talk to the angels because the argument exactly applies to them

too, as the polytheists of Arabia used to say that they were the daughters of Allāh. The sentence is a digression from the main topic.

The verse refers to ʻĪsā (a.s.) as the Messiah and describes the angels as the near ones; and in this way alludes to the reason why they would not disdain Allāh's worship. How can ʻĪsā disdain the worship of Allāh when he is the Messiah; anointed and blessed; or the angels when they are near to Allāḥ Had there been any possibility of their disdaining Allāh's worship, Allāh would not have blessed ʻĪsā nor brought the angels nearer. By the way, Allāh has depicted Messiah too as the one near to Allāh, as He says: *. . . worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near* (to Allāh), (3:45).

QUR'ĀN: ***and whoever disdains His worship and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself. . . .*** **:** It points to the condition of the Messiah and the angels, and gives the reason why they wouldn't disdain His worship. How can they do so when they know that those who disdain His worship and are proud – be they human beings, jinn or angels – will be gathered all together to Him and will be requitted according to their deedṣ The Messiah and the angels believe in Him and fear Him and know these realities.

We have said that the words, "and whoever disdains His worship and is proud" show that the Messiah and the near angels are fully aware that the disdainers shall be gathered to Him all together. This idea is depicted by the word, "and is proud". Mere disdaining, if it is not the result of pride, does not attract Divine wrath, as happens in those who are ignorant or weak; but if the Messiah and the angels were to disdain His worship it would only be a result of pride because they know the status of their Lord. The meaning of the verse would be that they are well aware that "whoever disdains His worship and is proud . . ."

The words, "will gather them all together" encompass good servants as well as bad ones. This paves the way for the categorization coming in the next verse: *Then as for those who believe and do good, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace; and as for those who disdain and are proud, He will chastise them with a painful chastisement.*

QUR'ĀN: ***And they shall not find for themselves besides Allāh a guardian or a helper*** **:** The negation of guardian or helper stands face to face with their belief in Divinity of Messiah and the angels.

QUR'ÃN: ***O people! Surely there has come to you manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you clear light*** **:** ar-Rãghib has said: "*al-Burhãn* (اَلبُرْهَان = exposition of argument). It is on the paradigm of *fu'lãn* [فُعْلَان] like *ar-rujḥãn* [اَلرُّجْحَان]. Some people say that it is a verbal noun of *baraha, yabrahu* [بَرَهَ، يَبْرَهُ = it became white])." In any case, it is a verbal noun. Sometimes, it is used in the meaning of active participle, e.g., when it is used for the argument and proof itself.

The light refers to the Qur'ãn as the word "sent down to you" shows. Possibly, the "manifest proof" also means the same. Thus, the two sentences do strengthen each other.

Another possibility: The light may mean the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). This idea is strengthened when we see that the verse comes in the wake of the verses showing the truthfulness of the Prophet in his prophethood and the revelation of the Qur'ãn from Allãh; and then realize that the verse has branched from the previous verses. Also, the words of Allãh in the coming verse: *and hold fast by Him,* support this view, as we have explained in the chapter of "The Family of 'Imrãn" vr.101 (*And whoever holds fast to Allãh, he indeed is guided to the straight path*) that holding fast to Allãh means accepting His Book and following His Messenger.

QUR'ÃN: ***Then as for those who believe in Allãh and hold fast by Him, He will cause them to enter into His mercy and grace and guide them to Himself on a straight path*** **:** It describes the reward of those who follow the proof of their Lord and the light which has descended from Him. The verse is drawn from the preceding verse which describes the reward of those who believe and do good: *Then as for those who believe and do good, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace; . . .* (3:57). Perhaps, that is why this verse does not mention the recompense of those who shrink from following the proof and the light. As the same punishment as mentioned in the previous verse applies in this case too, there was no need to repeat it again; this verse has shown that the reward of the followers here is the same as that given to the followers in the preceding verse; and there are only two groups: the followers and the transgressors.

Accordingly, the clause in this verse, "He will cause them to enter into His mercy", goes parallel to: *He will pay them fully their rewards,* and it is the garden. And the word 'grace' in this verse is

parallel to the clause in that verse: *and give them more out of His grace*. The ending clause, "and guide them to Himself on a straight path" gives the result of holding fast to Allāh (mentioned in this verse) as Allāh says: *And whoever holds fast to Allāh, he indeed is guided to the straight path* (3:101).

* * * * *

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي ٱلْكَلَٰلَةِ ۚ إِنِ ٱمْرُؤٌا۟ هَلَكَ
لَيْسَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٌ وَلَهُۥٓ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ ۚ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَآ
إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهَا وَلَدٌ ۚ فَإِن كَانَتَا ٱثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا ٱلثُّلُثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ ۚ
وَإِن كَانُوٓا۟ إِخْوَةً رِّجَالًا وَنِسَآءً فَلِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ ٱلْأُنثَيَيْنِ ۗ
يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَن تَضِلُّوا۟ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌۢ ﴿١٧٦﴾

decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring; if a man dies (and) *he has no child and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves, and he shall be her heir if she has no child; but if there be two* (sisters), *they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves; and if there are brothers* (and sisters)*, men and women, then the male shall have the like of the portion of two females; Allãh makes clear to you, lest you err; and Allãh knows all things"* (176).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verse explains the prescribed shares of consanguine or agnate relatives – other than the parents and the children as the explanatory traditions make clear. The shares of relatives – other than

the parents and the children – described in the beginning of the chapter, were related to the uterine relatives as the prophetic traditions had explained. It may also be understood from the fact that the shares prescribed here are greater than those described in the beginning of the chapter. It is inferred from the verses that the males' share is greater than that of females.

QUR'ĀN: ***They ask you for a decisionof the law. Say: "Allāh gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring; if a man dies*** **(and)** ***he has no child*** **:** In previous verses of this chapter, we have given the meaning of *al-istiftā'* (اَلاِسْتِفْتَاءُ = seeking decision), *al-iftā'* (اَلاِفْتَاءُ = giving decision) and *al-kalālah* (اَلْكَلَاله = a relative other than the parents and children).

"he has no child": It encompasses male and female children as is understood when the word, child, is used without any restriction. aṭ-Ṭabrisī has said in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* : "It means he has neither child nor parent; according to concensus, parent is omitted but understood in this verse." Moreover, if either parent were present, the verse would not have neglected prescribing his/her share. Therefore, it is understood that they are not present.

QUR'ĀN: ***and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves and he shall be her heir if she has no child; . . .*** **:** It describes the share of the sister from her brother and share of the brother from his sister. It also implies the share of the sister from her sister and share of the brother from his brother; if there were difference in the shares of the latter two, the verse would have mentioned it clearly. "he shall be her heir", it means that if there is a brother in place of the sister, he will take the whole inheritance. *but if there be two* (sisters)*, they shall have two-thirds of what he leaves; and if there are brothers* (and sisters)*, men and women, then the male shall have the like of the portion of two females*, that is, the share of two sisters. The share of the brothers and sisters will remain the same whether the deceased was male or female.

The verse has explicitly explained the shares of one sister, one brother, two sisters and a mixed group of brothers and sisters. Other prescribed shares may be understood from the above. For example: two brothers will inherit the whole property dividing it half and half; it is known from the share of one brother who takes the whole property; likewise, if there is a brother and a sister, they will be governed by the clause, "and if there are brothers (and sisters), men and women, then

the male shall have the like of the portions of two females". Moreover, the traditions have clearly explained it.

The above shares will apply when there are only agnate or only consanguine relatives. However, if both types of relatives gather together, for example: a consanguine sister with an agnate sister, the agnate will get nothing, as we have discussed it under the verses in the beginning of the chapter.

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh makes clear to you, lest you err; . . .*** **:** The literal translationof the end clause will be: that you err; but it implies "lest you err"; such usage is found in every language. 'Amr ibn Kulthūm has said, "We made haste in your entertainment that you abuse us", that is, lest you abuse us.

T R A D I T I O N S

Jãbir ibn 'Abdillãh al-Anṣãrī said, "I was sick and I had nine – or seven – sisters. The Prophet came to me and blowed at my face and I became conscious. Then I said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! should not I bequeath two-third to my sisterṣ' He said, 'Good." I said, 'A part of iṭ' He said, 'Good.' Then he went out and left me. Again he returned to me and said, 'O Jãbir! I do not see you dying from this illness of yours and surely Allãh has sent down regarding the share of your sisters and has prescribed for them two-third.'" They said, "Jãbir used to say, 'This verse was revealed for me.'" (*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: A tradition is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* which is near to this in meaning.

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasã'ī, Ibn Ḍarīs, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqī (in his *ad-Dalãil*) have narrated from al-Barã' that he said, "The last complete *sūrah* to be revealed is 'Barã'ah' [or 'at-Tawbah', ch.9] and the last verse to be revealed is the end of the chapter, 'The Women': *They ask you for a decision of the law, Say: 'Allãh gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither parents nor offspring . . .'"* . (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: The same book narrates various traditions that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and the companions used to call it 'the verse of the summer'. aṭ-Ṭabrisī says in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* : "It was because Allãh had revealed two verses about *al-kalãlah;* one in

the winter; and it is the one which is placed in the beginning of this chapter and the other in the summer, and it is this verse."

Abu 'sh-Shaykh has narrated in *al-Farãiḍ* from al-Barã' that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was asked (the meaning of) *al-kalãlah*. He said, '(Relatives) other than the child and parent.'" (*ibid.*)

al-Qummī says, "Narrated to me my father from Ibn Abī ʻUmayr from Ibn Udhaynah from Bukayr from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, 'When a man dies and he has a sister, she will get half of what he has left in inheritance by virtue of this verse (as will take a daughter if she is alone) and the remaining half will be returned to her by virtue of kinship when the deceased doesn't have any heir nearer than her. If there is a brother in place ofthe sister, he will take the whole inheritance by authority of the words of Allãh: *and he shall be her heir if she has no child*. If there are two sisters, they will take two-third by virtue of this verse and the remaining one-third will be theirs by kinship. If there are brothers and sisters (men and women) the males shall have the lie of the portion of two females. All this is when the deceased has no child or parent or wife.'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: al-`Ayyãshī has narrated in his *Tafsīr* the last part of this tradition in several *aḥãdīth* from Abū Jaʻfar and Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.).

There is a tradition narrated from Bukayr that he said, "A man came to Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) and asked him about a woman who (died and) left a husband and uterine brothers and an agnate sister. He said, 'The husband will have a half, three [out of six] portions and the uterine brothers one-third, two portions, and agnate sister one portion.' The man said, 'O Abū Jaʻfar! the computation of Zayd and Ibn Masʻūd and the system of inheritance of the general Muslims and the *qãḍī*s is different from it. They say the consanguine sister will take three portions from six and the six portions will change to eight.' Abū Jaʻfar said, 'Why do they say thiṣ' He said, 'Because Allãh has said: *he has no child and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves*.' Then Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, 'Then why did you reduce (the share of) the brother if you are arguing through Allãh's commandmenṭ Because Allãh has prescribed for her the half and He has prescribed for the brother the whole, and the whole is bigger than the half. He [Allãh] has said: *she shall have half,* as He has said about the brother: *he shall be her heir,* that is, the whole estate: *if she has no child;* so sometimes

in your computations you do not give anything to him whom Allãh has given the whole and you give her whom Allãh has prescribed the half, the whole estate!'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

ʻAbdu 'r-Razzãq, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, al-Ḥãkim and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn ʻAbbãs that he was asked about a man who died leaving his daughter and a consanguine sister. He said, "The daughter will have the half and the sister gets nothing and the residue is for his agnates (paternal relations)." He was told, "Verily ʻUmar had prescribed the (remaining) half for the sister." Ibn ʻAbbãs said, "Are you more knoledgeable or Allãḥ Allãh says: *If a man dies* (and) *he has no child and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he leaves,* but you people say she will have a half even if he has a child!" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are other traditions on the above themes.

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Chapter Five

al-Mã'idah
(The Table)
120 verses - Medina
vrs.1–3

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَوْفُوا۟ بِٱلْعُقُودِ ۚ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُم بَهِيمَةُ
ٱلْأَنْعَٰمِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّى ٱلصَّيْدِ وَأَنتُمْ حُرُمٌ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تُحِلُّوا۟ شَعَٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ
وَلَا ٱلشَّهْرَ ٱلْحَرَامَ وَلَا ٱلْهَدْىَ وَلَا ٱلْقَلَٰٓئِدَ وَلَآٰ ءَآمِّينَ ٱلْبَيْتَ
ٱلْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَٰنًا ۚ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَٱصْطَادُوا۟ ۚ
وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَـَٔانُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ
ٱلْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا۟ ۘ وَتَعَاوَنُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلْبِرِّ وَٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا۟
عَلَى ٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلْعُدْوَٰنِ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾
حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْمَيْتَةُ وَٱلدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ ٱلْخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ
بِهِۦ وَٱلْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَٱلْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَٱلْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَٱلنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَآ أَكَلَ
ٱلسَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى ٱلنُّصُبِ وَأَن تَسْتَقْسِمُوا۟
بِٱلْأَزْلَٰمِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ۗ ٱلْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِن دِينِكُمْ

فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ۚ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي
مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ ۙ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

In the Name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

O you who believe! fulfil the covenants. The cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you except that which is recited to you, not violating the prohibition against game when you are under pilgrimage restrictions; surely Allãh orders what He desires (1). *O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allãh nor the sacred month, nor the offering, nor the symbolic garlands, nor those going to the Sacred House seeking the grace and pleasure from their Lord. And when you are free from* (the restrictions of) *the pilgrimage, then* (you may) *hunt; and let not hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits. And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and fear Allãh; surely Allãh is severe in punishment* (2). *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allãh has been invoked, and the strangled* (animal) *and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter and what is sacrificed on stones set up* (for idols) *and that you divide by arrows; that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion; but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (3).

* * * * *

GENERAL COMMENT

If we meditate on the beginning and end of this chapter and ponder on the general verses which have been revealed in it and look at the admonitions and the stories which it contains, we will find that the general theme of the chapter is to call the people to fulfil the covenants and to uphold the valid agreements whatever they might be. It warns against breach of agreement and cautions those who take the covenants lightly. It shows that Allãh has made it His habit to deal with mercy and lighten the burden of those who guard themselves against evil and belief, and then again guard themselves against evil and do good work. On the contrary, He deals harshly with those who commit outrage, exceed the limit and overstep the bounds by throwing away the collar of obedience and going out of the boundary of covenants which have been made in the religion.

That is why you will see that the chapter contains many laws concerning legal punishment and retribution; there are stories of the dinner table, of questioning of the Messiah and of the incident of the two sons of Adam; it also points to a lot of injustices of the Israelites and how they broke the covenants which were taken from them; also there are many verses in which Allãh describes His Grace on the people in various matters like perfecting the religion, completing His favour, making the good things lawful to man and legislating the ways of purification without putting the people into any difficulty and hardship.

This was in confirmity with the time when the chapter was revealed. All reporters agree that it was the last detailed chapter which was revealed to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) nearing the end of his life. It has come in both sects' traditions that it is the abrogating chapter, not the abrogated; and it was proper in this background to emphasize the admonition to fulfil and safeguard the agreements which Allãh has taken from His servants, and to remain firm on it.

C O M M E N T A R Y

QUR'ÃN: *O you who believe! fulfil the covenants* : *al-'Uqūd* (اَلْعُقُودْ) is plural of *al-'aqd* (اَلْعَقْدْ), and it means to tie two things together in such a way that it becomes very difficult to separate one from the other. For example, tying a rope or thread with a similar rope or

thread. Obviously, both adhere to each other and remain tied. First, this word was used for such phenomenon which could be perceived by the senses; then it was used metaphorically for abstract things like the offer and acceptance in trade or employment, etc. It covers all the covenants and agreements. All these things are called '*al-'aqd'* because the effect of the 'tying' is present there, that is, adherence to each other.

al-'Aqd, that is covenant, is used for all the religious covenants which Allãh has taken from His servants, like monotheism and all the fundamental cognition and perception, the acts of worship and the laws which were laid down anew or were allowed to continue from previous times, including the proposal and acceptance in trade, etc. The verse contains the word *al-'uqūd* which is plural of *al-'aqd* having *al* (ال) which signifies comprehensiveness; therefore, this word in this verse encompasses all which could be called *'aqd* (عَقْد = tie, covenant).

The above explanation shows the weakness of what various exegetes have written in its interpretation. Some have said that the covenants refers to those agreements or contracts which people make one with another, like trade deal, marriage and promise or which man binds himself with like oath.

Likewise, some others have said that it refers to those agreements which the people of the time of ignorance had contracted with one another that they will help and support each other against those who would proceed against them with evil intention or transgress against them. It means the pact or treaty which was common in those days.

Similarly, some others have said that it refers to the covenants taken from the People of the Book that they would follow what was written in the Torah and the Gospel. All these interpretations are without any support from the wording of the verse. Moreover, as we have said that a plural joined with '*al'* and the common usage of the word *al-'aqd* for every type of covenant, renders all such expalantions inappropriate. Therefore, the word should be taken in its comprehensive and general meaning.

A DISCOURSE ON THE MEANING OF *AL-'AQD*

The Qur'ãn manifestly orders man to honour the covenants as is clear from the Divine words, "fulfil the covenants". Apparently, the

order is general and covers all affairs which could be called a covenant, fulfilling which is necessary. *al-'Aqd* is every deed or word which is analogous to the literal tying – a sort of connecting one thing with another in such a way that they become inseparable; the tie of trade deal which attaches the merchandise to the buyer giving it into his ownership with full authority to do with it whatever he likes, and the seller after that deal loses the right of ownership and management of the merchandise; or like the *'aqd* of marriage which binds the woman with the man giving him the right to establish sexual relations with her and the woman has no right to allow another man to touch her for this purpose; or like an agreement in which one man binds himself to do for the other party the work agreed upon and he has no right to dishonour that agreement.

The Qur'ãn has emphatically exhorted the people to fulfil the covenant and agreement (with all its meanings and applications), and has put utmost emphasis on it. It has condemned those who break the agreements and threatened them very severely; it has praised those who fulfil their covenants when they make it; there are a lot of verses of this connotation, which need not be quoted here.

The said verses have referred to the covenants without defining them in so many words; it shows that the meaning of covenant was understood by the people with their natural wisdom. It is so, because covenant and its fulfilment are the things which man cannot do without in his life; this essentiality of fulfilment of covenant effects individuals and societies both. If we ponder upon human beings' social life, we will find that all the privileges which we enjoy and all the rights which we take for granted are based on general social covenant and the resulting agreements which spring from it. All the duties towards the society which we feel ourselves bound to fulfil and all the rights which we think we have over the society are based on a practical covenant (even if we have not put it into words). If a man were to break an agreement which he had made with his own free will – merely because now he has power or authority or strength to break it – the first victim would be the social justice, while this justice is the first principle on which man relies for freeing himself from exploitation and servitude.

That is why Allãh has highly emphasized the importance of fulfilling the covenant. He says: *And fulfil the promise; verily promise shall be questioned about* (17:34). This verse covers individual agreements a man makes with another person (like most of the verses which praise fulfilling the agreement and condemn its breach) as well

as collective agreements like the ones made between two nations or two people; rather fulfilling inter-communal agreements is more important in the eyes of religion than the individual ones, because it has more effect in completing the justice; and the disadvantages of their breach will be more pronounced.

We find that the Divine Book forbids very clearly breaking a covenant even in such a place and in such circumstances where it would have been very easy to break it. Allāh says: (This is a) *renouncement by Allāh and His Messenger towards those of the idolators with whom you made an agreement. So move about in the land for four months and know that you cannot weaken Allāh and that Allāh will bring disgrace to the unbelievers. An announcement from Allāh and His Messenger to the people on the day of the great pilgrimage that Allāh and His Messenger are free from all responsibilities towards the idolators; therefore if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken Allāh; and announce painful punishment to those who disbelieve. Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not fauled you in anthing and and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term; surely Allāh loves those who are careful* (of their duty). *So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them* (9:1-5). The verses, as the context shows, were revealed after the conquest of Mecca when Allāh had humiliated the idolaters, destroyed their power and crushed their valour. These verses obliged the Muslims to cleanse the land which they had conquered from the impurity of polytheism, and encouraged them to spill the blood of the polytheists without any restriction or condition, except if they come into the fold of Islam. In spite of that, the same verses make exception for those polytheists with whom the Muslims had a valid agreement of non-aggression; the verses do not allow the Muslims to attack them even when they have weakened and lost their power, even when they have no way of defending or protecting themselves. All this was done to uphold the sanctity of the agreement and out of regard for piety.

Of course, if somebody breaks a covenant after its confirmation, he shall be requitted exactly as he had done. Allāh says: *How can there be an agreement for the idolaters with Allāh and with His Messenger; except those with whom you made an agreement at the Sacred Mosque? So long as they are true to you, be true to them; surely Allāh loves those who are careful* (of their duty) . . . *They do*

not pay regard to ties of relationship nor those of covenant in the case of a believer; and these are they who go beyond the limits. But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay zakãt *they are your brethren in faith; and We make the communications clear for a people who know. And if they break their oaths after their agreement and revile your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief – surely their oaths are nothing – so that they may desist* (9:7-12). Also He says: *. . . whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you; and fear Allãh . . .* (2:194); again He says: *. . . and let not hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits. And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and fear Allãh . . .* (5:2).

In short, Islam believes in sanctity of covenant and obliges man to fulfil it without reservation; it makes no difference whether the said man benefits from that covenant or is harmed by it once the pact has been made. After all, consideration of the social justice is more compulsory and obligatory than the consideration of a private or personal benefit. Of course, if one of the parties breaks his agreement, then the other party can break it to the same extent and act aggressively against him to the same degree. This principle liberates the society from servitude and exploitation; after all the main purpose of religionis to erase the arrogance of the powerful.

By my life! this is one of the lofty teachings brought by Islam for the gudiance of the people, that they should pay attention to the human nature and preserve the social justice on which the human society is based; and that they should remove the injustice of subjugation and exploitation. The Mighty Book has made it clear and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) proceeded on the same path throughout his noble life. The discourse is related to the Qur'ãn, otherwise, we would have written for you some of his stories. If you want to know in detail, you should study his biographies.

Compare how Islam had preserved the sanctity of covenant with the behaviour of civilized and less civilized nations nowadays – especially what we see and hear everyday concerning the dealings of the powerful nations with the weaker ones in their agreements and pacts, and how they fulfilthe agreements so long as it is beneficial to them or supports their national interests and break them unhesitatingly when it goes against their interest, offering for it lame excuses – then you will see the difference between the two systems and realize who pays regard to the truth and serves the reality.

That is more appropriate for the religion and this suits these people's selfish behaviour. We find two types of logic here: one says that the truth and reality must be preserved with all possible means as only in this way the society will prosper; and the other says that the national interest must be protected by any possible means even if it crushes the truth and reality. The first is the logic of religion; and the second, the logic of all other societies, be they barbaric or civilized, be they dictatorial, democratic or communist, etc.

You must have understood from the above that Islam in its determination concerning agreement and pact is not restricted to the legal agreements only; its decree encompasses all those things on which an edifice is built be it explicit or implicit; Islam admonishes the Muslims to pay full attention to it. There are some other points concerning this theme which you will come across as you read on, God willing.

QUR'ĀN: ***The cattle quadrupeds are made lawful to you except that which is recited to you*** **:** *al-Iḥlāl* (اَلْاِحْلَالُ = to make lawful); *al-bahīmah* (اَلْبَهِيْمَةُ = quadruped from terrestrial and marine animals), as has been explained in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*. Accordingly, the genitive construction, relating quadruped to the cattle, relates the species to its classes, as we say human species, animal genus. Some have said that *al-bahīmah* is the foetus of the cattle. In any case, the sentence; "the cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you", means that eating the meat of eight pairs[29] is made lawful to you. The words, "except that which is recited to you", point to the law described later: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself* . . .

QUR'ĀN: ***not violating the prohibition against game when you are under pilgrimage restrictions; . . .*****:** It is a circumstantial clause related to the second person pronoun in the word, "are made lawful for you", and it indicates that even this lawful category will become unlawful if it was hunted in the condition of *iḥrām;* for example, if one hunts wild deer, cow or zebra in that condition. Some people have said that the said circumstantial clause is related to the word 'fulfil'; others have said that it is related to the second person pronoun in the words: *except that which is recited to you. aṣ-Ṣayd* (اَلصَّيْدُ = to hunt) is a verbal noun used here in the meaning of passive participle, that is, hunted game; *al-ḥurum* (اَلْحُرُم) is plural of *al-ḥarām* (اَلْحَرَام) giving

[29] It refers to ch.6, vrs. 142-3. (*tr.*)

here the meaning of active participle, that is, he who puts himself under restriction of pilgrimage.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allãh nor the sacred month, nor the offering, nor the symbolic garlands, nor those going to the Sacred House seeking the grace and pleasure from their Lord*** **:** The believers are addressed again in this verse to indicate importance of maintaining the respect of the things sanctified by Allãh. It was explained earlier that *al-iḥlãl* means to make lawful; as this idea is closely connected to indifference towards respect or honour of the thing made lawful, therefore, it is metaphorically used here in the sense of violating. Its specific meaning will be decided in the contexts of the second construct of the genetive; the signs and symbols appointed by Allãh are violated if one does not pay respect to them or neglects them, a sacred month is violated if one begins fighting in it, and so on.

ash-Sha'ãir (اَلشَّعَائِر) is plural of *ash-sha'īrah* (اَلشَّعِيْرَة = sign). Probably here it refers to the guide posts of *ḥajj* and its rites. The sacred months are those lunar months in which fighting has been prohibited by Allãh; they are al-Muḥarram, Rajab, Dhi 'l-qi'dah and Dhi 'l-ḥijjah. *al-Hady* (اَلْهَدْى) refers to goat, sheep, cow and camels that are taken to the pilgrimage. *al-Qalãid* (اَلْقَلاَئِد) is plural of *al-qalãdah* (اَلْقَلاَدَة); it refers to the garland of shoes, etc. which is put in the neck of a sacrificial animal to show that it is meant for sacrifice, in order that nobody should appropriate it. *al-Ãmmīn* (اَلاٰمِّيْن) is plural of *al-ãmm* (اَلاٰمّ) which is the active participle of *amm* (اَمَّ = he headed to); here it refers to those who are on their way to the pilgrimage of the Sacred House "Seeking the grace" is the circumstantial clause to "those going"; *al-faḍl* (اَلْفَضْل = grace) refers to property or material profit. The same is the connotation of the Divine words: *So they returned with favour from Allãh and* (His) *grace; no evil touched them* (3:174); there are other verses too of the same meaning; also it may mean the reward of hereafter; or it may have a meaning encompassing the both senses. The exegetes have given several other meanings of the words used here like *ash-sha'ãir* and *al-qalãid;* what we have mentioned is more appropriate in the context, and no purpose will be served by mentioning other interpretations.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when you are free from*** **(the restrictions of)** ***the pilgrimage, then*** **(you may)** ***hunt*** **:** When an imperative comes after

prohibition, it only indicates that now the thing or action is allowed and the prohibition is lifted. *al-Ḥall* and *al-iḥlãl* (اَلْحَلُّ ، اَلْاِحْلَالُ) give the same meaning, that is, becoming free from the restrictions of *iḥrãm*.

QUR'ÃN: ***and let not the hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits*** **:** *Jarama* (جَرَمَ) means 'he carried it', 'he bore it'; that is why disobedience and sin is called *al-jarīmah* (اَلْجَرِيْمَة) because the culprit bears its responsibility; this word is also used for monetary fine because it is borne by the culprit. ar-Rãghib says that its real meaning is 'to cut'. *ash-Shan'ãn* (اَلشَّنْأَن = hatred, enmity); *an ṣaddūkum* (اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ = because they prevented you); it is an explicative apposition or appositional substitute for 'hatred'; the meaning: and let not hatred of a people they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed the limits when you have vanquished them.

QUR'ÃN: ***And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and fear Allãh; . . .*** **:** The meaning is clear. This is the foundation of Islamic culture and ethics. Allãh has explained righteousness in His Book as belief and doing good in the acts of worship and in mutual dealings, as we have explained under the Divine words: *. . . but righteousness is the one who believes in Allãh and the Last Day . . .* (2:177). *at-Taqwã* (اَلتَّقْوي = to be on one's guard regarding orders and prohibitions of Allãh). To cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety means to join together in true faith and good deeds on the basis of the fear of Allãh; it is the collective good and piety. Its opposite is cooperating with one another in sin and aggression; sin is the evil action which brings regression in a blissful life; aggression is usurping peoples' genuine rights, giving rise to a feeling of insecurity for their lives, honour or property. We have explained this topic under the Divine words: *O you who believe! be patient and help each other in patience and remain lined up; and fear* (the wrath of) *Allãh, that you may be successful,* (3:200), in the fourth volume of this book[30].

Then Allãh has emphasized the prohibition of joining together in sin and aggression by saying: *and fear Allãh; surely Allãh is severe in punishment.* Actually, it is an emphasis over emphasis.

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[30] *al-Mīzãn,* (Eng.), vol.7, pp.143-202. (*tr.*)

QUR'ÃN: ***Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allãh has been invoked*****:** These four were prohibited in the revelations sent long before this chapter. See , for example, in the chapters of "The Cattle" and "The Bee", both of which were revealed in Mecca and in the chapter of "The Cow" which was the first detailed chapter revealed in Medina. Allãh has said: *Say: "I do not find, in that which has been revealed to me, anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth, or flesh of swine – for that surely is unclean – or that which is a transgression, other than* (the name of) *Allãh having been invoked on it; but whoever is forced* (to it), *not revolting nor exceeding the limit, then surely your Lord is Forgiving, Merciful"* (6:145); and He has said: *He has only forbidden to you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other* (name) *than* (that of) *Allãh has been invoked; but whoever is forced* (to it)*, not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (2:173).

As you see, all these verses forbid the four things mentioned in the beginning of this verse and the exception too is similar to this verse where it says: *but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful.* So, this verse's only purpose is to emphasize the previously and repeatedly revealed prohibition of the four items. In fact, this prohibition and especially of the first three items, (that which dies of itself, blood and flesh of swine) was promulgated long before the revelation of the chapters of "The Cattle" and "The Bee" (of Meccan period) because the verse of the chapter of "The Cattle" explains the reason of prohibition that "it is unclean"; it shows that eating unclean things was forbidden; and Allãh says in the ch.74: *And uncleanness do shun* [vr.5]. This chapter was revealed in the early Meccan period. [It was the second chapter revealed.]

And the strangled (animal) *and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten.*: Actually it is not a new legislation, because all these come under "that which dies of itself", (as may be understood from the exception, *except what you slaughter*); yet they have been mentioned separately to describe various types of dead animals.

Likewise, the words of Allãh, *and that is sacrificed on stones set up* (for idols) *and that you divide by arrows; that is a*

transgression, forbid these two items for the first time in this chapter, but Allãh has given the reason of their prohibition (or that of the second item) that it is a transgression, and He had before that prohibited transgression in the verse of the chapter of "The Cattle". Also, the following words: *not inclining wilfully to sin,* show that the things mentioned here have been forbidden because they are sins; and many verses revealed before it say that sin is prohibited. For example, the verse 173 of the chapter "The Cow", says: *but whoever is forced* (to it), *not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him.* Also, He says: *And abandon open and secret sin* (6:120); *Say: "My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed,and sin . . ."* (7:33)

Now, it is clear that the verse with this list of forbidden items has not promulgated any new order which was not given in previously revealed verses of the Meccan or early Medinite period which had listed the forbidden meats.

QUR'ÃN: ***and the strangled*** **(animal)** ***and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter*** **:** *al-Munkhaniqah* (اَلْمُنْخَنِقَة) is the cattle which dies as a result of strangulation. It makes no difference whether it was accidental or intentional; also, the instrument of strangulation has no effect on this ruling; may be a rope was tied around its neck and becoming tight, it clocked breathing or its neck was pressed between two rods; this and similar methods were common in the days of ignorance. *al-Mawqūdhah* (اَلْمَوْقُوْذَةُ) is an animal which is beaten until it dies. *al-Mutaraddiya* (اَلْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ) is an animal which falls from a high place like a mountaintop or well, and so on. *an-Naṭīḥah* (اَلنَّطِيْحَةُ) is an animal which dies as a result of being gored with horns or tusks of another animal. "and that which wild beasts have eaten", that is, a beast of prey has eaten some of its flesh resulting in its death. A beast of prey indicates carnivorous animals like lion, wolf, tiger, etc.

"except what you slaughter", this exception applies to all the five groups mentioned before that. If any of these animals shows some signs of life like breathing or twitching of its tail, etc., and it is at once slaughtered according to the rules of the *sharī'ah* (i.e., its four jugular veins are cut), then it is allowed to be eaten. As mentioned just now, the exception covers all five groups and not only the last one. The five groups are included in the term *al-maytah* (اَلْمَيْتَةُ = that which dies by itself). Animals killed by a fall or gored by another animal with horns

are forbidden when they die as a result of that fall or those wounds. It may be understood from the exception "except what you slaughter". Obviously, they will not be eaten when they are alive; but when the soul goes out then they can be eaten. Now, either they were slaughtered according to *sharī'ah* or not; and Allãh has excepted the slaughter. Therefore, they will only be unlawful when they die as the result of the fall or the said wound without being slaughtered. If a goat, for example, falls into a well and is taken out alive and uninjured and then after a short or long time it dies by itself or is slaughtered then it will not be called an animal that was killed by a fall. The context shows that only such animals are forbidden which are killed ordie because of the causes mentioned in the verse.

These groups of dead animals have been singled out here to remove any possible misunderstanding that probably they were not included in the word, *al-maytah* because they are not common types. Therefore, Allãh mentioned these rare types with their names in order that there should be no confusion and the prohibitionremains clear.

QUR'ÃN: ***and what is sacrificied on stones set up*** **(for idols):** ar-Rãghib says in *Mufradãtu 'l-Qur'ãn* : "*an-Naṣb* (اَلنَّصْبُ) of a thing means setting it down in a projecting position like setting a spear or stone; *an-naṣīb* (اَلنَّصِيْبُ) a stone which is set on something in a projecting manner. Its plural is *an-naṣãib* (اَلنَّصَآئبُ) and *an-nuṣub* (اَلنُّصُبُ)." [This latter is used in this verse.] The Arabs had various stones which they worshipped and on which they slaughtered sacrifices. Allãh says: . . . *as if they were hastening unto a signpost* (70:43); and He has said, "and what is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols)"; also its plural comes as *al-anṣãb* (اَلْأَنْصَابُ). Allãh says: . . . (dedication of) *stones* (i.e., idols) *and* (divination by) *arrows* . . . (5:90). *an-Nuṣb* and *an-naṣb* (اَلنَّصْبُ ، اَلنُّصْبُ) = trouble, exertion.

The verse forbids eating the flesh of an animal slaughtered on stone; in this way, it prohibits adoption of the customs of the days of ignorance. They had set up around the Ka'bah stones which they venerated and over which they offered sacrifices. It was a custom of idolatory.

QUR'ÃN: ***and that you divide by arrows; . . . :*** *al-Azlãm* (اَلْأَزْلَامُ = arrows without head). The division by arrows was done in this way: A camel or another animal was taken and its shares divided; then, the arrows were used to identify the one who would get a share and the one who would not have any; also, the number of shares a man would

get was decided by the same arrows. It was a clear gambling and we have given the details under the verse: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance* . . . (2:219) in vol.2 of this book[31].

ar-Rãghib says: "*al-Qism* (اَلْقِسْمُ = setting apart the shares). It is said: I divided such and such thing in parts; division of inheritance or war-booty means dividing them to the rightful persons. Allãh says: . . . *for each gate there shall be a separate party of them* (15:44); *And inform them that the water is shared between them* (54:28). *Istaqsamtuhu* (إِسْتَقْسَمْتُهُ = I asked him to divide); also, sometimes it is used in the meaning of division itself, as Allãh says: *and that you divide by arrows.*"

COMMENT: To say that *istaqsamah* is used here for division is correct in practical application, but the literal meaning still remains the same, that is, to want to divide through arrows, which were used as tools of this game; using the tools is in itself a demand for getting the intended result. Therefore, using the arrow is in itself asking for the division. However, the verse, as the context shows, forbids using the arrows for the camels, etc. to get an apportioned share of the meat.

Some people have said that this phrase forbids using the arrows for divination to find out the good or bad of a course of action and to distinguish a beneficial deed from the harmful one, as for example, when someone wants to go on a journey or to marry or to begin a new work, etc., and uses the arrows to find out whether it is beneficial for him or not. They said that it was a well established custom among the Arabs in the days of ignorance; it was a sort of forcastingwith omens and its details will come in the coming traditions.

COMMENT: The context does not allow the use of this phrase for this meaning. The verse describes and counts the prohibited items of food and has pointed to this in the beginning when it said: *The cattle quardrupeds are made lawful for you except that which is recited to you;* then it goes on giving the list of ten forbidden food items: that which dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine, an animal on which any other name than that of Allãh is invoked, the strangled one, the one beaten to death, or killed by fall, or as a result of being smitten with the horn, or that which wild beasts have eaten and what is sacrificed on stones set up for idols; then it mentions *al-istiqsãm bi 'l-azlãm* (اَلْاِسْتِقْسَامُ بِالْاَزْلَامِ) which can be used in two meanings: i) Dividing meat

[31] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.3, p.280 (*tr.*)

by gambling, and ii) Divination of goodor evil in the future. How can any one think, after this clear context and the repeated associations, that this phrase in this verse does not denote dividing the meat through arrows Can anyone who knows the styles of speech entertain any doubt about its meaning?

Let us look at another similar example, *al-'umrah* (اَلْعُمْرَةُ) is a verbal noun which denotes construction, and it has another meaning, that is, pilgrimage of the Sacred House. If this word is used in realtion to a house, both meanings can be applied; but when it comes to the Divine words: *And complete the* ḥajj (pilgrimage) *and* 'umrah *for Allãh* (2:196), then only the second meaning can be applied. There are many such example.

The indicative in, *that is a transgression,* may be pointing to the whole list, or to the last two items described after the words, *except what you slaughter* (because the exception has separated the two groups), or to the last item. Probably, the middle view is the best of all.

QUR'ÃN: ***This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me*** **:** The positioning of this speech in midst of this verse and then its connotation are all amazing. If you ponder on the beginning of this verse, that is: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood . . . that is a transgression* and then join to it the end part, *but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful,* you will see that it is a complete sentence and does not depend for completion of its meaning and explanationof its theme to this part of the verse at all. If you take out these sentences, then the remaining part will perfectly correspond with previously revealed verses in the chapters, "The Cattle", "The Bee" and "The Cow", which give the list of the forbidden food items. The verse in the chapter of "The Cow" says: *He has only forbidden to you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other* (name) *than* (that of) *Allãh has been invoked; but whoever is forced* (to it), *not revolting, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (2:173). Similar wordings are found in the chapters of "The Cattle" and "The Bee".

It is clear that the Divine words, "This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, . . .", is a paranthetical speech placed in the midst of this verse, yet the main verse does not depend on it for its exposition or explanation. We may say that this speech

was actually revealed in the middle of this verse separating the preceding part from the following one; or that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself ordered the sribes to put this speech in this place even though it had no connotation with this verse, and was not even revealed at the same time; or that the compilers put it in this place at the time of compilation although both the parts were revealed at totally different times. None of these probabilities can affect the view we have just mentioned that it is a paranthetical speech.

This view is strengthened by the fact that most, if not all the traditions describing the reason of its revelation – and there are a lot of such traditions – particularly talk about the words of Allãh, "This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . .", without hinting even once to the beginning of the verse, that is: *Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself . . . This proves that the Divine words, "This day have those who disbelieve . . .",* were independently revealed and have no connection with the preceding or the following verses. Thus, the present positioning of this speech in the middle of the verse will have to be attributed either to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) or to the compilers of the Qur'ãn after him.

A tradition in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* somewhat supports this view. It is narrated from ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd from ash-Shaʻbī that he said, "The verse: *This day I have perfected for you your religion . . . ,* was revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while he was in ʻArafãt; and when any verses much pleased him, he used to put them in the beginning of the chapter." He also said, "And Jibrīl used to teach him how to do it."

The two sentences, that is: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . . ,* and: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . ,* have identical themes and no one can have any doubt that the meaning of both are connected with each other. There is very close connection between the despairing of the disbelievers from the Muslims' religion and the perfection of the Muslims' religion; both connotations are joined together in a single theme, both sentences are interconnected and their sides are combined with one another. Add to it the singularity of context in these two sentences.

Further support of this view can be found in the convention of the ancient and modern exegetes – right from the companions of the Prophet and their followers to our contemporaries in these days. All of them take the two sentences jointly as if one completes the other. This unanimous way of explanation shows that all of them believed that these two sentences were revealed together and both of them jointly describe one meaning.

It appears from the above that this paranthetical verse: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . . ,* and: *chosen for you Islam as a religion,* is a single speech and its parts are interconnected and the whole speech leads to a single theme which is reflected in the two sentences jointly. It makes not difference whether we say that this speech is connected with the preceding and following sentences or not. The two sentences will remain as one speech; they can never be treated as two talks having two separate aims. Also, it is clear that the word "this day" repeated in both sentences refers to a single day when the disbelievers were despaired and the religion was perfected.

To which day does the adverb, "this day", refer in these two sentenceș

1. Does it refer to the time when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was commanded to call the people to Islam? Does it mean that Allãh sent to you the Islam, perfected the religion for you, and completed His favours on you and made the disbelievers despaired of your religion?

COMMENT: It cannot be. The context shows that the Muslims already had a religion which the disbelievers were eager to change or destroy altogether, while the Muslims were afraid of them cncerning their religion, but Allãh deprived the disbelievers of their nefarious goal and made Muslims secure and safe; that religion was imperfect and Allãh made it perfect on that day and completed His favours on them. But the Muslims had no religion of their own before the advent of Islam, so, where was the question of the disbelievers having some hope of destroying that religion or of Allãh perfecting it and completing His favours on them? Moreover, if that interpretation is taken seriously, then the sentence: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . ,* should have preceded the sentences: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion . . .* Only in this way, could literary perfection be achieved.

2. Or does "this day" refer to the era after the conquest of Mecca? Because on that day, Allãh had nullified the intriques of the Qurayshite polytheists and destroyed their power; their religion was uprooted and their idols shattered; in this way, they had lost all hope of standing on their feet to prevent the spread of Islam and to fight against it.

COMMENT: This too cannot be. The verse announces that on the day under discussion the religion was perfected and the Divine favours

completed; but the religion was yet incomplete in the year 8 AH when Mecca was conquered; there were many obligatory laws promulgated and many permissions and prohibitions laid down between the conquest of Mecca and the death of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Apart from that, "those who disbelieve" covers all the idolaters of Arabia and not all of them and despaired of the Muslims' religion. There were many covenants still valid which obligated the Muslims and many disbelieving tribes not to stand against each other; they still performed the *ḥajj* of *jāhiliyyah* according to the custom of the idolaters; their women still performed *ḥajj* completely naked. This had continued until the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) sent ʻAlī (a.s.) with the verses of the chapter of the "Repentance" and thus the remnants of the customs of the days of Ignorance were erased.

3. Or does "this day" refer to the period after the revelation of the chapter of "Repentance" [end of the year 9 AH]' Because Islam had spread to almost all areas of the Arabian Peninsula; the customs of the Days of Ignorance were wiped out and the signs of polytheism obliterated. Now, the Muslims did not encounter any polytheist during the *ḥajj* rituals and their life was free from the shadow of disbelief; Allāh had given them peace and order (while before that they were scared and afraid), they worshipped Allāh and ascribed none to Him.

COMMENT: This too cannot be. Although the idolaters of Arabia had despaired of the Muslims' religion after the revelation of the chapter of "Repentance" when the customs of the *jāhiliyyah* were wiped out and polytheism had gone out of the Peninsula, yet the religion was not completed at that time. A lot of rules and regulations were revealed after that, including this chapter of "The Table" which, all agree, was revealed during the last days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and this chapter contains a lot of laws about lawful and unlawful things, penal code and retribution.

It is now clear that the adverb "this day" cannot be taken to mean a long period which might be apparently relevant to the connotation of this verse, for example, the era of the advent of Islam, or the time after the conquest of Mecca or after the revelation of the verses of "Repentance". The only alternative is to say that "this day" refers to the particular day when this verse was revealed. Does it mean the day when Mecca was conquered or the day when the chapter of "Repentance" was revealed? The objections which we have raised against the second and the third possibilities above are enough to refute these suggestions altogether.

Or does it mean the day of ninth Dhi 'l-ḥijjah of the last pilgrimage [10 AH] as claimed by many exegetes and shown in some traditionṣ If so, then we will have to decide how the unbelievers had despaired of the Muslims' religion on that day. Does it mean that the polytheists of Quraysh had lost all hope of overpowering the Muslims' religion? But this had happened on the day Mecca was conquered in the year 8AH not on 9th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah 10 AH. Or does it refer to the despairing of the polytheists of the whole Arabia? But this had already happened at the time of the revelation of the chapter of "Repentance" in the year 9 AH. Or does it relate to the despairing of all the disbelievers – the Jews, the Christians, the fire-worshippers and otherṣ (And this all-inclusive meaning is more in keeping with the unrestricted phrase "those who disbelieve"). But those people had not yet despaired of overcoming the Muslims because Islam had not acquired any foothold or power beyond the Arabian peninsula on the day of ʻArafãt in the year 10 AH.

Looking from another angle, we should again ponder on this day (9th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah 10 AH): What importance it had which could be in keeping with the Divine words: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you.*

1. It may probably be said that it means perfecting the rituals of *ḥajj* in the presence of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself there, as he practically taught them the *manãsik* of *ḥajj* and gave verbal explanations.

COMMENT: Merely teaching the *manãsik* of *ḥajj* cannot be called perfection of religion by any stretch of imagination. First of all, he had ordered them to do *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* and not many years had passed that it was discontinued[32]. Secondly, many important pillars of religion had been established long before that, like prayer, fast, *ḥajj, zakãt, jihãd,* etc. How can teaching an obligatory ritual of the religion be called perfection of that obligatory thing? And how can teaching

[32] The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had himself performed *ḥajju 'l-qiran,* then came the order of *ḥajju 't-tamattu`,* which the Prophet ordered all Muslims to do. But `Umar was highly critical of this order and during his caliphate announced that "two *mut`ah*s were prevalent in the days of the Prophet; I declare them unlawful and shall punish those who would do them: the *mut`ah* of women and the *ḥajju 't-tamattu`* ". However, this prohibition was later ignored by the Muslims (*tr.*)

one obligatory part of religion be called perfection of the whole religion?

Moreover, this view cuts the connection between the first sentence (*This day have those who disbelieve . . .*) with the second one (*This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .*). And what is the revelance of despairing of the disbelievers to teaching the people *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* ?

2. It may be said that the perfection of the religion points to the revelation of all pending lawful and unlawful things "this day" in the chapter of "The Table"; after that there came no new *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām*. And with perfection of religion the disbelievers were overwhelmigly despaired and its signs appeared on their faces.

COMMENT: First, we have to decide who were the disbelievers described by the phrase "those who disbelieve". If it refers to the disbelievers of Arabia, then Islam had already engulfed them and there was nobody who did not publicly declare to be Muslim. So, who were the despairing disbelieverṣ

And if it is taken to refer to the non-Arab disbelievers who lived around Arabia, then we have described earlier that they had not despaired on that day of overpowering the Muslims.

Then the claim that the door of legislation was closed on the day of 'Arafāt is nonsense. There are a lot of traditions which mention revelations of rules and regulations after that day. See, for example, the verse of the summer[33] and the verses of interest. It has been narrated from 'Umar that he said *inter alia* in a sermon: "Among the last verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed is the verse of interest; the Messenger of Allāh died without explaining it to us. Therefore, leave whatever you feel doubtful about and go to that about which you have no doubt." Also, al-Bukhārī has narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ibn 'Abbās that he said, "The last verse revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was the verse of interest." There are many similar traditions.

Nobody should try to say that these traditions are weak; therefore, the verse should have precedence over them; because the verse doesn't explicitly say which day it talks about. The day of 'Arafāt is just a possibility and for the definite identification of the day, first all other possibilities have to be discarded; and these traditions offer at least opposing views.

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[33] It is the verse of *al-kalālah* at the end of the chapter of the "Women". (*Author's note*)

3. Somebody may say that the perfection of the religion points to the fact that the Sacred House had exclusively come into their hands and the polytheists were banished from it, the Muslims performed their *ḥajj* and there was no polytheist to mingle with them.

COMMENT: We have already said that this had happened one year before the day of ‘Arafãt. Then, why should it be restricted with the adverb "this day" in the verse: *This day have I perfected fro you your religion* . . . Even if we accept that this exclusive hold on the Ka‘bah was the completion of the Divine favour, it cannot be said that it was the perfection of the religion. Why should the exclusive possession of the Ka‘bah be called perfecting the religion, when religion is nothing except a collection of the beliefs and regulationṣ Religion could only be perfected if some more parts or chapters were added to it. That the environment became condusive for the implementation of the rules of religion and the snags and the hurdles were removed from practising it is not called perfecting the religion.

Moreover, the difficulty concerning the despair of the disbelievers remains in its place.

4. A writer has tried to combine the above hypotheses which we are giving here in short before commenting on it. He says that perfecting the religion means that Allãh has described these forbidden items of food in detail in order that the Muslims may follow it without being afraid of the disbelievers, because the disbelievers have despaired of the Muslims' religion and Allãh has given strength and power to the Muslims and made them victorious over the infidels.

Why did Allãh mention only the four forbidden things (that which dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine and that on which any other name than that of Allãh has been invoked) in the early days of Islam in some chapters of the Meccan period? And why did He delay giving the details of what comes within its circle which Islam does not like the Muslims to use until Mecca was conquered? It was done to promulgate the prohibition of these filthy things gradually and to show their intense undesirability. It was the same policy which was used in prohibition of liquor step, so that the Arabs should not have an aversion to Islam and should not find it intolerable; and would continue hoping that their poverty-ridden folks (who constituted the majority of the early converts to Islam) would return to their original infidelity.

This detailed description of the forbidden things was revealed after Islam gained strength and Allãh gave the Muslims wealth and

power. This was after the polytheists had lost the hope that the Muslims would ever turn away from Islam, they had realized that they could not defeat the Muslims nor could they make them renounce their religion under duress. Now, the believers were in a position where they were not afraid of the disbelievers about their religion or their lives and had no need to deal with them politely.

Thus the adverb "this day" means the day of ʻArafāt in the year of the Last Pilgrimage. It was the day when this verse was revealed which describes whatever laws had remained undisclosed uptil now; through these laws Islam nullified the remnants of the abasements, evils and superstitions of the days of ignorance. This verse brought the good news to the Muslims that they have gained the upper hand over the polytheists, who were now despaired of the Muslims' religion; now the Muslims did not have any need to deal with them in soft manners or any fear of their reprisals.

Thus, Allāh informs them in this verse that the disbelievers themselves are despaired of their religion; and now that Allāh has changed their weakness to power, their apprehension to tranquility and their poverty to riches, the Muslims should not be afraid of anyone other than Allāh and should refrain and abstain from using the things forbidden in detail in this verse because in this lies the perfection of their religion.

COMMENT: This writer wanted to gather together several of the previously mentioned hypotheses in order to dispel the objections levelled against one possibility with the help of another possibility. But he became embroiled in all the perils together and in the process he corrupted the words and meaning of the verse completely.

He failed to realize that if the disbelievers' despair refer to that despair which had resulted from the victory and power of Islam, then it had happened on the day Mecca was conquered or, let us say, when the verses of the chapter of "Repentance" were pronounced. Therefore, it would not be correct to announce on the day of ʻArafāt in the year 10 AH: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion,* because they had despaired of it one or two years before. Had it been the case, the verse should have said: Those who disbelieve have already despaired of your religion (as this writer had himself used the same wording while giving his explanation). Or alternatively, it could be said: They are despaired.

Also, he seems oblivious of the fact that if this supposed gradual prohibition of various food items (for which he has mentioned

the analogy of prohibition of the intoxicant) means that some food items were prohibited after some others, then you have seen that this verse does not mention any other prohibited items than the previously revealed verses of prohibition had done, that is, the verses of the chapters of "The Cow", "The Cattle" and "The Bee"; keeping in view that the strangled animals, etc., are merely the details of the dead animals.

And if he means that the previous descriptions were general and this verse gives the details, and it was done because there was a possibility of people refusing to follow the rules, then it is out of place; what was explicitly mentioned in the previous chapters, that is, "the dead animal, blood, flesh of swine and that on which any other name than that of Allãh has been invoked", were more commonly used in the society, and people should have revolted against that rule more readily than against the rule against strangled animal and that beaten to death, etc., because these situations occur very rarely. If there was any danger of opposition then the first mentioned four things should not have been prohibited so explicitly; and when they were prohibited without any fear, why should there be any hesitation in relatively unimportant examples.

Moreover, even we accept his interpretation, it could not be called perfection of religion. How can legislation of some rules be named 'religion'? And how can its promulgation and explanation be called perfection of religion? Even if we accept it, it would be perfection of a small part of religion and completion of some of the favours, rather than the whole religion and all the favours; while Allãh says: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you;* here, the perfection and completion are all-encompassing without any restriction.

Moreover, Allãh had legislated a lot of rules and laws during all the preceding years. What was the speciality of this rule on this day that its legislation or explanation should be called perfection of religion and completion of grace?

Or does the perfection of religion mean that Allãh perfected it by closing the door of legislation after revealing this verse which gives the details of forbidden food items? Then what will be said about those rules which were revealed after revelation of this chapter and before the death of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)? Rather, what will be said about all the rules which were revealed in this very chapter of "The Table" after this verse? Think over it.

Until now, we have left untouched the last clause: *and chosen for you Islam as a religion,* which means: This day I have chosen for you Islam as a religion. If the speech ends at describing the favours of Allāh on the Muslims by detailing the forbidden food on the day of ʻArafāt in the year 10 AH, then what will be the revelance of this clause? What special thing happened on that day that Allāh chose Islam as their religion? There was nothing most of the objections levelled against the preceding interpretations apply to this too; and there is no need to repeat them here.

Or does "This day" point to any particular day between the day of ʻArafāt and the arrival of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) at Medina when the disbelievers were despaired and the religion was perfected? But again the objections described earlier against other interpretations would be levelled against this, with the same details.

Up to here, we have discussed this verse looking at what has been or could be said about it regarding its interpretation. Now, we shall look at it in the way that is more consistent with the special style of this book.

This day have those who disbelieve despaired or your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me : Despair and disappointment is opposite of hope; and the religion was sent down gradually. In this backdrop, this sentence indicates that disbelievers in the early days of Islam had some hope regarding the Muslims' religion, expecting it to somehow die with the passage of time. This idea of theirs posed a great threat against Islam from time to time and such a situation nessecitated for the believers to be always on guard and live in fear. In this background, the words, "so fear them not" reassure the believers that Allāh would protect them from the danger which was facing them and which had caused them such a fear. Allāh says: *A party of the People of the Book desire that they should lead you astray* (3:69); also He says: *Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on their part,* (even) *after the truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and forgive* (them) *until Allāh should bring about His command. Surely Allāh has power over all things* (2:109). The disbelievers were not waiting for something to happen to the Muslims except because of their religion, and they were not angry with them and their hearts were not burning against them but for one reason: The religion of Islam posed a challenge to their supremacy and was ruining their dominance. It puts hinderance against their indulging in the pleasures they were inclined

to, and to which they were accustomed all their lives; it was putting a stop to their unrestricted debauchery and wanton behaviour.

What they hated was the religion, not the followers of the religion. Of course, they disliked the Muslims, but it was because of their accptance of the Divine religion. The reason why they wanted to annihilate the Muslims and destroy their society was their intention to put out the Light of Allãh; they wanted to restrengthen the pillars of polytheism which had been shaking because of the impact of Islam; They hoped against hope that they would one day turn the believers into disbelievers, as has been described in the Divine words: *that they could turn you back into unbelievers;* and He has said: *They desire to put out the light of Allãh with their mouths, but Allãh will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse. He it is who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may make it triumph over the religions, though the polytheists may be averse* (61:8-9); *Therefore call upon Allãh, being sincere to Him in relgion though averse be the unbelievers* (40:14).

In short, their only plan was to cut this blessed tree from its root and demolish this lofty structure from its foundation; they tried to ensure the believers in various ways, spreading hypocrisy in their midst and creating doubts in their hearts in order to corrupting their religion.

In the beginning, they tried to weaken the determination of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and enfeeble his resolve for religious *da'wah* (propaganda) by offering him worldly riches and honour; as the Divine words point to it: *And the chief persons of them break forth, saying: "Go and steadily adhere to your gods; this is most surely a thing sought after"* (38:6). Alternatively, they tried flattery and friendly intercourse, as may be seen in the following verses: *They wish that you shouldbe pliant so they* (too) *would be pliant* (52:9); *And had it not been that We had already firmly established you, you would have been near to incline to them a little* (17:74); *Say: "O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship. Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship."* (109:1-3), as is understood from the traditions giving the reasons of their revelation.

The last thing, which they hoped would bring downfall to Islam, and toll the death bell of the *da'wah*, was the idea that Islam would certainly die with the death of its Prophet (s.a.w.a.), as he did not have a male offspring. In their eyes, the Prophet wanted to establish a kingdom in the guise of prophethood, and begin his reign in the name of Divine call and Messengership. When he died or was

killed, his traces would be erased, his memory would die and his religion would be forgotten. After all, this is what generally and habitually happens with kings and despotic rulers; no matter how great a power they acquire, how much arrogance they show, their memory dies with their death, and their laws and codes which had kept the people in their bondage are buried with them in their graves. The chapter of "Abundance" refers to this ultimate hope of theirs when it says: *Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity* (108:3), as is clear from the reason of its revelation[34].

These and similar expectations had kept their hope alive, and they believed that one day they would extinguish the light of the religion. They were under erroneous impression that this pure Divine call was merely a fiction whose falsity will become obvious in the coming days; and the passage of time will erase its tracks and finish it. But gradually, the Islam overcome all its adversaries – the false religions and their believers; the fame of Islam spread far and wide, and the religion acquired strength and power to defeat its enemies; these developments rooted out their hopes, they became despaired as they knewthat they could not spoil the determination of the Prophet, nor could they diminish his zeal; and they had found earlier that he could not be bought by wealth or honour.

Islam's strength and power engulfed them with despair and pessimism; all the endeavours for defeating the Prophet had proved furtile; yet one hope was still alive: The hope that he did not have any male offspring who could succeed him in his mission, to keep the religious *da'wah* alive as he was doing; so they hoped that his religion would die with him. It was self-evident that a religion, however perfect it may be in its *sharī'ah* and ideology, could not protect itself in the absence of a protector. Clearly, any established tradition and any religion with all its followers could not maintain its purity and freshness by itself, no matter how much its fame had spread in the world and how many people had entered into its fold. It needed

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[34] It is interesting to note that even the polytheists of Arabia knew that the continuity of the religion of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) depended on his having a male offspring. They never thought that the Prophet's companions could keep his religion alive, nor did Allãh console the Prophet in this chapter that he should not worry, as there were his companions who would strengthen and develop his religion after him. Instead, Allãh gave him the good news that he would be given abundant offsprings to continue his mission. But the Muslims did not reaize this fact. (*tr.*)

someone who could protect it from deterioration and pollution. Also, it was clear that a religion could not be obliterated or annihilated by force or coercion, threats or mischief; or torture and things like that. I could die only with the death of its protectors and those who were apointed to manage its affairs.

All this shows that the total despair of unbelievers could take place only if Allãh was to appoint someone who would stand in the place of the Prophet for protection of religion and management of its affairs, in order that he could properly lead the Muslim *ummah* on the right path. This was sure to bring in its wake the disappointment and despair of the disbelievers concerning the Muslims' religion. Then the enemies would realize that the religion has already developed and reached the stage where it is not dependent on the person of the Prophet alone; rather it is placed under the care of a group who are true successors of the Prophet. This would be the perfection of the religion as it would discard the transient nature and acquire continuity and eternity; and this would be the completion of the Divine favour. Let us look at the Divine words: *Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on their part,* (even) *after the truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and forgive* (them) *until Allãh should bring about His command. Surely Allãh has power over all things* (2:109). Very probably, the words: *until Allãh should bring about His command,* point to this very theme.

This explanation supports what has been narrated in the traditions that the verse was revealed on the day of Ghadīr Khumm, the 18th day of Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, the year 10 AH, regarding the successorship of ʻAlī (a.s.). In this way, the two sentences will be very clearly connected with each other, and none of the objections mentioned earlier could be levelled against this explanation.

Now, that you have understood the meaning of desparation in this verse, you will appreciate that "this day" in the Divine Speech, "This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion", is an adverb of time related to the verb "have despaired". The adverb has been placed at the begining of the sentence in order to show this day's importance and grandeur; as it was on this day that the religion passed the stage of personal guardianship of the Prophet and entered into the stage of collective guardianship of the Imãms; in this way, it rose from transiency to permanence and eternity.

On going ahead, we shall find a similar construction in the verse: *This day* (all) *the good things are allowed to you* . . . (5:5). But

the verse under discussion cannot be compared with this verse, because the contexts of the two verses are totally different. The verse: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion,* is a sort of expostulation against the unbelievers, while the verse: *This day* (all) *the god things are allowed to you,* begins a new subject. Also, the connotations are different. The former is a creative decree which contains good news on one side and warning on the other, while the latter is a legislative decree and describes the Divine grace and favour to the Muslims. *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion,* shows the grandeur of the day because it brought a very highly beneficial good to the Muslims, that is, desparation of the unbelievers regarding the Muslims' religion. "those who disbelieve" refers to all the disbelievers, be they idolworshippers, Jews, Christians or others, because the clause is unrestricted, as we had described earlier.

The prohibition in the Divine words: *so fear them not, and fear Me,* is advisory, not obligatory. The connotation is that now that those who until now had posed as a danger to you have despaired, you have no reason to fear them; a man does not spend his energies for something when he has lost all hopes of attaining it; so now you are safe from their side and you should not fear them concerning your religion; therefore, "fear them not, and fear Me".

The words, "fear Me" in this context show that the Muslims should now fear Allãh in the matter concerning which they until thenwere afraid of the disbelievers, because now they cannot deprive you of your religion. It is clear that this is a sort of warning to the Muslims; and that is why we have not taken this verse as a statement of favour. This explanation gets strengthened if we remember that the fear of Allãh is obligatory in any case. It is not that it is *wãjib* in this state but not in that; or with this condition and not with that; therefore, there was no reason to add "and fear Me" after the clause, "fear them not" if it does not indicate a very special fear in a particular situation.

These sentences should not be compared with the Divine words: *. . . so do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers* (3:175); because the order to fear Allãh in this verse is made conditional to believing; the order is obligatory and the connotation is that the believers are forbidden to fear the disbelievers regarding their safety; rather, they are obliged to fear Allãh alone. The verse, therefore, forbids them to do what was not proper for them, that is, their fearing the disbelievers concerning their ownselves; it makes no difference here whether they are told to fear Allãh or not. That is why the order

to fear Allãh has been made conditional to their being the believers, and this condition also expounds the reason of this order.

But the Divine words in the verse under the discussion, "so fear them not and fear Me", are not like that. The believers' fear in this verse was the fear concerning their religion; and such a fear was not disliked by Allãh, because in reality it meant the pursuit of the Divine pleasure. When Allãh forbids this fear, it is because the reason causing that fear was no more. They feared the disbelievers because the disbelievers had not despaired of their religion yet; but now that the situation has changed, they no more needed to fear them. Thus, the prohibition here is advisory; and consequently, the order to fear Allãh also is in advisory capacity. The connotation, in short, is that it is necessary that you should be cautious and fearful in the matters of religion; but the cause of fear until now had come from disbelievers and you were afraid of them because till today they had hoped to divert you from your religion; but today they have despaired, and now the cause of fear emanates from Allãh. Therefore, you should be afraid of Him alone. Ponder on it.

The verse because of the words, "so fear them not, and fear Me", gives a hint of a warning and threat, because it orders the believers to have a special fear. It is not the general fear which is *wãjib* for the believers in all conditions and at all times. Let us think on the speciality of this fear and find out why it has been made obligatory.

There is no doubt that the two sentences of this verse, that is: *This day have those who disbelieve . . .* ; and, *This day have I perfected for you your religion,* are inter-related and express the same theme, as we have explained before. The religion which Allãh had perfected this day and the bounty which He has completed this day (in reality both are the same thing) was the thing regarding which the disbelievers had entertained all those hopes and because of which the believers were afraid of them; now Allãh made the disbelievers despaired of that religion, perfected it and completed it and then forbade the believers to fear the disbelievers in this respect; now when He orders them to fear His Ownself, it must refer to the same type of fear, that is, about the religion; they should remain on guard lest Allãh takes away the religion from their hands and remove this gifted favour from them.

Allãh has made it clear that He does not take away any favour axcept when the recepient of that favour shows ingratitude; and He has threatened the ungrateful person very severely: *This is because*

Allãh does never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition; and because Allãh is Hearing, Knowing (8:53); *. . . and whoever changes the favour of Allãh after it has come to him, then surely Allãh is severe in requiting* (evil) (2:211). And Allãh has set a general parable for its bounties and how it changes when people become ungrateful. He says: *And Allãh sets forth a parable:* (consider) *a town safe and secure to which its means of subsistence come in abundance from every quarter; but it became ungrateful to Allãh's favour, therefore Allãh made it to taste the utmost degree of hunger and fear because of what they wrought* (16:112).

The verse beginning from "This day have those who disbelieve", and ending at "Islam as a religion". announces that the religion of the Muslims is completely secured against the disbelievers and is safe from every danger which could come from that side; and no corruption or destruction can infiltrate into it except from the Muslims themselves. That would happen if the Muslims showed ingratitude towards this perfect Divine bounty and rejected this complete religion chosen by Him; then Allãh would take away His favour from them and change it to retribution and affliction and would make them taste the utmost degree of hunger and fear. Unfortunately, the Muslims have done it and Allãh has made them suffer the consequences.

If anyone wants to understand how true is the prophecy of tribulation and trial (which is inferred from the Divine words: *fear them not, and fear Me*), he should ponder on the condition of the Islamic world today, then he should go back analysing the historical events until he reaches at the roots of these misfortunes and afflictions.

The verses of *al-wilãyah* (اَلْوِلاَيَة = guardianship, mastership) in the Qur'ãn are fully connected with the threat and warning contained in this verse. Allãh has not cautioned His servants of Himself except when it concerns the *wilãyah;* and has said in this respect, time and again: *. . . and Allãh cautions you of Himself* . . . (3:28 & 3:30). To go more deeply in this subject will take us of the scope of this book.

QUR'ÃN: ***This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion*****:** *al-Ikmãl* اَلإِكْمَالُ = to perfect) and *al-itmãm* (اَلإِتْمَامُ = to complete) are near to each other in meaning.

ar-Rãghib has said: "A thing is called perfect when it serves the purpose which it is intended for; and it becomes complete when it reaches a stage where it doesn't need anything extra; a thing is called incomplete when it needs something more."

You can differentiate the meaning of the two words in another way: Effects of the things are of two kinds; some effects spring from it when all its parts and ingredients are in place; if any of its ingredients or conditions is missing, the effect will not take place. We can take the example of the fast; if any of its conditions is violated even for a very small part of the day the fast will be void. Such things are described with the word 'complete". Allãh says: . . . *then complete the fast till night* . . . (2:187); *And the word of your Lord has been completed truly and justly* . . . (6:115).

On the other hand, there are the effects which spring from a thing without waiting for completion of all its ingredients. When one part is found, its related effect will appear; if all ingredients are present the desired effect will appear in its entirety. This is described as perfection. Allãh says: . . . *but he who cannot find* (any offering) *should fast for three days during the* ḥajj *and for seven days when you return; these* (make) *ten* (days) *perfect* . . . (2:196); . . . *and that you should perfect the number* . . . (2:185). The effect of some parts of this number are seen as are the effects of the whole number. Arabs say: His affairs are complete and his understanding is perfect; but they do not say: His understanding is complete and his affairs are perfect.

There is a difference between *al-ikmãl* and *at-takmīl* (اَلإِكْمَالُ، اَلتَّكْمِيْلُ) as there is between *al-itmãm* and *at-tatmīm* (اَلإِتْمَامُ ، اَلتَّتْمِيْمُ). It is the difference between the paradigms of *al-if'ãl* and *at-taf'īl* (اَلإِفْعَالُ، اَلتَّفْعِيْلُ). *al-If'ãl* basically shows instantaneousness of a work while *at-taf'īl* shows graduality. However, in a wider sense or as a result of literary evolution, the meanings in both paradigms change; sometimes, they become very different from the meaning of the root word, e.g., *al-ifrãṭ* (اَلإِفْرَاطُ = excess) and *at-tafrīṭ* (اَلتَّفْرِيْطُ = negligence), etc. Actually, these meanings were attached to such words at some particular occasions and then regular usage made them inseparable and they became like actual meanings.

It appears from the above discourse that the sentence, "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you", shows that something has been added to the religion, (which is a collection of beliefs, ideologies and laws) today making it perfect; and the Divine bounty and favour (which was something spiritual) was

incomplete and without effect until today when it was completed and now the expected effect is going to result from it.

The favour and bounty is the thing which has affinity with nature of the recipient of that bounty. All the things are inter-connected with each other because they are parts of the system of Divine management and in the long run all have affinity with one another; and most, rather all of them are Divine bounties when they are put parallel to each other, as Allāh says: . . . *and if you count Allāh's bounties you will not be able to number them* . . . (14:34); . . . *and made complete to you His favours outwardly and inwardly* . . . (31:20).

However, Allāh has described some of these favours naming them as evil, vile, game and play and using similar adjectives which are not paiseworthy; as He says: *And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is good their souls; We grant them respite only that they may increase in sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement* (3:178); *And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play; and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life* . . . (29:64); *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities* (fearlessly). *A brief enjoyment! then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting place* (3:196-7). There are many other verses like these.

All these verses show that the things which are counted as bounties and Divine favours would really be bounties when they conform with the Divine purpose for which they were given to man. They have been created to serve as the Divine help to man in order that the man cold use them in the way of his real felicity; in other words, when they help the man to be nearer to Allāh through worship and submission to His Mastership. Allāh says: *And I have not created the* jinn *and the human beings except that they should worship Me* (51:56).

All the things and faculties which the man uses with the aim of attaining nearness to Allāh and seeking Divine pleasure are the bounties and favours. Otherwise, they will become an affliction and trial. It means that the things in themselves are neutral. They become favour and bounty because they have in themselves the spirit of servitude and with that praiseworthy usage they come under the Divine *wilāyah*. This *wilāyah* results in Divine management of the servants' affairs. It follows that the favour in reality is the Divine *wilāyah* (mastership, guardianship); and a thing will become bounty when it contains something of that *wilāyah*. Allāh says: *Allāh is the*

guardian (master) *of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into the light . . .* (2:257); *That is because Allãh is the Master of those who believe, and because the unbelievers have no master for them* (47:11); and He says about His Messenger (s.a.w.a.): *But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a Judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total submission* (4:65). You may find other similar verses in the Qur'ãn.

Islam is a religionbecause it is a collection of what was sent down from Allãh for guidance of His servants, so that they may worship Him properly; and it is a Divine favour and bounty inasmuch as practically it contains in itself the *wilãyah* of Allãh, the *wilãyah* of His Messenger and of those vested with authority (*ulu 'l-amr*) after him.

The *wilãyah* of Allãh (i.e., His management of the servants' affairs through the religion) cannot be complete except through the *wilãyah* of His Messenger; nor will the *wilãyah* of His Messenger be complete without the *wilãyah* of those vested with authority after him; and that *wilãyah* means their management of the religious affairs of the *ummah* with Divine permission. Allãh says: *O you who believe! obey Allãh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you* (4:59), we have fully explained this verse before. Again, Allãh says: *Only Allãh is your guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the* zakãt *while they bow* (5:55); and we shall explain the verse, God willing, in its place.

Thus, the verse means as follows: Today, and it is the day when those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, I have perfected for you the whole religious perceptions (which I had revealed to you before) by making the *wilãyah* obligatory for you; and I have completed My bounty on you, and it is the *wilãyah* which means management of the religious affairs with Divine guidance. Until now, you were under the *wilãyah* of Allãh and His Messenger only; but it could work only upto the time the revelations would be coming down from Allãh; it could not work later when the revelation would be cut off, when the Messenger would not remain among the people to safeguard the Divine religion and defend it. It was essential that somebody should be appointed to carry on this responsibility and be vested with the authority after the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), to act as the overall authority in the affairs of the religion and the *ummah*.

The *wilãyah* is a single project; it was incomplete until it was completed with appointment of the one who was vested with the authority after the Prophet.

Now that the religion has became perfect in its legislation and the bounty of *wilãyah* is completed, I have chosen for you the Islam as religion, which is the religion of monotheism, in which no one is worshipped except Allãh and no one is obeyed (and obedience is a sort of worship) except Allãh and those whose obedience He has made obligatory for you, that is, the Messenger and the *waliyy.*

The verse makes it clear that the believers are today enjoying the security after they were afraid before, and that Allãh has chosen for them that they should devotedly adhere to Islam, the religion of monotheism. It is compulsory for them that they should worship Allãh without associating anything with Him; they have only to obey Allãh or him whose obedience has been ordered by Allãh. Now, ponder on the Divine words: *Allãh has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever disbelieves after this, these it is who are the transgressors* (24:55). Then place it parallel to the verses under discussion: *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.* You will at onece appreciate that this verse is the fulfilment of the promise given in the chapter of "The Light"; the words: *they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me,* describe the real purpose of this exercise as may be understood also from the end sentence: *and whoever disbelieves after this, these it is who are the transgressors.*

The chapter 24, "The Light", was revealed long before the chapter of "The Table" as it contains the story of slander, the verse of flogging, and that of *ḥijãb* (veil) and other such commandments.

QUR'ĀN: ***but however is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful*** **:** *al-Makhmaṣah* (اَلْمَخْمَصَة = hunger); *at-tajãnuf* (اَلتَّجَانُف = to incline); it denotes inclination of the feet to the outer side; its oposite is *at-taḥãnuf*

(لِّتَحَانُف) which denotes their inclination to the inner side. The verse, in this context, shows three things:

1. This order is secondary, meant only for emergencies.
2. The permission to take unlawful food is limited to that small amount which removes the pangs of hunger and averts the emergency.
3. The Divine forgiveness and mercy is used in relation to the sins which make one liable to punishment; and likewise, it may be used in connection with the source of those sins, that is, the law contravening which results in sin and brings punishment in its wake.

A DISCOURSE ON SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS

1. Various Views Concerning Eating of Meat:

There is no doubt that man, like all other animals and vegetables, has been provided with alimentary system with which he ingests those material ingredients which he can process to make them a part of his body and thus keep himself alive. So far as the nature is concerned, there is nothing to prevent him from eating whatever he can chew and swallow, the exceptions being the things which bring harm to him or create aversion.

As for harmfulness, the realization comess when he recognizes that the thing which he wants to eat is harmful to his body as, e.g., it is poisonous or things like that; then he restrains himself from eating it; or when he finds that eating it will cause him spiritual harm, like the things which are forbidden in various religions.This self-restraint is ideational.

As for aversion, it emanates from odiousness and dirtiness which repulses man from the thing; a man does not eat his faeces because by nature he thinks it is dirty (although some children and insane persons have been seen eating it). To this natural repulsion is added what results from religious beliefs or various customs prevalent in different societies. For example, the Muslims treat pork as dirty and unclean while the Christians enjoy eating it. In the same way, the Western people eat many animals which the orientals treat as unclean, like crabs, frogs and rats, etc. This type of aversion results from acquired disposition which we call second nature.

It shows that so far as eating of meats is concerned, mankind is divided in numerous categories. The spectrum shows on one side total prohibition and on the other unrestricted indulgence. When he uses

some meats he follows the dictates of nature, and when he refrains from some items, it emanates from some ideology, or is a result of his second nature.

The Buddhist system prohibited use of all animals altogether. This is one extreme, and its opposite is the excess which was prevalent among uncivilized people, in Africa and elsewhere, who had no hesitation in eating any meat, even the flesh of man.

The Arabs used to eat the meat of quardrupeds and other animals, even rats and lizards; they ate all types of dead catle which they killed by slaughteringor which died by itself, was strangled or beaten to death; they ate what died as a result of a fall, or by being gored by another animal, or which was killed by beasts of prey. They rediculed the Muslims saying: Why is it that you eat what you kill yourselves and do not eat what has been killed by Allãḥ Many people offer similar objections even today. Some people say: What is the difference between one flesh and the other, when the human body does not get any harm from, especially if it is hygienically prepared, because the digestive system does not differentiate between this and thaṭ

The Arabs also used to eat blood; they filled the intestine with blood, roasted it and offered it to the guests. During famine days, they used to wound their camels with arrows and drank the blood which came gushing out. Even today, eating of blood is common among many non-Muslims communities.

The Chinese Buddhists are more liberal than the ancient Arabs; reportedly, they eat all types of animals including dogs and cats, even the worms, sea-shells and all types of insects.

Islam has charted a middle course, and has allowed the meats which are agreeable to the normal human nature. It has selected in quardrupeds the cattles like sheep, goats, cows and camels (also horse and donkey, although with dislike); among the birds, it disallowed the birds of prey and allowed those other birds which have craw and those which flap their wings more often and do not have talon; in marine animals, it has allowed some categories of fish, details of which may be found in books of *sharī'ah*.

Even while allowing above-mentioned animals, it has prohibited its blood and that which has died of itself and on which the name of Allãh has not been invoked. The purpose behind these rules is to revitalize the natural canon, inasmuch as the man naturally likes to eat meat. Together with it, Islam respects the correct thinking and normal nature as these too are repulsed from eating those things which

may prove harmful to human being or which the human nature thinks odious and unclean.

2. How Allãh Allowed Killing of Animals When the Mercy Rejects iṭ:

It may be asked: The animal has a spirit which is endowed with feelings similar to that which a man has: man hates the torture of slaughtering, the bitter taste of death and is endowed with the natural love of self. These are the feelings which incite a man to flee from every disliked and dangerous situation. This realization of our own feelings demands from us that we should look with respect and mercy on other human beings, because they too feel the same pain as we do, and all souls are equal. The same argument can be advanced for animal species. How can we inflict on animals the sufferings which we ourselves do not accepṭ How can we exchange their sweet life with bitter deatḥ What right do we have to deprive them of the bounty of life which is the best of the bountieṣ Allãh is the most Merciful of all. How can His Mercy allow us to kill an animal for enjoying its meat when both of us are equally His creatureṣ

Reply: This question gives precedence to the feelings over the realities. Legislation follows the real good of humanity and not the emotional feelings. We may expound it as follows: Look minutely at all the things which you find around yourselves; you will see that all of them in their creation and continuity follow the law of continuous change. All things without exception do change to other things; and those other things in their turn do change into these things – directly or indirectly. Nothing comes into being unless another thing loses its existence in the process. Nothing continues living on this earth without something else going out of existence. This material world is the world of change and exchange; or you may say, the world of the eater and the eaten. The earthly compounds eat the earth itself by absorbing its chemicals to themselves changing them to their own images; then after sometime, the earth again eats and destroys them. Again, the vegetable world gets its nourishment from the earth and absorbs the air then later the earth eats it down to its original ingredients, the first elements: and this cycle continues.

How comes the animal world which gets its nourishment from vegetables, water and air. Some animals feed themselves on other animals, like the wild beasts which eat of their preys; and likewise predatory birds eat the pigeons and sparrows. The digestive systems of these carnivorous animals and birds do not accept any other food. The

small birds in their turn feed on grain, flies, fleas, insects and mosquitoes, while the mosquitoes feed on blood of man and other animals. Then, finally, the earth devours them all.

Clearly, the system of creation which has overall control on all the creatures, has ordained that man should get nourishment from meats, etc.; then it has guided the various parts of existence towards it. It is the system which has created in human beings the ability to get sustenance from both animals and vegetables. He has in the front of his alimentary system the teeth some of which are made to cut, the others to break, some to tear and others to grind; they are called canines, molars, premolars and incisors; man is not like goat or cow which cannot cut or tear apart, nor is he like beasts of prey which cannot grind or incise.

The faculty of taste with which his mouth is equipped finds the taste of meats pleasant; then other organs of his digestive system likewise find the meats delicious and long for it. All this is a part of creative guidance which proves that the Creator has given him permission to use and eat various meats. How can we separate this creative guidance from lawfulness of the work which this guidance leads to.

Islam is a natural religion. Its only aim is to revive the tracks of nature which the human ignorance has obliterated. It is bound to declare lawful what the creation guides to and the nature decrees. Islamic legislation revives this natural commandment; and in the same way it restores other arrangements which the Creator has ingrained in our nature. We have already mentioned that it confirms the decree of reason that one should abstain from such meats which are harmful physically or spiritually; and it strengthens the inner feelings by prohibiting what the normal human nature dislikes or feels aversion from. These two principles ultimately are based on the Divine management of the creation; and Islam has given credence to them. It has prohibited that which harms the growthof body and has forbidden that which is injurious to the well-being of human society; for example, that which has been slaughtered in the name of other than Allãh or that which has been obtained through gambling and dividingwith arrows and so on; and it has prohibited those repulsive things which the nature abhors.

As for the idea of mercy which prevents one from torturing or killing other living beings, there is no doubt that mercy is a fine gift of Allãh which has been ingrained in the human nature, and in many animals as well, as we have sometimes observed. But the Creator has

not given it the status that it should enjoy absolute power over all affairs, or should command unqualified obedience. The creation itself has not given the mercy free rein; otherwise, there would not have been in this world any trace of grief, disease, suffering and various types of tortures and oppressions.

Moreover, human mercy in itself is not like justice, inasmuch as it is not an absolute noble characteristic which admits no restriction. Had it been so, then it would not have been proper to punish an oppressor for his oppression or to penalize a criminal for his crime; nor would we have been allowed to confront a transgression with similar action. If mercy means this, then the earth and all that is on it would perish.

However, Islam has not neglected the demands of mercy altogether, because it is among the creation's gifts. It has ordered us to deal with the animals with mercy. It has forbidden us to torture the animal at the time of slaughter; it doesn't allow to dissect the limbs of the slaughtered animal before it has died, nor is it allowed to skin it while it is alive. The prohibition of strangling an animal or beating it to death comes under this category of rules. Also, it has forbidden to slaughter an animal with another one looking at it. At the time of slaughtering, many rules based on mercy have been laid down, as for example, the animal should be given water before slaughtering, and so on, details of which can be seen in books of jurisprudence.

When all is said and written, the fact remains that Islam is a religion of reason, not of sentiments; it does not give precedence to the dictates of sentiments over the rules which are meant to bring reform in the human society. It accepts only that sentiment which is accepted by the reason; so in the end, that too becomes the dictate of reason.

As for the talk of Divine Mercy and His being the most Merciful of all, do they think that Allãh is a tender-hearted being? Or that His senses are influenced and He feels pity on some things Obviously, these are material and physical characteristics and Allãh is far above such things. The Divine Mercy means that Allãh bestows good on someone who deserves it as much as he deserves it That is why sometimes what we think is punishment turns out to be the Mercy from Him, and *vice versa*. Consequently, according to the reason, it is not good to neglect or discard a beneficial action by listening to what is suggested by our false mercy. Nor is it allowed to be negligent in legislating the *sharī'ah*, keeping in view the realities of the creation.

It appears from the above, that Islam follows the dictates of nature when it allows eating of meat, and enforces the the conditions for that, or explains the rules which it has laid down: . . . *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allāh's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know* (30:30).

3. Why Does Islam Insist on Slaughter?

It is another question branching from the previous one: We accept that eating meats is allowed by the human nature. Then why did not Islam restrict it to that meat which comes into hand after an animal's deaṭh It could have allowed that meat which is obtained when an animal dies by itself. Such a rule would have reconciled the creative order of lawfulness of meat with the demand of Mercy which forbids man to torture an animal by killing or slaughter; there was no need to lay down special rites of slaughtering.

Its reply is clear from what we have said in the preceding question. Mercy in this meaning is not to be necessarily pursued; in fact, following the dictates of such mercy will nullify the norm of realities. However, as explained earlier, Islam has not spared any effort to deal with the animals mercifully, as much as was possible in this respect; it has been done in response to this fine human instinct.

Moreover, if we restrict the lawfulness of meat to the one obtained from a dead body, the only result will be the spread of diseases and physical harm which in itself is against the demands of mercy. Such an order will create a critical situation in general which the reason says must be avoided[35].

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[35] **Why invoking the Name of Allāh?:** The animals have not been created by us; they are the creatures of Allāh. It is His favour and grace that He has allowed us to use their meat. Therefore, it is necessary to invoke His name at the time of slaughtering them, so that we may show our gratitude to Allāh and establish our right for killing and eating them.

Why facing the *qiblah*?: As for facing the direction of *qiblah,* its reason is not difficult to understand. It is the same reason for which we are ordered to face towards Mecca during prayers And that reason is the manifestation of the universal unity of the Muslims, all of whom turn towards the Ka`bah for prayers and on certain prescribed occasions like slaughtering. (*Your Questions Answered,* vol.7, by S.S. Akhtar Rizvi)

TRADITIONS I

‘Ikrimah narrates from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said, "No verse was revealed (with the words): *O you who believe!* but ‘Alī is its chief and its head. Allãh has admonished the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) in more than one place, but He has never mentioned ‘Alī except with good (words)." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: The same *ḥadīth* upto the words "its head" has been narrated in *Tafsīru 'l-burhãn* from Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn ‘Abbãs; al-‘Ayyãshī also has narrated it from ‘Ikrimah; and we have quoted this *ḥadīth* earlier from *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr.* Some traditions quote ar-Riḍã (a.s.) as saying: "There is not in the Qur’ãn: *O you who believe!* except about us." This *ḥadīth* is based on the flow of Qur’ãn or describes the esoteric meaning of the revelation.

‘Abdullãh ibn Sinãn says, "I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about the words of Allãh: *O you who believe! flfil the covenants.* He said, '(It means) agreements'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: al-Qummī has also narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from him.

ash-Shaykh aṭ-Ṭūsī narrates through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he said, "I asked of one the two (i.e., the 5th or the 6th Imãm, a.s.) about the words of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *The Cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you*. The Imãm said, 'The foetus in th wom of its mother when hair or wool grows on its body, then its mother's slaughter is also its slaughter and this is what Allãh has meant (here).'" (*at-Tahdhīb*)

The author says: This *ḥadīth* is narrated in *al-Kãfī* and *al-Faqīh* from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from one of the two (a.s.); al-‘Ayyãshī in his *Tafsīr* has narrated this theme from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from one of the two, and from Zurãrah from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.); and al-Qummī has also narrated it in his *Tafsīr;* and aṭ-Ṭabrisī has narrated it in *Majma‘u 'l-bayãn* from Abū Ja‘far and Abū ‘Abdillãh (peace be on them).

al-Qummī writes in his *Tafsīr* under the words of Allãh: *O you who believe! do not violate the signs appointed by Allãh . . .* : The signs: *Iḥrãm, ṭawãf,* prayer in the place of Ibrãhīm, running between Ṣafã and Marwã and other rituals are all among the signs appointed by Allãh. Also, it is among the signs that when a man drives his sacrifice

for *ḥajj* and puts some signs on it, as for example, if he wounds the camel's hump or some other part of its skin or puts a garland (of old choes) on its neck in order to make the people know that it was a sacrificial animal so that nobody would meddle with it. This is called *ash-sha'ãir* (اَلشَّعَائِر = sign,indications) because it indicates to the people its purpose. The words: *nor the sacred month,* indicate here the month of Dhi 'l-ḥijjah which is one of the sacred months; *nor the offerings,* points to the animal which is driven by the pilgrim after he wears *iḥrãm; nor the symbolic garlands* – the garland is made of the shoes in which he has prayed; *nor those going to the Sacred House* – those who go for pilgrimage of the House. (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

aṭ-Ṭabrisī says, "Abū Ja'far al-Bãqir (a.s.) said, 'This verse was revealed concerning a man from Banū Rabī'ah who was called al-Ḥuṭam.'" aṭ-Ṭabrisī goes on to say, as-Suddī has said, 'al-Ḥuṭam ibn Hind al-Bakrī came until he reached the Prophet alone, and he had left his group outside Medina; then he asked, "To what do you call (us)?" – The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had already told his companions, "Today will come to you from Banū Rabī'ah (a man) who speaks with the tongue of Satan" – When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied, he said, "Give me some time; probably I wil accept Islam; and there are people who I should consult." Then he went out. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, "Surely he entered with a *kãfir* face and went out with a treacherous back." Then, al-Ḥuṭam passed by some camels of Medina which were left to pasture, and he took all of them and went away; and he was singing (the following lines):

Tonight Ḥuṭam rolled up with animal drivers,
He is not a herdsman of camles nor a shepherd,
Nor is he a butcher working on a butcher's block,
They all were asleep, but the son of Hind did not sleep,
The night was passing and a young man was enduring it
who is straight like an arrow,
With well-developed legs and smooth feet.

Then, next year he came for *ḥajj* and had put symbolic garlands on the neck of (those) camels. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was thinking of sending some people to him. Then this verse was revealed: *nor those going to the Sacred House.*'" (*Majma'u 'l-bayãn*)

aṭ-Ṭabrisī further says, "Ibn Zayd has said that it was revealed on the day Mecca was conquered about those polytheists who were coming to the House and saying *talbīyyah* of *`umrah*. The Muslims said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! These too are polytheists like these (Meccans). Let us aid them.' Then Allãh revealed this verse."

The author says: aṭ-Ṭabarī has narrated the first story from as-Suddī and ‘Ikrimah and the second one from Ibn Zayd; *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* narrates the second story through Ibn Abī Ḥãtim from Zayd ibn Aslam and there it is said that it was on the day of al-Ḥudaybiyyah; but neither story conforms with what is almost unanimously agreed by the exegetes and the narrators that the chapter of "The Table" was revealed in the last pilgrimage. In other words, the Divine orders: . . . *the idolators are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this* (very) *year* . . . (9:28); . . . *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them* . . . (9:5), were already revealed before the Divine words: *nor those going to the Sacred House.* So, there is no reason why should this last order be taken to forbid confronting the idolworshippers when they go to the Sacred House, [because they had already ceased to visit it].

Probably, something from these two or similar stories was the reason of the traditions narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs, Mujãhid, Qatãdah and aḍ-Ḍaḥḥãk that the words: *nor those going to the Sacred House,* are abrogated by the words: *then slay the idolators wherever you find them,* and the words: *the idolators are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this* (very) *year.* al-Qummī also has written about this abrogation in his *Tafsīr* and it seems that that too is a tradition. But all these traditions should be discarded because the chapter of "The Table" was the last to be revealed and it has been narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) that this chapter is abrogating, not abrogated. Moreover, the Divine words: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . ,* totally refute the idea that some of its verses would be abrogated. Keeping all this in view, the words: *nor those going to the Sacred House,* may be taken to be an explanation of the words which follow: *and let not the hatred of a people – because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque – incite you to exceed limits.* You should not violate the sanctity of the House they had in the past hindered you from the Sacred House; Nor should you commit transgretion against those who had hindered you from the sacred Mosque before; don't commit any sin like murder against them, nor any lesser transgression and injustice; rather you should cooperate with each other in righteousness and piety.

Aḥmad and ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd have narrated about the verse: *and help one another in righteousness and piety;* and al-Bukhãrī has narrated in his *Tãrīkh* – all from Wãbiṣah that he said: "I came to the

Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and I had intended that I would not leave any item of righteousness and sin without asking him about it. (The Prophet) said to me: 'O Wãbiṣah! Should I tell you what you have come to ask about or you would ask?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! You tellme.' He said, 'You have come to ask about righteousness and sin.' Then the Prophet joined his three fingers and kept poking them at my chest and he was telling, 'O Wãbiṣah! Ask your heart, ask your heart, righteousness is which the heart gets tranquility and you get peace of mind, and the sin is that which upsets (your) heart and creates uncertainty – even if people give you rullings and rullings.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Aḥmad, ‘Abd bin Ḥamīd, Ibn Ḥibbãn, aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, al-Ḥãkim (and he has said that it is correct) and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Abū Amãmah (that he said), "A man asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about sin. The Prophet said: 'Whatever makes your soul restless, leave it.' He said: 'Then what is *īmãn*?' The Prophet said, 'Whoever is grieved for his evil (deed) and is pleased with his good (deed) is a believer.’" (*ibid.*)

Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad, al-Bukhãrī (in *al-Adab*), Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, al-Ḥãkim and al-Bayhaqī (in his *Shu‘abu 'l-īmãn*) have narrated from an-Nawwãs ibn Sam‘ãn that he said, 'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was asked about righteousness and sin. He said, 'Righteousness is good behaviour and sin is that which keeps your soul restless and you do not like that people should come to know about it.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: As you see, these traditions are based on the words of Allãh: *And the soul and Him who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it* (91:7-8); and they support what we have written earlier about the meaning of sin.

aṭ-Ṭabrisī has written: There is a difference of opinion about it (i.e., the Divine words: *nor those going to the Sacred House*). It has been said that it is abrogated by the words of Allãh: *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them,* and this has been written by most of the exegetes; on the other hand, it is said that nothing from this chapter has been abrogated nor from this verse, because it was not lawful to start fighting with the polytheists in the sacred months except when they start it. Then he has said that it is narrated from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.).

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain from Abãn ibn Taghlib from Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Bãqir (blessings of Allãh be on them) that he said: "Dead body, blood and flesh of swine is known: *that on which any other name than that of Allãh has been invoked,* that is, what has been slaughtered on idols. As for the strangled (animal), the fire-worshippers did not eat slaughtered animals rather they ate dead ones; they used to strangle cow and sheep, and when it died, they ate it; *and that beaten to death:* they used to tie its legs and beat it until it died and then they ate it; *and that killed by a fall*: they used to blindfold it and throw it from a roof, when it died, they ate it; *and that killed by being smitten with the horn*: they made the rams fight each other and when one of them died, they ate it; *and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter*: they used to eat what was killed by wolf, lion and bear; so Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, prohibited; *and what is sacrificed on stones set up* (for idols): they (the zoroastrians) used to sacrificed animals in their fire-temple; and the Qurayshites used to worship trees and stones and slaughtered animals on them; *and that you divide by arrows; that is a transgression*:" He said: "They used to take an animal and divide it into ten parts[36], then they gathered and took out the arrows (and they gave it to a man) and there were 10 arrows, seven of which had got shares and three were without any share. Those with shares were: *al-fadhdh, at-taw'am, al-musbil, an-nãfis, al-ḥils, ar-raqīb* and *al-mu'allã, al-fadhdh* had one share, *at-taw'am* two, *al-musbil* three, *an-nãfis* four, *al-ḥils* five, *ar-raqīb* six and *al-mu'allã* had seven shares. Those without share were *as-safīḥ, al-munīḥ* and *al-waghad*; and the animals price was paid by those who did not get any share; and it was gambling, therefore, Allãh prohibited it." (*Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*)

The author says: The meanings given in the tradition in explanation of the strangled animal, that beaten to death and that killed by a fall, aim at explaining the verse through examples (as is clear from the next tradition). Also, the exception of *except what you slaughter*, attached to *and that which wild beasts have eaten*, and likewise the words, *that is a transgression*, which qualifies *and that you divide by the arrows*, do not mean that this exception or qualification is limited to these single items.

'Ayyūq ibn Qasūṭ narrates from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) concerning these words, that he said, "The strangled animal is that

[36] It should be 28 parts. (*tr.*)

which is strangulated in the neck; that beaten to death is such a sick animal which doesn't feel the pain of slaughter, it does not agitate its limbs nor blood comes out of it; that killed by a fall is that animal which falls down from roof, etc.; that killed by being smitten with the horn is that which is gored by another animal. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

al-Ḥasan ibn ʻAlī al-Washshāʼ narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.); he says, "I heard him saying that the animals which fall from high place, those smitten with the horn and those which wild beasts have eaten, if you get chance of slaughtering it, then (you may) eat it." (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn ʻAbdillāh narrates from one of his companions that he said, "I said to Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), 'May I be made your ransom! Why did Allāh forbid the dead animal, blood and flesh of swine?' He said, Verily when Allāh, the Blessed, the High, prohibited these to His servants and made the other things lawful to them, it was not because Allāh liked these prohibited things for Himself, Blessed and High is He, nor did He dislike other things so allowed His servants to use it. The fact is that He created the creatures and knew what would sustain their bodies and keep them in good health. Therefore, He made it lawful for them as a favour from Himself for their own well-being; and He knew what would be harmful to them, so He forbade it to them and made it unlawful; yet He allowed it for those facing emergencies, and made it lawful to him when his body could not be sustained otherwise; so He ordered him to partake from it to that amount which would avert the emergency, but not any more.' Then the Imām (a.s.) said, 'As for the dead body, nobody goes near it or eats it but his body becomes weak and thin, and his strength is lost and his generation is discontinued; and one who (habitually) eats dead body will not die but unexpectedly. As for blood, it creates burning thirst and hard-heartedness, mercilessness unkindness; one cannot be sure that he would not kill his child or parents; he cannot be trusted about his firends or companions. As for the flesh of swine, verily Allāh had transformed some groups in various forms, resembling swine, monkey, bear and other such animals; then He prohibited (His servants) to eat the animals of similar shapes in order that they should not be polluted by it and should not take the Divine punishment lightly. As for intoxicants, Allāh has made it unlawful because of its effect and disorder.' Then he said, 'Verily the one addicted to liquor is like the idolwoshipper; it creates in him tremor and takes away his radiance; it destroys his sense of honour, and incites him to indulge in unlawful activities like bloodshed and fornication; when he is

intoxicated, there is no guarantee that he would not assault sexually the women who are within his prohibited degree [like mother, daughter or sister] without being aware of it. The liquor does not lead the drinker except to every type of evil.'" (*ibid.*)

TRADITIONS II

Abu 'l-Muayyad Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad [al-Khwãrazmī] has written in his book *Faḍãil ʻAlī*; he says, "Informed me the chief of the memorisers Shahrdãr ibn Shīrwayh ibn Shahrdãr ad-Daylamī among what he wrote to me from Hamadãn, informed us Abu 'l-Fatḥ ʻAbdūs ibn ʻAbdillãh ibn ʻAbdūs al-Hamadãnī in writing, narrated to us ʻAbdullãh ibn Isḥãq al-Baghawī, narrated to us al-Ḥusayn ibn ʻAlīl al-Ghanawī, narrated to us Muḥammad ibn ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn az-Zarrã', narrated to us Qays ibn Ḥafṣ, narrated to us ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, narrated to us Abū Hurayrah from Abū Saʻīd al-Khudrī, 'Verily, the day the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) called the people to Ghadīr Khumm, he ordered so that the thorns under the trees were swept aside, and that was a Thursday, when he called the people to ʻAlī and holding his arm, he lifted it until people were looking at the whiteness of his armpits; then both did not separate from one another until this verse was revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.* Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, *"Allãhu Akbar!* for perfecting the religion and completing the bounty and for pleasure of the Lord with my Messengership and the *wilãyah* of ʻAlī." Then he said, "O Allãh! Love him who loves him (ʻAlī) and be enemy of him who has enmity with him (ʻAlī) and help him who helps him (`Alī) and forsake him who forsakes him (ʻAlī)." '

"Ḥassãn ibn Thãbit said, 'Do you allow me, O Messenger of Allãh! to compose some lines of poetry?' He said, 'Say it, Allãh will send it down (to you).' So, Ḥassãn ibn Thãbit said:

On the day of Ghadīr their Prophet was calling them,
At Khumm, and how loud was the Prophet as a caller!
That verily I am Your Mawlã, *Yes, and your* Waliyy,
So they all said and did not show there any blindness:
Your God is our Mawlã *and you are our* Waliyy.
And you will not find anyone in the creation disobeying this order.
So he said to him, 'Stand up O ʻAlī! because surely,

I am pleased for you to be the Imām and Leader after me.' "
(*Ghāyatu 'l-marām*)

al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu'aym has narrated a similar *ḥadīth* through his chains from Qays Ibn Rabī' from Abū Hārūn al-'Abdī from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī; and he has added four lines more at the end of the poem:

So whomsoever I am the Master then this is his Master,
Therefore you must be his true helpers and lovers.
Then he prayed (saying)*: "O Allāh! be friend of his lover*
and be the enemy of him who has enmity towards 'Alī."
(*Nuzūlu 'l-Qur'ān fī Amīri 'l-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*)

Also, he narrates through his chains from 'Alī ibn 'Āmir from Abu 'l-Ḥajāf from al-A'mash from 'Aḍḍah that he said: "This verse came down to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) about 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from Your Lord . . . ;* and (also) Allāh has said: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.*" (*ibid.*)

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawaynī said, informed me ash-Shaykh Tāju 'd-Dīn Abū Ṭālib 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Uthmān ibn 'Abdillāh al-Khāzin; he said, informed us al-Imām Burhānu 'd-Dīn Nāṣir ibn Abi 'l-Makārim al-Maṭrazī through Ijāzah; he said, informed us al-Imām Akhtab Khwārazm Abu 'l-Muayyad Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad al-Makkī al-Khwārazmī; he said, informed me the Chief of the memorizers in what he wrote to me from Hamadān; informed us ar-Raīs Abu 'l-Fatḥ in writing; narrated to us 'Abdullāh ibn Isḥāq al-Baghawī; informed us al-Ḥasan ibn 'Aqīl al-Ghanawī; informed us Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh az-Zarrā'; informed us Qays ibn Ḥafṣ, he said, narrated to me 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-'Abdī from Abū Hārūn al-'Abdī from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (and he narrated like the first tradition). (*ibid.*)

al-Ḥamawaynī has also narrated from the Chief of the memorizers and Abū Manṣūr Shahrdār ibn Shīrwayh ibn Shahdār ad-Daylamī; he said informed us al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaddād al-Muqri' al-Ḥāfiẓ from Aḥmad ibn 'Abdillāh ibn Aḥmad; he said, informed us Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī; he said, informed us Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah; he said, informed us Yaḥyā al-Ḥammānī; he said, informed us Qays ibn ar-Rabī' from Abū Hārūn al-'Abdī from Abū Sa'īd al-Kudrī (and narrated like the first tradition) (*ibid.*)

al-Ḥamawaynī has said after this tradition: "This tradition has many paths to Abū Sa'd ibn Mālik al-Khudrī al-Anṣārī."

as-Sayyid ar-Raḍī (r.a.) has narrated from Muḥammad ibn Isḥãq from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) from his father, from his grandfather that he said, "When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) returned from the Last Pilgrimage, he came down at a place called Ḍawjãn; then this verse came down: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allãh will protect you from the people* (5:67). When it was revealed that he would be protected from the people, he (ordered to) call: The prayer in congregation! So, the people gathered near him. He said, 'Who has more authority on you than you have yourselveṣ' All of them cried out and said, 'Allãh and His Messenger.' So he held the hand of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib and said, 'Whomsoever I am the Master, 'Alī is his Master. O Allãh! befriend him who befriends him, and be enemy of him who is his enemy, and help him who helps him, and forsake him who forsakes him; because he is from me and I am from him, and his status with me is like that of Hārūn with Mūsã except that there is no prophet after me.' It was the last obligation which Allãh, the High, imposed on the *ummah* of Muḥammad. Then Allãh, the High, revealed to His Prophet: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as a religion.*"

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said, "So they accepted from the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) all the obligations that Allãh had imposed on them: the prayer, fast, *zakãt* and *ḥajj,* and confirmed his truthfulness in all these things."

Ibn Isḥãq said, "I said to Abū Ja'far (a.s.), 'When was thaṭ' He said, 'On 19th[37] Dhi 'l-ḥijjah 10 AH[38] during his return journey from the last pilgrimage and there were between that and [the death of] the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) 100 days[39], and had heard the Messenger of Allãh at Ghadīr Khumm twelve[40].'" (*al-Manãqibu 'l-fãkhirah*)

Ibnu 'l-Maghãzilī narrates through his chains from Abū Hurayrah that he said, "Whoever will fast on the 18th day of Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, Allãh will write for him the fast of sixty months; and that is the day of Ghadīr Khumm. At that place, the Prophet took (from the Muslims) the *bay'ah* of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib and said, 'Whomsoever I

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[37] *al-Burhãn,* says, 17th. (*Author's note*)
[38] The correct date is 18th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, not 17th or 19th. (*tr.*)
[39] This too is not correct. Between Ghadīr day and the death of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) were 70 days (according to the Shī`ah and Sunnī traditions). (*tr.*)
[40] *al-Burhãn,* says, twelve men. (*Author's note*)

am the Master ‘Alī is his Master, O Allāh! befriend him who befriends him, and be enemy of him who is his enemy, and help him who helps him.' Then ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said to him, 'Congratulations! Congratulations! to you, O son of Abū Ṭćlib! you became my *mawlā* and *mawlā* of every believing man and woman.' Then Allāh, the High, sent down the verse: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed . . .* " (*al-Manāqib*)

There are traditions like the first one narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī in *al-Manāqib* of Ibn Marduwayh and in *Saraqātu 'sh-shi‘r* of al-Marzubānī.

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* the two traditions from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and Abū Hurayrah, and has said that the chains of narrators of both are weak. And it has been narrated through many chains that end at the companions like ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Mu‘āwiyah and Sumrah that the verse revealed on the day of ‘Arafah in the Last Pilgrimage and it was a Friday. The reliable among these traditions is that which has been narrated from ‘Umar. (as-Suyūṭī) has narrated it from al-Ḥamīdī, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, ar-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu ’l-Mundhir, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) from Ṭāriq ibn Shahāb from ‘Umar; and has narrated from Ibn Rāhawayh (in his *al-Musnad*) and ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd from Abu ’l-‘Āliyah from ‘Umar; and also, from Ibn Jarīr, from Qubayṣah ibn Abī Dhuayb from ‘Umar; and also from al-Bazzāz from Ibn ‘Abbās and apparently, he narrates from ‘Umar.

As for the weakness of the chains of narrators of the two traditions, it will not help him at all in proving the weakness of the text of the tradition. We have explained clearly in the foregoing Commentary that the theme of the noble verse does not fit on any hyphothesis except the even of Ghadīr. All other meanings claimed for it are clearly off the mark. Therefore, the two traditions and others of the same meaning conform with the Book of Allāh – contrary to all other traditions – therefore, only these traditions have to be accepted.

Moreover, these traditions which show that the verse was revealed on the subject of *al-wilāyah* – there are more than twenty traditions from the Sunnī and Shī‘ah chains – are closely related to the traditions describing the reason of revelation of the Divine words: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord . . .* (5:67) – and there are more than fifteen such traditions narrated by both the sects – and all this together is connected with the tradition of Ghadīr: 'Whomsoever I am the Master, ‘Alī is his Master;' and it is a

mutawãtir tradition narrated by a huge number of the companions and a great many scholars of both sects have accepted that it is *mutawãtir*.

And it is agreed upon that this had happened when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was returning from Mecca to Medina; and this *wilãyah* (if it is not to be taken as a jest or joke) is an obligatory order like loving the friends of Allãh and keeping aloof from His enemies, which have been explicitly ordered in many verses of the Qur'ãn. Keeping allthis in view, it is not possible to say that this obligatory order of *wilãyah* was revealed after the revelation of the verse: This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . Obviously, this verse must have been revealed after the legislation of *al-wilãyah*. If there are traditions which show something different from this reality, then they are not to be relied upon.

You have already known what is the position of the tradition which as-Suyūṭī has narrated from 'Umar. However, there is one thing to which attention should be drawn. If we look at the two noble verses: *O Messenger! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His Message, and Allãh will protect you from the people* (as we shall describe its meaning later on), and: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . ,* together with the traditions written about them by both sects, and the *mutawãtir* traditions of Ghadīr; and then we study the internal condition of the Islamic Society during the last days of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.), and deeply ponder on all this phenomenon, we will feel certain that the order of *al-wilãyah* was already revealed some days before the day of Ghadīr, but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was hesitating to announce it before the masses, fearing that people would not accept it or would confront the Prophet with evil intentions, which would result in damaging his mission; he was postponing its announcment from today to tomorrow until the the Divine order came: *O Prophet! deliver what has been revealed to you . . . ,* and this did not leave him any room for delaying.

Accordingly, it may be surmised that Allãh had revealed a major part of this chapter including: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . ,* together with the order of *al-wilãyah;* and all this happened on the day of 'Arafah; but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) postponed the announcement of *al-wilãyah* upto Ghadīr Khumm, although he recited the verse referring to it on the day of 'Arafah. As for the traditions which sho its revelation on the day of Ghadīr, it is not improbable that the idea sprang because the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had

recited this verse at the time when he announced the order of *al-wilãyah* as the verse was revealed for the same purpose.

If we accept this hypothesis, then there would not remain any contradiction between those traditions which say that the verse was revealed about *al-wilãyah* and those which say that it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah, as has been narrated from ‘Umar, ‘Alī, Mu‘ãwiyah and Sumrah. There would have been contradiction if one group of the traditions had said that it was revealed on the day of Ghadīr Khumm and the other had said that it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah.

As for those traditions which take the verse to mean that the religion was perfected by *ḥajj,* etc., these are merely the narrators' own interpretations. They are supported neither by the Book of Allãh nor by any reliable explanation of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

The hypothesis given above may be inferred from the tradition narrated by al-‘Ayyãshī in his *Tafsīr* from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Khuzã‘ī from his father that he said, "I heard Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) saying, 'When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) reached ‘Arafah on Friday, Jibrīl came to him and said, "Verily Allãh sends you salutations and tells you: 'Say to your *ummah:* "This day I have prefected your religion with *wilãyah* of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib and completed on you My favour and chosen for you Islam as a religion; and I will not descend on you people after this. I have brought for you the prayer, *zakãt,* fast and *ḥajj* and this is the fifth obligation and I shall not come to you after these four except with that (fifth one).'" """

A part from that, there is another difficulty in the tradition narrated from ‘Umar regarding the revelation of this verse on the day of ‘Arafah. All these traditions together describe that some People of the Book – and some name him as Ka‘b – said to ‘Umar, "Verily there is a verse in the Qur’ãn if like that would have been revealed on us, the Jews, we would have taken the day of its revelation as an *‘īd* (feast) and the verse is: *This day have I perfected for you your religion* . . . " ‘Umar said to him, "By Allãh! Surely I know the day and it was the day of ‘Arafah during the Last Pilgrimage."

The wording of the tradition as narrated by Ibn Rãhwayh and ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd from Abu ’l-‘Ãliyah is as follows: He says, "They were near‘`Umar and mentioned this verse. A man from the People of the Book said: 'Had we known on which day this verse was revealed we would have taken it as an *‘īd.*' ‘Umar said, 'All praise is for Allãh who has made it *‘īd* for us and also the next day; it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah and the next day is the day of sacrifice; thus He

perfected the affairs for us; and we understood that the affairs after this will go on deteriorating.'"

The theme mentioned at the end of this tradition has been narrated in another way. It is written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn Abī Shaybah and Ibn Jarīr from ʻAntarah that he said, 'When the verse was revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . .* – and it was the day of the great *ḥajj* – ʻUmar started weeping; the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to him, 'Why are you weeping?' He said, 'The thing which has made me weep is that we were (until now) enjoying the increase in our religion. Now that it has become perfect then nothing ever becomes perfect but starts deteriorating.' The Prophet said, 'You are right.'"

There is another tradition resembling a little with the above which is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Aḥmad from ʻAlqamah ibn ʻAbdillāh al-Muznī who said, "Narrated to me a man who said, 'I was in the gathering room of ʻUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. ʻUmar said to one of those present, "How did you hear the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) describing Islam?" He said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying, 'Verily Islam started [and grew as a camel grows from] a newborn calf, then it grows two teeth[41], then four, then six and then it reaches its peak strength with last set of teeth.' ʻUmar said, "Then there is nothing after completion except deteriorating."'"

As you see, these traditions are intended to show that this verse of "Perfection of Religion" was revealed on the day of ʻArafah for a specific purpose. According to them, it wanted to draw the attention of the people to what they were witnessing of triumph of the religion and its independence at Mecca during *ḥajj* season.

They want to interprete the perfection of religion and completion of Divine favour as the cleanness of Meccan atmosphere from pollution of polytheism, as all the affairs had come under the Muslims' control; on that day there was no religion there except Islam; and the Muslims had no need to fear their enemies or to remain on guard.

In other words, perfection of religion and completion of the bounty means perfection of what they had been given; they acted upon it without ther being any enemy to mingle with them. According to this interpretation, the religion here does not refer to the *sharīʻah* which was laid down by Allāh and which contained tenets, ideologies,

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[41] "Two teeth" means two in the upper jaw and two in the lower. The same is the case with four and six teeth. (*tr.*)

beliefs and the religious laws; and likewise, Islam in this verse refers to that Islam which was in their hands and which they followed. We may say that according to these traditions, religion means the form of the religion which could be witnessed in their actions and the same will be the status of Islam. It is this phenomenon which could be subjected to deterioration after reaching its peak; but as for the basic ideologies, faith and the laws laid down by Allãh, they cannot deteriorate after perfection (the idea which is inferred from ‘Umar's words: 'nothing ever becomes perfect but starts deteriorating'). Surely it is the system prevalent in the creation throughout the human history; and the society too is governed by this law; but the religion cannot come under the sway of these social laws. Of course, we are not talking here with those who believe that the religion too is a social phenomenon which is subject to change and evolution like other social formulas.

When you ponder on these matters, you will realize that this interpretation of ‘Umar is not free from shortcomings:

First: What he understood about the meaning of perfection of religion is not applicable to the Divine words: *This day have I perfected for you your religion . . . ,* as we have explained earlier.

Second: How is it possible that Allãh should count the religion, in the form with which it appeared to the people, as perfect and could ascribe it to His Ownself as a matter of benevolence, just because the land was free from apparent idolworshippers and the society was apparently made up of the Muslims and cleansed from the polytheist enemies – while the very society contained those who were more harmful then the polytheists and more undermining to the Islamic system. They were the hypocrites who had their own secret societies and had infiltrated the inner circle of Islam. They sabotaged the system, turned the affairs upside down, created doubts in the believers' hearts and surreptitiously put in the religion un-Islamic ideas. They posed a greater threat to Islam; and a great number of Qur’ãnic verses and chapters had warned the Muslims of their machinations; as for example, the chapter of "The Hypocrites", and the warnings given in the chapters of "The Cow", "Women", "The Table", "The Spoils". "Repentence " and "The Confederates" and so on.

I wish I knew where did their gang go? How their fire died ouṭ By which strategy their plots were thwarted? And how their falsity was obliterated? When they were present among the Muslims, how was it possible for Allãh to remind the Muslims of His Benevolence just because the exterior of religion had been perfected and apparent

bounties had been completed for them? How could He be pleased by the apparent features of Islam merely because He had banished their idolworshipping enemies from Mecca, while the hypocrites were more inimical towards the Muslims, their danger was greater and it has left bitter results after the prophet. All this may be confirmed from the words of Allãh when He addresses His Prophet about them: *They are the enemy, therefore beware of them* (63:4).

How could Allãh portray it as His Benevolence to the Muslims and describe as perfect the appearance of religion whose inner reality was thiṣ Or praise His Bounties as complete when they were mixed with afflictionṣ Or announce His pleasure with the shape of an Islam whose reality was suchṇ Allãh, the High, the Great, has said: *Nor could I take those who lead* (others) *astray for aiders* (18:51); and He has said about hypocrites – *but if you are pleased with them, yet surely Allãh is not pleased with the transgressing people* (9:96). (In this verse, the pleasure of Allãh is exclusively related to their hypocricy.)

The verse under discussion is absolutely general and no word has been restricted in any way; it speaks about unconditional perfection, completion and pleasure and unrestricted religion, bounty and Islam.

Objections: The verse, as mentioned earlier, is the fulfilment of the promise given in the chapter of the "Light": *Allãh has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors in the earth as He made successors those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall worship Me, not associating aught with Me;* (24:55).

This verse, as you see, promises them to establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them. Parallel to that, we find in this verse: *I have perfected for you your religion,* and, *I have chosen for you Islam as a religion*. Thus, perfection of their chosen religion means establishing it for them, i.e., cleansing it from mingling of the polytheists. As for the hypocrites, their problem was different, not connected with this mingling. It is the connotation to which those traditions point which say that it was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah. That is why it is said that it refers to the fact that the religious rites, and the Muslims who performed it, had been rescued from mingling of the polytheists.

Reply: There is no doubt that: *This day I have perfected . . . ,* points to the fulfilment of the promise given in the verse: *Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good . . .* (24:55); Also, it is accepted that: *perfected for your your religion* is parallel to the words: *most certainly establish their religion which He has chosen for them;* but the verse of the chapter of the "Light" begins with the words: *Allāh has promised to those of you who believe and do good.* Obviously, it was a selected group of the Muslims; appearance of whose deeds fully tallied with their realities, their exterior was one with their inner condition their religious actions were parallel to the religion which was ordained by Allāh. Therefore, establishment of their chosen religion meant perfecting that chosen religion which was in the knowledge, and under the decree, of Allāh, by moulding it in the mould of legislation and gathering all its parts together for them, in order that they should worship Allāh according to that religion, when the unbelievers had despaired of their religion.

That is, as we had said earlier, that perfection of religion means that Allāh perfected it from the point of legislation; now no new obligation was to be revealed after this verse. It does not mean that their actions and particularly their *ḥajj* was cleansed from the rites and *ḥajj* of the idolworshippers. In other words, perfection of religion did happen when Allāh raised it to the highest level of development until there was no question of its ever getting deteriorated after completion.

al-Qummī says: "Narrated to me my father from Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā from al-'Ulā' from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said, 'The last obligatory order which Allāh revealed was *al-wilāyah;* therefore no obligatory order was revealed; then was revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion* . . . at Kurā' al-Ghamīm; and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) established (announced) it at Juḥfah. After that, no obligatory order was revealed.'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

The author says: This theme has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.); and al-'Ayyāshī has narrated it in his *Tafsīr* from Zurārah from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

ash-Shaykh has narated through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Ja'far ibn Muḥammad from his father Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) from the Commander of the Believers 'Alī (a.s.) that he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saying, 'The foundation of Islam is on five characteristics, on the two *shahādah*s and two associates.' He was

told, 'As for the two *shahãdah*s, we know them, but what are the two associateṣ' He said, 'The prayer and the *zakãt*, because one of them will not be accepted without the other; and the fast and the pilgrimage of the House of Allãh upon the one who can afford the journey to it; and he completed it with *al-wilãyah;* then Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as a religion.*'" (*al-Amãlī*)

There is in *Rawḍatu 'l-wã'izīn* (by al-Fattãl) a tradition from Ibnu 'l-Fãrisī from Abū Ja'far (a.s.). The tradition narrates the story of the journey of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to pilgrimage and then his appointing 'Alī for *al-wilãyah* at the time of the return journey to Medina and revelation of this verse; that tradition contains the speech of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) on the day of Ghadīr, and it is a very lengthy speech.

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *al-Iḥtijãj* through a well connected chain from al-Ḥaḍramī from Abū Ja'far al-Bãqir (a.s.); also, al-Kulaynī in *al-Kãfī* and aṣ-Ṣadūq in *al-'Uyūn* have narrated on revelation of the verse of *al-wilãyah,* both through their chains from 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz ibn Muslim from ar-Riḍã (a.s.). The same theme has been narrated by ash-Shaykh in his *al-Amãlī* through his chain from Ibn Abī 'Umayr from al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) from his grandfather, the Commander of the Believers (a.s.). Also , it has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* through his chain from Abū Hãrūn al-'Abdī from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī; also, by ash-Shaykh in his *al-Amãlī* through his chain from Isḥãq ibn Ismã'īl an-Naysãbūrī from aṣ-Ṣãdiq from his father from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (peace be on them all). We are not quoting those traditions for the sake of brevity. Whoever wants to see them should consult the books referred to. And Allãh is the Guide.

* * * * *

End of al-Mīzãn, volume 9

AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān

By:
al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

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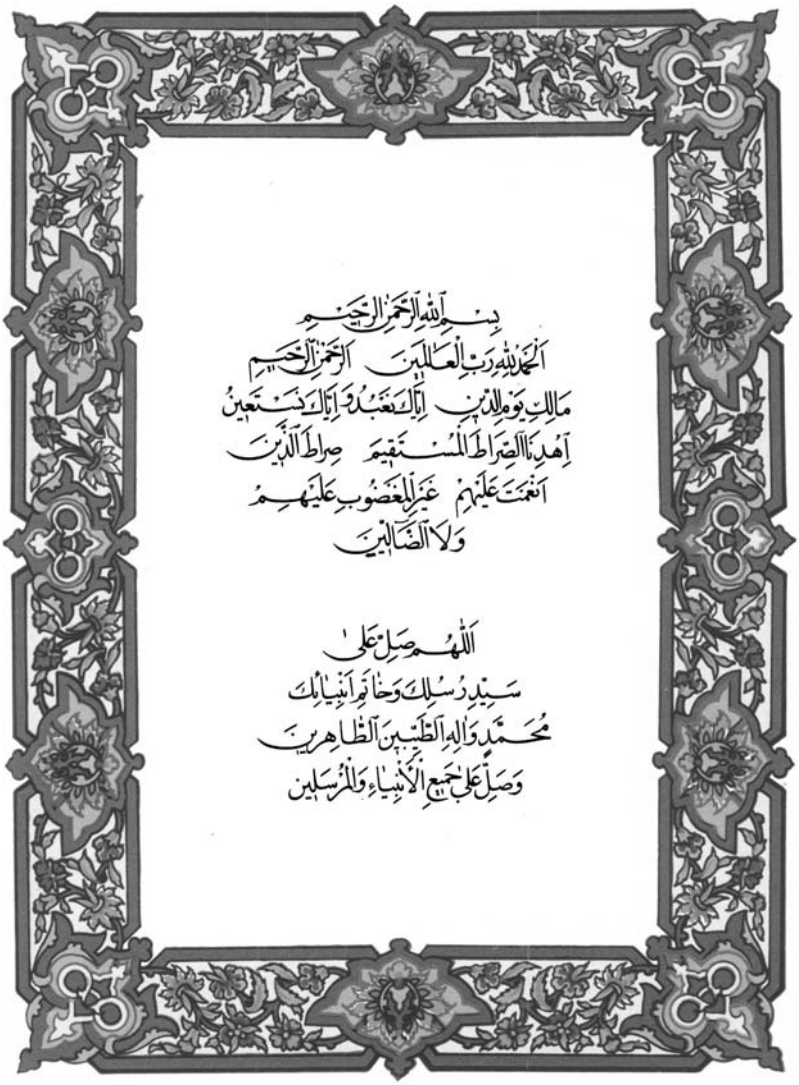
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In the Name of Allãh
The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful

Praise belongs to Allãh, the Lord of all being;
the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succor;
Guide us in the straight path;
The path of those whom thou hast blessed,
Not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

*** * * * ***

O' Allãh! Send your blessing to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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TRANSLITERATION

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ء	’
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ي	y
ة	ah
	.
Short Vowel	
ـَ	a
ـِ (or ـٖ)	i
ـُ	u
Long Vowels	
آ	ã
ـِي	ī
ـُو	ū

تصدير

1- المرحوم العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (1321/1904-1402/1981) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

2- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

3- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة الى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالإنجليزيّة، و بعد مداولات و استشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لأ نّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما ، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرأن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، و كفائته الأدبيّة في التعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الإنجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هو الزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

4- و نحن اذ ننشر (الجزء العاشر) من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة لتفسير (الميزان) و يطابق النّصف الثّاني من الجزء الخامس للنّصّ العربيّ، لنرجوا من الله سبحانه أن يأخذ بأيدينا و يعيننا علي إعداد التّرجمة الكاملة للكتاب و نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين

بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة. و لكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصاً لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولي و نعم النّصير.

1422/6/20 **المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة**
2001/9/9 (لجنة التّأليف و التّرجمة و النّشر)
طهران – ايران

FOREWORD

1. The late al-'Allãmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã'ī (1321/1904 – 1402/1981) – may Allãh have mercy upon him – was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the translation of *al-Mīzãn*.

2. al-'Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã'ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzãn fī tafsīri 'l-Qur'ãn* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the 'Allãmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur'ãn in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzãn* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur'ãn and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustãdh al-'Allãmah as-Sayyid Sa'īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-'Allãmah aṭ-

Ṭabāṭabā'ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the tenth volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*. This volume corresponds with the second half of the fifth volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allāh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendices included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*: One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * * *

We implore upon Allāh to affect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work, which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES

(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

20/6/1422,
9/9/2001,
Tehran – IRAN.

al-Mīzān

Volume Ten

ch.5, vrs. 4 – 54

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَآ أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ ۖ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتُ ۙ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم
مِّنَ ٱلْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۖ فَكُلُوا۟ مِمَّآ أَمْسَكْنَ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱسْمَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ
﴿٤﴾ ٱلْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتُ ۖ وَطَعَامُ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ حِلٌّ
لَّكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ ۖ وَٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتُ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ وَٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتُ
مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَآ ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ
مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَٰفِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِىٓ أَخْدَانٍ ۗ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ
بِٱلْإِيمَٰنِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُۥ وَهُوَ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٥﴾

They ask you as to what is made lawful for them. Say: "The good things are made lawful for you and what you have taught the beasts of prey, training them to hunt – you teach them of what Allah has taught you – so eat of that which they hold for you and mention the name of Allãh over it; and fear Allãh; surely Allãh is swift in reckoning" (4). *This day have been made lawful for you* (all) *good things; and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful*

for them; and the chaste (ones) *from among the believing women and the chaste* (ones) *from among those who have been given the Book before you* (are lawful for you), *when you have given them their dowries, taking* (them) *in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret; and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is forfeited, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers* (5).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: ***They ask you as to what is made lawful for them. Say: "The good things are made lawful for you*****:** It is a general question which has been answered with a general reply; and it lays down an overall principle for differentiating between lawful and unlawful; that a thing using of which is onsidered good is a good thing. The word, "good", is also used without any condition or restriction and it means that the judge for identification of its goodness should be the normal intellect; whatever normal intellect considers good is good, and every good is lawful. We have explained lawfulness and goodness in general terms putting reliance on normal intellect, because according to the fundamentals of jurisprudence that is how generality is explained.

QUR'ÃN: "***and what you have taught the beasts of prey, training them to hunt – you teach them of what Allãh has taught you – so eat of that which they hold for you and mention the name of Allãh over it; . . .***"**:** It is said that this sentence is in conjunction with "good things" i.e. and also lawful for you is what you have taught the beasts of prey i.e. the prey of those beasts which you have taught. This explanation supposes that a word, "prey of", is omitted here but understood. But apparently, the sentence is in conjunction independently with the preceding sentence, and the word, "what", is a preposition of condition and the clause: "so eat of that which they hold for you", gives the result of that condition; so there is no need to suppose omission of any word in the sentence.

al-Jawãriḥ (**اَلْجَوَارِحُ**) is plural of *al-jãriḥah* (**اَلْجَارِحَةُ**), which denotes such a bird or beast, which is used for hunting or preying, like hawk, falcon, dog and cheetah. *Mukallibīn* (**مُكَلِّبِيْنَ**) is the active parti-

ciple of the verb *at-taklīb* (اَلتَّكْلِيبُ = to teach and train dogs for preying; to keep hunting dogs and releasing them for this purpose). The sentence is restricted with the word *mukallibīn* and this may be a sort of indication that the order is reserved for hunting dog and does not cover other preying beasts.

The words: "of that which they hold for you". The restriction, "for you", clearly shows that the lawfulness is limited to that case where the dog preys for its owner, not for itself. The words: "and mention the name of Allāh over it", complete the conditions of lawfulness: the prey should be taken by the beasts of prey according to the given training and the beast should hold it for the hunter and the name of Allāh should be mentioned over it.

The sentences, in short, indicate that the beasts trained for hunting, i.e. the hunting dogs, when they are properly trained and they catch for you any wild animal (eating of which is lawful when it is slaughtered according to the *sharī'ah*) and you have mentioned the name of Allāh at the time of releasing the dog, then you may eat from it if the dog kills it before you reach there (that earlier recitation of Divine name will be counted as the proper slaughter). If the dog doesn't kill it, then you will have to slaughter it properly reciting the name of Allāh; but that doesn't come under this rule.

Then the verse ends on the words: *and fear Allāh; surely Allāh is swift in reckoning*. It clearly shows that one should fear Allāh while hunting wild animals. Hunting should not result in excessive loss of life, nor should it be done merely for game, arrogance, or amusement because Allāh is swift in reckoning and He requits transgression and oppression in this world before the hereafter. Such oppressions and transgressions where people indulge in indiscriminate killings of poor animals inevitably lead one to a very shameful end as we have often seen.

QUR'ĀN: *This day have been made lawful for you* (all) *good things; and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them*: Repetition of lawfulness of good things (although it was mentioned in the immediately preceding verse) and beginning of the verse with the adverb, "This day", aims at showing the favour of Allāh on the believers by making lawful for them the food of the People of the Book and their chaste women.

Probably, the clause: "have been made lawful for you (all) good things", has been added to the clause: "and the food of those who have

been given the Book is lawful for you . . ." to create reassurance in the hearts of the believers by adding a definite order with an order in which there might be room for some doubt; this addition would remove perplexity and uneasiness. For example, a master says to his servant, 'You are the owner of all that I have gifted to you earlier in addition to this and this extra item.' Mentioning previously gifted things will give the servant full confidence concerning the ownership of the later additions. In a way, the same may be the explanation of the following two verses: *For those who do good is good* (reward) *and more* (than this); . . . (10:26). *Therein they shall have whatever they will; and with Us there is yet more* (50:35).

It looks as though the believers' hearts were very perturbed and they felt doubts concerning the lawfulness of the food of the People of the Book, especially in view of the very strict admonition regarding their friendship – they were strictly forbidden to mix with them and have friendly relations with them. In this background, the order concerning their food was joined with the order of lawfulness of good things without any reservation. Now, they could be sure that the Jews' and the Christians' food is like other lawful good things, and their hearts will be at ease. The same is the explanation of the verse: *and the chaste* (ones) *from among the believing women and the chaste* (one) *from among those who have been given the Book before you* (are lawful for you).

The Divine words: "and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them", have not laid down two separate rules. Obviously, it is one speech with a single connotation. The words: "and your food is lawful for them", have not ordained any order for the People of the Book. Even if we say that disbelievers are obliged to follow the orders of Islamic *sharī'ah,* yet they do not believe in Allãh and His Messenger or his Prophethood. They do not listen to the Prophet nor do they accept his commandments; and it is not the style of Qur'ãn to address some people or give any order to them when it is clearly known that such a talk will have no effect on them, and that address will avail nothing. [Of course, if such a talk becomes necessary for some reasons, Allãh turns the address from those people to the Prophet or uses some other modes of speech like that. For example, Allãh says: *Say, "O People of the Book! Come to a word between us and you . . ."* (3:64). *Say: "Glory be to my Lord; am I aught but a human messenger?"* (17:93); there are other many such verses.]

In short, the clauses are not meant legislating two separate laws: one, allowing the food of the People of the Book to the Muslims, and the other, making the food of the Muslims lawful for the People of the Book. Rather, the whole speech gives one order and that is the lawfulness of food for both groups. There is no restriction in between on either side. It is like the Divine words: . . . *then if you find them to be believing women, do not send them back to the unbelievers; neither are these* (women) *lawful for them, nor are those* (men) *lawful for them* . . . (60:10). In other words, there is no lawfulness on any side.

aṭ-Ṭa'ãm (اَلطَّعَامُ) according to philology refers to all that is eaten and taken as nourishment. But it is said that it is used to wheat and other such grains only. *Lisãnu 'l-'Arab* says: "When the people of Ḥijãz use the word *aṭ-ṭa'ãm* without any restriction or association, they mean wheat exclusively." He further says: "al-Khalīl has said, 'In high Arab language *aṭ-ṭa'ãm* is wheat in particular." The same meaning has been given by Ibnu 'l-Athīr in *an-Nihãyah*. It is for this reason that in most of *aḥãdīth* narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l Bayt* (a.s.) it has been declared that *aṭ-ṭa'ãm* in this verse means wheat and other grains, although a few traditions give another meaning; and we shall talk about it under "Traditions".

In any case, this permission does not cover those animals whose meat is forbidden and slaughtering them can make no difference like pig, nor does it cover those lawful animals, which have not been slaughtered properly like the one over which the name of Allãh has not been recited and which has not been slaughtered according to Islamic rules. Allãh has counted the above-mentioned unlawful items in the verses of prohibition (that is, the four verses in the chapters of "The Cow", "The Table, "Cattle" and "The Bee") describing them as uncleanness, transgression, and sin, as we have explained earlier. Far be it from Allãh to allow what He has called uncleanness, transgression, and sin and then to mention it as a favour to the believers.

Moreover, these forbidden things have been enumerated in this very chapter a few lines before this verse. And nobody can claim abrogation in such cases and especially in the chapter of "The Table" about which the traditions say that it is an abrogating chapter, not abrogated.

QUR'ÃN: ***and the chaste*** **(ones)** ***from among the believing women and the chaste*** **(ones)** ***from among those who have been given the***

Book before you **(are lawful for you):** The description of the group using the verb (i.e. among those who have been given the Book), instead of saying, from the Jews and the Christians or even saying, from the People of the Book, points in a way to the reason of the law; because Allãh wants to show His favour and to ease the burden from the believers. The meaning: We have done you a favour by easing the burden by removing the prohibition of marriage between your men and the chaste women of those who have been given the Book before you, because they are nearest to you of all the non-Muslim communities, as they were given the Book and they had believed in One God and the prophets, in contrast to the Idol-worshippers and polytheists who disbelieve in the prophets. Probably, it is for this reason that "those who have been given the Book" is followed by the words "before you"; it clearly indicates a mixing and intermingling.

Be as it may. The verse describes the favour of Allãh and relaxation of rule; such a law cannot be made subject to abrogation. There are two verses which seem to contradict this relaxed law: *And do not marry the idolatress until they believe* (2:221); *and hold not to the ties of marriage of unbelieving women* (60:10). But these two verses cannot abrogate the verse under discussion because the first verse is in the chapter of "The Cow" and it was the first detailed chapter which came down in Medina long before the chapter of "The Table"; and the second one is in the chapter of "The Woman Tested" and it was revealed in Medina before the conquest of Mecca, that is, more than two years before the revelation of the chapter of "The Table". Therefore, the earlier revealed verses cannot abrogate a verse revealed later. Moreover, the traditions say that the chapter of "The Table" was the last chapter revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); it has abrogated some previous laws but nothing has abrogated this chapter. Apart from that, you have seen in the exegesis of the verse 2:221 that these two verses (of "The Cow" and "The Woman Tested") are not concerned at all with the subject of the marriage with a Christian or a Jewish woman.[1]

If one were to claim that the verse of "The Woman Tested" somehow showed unlawfulness of such a marriage, and if one were to say that the tone of the verse of "The Table", showing Divine favour and relaxation proved that such a marriage was previously forbidden – otherwise there was no place for showing favour and relaxation – then this verse of the chapter of "The Table" will abrogate the verse of the

[1] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.3, pp.228-9 (*tr.*)

"The Woman Tested, and not *vice versa.* We shall further talk under "Traditions" about this second verse.

al-Muḥṣanāt (اَلْمُحْصَنَاتُ) has been translated here as "the chaste ones". Chastity is one of the meanings of *al-iḥṣān* (اَلإِحْصَانُ). The clause, "and the chaste (ones) from among the believing women and the chaste (ones) from among those who have been given the Book before you"*,* clearly shows that these women are unmarried, and putting together these two groups of the People of the Book and the believers demands that the word *al-muḥṣanāt* should have the same meaning in both places. It means that *al-iḥṣān* here cannot be interpreted as Islam, because of inclusion of the women of the People of the Book. Also, the word cannot be interpreted as the free women because the Divine favour would remain incomplete if it were confined to the free women and excluded the slave girls. Thus, we see that no connotation of the word, *al-iḥsān,* can fit on this verse except chastity.

The verse explicitly shows the lawfulness of the chaste women of the People of the Book for the believers without mentioning permanent marriage or the *mut'ah;* the only condition is that the believers should give them their dowries and the relationship should be of marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret. It means that the believers are allowed to marry them paying them their dowries and not indulging in illicit relations with them, without mentioning any condition regarding permanency or temporariness of the marriage; and we have described under the Divine words, *Then as to such of them with whom you have* mut'ah that *mut'ah,* is a marriage like the permanent one.[2] Its details should be seen in the books of *fiqh.*

QUR'ĀN: ***when you have given them their dowries, taking*** **(them)** ***in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret*****:** It is the same theme that we had seen in the verse. "*And lawful for you is* (all) *besides that, that you seek* (them) *with your property, taking* (them) *with decency, not committing fornication"* (4:24). This sentence indicates that the verse is speaking about lawfulness of the marriage with chaste women of the People of the Book and does not cover slave girls.

QUR'ĀN: ***and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is forfeited and***

[2] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.8, pp.130-62. (*tr.*)

***in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers*:** *al-Kufr* (اَلْكُفْرُ) actually means to hide, to cover. For covering to take place there must be an object that is covered. An *ḥijãb* (اَلْحِجَابُ = veil) cannot be an *ḥijãb* unless there is something to be veiled. *al-Kufr* may be of Divine favours, of Divine signs or of Allãh and His Messenger and the Last Day.

al-Kufr (= denial, covering) of *Imãn* demands that there should be in the beginning a firm *imãn* (اَلْإِيْمَانُ = belief, faith). It is an attribute, which is firmly, rooted in the believer's heart, that is, the correct and true beliefs, which give rise to the good deeds. In this light, denial of faith means not acting on what one knows to be right and truth. For example, if one neglects the pillars of religion like prayer, *zakãt,* fast and *ḥajj* although he knows that they are the pillars of religion, or keeps friendship with the polytheists, mingling with them and taking part in their activities, although knowing that only Islam is the truth.

This is the significance of the denial of the faith. However, there is a fine point here *al-kufr* denotes hiding and the human mind do not accept that an established thing has been covered and hidden unless it is perpetually kept out of sight. Therefore, a man will be accused of denial of the faith only if he continues to neglect the demands of his faith and does not act according to his knowledge and belief. If he goes against the demands of his faith only once or twice without persisting in that behaviour, then the word *al-kufr* will not be used for him. He will be said to have committed *fisq* (اَلْفِسْقُ = sin).

It appears from the above that "whoever denies faith" actually means whoever persists in denying faith, although the sentence uses the verb instead of adjective. In other words, whoever does not adhere to what he knows to be truth and does not hold fast to the pillars of religion, he is the disbeliever in the faith and all his good deeds are forfeited as Allãh Says: "his work indeed is forfeited".

This verse fully corresponds with the following verses of the chapter of "The Battlements": . . . *and if they see the way of rectitude they do not take it for a way, and if they see the way of error, they take it for a way; this is because they rejected Our signs and were heedless of them. And* (as to) *those who reject Our signs and the meeting of the hereafter, their deeds are forfeited. Shall they be rewarded except for what they have done?* (7:146-7). In this verse, Allãh mentions them as taking the way of error and leaving the way of rectitude after seeing the both, i.e. even after knowing them, then further attributes to them rejection of the signs, and the signs are called signs when it is known

what they indicate; finally, it is explained as rejection of the hereafter because if he does not reject the hereafter the knowledge that it was certainly to come should have prevented him from deviating from the truth; as a result, their deeds are forfeited.

Similar is the theme of the Divine words: *Say: "Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in* (their) *deeds?* (These are) *they whose labour is lost in this world's life and they think that they were acquiring good by their deeds. These are they who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become forfeited, and therefore We will not set up balance for them on the Day of Resurrection . . ."* (18:103-5). It can easily be seen how these verses fit the theme of denial of faith as described above.

If we ponder on the above explanations, we will see how the sentence: "and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is forfeited," becomes connected with the preceding sentences. It in fact completes the preceding statements. The idea is to warn the believers of the danger that would face them if they became lax in sincerely following the commands of Allãh. They should not freely mingle with desbelievers. Allãh has allowed them the food and the chaste women of the People of the Book to bring some ease in the believers' lives in order that it should become a means of spreading piety; hopefully it would cause the pure Islamic morality to seep into the non-Muslim society. It would create beneficial knowledge and propagate good deeds.

This is the main purpose of this legislation. It was not meant for the Muslims to tumble down the pitfalls of debauchery and descend into the valleys of lechery and lewdness. They should not be beguiled in their desires nor should they be infatuated with their beauty, lest they gain the upper hand and their culture and their people's culture dominate the Muslim society; then their misconduct will vanquish the Islamic righteousness. This, in its turn, will bring a greater calamity and the believers will become victims of degradation and retrogression. Consequently, this Divine favour will become a devastating tribulation and this relaxation turn into a curse instead of a blessing. That is why Allãh warned the believers – after describing lawfulness of their food and chaste women – that they should not rush headlong into taking advantage of this relaxed rule in such a way that it leads them to the denial of faith and neglect of the pillars of religion; otherwise, it would cause nullification of all their good deeds and in the hereafter all their deeds will be forfeited.

The exegetes while explaining these two verses have plunged

into unknown waters and come up with astonishing explanations which are neither supported by the Qur'ãnic wordings, nor are in keeping with the context.

For example, one has said that the clause: *The good things are made lawful for you,* refers to *baḥīrah, sãibah, waṣīlah* and *ḥãmī*.[3] Another has said that the words: *the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you,* denote that in basic principle the food of the People of the Book is lawful for the believers, Allãh has never forbidden it; and that the animals' meat too is lawful even if it had been slaughtered according to their own custom. A third one said that the verse shows that you may eat with them on one table. Someone wrote that the clause: *and the chaste* (ones) *from among those who have been given the book before you,* shows that these chaste women were lawful to the believers from the beginning, they were never forbidden before because the clause: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that* (4:24), was enough to make them lawful. Another one said that the sentence: "and whoever denies faith his work indeed is forteited", sounds a warning to the believers that they should not reject the order allowing them the food of the People of the Book and their chaste women.

They have written these and other similar meanings some of which are sheer foolhardiness and others are arbitrary; still others are totally against the context and do not look at the adverb "This day" nor at the favour and relaxation. What we have described earlier in the Commentary is enough to show the invalidity of such interpretations. The claim that the clause: *and lawful for you is* (all) *besides that* (4:24), shows the lawfulness of marriage with women of the People of the Book, is clearly invalid because the verses 4:23-24 aim at describing the lawfulness and unlawfulness of women because of consanguinity and marriage. They are not concerned with difference of religion.

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[3] *Baḥīrah* was a she-camel exempted from slaughter or carrying of any burdens after she had brought forth five or ten issues. *Sãibah* was a beast left to pasture without attention or restriction; she was neither ridden on nor milked. *Waṣīlah* was a goat under some superstition. *Ḥãmī* was a stallion-camel, left free, not made use of in any way.

Slaughtering them or eating their meat was a taboo in pre-Islamic days, and Islamic abolished their superstitious rituals of the Idol-worshippers. See for detail 5:103. (*tr.*)

TRADITIONS

as-Suyūṭī writes under the verse: *They ask you as to what is made lawful for them . . .* Ibn Jarīr has narrated from ʻIkrimah: "Verily the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), sent Abū Rāfiʻ to kill the dogs. He killed them until he reached al-ʻAwālī. Then ʻĀṣim ibn ʻAdiyy, Saʻd ibn Khaythamah and ʻUwaym ibn Sāʻidah came (to the Prophet) and said, 'What has been made lawful for us, O Messenger of Allāh?' So, this verse was revealed: *They ask you as to what is made lawful for them . . .* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Again he says, "Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Muḥammad ibn Kaʻb al-Qaraẓī, 'When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), ordered killing of the dogs, they said: "O Messenger of Allāh! What has been made lawful for us from this group?" Then the verse was revealed: *They ask you as to what is made lawful for them . . .'"* (*ibid.*)

The author says: The two traditions explain each other. The theme is that they had asked what categories of dogs they were allowed to keep and use in various activities like hunting, etc.

But the Divine words: *They ask you as to what is made lawful for them. Say: "The good things are made lawful for you, . . ."* do not tally with this theme because the question was restricted and the verse is general.

Moreover, these two traditions as well as the next one apparently show that, the clause: *and what you have taught the beasts of prey*, is in conjunction with: *the good things,* and that it means: It has been made lawful to you what you have taught. That is why some exegetes have said that the word: *prey of,* is omitted, but understood in this sentence. But we have already explained that: *what you have taught the beasts of prey,* is a conditional clause, which is completed by the clause: *so eat of that which they hold for you.*

According to these traditions, the group about which the question was asked refers to dogs.

Also, he says, "al-Fāriyābī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, aṭ-Ṭabarānī and al-Ḥākim (who has said that the tradition is correct) and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Abū Rāfiʻ that he said, 'Jibrīl came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and asked permission to enter. The Prophet gave him permission but he tarried (in entering). The Prophet took his cloak, came out, and said, "We have already given

you permission." (Jibrīl) said, "Yes, but we do not enter a house wherein there is a dog or a picture." They looked around and lo! There was a puppy in one of their houses.'

"Abū Rãfi‘ said, 'Then he (the Prophet) ordered me to kill every dog in Medina, and this I did. People came and said, "O Messenger of Allãh! What is allowed to us from this group, which you have ordered to be killed?" The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was silent. Then Allãh revealed: *They ask you as to what is made lawful for them. Say: "The good things are made lawful for you and what you have taught the beasts of prey, training them to hunt . . ."* Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) said, "When a man releases his dog and recites the name of Allãh and it holds the prey for him then he should eat what the dog has not eaten."'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: What the tradition describes about the coming down of Jibrīl is very strange. Moreover, it does not stand on sound footing because it shows that Jibrīl did not come to the Prophet because there was a puppy in one of their houses. But the story does not tally with the apparent meaning of the verse where both the question and its reply are unrestricted. More probably, the tradition is a forged one.

Also he says, "'Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from ‘Ãmir that the said, 'Verily ‘Adiyy ibn Ḥãtim aṭ-Ṭã’ī came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and asked him about the prey of dogs; the Prophet did not know what to say until Allãh revealed to him this verse in the chapter of "The Table": *you teach them of what Allãh has taught you.*'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are other traditions of the similer meaning and the objections mentioned earlier apply to all of them. Apparently, these and similar traditions are an attempt to fit some events on the verse; but the attempt is inconclusive and defective. What is clear is that they had talked to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about hunting with dogs and then asked him about a comprehensive principle to distinguish the lawful from the unlawful. So, Allãh mentioned their question in the verse and replied to them by giving a comprehensive principle in this respect. Then the reply was given to their specific question about dogs. This meaning is clear from the verse [and it doest not need any such tradition to make its meaning clear.]

al-Kulaynī has narrated through his chains from Ḥammãd from

al-Ḥalabī from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said, "It is written in the book of ʻAlī (a.s.), about the Divine word: *what you have taught the beasts of prey,* that it refers to dogs." (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: al-ʻAyyāshī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from Samāʻah ibn Mihrān from the same Imām (a.s.).

Also, he has narrated through his chains from Ibn Muskān from al-Ḥalabī that he said, "Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), said, 'My father used to give *fatwā* and he practised *taqiyyah* and we were afraid of (giving actual ruling) about the prey of eagles and falcons; but now we are not afraid. Its prey is not lawful except when you get the chance to slaughter it. Because it is written in the book of ʻAlī (a.s.) that Allāh has revealed this sentence: *what you have taught the beasts of prey training them to hunt,* about the dogs.'"[4] (*ibid.*)

Also, he narrates through his chains from Abū Bakr al-Ḥaḍramī from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.). He says, "I asked the Imām about the prey of eagles, falcons, cheetahs and dogs. The Imām said, 'Do not eat except what you slaughter except the prey of dogs.' I said, 'If it (dog) kills it.' The Imām said, 'Eat it because Allāh says: *what you have taught the beasts of prey, training them to hunt – you teach them of what Allāh has taught you – so eat of that which they hold for you.*' Then he said, 'Every beast of prey holds the prey for itself except the trained dog, for it holds it for its owner.' He further said, 'And when you release the dog mention the name of Allāh over it, that is its *dhabīḥah.*'" (*ibid.*)

al-ʻAyyāshī narrates from Abū ʻUbaydah from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) about a man who releases a trained dog and mentions the name of Allāh at the time of release. The Imām said, "He shall eat from what the dog has held for him even if he has killed it. And if there was found an untrained dog with it, then don't eat from it." "I asked, 'And (what about) falcons and eagles?' The Imām said, 'If you get chance to slaughter it then eat from it; otherwise don't eat it.' I said, 'So, cheetah is not like dog?' He said, 'No. Nothing is called *mukallab* except the (*kalb*) dog.'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyāshī).

Abū Baṣīr narrates from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) about the Divine words: *what you have taught the beasts of prey, training them to hunt – you teach them of what Allāh has taught you – so eat of that which*

[4] The word, *mukallibīn*, used in the verse, is derived from *kalb* (كلبٌ = dog); and this derivation restricts the permission to the game hunted by dog. (*tr.*)

they hold for you and mention the name of Allãh over it, that he said, "There is no harm in eating what the dog has held when he has not eaten from it; but if the dog has eaten from it before you reach there, then do not eat it." (*ibid.*)

The author says: The various particular orders mentioned in the traditions like restriction of lawfulness to the prey of dog because of the Divine word: *mukallibin* and: *which they hold for you,* and the condition that no untrained dog should join in the hunt, all this is inferred from the verse and we have mentioned them before.

Ḥarīz narrates from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he was asked about a dog of a Magian[5] which a Muslim trains and mentions the name of Allãh on releasing it. The Imãm said, "Yes, it is a trained dog. There is no harm when Allãh's name is mentioned over it." (*ibid.*)

The author says: The *ḥadīth* is based on the generality of the word: *what you have taught to the beasts of prey.* as-Suyūṭī narrates in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn Abī Ḥãtim from Ibn ʻAbbãs that he was asked about a Muslim who takes a trained dog of a Magian or his falcon or eagle which has been trained by its owner and the Muslim releases it and it catches a prey. Ibn ʻAbbãs said, "Don't eat it even if you have invoked the name of Allãh because that animal or bird was taught by the Magian while Allãh says: *what you have taught the beasts of prey, training them to hunt – you teach them of what Allãh has taught you*." But the weakness of the *ḥadīth* is obvious because although the speech: *you teach them of what Allãh has taught you*, is addressed to the believers but what Allãh has taught the Muslims regarding the training of dogs is not different from what He has taught to the people of other religions[6] and this connotation helps the reader understand that it does not restrict the dogs' training to the believers. There is no difference when a dog is trained, whether a Muslim or a non-Muslim trained it, or whether a Muslim or a non-Muslim owned it.

al-ʻAyyãshī narrates from Hishãm ibn Sãlim from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said explaining the Divine words: *and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you*. It refers to lentils, grains, and similar things of the People of the Book. (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī).

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[5] Magus, adherent of Mazdaism. (*ed.*)

[6] This Divine teaching refers to the creative instinct ingrained in human nature. (*tr.*)

The author says: ash-Shaykh has narrated it in *at-Tahdhīb* from the same Imãm and the wording there is, "lentils, chickpeas, etc."

There are traditions from ʻAmmãr ibn Marwãn and Samãʻah from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) explaining what is lawful from the food of the People of the Book. The Imãm said, "Grains." (*al-Kãfī; at-Tahdhīb*)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain from Ibn Muskãn from Qutaybah al-Aʻshã that he said, "A man asked Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), and I was present there. He said to the Imãm, 'A Jew or a Christian releases (a dog) on goats or sheep and it attacks it, then it is slaughtered. Should his *dhabīḥah* (slaughtered animal) be eaten?' Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) said, 'Do not enter its price in your property and don't eat it because it is the (Divine) name (which is important) and no one can be trusted in this matter except a Muslim.' That man said to the Imãm (a.s.), 'Allãh has said: *This day have been made lawful for you* (all) *good things and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you.*' Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) said, 'My father used to say that it refers to grains, and similar things.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: This tradition has been narrated by ash-Shaykh in *at-Tahdhīb* and by al-ʻAyyãshī in his *at-Tafsīr* from Qutaybah al-Aʻshã from the Imãm (a.s.).

As you see, the traditions explain the lawful food of the People of the Book as being confined to grains, and similar items. It is the meaning that is understood from the word: *aṭ-ṭaʻãm* (اَلطَّعَام = food) when it is used without any contextual restriction as it appears from the traditions and the stories narrated from the early days of Islam. That is why a great majority of our *ʻulamã'* believes that the lawfulness is confined to the grains, and similar things and the food prepared from them.

Some people (Rashīd Riḍã in *Tafsīru 'l-manãr*) have forcefully rejected this interpretation, saying that it is against the usage of the Qur'ãn concerning the word: *aṭ-ṭaʻãm*. He further says, "In the Qur'ãnic language, cereal grain is not the overwhelming meaning of *aṭ-ṭaʻãm*. Allãh has said in this very chapter: *Lawful for you is the game of the sea and its food, a provision for you and for the travellers* (5:96); and nobody can claim that the food of the sea means wheat and grain. Also, Allãh says: *All food was lawful to the Children of Israel – except that which Israel had forbidden to himself* (3:93), and no one has said that the word food here means wheat or grain, because

nothing of it was forbidden to the Children of Israel – neither before the revelation of the Torah nor after it. *aṭ-Ṭa'ãm* basically refers to all that is tasted or eaten. Allãh says narrating the story of the stream that Ṭãlūt had said: *whoever then drinks from it he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it* (lam Yaṭ'amhu)*, he is surely of me* (2:249). Also, Allãh says: *when you have taken the food* (ṭa'imtum)*, then disperse* (33:53)."

COMMENT: Would that I could know what did he understand from the sentence: *aṭ-ṭa'ãm* when used without any contextual restriction refers to the grain, and similar things. It is amusing that he has tried to refute it with the verbs *yaṭ'amhu* and *ṭa'imtum* while the scholars had talked about the noun *aṭ-ṭa'ãm* and not about the verbs derived from that root. Another of his arguement is based on the genitive construction "food of the sea" and this construction itself is a clear context, which shows that it doesn't refer to cereal grain because wheat or barley does not grow in the sea. Another argument is based on the sentence: *All food was lawful to the Children of Israel,* and he himself says that wheat or cereal grains were not forbidden in their religion. This context clearly shows that the talk is not about cereal grains. He should have found out from the Qur'ãn the examples where the word: *aṭ-ṭa'ãm* is used in its generality without contrary context and then he should have spoken; like the Divine words: *redemption by feeding a poor man* (2:184); *the expiation* (of it) *is the feeding of the poor* (5:95); *And they give food out of love for Him* (76:8); *Then let man look to his food* (80:24). [In all these verses the noun *aṭ-ṭa'ãm* has been used free from contextual restrictions and it all refers to the food prepared from cereal grains.]

He further says, "There was no confusion regarding cereal grains whether they were lawful or not. The question arose only about meat when something happens to create doubt about its lawfulness, e.g. if the animal dies a natural death or if it is slaughtered as an offering to the idols or without invoking the name of Allãh. That is why Allãh has said: *Say: 'I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself or blood poured forth . . .'* (6:145); and all this is related to animals. It clearly shows that unlawfulness is restricted to this group only and unlawfulness of other things requires similar clear declaration."

COMMENT: This talk is more amusing than the previous one. He says that cereal grains are not the subject of doubt that it is lawful or

not; the doubt occurs about the meat only. We should ask him: Which time is he talking about? Is he looking at these times of ours when people are familiar with Islam and its general regulations since so many centuries or is he talking about the times when the Qur'ān was being revealed and the religion was just a few years old? Does he not know that the people had asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the subjects, which were clearer than the rules of cereal grains? Allāh has quoted some of their questions. For example: *They ask you as to what they should spend* (2:215). 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated from Qatādah that he said, "We have been told that some people had said: 'How can we marry their women and they are on a (different) religion and we are on a (different) religion.' Then Allāh sent down the verse: *And whoever denies faith, his work is indeed forfeited . . .*" You will find similar questions and objections in the traditions as we have quoted some in the subject of *ḥajju 't-tamattu'*, etc.

When they could raise such objections after the verse was revealed allowing the marriage with chaste women of the People of the Book, then what was there to prevent them, before the verse was revealed, from asking about eating together with the People of the Book or to eat the cereal grains purchased from them or the meals prepared from it like bread or other dishes; or other items prepared from cereal grains when these things were made by the People of the Book, because: they have their own religion and we follow a different religion! Especially so when Allāh had warned the believer in so many verses against establishing friendship and close relation with the People of the Book and inclining towards them.

Rather, we can turn the table against him when he says, 'There is a chance of confusion about meat whether it was lawful or not.' Fine. But how could they ask about it when Allāh had described the general unlawful items of meat in the chapter of "Cattle": *Say: "I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth, or flesh of swine – for that surely is unclean – or that which is a transgression other than* (the name of) *Allāh having been invoked on it"* (8:145); and then in the chapter of "The Bee". Both these chapters are of Meccan period. Then details have been given in the chapter of "The Cow" which was revealed in Medina long before the chapter of "The Table". And even in this chapter, before this verse, forbidden meat has been described. And this preceding verse according to Rashīd Riḍā explicitly shows that the animals slaughtered by

the People of the Book are not forbidden. Now, we may ask: How could they entertain any doubt about the lawfulness of the animals slaughtered by the People of the Book when verse after verse of Meccan as well as Medinite period was revealed declaring that it was lawful; and the Muslims were memorising these verses and reciting them and teaching them and putting them into practice?

He has claimed that the verse of the chapter of "Cattle" confines the unlawful things to what has been mentioned therein; accordingly, unlawfulness of animals slaughtered by the People of the Book will require a clear proof. Well, there is no doubt that every rule needs a proof to support it and his claim clearly shows that this exclusive confinement will be valid only when there is no other proof to show that some other things too are forbidden.

Now, if he wants proof from traditions then those who say that the animals slaughtered by the People of the Book are unlawful rely on the traditions, which are narrated in explanation of this verse, and we have quoted some of them earlier.

And if he wants proof from the Qur'ãn, then, first of all it is an unjustifiable arrogance, because tradition is the companion of the Qur'ãn and they are not separate from each other in being authoritative sources of the law. Secondly, we shall ask him what are his views about the animals slaughtered by unbelievers other than the People of the Book like Idol-worshippers and atheists. Will he say it is unlawful because it is a dead body, which has not been slaughtered according to the *sharī'ah*? In that case, let us look at two slaughtered animals: On one of them the name of Allãh was not invoked at all and it was not slaughtered facing the *qiblah*; and the other was not slaughtered in the Islamic way. What is the difference between the two? Allãh is not pleased with either, both are unclean in the eyes of the religion, and Allãh has forbidden the unclean things. Allãh Says: (Who) *enjoins them good and forbids them unclean things* (7:157); and He has said in the preceding verse: *They ask you as to what is made lawful for them. Say: "The good things are made lawful for you."* This question and answer is a clear proof that lawfulness is confined to the good things and even in this verse, the words: *This day have been made lawful for you* (all) *good things*, point to this exclusiveness especially when they describe the favour of Allãh on the believers.

If he says that the animals slaughtered by those unbelievers are unlawful because they invoke on it the names of other than Allãh, like their deities, then there is no difference whether a name of other than

Allãh is invoked on it or the name of Allãh is invoked but in a way which has been abrogated and with which Allãh is not pleased.

Rashīd Riḍã further says, "Allãh has very forcefully forbidden the Muslims to follow the idolators of Arab in eating dead animals of all different categories mentioned earlier and sacrificing animals on their idols. It was done in order that the early Muslims should not treat it as an easy matter according to their earlier habit. As for the People of the Book, they were far from eating dead bodies or sacrificing for idols."

He has forgotten that the Christians among the People of the Book eat pork and Allãh has mentioned and forcefully condemned it. In fact, they eat all things the Idol-worshippers eat because atonement of Jesus Christ has made all things lawful for them. In any case, this is an absurd reasoning that should not be used in exegesis of the Book of Allãh or in understanding the laws of His religion.

Finally, he says, "It was the policy of Islam to deal very strictly with polytheists of Arabia in order that everyone in the Arabian Peninsula should feel compelled to enter into the fold of Islam; but it was very lenient to the People of the Book. Then he quotes the rulings of a few companions who believed that the animals sacrificed in synagogues or churches were lawful to eat.

The basic idea lurking behind this speech is, as appears from some traditions, that Allãh had chosen the Arabs over other nations and the Arabs were superior to others. That is why they used to call non-Arabs as *al-mawãlī* (**اَلْمَوَالِي** = plural of *al-mawlã;* clients) but the Qur'ãnic verses apparently do not agree with it. Allãh has said: *O you people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other. Surely the most honourable of you with Allãh is the one among you who is most pious* . . . (49:13); a lot of *aḥãdīth* giving this connotation have been narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlul 'l-Bayt* (a.s.).

Islam while calling people to the right path had not put the Arabs on one side and the non-Arabs on the other. It had put the polytheists – be they Arab or non-Arab – on one side, and they were given no choice except that they should accept Islam; and it had put the People of the Book, Arabs and non-Arabs alike, on the other side and if they did not enter in Islam, they were given an option to come under the protection of Islam by paying *jizyah*. All that can be seen in this treatment is some leniency shown to them; but it doesn't mean that their slaughtered animals should become lawful to the Muslims

when they have killed it according to their own custom and ritual.

As for the practice of *fatwã* of some companions, it has no authority at all in Islam.

It is clear from the above discussion that this verse does not show that the animals slaughtered by the People of the Book are lawful when killed in un-Islamic way; nor is there any other proof to prove it. If anyone insists on lawfulness of the animals slaughtered by them (because of the generality of the verse), then we have to restrict it to the case when it is known that the animal was slaughtered according to the rules of Islamic *sharī'ah,* as may be inferred from the words of aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) quoted above from *al-Kãfī* and *at-Tahdhīb:* "It is the (Divine) name which is important) and no one can be trusted in this matter except a Muslim." Further details may be seen in the books of *fiqh.*

al-'Ayyãshī narrates from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) about the Divine words: *and the chaste* (ones) *from among those who have been given the Book before you* (are lawful to you), that he said, "It *(al-muḥṣanãt)* means the chaste ones." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyãshī).

The same book narrates from the same Imãm (a.s.) about the words: *and the chaste* (one) *from among the believing women*, that he said, "It means the Muslim women."

al-Qummī narrates from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said, "Verily the marriage is allowed with only those People of the Book who pay *jizyah;* marriage with others is not lawful." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī).

The author says: It is because without payment of *jizyah* they will be counted among *kãfir ḥarbi.*

al-Bãqir (a.s.) said, "Verily it is lawful to marry only the simple-hearted women from among them." (*al-Kãfī; at-Tahdhīb*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) was asked about a believing man who marries a Christian or a Jewess. The Imãm said, "When he can get a Muslim woman then what will he do with the Jewess or Christian woman?" It was said to him, "He is inclined towards her." He (a.s.) said, "If he does, then he should stop her from drinking liquor and eating flesh of swine, and know that there must be a deficiency in his religion." (*Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*).

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said, "There is no harm if a man does *mut'ah* with a Jewess or a Christian woman while he has got a free (Muslim)

woman." (*at-Tahdhīb*).

al-Bãqir (a.s.) was asked about a Muslim man, "Can he marry a Magian?" He (a.s.) said, "No; but if he has got a Magian slave girl, then there is no harm if he establishes sexual relations with her; he should practice coitus interruptus and should not seek a child from her." (*Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain from ʻAbdullãh ibn Sinãn from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said *inter alia* in a *ḥadīth*, "And I don't like a Muslim man to marry a Jewess or a Christian woman lest his child becomes a Jew or a Christian." (*al-Kãfī*).

Also, he narrates through his chains from Zurãrah, and al-ʻAyyãshī from Masʻadah ibn Ṣadaqah, that he said, "I asked Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.), about the words of Allãh: *and the chaste* (ones) *from among those who have been given the Book before you.*" The Imãm (a.s.) said, "It is abrogated by the words: *and hold not to the ties of marriage of unbelieving women*" (60.10). (*al-Kãfī*).

The author says: It is a problematic *ḥadīth,* because the chapter 60 was revealed long before the chapter of "The Table" and abrogating verse cannot come before the abrogated one. Moreover, it is accepted and confirmed in the traditions that the chapter of "The Table" is the abrogator and not the abrogated as we have mentioned repeatedly. Another proof to show that it is not abrogated may be seen in the foregoing tradition that *mutʻah* with a woman from the People of the Book is allowed and people have acted upon it; and it was described in the verse of *mutʻah* that *mutʻah* is a *nikãḥ* and marriage.

Another tradition says the verse is abrogated by: *And do not marry the idolatress until they believe* (2:221); and we have already mentioned the objections on this tradition. Details can be seen in the books of *fiqh.*

al-ʻAyyãshī narrates from Abãn ibn ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn about the words of Allãh: *and whoever denies faith his work indeed is forfeited*, that he said, "I heard Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), saying, 'The least that throws a man out of Islam is that he has an opinion against the truth and (even after realizing his error) he holds fast to it.' The Imãm (a.s.) then recited the verse: *and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is forfeited*. Then he (a.s.) said, 'He who denies faith does not accomplish what Allãh has ordered and is not pleased with it.'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

Muḥammad ibn Muslim narrates from one of the two (fifth or

sixth) Imãm that he (a.s.) said, "It is not implementing (the commandments of Allãh) until he discards the whole lot." (*ibid.*)

The author says: What we have described earlier is enough to explain the fine points of these traditions.

‘Ubayd ibn Zurãrah said, "I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.), about the words of Allãh: *and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is forfeited.* He said, 'It is not implementing what he had acknowledged (to do); an example of it is that one neglects the prayer without sickness and without involvement in some work.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: Allãh has named prayer as faith in the verse: *and Allãh was not going to make your faith to be fruitless* (2:143). Probably, that was the reason that the Imãm (a.s.) particularly mentioned it as the example in this tradition.

The Imãm (a.s.) said, "This (denial of faith) refers to him who believes and yet obeys polytheists." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

Abū Ḥamzah (ath-Thumãlī) says, "I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), about the words of Allãh: *and whoever denies faith, his work indeed is forfeited, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers.* He said, 'Its esoteric Qur’ãnic interpretation is: and whoever denies the *wilãyah* of ‘Alī; and ‘Alī is the faith.'" (*Baṣãiru 'd-darajãt*)

The author says: It is esoteric or inner meaning, opposite of the manifest one, as we have explained while writing about "The Decisive and The Ambiguous Verses" in the third volume of this book[7] Also, the tradition may be based on the 'Flow of the Qur’ãn'; and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had named ‘Alī (a.s.) as Faith when he had gone out to fight ‘Amr ibn ‘Abd Wadd in the Battle of the Trench, when he (s.a.w.a.) said: "The whole of Faith has gone out to fight the whole Disbelief."

There are other traditions of the same theme.

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[7] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.5, pp.46-110 (*tr.*)

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ فَٱغْسِلُواْ
وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى ٱلْمَرَافِقِ وَٱمْسَحُواْ بِرُءُوسِكُمْ
وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى ٱلْكَعْبَيْنِ ۚ وَإِن كُنتُمْ جُنُبًا فَٱطَّهَّرُواْ ۚ
وَإِن كُنتُم مَّرْضَىٰٓ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَآءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنكُم مِّنَ ٱلْغَآئِطِ
أَوْ لَٰمَسْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُواْ مَآءً فَتَيَمَّمُواْ صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَٱمْسَحُواْ بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُم مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ
لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَٰكِن يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُۥ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾
وَٱذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَةَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَٰقَهُ ٱلَّذِى وَاثَقَكُم
بِهِۦٓ إِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌۢ بِذَاتِ
ٱلصُّدُورِ ﴿٧﴾

O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles; and if you are under

obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash (yourselves); *and if you are sick or on a journey, or one among you comes from privy, or you have touched the women, and you do not find water, betake yourselves to clean earth and wipe a part of your faces and* (part of) *your hands therewith; Allãh does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you so that He may complete His favour on you, that you may be grateful.* (6). *And remember the favour of Allãh on you and the covenant with which He bound you firmly, when you said: "We have heard and we obey," and fear Allãh; surely Allãh knows what is in the breasts* (7).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The first verse contains rules of all three types of *aṭ-ṭahãrah* (اَلطَّهَارَةُ = cleanness): *wuḍū', wãjib ghusl* and *tayammum*; and the second verse emphasizes or complements this order. There is another verse already mentioned in the chapter of "Women" which deals with these three modes of cleanness: *O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know* (well) *what you say, nor when you are in a state of major ritual impurity, unless* (you are) *travelling on the road – until you have washed yourselves; and if you are sick or on a journey or one of you comes from the privy or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to clean earth, then wipe a part of your faces and* (a part of) *your hands. Surely Allãh is Pardoning, Forgiving* (4:43).

This verse of the chapter of "The Table" is clearer than that of the chapter of "Women" and covers more aspects of the rule. That is why we had not given a detailed commentary there, until we have reached the verse under discussion here.

QUR'ÃN: *O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer*: *al-Qiyãm* (اَلْقِيَام = to stand up, to rise up), when followed by preposition *ilã* (الى = to) generally connotes the intention of doing that thing; because when one intends to do a thing one usually moves towards it. Let us suppose a man is sitting and he intends to perform an act, usually he would rise to do it. In other words, rising up for a work is inseparable

from its intention. There is a similar example in the words of Allāh: *And when you are among them and establish the prayer for them* (4:102), that is, you intend to establish the prayer. Conversely, there is a verse which uses the word wish or intention to allude to the actual deed: *And if you wish to have* (one) *wife in place of another and you have given one of them a heap of gold, then take not from it anything* (4:20); it means when you divorce a wife and marry another; so the verse uses the word "wish" for the actual deed.

In short, the verse shows that prayer must be preceded by bath and *wuḍū'*. If it had been unrestricted it would have meant necessity of *wuḍū'* before every prayer irrespective of the words: *and if you are under obligation to preform a total ablution, then wash* (yourselves). However, legislative verses are seldom unrestricted in all aspects. Moreover, it is possible to say that the coming words: *but He wishes to purify you,* explain this obligatoriness of bath, as will be explained later. It is only this much explanation that can be given here for this verse; the exegetes have written at length about it but it is all related to the matter of *fiqh* and not to *tafsīr*.

QUR'ĀN: *wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows*: *al-Ghasl* (اَلْغَسْلُ = pouring water on something); it is usually done for cleaning, removal of dirt and filth. *al-Wajh* (اَلْوَجْهُ = the side of a thing that faces you); but mostly it is used for the front side of man's head, that is, the side which has eyes, nose and mouth in it; when somebody faces you his features become manifest to you; the traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlul 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) interprete it as the area from the beginning of the hairline in the forehead upto the tip of the chin length wise and that which is covered by the thumb and middle finger breadthwise. There are some other delineation mentioned by the exegetes and jurisprudents.

al-Aydī (اَلْأَيْدِى = plural of *al-yad* اَلْيَدُ); it is the organ which is used for folding and unfolding, catching and releazing, attacking someone, etc. It begins from shoulder ending at fingertips. Because most of these activities like catching and releasing are done through that part which begins from elbow down wards, that section is also called hand; and for this very reason the section from wrist to fingertips is also called hand. In this way, the word becomes common between the whole and its' parts.

It is this commonality which makes it necessary to mention some association to point to the intended meaning; and it is for this

reason that Allãh has added: "as far as the elbows" to show that the area of the hand to be washed is that which ends at the elbows; also it shows that the whole area upto the finger tips is covered. The traditions also support this meaning. The preposition *ilã* (to, as far as) indicates the limit of action and it connotes continuation of movement.

This preposition does not show whether or not the elbows are included in the order of washing; the order to wash the elbows is derived from the traditions, not from this preposition.

Someone has said that the preposition *ilã* in this verse means "together with" as is seen in the verse: *and do not devour their property* (as an addition) *to your own property* (4:2). He has also argued on the strength of traditions that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to wash the elbows in *wuḍū'*. It is really an astonishing insolence in exegesis of the Divine Book. Let us say that the tradition describes an action, but an action may be interpreted in different ways. How can it be used to pinpoint the meaning of a word? Or it may legislate a rule without intending to explain this verse. Moreover, the obligatoriness of washing the elbows could have been inferred from logical reasonings; or may be the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has added to it, because he had the authority to do so (as he had done in the five prayers, as the correct traditions say). As for the verse: *and do not devour their property* (as an addition) *to your own property*, the word: *al-akl* (اَلأَكْلُ = to devour) contains the idea of addition and joining and for this reason it is followed by the preposition: *ilã;* it is not that *ilã* gives the meaning of togetherness.

The above discussion makes it clear that the clause: "as far as the elbows", qualifies the words, "your hands". It does not clarify where the washing of hands is to begin and where it is to end. So far as this clause is concerned, the washing could begin from the elbows going to the fingertips (and that is the way man acts while washing his hand apart from *wuḍū'*) or it could begin from fingertips ending at the elbows. But the traditions from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) guide us to follow the former method, instead of the latter.

This removes the objection raised by many people that the clause: "as far as the elbows" proves the obligatoriness of beginning the washing from fingertips ending at the elbows. This claim is based on the assumption that the clause: "as far as the elbows", is related to the order of washing; but, as we have explained, it is connected with the hands. It should be realized that the word "hands", being a common noun, needed an association to make its meaning clear, and once

the word "elbows" connects with "hands" it cannot be again connected with the order of washing.

Moreover, the *ummah* unanimously agrees that the *wuḍū'* of those who begin washing from the elbows coming to the fingertips is correct (vide *Majma'u 'l-bayān*). And this unanimity emanates from the fact that the verse gives this meaning and it could only be correct if the clause: "as far as the elbows", is connected with the "hands" and not with the washing.

QUR'ĀN: ***and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles*****:** *al-Masḥ* (اَلْمَسْحُ = to let the hand or any other limb pass over something). They say: 'I wipe the thing'; 'I wiped part of the thing' (*bi-shay'*, بِالشَّیءِ). When this verb is used without preposition it indicates wiping of the whole thing; and when used with the preposition *bi* (بِـــ) it denotes partial wiping. The Divine words: "and wipe a part of your heads", show that only a part of the head is to be wiped; however it doesn't show which parts are to be wiped. It is known only from the traditions. Our correct traditions say that it is the front part of the head.

The words, *wa arjulakum* (وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ) has been recited in two ways:

1. With *kasrah* of لِ (*-li-*) (*wa arjulikum*)*:* In this case it is clearly in conjunction with *bi-ru'ūsikum* (بِرُءُوسِكُمْ), i.e, "and wipe a part of your heads and your feet." Some people say that this *kasrah* here has no grammatical significance; it just follows the inflection of the preceding word, *bi-ru'ūsikum.* But it is a mistake because following in inflection is considered a bad grammar as grammarians have said; and the Divine words should not be taken in such a vulgar way.

2. With *fatḥah* of لَ (*-la-*) (*wa arjulakum*). If you read the sentence without any preconceived idea you will see that *arjulakum* is in conjunction with the grammatical position of *bi-ru'ūsikum* [which is in dative case and should have been *ru'ūsakum* but for the preposition *bi*]. You will understand that the verse shows the obligatoriness of washing the face and hands and wiping the head and feet. You will never think that the word: "and your feet" should be connected to the clause: "wash your faces" in the beginning of the verse, while another order to wipe the parts of the heads has already come in between. A man of good literary taste will not try such gymnastics in a speech of high literary value. How can a speaker of high standards agree to say for example: 'I kissed the face of Zayd and his head and touched his

shoulder and hands', when he actually want to say that he had kissed the hands also?

Numerous traditions for wiping the feet have been narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.). As for the traditions of *Ahlu 's-Sunnah,* they do not purport to explain the wordings of the Qur'ãn; they rather describe the action of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and *fatwã* of some companions. However they differ among themselves: Some show the obligatoriness of wiping the feet, while the others support their washing.

However, overwhelming majority of the Sunnīs has given preference to the traditions of washing over those of wiping; but one should not entangle with them here because it is a matter of jurisprudence, and the arguments and counter-arguments are more appropriate for a book of *fiqh.* However, they have tried to fit the verse on a ruling of *fiqh* which they have accepted and have written various contrived reasons for it; but the verse does not agree with such interpretations unless one is prepared to pull it down from the peak of eloquence to the depth of incoherence.

Some people have said that *arjulakum* (with *fatḥah* of *-la-*) is in conjunction with: "wash your faces"; and if it is recited *arjulikum* (with *kasrah* of *-li-*), then it just follows *bi-ru'ūsikum.* But we have already explained that such interpretations are not worthy of a speech of high literary standard.

[The author has then quoted some more abstruse grammatical interpretations of the partisans of washing. We have omitted them because they were beyond the grasp of non-Arabic speaking readers. *Tr.*]

Someone even while reciting with *kasrah* of *-li-*) has tried to show obligatoriness of washing of feet. He says that the conjunction is in its place [i.e. "your feet" is in conjunction with "wipe a part of your heads";] yet wiping is a shortened form of washing and therefore wiping of feet means their washing! Then he supports his argument by saying that the verse mentions the limits of the washed organ only i.e. the hands and does not limit the wiped organ i.e. the head; now when it limits the wiped organ by saying: "and your feet to the ankles", we know that it wants them to be washed!

This is the worst type of argument. Wiping is totally different from washing and there is no inseparable connection between them. Apart from that, why should only the feet be washed and the head be left for wiping? Would that I knew what prevents him from inter-

preting the word *masḥ* wherever it appears in the Qur'ān or traditions as washing and *vice versa.* Why should not the traditions of washing taken as to mean wiping and the traditions of wiping as meaning washing? In this way all the proofs will turn topsy-turvy without any clear end. As for his supporting reason he turn was tried in it to impose a meaning on the word through analogy and it is the worst type of analogy.

[Again the author quotes here some contrived reasoning to show that wiping and washing are not two separate actions; and then replies to it. We have omitted it because of its abstruseness. *Tr.*]

This and similar contrived reasonings which this verse has been made to suffer go against its manifest meaning; their only aim is to justify traditions of washing in a way that they should not appear to be going against the Qur'ān. If we open the door for imposing the theme of a tradition on a verse by twisting the apparent meaning of that verse then nobody could be found guilty of going against the Qur'ān. There is a better way for the believers in the washing of the feet to follow. They should say as some early *muḥaddithīn* (like Anas and ash-Sha'bī) are reported as saying that Jibrīl had brought wiping and the *sunnah* is washing. It means abrogation of the Book by the *Sunnah* and the subject will turn from the *tafsīr* to the Principles of Jurisprudence: whether or not the *Sunnah* can abrogate the Book. When an exegete says that a certain tradition is against the Book, he means to say that the connotation of this tradition goes against the apparent meaning of the Book. He shows the conflict of the tradition with the Qur'ān, not that he gives a *fatwā* for a rule of the *sharī'ah.*

Now, we come to the words: "to the ankles": *al-Ka'b* (**اَلْكَعْبُ**) is the bone protruding on the dorsum of the foot. Some people say that it is the bone protruding at the joint of the leg and foot. In this meaning there are two such bones at the joint of each foot and leg.

QUR'ĀN: ***and if you are under obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash*** **(yourselves):** *al-Junub* (**اَلْجُنُبُ**) is an infinitive verb but is generally used in the meaning of active participle; that is why it is used for both genders as well as for singular, dual and plural. When they want to use a word as an infinitive verb, they say *al-janābah* (**اَلْجَنَابَةُ**).

This sentence is in conjunction with the clause: *wash your faces*, as the verse is meant to show the necessary stipulation of cleanliness for prayer. The sentence means: perform a total ablution if you

are in *al-janãbah.* This condition alludes to an unspoken condition in *wuḍū'*. The verse then will mean: *wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles*, if you are not junub; *and if you are junub*, then *perform a total ablution.* It may be inferred from it that *wuḍū'* is prescribed if there is no *janãbah,* but with *janãbah* the *ghusl* is enough as the traditions show.

The same law has been explained in the verse of the chapter of "Women": *nor when you are in a state of major ritual impurity – unless* (you are) *travelling on the road – until you have washed yourselves* (4:43). The verse under discussion is more elaborate as it names the bath as cleanliness. This cleanliness is other than that which one usually gets from taking bath which it is an effect of that bath; but the cleanliness mentioned in this verse refers to the very act of taking bath (as it removes spiritual uncleanness); while in this context removing physical uncleanness and dirt from the body by using water is called *at-tanaẓẓuf* (اَلتَّنَظُّف). There is a tradition from Imãm (a.s.): "Whatever water flows on becomes clean." This rule is inferred from this very verse.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if you are sick or on a journey, or one among you comes from privy, or you have touched the women, and you do not find water, betake yourselves to clean earth*:** Now begins the rule which applies to a person who does not have water for cleansing or bath. The four situations which are joined with the particle of conjunction "or" are not opposite to each other in reality; sickness and journey by themselves do not cause *al-ḥadath* (اَلْحَدَثُ = the things because of which *wuḍū'* or *ghusl* becomes necessary); they may demand *wuḍū'* or *ghusl* when a small or big *ḥadath* takes place in that condition. The last two alternatives do not stand face to face with the first two; rather both of the first two alternatives are divided into the last two. That is why someone has said that "or" in the clause: "or one among you comes from privy", is used in the meaning of "and", as we shall describe later. Moreover, the reasons justifying *tayammum* are not limited to sickness or journey; there are other causes too.

Allãh has mentioned sickness and journey and in these two conditions one is generally unable to get or use water whenever he wishes; and He has mentioned coming from toilet and touching the women – and unavailability of water in these two conditions is a matter of chance. Conversely, it may be said that looking at the

physical structure of man, his being sick or on journey is a matter of chance while going to toilet or touching of the women are physical necessities. The first causes small *ḥadath,* which is removed by *wuḍū'* and the second brings on big *ḥadath* which is removed by *ghusl.* In all the four situations with which man becomes involved sometimes by chance and at other times by nature, he is obliged to do *tayammum* when he cannot get water.

Unavailability of water metaphorically denotes inability to use water. It means that unavailability of water is a condition for all the four situations including sickness.

The above explanation shows that:

First: The sickness mentioned in this verse is the one, which prevents a man from using water as the condition: "and you do not find water" shows; rather the context of the whole speech gives this connotation.

Second: "Or on a journey" is another alternative in which man is involved by chance and during which sometime water becomes unavailable; it is not restricted by the words: "or one among you comes from privy"; rather it is in conjunction with the words: "wash your faces". So the meaning will be as follows: When you rise up for prayer while you are on a journey and you do not find water then do *tayammum.* As the sentence: *when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces* . . . had not required any conditional clause, this order of *tayammum* also does not need any such condition as both are in conjunction with each other.

Third: The Divine words*:* "or one among you comes from the privy" is another independent situation. Someone has said that "or" has been used here in the meaning of "and"; as Allãh (s.w.t.) has said in another context: *And We sent him to a hundred thousand, rather, they exceeded* (87:147). But this interpretation is unwarranted. Apart from that, the word "*aw*" (أَوْ = or, rather) in the verse brought in evidence is not in the meaning of "and"; it is used in its literal meaning as we have translated it with the word "rather". It does not show that the speaker was unsure of their number; it just means that the situation or condition was indefinite. The same interpretation is given to other such expressions whenever they occur in the Qur'ãn. For example: . . . *so that you may guard* (against evil), (2:21); . . . *had they but known this* (2:102).

This sentence has the same construction of conjunction as the previous two. The meaning will be: When you rise up to prayer and

one of you had come from privy and you do not find water then you should do *tayammum*.

It may easily be inferred from these wordings that when a man has not broken his *aṭ-ṭahãrah* (اَلطَّهَارَةُ = here it means *wuḍū'* or *tayam-mum*) with small *ḥadath* then he does not have to repeat his *wuḍū'* or *tayammum*; it supports those *aḥãdīth* which show that a man who has done *ṭahãrah* is not obliged to repeat it.

The Divine words, "or one among you comes from privy" teach good manner; *al-ghãiṭ* (اَلْغَائِطُ = a depressed plot or pit); people used to sit in such places to relieve themselves in order to be hidden from public eyes; the Qur'ãn uses the expression "coming from depressed place or privy" and it alludes to relieving oneself. Nowadays, the word *al-ghãiṭ* is used for human excrements but it is a vulgar usage, which has come up in later centuries. The same is the position of *al-'adhrah* (اَلْعَذْرَةُ); its literal meaning is threshold of the door. As the people used to empty their lavatory in front of their houses, the word *al-'adhrah* gradually came to mean faeces, as al-Jawharī has explained in *aṣ-ṣiḥãḥ*.

Also, the Qur'ãn has not said: "or you come from privy"; because it would have pinpointed the one involved. Nor has it said: "or one of you has come from privy" because this possessive construction too would have shown a sort of specification. Rather, it went further in vagueness and ambiguity and said: "or one among you comes from privy." This was done to teach Muslims polite manner of speaking.

Fourth: "Or you have touched the women". This too, like previous clauses, is an independent condition; and the conjunction and the meaning are like previous phrases. Touching the women is an allusion to sexual intercourse. This too, shows the polite manner of speech, as to how one should keep one's tongue from clearly expressing what the human nature doesn't like to talk freely about.

One might say that, in that case, the preceding expression, "and if you are under obligation to perform a total ablution", would have been more appropriate because it was more decent; but it would have missed the main point of the speech. The present expression shows that it is something, which a man by nature is inclined to do, while the previous phrase lacks this indication.

Someone has said that "touching the women" means exactly what it says and it doesn't indicate sexual intercourse. However, it is a very wrong interpretation because it goes against the context of the

verse. Allāh has begun the speech by describing the order concerning small *ḥadath* and that is *wuḍū'*, and then the order regarding big *ḥadath*, that is, *janābah* after which one normally has to take bath. Then the speech turns to these very situations in unusual circumstances, when one doesn't get water; so it describes the substitute of *wuḍū'*, that is, *tayammum*. Now, the context demands that the substitute of bath too should be mentioned and that is why it has mentioned touching of the women alluding to sexual intercourse. There was no reason why only the substitute of *wuḍū'* should be mentioned ignoring that of *ghusl* altogether.

Fifth: The above explanations do not leave room for many objections brought against the verse as may be seen from the following:

i) The mention of sickness or being on a journey is irrelevant, because sickness or journey don't obligate one to do *tayammum* unless one has undergone a *ḥadath* or has touched the women; but the small *ḥadath* and the sexual intercourse would make *tayammum* necessary even if one is not sick or on journey.

Reply: Small *ḥadath* and sexual intercourse are not to be joined with sickness and journey; all four are independent situations as was explained earlier.

ii) The second alternative "or on a journey" is irrelevant and the reason is the same as given in the first objection. Sickness is an excuse, which can prevent use of available water; it does not indicate unavailability of water. Therefore, it was necessary to say "and you do not find water"; and in absence of water [one has to do *tayammum*]; so being sick or on a journey has no relevance here.

Reply: The phrase: "and you do not find water" is an allusion to inability to use water, no matter whether it is because of unavailability of water or otherwise.

iii) It was enough to say: "you do not find water", and all the situations mentioned before it would be covered in this one phrase; so if the phrases: "if you are sick or on a journey or one among you comes from the privy or you have touched the women," were omitted it would have been shorter and clearer.

Reply: If those phrases were omitted, all the fine points mentioned earlier would have been lost.

iv) It would have been better if the phrase were changed to the following: "and if you are unable to use water", because this amended phrase would have covered the sickness plus other excuses.

Reply: The present phrase alludes to that meaning too and it is more eloquent.

QUR'ÃN: ***betake yourselves to clean earth and wipe a part of your faces and*** **(part of)** ***your hands therewith*****:** *at-Tayammum* (اَلتَّيَمُّم = to intend*); aṣ-ṣa'īd* (اَلصَّعِيْدُ = face of the earth) *aṭ-ṭayyib* (اَلطَّيِّبُ), a thing is called *ṭayyib* when it is in its natural condition. This adjective used for the earth indicates that the earth should be in its natural condition like soil or common stones. It excludes the items, which are separated from earth by burning or through other natural processes like cement, potteries, and minerals. Allãh says: *And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth* (abundantly) *by the permission of its Lord, and* (as for) *that which is bad* (its herbage) *comes forth but scantily* (7:58). This adjective has given rise to the conditions mentioned in *aḥãdīth* for the soil, which may be used in *tayammum*. Also, it is said that *aṭ-ṭayyib* means clean; in that case, it indicates the condition of cleanliness for the earth of *tayammum*.

The phrase: "and wipe a part of your faces and (part of) your hands therewith", shows that one has to wipe those organs in *tayammum* which one was required to wash in *wuḍū'*. We may say that *tayammum* is a shortened alternative of *wuḍū'* from which the two wipings (of head and feet) have been omitted and the two washings (of face and hands) substituted with the wiping; and water has given way to soil – to remove hardships.

This shows that the two organs of *tayammum* are the same two which were washed in *wuḍū'*. As Allãh has used the preposition "*bi*" (بِ) with the verb of wiping, it indicates that the wiping in *tayammum* should apply to only some parts of the two organs, that is a part of face and a part of hands. It totally fits on the explanations narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) that the part of face to be wiped in *tayammum* is the forehead only and the part of hand to be wiped is from wrist downwards.

This explanation shows invalidity of some people's opinion that the hand to be wiped in *tayammum* covers from armpit to finger tips; or what has been said by others that the whole part of hand washed in *wuḍū'* should be wiped in *tayammum*. Clearly, the verb *al-masḥ* (اَلْمَسْحُ = to wipe) followed by preposition "*bi*" indicates that only a part of the organ is to be wiped.

"*Min*" (مِنْ) in "*minhu*" (مِنْهُ) translated here as "therewith" shows that wiping of face and hands should begin with earth; and

aḥãdīth have explained that *tayammum* should start with hitting the hands on earth and then wiping the face and hands with it.

Someone has said that "*min*" here indicates apportioning. In other words, there should remain attached to the palms some parts of earth (like dust) which would be used for wiping the face and the hands. According to him, *tayammum* would not be valid on a smooth stone on which there is no dust, etc.

COMMENT: The meaning that we have given is more in keeping with the wording of the Qur'ãn.

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh does not desire to put on you any difficulty but He wishes to purify you*****:** "*Min ḥaraj*" (**مِنْ حَرَجٍ** = translated here as any difficulty) literally means any kind of difficulty. It puts emphasis on the negative connotation. There is no commandment in religion, which could create difficulty; that is why the negative is attached to the Divine desire and not to difficulty.

Difficulty can be of two types:

i) A difficulty which results from the nature of the commandment itself; that is, the commandment itself becomes a source of difficulty. Allãh hasn't given any such order. For example, He has not forbidden eating tasty foods with a view of creating a knack for self-denial, because such an order would have created difficulty by its very nature.

ii) A difficulty, which temporarily happens in implementation of an order. For example, if someone cannot stand in prayer because of illness, this rule will be waived for him but the general rule will continue to apply to others.

The phrase: "but He wishes to purify you" after the preceding clause: "Allãh does not desire to put on you any difficulty", shows that Allãh has not laid down any rule with the aim of creating difficulties for human beings. The verse means: Our aim in these laid down rules is to purify you and the main purpose is to complete our favours on you; not that We want to put you in trouble or difficulty. That is why when We found that *wuḍū'* or *ghusl* was difficult for you in the absence of water, We changed that order to *tayammum* which you can easily do; we have not totally waived the order of *ṭahãrah* because we want to purify you and complete our favours on you, so that you may be grateful.

QUR'ÃN: ***but He wishes to purify you so that He may complete His***

***favour on you that you may be grateful*:** The preceding explanation shows that the main purpose of *wuḍū'*, *ghusl* and *tayammum* is to make you purified through these modes of *ṭahãrah.* This *ṭahãrah* is not from *al-khabath* [اَلْخَبَثُ = an uncleanness which doesn't require *an-niyyah* (اَلنِّيَّةُ = intention) for its removal]; but it is a spiritual purification which one gets through these three modes of *ṭahãrah* and which is the condition for validity of prayer.

It may be inferred from these words that if a person continues in *ṭahãrah* and does not get any *ḥadath,* then he is not required to repeat his *ṭahãrah* for the next prayer. Although the opening phrase: *when you rise up to prayer*, is unrestricted, it does not mean that one has to do *wuḍū'*, *ghusl* or *tayammum* before every prayer because not every order is obligatory. [In the situation mentioned above, one is only recommended to renew one's *ṭahãrah.*]

The clause: "so that He may complete His favour on you", the meaning of favour and its completion was explained in the verse 3 of this chapter: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour on you*; and the meaning of gratefulness was given in the verse 144 of chapter 3: *And Allãh will reward the grateful*. Accordingly, the favour in this verse means the religion (not in the sense of its particular beliefs and commandments) but in the meaning of submission to Allãh in all conditions and situations. This entails acceptance of Allãh's authority over His servants in whatever He obligates them to do. That authority will be completed if the *sharī'ah* covers all religious commandments, small parts of which are the three types of *ṭahãrah*.

The verse gives two reasons for this order:

i. To purify the believers;
ii. To complete His favour on them.

These two are different from one another. The first reason gives the purpose of legislating the three modes of purification while completion of favour is the purpose of legislating the whole *sharī'ah*, and the three modes of *ṭahãrah* are a small part of it. In other words, the two reasons are particular and general. Accordingly, the clauses would mean as follows. We have laid down the three purifications so that you could purify yourselves with them. They are a part of the religion. When the whole *sharī'ah* will be legislated, Allãh's favour on you will be completed in order that you may be grateful to Allãh, so that He may choose you for Himself. Ponder on it.

QUR'ĀN: ***And remember the favour of Allāh on you and the covenant with which He bound you firmly, when you said: "We have heard and we obey" . . .*:** That was the covenant which was taken from them. They were expected to surrender to Allāh as Allāh reminds them with the words: "when you said: 'We have heard and we obey.'" It is unconditional listening and unconditional obedience; in other words, it is Islam. The favour of Allāh in the clause: "And remember the favour of Allāh on you", points to the graceful gifts which Allāh bestowed on them under protection of Islam. If they compared their condition in the days of ignorance with that after entering into Islam, they would find themselves enjoying peace, well-being, affluence, purity of hearts and purity of deeds; as Allāh says: *And remember the favour of Allāh on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His bounty you became brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire then He delivered you from it* (3:103).

Alternatively, the favour may refer to the reality of Islam; Islam is the mother of all favours that nourishes all other favours as we have described earlier. When we say that Divine favour refers to Islam or to Divine authority, we are aiming at pinpointing the examples of favour. We are not trying to find out the meaning of the word; meanings are known from dictionaries and we are not concerned with it here.

Then Allāh reminds them of His Omniscience and that Allāh knows the hidden secrets of the hearts. So, He has ordered them to fear Him: *and fear Allāh; surely Allāh knows what is in the breasts*.

TRADITIONS

aṭ-Ṭūsī narrates with his *asnād* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *when you rise up to prayer*, that he said, "When you rise up from sleep." The narrator (Ibn Bakīr) says, "I said 'Does sleep break *wuḍū'*?' He (the Imām) said, 'Yes, when it overwhelms hearing and he doesn't hear voices.'" (*Tahdhību 'l-aḥkām*).

The author says: This meaning is also narrated in other traditions and as-Suyūṭī has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Zayd ibn Aslam and an-Naḥḥās. It doesn't go against the explanations given in the Commentary that rising up to prayer means intending to pray, because what we have said explains the meaninng of "rising to" and the tradition explains the meaning of "rising from".

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Zurãrah that he said, "I said to Abū Ja'far (a.s.), 'From where did you know and say that wiping should be done to a part of head and a part of feet.' He (the Imãm) laughed and said, 'O Zurãrah! The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said so and the Book has been revealed by Allãh with this order, because Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *wash your faces*, so we know that the whole face should be washed. Then He says: *and your hands as far as the elbows*; in this way, the hands up to the elbows have been joined with face (in one order) and we know that they too should be washed up to the elbows. Then He disjointed the speech and said: *and wipe a part of your heads*; when He used the preposition "*bi*" (بِ) before "your heads", we understood that wiping should cover only a part of the head. Then He joined the feet with the head (in that order) as had joined the hands with the face, and said: *and your feet to the ankles*. Now, because He has joined them with the head, we know that wiping should cover only a part of the feet. Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) explained it to the people but they neglected it. Then (Allãh) said: *and* (if) *you do not find water, betake yourselves to clean earth and wipe a part of your faces and* (part of) *your hands therewith.* When *wuḍū'* was waived in the absence of water, wiping (with earth) was ordered for part of (the organs) which were washed (in *wuḍū'*) because He has said: *part of your faces*, then has joined with it the hands (that is, parts of it). Then He has said: *therewith*, that is, in *tayammum*. It was so ordained because Allãh knew that the wiping with earth would not cover the whole face as the earth adheres to parts of the palms leaving other portions untouched. Then Allãh said: *Allãh does not desire to put on you any difficulty*; and *al-ḥaraj* means difficulty.'" (*al-Kãfi*).

The author says: The clause: *and* (if) *you do not find water*, paraphrases the verse making its meaning clearer.

Also al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrators from Zurãrah and Bakīr that both of them asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.) about the *wuḍū'* of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). He (the Imãm) asked for a wash-bowl with water; he dipped his right hand, scooped a handful of water and pouring it on his face washed the face with it; then he dipped his left hand and scooped a handful of water and pouring it on his right arm washed the arm from the elbow to the palm without returning the hand to the elbow; then he dipped his right palm (in the water) and poured it on his left arm and did as he had done with the

right arm; then he wiped his head and feet with wetness of his palms without adding new water to them. Then he said, "One should not insert his fingers under the shoelace." Then (the Imãm) said, "Surely Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *When you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands*, it is therefore not proper to leave any part of one's face without washing and Allãh has ordered to wash the hands to the elbows, it is therefore not proper for him to leave any part of his hands upto the elbows without washing, because Allãh says: *wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows*. Then Allãh has said: *and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles*. So, if he wiped a part of his head or a part of his feet between the ankles and toe-tips, his *wuḍū'* will be completed." The narrators said, "We asked, 'Where are the ankles?' (The Imãm) said, 'Here (pointing to the joint of feet with bone of leg).' We said, 'What is this?' (The Imãm) said, 'This is the bone of leg, and ankle is below it.' Then we asked, 'May Allãh make your affairs good! One handful (of water) is enough for the face and one handful for the arm?' (The Imãm) said, 'Yes, if you use it properly and two handfulls cover the whole *wuḍū'*.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: This tradition is well known; al-'Ayyãshī has narrated it from Bakīr and Zurãrah from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and has narrated a similar tradition through Abdullãh ibn Sulaymãn from Abū Ja'far (a.s.); also there are other traditions having similar connotation as well as of the preceding tradition in other books.

al-'Ayyãshī has narrated from Zurãrah ibn A'yan; and Abū Ḥanīfah has narrated from Abū Bakīr ibn Ḥazm that they said, "A man did *wuḍū'* and did *masḥ* on his socks and entering the mosque performed his prayer. Then came there 'Alī (a.s.) and trampled his neck under foot and said, 'Woe unto you! You are praying without *wuḍū'*!' He said, ''Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭãb has ordered me (to do *wuḍū'* like this).' So, 'Alī (a.s.) caught his hand, brought him to 'Umar and said, 'Look what this (man) is narrating from you (and his voice was raised).' 'Umar said, 'Yes. I have ordered him (to do like it). Verily, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had done *masḥ* (in similar way).' 'Alī (a.s.) said, 'Was it before the revelation of (the chapter of) "The Table" or after it?' He said, 'I don't know.' 'Alī (a.s.) said, 'Then why do you give *fatwã* when you don't know. The Book (of Allãh) has left socks behind.'" (*Tafsīru 'l-burhãn*).

The author says: There had appeared a controversy during the reign of 'Umar about *masḥ* on socks, and it was the judgement of 'Alī

(a.s.) that it was abrogated by the verse of the chapter of "The Table", as appears from the traditions. That is why it has been narrated from some companions like al-Barã', Bilãl and Jarīr ibn 'Abdillãh that they had narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), (permission of) *masḥ* on socks after revelation of the chapter of "The Table". [In this way they tried to justify 'Umar's *fatwã*.] But these traditions are not free from confusion. Perhaps they thought that the abrogation of the wiping on socks was not based on the Qurãnic verse. But it is not so, because the verse confirms the wiping on the feet upto the ankles and socks are certainly not parts of the feet. The same is the connotation of the coming tradition.

al-'Ayyãshī narrates from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Khurãsãnī (and the *ḥadīth* is *marfū'*) that he said, "A man came to the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.), and asked him about the *masḥ* on socks. The Imãm bowed his head for sometime; then he raised the head and said, 'Verily Allãh, the Blessed, the High, has ordered His servants to do *ṭahãrah* and divided it among the organs; so He gave a share of it to the face and a share of it to the head and a share of it to the feet and a share of it to the hands. Now, if your socks are among these organs you may do *masḥ* on them.'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyãshī)

Again, he narrates from al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (a.s.) that he said, "Verily 'Alī opposed the people in the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭãb regarding the *masḥ* on socks. They said, 'We had seen the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) doing *masḥ* on socks.' 'Alī (a.s.) said, 'Was it before the revelation of "The Table" or after it?' They said, 'We don't know.' 'Alī (a.s.), said, 'But I know that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) left wiping on the socks when "The Table" was revealed. And that I do *masḥ* on a donkey's back is preferable to me than doing *masḥ* on the socks.' Then he recited this verse: *O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe a part of your heads and your feet to the ankles.*" (*ibid.*)

as-Suyūṭī writes: Ibn Jarīr and an-Naḥḥãs (in his *Nãsikh*) have narrated about 'Alī (a.s.) that he was doing (fresh) *wuḍū'* for each *ṣalãt* and used to recite: *O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer . . .* (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: Its explanation has been given earlier.

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain of narrates from al-Ḥalabī

from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said, "I asked him (the Imām) about the words of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *or you have touched the women*. He (the Imām) said, 'It means sexual intercourse; but Allāh is concealed and He prefers to cover. Therefore, He did not (clearly) name the act as you do.'" (*al-Kāfī*)

al-ʻAyyāshī narrates from Zurārah that he said, "I asked Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.), about *tayammum*. He said, 'Verily ʻAmmār ibn Yāsir came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said, "I was in condition of *janābah* and I had no water with me." The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) asked. "What did you do? O ʻAmmār!" He said, "I removed my clothes and then I turned round over the earth." (The Prophet) said, "The donkeys too do the same. Allāh has said: *and wipe a part of your faces and* (part of) *your hands therewith.*" Then (the Prophet) put his hands together on the earth and wiped them. Then, he wiped from his forehead until below the eyebrows; then rubbed on hand with the other on the back of the palm, beginning with the right hand.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

Zurārah narrates from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, "Allāh laid down washing for the face and the arms, and *masḥ*, for the head and feet. When man happened to be overcome by journey, sickness or other needs, Allāh removed the washing and changed it to wiping. Then he recited: *and if you are sick or on a journey, or one among you comes from privy, or you have touched the women, and you do not find water, betake yourselves to clean earth and wipe a part of your faces and* (part of) *your hands therewith.*" (*ibid.*)

ʻAbdu 'l-Aʻlā Mawlā Āl Sām says, "I said to Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), 'I stumbled and my nail was broken. So I put a bandage on my toe. How should I do *wuḍū'*?' The Imām (a.s.) said, 'The order for this and similar situations is known from the Book of Allah, the Blessed, the High: *and* (Allāh) *has not laid upon you any hardship in religion,* (22:78).'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: This refers to the verse of the chapter of "The Pilgrimage" which disallows difficulties. The Imām did not refer the clause of the similar meaning in the verse of *wuḍū'* and went to the last verse of the chapter of "The Pilgrimage". It shows that non-imposition of difficulty has the same meaning in both places. The traditions quoted above contain many fine points which may be understood if one keeps in mind the explanations we have given regarding these verse; that commentary may also be taken as explanation of the traditions.

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يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُونُواْ قَوَّٰمِينَ لِلَّهِ
شُهَدَآءَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَـَٔانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰٓ
أَلَّا تَعْدِلُواْ ۚ ٱعْدِلُواْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ
ٱللَّهَ خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ
وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾
وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ
ٱلْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٠﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ
ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ أَن يَبْسُطُوٓاْ إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنكُمْ ۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ۚ وَعَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾ ۞ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ ٱللَّهُ مِيثَٰقَ بَنِىٓ
إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ ٱثْنَىْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا ۖ وَقَالَ ٱللَّهُ
إِنِّى مَعَكُمْ ۖ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَيْتُمُ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ
وَءَامَنتُم بِرُسُلِى وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ ٱللَّهَ قَرْضًا

حَسَنًا لَّأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنكُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ
جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ۚ فَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ
ذَٰلِكَ مِنكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ﴿١٢﴾ فَبِمَا
نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَٰقَهُمْ لَعَنَّٰهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَٰسِيَةً ۖ
يُحَرِّفُونَ ٱلْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِۦ وَنَسُوا۟ حَظًّا مِّمَّا
ذُكِّرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۚ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَىٰ خَآئِنَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۚ
فَٱعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَٱصْفَحْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾
وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّا نَصَٰرَىٰٓ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَهُمْ
فَنَسُوا۟ حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوا۟ بِهِۦ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةَ
وَٱلْبَغْضَآءَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۚ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ
بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

O you who believe! Be upright for Allãh, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and fear Allãh; surely Allãh is Aware of what you do (8). *Allãh has promised to those who believe and do good deeds: they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward* (9). *And* (as for) *those who disbelieve and reject our signs, these are the companions of the flame* (10). *O you who believe! Remember Allãh's favour on you when a people had determined to stretch forth their hands towards you, but He withheld their hands from you, and fear Allãh; and on Allãh let the believers rely* (11). *And certainly Allãh made a covenant with the Children of Israel, and We raised from*

among them twelve chieftains; and Allãh said: "Surely I am with you, if you keep up prayer and pay zakãt *and believe in My Messengers and assist them and offer to Allãh a goodly loan, I will most certainly cover your evil deeds, and I will most certainly cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, but whoever disbelieves from among you after that, he indeed shall lose the right way"* (12). *But on account of their breaking their covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard; they altered the words from their places and they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of; and you shall always discover treachery in them excepting a few of them; so pardon them and turn away; surely Allãh loves those who do good* (to others) (13). *And of those who say: "We are Christians," We did take their covenant, but they forgot a portion of what they were admonished with, therefore We excited among them enmity and hatred to the Day of Resurrection; and Allãh will inform them of what they did* (14).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The connection of the verse with the preceding ones is clear and needs no elaboration. The series of the verses is addressed to the believers, pointing to some important matters, which affect them individually and collectively in both worlds.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Be upright for Allãh, bearers of witness with justice and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably*****:** The verse is similar to the verse 135 of the chapter "Women", *O you who believe! Be maintainers of justice bearers of witness for Allãh's sake, though it may be against your own selves or* (your) *parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allãh is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow* (your) *low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allãh is aware of what you do*.

However, there is a subtle difference between the two verses. The verse of the chapter of "Women" forbids deviation from justice in bearing witness because of some low desires; the person loves the

man for whom he bears witness because of some relationship or friendship, etc. and therefore, gives evidence in his favour in order that he might get some undue benefits. Conversely, this verse of the chapter of "The Table" prohibits deviation from justice while bearing witness because of hatred and enmity for the person against whom evidence is tendered; he bears witness against him intending to take some revenge from him and thus tramples on his rights.

This difference of themes has brought difference of stipulations in the clauses of the two verses. The verse in the chapter of "Women" says: *Be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allãh's sake*; while this verse in the chapter of "The Table" turns the restrictions around and says: "be upright for Allãh, bearers of witness with justice."

The main purpose of this verse is to restrain the believers from going against truth in bearing witness because of some enmity that the witness might be entertaining against the party concerned. Therefore, the evidence is attached to justice, meaning that one should observe justice while giving evidence; the evidence should not contain even an iota of injustice, even if the person concerned is one's enemy. On the other hand, evidence in favour of someone because of love or relationship (even if it goes against the right) is not counted such a deviation from justice although in reality it is not free from injustice and deviation. Therefore, the verse in the chapter of "The Table" enjoins bearing witness with justice and it has been based on the order of being upright for the sake of Allãh; while the order in the chapter of "Women" enjoins giving evidence for the sake of Allãh, that is, without following base desires and it is based on the order of being upright with justice.

The same is the reason why in the verse of "The Table" the order to bear witness with justice leads to the order of acting equitably as Allãh says: *act equitably, that is nearer to piety*; it calls to justice and counts it as a means of acquiring piety. And in the verse of the chapter "Women", the order has been reversed and the command to bear witness for Allãh is followed by the phrases: *do not follow your* (low) *desires lest you deviate*. Thus, Allãh prohibits the believers from following one's low desire and discarding of piety; and counts it as a means of deviating from justice.

Then, both the verses warn them against deviation from piety, using almost similar wordings. The verse of the chapter of "Women" says: *and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allãh is aware of what you do*, i.e., if you don't keep firm hold of piety; and the verse of the chapter of "The Table" says: *and fear Allãh, surely Allãh is Aware*

of what you do.

The meaning of the wording: "be upright for Allãh, bearers of witness with justice . . .", may easily be understood from explanations of previous verses.

QUR'ÃN: ***act equitably, that is nearer to piety . . .*:** The pronoun "that" refers to justice that is understood from the order of acting equitably. The meaning is clear.

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh has promised to those who believe and do good deeds: they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward*:** The sentence: "they shall have forgiveness and a might reward", elaborates the divine promise given to those who believe and do good deeds. This verse presents this divine promise more forcefully than does the verse 29 of the chapter of "Victory": *Allãh has promised those among them who believe and do good forgiveness and a great reward*. It is because the verse under discussion clearly and independently describes the promise while the verse of the chapter of "Victory" mentions it as a part of the sentence. Someone has said that it is more emphatic because it is news after news; but this reasoning is not correct.

QUR'ÃN: ***And* (as for) *those who disbelieve and reject our signs, these are the companions of the flame*:** ar-Rãghib has said: "*al-Jaḥmah* (اَلْجَحْمَةُ) means intensely searing fire; and from it is derived the word *al-jaḥīm* (اَلْجَحِيْمُ = the Hell)". The threat contained in this verse stands opposite to the promise of the preceding verse: *they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward*.

In this verse, disbelief is qualified with rejection of the Divine message; the aim is to exclude a disbelief, which is not joined with rejection of the Divine signs and commandments.

When someone knows that the Divine sign is true and does not reject it [yet does not follow it properly] then his case is in the hands of Allãh; if He wishes He would forgive him; otherwise He might give him punishment. The two verses contain good promise for those believers who do good deeds and stern threat to those who disbelieve and reject the Divine signs. Between these two extremes, there are many intermediate stages and stations. Allãh has kept their conditions vague and ambiguous.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Remember Allãh's favour on you***

***when a people had determined to stretch forth their hands towards you . . .*:** These wordings may be applied to various incidents and events which had taken place between the infidels and the Muslims; for example, the battles of Badr, Uḥud and Aḥzāb, etc. Apparently, it is a general description and refers to the polytheists' continuous efforts to kill the believers, erase Islam, and annihilate the religion of *tawḥīd*.

Some exegetes have said that it refers to the polytheists' conspiracy to kill the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) or to plan of some Jews to assassinate him, but the apparent wording does not support this particularization, as may be seen clearly.

QUR'ĀN: *and fear Allāh, and on Allāh let the believers rely*: This exhortation for piety and reliance on Allāh in fact points to intense warning and total prohibition of neglecting the piety and discarding reliance on Allāh. We say so because this command is immediately followed by the description of making covenant with the Children of Israel and also with those who said: *"We are Christians"*. Both groups had broken the Divine covenant that made them the target of Divine curse, and their hearts were hardened consequently; thus they neglected a portion of their religions. Consequently, Allāh created enmity and hatred among them upto the Day of Resurrection.

The incident has been referred to, only to make the believers aware that the Jews and the Christians have been meted out the punishment because they had forgotten the Divine covenant; they had undertaken that they would surrender themselves to Allāh and had reinforced it with the promise of obeying the God's commands. Accordingly they should have desisted from going against the Divine rules and should have relied on God in their religious affairs. They should have taken what Allāh had chosen for them and left what He did not like them to do. Its only way was to obey their Messengers by believing in them and not following anyone other than Allāh and His Messenger. They should not have listened to those arrogant and insolent persons who called them to submit to their authority, even if they were their religious scholars and monks. There should be no obedience except to Allāh or to him who calls to Allāh's obedience.

But they threw the Divine guidance behind their backs. As a result they were removed far from Divine mercy; they altered the Divine speech from its place and interpreted it in a way that was against the Divine ideas; as a result, they neglected and forgot the important parts of the religion.

It was a part on which all good and happiness depended. When they abandoned it, every happiness, felicity, and good departed from their lives, and what was left of religion in their hands, that too was contaminated and spoiled. Religion is a composite entity of beliefs and rules, every part of which is intertwined with all other parts; if a part is spoiled all other parts are adversely affected, especially if the spoiled part was related to the basics. For example, a person prays but not for the sake of Allãh, spends in charities but not to seek the pleasure of Allãh or fights but not for raising the word of truth. Such people cannot get benefit of what has remained in their hands because it is altered and rotten; and what they had neglected of the religion would not be of any help to them in the hereafter. Nobody can do without religion especially its fundamental principles.

It is seen from the above that the context demands that the believers should be warned against neglecting the piety and discarding the reliance on God. This purpose is served by referring to that event and inviting them to ponder on it.

Also it appears from the above that reliance on God should cover all legislative and creative matters or may be the legislations only; in other words, Allãh has commanded the believer to obey Allãh and His Messenger in religious commandments and accept whatever the Messenger has brought and explained to them; they should entrust the religious affairs and Divine commandments to their Lord; should refrain from thinking that they were independent or that they could manipulate the Divine *sharī'ah* which the Messenger has brought to them. Also, they should conform to the system of the cause and effect laid down by God in the universe. But they should not ascribe to it any independent authority. They should not give to it any shade of Lordship. They should always remain waiting for what Allãh decides or chooses for them by His own management and will.

QUR'ÃN: ***And certainly Allãh made a covenant with the Children of Israel and We raised from among them twelve chieftains . . .*:** ar-Rãghib has said: *an-Naqīb* (اَلنَّـقِـيْبُ = translated here as chieftain) denotes the one who investigates or explores the condition of his people; it is derived from *an-naqb* (اَلنَّـقْبُ = breaching or boring a wall or a hide); plural = *an-nuqabã'* (اَلنُّـقَبَآءُ).

Allãh narrates to the believers of this *ummah* what had happened to the Children of Israel. They were given their religious commandments; a covenant was made with them that they would remain stead-

fast in religion. Chieftains were appointed for them and the *sharī'ah* was promulgated, and thus the proof of Allãh was completed against them. And what was their response to all that? They broke the covenant and in return, Allãh cursed them and made their hearts stone hard. Allãh says: "And certainly Allãh made a covenant with the Children of Israel." It is mentioned several times in the chapter of "The Cow", and in other place: "and we raised among them twelve chieftains"; apparently, they were the heads of the twelve tribes. They were a sort of rulers over them; their relationship with their tribes was in a way like that of *Ulu 'l-Amr vis-à-vis* people of this *ummah*; they had the authority in the worldly and religious affairs although they did not receive any divine revelation nor had they any right to legislate any *sharī'ah* (because this is reserved for Allãh and His Messenger). "And Allãh said: 'Surely I am with you.'" This is a commitment that Allãh would protect and look after them. It follows that God would help them if they obeyed Him and would abandon them if they disobeyed. That is why this sentence is followed by these two conditions: "if you keep up prayer and pay *zakãt* and believe in My Messengers and assist them." *at-Ta'zīz* (اَلتَّعْزِيْرُ = to help respectfully). "My Messengers" refers to those who were to come in future like 'Īsã and Muḥammad, and all those whom Allãh raised between Mūsã and Muḥammad (peace be on them all). "And offer to Allãh a goodly loan", it refers to unobligatory spending in the way of Allãh, not the obligatory *zakãt*: "'I will most certainly cover your evil deeds, and I will most certainly cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow.'" This is the goodly promise given by God and it is followed by these words: "'but whoever disbe-lieves from among you after that, he indeed shall lose the right way.'"

"But on account of their breaking their covenant"; apparently, it refers to the disbelief mentioned just above about which Allãh has warned that he indeed shall lose the right way.

Fabimã naqḍihim (فَبِمَانَقْضِهِمْ): The particle "*mã*" here gives emphasis to their breaking the covenant; also it creates a vagueness which gives various connotations in different settings; it may show that a certain thing is too big or too small, etc. The meaning: 'Because of their certain contrary behaviour against the covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hard.' Curse means keeping isolated from Divine Mercy. *Qãsiyah* (قَاسِيَةً = hard); it was originally used for hard stones; a hard heart is that which doesn't submit to truth, is not affected by mercy. Allãh says: *Has not the time yet come for those*

who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allãh and what has come down of the truth? And (that) *they should not be like those who were given the Book before, but the time became prolonged to them, so their hearts hardened, and most of them are transgressors* (57:16).

This hard-heartedness led them to altering the words from their places; this alteration could be by interpreting a Divine speech in a way which Allãh was not pleased with, that is, misinterpreting it and giving it an uncalled for meaning. Also, it could be by deleting some words or adding or altering it; all these are examples of alteration. In this way they lose the sight of clear realities of religion. "And they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of"; that was the portion which contained the fundamentals of religion on which the felicity of both worlds depended; that falicity was replaced by infelicity and hardships. They started believing that God was like His creatures, that the Prophet Mūsã (a.s.) was the final Prophet, that the *sharī'ah* of the Torah would continue forever, that *badã'* or abrogation of the *sharī'ah* was invalid and similar other beliefs.

"and you shall always discover treachery in them"; it may also be translated as 'you shall always find a treacherous group among them.' "excepting a few of them; so pardon them and turn away; surely Allãh loves those who do good (to others)." We have explained several times that exception of a few does not prevent attachment of curse and punishment to the whole group or nation.[8]

QUR'ÃN: ***And of those who say, "We are Christians," We did take their covenant, but they forgot a portion of what they were admonished with, therefore, We excited among them enmity and hatred to the Day of Resurrection, and Allãh will inform them of what they did*****:** ar-Rãghib has said: "*Gharã*" (**غَرَى**) means "became attached"; it is derived from *al-gharã'* (**الْغِرَآء** = glue).

Jesus Christ, son of Mary was a Prophet of Mercy; he called people to peace and love and exhorted them to look towards the hereafter keeping aloof from worldly adornments and delights. He strictly forbade them to fight among themselves for the gains of this life.[9]

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[8] A strange interpretation was seen in an exegesis that "a few" refers to 'Abdullãh ibn Salãm and his companions. The fact is that 'Abdullãh ibn Salãm had entered into Islam long before revelation of the chapter "The Table", while the exception in this verse points to some Jews who had not entered into Islam yet. (*Author's note*)

[9] Refer for it to statements of Christ (a.s.) on various occasions as attributed to him in

When they forgot a portion of what they were admonished with, Allāh made their hearts inclined to war and fighting in place of love and peace and exchanged the fraternal feelings which they were taught with enmity and hatred, as He says: "but they forgot a portion of what they were admonished with, therefore, We excited among them enmity and hatred to the Day of Resurrection."

This enmity and hatred became ingrained in their psyche, which has fixed its tentacles among these Christian nations. This mindset of theirs is like the Fire of the hereafter from which they cannot escape no matter how hard they strived. *Whenever they will desire to go forth from it, from grief, they shall be turned back into it and taste the chastisement of burning* (22:22). This had begun soon after ʻĪsā, son of Maryam (a.s.) was raised up. His disciples and missionaries who roamed from Jerusalem to Rome were entangled in one controversy after another among themselves; and this has kept growing and spreading its tentacles resulting in wars, fightings, raids, banishments and anathemas, until it reached to the great world wars which threatened the earth with destruction and humanity with annihilation. All this shows how a Divine bounty turns into Divine revenge and how the endeavours are wasted; and soon Allāh will show them the result of what they were doing.

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the four Gospels. (*Author's note*)

يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ
قَدۡ جَآءَكُمۡ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمۡ كَثِيرٗا مِّمَّا
كُنتُمۡ تُخۡفُونَ مِنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَيَعۡفُواْ عَن
كَثِيرٖۗ قَدۡ جَآءَكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ نُورٞ وَكِتَٰبٞ
مُّبِينٞ ﴿١٥﴾ يَهۡدِي بِهِ ٱللَّهُ مَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ رِضۡوَٰنَهُۥ
سُبُلَ ٱلسَّلَٰمِ وَيُخۡرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى
ٱلنُّورِ بِإِذۡنِهِۦ وَيَهۡدِيهِمۡ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسۡتَقِيمٖ
﴿١٦﴾ لَّقَدۡ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلۡمَسِيحُ
ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَۚ قُلۡ فَمَن يَمۡلِكُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيۡـًٔا إِنۡ أَرَادَ
أَن يُهۡلِكَ ٱلۡمَسِيحَ ٱبۡنَ مَرۡيَمَ وَأُمَّهُۥ وَمَن فِي
ٱلۡأَرۡضِ جَمِيعٗاۗ وَلِلَّهِ مُلۡكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ
وَمَا بَيۡنَهُمَاۚ يَخۡلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٞ ﴿١٧﴾
وَقَالَتِ ٱلۡيَهُودُ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ نَحۡنُ أَبۡنَٰٓؤُاْ ٱللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّٰٓؤُهُۚ قُلۡ

فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُم بِذُنُوبِكُم ۖ بَلْ أَنتُم بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ۚ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن
يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَىٰ فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ أَن تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا
مِن بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ ۖ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُم بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾

O People of the Book! Indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much; indeed there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allãh (15); *with it Allãh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of peace and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His permission and guides them to a straight path* (16). *Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Surely, Allãh – He is the Messiah, son of Mary." Say: "Who then could control anything as against Allãh if He wished to destroy the Messiah son of Mary and his mother and all those on the earth together?" And Allãh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them; He creates what He pleases and Allãh has power over all things* (17). *And the Jews and the Christians say: "We are the sons of Allãh and his beloved ones." Say: "Why does He then chastise you for your faults? Nay, you are men from among those whom He has created; He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases;" and Allãh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and to Him is the eventual return* (18). *O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you explaining to you after a cessation of the Messengers, lest you say: "There came not to us a giver of good news or a warner," so indeed there has come to you a giver of good news and a warner; and Allãh has power over all things* (19).

COMMENTARY

It was described above that Allãh had made a covenant with the People of the Book that they would help respectfully His Messengers and would preserve the Book that was revealed to them but they broke the covenant, which they had made with their Creator. After this preamble, Allãh invites them to believe in His Messenger whom He has now sent and the Book, which has been revealed to him. For this purpose, Allãh has introduced the Messenger and the Book to them and has established proof of truth of his messengership and the Book and finally, He has completed that proof for them.

As for the introduction, it is contained in these sentences: *O People the Book! Indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much; indeed there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allãh.* And then, *O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you explaining to you after a cessation of the Messengers . . .*

As for establishment of the proof, we see it in the Divine words: *making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much*. There could be no better proof of the truth of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who was an unlettered Arab and was revealing to them what they were hiding that could be known only to their own scholars with specialized knowledge. Likewise, the sentence: *with it Allãh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of peace . . .* gives a convincing proof; the true ideas are the best proof for the truth of Messengeship and veracity of the Book.

As for completing the proof, it is asserted in the last sentence: *lest you say: "There came not to us a giver of good news or a warner," so indeed there has come to you a giver of good news and a warner, and Allãh has power over all things*.

Also, Allãh has refuted in the passing the belief of a group of them that: "*Surely, Allãh – He is the Messiah, son of Mary"*, and the saying of the Jews and the Christians both: *"We are sons of Allãh and his beloved ones."*

QUR'ĀN: *O People of the Book! Indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much*: We may quote the following verses to see how the Prophet made clear to them what they were hiding: *Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the* ummī*, whom they find*

written down with them in the Tawrāt and the Injīl . . . (7:157). *Those whom we have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons;* . . . (2:146*). Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, and those with him are severe against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves . . . that is their description in the Tawrāt and their description in the Injīl; like as seed produce that puts forth its sprout* . . . (48:29). Also, as he (s.a.w.a.) disclosed the order of stoning which they had hidden and wanted to use the Prophet to get it changed as the verse 41 of this chapter will show: *O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together in hastening to unbelief* . . . We find even today the law of stoning clearly mentioned in *Deuteronomy*, 22:23-24.

As for the Messenger's passing over much of their misbehaviour, suffice it to say that he left undisclosed many things, which they were hiding of their Book. It may be ascertained from the contradictions and errors still found in the Tawrāt and the Injīl. The Tawrāt, for example, contains many things concerning *Tawḥīd* (Divine Unity) and Prophethood which cannot be ascribed to Allāh: That He has got a body, He enters into a place and things like that; also unacceptable accusations against the Prophet that they indulged in *kufr*, sins and other misdemeanours. Also, the Tawrāt is totally silent about the resurrection, while no religion can stand on its feet without this important belief. As for the Gospels, they, and especially the Gospel according to St. John are full of idolatrous ideas.

QUR'ĀN: ***indeed there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allāh*****:** The construction of the sentence manifestly shows that the coming one depends on Allāh as a speech depends on the speaker and an explanation depends on the explainer. Accordingly, the light would refer to the Qur'ān; and in that case the conjunction: "and a clear Book", would be an explicative apposition; thus, the light and the clear Book both would indicate the Qur'ān. Allāh has called the Qur'ān a light in several places; for example: . . . *and follow the light which has been sent down with him* . . . (7:157). *Therefore believe in Allāh and His Messenger and the Light which We have revealed* . . . (64:8). . . . *and we have sent to you clear light* (4:174).

Alternatively, the light may refer to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). This explanation gets support from the beginning of the verse; also, Allāh has called the Prophet, "Light", in the verse 46 of the chapter 33: . . . *and as a light-giving torch*.

QUR'ĀN: ***with it Allāh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of peace*****:** "with it" – the preposition "with" is attached to the pronoun of the instrument that refers to the Book or to the Light. It makes no difference whether the light refers to the Prophet or to the Qur'ān, because the end result is the same. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is one of the apparent causes of the guidance and the same is the position of the Qur'ān; and the reality of guidance comes from Allāh as He has said: *Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allāh guides whom He pleases . . .* (28:56). *And thus did We reveal to you a spirit by Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor* (what) *the faith* (was)*, but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants; and most surely you guide to the right path. The path of Allāh, Whose is whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; now surely to Allāh do all affairs eventually come* (42:52-53). As you see, these verses ascribe the guidance to the Qur'ān and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and simultaneously, they ascribe it to Allāh; Allāh is the Guide in reality while others are apparent causes who have been brought in this world to revive the guidance.

The guidance of Allāh benefits him who follows His pleasure. In other words, the Divine guidance will affect only those who would follow His pleasure. Guidance in this verse denotes conveyance to the destination; Allāh takes such people to a way or ways of peace or to many such ways, one after another.

Peace is unrestricted; as such, it denotes safety and freedom from all misery and distress that spoil the happiness of life in this world or the hereafter. The Qur'ān has described Islam, faith and piety as success, achievement and security and the peace mentioned here fits perfectly on that. We have described in the first volume of our book while explaining the verse: *Guide us to the straight path* (1:5), that depending on the conditions of the walkers, Allāh has created many lanes in one highway; all walk on the same route related to Allāh which He has named in His Book, 'the straight path': *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them unto Our ways; and Allāh is most surely with the doers of good* (29: 69). *And* (know) *that this is My path, the straight one, therefore follow it, and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will lead you away from His way . . .* (6:153). Allāh has thus shown that He has laid down many lanes but all lead the walkers to the same destination without differentiating between walkers of one lane from those of the others. It is unlike the ungodly ways where each way leads to a different destination.

The verse thus means – and Allāh knows better – that Allāh guides, and through His Book or through His Prophet, He leads those who follow His pleasure to the ways that protect the walkers from infelicity of the life of this world and the next, and keeps them away from all things which contaminate the happiness of life.

The guidance to peace and happiness revolves around following the Divine pleasure; and Allāh has said: . . . *and He does not like* kufr *in His servants; . . .* (39:7*). . . . yet surely Allāh is not pleased with the transgressing people* (9:96). Ultimately, it depends on keeping aloof from the way of injustice and avoiding any contact with unjust people. Allāh has excluded them from His guidance and made them despaired of reaching this Divine honour, as He has said: . . . *and Allāh does not guide the unjust people* (62:5). The verse: "with it Allāh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of peace", runs in a way parallel to the verse 6:82 which says: *Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who have the security and they are those who go aright*.

QUR'ĀN: ***and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His permission and guides them to a straight path*:** *aẓ-Ẓulumāt* (اَلظُّلُمَاتُ) is plural of *aẓ-ẓulmah* (اَلظُّلْمَةُ = darkness). Darkness has been brought in plural while light is singular. It gives an indication that unlike the path of untruth there is no difference or disparity in the path of truth even if it contains various lanes suitable to various spiritual levels.

If bringing out of utter darkness into light is ascribed to someone other than Allāh, like the Prophet or the Book, then the Divine permission means His approval and pleasure; as Allāh says: (This is) *a Book which We have revealed to you that you may bring forth men, by their Lord's permission from utter darkness into light* . . . (14:1). This verse says that the Prophet was to bring them out from darkness to light, and this action has been qualified with permission of their Lord. The idea is to show that the Prophet was not an independent cause of guidance, because its actual cause is Allāh. Soon after that a verse says: *And certainly We sent Mūsā with Our signs saying: "Bring forth your people from utter darkness into light . . ."* (14:5). This verse, has not qualified the guidance with Divine permission because the imperative mood has taken care of that.

When this action is attributed to Allāh then 'bringing them out with His permission' means that Allāh takes them out of darkness with His knowledge; *al-idhn* (الإِذْن = permission) has been used for

informa-tion. They say: *adhina bihi* (اَذِنَ بِهٖ= learnt of him), that is, was informed about him. The following verses give the same meaning: *And an announcement* (information) *from Allãh and His Messenger . . .* (9:3). *But if they turn back, say: "I have given you warning* (information) *all alike . . ."* (21:109). *And proclaim* (inform) *among men the* ḥajj . . . (22:27); there are several other verses like these.

"and guides them to a straight path": The verb, "guides them", has been repeated because another verb: "and brings them out", has come between "with it Allãh guides Him", in this sentence. Also, we have explained in the chapter of "The Opening" that the straight path is a highway, which contains many lanes. Therefore, guidance to that path also should be a comprehensive one which would include all kinds of guidance.

"a straight path" is a common noun, yet it refers to the same straight path which is unique and which Allãh always ascribes to Himself alone (the only exception is in the chapter of "The Opening" where it is not ascribed to Allãh but the context makes it clear). The common noun serves to enhance its status and magnify its honour.

QUR'ÃN: ***Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Surely, Allãh – He is the Messiah, son of Mary"*:** It refers to one of the three sects mentioned in the chapter of "The House of ʻImrãn" who believed that Allãh had become one with Messiah and Messiah is god and man both at the same time. This sentence may fit to the belief of sonship of Messiah as well as the belief of the three persons in one god. Be it as it may, the sentence points to the belief that Messiah had become one with God.

QUR'ÃN: ***Say: "Who then could control anything as against Allãh if He wished to destroy the Messiah son of Mary and his mother and all those on the earth together?" . . .*:** This is a proof to refute their belief because that belief contains contradiction in term. They say that Messiah is God and at the same time he is man as they have introduced him as the son of Mary; now being a man he is subject to all those changes which afflict any other man on this earth; all human beings like all that is in the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, are owned and controlled by Allah; they are subjugated under His Kingdom and authority; He can dispose them as He wishes and decides for or against them as He thinks fit; He has the right and authority to destroy Messiah as He has the right and authority to destroy his mother and all

those who are on the earth together without any distinction for Messiah over others. But if he is God how can he be destroyed? To say that Messiah is man rebuts their claim that he is God.

The words: "who then could control anything as against Allāh", are an allusion to show that there is no one at all who could stop Allāh from doing anything He wished; otherwise, it would mean that Allāh had no control on that thing. No cause in the universe has an independent control on its effect; nothing can stop or overwhelm the Divine control on anything; nobody owns anything except Allāh alone who has no partner or colleague; when He makes us owner of a certain thing, His ownership and His authority on it continues as before.

Now, come the words: "'if He wished to destroy the Messiah son of Mary and his mother and all those on the earth together?'" The Messiah is qualified by the phrase "son of Mary" to show that he was a total man, and like other human beings was under the control of the Lord. For this very reason, "his mother" has been added in conjunction because both had the same root and origin. Then, the clause: "and those on the earth together" was added because all are governed by the same law without any difference.

This qualification and conjunction clearly present the proof of ʻĪsā's transience. The Messiah is like any other human being, and like all those on the earth he is subject to all the changes and variations which affect others, because all are similarly transient; if others can be destroyed by Divine order then ʻĪsā too would be affected likewise. There is nothing to save him from it; if he were God he could not be destroyed.

The clause: "And Allāh's is the Kingdom of the Heavens and the earth and what is between them", gives the reason of the preceding statement. The Qur'ān generally refers to the creation with the words: "the Heavens and the earth" but here the phrase: "and what is between them" has been added. The aim is to make the proof clearer; now no one can say that Allāh has not mentioned what is between the heavens and the earth while the speech deals with ʻĪsā who was between the heavens and earth. In this sentence, the predicate "and Allāh's is" has been written before the subject, in this way it confines the Ownership to Allāh, and the proof becomes more emphatic. The meaning will be: How can anyone stop Allāh if He wished to destroy the Messiah and others when the Kingdom and unrestricted authority on the heavens, earth and what is between them is reserved for Allāh and no one shares it with Him. Consequently, nobody can stop the implementa-

tion of Allãh's order.

"He creates what He pleases; and Allãh has power over all things": These sentences in their turn explain the reason of the preceding sentence, that is: "and Allãh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them." The Kingdom – which is a sort of control and ownership – contains in its essential ingredients comprehensive power and effectual will; and such a Kingdom in the heavens, earth and what is between them is reserved for Allãh. He has power over all things and He creates what He pleases. His creating what He pleases and having power on all things is the proof of His Kingdom; and His Kingdom proves that if He wished to destroy all, there is nobody to stop its implementation. Finally, it proves that no one is His partner in His Divinity.

To prove that His will is implemented and His power is comprehensive, it is enough to say that He is Allãh. Perhaps, for this reason the Divine name, Allãh, has been repeated several times. If He is Allãh then nobody shares Godship with Him.

QUR'ÃN: ***And the Jews and the Christians say: "We are the sons of Allãh and His beloved ones"*****:** Certainly, they did not claim real sonship as the Christians claim for the Messiah (a.s.). Neither the Jews nor the Christian put forward this claim in the literal sense. They called themselves sons of God metaphorically, as a mark of distinction. In their scriptures, a lot of people have been called sons of God, for example, Adam[10], Jacob[11], David[12], Ephraim[13], Jesus,[14] and good-doing believers[15].

What they meant with this claim was that their relationship with Allãh was like that of sons with their father. They thought themselves like the sons of a King who had special status in comparison to the subjects. They were nearer to God and God was not supposed to treat them as His other subjects. In a way, they were exempted from the laws and regulations which were revealed for the general public, because they had very close connection with the King and as such, He would not punish them like His other subjects, nor will He keep them

[10] Luke, 3:38
[11] Exodus, 4:22
[12] Psalms, 2:7
[13] Jeremiah, 31:9
[14] Many places in the *New Testament*
[15] Mathew, 5:9; and other Gospels.

standing like common people on the Day of Resurrection. He would not humiliate them like others. All of this was the result of their relationship with God that was a relation of love and honour.

This sonship created a special relationship with God, which brought them very near to Him. The phrase: "His beloved ones" coming after the conjunction is an explicative apposition; it serves no real purpose. This claim of special relation and belovedness was meant to establish its inseparable attribute, that is, they can never be chastised and punished. They are assured of Divine favour and honour because if Allāh were to punish them, it will go against the distinction and honour that He has reserved for them. The proof of the above interpretation is seen in the rebuttal of their claim where Allāh says: *He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases*. There was no reason to give this reply if they had not meant by their claim: "We are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones", that they cannot be punished at all even if they did not accept the call of truth. Also, there would be no meaning to the statement: *Nay you are men from among those whom He has created*. In short, when they said: "'We are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones'", they wanted to say that they were the chosen people of God and His beloved ones and Allāh was not going to give them punishment even if they did what they did or left what they left, because full security against every unpleasant result or situation was a concomitant of special relationship and love.

QUR'ĀN: ***Say: "Why does He then chastise you for your faults?"*****:** Allāh tells His Prophet to refute their claim by bringing two proofs against them:

(1) By contradicting their claim, pointing to the chastisements that were inflicted on them; and (2) Bringing a proof, which would oppose their claim. The sentence under discussion contains the first proof: "Say: 'Why does He chastise you for your faults?'" If you are right in your claim that you are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones, that you are safe from Divine punishment and in no way you can be chastised, then you should have been safe from every punishment of this world and the next. If so, then why are you constantly being punished for your sins and faults?

As for the Jews, they always committed major sins; they killed their prophets, they murdered their good people, they broke the Divine covenants which were taken from them, they altered the words from their places, they concealed the Divine communications and rejected

them, they committed every type of transgression and contravention. Consequently, they always tasted the bitter results of their misdeeds; some were transformed into animals, others were thrown into disgrace and infelicity, unjust rulers were hoisted over them who killed them, disgraced them, and destroyed their towns and cities. Theirs is but a moribund life, they are neither alive nor dead.

As for the Christians, the sins and crimes that have taken root in their societies and nations are not less than those of the Jews; nor are the various types of chastisement meted out to them different from those of the Jews. Their condition was the same before coming of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), remained the same in his days and continues unchanged after him until now. History has recorded all this, even more than that; and the Qur'ãn also describes it to a certain extent, as may be seen in the chapters of "The Cow", "The House of 'Imrãn", "Women", "The Table" and "The Battlements", etc.

They cannot say that these misfortunes, disasters and calamities that afflict them from time to time are in fact manifestations of Divine love towards them, which they do not emanate from Divine wrath and are not meant as punishment or chastisement. After all, similar misfortunes had come upon good servants of Allãh, even His Prophets and Messengers like Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Zacharia and John the Baptist and others like them; and you too, O Muslims! Have suffered such reversals of fortune as in the battle of Uḥud and Mūtah, etc. How can you say that when these catastrophes come to us they are Divine punishment but when you are afflicted you count it as Divine favour?

COMMENT: There is no doubt that these physical troubles, worldly disasters and misfortunes afflict the believers and disbelievers alike, and they catch the good-doers and evil-doers in similar way. It is the Divine custom that covers all the servants of Allãh since time immemorial. However, it is called with different names and brings about different effects depending on the goodness or wickedness of the men affected. In other words, we have to see what is the status of the servant *vis-à-vis* his Master.

There is no doubt that when the good traits are entrenched in a servant's psyche and the human excellence has fully covered his being (like the Prophets and their true followers), then the afflictions and worldly troubles which come to him, serve only to unveil his hidden virtues and merits which benefit not only him but even others. This type of afflictions, although they are disliked by human nature, are

parts of spiritual training which Allāh puts His good servants through; you may say that through these misfortunes Allāh opens the way to raise their status and rank.

Then comes one whose felicity or infelicity has not taken root and after affliction with calamities and catastrophes, he did not find the way to felicity and happiness, then these trials and tribulations help in exposing his status of belief or disbelief, merit or demerit. The only name that can be given to such misfortunes is that they are tests and trials coming from Allāh, which open the way for the man to the paradise or the hell.

Lastly come those whose life is a permanent tale of base desires; they are depraved and corrupt and are intent on making others depraved and corrupt; they are submerged in the currents of desire and anger; if they get a chance, they would choose depravity over virtue and arrogance before their Creator instead of submitting to Him; as the Qur'ān narrates the end results of the unjust nations like the people of Noah, 'Ād, Thamūd, Pharaoh, the inhabitants of Midian and the people of Lot. Their bad end was the result of their arrogance against Allāh. The calamities that were poured on them and which annihilated their whole nations have to be counted as Divine punishment, chastisement, and the evil consequences of their deeds. They cannot be explained in any other way.

Allāh has combined these three groups in His noble speech: . . . *and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allāh may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you; and Allāh loves not the unjust. And that Allāh may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers* (3:140-1).

The history of the Jews since the time Mūsā was raised amongst them until Allāh raised Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), (more than 2000 years); and likewise, the history of the Christians since the day the Messiah was raised to heaven till the advent of Islam (nearly six centuries, as they say) are full of various types of sins they did and crimes they committed. There was hardly an evil they did not indulge in, they persisted in it and remained stubborn without any shame. In this backdrop, the only name that can be given to the calamities that afflicted them is chastisement, punishment, and retribution.

Of course, the Muslims too have suffered similar afflictions; those misfortunes (in their natural disposition) were such episodes, which the Divine management had brought on the Muslims. Such has been the course of Allāh that has indeed run before: . . . *and you shall*

not find a change in Allãh's course (48:23). We have to look at the position of the affected Muslims to decide about those misfortunes; if they were steadfast on the path of truth then the misfortune was a trial and test given to them by Allãh, and if they had deviated from the straight path, then certainly it was punishment and chastisement. No one has any badge of honour against Allãh, nor can anyone arbitrarily claim any right on Allãh. The Qur'ãn has never said that the Muslims had any special honour before Allãh nor has it called them sons of Allãh and His beloved ones. In fact, Qur'ãn doesn't care about the names and the titles, which people have taken for themselves.

Allãh has addressed them in these words: *Do you think that you will enter the Garden while Allãh has not yet known those who strive hard from among you, and* (He has not) *known the patient . . . And Muḥammad is no more than a Messenger, the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to Allãh in the least; and Allãh will reward the grateful* (3:142-4). (This) *shall not be in accordance with your vain desires nor in accordance with the vain desires of the People of the Book; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides Allãh he will find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper* (4:123).

The phrase: "'Why does He then chastise you for your faults?'", may be taken to refer to the chastisement of the next world. In that case, it would be translated as a future tense and not as a present imperfect tense. The People of the Book accept that they could be punished a little for their faults. The Qur'ãn has quoted the Jews' claim that*: "Fire shall not touch us but for a few days"* (2:80); and although the Christians say that Messiah sacrificed himself to atone his followers' sins, but this claim in itself admits that they commit sins and that the resulting punishment was taken by Messiah upon himself in the form of crucifixion; in addition to that, the Gospels describe some sins like fornication, etc, and the Church in its turn was admitting it practically by issuing certificates of atonement. However, the earlier interpretation is more appropriate.

QUR'ÃN: ***"Nay, you are men from among those whom He has created; He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases;" and Allãh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and to Him is the eventual return*****:** It is the second argument against their claim. It tells them that if we look

into your reality it will show the falsity of your claim that you are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones; you are merely mortal human beings from among the creatures of Allāh; you have no superiority in this matter over other creatures of God; whoever is in the heavens and earth and what is between them, his only distinction is that he is one of the creatures placed in the heavens and earth and between them. He is a creature of God, and God is the King who rules over him and about him as well as over others and about others as He wishes and anyhow He wishes; and that creature like other things is to return to his Lord who is the King and ruler over him and the others. Accordingly, it is on Allāh's discretion to forgive whom He pleases or give punishment to whom He pleases; any distinction or nobility or other such things cannot stop Allāh from forgiving him or punishing him as He wishes. Nothing can block Allāh's way and no shield can protect anyone from Allāh's will.

The clause: "'Nay, you are men from among those whom He has created'", is one premise of the argument; the second is: "and Allāh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them"; and the end phrase: "and to Him is the eventual return", is the third premise. The clause: "He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases", gives the result of the argument that refutes their claim that there was no way they could be punished.

QUR'ĀN: ***O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you explaining to you after a cessation of the Messengers . . .*:** ar-Rāghib has said: "*al-Futūr* (اَلْفُتُوْرُ) is tranquillity after heat, softness after hardness and weakness after strength. Allāh has said: *O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you explaining to you after a cessation of the Messengers*, i.e. tranquillity and quiet during which no messenger of Allāh came."

This verse is the second speech addressed to the People of the Book; and it completes the preceding speech. The first verse has explained to them that Allāh has sent to them a Messenger who is supported by the manifest Book and he guides by Allāh's permission to every good and happiness. Now, this verse explains that this Divine explanation is meant for completing the proof over them, lest they say: "there came not to us a giver of good news or a warner."

This description makes it clear that the clause related to the verb: "explaining to you"; in this verse is the same, which is mentioned, in the preceding verse. Thus, the full sentence will be: 'explaining to you

much of what you concealed of the Book.' You should understand that this religion to which you are invited is exactly the same which you believed in; it confirms what is with you; if there is any difference it is because it makes clear those religious realities which the Divine Books had explained and you had kept them hidden. It means that the speech: "O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you explaining to you", in a way repeats exactly the previous speech and the purpose is to add some more details which were not given before, and which are mentioned in the clause: "lest you say: 'There came not to us a giver of good news or a warner'". Such repetition is allowed because there is a long gap between the two sentences and it is not unusual in literature.

There is another possibility that it is a completely new speech, and the related clauses of the verb: *making clear to you* are deleted. This deletion may allude to comprehensiveness i.e. He makes clear to you all those things which require clarification. Or it may show eminence and magnificence of the matter, i.e. makes clear to you a very important and great matter which you needed to know. The clause: "after a cessation of the Messengers" alludes to this need. The meaning then will be: makes clear to you all those things you needed to know because a long period has gone by without there being any messenger who could have explained to you. The words: "lest you say: 'There came not to us a giver of good news or a warner'", is connected with the verb: *indeed there has come to you*, showing the reason of his coming.

The sentence: "and Allãh has power over all things", aims at replying to an unspoken objection. The Jews thought that no *sharī'ah* was to come after the Torah because abrogation and *al-badã'* were not possible. Allãh refutes their assumption by saying that such thinking goes against the comprehensiveness and generality of Divine Power. We have described in detail about abrogation while writing on the verse 2:106 in the first volume of our book: *Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it.*

THE WAY OF THINKING TO WHICH THE QUR'ÃN GUIDES*

* The author in this essay wants to prove the inevitability and reliability of logical proofs and rational arguments. Although he does not say so clearly, I think his main aim is to refute the Akhbãrīs' views that rational precepts have no place in religion. They say that only the Qur'ãn and the *Sunnah* are the genuine sources of the

No doubt, man's is a life of reflection that requires perception and discernment; we call it faculty of thought. So the life is built on thought. It follows that the more correct and comprehensive the thought is, the more appropriate and sound the life will be. Whatever system a man follows and whichever path he treads upon, his good life is linked to, and bound with, proper thought; as much share it takes from that thought, that much uprightness it enjoys.

Allãh has repeatedly described it in His Great Book in different ways and various styles: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth?* (6:122). *Say: "Are those who know and those who do not know alike?"* (39:9). *Allãh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees* (58:11). . . . *therefore give good news to My servants, those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it, those are they whom Allãh has guided and those it is who are the men of understanding* (39:17-18). There are many such verses, which there is no need to quote here. Nobody has any doubt how Qur'ãn invites people to the correct thinking and exhorts them to proceed on the path of knowledge.

Also the Qur'ãn reminds the readers that what it guides to is a way from among the ways of thinking. Allãh says: *Surely this Qur'ãn guides to that which is most upright* (17:9); i.e. the religion, custom, or path that is most upright. In any case, it is the path of life and its uprightness depends on the uprightness of the way of thinking, as Allãh has said: *indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allãh; with it Allãh guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of peace and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His permission and guides them to the straight path* (5:15-16). The straight path is that clear path which is free from contradiction and conflicts, i.e. neither it goes against the truth which one seeks nor its various sections point to different directions.

Allãh, in His Mighty Book, has not pin-pointed the correct and upright thought to which He calls His servants; He has left it to the common sense of the people, expecting them to use their natural

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sharī'ah. However, a group of them says that the Qur'ãn should not be explained except according to the traditions narrated from a *ma'ṣūm*. This practically divests the Qur'ãn of its authority, transferring it to its explanatory traditions. For them all traditions in the four early collections are authentic and must be followed without any testing. (*tr.*)

reasoning power and the perception engrained in their minds. If you minutely study the Divine Book and meditate upon its verses, you will probably find over three hundred verses which invite people to contemplate, remember or ponder; or they teach the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) an argument to prove a truth or negate a falsity; as for example: *Say: "Who then could control anything as against Allãh if He wished to destroy the Messiah son of Mary and his mother . . ."* (5:17). Of the same genre are those verses which describe the arguments and proofs used by His prophets and beloved ones like Nūḥ, Ibrãhīm, Mūsã and other great prophets, in addition to Luqmãn (Lokman) and the believer from the family of Fir'awn (Pharaoh) and others, peace of Allãh be on them all. For example: *Their Messengers said: "Is there* (any) *doubt about Allãh, the Maker of the heavens and the earth*?" (14:10). *And when Luqmãn said to his son while he admonished him: "O my son! Do not associate aught with Allãh; most surely polytheism is a griveous iniquity"* (31:13). *And a believing man of Fir'awn's people who hid his faith said: "What! Will you slay a man because he says: 'My Lord is Allãh,' and indeed he has brought to you clear arguments from your Lord?"* (40:28). Also, He quotes the magicians of Pharaoh as saying: *They said: "We do not prefer you to what has come to us of clear arguments and to He Who made us, therefore decide what you are going to decide; you can only decide about this world's life; surely we believe in our Lord . . ."* (20:72-73).

Allãh has not ordered His servants even in a single verse of His Book that they should blindly believe in Him, or in things sent by Him; or that they should tread on a path without thinking. He has often hinted to the reasons because of which He has laid down certain regulations and commandments (where a man has no way of knowing their detailed causes) describing some things which could be used as arguments; as He says: . . . *surely prayer keeps* (one) *away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allãh is the greatest . . .* (29:45). *O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard yourselves* (against evil) (2:183). *Allãh does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you so that He may complete His favour on you, that you may be grateful* (5:6). There are many other verses of similar nature.

This thoughtful perception, i.e. the way of correct thinking which the Qur'ãn exhorts the human beings to use, on which it has based its call to truth, good or benefit or restrains from falsity, evil or

harm – it is that perception which we know and recognise with our nature, which doesn't change or alter, and about which no man disputes with others. If there appears some dispute or discord about it then it is like a dispute in self-evident principles; it happens only when one or the both parties do not understand the true meaning of the subject matter because of some miscomprehension.

You may ask what is this path, which we are supposed to know by our nature. There is no doubt that there are some solid realities which independently exist and do not depend on our actions, like the realities of the genesis of the world and its end or mathematical, physical or other such principles. When we want to understand these matters we refer to basic principles, which are self-evident and are not subject to any doubt. Also, we take help from other principles, which are intrinsically attached to those self-evident principles. Then we arrange them in a particular way until we get the desired result. For example we say:

A is B, and every B is C; therefore A is C.

Or, as we say:

If A is B, then C is D; and if C is D, then G is H. Therefore if A is B then G is H.

Or, as we say:

If A is B, then C is D; and if C is D, then G is H. But A is not B. Therefore G is not H.

These patterns of logic and the principle matters described above are self-evident truths and no man of normal wisdom can have any doubt about them. If anybody doubts them, then it indicates some defect in his power of understanding, because of which it has failed to grasp these clear matters, as is generally seen about those who express doubts about self-evident truths.

If we look at the doubts or uncertainties expressed against this logical way of thinking, we will see that when they want to reach at a result in their claims and objectives they too use the same principles laid down in the logic in its form, pattern and material; if we analyse their speech to the elementary premises used in them, they will turn into logical forms and principles. If somebody changes those premises or the forms in a way that according to logical principles would not lead to any result, the whole speech would become devoid of meaning and you will see that they would not like it. This is a clear proof that these people according to their human nature do accept the correctness of these logical principles, they submit to it and use it; they refute it

with their tongues but in their inner selves they believe in it.

1) As some *mutakallimūn* (experts of scholastic theology) have said: "If the logic were a way leading to the truth then there should not have been any discord among the scholars of logic; but we find them differing among themselves in their opinions."

COMMENT: This scholar has used hypothetical syllogism without realizing what he was doing. He doesn't realise that when we say that logic is the instrument that prevents man from falling into error, we mean that use of logic in proper way prevents man from falling into error. Nobody claims that everyone who uses logic uses it correctly. Sword is the instrument for cutting; but it will do its work only if it is used in proper way.

2) Some of them have said: "These principles of logic were developed gradually. How can the recognition of true realities depend on them? How can a man who doesn't know them or doesn't use them arrive at the real truth?"

COMMENT: This argument too like the preceding one is hypothetical syllogism. Moreover it is the worst type of sophistry. He has not understood the meaning of development. Development in this context refers to the detailed discovery of those principles which man is vaguely aware of by his nature; development doesn't mean invention.

3) Some have said: "These principles were propagated among the people in order to close the door of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.), or to divert the people from following the Book and the *Sunnah*. As such the Muslims must keep aloof from them."

COMMENT: If we analyse this speech it will result in some conjunctive or hypothetical syllogism. If a system is used for improper purpose it doesn't mean that the system in itself is not good and proper; it is like a sword, which is used to kill an innocent person or the religion, which is used for something other than the pleasure of Allãh.

4) Some have said: "The intellectual reasoning often leads to what is clearly against the Book and the *Sunnah,* as we see in the opinions of many philosophers."

COMMENT: This too is a compound conjunctive syllogism. The mistake of the philosophers does not emanate from the form of syllogism or from a self-evident truth. It occurs because some wrong proposition is mixed with correct ones.

5) Some people have said: "The whole purpose of logic is to differentiate between a form that would lead to a correct conclusion from an unsound form; but as far as the matter is concerned, the

logic doesn't have any law which would prevent a man from falling into error about it. There is no assurance against committing mistakes in the matter except referring it to the *ma'ṣūmīn* (a.s.). Therefore, the only safe way is to return to the *ma'ṣūmīn* (a.s.)."

COMMENT: The above argument is sophistic. The scholar wants to prove that *khabaru 'l-wāḥid* (**خَبَرُالْوَاحِدْ**)[16] or the collection of *akhbāru 'l-āḥād* (**اَخْبَارُ الأَحَاد**) combined with the apparent meanings of the Qur'ān is *al-ḥujjah* (**اَلْحُجَّةْ** = proof) of *sharī'ah*. We know that we can hold fast to the *ma'ṣūmīn* only when me are sure that a *ḥadīth* has actually been uttered by them and also know what is the meaning of the speech. But such certainty is impossible concerning *akhbāru 'l-āḥād* because there is no more than a strong conjecture that the words were spoken by the *ma'ṣūm* (a.s.), and the same is the case with its meaning. And this applies to all those proofs, which are based on strong conjectures. Holding fast to the *ma'ṣūmīn* (a.s.) admittedly depends on the certainty of matter and the certainty of matter may emanate from their words or from logical premises; and in any case, one has to be sure that the form of the argument is not faulty [and it leads us to logic].

They have said that in view of all these doubts, the rational arguments cannot give us any certainty regarding the subject matter.

COMMENT: First of all, it is just an overbearing obstinacy. Secondly, this speech in itself is a rational argument from which he wants to reach to a definite conclusion and even its form is based on logic.

6) Some have said: "All that is needed by human beings is placed in the Mighty Book and stored in the traditions of the *ma'ṣūmīn* (a.s.). Therefore, why should we resort to the left overs of the unbelievers and atheists?"

COMMENT: The need of rational and logical arguments is the same, which we observe in this objection itself, because he has composed a logical conjunctive syllogism and has used in it the materials that are admittedly correct. Yet, he has fallen victim of sophistry in two places.

Firstly, he did not realize that these logical principles themselves are a part of what is stored in the Book and the *Sunnah* and one cannot go to its depth without independent research.

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[16] *Khabaru 'l-wāḥid* (plural: *akhbāru 'l-āḥād*:): Literally, a tradition narrated by one person; actually the term refers to a tradition, which is not *mutawātir*, even if many narrators narrated it. (*tr.*)

Secondly, it is one thing to say that the Book and the *Sunnah* do not need any addenda or appendix for making their meaning clear and quite another to say that those who hold fast to the Book and the *Sunnah* also do not need any additional help in reaching at the correct conclusion. What will they say if a medical doctor who makes research about the human body were to claim that he did not need to study any scientific, social, or literary subject, because all are related to human beings. Or, if an ignorant person refused to learn any knowledge claiming that all types of knowledge are found in the human nature. These friends of ours are not different from them.

Thirdly, the Book and the *Sunnah* themselves invite the people to widely use the correct logical and rational arguments. (Such arguments are the self-evident premises or those depending on the self-evident propositions.) Allãh says: . . . *therefore give good news to My servants, those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allãh has guided, and those it is who are men of understanding* (39:17-18). There are many other such verses and traditions. Of course, the Book and the *Sunnah* forbid us to follow what clearly goes against them. The Book and the definitely proved *Sunnah* are the things whose veracity and truth has been clearly proved by reason; and it is impossible that the same reason should prove invalidity of what it has definitely proved to be valid earlier. Admittedly, we have to distinguish true rational premises from the false ones, in order that we may hold fast to the correct premises, in the same way, as we have to distinguish the decisive verses and traditions from the ambiguous ones in order that we may hold fast to the decisive ones. The same is the case of the traditions where we have to distinguish those traditions, which have surely emanated from the *ma'ṣūmīn* (a.s.) from the forged and fraudulent ones; and how great their number is!

Fourthly, the truth is truth wherever it is found and however it is found. Its truth is not affected by the belief or disbelief of its conveyor nor his piety or sinfulness makes it tainted. To refuse to accept a truth just because of hatred of its conveyor is nothing but the prejudice of ignorance, which has been condemned by Allãh in His Book and through the words of His Messengers (a.s.).

7) Some have said: "The way of precaution in religion which is preferred in the Book and the *Sunnah* is to restrict oneself to the apparent meanings of the Book and the *Sunnah* and to keep aloof from using logical and rational principles, because there is a danger

of their pushing one into eternal perdition from which one could never get out."

COMMENT: The objecter has in this very statement used the logical and rational principles as it contains exceptive syllogism based on rational premises that are acceptable by reason although they are not based on the Book or the *Sunnah*. However, the risk he mentions might involve those who don't have ability to understand deep rational propositions. But as for those capable persons who have such discernment, there is no proof from the Book, the *Sunnah,* or reason to show that they cannot understand the realities of the deep knowledge. We know that man can have no nobility or greatness except with such understanding and the Book, the *Sunnah* and the reason all prove it.

8) Some people have said: "The way of our noble predecessors was totally different from the way of the philosophy and *'irfãn*. They used the Book and the *Sunnah* and had no need to use the logical and rational principles like the philosophers, or to use the ways of spiritual regimen like the Ṣūfīs. When the Greek philosophy was rendered into Arabic in the days of the caliphs, the Muslim *mutakallimūn* (scholastic theologians) who themselves were among the followers of the Qur'ãn decided to fit the philosophical ideas on the Qur'ãnic realities. As a result, they were divided into two sects, the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites. Then, during the same period appeared another group who were called Ṣūfīs and *'ãrif*s. They claimed that the secrets were open to them and they knew in depth the Qur'ãnic realities. They thought that they had no need to return to the *ma'ṣūmīn* (a.s.). In this way, they separated from the Shī'ahs who held fast to *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.); things continued like this until about the middle of the thirteenth century of Hijrah (about a 100 years ago). Then these people (the philosophers and the Ṣūfīs) began forgery and deception; they reinterpreted the themes of the Qur'ãn and *Ḥadīth* to make them conform to the ideas of philosophy and *taṣawwuf*. They used this method so extensively that the majority of the Shī'ahs were confused."

He has inferred from the above statement that these principles go against the correct way to which the Book and the *Sunnah* guide the people. Then he has mentioned some objections against the logic. For example, the existence of discord among the logicians themselves, and the fact that one is not always safe from errors inspite of using logical formulae and the fact that we do not find a sufficient number

of self-evident truths or free from doubt realities which could serve in leading us to the deep realities. Then he has mentioned many themes of philosophy that according to him go clearly against the principles inferred from the Book and the *Sunnah*.

This is the gist of his writing, which we have given in brief.

COMMENT: would that I knew which aspect of these lengthy ramblings can be mended and corrected, because the disease has passed the stage of treatment. What he has said about the history of the *mutakallimūn* and their going against the *aimmah* of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) – that they wanted to fit the philosophy on the Qur'ãn which supposedly divided them into two sects of Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites; then the appearance of the Ṣūfīs and their presumption that they and their followers had no need of the Book and the *Sunnah*; that the things continued like that until the thirteenth century of Hijrah when the philosophy or *'irfãn* came into being – all these are totally against the known definite history and we shall briefly refer to all of this later on.

Apart from that, he has committed a great blunder by mixing *al-kalãm* (scholastic theology) and philosophy. The philosophy deals with phenomenal things and matters (which are found in reality) and offers proof for accepted issues and problems through such premises, which are free from doubt. Scholastic theology, on the other hand, deals with matters that may be real and objective or subjective (mentally posited), and it offers proof for issues and problems through such premises, which could be based on reality or on subjective consideration. Obviously, these two fields of knowledge are far removed from one another. How can it be thought that the *mutakallimūn* would endeavour to make philosophy conform to the Qur'ãn? It is common knowledge that the *mutakallimūn* from their very beginning until now had remained in conflict and dispute with the philosophers and *al-'urafã'* (اَلْعُرَفَاءُ = here this word has been used for the Ṣūfīs). Their books and writtings which are in our hands and the reports of their debates and polemical argumentations which have come to us are the best witness to prove it.

Probably, his talk was based on the writings of some orientalists who claim that it was the transference of Greek philosophy to Islam, which caused the appearance of *'ilmu 'l-kalãm* (عِلْمُ الْكَلاَم = scholastic theology) among the Muslims. This man did not know the meaning of *al-kalãm* or philosophy, nor was he aware of the aims and objectives of the two fields of knowledge. He was also unaware of the factors that led to the appearance of scholastic theology in Islam. He just shot

his arrows in the dark.

Even more amusing is his assertion where he describes the difference between *al-kalãm* and philosophy. He says: "The scholastic theology aims at attesting to the topics of genesis and resurrection keeping in view the aspects of religion; while philosophical discussions talk about the same topics without paying any attention to religious dictates." Then he has used this supposed difference to claim that the way of logical and rational principles is totally different from the way of religion, and goes against the path laid down by the *sharī'ah*. He has confounded the confusion. Every knowledgeable scholar knows that the group which has mentioned this difference between these two disciplines wants to indicate that the syllogisms used in theological discussions are dialectical and composed of uncontestable premises (the well known undisputable ones), because such arguments lead to undisputed realities; as for the philosophical discussions, some of them are composed of argumentative syllogisms which aim to prove what is truth, not what is universally accepted. In the light of the above, how can it be taken to mean that the way of scholastic theology is the way of religion and the way of philosophy goes against religion and that it should be discarded even if it is true?

As for his objections against logic, philosophy and *'irfãn*, we have already commented on his objections against logic. What he has written concerning philosophy and *'irfãn*, if it is correct quotation and he has correctly understood its meaning that it goes against the clear dictates of the true religion, then nobody doubts that it is invalid and it is among the erroneous ideas of philosophers or those who tread on the path of *'irfãn;* but such errors should be put in the account of those people who have expressed those ideas, and should not be used against philosophy or *'irfãn* as a discipline; it would be merely the defect and deficiency of the scholars concerned.

It was incumbent on him to ponder on the disputes that have grown between various groups of scholastic theologians – Ash'arites, Mu'tazilites and Shi'ites. These differences have divided the single Islamic *ummah* into 73 sects, then every sect has branched into various sub-sects, and these subdivisions might be equal in number to the main divisions. He should have thought what was the root cause of these differences. Was it not because of following the path of religion itself? Does any research scholar have a right to present these differences to prove that religion is null and void and its way is incorrect? Can any explanation be given for this phenomenon that could not be

applied with equal force to logic and philosophy? Can the logicians and philosophers be accused of an inner deficiency that could not be found in the people of religion?

Similar to the scholastic theology is the case of Islamic jurisprudence. How many sects have developed even within a single sect; how much discords and differences are found among their various *fuqahã'*? The same is the case of all numerous disciplines and arts as none of them is immune from differences.

All this long talk has led him to declare that all the ways used for argumentation are null and void and the only correct path is that of the Book and the *Sunnah* that is the path of religion. In short, the only way left to him is that of *tadhakkur* (اَلتَّذَكُّر = remembrance). It is a theory attributed to Plato; he says that if man frees himself from lustful mentality, acquires piety and spiritual perfection, and then turns to his inner self, he may reach at the truth.

This explanation is offered of the said Platonic theory. Some ancient Greek and other philosophers had adopted it. Some Muslims and some other occidental philosophers accepted this view too. However, every group has affirmed it in a different way.

1. Some assert that human knowledge is but natural; it is there, present with him actually from the first instant of his existence; as such, when we say that a new knowledge has come to Zayd, it in effect means that he has remembered it.
2. Some others say that when man turns to his soul by isolating himself from material distractions, it causes discovery of realities – it does not mean that knowledge is present with him actually; rather it is with him potentially. Actuality of knowledge is found in the inner human soul – it separates from him when he is heedless, connects with him when he remembers. This view is held by the Illuminists and those cognizant with divine knowledge (implying here the Ṣūfīs), and their likes from all religions and creeds.
3. Another group offers the same explanation as the no.2 above, but has added to it the condition of piety and adherence to the *sharī'ah* in knowledge and practice. It has been asserted by some of our contemporary Muslims and others, as they think that this condition of adherence to the *sharī'ah* would separate them from the Ṣūfīs and *'urafã'* (those cognizant with divine knowledge). But they are oblivious of the fact that the Ṣūfīs and *'urafã'* have already put that condition in their explanations, as evidenced by their reliable books, which are commonly available. So, this view

is the same as the one held by the Ṣūfīs; yet the one differs from the other in the manner of "following" and the exact identification of its meaning. They believe that "following" should inflexibly concentrate on the apparent meanings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Their method is a mixture of those of the Ṣūfīs and the Akhbārīs.

If this theory of remembrance is not intended to invalidate reference to logic and rational principles, then it may be deemed correct to a certain extent. When man is created in his essence, he has perception of his person and is cognizant of his personal powers and weaknesses; this cognition is naturally present with him, and it turns to acquired knowledge under influence of some of his faculties. Every faculty is bound to remain active within its sphere. It is inferred from the above that man, from the first moment of his existence, has some knowledge – that knowledge, although behind in nature, is concurrent with him in time. Also, nobody can deny that man gets some knowledge when he isolates himself somewhat from material connections.

But if the theory of remembrance is meant to invalidate reference to logic and rational principles, in other words, if it means that turning to oneself by isolating from external distraction frees one from the need of arranging academic premises for arriving at the results, then this view is most absurd, unworthy of slightest consideration. There are many reasons, which negate this view:

First: Deep research in human fields of knowledge and cognition, shows that man's declarative knowledge depends on his knowledge of the ideas of subject and predicate separately; and his ideas are confined to, or abstracted from the knowledge of items perceived by one of the five senses. Analogy and experiments have shown that if a man lacks one of the senses, he remains totally oblivious of all knowledge that depends on that sense – be it ideal or assertive, self-evident or requiring analogical set-up. If the knowledge were actually present with human nature and essence, lack of a sense would not have any adverse effect on that knowledge. If it were said that blindness or deafness obstructed that remembrance, it would contradict the basic theory that remembrance – turning to oneself by discarding material connections – helps in this process by removing the obliviousness.

Second: So far as this remembrance is concerned, only some human beings are blessed with it. As for the general humanity, they achieve their goals of life by combining various premises and deriving the results; they derive in this way thousands and thousands of correct

results. This method pervades all fields of knowledge and technical skills. To deny this fact would be haughtiness, and to explain it as a chance would be rashness. To follow this method is but natural for the human beings; and when a species is equipped with a natural and creative apparatus, it is bound to succeed in its endeavours, it is impossible for it to stumble in its actions.

Third: If we analyse the results of this "remembrance" we find that it is made up of well-arranged logical premises – disturb any laid down procedure in its form or substance and you disturb the result. So, they do use the logical principle – without knowing what they were doing. The hypothesis of chance and concurrence cannot be applied here. If they want to prove their theory of remembrance, they should bring an academic form based on it, which should have no connection with logic and its principles.

Now, let us look at the view that remembrance frees man from the need of referring to logical principles. It implies that there are two ways: the way of logic and the way of remembrance by following the *sharī'ah*; that both of these ways lead to the correct destination, but the way of remembrance is better and preferable, because it is sure to hit the mark by conforming to the *ma'ṣūm*'s views; while there is the risk of falling into error, always or mostly, in the way of logic and intellect.

In any case, the second objection to the previous view applies here too. Only a few persons can comprehend all objectives of the Book and the *Sunnah* with their mysteries and secrets that have such astonishing wide range. Those precious few persons are those who deeply meditate on religious gnosis with its astonishing inter-connectedness and intertwining roots and branches; some aspects of which are related to belief, others to personal and social activities. Man cannot be asked to perform something beyond his ability and power, neither in creation nor in legislation. People are only required to understand the objectives of religion through normal methods that they use in their lives. That is, arranging the known premises for discovering the unknown. And we know that only some premises of *sharī'ah* are known which have been established by proofs. It is amusing to note that a proponent of remembrance has used this very argument against logic and philosophy. He says that even if we accept for the sake of argument that it was possible to know the actual realities by using the logic and philosophy, only such stalwarts of philosophy as Aristotle and Avicenna could achieve it; general public could not do it. There-

fore, how can the Lawgiver order people to use logical and philosophical principles to discover the realities?

That man did not realize that the tables could be turned on him and the same question asked from him. If he says, that use of remembrance is within reach of everybody according to the degree of his following of the *sharī'ah*, we shall reply that the use of logic, a little or a lot, is within reach of every body according to his ability of finding the realities – it is not necessary for every one to reach the furthest limit, even if it is beyond his strength.

Secondly, the third objection, mentioned earlier, is applicable here too. These people use the methods of logic in all their arguments they put forward in the name of remembrance. They could not discard those logical methods even when trying to negate the same way of logic and establish the way of remembrance. And this is enough to show its incorrectness.

Thirdly, even those who follow the way of remembrance fall mostly in error. Remembrance, as they claim, was the way used by our good predecessors – and not the way of logic. Yet they were involved in a lot of controversies and differences among themselves, like a number of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who are regarded by the Muslims to be perfect in knowledge and adherence to the Book and the *Sunnah*; or whose knowledge and probity are agreed upon by the majority; and like many companions of the Imãms of the same calibre, like Abū Ḥamzah, Zurãrah, Abãn, Abū Khãlid, Hishãm ibn al-Ḥakam, Hishãm ibn Sãlim, Mu'minu 'ṭ-Ṭãq, the two Ṣafwãns and others. Their basic differences with each other are well known. Clearly, when two persons differ on a subject, only one will be on the right. The same is the case with ancient jurisprudents and *muḥaddithīn* like al-Kulaynī, aṣ-Ṣadūq, aṭ-Ṭūsī, al-Mufīd, al-Murtaḍã, and others (may Allãh be pleased with them all). So what is the advantage of remembrance over logical consideration? They must search for some factor other than remembrance to distinguish between right and wrong. The only resort is the logical contemplation.

Fourthly: The gist of their argument is that man by adhering to the sinless personalities saves himself from falling into error. It is because the views of a sinless personality when heard from him properly and when his meaning is perfectly understood are safe from error. This much is accepted by all. Yet the fact is that what is definitely heard or taken from a *ma'ṣūm*, has nothing to do with remembrance or intellectual consideration at all; rather its syllogism runs as follows: It is the

opinion of a *ma'ṣūm*; and all his opinions are right; therefore it is right. It is a proof that produces difinite result.

On the contrary, what is understood from a tradition narrated by one narrator or other such things which produce only presumption, it has no authority; there is no proof that such solitary traditions have any validity – except in the field of *fiqh* – unless it is in conformity with the Qur'ãn; nor does presumption lead anywhere when its opposite is proved by academic proofs.

9) Some people have said: "Allãh has spoken to us in the Qur'ãn in the language with which we are familiar, with arrangements of words and phrases known to the speakers of this language. The apparent statements contain order and prohibition, promise and threat, stories and wisdom, sermon and arguments in a good manner. For understanding them, one is not obliged to learn logic, philosophy, and other such legacies of unbelievers, polytheists, and unjust persons. Allah has forbidden us to befriend them, incline towards them, or follow their paths. The proper way for one who believes in Allãh and His Messenger is to adhere to the apparent meanings of religious statements, and stop at what a normal intellect understands from those words, without interpreting or overstepping them. This view is held by al-Ḥashawiyyah (اَلْحَشَوِيَّةُ = those who believe in literal meanings of traditions), *al-Mushabbihah* (اَلْمُشَبِّهَةُ = those who think that the person of Allah is similar to that of humans), and other traditionalists."

This view is wrong both in form and in substance. As for the form, this argument uses the principles of logic at the same time when it wants to ban its use! Nobody says that the Qur'ãn leads to the use of the logical principles and that it was incumbent on every Muslim to learn logic. Yet its use is unavoidable in daily life. The opponents of logic are not unlike a person who says: The objective of the Qur'ãn is to lead us to the goals of religion, as such we are not obliged to learn the Arabic language which is a legacy of the people of Ignorance! Obviously, this assertion has no legs to stand upon, because language is the way man is naturally obliged to use in conversation, and that is why Allãh has used it in His Book and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in his traditions. Likewise, logic is a mental way, which man is naturally obliged to tread in the sphere of understanding, and Allãh has used it in His Book and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in his traditions.

Coming to the substance of that view, it takes intellectual substance but falls into fallacy by equalizing the apparent meaning with

its application. A Muslim is required to understand from the Qur'ãnic words, like knowledge, power, life, hearing, sight, speech, volition and will the meanings that are opposite of ignorance, inability, death, deafness and blindness, etc. But he is not supposed to assert that Allãh has a knowledge like our knowledge, power and life like our power and life, and hearing, sight, volition and will like those of ours; he is not allowed to say so by the Book, the *Sunnah* or the reason. We have explained this topic to a certain extent under the discussion of the Decisive and Ambiguous verses in the third volume of this book.[17]

10) Some others have said: "The only evidence for the validity of the premises which are proved by rational arguments is the rational premise which says that reason's dictates must be followed. In other words, there is no authority for the reason's dictates except the reason itself. And it is clearly a vicious circle. Therefore, there is no escape in controversial issues except to the opinion of a *ma'ṣūm* – the Prophet or Imãm – without following [a non-*ma'ṣūm*]."

But it is a most absurd doubt expressed on this matter. The man wanted to strengthen a structure, but it has led to its demolition. He has invalidated the rational dictate by what he has described as clear vicious circle. Then when he turned to authenticating the *sharī'ah*'s orders he was obliged to argue through rational arguments (which led to a vicious circle), or through *sharī'ah*'s dictate (which led to another vicious circle.) Now, he is disconcerted and confused between two vicious circles. Or he may opt to follow a non-*ma'ṣūm*, which will be a second confusion.

He has fallen into confusion when trying to understand the meaning of 'Obligatoriness of following the reason's dictate.' If this obligatoriness refers to what stands with prohibition and permission as a copartner, and whose contravention entails condemnation or punishment (like obligatoriness of obeying a good counsellor, and obligatoriness of justice in deciding the cases and other similar things), then it is the dictate of practical intellect, and we have nothing to say against it. And if it means that man is necessarily bound to confirm and accept a result – when arguments are offered for it with academic premises and in correct form with perfect conception of all aspects of related issues, then it is a proposition which man sees by his psychic forces. In this case, why should the intellect be asked for an evidence

[17] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.5, p.46. (*tr.*)

to prove the authenticity of its proof? Because its authenticity is self-evident; and this case is like other self-evident propositions. Every self-evident clause is its own proof; it needs no outside proof.

11) Some have said: "The ultimate goal of logic is to get at the things' established quiddities, to arrive at the results through firm and established general premises. But academic researches have established today that there is no totality, generality, permanency, or durability – neither in mind nor outside it. The things are governed by the law of general transformation; nothing continues as it is, in an established, permanent, or total condition."

This assertion is totally wrong. The man has used the principles of logic; in form and substance both, [to argue against the same principles] as any contemplating person will understand. Moreover, the objector has offered this objection only to prove that the old [Aristotlian] logic was not correct; yet it is a result, which is general, enduring and established which contains established concepts. Otherwise, it would not serve his purpose. So, the objection invalidates itself.

Perhaps we have gone beyond the self-imposed condition to keep the book as brief as possible. So, let us return to our previous topic.

The noble Qur'ãn guides the intellect to use what it has been created to use, and to precede on what it knows and is familiar with – that is, to arrange the known premises for arriving at the results, which were hitherto unknown. The intellect has a natural disposition for using authentic and indisputable premises in order to arrive at genuine and authentic results – and it is what is called "Proof". Also, the intellect is used in practical matters which lead to felicity and infelicity, good and evil, benefit and harm; showing what should be taken and adopted and what is to be rejected and discarded – these are mentally posited ideas, well-known or accepted premises – and it is what is called "Debate" or "Disputation". Alternatively, it uses in matters of assumed good or evil assumed premises, which guide to presumed good or prevent from presumed evil – and it is called "Admonition". Allãh says: *Call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputation with them in the best manner* (16: 125). Clearly, "wisdom" refers to "proof", as may be understood from its positioning *vis-à-vis* goodly exhortation and disputation.

Question: The way of logical thinking and contemplation is within the ability of believer and unbeliever both, and human beings whether

sinner or pious tread on it. In this background, how can you justify the Qur'ãnic statements where Allãh disallows good knowledge and correct remembrance to all who are not pious and do not follow true religion; as is seen in the following verses: . . . *and none minds but he who turns* (to Him) *again and again* (40:13). . . . *and whoever fears Allãh, He will make for him an outlet* (65:2). *Therefore turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our reminder and does not desire anything but this world's life. That is the* (last) *reach of their knowledge; surely your Lord knows best him who goes astray from His path and He knows best him who follows the right direction.* (53:29-30). And how will you explain the numerous, nearly-*mutawãtir* traditions which say that beneficial knowledge cannot be attained except through good deeds?

Reply: There is no doubt that the Book and the *Sunnah* give importance to piety in respect of knowledge. But it does not mean that they have made piety (or piety coupled with remembrance) an independent way for acquiring knowledge of realities, separate from the natural way of contemplation which man inevitably treads upon. Otherwise, all the arguments and disputations brought in the noble Book against the unbelievers, polytheists, and immoral and sinful persons would become irrelevant – they do not follow the truth and do not know what piety and remembrance was; accordingly, they would be unable to attain the intended goal. Consequently, it would be irrelevant to argue with them. The same applies to the disputations found in the *sunnah* against various sects and groups that have gone astray.

In fact, piety is considered necessary for bringing the human intelligent soul back to its natural uprightness. It may be explained as follows:

Man, on his body's side, is made up of contrary animalistic and predatory powers, all related to this material body; each of these powers performs its own function without having any coordination with other powers. The desire of food, for instance, encourages man to go on eating and drinking; it feels no restriction or limitation by itself, except if stomach refuses to accept any more food or drink when it is filled up completely, or if the jaws become tired of chewing, or things like that. These are the things we always observe in ourselves

In this situation, if man inclines towards one of his powers, follows its dictates and proceeds to where it instigates him to go, that power exceeds its limits, and subjugates the opposite power to such an

extent that it is almost negated. For example, giving free rein to desire of food or sex diverts the man away from all important affairs of life, like earning livelihood, social relations, domestic affairs, upbringing of children and all other individual and social responsibilities which he is obliged to do. The same thing happens when man goes on following other powers of desire and anger. This too we always see in our own lives as well as in others'.

With this excess and shortcoming, humanity is bound to perish. Man is a person who is controlled by these adverse powers; he is supposed to pull all these powers together by activating them in the way of his felicity in the life of this world and the next. Such life has to be based on knowledge and perfection. He has no option but to give every power its due share in a way that it does not obstruct other powers, nor does it become dormant itself.

Man cannot perfect his humanity unless he creates a perfect balance between his various powers in such a manner that every power keeps in the middle of the way prescribed for it. The top characteristic of proper proportion in these powers is called wisdom, bravery, chastity, etc., and collectively they are called justice, probity.

No doubt, man acquires the thoughts (which are present with him now), and expands his human cognizance and knowledge by instigating these perceptive faculties to do their work. I mean, initially man comes into this world without any of these vast informations and knowledge; he is totally empty-handed. Then his internal faculties perceive their requirements and demand from him what they desire. These elementary perceptions are the starting point of man's knowledge. Thereafter he goes on generalising, particularizing, mixing and separating these matters until he completes the process of human thoughts.

A wise person will understand from the above description that if man remains deeply involved in obeying one of his various contradictory powers, and exceeds the limit in giving it what it demands, then his thoughts and perceptions would be deviated from right path; he would blindly make its propositions superior and keep other powers' propositions and thoughts subservient to it; he will remain oblivious to the demands of other faculties and powers.

Experience confirms it. It is this deviation, which we observe in intemperate and extravagant persons who have become slaves of their desires. Also it may be seen in unjust, oppressive tyrants who corrupt the life in human society. The former who are submerged in the abyss

of desires and are obsessed by pleasures of drinking, entertainment and sexual enjoyments, are almost incapable of thinking about the obligations of humanity and the important matters for which great people vie with each other. Desire has permeated their sitting and standing, their joining and separating and things like that. The later, that is the oppressive and haughty people, are hard-hearted; incapable of thinking about compassion, kindliness, mercy, or humility even where it is essential. Their lives are mirrors of their evil condition which they display in all its manifestations – their talk and silence, their looking and averting of eyes, their advancing and retreating, all are devoid of kindliness. Both groups are proceeding on a wrong path in seeking the knowledge; all are bent upon the perverted and deviated knowledge and thoughts connected with their twisted psyche. They are unaware of what lies beyond their myopic vision. And what lies there? It is beneficial knowledge and true cognizance. Man cannot attain true cognizance and beneficial knowledge unless his morals are excellent and his human virtues are complete. And this is piety, God-fearing.

It is thus proved that it is the good deeds, which preserve the good characteristics, which in their turn preserve the true cognizance, beneficial knowledge, and correct thoughts. There is no good in knowledge if it is devoid of practice.

Although we have explained this topic in academic and ethical terms (because the context demanded it), Allãh has told all this in one short phrase, where He says: *And pursue the right course in your going about . . .* (31:19). It is an indication that one should keep on the middle of the path, and remain moderate in life. Also He says: *If you fear Allãh, He will grant you a distinction . . .* (8:29). *. . . and make provision, for surely the best provision is piety* (guarding oneself against evil); *and fear Me, O people of understanding!* (2:197); i.e. being men of understanding, you require piety and God-fearing for activating your understanding. Again Allãh says: *And* (I swear by) *the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it; He will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it* (91:7-10). Also He says: *. . . and fear Allãh, that you may be successful* (3:130).

On the other hand, He says about the opposite group: *But there followed after them an evil generation, who neglected prayer and followed the sensual desires, so they shall soon meet* (the result of their) *sin; except such as repent and believe and do good . . .* (19:59-60).

Allãh states here that following the sensual desire leads to perdition. Also He says: *I will turn away from My signs those who are unjustly proud in the earth; and if they see every sign they will not believe in it; and if they see the way of rectitude they do not take it for a way, and if they see the way of error, they take it for a way; this is because they rejected Our signs and were heedless of them.* (7:146). Here Allãh reminds that the prisoners of the powers of anger are prevented from following the way of truth and are pulled to the path of error and perdition, then He explains that it all happens because they are heedless of truth. Again He says: *And certainly We have created for hell many of the jinn and the men; they have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear; they are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors; these are the heedless ones* (7:179). In this verse, He states that these heedless ones are oblivious of the true perceptions, which behove human beings. Their hearts, eyes, and ears do not perceive what a blissful man perceives. Their perception does not reach higher than the level of cattles or even worse – and these are the ideas which grazing cattles and preying beasts are familiar with and inclined to.

The foregoing details clearly show that the Qur'ãn has made thought, remembrance and understanding conditional upon piety (God-fearing), and has joined knowledge with practice in order that man may attain to straight thinking and correct knowledge which is free from animalistic imaginations and Satanic insinuations.

Of course, there is a Qur'ãnic reality which cannot be denied; and that is: If man is brought under the influence of divine guardianship and goes near the perimeter of heavenly sanctity, it opens for him a door to the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth, and he sees through it what remains hidden to others – the great signs of Allãh and everlasting lights of His omnipotence. aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) has said, "If the Satans had not hovered around the hearts of the human beings, they would have seen the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth." The Sunnīs have narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: "If there were no multiplicity in your talk and confusion in your hearts, you would have seen what I see, and heard what I hear." Allãh has said: *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways; and Allãh is most surely with the doers of good* (29:69). The apparent meaning of the following divine words prove it: *And worship thy Lord until there comes to thee that which is*

certain (15:99), as it shows that certainty springs from worship. Also He says: *And thus did We show Ibrāhīm the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth, and so that he might be of those who are sure* (6:75), as it ties the virtue of certitude to observation of the kingdom. In other verses He says: *Nay! If you had known with a knowledge of certainty, you should most certainly have seen the hell; then you shall most certainly see it with the eye of certainty* (102:5-7) *Nay! Most surely the record of the righteous shall be in the* ʻilliyyīn*. And what will make you know what the* ʻilliyyīn *is? It is a written book; those who are drawn near* (to Allāh) *shall witness it* (83:18-21). (A full discussion of this subject will be found in Chapter 5, verses 55 and 105.)

Affirmation of this reality does not go against our earlier stand that the noble Qur'ān supports the way of natural thinking, on which the structure of human life is founded and man has been created. Because this way is other than meditation and contemplation; it is a divine gift, which is reserved for His selected servants; and the good end is for the pious ones.

A HISTORICAL DISCUSSION

In this discussion we shall have an overall view of the history of Islamic thoughts, and the way, which the Muslim *ummah* adopted – in spite of its sectarian differences. We do not intend to support or oppose any school of thought. Our aim is to present the historical events to the Qur'ān and let the Holy Book confirm or reject them. We are not concerned with boastings of supporters or apologia of opponents, because the place for it is in a religious discussion.

The noble Qur'ān deals with all aspects of human life without being restricted with any condition. It governs man – be he an individual or a group, small or big, male or female, be he of white race or black, an Arab or non-Arab, civilized or primitive, learned or ignorant, present or absent; be he at any time and in any place. The Qur'ān certainly guides him in all his affairs, be it belief, ethics or deeds.

The Qur'ān interlocks with all academic and industrial aspects related to the human life. Ponder on its verses exhorting people to meditate, think, remember and understand, and you will find that the Book intensely urges man to acquire knowledge and discard ignorance in every field, be it concerned with heavens or earth, whether it is

vegetable world, animal kingdom or humanity as parts of this world of ours; and even going beyond that to the angels, satans, the tablet and the pen, etc., in order that it may be a means to acquire gnosis of God and whatever is in any way related to the social human life – ethics, laws, reciprocal rights and social norms.

You have seen that the Qur'ãn supports the natural way of thinking, to which the nature inevitably invites; there is no escape from it as the nature demands to proceed in logical way.

The Qur'ãn itself uses all types of logical techniques – proof, argumentation, and sermon. It invites the Muslim *ummah* to follow its lead and to offer proofs regarding positivistic realities (in practical sphere); and to argue with the help of accepted premises in other spheres as in mentally posited considerations.

The Qur'ãn has offered the Prophetic way of life as its ideal; it has appointed the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) as its model; the Muslims used to observe and remember his ways, and follow his knowledgeable steps as a student follows his teacher in his academic progress.

The Muslims during the Prophet's time (i.e. during his stay at Medina) were new to the Islamic teachings. Their condition was not different from the ancient man in academic and industrial field. When they engaged in academic discussion, it was in a simple and untechnical manner, their only aim being to know divine commandments. In the beginning their attention was fixed on memorizing and recital of Qur'ãn, and memorizing the Prophetic traditions (without writing them) and their transmission. Sometimes they disputed with each other on religious topics; also they entered into arguments with people of some alien faith, especially the Jews and the Christians, because there were some groups of them in Arabia, Ethiopia and Syria. This was the beginning of *'ilmu 'l-kalãm* (Scholastic Theology). They also liked narrating poetry; it was a part of Arabian culture, which Islam did not give importance to; the Book does not contain a single word in praise of poetry or poets, nor the *sunnah* lauds it much.

When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) departed from this world, we know what happened regarding the caliphate; the resulting discord further increased the disunity. The Qur'ãn was collected during the reign of the first Caliph after the battle of Yamãmah, when a great number of the reciters were martyred there. The condition remained the same during his time – nearly two years – and the reign of the second caliph.

Although Islam's fame had spread and its domain increased, thanks to the great victories the Muslims had achieved in those days, it kept them busy and prevented them from paying any thought to academic matters, nor did they try to enhance their level of knowledge. Or, perhaps with their academic level they did not feel need to any increase or enhancement.

Knowledge and its virtue is not something to be perceived by the five senses, which a nation may know from the other, except when that knowledge is related to craft and industry; then its effect is perceivable and general public recognizes it.

Those continuous and growing victories did reawaken in them the characteristics of the Days of Ignorance – the pride and arrogance – which had subsided as a result of the Prophetic teaching and training. But now the spirit of domineering and oppressing nations was sneaking into, and getting hold of them. Its proof may be seen in the division of the Muslim *ummah* at that time into Arab and clients; also look at the behaviour of Mu‘ãwiyah, then Syria's governor, towards the Muslims, and how he adopted the imperial Caesarian style, in addition to many other indications recorded by history about Muslim armies. This psychology had its effect on the academic progress, especially the Qur’ãnic teachings.

As for their academic development at that time, their involvement with Qur’ãn was as before; and there appeared its numerous versions attributed to Zayd, Ubayy, Ibn Mas‘ūd, and others.

As for *ḥadīth*, it spread widely – and what a spreading it was? Its narrations and records increased to such an extent that ‘Umar forbade some companions from narration because he was narrating a lot of it. A number of the People of the Book entered into the fold of Islam, and the Muslim *muḥaddithīn* took from them a lot of traditions from their books including the stories of their prophets and nations; then they mixed it with what they had preserved from the traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Forgery and uncalled for infiltration freely circulated among the *aḥãdīth*. Today we have got a lot of pieces of traditions, narrated from the companions and their narrators of the early days of Islam, which are clearly rejected by the Qur’ãn.

We may summarize its reason in three factors:

1. The high status which people accorded to the Prophet's companionship and to memorization of his *aḥãdīth*; the prestige and honour enjoyed by the companions and their disciples who narrated to the people the traditions on those companions' authority. This led the

people to take traditions – and that too abundantly – even from converted People of the Book, and to intense rivalry among narrators of *ḥadīth* for gaining precedence and pride of place.

2. Their intense avidity for remembrance and narration of *ḥadīth* hindered them from testing the narrative for correctness, and from meditating on it's meaning, especially presenting it to the Qur'ãn for verification. The Book of Allãh is the foundation on which the religion's structure is built; and the root from which the religion's branches sprout. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had enjoined them to do so, as his correct traditions show. For example: "Certainly forgers and liers against me will increase; so when a tradition is brought to you, present it to the Qur'ãn: whatever conforms to it, accepts it, and whatever goes against it, throw it on the wall."

This environment became a fertile ground for circulation of forged traditions in respect of divine attributes, names and actions; about the lapses ascribed to the noble prophets, and slanderous evil deeds attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); it took in its fold the myths of genesis and creation, stories of past nations; it even contained the claim that the Qur'ãn had been altered, and numerous such stories which are similar to what is found in the Tawrãt and the Injīl.

At this juncture the Qur'ãn and the *Ḥadīth* divided advancement and practice between themselves. Seeming advancement became the Qur'ãn's lot, but practice was reserved for *ḥadīth*; consequently very soon Qur'ãn was abandoned. This habit of neglecting to present the *ḥadīth* to the Qur'ãn has become a permanent feature of the Muslims' behaviour since those early days uptil now, although they do not admit it in so many words: *And the Messenger cried out: "O my Lord! Surely my people have treated this Qur'ãn as a forsaken thing."* [25:30]. Exceptions to this malady are rare, countable on fingers.

This negligence is exactly one of the reasons why many ancient national myths and superstitions are still alive in the Muslim nations even after their entering into the fold of Islam. And disease breeds disease.

3. What happened regarding the caliphate after the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) turned the opinions of the general Muslims away from the people of the family of the Prophet? Muslims found themselves divided into three groups. There were some who were devoted to them, remained adhered to them; others turned away from them, not caring about them or the position they had in Qur'ãnic knowledge; there were even those who hated them, felt enmity towards them. All

this took place when the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) had enjoined them – in traditions whose authenticity is undoubted and whose meaning is accepted by all – that they should learn from the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) and should not attempt to teach them because they know the Book of Allāh better than the *ummah*; he had reminded them that his family members would never make mistake in Qur'ānic exegesis nor would they go astray in its understanding. He had said in the *mutawātir ḥadīth* of "Two Precious Things": "Surely I am leaving among you two precious things, the Book of Allāh and my descendants, and they shall not separate from each other until they come to me near the reservoir." Some of its narratives add: "Do not teach them, for they are more knowledgeable than you." Also he has said in a nearly-*mutawātir ḥadīth*: "Whoever interprets Qur'ān according to his opinion, he should prepare his seat in hell." (It has been fully explained in the discussion on "The Decisive and the Ambiguous Verses", in the third[18] volume.)

That was the biggest loss that afflicted the knowledge of the Qur'ān, and the way of thinking to which it calls. If you want any proof of this turning away, look at the paucity of the *aḥādīth* which have been taken from the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.). Think about the prestige and status *'ilmu 'l-ḥadīth* enjoyed in the reign of the caliphs, and how the people vied with each other in taking *ḥadīth*; and then count how many *aḥādīth* have been narrated from 'Alī, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn – and particularly those connected with the Qur'ānic exegesis – and you will see an astonishing phenomenon: As for the companions, they did not narrate from 'Alī (a.s.) anything worthy of attention. As for their disciples if we count what they have narrated from him in the whole of Qur'ān, it will not reach a hundred narratives. As for al-Ḥasan (a.s.), perhaps the number of narratives taken from him would not reach ten; and as for al-Ḥusayn, they have not narrated from him anything worthy of mention. You will understand the true position when you come to know that some people have counted the narrations regarding the Qur'ānic exegesis and the number has reached seventeen thousand *aḥādīth* from Sunnī chains.[19] The same ratio is found in the tradition of *fiqh* too.[20]

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[18] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.5, p.46. (*tr.*)

[19] It has been mentioned by as-Suyūṭī in *al-Itqān* that he said he has counted the traditions in his *tafsīr* named *Tarjumānu 'l-Qur'ān*, and its abridgement known as *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*. (*Author's Note*)

[20] A researcher said that he has been able to find only two narratives from al-Ḥusayn

Was it because they had abandoned *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* and turned away from their *ḥadīth*? Or was it because they had abundantly taken *ḥadīth* from them, and then it was hidden and forgotten during Umayyad period, because Umayyads were hostile to them? I do not know.

However, seclusion of ʻAlī and his non-participation in the gathering of the Qur'ān – in beginning and in end – and the life histories of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (peace be on them all) supports the first alternative.

The situation regarding his *ḥadīth* deteriorated to such an extent that some people denied that some of his magnificent sermons in the book, *Nahju 'l-balghah* were of his saying; while no one casts any doubt about *al-khuṭbatu 'l-batrā'* of the Ziyād (of illegitimate birth) or Yazīd's poems extolling intoxicants!

The *Ahlu 'l-bayt* remained under oppression and their *ḥadīth* forsaken until the time of the Imāms, al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (peace be on them), when there was some intermission because of the ensuing conflict between the Umayyads and ʻAbbāsids. Thus they got a chance to describe the hitherto lost traditions of their ancestors, and renew what had been obliterated of their tracks.

However their traditions as well as those of their forefathers and descendants did not remain safe from infiltration, were not free from forgery, and unauthorised insertion – just like the Prophetic traditions. Those two Imāms had stated it clearly and mentioned by name some forgers, like Mughīrah ibn Saʻīd and Ibn Abi 'l-Khaṭṭāb and others like them. Some Imāms refuted many traditions, which were attributed to them and to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); and commanded their companions and the Shīʻahs to present the narrated traditions to Qur'ān, and to accept what conforms to it and reject what goes against it.

But the people (excepting a few individuals) did not follow this order in practice concerning the *aḥādīth* of the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.), and especially in subjects other than *fiqh*; they followed the same path which the general Muslims had taken in respect of the Prophetic traditions.

The malady spread to such an extent that a group said that the apparent meanings of the Qur'ān had no authority at all[21]; while the books of traditions like *Miṣbāḥu 'sh-sharīʻah*, *Fiqhu 'r-Riḍā* and *Jāmiʻu 'l-akhbār* had authority. They went to such an extent that some of them said that *ḥadīth* explains the Qur'ān even when the former

(a.s.) in traditions related to *fiqh*. (*Author's Note*)

[21] The author refers to the Akhbārīs' view. (*tr.*)

goes against the clear meaning of the latter. It is not different from some Sunnīs' view that *ḥadīth* abrogates the Book! Perhaps what is seen in the Muslims' behaviour is what a research scholar has said: "The Sunnīs took the Book and abandoned the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt*; the result was that they forsook the Book too, because the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), has said: 'Surely they will not separate from each other.' And the Shī'ahs took the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* and abandoned the Book; the result was that they forsook the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* too, because of the same Prophetic saying: 'Surely they will not separate from each other.' Thus the *ummah* collectively forsook the Qur'ān and the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (the Book and the *Sunnah*) altogether."

The path they had taken regarding *ḥadīth* was one of the factors that caused severance of relationship between Islamic subjects (like religion and literature) and the Qur'ān. This happened while it is known that all Islamic subjects are like branches and fruits growing from this good tree (Qur'ān) whose root is firmly fixed and whose branches are in heaven, yielding its fruit in every season by the permission of its Lord. You will clearly see it if you look at these subjects: you will find that they have been developed and arranged in a way that they do not need Qur'ān at all. It is possible for a student to learn and complete all Islamic subjects – morphology, grammar, rhetoric, language, *ḥadīth, rijāl*, critical knowledge of *ḥadīth*, jurisprudence and its fundamentals; he may become an expert and authority in these branches of knowledge without even reciting the Qur'ān or touching the Book. So what share has actually been given to Qur'ān in Muslims' lives? Its recital is only for earning reward in the next world or using it as amulet for protection of their children from misfortunes and untoward occurances! Learn lesson if you have any understanding.

Now, let us return to our original topic:

You have heard what was the position of Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* during 'Umar's reign. In the same period there was increase in scholastic debate, as the Islamic victories naturally led to mingling of Muslims with other religions and groups, and there were scholars, rabbis, bishops and patricians in those religions who discussed and debated on religious matters. In this way, scholastic theology got boost although it was not much arranged or recorded – its early books are attributed to later scholars.

It continued during 'Uthman's time, but people turned against the caliph. However, he succeeded in gathering of various collections of Qur'ān and uniting the Muslims on one version.

The same was the condition during ‘Alī's caliphate; but he remained busy in reform of Muslim society, as there were internal conflicts which led to battles one after another. However, he founded Arabic grammar (syntax) and dictated its general broadlines to his companion, Abu 'l-Aswad ad-Dualī, and told him to write down smaller details. He could not do more, but he delivered important sermons and *aḥadīth,* which contain comprehensive materials of religious knowledge and finest Qur’ãnic mysteries. In addition, his scholastic discussions are recorded in collections of *ḥadīth*.

This situation of Qur’ãn and *ḥadīth* continued in Mu‘ãwiyah's reign and after him during the Umayyad and ‘Abbãsid periods' upto nearly beginning of the fourth century of *hijrah*. It coincided with the end of the time of twelve Shī‘ite Imãms. Nothing important happened in respect of discussions about Qur’ãn and *ḥadīth* – except what happened during Mu‘ãwīyah's reign as he tried his utmost to destroy the name of the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) and obliterate their tracks. For this purpose he started forgery of *aḥãdīth* in an organized way. The religious rule turned into an autocratic despotic government, and the Islamic *sunnah* gave way to byzantine splendour and authority. Also in this same period ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdi 'l-‘Azīz gave order to put *ḥadīth* in writing; before that *muḥaddithūn* used to take, preserve and transmit traditions verbally without recording them on paper.

In this very period, Arabic poetry got wide prevalance in society. It began in Mu‘ãwiyah's time, as he was very keen to spread it, and it continued during Umayyad and ‘Abbãsid periods. Sometimes, they rewarded two lines of poetry, or a fine literary point with hundreds and thousands of dinãr. People dedicated themselves to poetry and its transmission, and to history of Arabia and their battles; they earned through it magnificent wealth. The Umayyads benefited very much from spread of poetry and paid good money for it, because it supported their stand *vis-à-vis* Hãshimites; the same advantage was taken from it by Abbasids *vis-à-vis* Fãṭimids. The rulers paid high respects to scholars in order that they could help them against masses, and could make them do what they (rulers) wanted.

Poetry and literature got so much hold on academic circles that you would see many scholars, while engaged in intellectual or academic discussions, offering a poetry or well-known proverb as their proof, and winning the debate. Often they base theoretical purports on linguistic rules – at least they begin with linguistic explanation of the name of the subject and then enter into its main topics. All these

things do have deep influence on scholars' thoughts and their academic proceedings.

In those very days scholastic discussions got wide prevalence; many books and booklets were written on this subject. Soon the scholars were divided into two big sects: the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites. The seeds of their views were present at the time of the caliphs – nay, of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself. Its proof may be found in the recorded arguments of 'Alī (a.s.) regarding compulsion and delegation, *qadar* and ability, etc. and in the narrated *aḥãdīth* of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) on these subjects.[22] What happened at this time was clear distinction of the two groups in their opinions. The Mu'tazilites accorded total authority to dictates of reason over apparent aspects of religion, like the beliefs that good and evil may be understood through intellect; that it is wrong to give precedence to something without a reason; that it is repugnant to force someone to do what is beyond his power; that man is totally independent in his actions, and that he has been given all power, etc. The Ash'arites, on the other hand, gave total authority to apparent factors of religion on the dictates of reason, like the rejection of idea that good and evil could be understood through intellect; that it was quite in order to give precedence without a reason; that man is not independent in his actions, rather he is under compulsion; that the speech of Allãh is eternal, and many similar ideas which are found in their books.

Then they wrote and arranged the subject of scholastic theology, coined its terminologies, and added to it some issues with which they faced the philosophers in imaginative topics of general proposition. This happened when the works of Greek philosophy were translated into Arabic and its study spread among the Muslims. Anyhow, it is not correct to say (as some have done) that the scholastic theology began in Islam or divided into I'tizãl and Ash'ariyyah after the transfer of philosophy to Arabia. The existence in the early traditions of their major issues and opinions is sufficient to refute such an idea.

The Mu'tazilites continued to multiply in number and their splendour and might kept on increasing from their advent to the early 'Abbãsid period (early third century of *hijrah*); then they began their downward slide until the Ayyūbids extinguished their life. Only Allãh

[22] For example: His (may Allãh bless him and his progeny) saying which is narrated from him: "There is no compulsion, nor delegation; rather it is a position between the two." And his saying: "The Qadariyyah are the Mazdaists of this *ummah*." (*Author's Note*)

knows how many people were massacred at that time and later for the crime of I'tizãl. This left the field clear for the Ash'arites to indulge into scholastic discourses without anybody being there to oppose them; so they entered its arena (while previously their jurisprudents used to brand it a sin!). Now, Ash'ariyyah is the prevalent school among the Sunnīs today.

The Shī'ites had precedence in scholastic discussions. They began speaking in this vein soon after the departure of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Most of their scholars were companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) e.g. Salmãn, Abū Dharr, Miqdãd, 'Ammãr and 'Amr ibn al-Ḥamq and others. Also there were among the *tãbi'īn* people like Rushayd, Kumayl and Maytham and the descendants of 'Alī (a.s.). Umayyads annihilated them; yet they put down new roots and were reinvigorated in the days of the two Imãms al-Bãqir and aṣ-Ṣãdiq (peace be on them). They took part in discussions and wrote books and booklets. Their efforts continued in spite of the persecution and suppression of the governments. However they were given some breathing space during the Buwayhids' rule.[23] Then again they were strangulated until the advent of the Safavid kingdom[24] in Iran – and this situation continues till today.

The characteristic style of their scholastic discussions was more in conformity with Mu'tazilites than with Ash'arites. The Shī'ite and Mu'tazilite views were almost similar in many aspects, as for example they too believed that good and evil were perceivable through intellect, to give precedence without reason was wrong, and in the questions of *qadar* and delegation. This similarity made some people to think that the Shī'ites and the Mu'tazilites went on the same way in scholastic matters, like two competing horses. But they have totally missed the point, because the fundamentals which are narrated from the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) – which are the authority in the Shī'ite sect – have no affinity with the Mu'tazilite taste and style.

In short, the scholastic theology is a noble branch of knowledge, which defends the true religious precepts. But the Muslim scholars went awry in their debates and discussions and they made no distinction between intellectual propositions; they mixed truth with acceptable, as we shall explain it later to some extent.

During the same period, ancients' books were translated into

[23] About 4th century of *hijrah*. (*Author's Note*)
[24] Early 10th century of *hijrah*. (*Author's Note*)

Arabic; they were related to logic, mathematics, physics, divinity, medicine, and practical *ḥikmah*. Some were translated in Umayyad reign, and the exercise was completed in the early ‘Abbãsid period. Hundreds of books were rendered into Arabic from the Greek, Latin, Sanskirit, Persian and Suriyac languages. People became engaged in studies of various fields of knowledge, and in a short time they formed independent views and opinions. Of course, the religious scholars were enraged by this "development", especially when they looked at the open attacks against the accepted religious issues launched by atheists, philosophers, Manichaeans and others; they were also infuriated by the Muslim philosophers' disparaging the religion and religionists, and insulting the fundamentals of Islam and landmarks of *sharī‘ah*. And there is no disease like ignorance!

What inflamed their anger most was the philosophers' habit of basing the issues on the principles derived from Greek astronomy and physics, like the arrangement of Ptolemaic celestial bodies, and their belief that those skies were the fifth nature; they could not be rent or mended; they were eternal as was the astronomical system in person; likewise the elements were eternal in species; all species were eternal and so on. In fact, all these issues were based on principles that were taken for granted and for which philosophy had not established any proof. Yet ignorant persons posing as philosophers were presenting them as if they were proven issues. The atheists and their likes who professed to believe in philosophy added to it other false issues like belief in transmigration of soul, rejection of resurrection, particularly the physical one. They used all these suppositions for ridiculing literal meanings of religion. Sometimes one of them would say: Religion is a collection of blindly followed rituals and responsibilities, which the prophets had brought for training and perfecting the simple and primitive minds; but a philosopher who has attained real knowledge, does not need them or their message, they had firm standing on the path of argumentation.

This behaviour prompted and called the jurisprudents and scholastic scholars to stand against them and refute their views; to annihilate their influence by all possible means, debating with them, cursing and disavowing them, declaring them out of the fold of Islam. In this way, they broke their force, dispersed their gathering, and destroyed their books during Mutawakkil's reign. Then philosophy was on the verge of extinction; until it was revived by the Second Teacher, Abū Naṣr al-Fãrãbī (d. 339 AH) and then ash-Shaykhu 'r-

Raīs Abū ʻAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʻAbdillāh ibn Sīnā (d. 428 AH) followed by other stalwarts of philosophy like Abū ʻAlī ibn Miskwayh, Ibn Rushd al-Andulusī and others. Since then, philosophy has remained alive although the number of its students has always been small; it rotates between strength and weakness.

Although philosophy was first brought to Arabia, very few Arabs, like al-Kindī and Ibn Rushd got fame as philosophers. Lately it has settled in Iran.

The Muslim scholars of *ʻilmu 'l-kalām* opposed philosophy and vehemently refuted it. However, most of them accorded acceptance to Logic as they found it conforming to the natural way of argumentation; so they wrote books and booklet on this discipline.

But, as you have been told earlier, they erred in its use: They applied the rules of real definition and its parts on mentally posited concepts, and used the proof in propositions of subjective consideration – while in fact proof had nothing to do with it, it was the field of argumentative syllogism. You will find them talking on scholastic issues like good and evil, reward and punishment, forfeiture and grace, and they describe its genus, class and limits, they describe its definition. Likewise, they argue regarding issues of *uṣūl* and *al-kalām* (in branches of religion) on the basis of inevitability and impossibility; it is an example of using realities in mentally posited issues. On the other hand, they say that: 'This is obligatory for Allāh', or 'This is improper for Allāh'. In this way they make subjective considerations rule over realities – and they think that it is proof! In fact, it is just a poetic analogy.

They went ahead in this respect to such a stage that one of them said: Allāh is so sublime that subjective consideration cannot creep into His command and action, such consideration is mere allusion; therefore whatever He has created or legislated are real factual matters. Another one said: Allāh has all power; it would be beneath His omnipotence to give an order and not to be able to establish a proof for it; therefore proof covers both created things and legislated orders. There are other such absurd sayings that, by my life, are tragedies of knowledge and people of knowledge; and even greater tragedy is for me to feel compelled to record and discuss them in academic works.

In this same period, Ṣūfīsm appeared among the Muslims. Its rudiments were found in the garb of asceticism. Then the Ṣūfīs began openly showing their colours in early ʻAbbāsid period, when people like Abū Yazīd, Junayd, ash-Shiblī and Maʻrūf appeared on the scene.

They believe that the true way for reaching real human perfection and attaining realities of cognition is to enter into an Ṣūfī *ṭarīqah* (path). This path is a sort of diligence in practice of *sharī'ah* for attaining to the reality. A greater part of them – among the Shī'ites and Sunnītes both – trace their chain to 'Alī (a.s.).

They claim to perform some supernatural deeds, and their talks contain things that go against clear concepts of religion and dictate of reason (saying that those expressions have correct interpretations which are beyond the understanding of general people!). Consequently, *fuqahā'* and general Muslims could not tolerate such utterances; they opposed them, avoided them and decreed that they were infidels. Sometimes they were imprisoned, whipped, killed, crucified, chased away, or banished. All this happened because of their moral depravity and their loose talks that they called mysteries of the *sharī'ah*. But if the things were as they claimed, and the Ṣūfīs' path was the kernel of reality and concepts of religion were merely its shell, then the legislator of the *sharī'ah* had more right to pay attention to it and make it public – as they are doing. On the other hand, if it is not truth, then what is there after truth except error and falsehood?

The Ṣūfīs, to begin with, expressed their views relating to the path in words only. After finding some place in people's hearts, they started writing books and tracts after the third century of *hijrah*. Then they went ahead and declared in clear words their opinion about reality and path together; and what they wrote in prose and poetry spread to all corners of the world.

Their number kept increasing, and so did their strength and influence among Muslim masses. They reached the pinnacle of their prestige in the sixth and seventh centuries of *hijrah*.

Then began their retreat; their status suffered and general public turned away from them.

There were two factors that led to their downfall:

First: When a system, which involves general public, becomes highly popular attracting the masses, insincere people take its advantage seeking to gain worldly riches through it; they disguise themselves, showing that they were deeply rooted in that system and are particularly attached to it. This exploitation makes people dislike, nay, hate the whole system.

Second: A group of their *mashāyikh* said that the way to know one's self was an innovation, which the Legislator of the *sharī'ah* had not enacted, yet it was a pleasing way which Allāh is pleased with, as

He was pleased with monasticism which the Christians had innovated. Allãh says: . . . *and* (as for) *monasticism, they innovated it – We did not prescribe it to them – only to seek Allãh's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance* . . . (57:27).

The masses agreed whole-heartedly with it. This opened the way to them to create for it rituals and etiquettes hitherto unknown in *sharī'ah*. They went on innovating fresh procedure that resulted in discarding a procedure of the *sharī'ah*. Ultimately a time came when the *sharī'ah* was placed on one side and the *ṭarīqah* (way) stood on another side. Not surprisingly, it led to indulgence in unlawful things, discarding of obligatory practices of religion – in short, *sharī'ah* was treated as abrogated, there appeared groups like al-Qalandariyyah, and nothing remained of Ṣūfīsm except beggary and addiction to opium and bhang – which they call 'obliteration of the self'.

What have the Book and the *Sunnah* to say on this subject? They guide to the verdict of reason. According to them, it is true that behind the external aspect of the *sharī'ah* there are realities that are its hidden or esoteric meanings. It is also correct to say that man has a way to reach that reality. But that way is to deligently follow and obey the external aspect of the *sharī'ah* – nothing else. Far be it from us to think that there was any esoteric idea which the external practices did not lead to; it is the external which identifies the hidden or esoteric realities, and leads to them. Far be it from us to suppose that there was a nearer path than the one laid down by the Bringer of religion, but the Prophet did not pay heed to it, or showed negligence towards it or ignored it for some reason. Remember what Allãh says: . . . *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* (16:89).

To make a long story short, three methods developed for searching and uncovering of realities: the external meaning of religion, the way of intellectual research, and that of purification of soul. A Muslim group adopted each method – and the three groups continue to dispute and quarrel with one another. They are like the angles of a triangle; if one of them becomes bigger, the other two are bound to reduce and *vice versa*. The methods used in Qur'ãnic exegesis greatly differed from one another resulting from vast differences in exegetes' taste. Usually they imposed their own academic views on the Qur'ãn, instead of letting the Qur'ãn shape their views – with rare exceptions.

You have seen that the Book confirms all that is true in each method and way. It cannot be that there is a true hidden reality, which the external sense does not conform to, or that there is a truth – hidden

or apparent – which is opposed by true proof.

That is why some *'ulamã'*, according to the knowledge they had, and with diverse tastes, tried to bring conformance between apparent senses of religion and *'irfãn*, like Ibnu 'l-'Arabī, 'Abdu 'r-Razzãq al-Kãshãnī, Ibn Fahd, the Second Martyr and al-Fayḍ al-Kãshãnī; while others endeavoured to bring agreement between philosophy and *'irfãn*, like Abū Naṣr al-Fãrãbī, ash-Shaykh as-Suhrawardī (the illuminist) and ash-Shaykh Ṣãinu 'd-Dīn Maḥammad Turkeh. Still others attempted to bring conformity between apparent senses of religion and philosophy, like al-Qãḍī Sa'īd and others; while a fourth group endeavoured to make all the above disciplines conform with one another, like Ibn Sīnã in his exegesis and books, and Mullã Ṣadrã in his books and tracts in addition to some later scholars.

In spite of that, the deep-rooted difference continues as before; the more attempts are made to uproot, it the deeper go the roots; the more water is thrown on this fire, the higher rise the flames.

You find that no amulet is of any benefit.

Scholars of every discipline accuse experts of other fields of ignorance, atheism, or stupidity, while the masses disavow all of them together.

This is the result of initial error when the *ummah* did not pay heed in the beginning to the call of the Book for joint meditation: *and hold fast to the rope of Allãh and be not divided . . .* (3:103)

Conversation drifts from one topic to another.

O Allãh! Guide us to what would make You pleased with us; unite our word on truth; give us a guardian from You; and give us a helper from You.

TRADITIONS

It is reported [by as-Suyūṭī] under the verse: *O People of the Book! Indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book . . .* Ibnu 'ḍ-Ḍarīs, an-Nasã'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim and al-Ḥãkim (who said that it was correct) have narrated from Ibn 'Abbãs that he said, "Whoever denies stoning, he denies the Qur'ãn from whence he thinks not. Allãh has said: *O People of the Book! Indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book*. So, stoning was among what they had concealed." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: It points to what we shall write under the verse: *O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together . . .* (5:41) that how the Jews had concealed the commandment of stoning in the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and how he (s.a.w.a.) exposed it.

at-Tafsīr of al-Qummī explains the words of Allãh: *after a cessation of the messengers*, as 'after discontinuation of the messengers'.

[al-Kulaynī narrates] through his chains from Abū Ḥamzah Thãbit ibn Dīnār ath-Thumālī and Abu 'r-Rabī‘ that he said, "We performed *ḥajj* with Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) in the year when Hishãm ibn ‘Abdu 'l-Malik too went for *ḥajj*; and there was with him Nãfi‘ *mawlã* (client) of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭãb. He looked at Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) in the *rukn* of the Ka‘bah and people had gathered around him. Nãfi‘ said, 'O leader of the faithful! Who is it that people are pressing around him?' [Hishãm] said, 'He is the prophet of the people of Kufah; he is Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī.' [Nãfi‘] said, 'I bear witness that I shall certainly go to him and ask him about problems which no one would give me their reply except a Prophet or successor of a Prophet.' [Hishãm] said, 'Then go and ask him; perhaps you would put him to shame.'

"So Nãfi‘ came (near) until he leaned on people; then he was close to Abū Ja‘far (a.s.). Then he said, 'O Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī! I have read the Torah, the Injīl, the Zabūr and the Qur’ãn; and I have understood its lawful and its unlawful; and I have come to ask you about problems which no one would reply except a prophet or a successor of the prophet.'" [The narrator] said, "So Abū Ja‘far raised his head and said, 'Ask whatever you want to.' [Nãfi‘] said, 'Tell me how many years (had passed) between ‘Īsã and Muḥammad?' [Abū Ja‘far] said, 'Should I inform you according to my view or your view?' [Nãfi‘] said, 'Tell me according to both together.' He [Abū Ja‘far] said, 'As according to my view, five-hundred years, and as according to your view, six-hundred years.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: Various traditions are narrated concerning the reason of revelation of verses. For example, aṭ-Ṭabarī has narrated from ‘Ikrimah that the Jews had queried the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) about the law of stoning. So he asked who was the most knowledgeable of them; they pointed to Ibn Ṣūriyã. He [the Messenger of Allãh] adjured him by Allãh whether there was the commandment of stoning (the adulterer and adulteress) in their books. He said, "When it increased in our society, we flogged hundred (lashes) and shaved (their) heads." The Prophet sentenced them to be stoned. Then Allãh

revealed: *O People of the Book! Indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you concealed . . . and guides them to the straight path* [5:15-16].

Also he has narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said, "Ibn Ubayy, Baḥrī ibn ‘Amr and Shās ibn ‘Adiyy came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); he talked with them and they talked with him. He called them to Allāh and warned them of His punishment. So they said, 'What are you frightening us with O Muḥammad! We, by Allāh! Are the sons of Allāh and His beloved ones' – they used the words of the Christians. Then Allāh revealed about them: *And the Jews and the Christians say: 'We are the sons of Allāh and his beloved ones.' Say: 'Why does He then chastise you for your sins?' . . .* [5:18]"

He has also narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh invited the Jews to Islam; he excited their interest in Islam and frightened them, but they refused to listen. Then Ma‘ādh ibn Jabal, Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubādah and ‘Uqbah ibn Wahb said to them, 'O group of Jews! Fear Allāh, because, by Allāh, you certainly know that he is the Messenger of Allāh; you were telling us about him before his being sent, and describing to us his attributes.' So Rāfi‘ ibn Ḥuraymalah and Wahb ibn Yahūdā said, 'We did not tell it to you; and Allāh has not revealed any book after Mūsā, nor did he send any bringer of good news or any warner after him.' Thereupon, Allāh revealed: *O People of the Book! Indeed Our Messenger has come to you explaining to you after a cessation of the messengers . . .* [5:19]"

as-Suyūṭī has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthur* from Ibn ‘Abbās and others; and has narrated other stories too.

These traditions like most of the narratives giving theoretical reasons are, in fact, mere attempts to fit some occurances on a verse, and then claiming that it was revealed for this reason. These are merely theoretical reasons; the verses most probably do have general connotation.

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وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱذْكُرُوا۟
نِعْمَةَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنۢبِيَآءَ وَجَعَلَكُم مُّلُوكًا
وَءَاتَىٰكُم مَّا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِّنَ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱدْخُلُوا۟
ٱلْأَرْضَ ٱلْمُقَدَّسَةَ ٱلَّتِى كَتَبَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَدْبَٰرِكُمْ
فَتَنقَلِبُوا۟ خَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ قَالُوا۟ يَٰمُوسَىٰٓ إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ
وَإِنَّا لَن نَّدْخُلَهَا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا۟ مِنْهَا ۖ فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا۟ مِنْهَا
فَإِنَّا دَٰخِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ
أَنْعَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ٱدْخُلُوا۟ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْبَابَ ۖ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ
فَإِنَّكُمْ غَٰلِبُونَ ۚ وَعَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوٓا۟ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾
قَالُوا۟ يَٰمُوسَىٰٓ إِنَّا لَن نَّدْخُلَهَآ أَبَدًا مَّا دَامُوا۟ فِيهَا ۖ فَٱذْهَبْ
أَنتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَٰتِلَآ إِنَّا هَٰهُنَا قَٰعِدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ
إِنِّى لَآ أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِى وَأَخِى ۖ فَٱفْرُقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ
ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً

يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

And when Mūsã said to his people: "O my people! Remember the favour of Allãh upon you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings and gave you what He had not given any other in the worlds (20). *O my people! Enter the holy land, which Allãh has prescribed for you and turn not on your backs, for then you will turn back losers"* (21). *They said: "O Mūsã! Surely there is a strong race in it, and we will never enter it until they go out from it, so if they go out from it, then surely we will enter"* (22). *Two men of those who feared, upon both of whom Allãh had bestowed a favour, said: "Enter upon them by the gate, for when you have entered it you shall surely be victorious, and on Allãh you should rely if you are believers"* (23). *They said: "O Mūsã! We shall never enter it at all so long as they remain therein; go therefore you and your Lord, then fight you both, surely we will here sit down"* (24). *He said: "My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and* (so does) *my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors"* (25). *He said: "So it shall surely be forbidden to them for forty years, they shall wander about in the land, therefore do not grieve for the nation of transgressors"* (26).

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COMMENTARY

The verses are not without connection with the preceding ones: they show how they broke some of the covenants they had made for listening to and obeying Mūsã (a.s.). How they confronted Mūsã with open rejection of his order and how they were inflicted for the sin with the Divine punishment of wandering in wilderness.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when Mūsã said to his people: "O my people! Remember the favour of Allãh upon you . . ."*:** The verses related to Mūsã's life show that this incident – the call of Mūsã to them to enter

the holy land – had occurred after their exodus from Egypt; as the phrase: "and made you kings", in this verse too proves it.

The clause: "and gave you what He had not given any other in the worlds", shows that before that time they were favoured with several signs of divine favour, like manna and quails, gushing forth of water from stone and making the clouds to give shade over them.

The phrase: *the nation of transgressors*, repeated twice, shows that even before this event they were habitually opposing and disobeying the divine messenger, i.e. Mūsã, until transgression became a confirmed trait of their character.

All these aspects prove that this wandering in wilderness had occurred during the last phase of Mūsã (a.s.)'s life among them, and that most of the events described in the Qur'ãn concerning them had taken place before it.

Mūsã's words: "Remember the favour of Allãh upon you", point to the sum total of all the favours Allãh had bestowed on them. He has used it to prepare them for what he was going to command them, i.e. to enter the holy land. He reminded them of the Lord's favours, in order that they might become enthusiastic for receiving more favours and blessings. Allãh had bestowed His bounties upon them by sending Mūsã to them, guiding them to His religion, delivering them from Pharaoh, sending the Torah to them and legislating a *sharī'ah*. They had got almost everything; now there was only one thing to complete these favours that they should have a holy land where they would live in and rule over it independently.

Mūsã (a.s.), while enumerating the favours, divided them into three categories:

1) "He raised prophets among you": It could refer to the prophets in their direct ancestral line, i.e., Ibrãhīm, Isḥãq, Ya'qūb and those after them, or specifically to those from the Children of Israel, i.e., Yūsuf, the tribes, Mūsã and Hãrūn. Prophethood is another favour.

2) "and made you kings": The word *mulūk* (مُلُوك = plural of اَلْمَلِكُ = *al-malik*) is usually translated as "kings". Here it means: free from humiliation of Pharaohs' subjugation, independent of tyrants' oppression. He is truly a king who independently manages the affairs of his own self, his family and his property. The Israelites, at the time of Mūsã (a.s.), followed a social system that was the best of all. It was the system of monotheism which exhorted them to obey Allãh and His messenger, to enforce complete justice in society and non-aggression against other nations; they did not allow anyone of their group to

acquire mastery over them; there was no such class distinction among them which could disrupt their social order. There was no one over them except Mūsã (a.s.) – and he was a prophet who did not behave like a king or a tribal chief who gains upper hand unjustly.

Someone has offered another explanation for this phrase: "made you kings"; that Allãh had decreed that there would be kings among them beginning with Ṭãlūt, then Dãwūd and going to their last king. The speech, accordingly, refers to the future and is the news of the unseen, because kingdom did not come to them except sometime after Mūsã. There is no difficulty in this explanation, except that the phrase: "and made you kings", does not agree with it. If this explanation were perfect, Allãh would have said: 'and made *among* you kings', as He has said: "He raised prophets *among* you."

Possibly, the "kingdom" could merely indicate concentration of authority in some members; it would then include the custom of sheikhdom. In this light, Mūsã too would be a king, followed by Joshua; before them Yūsuf was king; this would reach to well-known kings, Ṭãlūt, Dãwūd, Sulaymãn and others. But the above-mentioned objection applies to this explanation also.

3) "and gave you what He had not given any other in the worlds": It reminds them of the divine care and blessings that were joined with clear important signs. Those favours guaranteed that their lives would improve and straighten out if they remained firm on their words and adhered to their covenant. Those were the clear signs that surrounded them from all sides during their stay in Egypt, and after they were delivered from Pharaoh and his people. It is a fact that no nation before Mūsã's time was given so many and so continuous signs, miracles, and brilliant proofs. Israelites were the first to be blessed with such favours in their nation's life.

Accordingly, there is no reason to say (as some have done) that "the worlds" means 'worlds of that time'. The verse asserts that no nation throughout the world upto that time was blessed with so many favours as were the Israelites. And it is a fact.

QUR'ÃN: ***"O my people! Enter the holy land which Allãh has prescribed for you and turn not on your backs, for then you will turn back losers"*****:** Mūsã ordered them to enter the holy land; but looking at their past he knew they would not obey him. That is why he emphasized the order by forbidding them to turn on their backs and warning them of the consequences of disobedience, that they would turn losers.

The proof that he was apprehensive of their disobedience because of their past behaviour is found in his description "transgressors" used for them after their refusal to enter. Just one disobedience does not justify the use of this active participle for them; it is generally used when one repeatedly and continuously indulges in that action.

The land is described as holy. Exegetes have explained it as the land free from polytheism because prophets and believers made it their abode. There is nothing in the Qur'ãn to explain this word. Yet there are in it other expressions nearer in meaning. For example: *. . . to the remote mosque of which We have blessed the precincts . . .* (17:1). *And We made the people who were deemed weak to inherit the East and the West of the land, which we had blessed; . . .* (7:137). To bless a land means only to place in it a great good; and a part of that great good is establishment of the religion and removal of the impurity of polytheism.

The clause: "Allãh has prescribed for you", apparently means that Allãh had decreed that they would abide therein. The later coming clause: *So it shall surely be forbidden to them for forty years*, does not contradict it, rather it supports it, because the clause: "Allãh has prescribed for you", is general, it has left vague many details – it does not say for what time and for whom it has been assigned; it is addressed to the *ummah* without specifying who comes under its circle. It has been said that all the people who had been addressed and were given that order, had expired and perished in the wilderness, and it was their sons and grandsons who entered the holy land under Joshua ben Nun. In any case, the clause: *So it shall surely be forbidden to them for forty years*, indicates that this assignment was to take place after this period.

This prescription is seen in the verses: *And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imãms, and to make them the heirs, and to grant them power in the land* (28:5-6). Mūsã (a.s.) hoped that his people would get that land provided they sought help from Allãh and were patient, as Allãh says: *Mūsã said to his people: "Ask help from Allãh and be patient; surely the land is Allãh's; He causes such of His servants to inherit it as He pleases, and the end is for those who fear* (Allãh)*." They said: "We have been persecuted before you came to us and since you have come to us." He said: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, then He will see how you act"* (7:128-9).

And it is this promise whose fulfilment is mentioned in these words: *And We made the people who were deemed weak to inherit the East and the West of the land which We had blessed; and the good word of your Lord was fulfilled in the Children of Israel because they bore up* (sufferings) *patiently;* . . . (7:137). This verse shows that their domination over the holy land and their settlement there was a divine word; a decided fact and firm decree provided they remained patient in Allãh's obedience, in avoidence of His disobedience and in bitter happenings.

We have widened the circle of patience because the verse is unrestricted, and also because hard events were piling up over them during Mūsã's time in addition to the divine commands and prohibitions. The more they persisted in disobedience, the harder became their assignments, as may be seen in their stories mentioned in the noble Qur'ãn.

This is the apparent Qur'ãnic connotation of prescription of the holy land for them. Yet the verses are vague as to its time and extent. However, the following verses make it clear that this prescription was conditional, not unrestricted, or irrevocable: *It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, and if you again return* (to disobedience) *We too will return* (to punishment). *And We have made hell a prison for the unbelievers* (17:8); [Mūsã's words in the above-mentioned verse]: *"It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, then He will see how you act"* (7:128-9). *And when Mūsã said to his people: "Call to mind Allãh's favour to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh's people . . . And when your Lord made it known: 'If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more; and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe'"* (14:6-7).

An exegete has said that the words of Mūsã: "Allãh has prescribed for you", refer to the promise Allãh had given to Ibrãhīm (a.s.); then he has quoted from the Old Testament[25] the divine

[25] The Genesis reports that when Ibrãhīm passed into the land of Canaan, the Lord appeared unto him and said: "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. 12:7); "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram [Ibrãhīm], saying, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.'" (Gen. 15:18)

The Deuteronomy gives the following details: "The Lord our God spoke unto us in Horeb, saying, 'Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river

promises to Ibrãhīm, Isḥãq and Ya‘qūb, that He would give the land to their progeny; and has gone to some length in this topic. But keeping in view the limit we have put for our book, it is not of much concern to us to discuss it, no matter whether those promises were in the original Torah or are the handiwork of manipulators and forgerers. Certainly the Qur’ãn is not explained through the Torah.

QUR’ÃN: ***They said: "O Mūsã! Surely there is a strong race in it; and we will never enter it until they go out from it, so if they go out from it, then surely we will enter*:** ar-Rãghib has said: "The real meaning of *al-Jabr* (اَلْجَبْرُ) is to restore a thing with some force. It is said: *Jabartuhu fa-injabara wa ijtabara* (جَبَرْتُهُ فَاِنْجَبَرَ وَاِجْتَبَرَ) 'I mended it, so it became mended and restored.'" He further says: "Sometimes *al-jabr* is used for restoring and mending [without connotation of force]; for example, the saying of ‘Alī (may Allãh be pleased with him): 'O who sets every broken (thing or heart), O who makes easy every difficult (situation or problem)'; in this sense they call bread *Jãbir ibn ḥabbah* (جَابِرْ اِبْنْ حَبَّة = 'restorer son of grain'); at other times it is used for force and compulsion only, as [the Prophet] has said: *La jabra wa la tafwīḍ* (لَاجَبْرَ وَلَا تَفْوِيْضُ = 'There is no compulsion nor delegation')." He goes on to say: "*al-Ijbãr* (to compel) actually means to make someone to restore another one, but it is commonly used for mere compulsion; the clause: 'I forced him', has the meaning of, 'I compelled him'." He has further explained: "*al-Jabbãr* (اَلْجَبَّارُ = tyrant, gigantic, insolent) when used for a man implies that having a defect, he tries to make it up by claiming for himself a high position which he does not deserve. It is only used in derogatory sense. Allãh says: *. . . and every insolent opposer was disappointed* [14:15]. *. . . and He has not made me insolent, unblessed* [19:32]. '*. . . there is a strong race in it*' (5:22)." Also he writes: "Keeping in view the idea of overwhelming by towering over one's fellows, they say: a *jabbãrah* (giant) date tree; a *jabbãrah* (colossal) she-camel."

It is now clear that "strong race" in this verse refers to the group with power and authority who compel people to obey them.

The sentence: "and we will never enter it until they go out from

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Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.'" (Deut. 1:6-8). (*Author's Note*)

it", makes their entering the land conditional on the exit of the strong race from it; in reality it is rejection of Mūsā's order, although they promised again to enter it if their condition was met: "so if they go out from it, them surely we will enter."

A number of traditions have been narrated describing those Amalekites, how huge were their bodies and how tall their stature, they contain such strange things as no sane person can accept; no archaeological find supports those stories, nor any physical research has found their trace. Obviously those traditions are mere forgeries, inserted in Islamic literature.

QUR'AN: ***Two men of those who feared, upon both of whom Allāh had bestowed a favour, said: "Enter upon them by the gate, . . . and on Allāh you should rely if you are believers"*****:** The context clearly shows that the fear means fear of Allāh; there were people who feared God and avoided disobedience of Allāh and His prophet; and these two men belonged to that group; that is why they said what they said. Moreover, they had a distinction among that group that Allāh had bestowed His favour upon them, it has been earlier mentioned in this book that when "favour" comes in the Qur'ān without any condition, it denotes divine *wilāyah* (اَلْوِلاَيَةُ = friendship); so, the two men were among the friends of Allāh. This in itself indicates that the above-mentioned fear refers to fear of Allāh, because friends of Allāh are not afraid of anything, they fear only Allāh. He says: *Now surely the friends of Allāh – they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve* (10:62).

It may possibly be said that bestowal of divine favour is related to fear; that is, Allāh had bestowed His fear upon them. In the phrase: "those who feared", object of the verb, "feared", is omitted because it is understood from the phrase: "upon both of whom Allāh had bestowed a favour", because clearly they were not afraid of the strong race, otherwise they would not have exhorted the Israelites to enter as they said: "'Enter upon them by the gate'".

Some exegetes have given a strange explanation: The phrase: "of those who feared", means: Two men from among those whom the Children of Israel feared and upon both whom Allāh had bestowed a favour by guiding them to Islam. They support it with the recital of Ibn Jubayr, who read, *yukhāfūn* (يُخَافُونَ in passive case; meaning: they were feared). They say: Two men from the Amalekites had believed in Mūsā (a.s.) and joined the Children of Israel, then they advised them as described in the verse, showing the way to vanquish Amalekites

and capture their towns and land.

This explanation is based on some explanatory traditions; but they are solitary narratives, and are not supported by the Qur'ãn, etc.

"Enter upon them by the gate": "Gate" may refer to the first town of that strong race, nearest to the Israelites; reportedly, it was called Ariḥã', such usage is not uncommon. Or it may refer to the gate of the town.

"for when you have entered it you shall surely be victorious": It was their promise to the Israelites for victory over the enemy. They gave such a definite promise, as they had full faith in Mūsã (a.s.) who had said that Allãh had prescribed the holy land for them – because they knew that his statements were true. Or, probably they knew about this victory through the light of divine friendship.

Most of the Shī'ah and Sunnī exegetes have written that the two men were Joshua ben Nun and Caleb ben Yuqina, and that they were among the twelve chiefs of the Israelites.

Then the two men invited them to rely on Allãh: "and on Allãh should you rely if you are believers", because Allãh is sufficient for him who relies on Him; the call was meant to set their minds at rest and give them encouragement.

QUR'ÃN: ***They said: "O Mūsã! We shall never enter it at all so long as they remain therein; go therefore you and your Lord, then fight you both, surely we will here sit down"*:** They repeated their refusal, "We shall never enter it", in order to make Mūsã (a.s.) lose all hope of their compliance, so that he should not go on telling them to enter.

This speech is full of derision, insult and contempt for Mūsã (a.s.) and the divine order and promise that he had conveyed to them. The sentences are set in an amazing way: They totally ignored the advice of the two men who had told them to obey Mūsã (a.s.)'s order, as if they did not deserve any reply; then they told off Mūsã (a.s.) in a few words after they had talked with him in the beginning to some length and given him their reason, etc. Resorting in argumentation to brevity after lengthy talk indicates that the speaker is tired of talking with his opposite party and does not like to hear his voice any more. Then they emphasized the repeated refusal, "We shall never enter it", with the word, "at all"; then their stupidity emboldened them to commit the most improper folly when they told Mūsã (a.s.): "go therefore you and your Lord, then fight you both, surely we will here sit down."

This speech very clearly proves that they thought, like Idol-

worshippers, that God had a body like His creatures. And they were like this, for Allāh quotes them as saying: *And We made the Children of Israel to pass the sea; then they came upon a people who kept to the worship of their idols. They said: "O Mūsā! Make for us a god as they have* (their) *gods." He said: "Surely you are a people acting ignorantly"* (7:138). To this day they have continued to believe in anthropomorphization and embodiment of God, as their books clearly show.

QUR'ĀN: ***He said: "My Lord! Surely I have no control*** **(upon any)** ***but my own self and*** **(so does)** ***my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors"*****:** The context shows that the clause: "Surely I have no control (upon any) but my own self and (so does) my brother", is an indirect declaration that he cannot make anyone accept his call except his own self and his brother. Obviously he could himself follow the divine command and call his brother, Hārūn (a.s.), to do so; his brother was, after all, a messenger prophet and was his successor in his life, he could not go against the divine commands. Another meaning: Mūsā (a.s.) had no control except on his own self, and likewise his brother had no control except on himself.

Mūsā (a.s.) did not mean that he had no power at all even in making someone to listen to his invitation to belief. Such an explanation does not agree with the context: Certainly there were the two men who feared and many others who believed in him and had accepted his call. What we should ponder upon is the fact that he had not included even his and his brother's families in the people under his control, while obviously they were not disobedient to him in any way.

This mystery is solved when we look at the context and the situation. Mūsā (a.s.) had called his people to a legitimate responsibility; he put all his efforts in it; but the Israeli society rejected his call in a very ignominious and repulsive manner. This situation demanded that he should say to Allāh: 'O my Lord! I diligently conveyed your message to them, but in this affair I have no control on anyone except my own self, and so does my brother; we have discharged the responsibility put on our shoulders; but these people confronted us with total refusal. Now, we have lost hope concerning them and our path is blocked. Now, we pray to You to open this knot and with Your Lordship, pave the way for them to get your complete favour, that they may inherit the land and be made successors in it. O Lord! Decide and judge between these transgressors and us.'

They had in past disobeyed Mūsã (a.s.) on many occasions: in their demand to see the Lord, in worship of the calf, in entering the door saying *ḥiṭṭah*, etc. But this time they transgressed all limits; they openly rejected Mūsã (a.s.)'s call in a very rude manner. If Mūsã had left them in their insolence, and remained silent on their flaunting his order, it would have been the end of his prophetic call; his orders and prohibitions would have lost their value and the society would have disintegrated, losing the unity which Mūsã (a.s.) had established with so much trouble.

The above statement shows that:

First: The situation demanded that Mūsã (a.s.) should mention his own condition and that of his brother while complaining to Allãh, because these two were the conveyors of the divine message, and should not refer to other believers' condition (even though they were not insubordinate), because the others had no concern with *tablīgh* and mission. The context required description of the conveyor of the order, not of those who accepted the call, followed, and obeyed the divine commandment.

Second: The situation also demanded that Mūsã (a.s.) should turn to his Lord with this complaint, which in reality was a call to Allãh to help him in enforcement of His command.

Third: The clause, "and my brother", is in conjunction with "I" in, "Surely I have no control", The meaning thus will be as follows: and my brother too, like me, has no control except on his own self. It is not in conjunction with, "my own self", which would imply that he had no control except on himself and on his brother, because it would not agree with context, although both connotations are correct in themselves. Mūsã and Hãrūn (a.s.) both had control on their own selves in obedience and compliance, and Mūsã (a.s.) had control on Hãrūn (a.s.) that he would obey him (Mūsã), because he was Mūsã (a.s.)'s successor in his life; likewise, both had control on sincere believers that they would listen to, and obey them.

Fourth: The sentence: 'therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors." Mūsã (a.s.) does not invoke God against the Children of Israel that He should enforce on them His final judgement by sending punishment on them, or by separating Mūsã and Hãrūn (a.s.) from them (by removing them from there or by giving death to both brothers); Mūsã (a.s.) was calling them to what Allãh had prescribed for them with completion of favour, and it was through him that Allãh bestowed His blessings on the Israelites by delivering

them and making them successors in land – all on his hands, as Allãh says: *And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imãms, and to make them the heirs* (28:5). Also the Israelites were aware of the role of Mūsã in their lives, as Allãh quotes them as saying: *They said: "We have been persecuted before you came to us and since you have come to us." He said: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, then He will see how you act"* (7:129).

Another evidence may be found in the divine advice to Mūsã (a.s.): *therefore do not grieve for the nation of transgressors* (5:26). It shows that Mūsã (a.s.) was afraid of divine punishment overtaking them, and not unexpectedly he would grieve for them when they were encircled in the wilderness.

QUR'ĀN: ***He said: "So it shall surely be forbidden to them for forty years, they shall wander about in the land, therefore do not grieve for the nation of transgressors."*****:** The pronoun, "it", refer to the holy land. The forbidding implies divine creative decree to that effect; *at-tīh* (اَلتِّيه = wondering, wilderness); "in the land": "the" here refers to the land where they were at that time; "do not grieve": Mūsã (a.s.) is advised not to be sorry for them. Allãh has confirmed here Mūsã (a.s.)'s description of his people as "transgressors".

Meaning: The holy land, i.e., entering and capturing it is forbidden to them, i.e., We have decreed that they would not be able to enter it for forty years; they will wander in the land all those years – neither will they be 'civilized' and dwell in a town, nor will they be 'bedouines' living a life of desert-dwellers; do not grieve for the nation of transgressors because of this chastisement, because they are transgressors, one should not be sorry for them when they are inflicted with retribution of their deeds.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Abī Ḥãtim has narrated from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said: "The Children of Israel, if one of them had a servant, a riding animal and a woman he was written a king." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Abū Dāwūd has narrated in his *marāsīl*[26] from Zayd ibn Aslam, in explanation of: *and made you kings*, that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: "A wife, house and servant." (*ibid.*)

The author says: [as-Suyūṭī] has narrated other traditions too of the same theme. But the verse's context does not agree with this explanation. Although it was possible that the Israelites used to call everyone having a house, woman and servant a king, or write him as king, yet obviously not all of them (even their servants!) fulfilled this condition and had houses, women and servants. Certainly, only some of them were of that status, as is the case in other nations and generations; acquiring house, wives and servants is a worldwide custom and no nation is without houses, wives, and servents. Therefore, it was not something particularly bestowed on the Children of Israel, so that Allāh should count it as a special favour to them that He made them kings – and the verse counts His special favours.

Probably awareness to this defect has led some narrators to say – as is narrated by Qatādah – that the Israelites were first to have servants! But history does not agree with it.

al-Mufīd narrates through his chains through Abū Ḥamzah from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "When Mūsā arrived with them near the holy land, he told them: *'Enter the holy land which Allāh has prescribed for you and turn not on your backs, for then you will turn back losers.*' And Allāh had certainly prescribed it for them. *They said: 'Surely there is a strong race in it, and we will never enter it until they go out from it, so if they go out from it, then surely we will enter.' Two men of those who feared, upon both of whom Allāh had bestowed a favour, said: 'Enter upon them by the gate, for when you have entered it you shall surely be victorious, and on Allāh you should rely if you are believers.' They said: 'O Mūsā! We shall never enter it at all so long as they remain therein; go therefore you and your Lord, then fight you both, surely we will here sit down.' He said: 'My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and* (so does) *my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors.'* So, when they refused to enter it Allāh made it forbid-

[26] *Marāsīl* is the plural of *mursal* [i.e.] *al-Aḥādīthu 'l-Mursalah* means the traditions which one relates as on the authority of a *tābi'ī* (one next in the order of time after the *ṣaḥābah*) by tracing up the ascription thereof uninterruptedly to him; when the *tābi'ī* says, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, . . ." without mentioning a *ṣaḥābī* who heard it from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). (*ed.*)

den to them, and they kept wandering within about four parasang for forty years, wandering in the land; *therefore do not grieve for the nation of transgressors*."

Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) said: "When evening came, their crier called: 'Departure', so they set out with chantings and songs; until came the dawn, and Allāh ordered the land to turn round with them, and in the morning they found themselves in the place which they had started from, then they said (to one another): 'Certainly you lost the way.' They remained in this (punishment) for forty years; and manna and quails were sent down to them; until all of them had died except two persons, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Yuqina as well as the children of the (first generation). They kept wandering within about four parasang. When they wanted to go from there, their clothes and socks dried up upon them." He said: "They had with them a rock; when they came down, Mūsā hit on it with his staff and there gushed out twelve streams from it, one stream for each tribe; and when they departed, the water returned to the rock and it was put on an animal . . . " (*al-Amālī*, al-Mufīd)

The Author says: There are so many traditions of nearly the same meaning narrated through Shīʻah and Sunnī chains. The words, "Abū ʻAbdillāh said", indicate beginning of another tradition.

Although these traditions give such details about the wandering and other matters that are not expressly supported by the verses, yet they do not contain anything, which might be considered against the Book. Actually the affairs of Israelites in the time of Mūsā (a.s.) were amazing, and their life was surrounded on all sides by supernatural happenings; therefore, there is nothing wrong if their wandering had the features mentioned in the traditions.

Masʻadah ibn Ṣadaqah narrates from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he was asked about the words: *enter the holy land which Allāh has prescribed for you;* he said. "He wrote it for them, then erased it, then wrote it for their children; so they (the children) entered it; *Allāh erases what He pleases, and establishes* (likewise), *and with Him is the basis of the Book* [13:39]." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

The Author says: This theme has been narrated also by Ismāʻīl al-Juʻfī from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), and by Zurārah, Ḥumrān and Muḥammad ibn Muslim from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.). The Imām (a.s.) has looked at the generation which received from Mūsā (a.s.) the order to enter the land with assurance that it was prescribed for them and at the

generation which actually entered it; this resulted in *al-badã'* regarding the generation prescribed for. It does not go against the apparent context of the verse, which shows that those who were prescribed for had entered the land; it was forbidden to them for forty years, then they entered it. In fact, the order was given to the Israeli society collectively; thus the same people entered it for whom it was prescribed, because all were one nation and one society. It was prescribed to that society to enter, then it was forbidden for a time, then they succeeded in entering. In this light, there was no *badã'*, although looking at the particular people there certainly was *badã'*.

[al-Kulaynī] has narrated through his chains from ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn Yazīd that Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said: 'The Prophet Dãwūd died on Saturday morning, so the birds overshadowed him with their wings, and Mūsã Kalīmullãh died in wilderness, so a crier announced from the sky: "Mūsã has died, and which soul would not die?"'" (*al-Kãfī*)

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وَٱتۡلُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ نَبَأَ ٱبۡنَيۡ ءَادَمَ بِٱلۡحَقِّ إِذۡ قَرَّبَا قُرۡبَانٗا
فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنۡ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمۡ يُتَقَبَّلۡ مِنَ ٱلۡأٓخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقۡتُلَنَّكَۖ
قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلۡمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَئِنۢ بَسَطتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ
لِتَقۡتُلَنِي مَآ أَنَا۠ بِبَاسِطٖ يَدِيَ إِلَيۡكَ لِأَقۡتُلَكَۖ إِنِّيٓ أَخَافُ ٱللَّهَ
رَبَّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنِّيٓ أُرِيدُ أَن تَبُوٓأَ بِإِثۡمِي وَإِثۡمِكَ فَتَكُونَ
مِنۡ أَصۡحَٰبِ ٱلنَّارِۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَٰٓؤُاْ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتۡ
لَهُۥ نَفۡسُهُۥ قَتۡلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُۥ فَأَصۡبَحَ مِنَ ٱلۡخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾
فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ غُرَابٗا يَبۡحَثُ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ لِيُرِيَهُۥ كَيۡفَ يُوَٰرِي
سَوۡءَةَ أَخِيهِۚ قَالَ يَٰوَيۡلَتَىٰٓ أَعَجَزۡتُ أَنۡ أَكُونَ مِثۡلَ هَٰذَا
ٱلۡغُرَابِ فَأُوَٰرِيَ سَوۡءَةَ أَخِيۖ فَأَصۡبَحَ مِنَ ٱلنَّٰدِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
مِنۡ أَجۡلِ ذَٰلِكَ كَتَبۡنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ أَنَّهُۥ مَن قَتَلَ
نَفۡسَۢا بِغَيۡرِ نَفۡسٍ أَوۡ فَسَادٖ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ
ٱلنَّاسَ جَمِيعٗا وَمَنۡ أَحۡيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَآ أَحۡيَا ٱلنَّاسَ

جَمِيعًا ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنْهُم بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

And relate to them the story of the two sons of Adam with truth when they both offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. He said: "I will most certainly slay you." (The other) *said: "Allãh only accepts from those who are pious* (27). *If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you; surely I fear Allãh, the Lord of the worlds* (28). *Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your own sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the Fire, and this is the recompense of the unjust."* (29). *Then his mind facilitated to him the slaying of his brother, so he slew him; then he became one of the losers* (30). *Then Allãh sent a crow digging up the earth so that he might show him how he should cover the dead body of his brother. He said: "Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother?" So he became of those who regret* (31). *For this reason did We prescribe to the Children of Israel that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men; and certainly Our messengers came to them with clear proofs, but even after that many of them certainly act extravagantly in the land* (32).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses describe the story of the two sons of Adam, and make it clear that envy sometimes drives son of Adam to a stage where he slays his brother unjustly, then he becomes a loser and he regrets when no remorse can do any good. In this sense, the verses are conjoined with preceding ones, which describe how the Children of

Israel had an aversion to believing in the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.); their rejection of the true call had no reason except envy and transgression. Thus does envy pushes man to slaughter of his brother, then throws him in a remorse and regret from which he can never be free; so they should take lesson from this story, and should not persist so much in envy and then disbelief.

QUR'ÃN: ***And relate to them the story of the two sons of Adam with truth . . . "Allãh only accepts from those who are pious*****:** *Watlu* (**وَاتْلُ** = translated here as: "And relate") has its root in *at-tilãwah* (**اَلتِلاَوَة** = to read, to recite), which in its turn is derived from *at-tulūw* (**اَلتُّلُو** = to follow); because a relater describes a news or story in stages one after another; *an-nabã'* (**اَلنَبَاء** = news which has some benefit); *al-qurbãn* (**اَلْقُرْبَانُ** = offering with which one wants to come nearer to God or someone else), it is an infinitive verb/grund, it has no dual or plural form; *at-taqabbul* (**اَلتَقَبُّلْ** = to accept with more care accorded to the accepted thing). The pronoun, "them", (in, "relate to them") refers to the People of the Book, because the speech concerns them.

"Adam" refers to the same person whom Qur'ãn introduces as the progenitor of the mankind. An exegete has said, "It refers to an Israelite who had two sons who quarrelled regarding an offering, and one of them, called Qãbīl (Cain), killed Hãbil (Abel); and that is why Allãh says at the end of the story: *For this reason did We prescribe to the Children of Israel . . ."* But it is wrong, because:

First: Qur'ãn has nowhere mentioned any other Adam except the one who was the progenitor of mankind. If someone else were the subject of this verse, it was necessary to place here some indication, in order to remove any confusion.

Second: Some details of the story, e.g., sending of a crow, conforms with the condition of the primitive man who possessed simple thoughts and unelaborate perceptions, who gradually went on accumulating informations through experiences which he got from incident to incident. The verse clearly shows that the killer did not even know that a dead body could be covered in the earth. Obviously, this characteristic fits on the son of Adam, the progenitor of mankind, not on a person from the Children of Israel, who were civilized, advanced, and nationally refined in culture; and such matters could not be unknown to them.

Third: This exegete, by saying that "and that is why Allãh says at the end of the story*: For this reason did We prescribe to the Children*

of Israel", wants to reply to a question levelled against the verse. That question says: "Why the said prescription was reserved particularly to the Children of Israel, while the moral of the story covers the whole humanity – that whoever kills a person it is as though he killed all men, and whoever kept alive one person it is as though he kept alive all men."

So the said exegete tried to reply that the killer and the killed were not sons of Adam who was progenitor of mankind, and this story was not among the initial events taking place at the dawn of humanity, so that it could provide a lesson to all succeeding generations. Rather this event had concerned two sons of an Israelite, and the story describes an Israeli incident, which had a particularly national character; and that is why its lesson was especially confined to the Children of Israel.

However, this reply does not settle the argument; the question even now remains unanswered. The principle that killing one man is tantamount to killing all men and keeping one person alive is like keeping all men alive, is applicable to all killings taking place in human species; it is not reserved to any particular killing; and innumerable murders had taken place before the era of Israelites and even in Israelites before the one mentioned in this verse. Then why was this principle enunciated from this particular murder? And why was it confined to a particular nation?

Moreover, if the matter were as he says, it was better to say, . . . that whoever "among you" slays a soul, so that it would have been reserved for them, and in that case the same question would arise as to that reservation; and the notion in itself was not sound.

The reply to original question is as follows: The words: *whoever slays a soul . . . it is as though he slew all men; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men*, do not enact a legislative order; they enunciate a deep principle. Therefore, the prescription to the Children of Israel denotes that this principle was explained to them, although its benefit was comprehensive and covered Israelites and non-Israelites both. It is not unlike the admonitions and wisdom the Qur'ãn explains to the *ummah* of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) although their benefits are not confined to it.

Why does this verse say that this maxim was prescribed to the Israelites? It is because the verses are concerned with admonishing them, reminding them and rebuking them for their envy and jealousy against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); their intense hatred of the Prophet led

them to fanning the fire of mischief, instigating others to fight the Muslims and active participation in many such wars. That is why this speech is followed by the words: *and certainly Our messengers came to them with clear proofs, but even after that many of them certainly act extravagantly in the land*.

Add to all this fact that the story as mentioned by that exegete has no basis at all – neither in tradition nor in history.

Now, it is clear that "the story of the two sons of Adam" is related to the sons of that Adam who was the Father of mankind. The clause: "with truth" is related either to "the story" or to "relate"; in either case it is a notice or declaration that the story as was prevalent in their society was not free from distortion and omission. Actually the story as presented in the *Genesis* (ch.4) does not mention the event of the crow and its digging up the earth; also it clearly presents God as having a body – Far exalted be He from such things!

The context of the clause: "when they both offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other", obviously shows that each of the two had offered an offering to Allãh; but the word, *al-qurbãn* (اَلْقُرْبَانُ = offering) was used in singular number, because, as mentioned earlier, it being a *maṣdar*, does not accept dual or plural form.

The clauses: "He said: 'I will most certainly slay you.' He (the other) said: 'Allãh only accepts from those who are pious.'" The first speaker is the killer and the second, the killed one. It shows that they both knew that the offering of one was accepted and of the other rejected. But the verse does not say as to how they came to know it or which evidence led them to that deduction.

However, the Qur'ãn in another place mentions that among the ancient nations, or particularly among the Israelites, customarily the acceptance of an offering was known through its consumption by fire. Allãh says: (Those are they) *who said*: "*Surely Allãh has enjoined us that we should not believe in any messenger until he brings us an offering which the fire consumes." Say: "Indeed, there came to you messengers before me with clear proofs and with that which you said; why then did you kill them if you are truthful?"* (3:183).

Offerings are well known among the People of the Book till today.[27] Possibly in this case too the same method was used to indi-

[27] Offerings among the Jews are of various types: slaughtering an animal for sacrifice, presenting flour, oil, frankincense, and first fruits. Among the Christians, it is

cate the offering's acceptance – especially keeping in view that the story was narrated to the People of the Book who believed in that method. Be it as it may, the killer and his victim both knew that the one's offering was accepted and that of the other rejected.

Obviously, the one who said, "'I will most certainly slay you,'" was that brother whose offering was not accepted; and he thus spoke only because of envy and jealousy, as there was no other reason, nor the victim had committed any crime by his own will and power so that he should be confronted with such talk and threatened to be murdered.

The killer threatened: "'I will most certainly slay you,'" merely because of envy that the victim's offering was accepted and the killer's rejected. The victim replied: "'Allãh only accepts from those who are pious. If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you; surely I fear Allãh, the Lord of the worlds.'" By this reply he made it clear that:

First: He (the victim) had nothing to do with the acceptance or non-acceptance of any offering, nor had he committed any crime. If anyone was to be blamed, it was the killer who did not fear Allãh, and consequently Allãh refused to accept his offering.

Second: If the killer wanted to kill him and stretched his hand toward the victim for that purpose, the victim was not going to stretch his hand towards him with intention of killing him. Why? Because of his piety and fear of Allãh. In this situation, the killer would return (in the next world) with the victim's sin and his own, so that he would be among the inmates of the Fire, and that is the recompense of the unjust.

"Allãh only accepts from those who are pious." It asserts that acceptance is reserved only for the offering of the pious – it excludes that of unpious. Or, perhaps the killer arrogantly or ignorantly was thinking that his own offering would be accepted and that of the victim rejected – thinking that it does not depend on piety; or that Allãh did not know the real position and probably He would be confused as human beings become sometimes; therefore it was established that the killer's offering was not acceptable at all.

This episode contains many important principles: It describes how and when acts of worship and offerings are accepted; admonishes about murder, injustice and envy emphasizing their seriousness;

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the bread and wine taken at the Eucharist, which according to their belief, really turns into Christ's flesh and blood. (*Author's Note*)

confirms the system of divine retribution and shows that it is an integral part of the Lordship of the Lord of the worlds, for, Lordship cannot be complete without a well organized system interlinking various parts of the world, which would lead to just evaluation of deeds, and would recompense injustice with painful chastisement; so that the oppressor should desist from oppression, or should receive the retribution which he had arranged for himself, and that is the Fire.

QUR'ĀN: ***"If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch my hand towards you to slay you; surely I fear Allāh, the Lord of the worlds*****:** The preposition, "l" (ل) in *lain* (لَئِنْ = if) is for oath; stretching forth the hand alludes to preparing for murder and making its arrangements; the reply to this conditional clause begins with a negative connected to a nominal clause: "not one to stretch my hand" – in original Arabic, it is not a verb but an adjective, the negative is strengthened with '*bi*' (بِ) and the whole speech with the earlier mentioned oath. All these devices were used to show that the victim was far-removed from intention of killing his brother; such thought had never come to his mind.

This claim of his innocence is emphasized by the clause: "'surely I fear Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.'" When the pious ones, those who fear Allāh, remember their Lord, Allāh, the Lord of the worlds, Who, they know, recompenses every sin with its prescribed punishment, the fear of Allāh is awakened in them, and it does not allow them to commit any injustice which would throw them into perdition.

Then comes the reality of this sentence: "'If you will stretch forth your hand towards me . . .'", and its true interpretation. In short, the events had reached a point where the victim had only two alternatives before him: Either he should kill his brother or his brother kills him; if he opts for the first alternative then he would become unjust oppressor, would carry sins of both on his shoulders and would enter the Fire; if on the other hand his unjust brother kills him all the above consequences would come to that brother. Obviously, the victim did not opt for the first alternative because in that case his own felicity would be jeopardized; he rather opted for the second alternative – that his unjust brother should suffer infelicity by killing him while he himself attains felicity without being unjust or oppressor. Thus, in the clause: "'Surely I wish that you should bear my sin . . .'", the word, "wish", denotes option in case of there being two alternatives.

This verse gives the interpretation of the clause: "'If you will stretch forth your hand . . .'" in the same way as had happened in the story of Mūsã (a.s.) and his companion when the latter had killed a boy they had met; Mūsã (a.s.) objected saying: *"Have you slain an innocent person otherwise than for manslaughter? Certainly you have done a horrible thing"* (18:74). His companion later gave him its interpretation in these words: *"And as for the boy, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should oppress them by disobedience* (to them) *and disbelief* (in God). *So we desired that their Lord might give them in his place one better than him in purity and nearer to having compassion"* (18:80-81).

Likewise, in this case, the victim "wished" i.e. he opted for death joined with his felicity even if it resulted in his brother's infelicity as he had wrongly preferred life joined with infelicity which pushed him into the band of oppressors; exactly as the companion of Mūsã (a.s.) preferred the boy's death in felicity (although it would cause grief and sorrow to his parents) over his continued life which would make him oppressor and disbeliever who would go astray and lead his parents into error; and he desired that Allãh would give them in his place another boy better than him in purity and nearer to having compassion.

The son of Adam who was murdered was pious and God fearing and had gnosis of Allãh. His piety is shown in his reply: "'Allãh only accepts from those who are pious.'" It contains the claim of his own piety, and Allãh has quoted it without rebutting it. As for his knowledge and gnosis, it is inferred from his speech, "'surely I fear Allãh, the Lord of the worlds.'" Here he openly claims that he feared God, and Allãh has again quoted him without rebuttal; and Allãh says in another place: . . . *verily fear Allãh only those of His servants endued with knowledge* . . . (35:28). So when Allãh endorsed his claim that he feared Allãh, it was as though He also confirmed that he was a man of knowledge, as He has also portrayed the Mūsã (a.s.)'s companion as a knowledgeable person and said: . . . *and whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves* (18:65). The victim's talk with his unjust brother is enough to show the extent of his knowledge; you will find in it deep sagacity, wisdom and good sermon. He showed with his clean disposition and pure nature that human race was bound to multiply, and their bands would contain individuals of diverse characters, some would be pious, others unjust and transgressors. However, there is one Lord Who is their Owner and the Owner of all the worlds

and He manages their affairs. It is an aspect of His perfect management that He likes and loves justice and beneficence, dislikes and hates injustice and transgression. It follows that man must fear God and acquire piety – and this is religion. There are acts of obedience that bring man nearer to God, as there are acts of disobedience and injustice. Obedience is accepted when it springs from piety. Disobedience and injustice are sins the burden of which lies on the shoulders of the sinner. All this makes it clear that there should be another life – the resurrection – where everyone would be recompensed for his deeds, and the recompense of unjust and oppressors is the Fire.

As you see, these are the roots of the religious gnosis, confluence of the knowledge of genesis and resurrection, which this good servant of Allāh explained to his foolish brother who did not even know that a thing could be hidden from people by burying it in the earth – until he learned it from the crow. The victim, however, did not say to his threatening brother: If you want to kill me I'll throw myself before you without defending myself or repulsing your attack; he had only said: "I am not going to kill you." Nor did he say: 'I wish to be killed by you anyhow, so that you will become an oppressor and will go to the Fire.' To cause someone to go astray and fall into disgrace is in itself an injustice and error; and it is the verdict of natural law, not confined to one *sharī'ah* or the other. He only said: "If you stretch forth your hand towards me to kill me, I shall accept it and opt for it."

Keep in mind this fine point; and then listen to this objection on this event: No doubt the killer went beyond the limit through his oppression and transgression; but the victim too fell short in his duty by not standing up to the killer and by accepting the oppression; instead of boldly facing the adversary and defending himself, he meekly submitted to the killer and said: "'If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you; . . .'"

You will realize that this objection is baseless. He had not said, 'I shall not defend myself and shall let you do whatever you want to do with me;' he had only said, "I do not wish to kill you." The verse does not say that he was killed and knowingly did not defend himself. May be, he was waylaid or ambushed, or was killed while defending or protecting himself.

Someone has looked at this episode in a wrong perspective, saying: The victim intended to give his brother power over himself, so that he would kill him, and thus fall into eternal perdition, while he

(the victim) would get felicity and bliss, as he himself had said: *"Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the Fire."* As in these days, some ascetics think that they should adhere to their acts of worship and denial of self; if someone oppresses him or does injustice to him, that unjust oppressor would himself bear the burden of his oppression and injustice, and the victim should not stand up to defend his right, rather he should bear it patiently hoping to get its reward from God. But it is nothing but stupidity, because it is helping the sinner in his sin, and it makes both the helper and the helped partners in sin, so it will not make the oppressor to bear the burden of sins of both alone.

However, the explanation we have written above, of the words: *"Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your sin, . . ."* clarifies this objection.

Some people have replied to the above-mentioned two objections with some absurd answers; there is no benefit in mentioning them.

QUR'ĀN: *"Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your own sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the Fire, . . ."*: *Tabūa* (تَبُوءَ) translated here as "bear", literally means, stay; i.e. you should stay with my sin. ar-Rāghib has written in his *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān*: "*al-Bawā'* (اَلْبَوَاء) actually means equality of parts in a place, in contrast to *an-nabwah* (اَلنَبْوَة) i.e. disagreement of parts; they say: a *bawwā'* (بَوَّاءُ = agreeable) place, when it is not repulsive; also they say: 'I *bawwa'tu lahu* (بَوَّأْتُ لَهُ = prepared for him) a place . . .' And the Qu'ān says: *'Surely I wish that you should bear with my sin as well as your own sin'*; a poet has said:

" *'I rejected her falsity and stayed with her right.'*"

Therefore, its explanation with "return" looks at its inseparable connotation.

The clause: "'that you should bear my sin as well as your sin,'" denotes that the sin of unjustly murdered person is transferred to his killer, thus he shall bear two sins while the victim will come to Allāh without any sin in his account. This is the apparent meaning of this clause and traditions support it; also reason justifies it. This topic has been discussed to a certain extent in the second volume of this book.[28]

Objection: This theory compels us to admit that a person may be

[28] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.4, pp.251-62.

held responsible for another man's sin; but reason rejects it, and Allāh has said: *That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another* (53:38).

Reply: This matter is not within the purview of theoretical wisdom (so that reason could declare that it was impossible); rather it is within the jurisdiction of practical wisdom that follows the changing pattern of human social order and its exigencies. It is quite in order if the society lays the burden of one person's deed on another person, and considers the latter responsible for it; or if it decides that the deed done by a man was not done by him. For example, someone kills a man and the society had some rights upon the murdered man; now the society is justified in demanding those due rights from the killer. Likewise, if someone rebels against the society and creates disturbance in law, order, and mischief in the land, then the society has the right to consider all his good points as if they did not exist at all. And so on.

In the above-mentioned examples, the society looks at the bad deeds of the oppressed and puts them in the account of the oppressor. At this juncture, that bearer of burden bears the burden of the deeds which are now assigned to him – now it is not someone else's load; it is now transferred to his account because he had committed injustice to his victim, and in lieu of that injustice the victim's bad deeds have come to his door. It is not unlike a business transaction when the seller gives the goods to the buyer and accepts a price in its place; now the new owner of the goods uses it as he likes, and nobody would object to it simply because at one time it had belonged to someone else – because now the previous ownership has ceased. In the same way, the verse: *That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another*, cannot prevent the killer being charged with sins that were committed by the murdered man in his life, because now they have been transferred to the killer's account, and the previous responsibility of the murdered man is no more operative. It does not mean that the verse: *That no bearer of burden . . .*, has lost its validity or effect because a new reason has caused its transfer to a new doer; it is like the *ḥadīth*, "A Muslim's property is not lawful to another except with his pleasure"; if the previous owner sells the property, he will lose all rights in it as his rights have been transferred. But no one can say that the above-mentioned *ḥadīth* has lost its validity or effect.

An exegete has written: The words: *my sin as well as your own sin*, mean 'the sin of my murder if you did it, and your sins which you

had previously committed.' It is narrated from Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ibn ‘Abbãs and others. Another interpretation: 'the sin of my murder and your previous sin because of which your offering was not accepted.' It has been narrated from al-Jubbã’ī and az-Zajjãj. A third explanation: 'the sin of my murder and your sin of slaying the whole mankind.' It has been narrated from others.

But all these interpretations are devoid of support from the wordings of the Qur’ãn, and reason too does not agree with them. Moreover, if any of these interpretations were correct, there was no reason to put both sins side by side – when both were committed by the killer – and then ascribe one to the victim and the other to the killer.

QUR’ÃN: ***Then his mind facilitated to him the slaying of his brother, so he slew him; then he became one of the losers*****:** ar-Rãghib says in his *Mufradãtu 'l-Qur’ãn*: "*aṭ-Ṭaw‘* (اَلطَّوْعُ) means obedience; its oppo-site is *al-kurh* (اَلْكُرْهُ = dislike). *aṭ-Ṭã‘ah* (اَلطَّاعَةُ) is synonymous to *aṭ-ṭaw‘*, but it is mostly used for obeying an order and displaying a draw-ing. The [Qur’ãnic] clause, *fa-ṭawwa‘at lahu nafsuhu*, means his mind allowed him and seduced him; *ṭawwa‘at* [طَوَّعَتْ, used in the verse] is more appropriate here than simple *aṭã‘at* (أَطَاعَتْ = obeyed); the Qur’ãnic clause is opposite to *ta’abbat ‘an kadhã nafsuhu* (تَأَبَّتْ عَنْ كَذَا نَفْسُهُ = his mind declined it)."

It does not mean that *ṭawwa‘at* includes the connotation of obedience and seduction. It actually means that *at-taṭwī‘* (اَلتَّطْوِيْعُ = *maṣdar* of *ṭawwa‘at*) indicates graduality, while *al-iṭã‘ah* (اَلإِطَاعَةُ) indicates promptness, and it is the usual difference between the stems of *if‘ãl* and *taf‘īl*. *Ṭawwa‘at*, used in the verse, therefore, implies that he was gradually pushed towards that deed through insinuations and temptations coming successively one after another, until he submitted to it and obeyed. Meaning: His mind submitted to that evil plan and he gradually succumbed to the temptation to kill his brother. The phrase: "slaying of his brother", stands for "the order of slaying of his brother".

Sometimes it is said that *ṭawwa‘at* here means, 'made attractive'; in that case, slaying of his brother will be its object – that is, his mind made slaying of his brother attractive to him. Another explanation: *ṭawwa‘at* means 'his mind acceded to him in slaying of his brother'; in this case *qatla* (قَتْلَ) is given the vowel *a* in place of *i* because the preposition, *fī* (فِى = in) has been omitted.

Someone has inferred from the phrase: *fa-aṣbaḥa* (فَأَصْبَحَ = became one of the losers) that he had slayed his brother at night [because *aṣbaḥa* (أَصْبَحَ) literally means entered upon morning]. But this is not correct, because although literally it gives this meaning, but Arabs generally use it in the meaning of "became" without looking at its root or time. Even in the Qur'ān there are several sentences where time factor is not relevant at all. For example: . . . *so by His favour you became brethren;* . . . (3:103). . . . *so that they shall be regretting on account of what they hid in their souls* (5:52). Hence there is no way of taking the above phrase in its literal sense.

QUR'ĀN: ***Then Allāh sent a crow digging up the earth so that he might show him how he should cover the dead body of his brother . . .:*** *al-Baḥth* (اَلْبَحْثُ = means searching for something in the earth; then it is said: 'I thoroughly searched' [i.e. made research] about this matter. This meaning is given in *Majma'u 'l-bayan*. *al-Muwārāt* (اَلْمُوَارَاة = to hide); from this root come *at-tawārī* (اَلتَّوَارِى = to hide oneself) and *al-warā'* (اَلْوَرَاء = behind). *as-Saw'ah* (اَلسَوْأَة = what makes one annoyed, displeased); *al-wayl* (اَلْوَيْلُ = woe, perdition), *ya waylata*
(يَاوَيْلَتَا = exclamatory expression used for disaster, perilous situation); *al-'ajz* (اَلْعَجْزُ = weakness; opposite of power).

The context shows that the killer had spent a considerable time in bewilderment and perplexity; while he was wary lest others come to know of his deed; he could not understand what device to use in order to hide the dead body of his brother; this continued until Allāh sent the crow. If the sending of the crow and his digging the earth had occurred close together with his slaying of his brother, he would not have lamented in these words: "'Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother?'"

Also it appears from the context that the crow had buried something in the earth after digging it; clearly it wanted to demonstrate the method of burial, not the way of digging. Mere digging could not teach him how to bury the dead body, because he was so simple minded that he did not understand the purpose of digging; how could he go ahead from digging to burial as the two things are not concomitant. His mind perceived the method of burial when he saw the crow digging the earth and burying something in it.

Among the birds, the crow has a habit of storing for future use a part of what he obtains through preying [or lifting away] by burying it

in the earth. Although other birds which feed on grain, etc. sometimes dig the earth, but their purpose is to find out things like grain and worms, not to bury and store.

The pronoun, "he" in "so that he might show him", stands for the crow, as it is the nearest noun. Some people have claimed that it refers to "Allãh"; this too may be correct, but it seems a bit far-fetched; however, meaning is correct in both cases.

The words: "He said: 'Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow'", were uttered by the killer when he realized how easy was the method used by the crow to bury something. He found that he too was able to do as the crow had done and bury the dead body – now he had seen the connection between digging and burial. Then he felt remorse for not thinking about it himself, so that he could understand that digging the earth was the easiest means of hiding the body. So he expressed his regret: "'Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother?'" It was a sort of a soliloquy between him and his mind in the style of a question implying negation. It is as though he was questioned – implying negation: 'Did you lack the strength to be like this crow and cover the dead body of your brother?' The reply would be: 'No.' Then he would be asked second question in the same style: 'Then why did you remain oblivious to it? Why did you not resort to this method although it was so obvious, and put yourself in such trouble without any reason for such a long period?' There was no answer to it. And this caused the remorse. Remorse is a psychological emotion, a mental agony that particularly affects a human being when he realizes that he has neglected some means, which have led to loss of a benefit or appearance of a loss. You may say that it is a feeling that affects man when he remembers that he has neglected making use of a possibility.

This is the condition of man, when he commits an injustice or oppression, which he does not want people to know about. Such deeds and behaviour are not acceptable to the society with its well-laid system whose parts are interlinked. The effects of such anti-social deeds are bound to appear before public eyes, even if they remain hidden in the beginning. The unjust criminal wants to compel the society to accept his crime, but it does not accept it at all. It is not unlike a man eating or drinking poison, wishing that his digestive system would digest it, but it does not digest it. And even if that injustice remains hidden in this life, there is a meeting place, which he

cannot avoid, and your Lord is on watch. At this juncture man will know that his plans were defective and he did not properly observe what was required of him; then he will feel remorse. Even if he were given a second chance, he would damage some other parts. It would continue like that until Allāh disgraces him before the whole world.

The above discussion makes it clear that the words: "So he became of those who regret", indicate his regret for not hiding and burying the dead body of his brother. Also it may possibly be said that the words show his regret for the slaying itself, and it is not wide of mark.

A TALK ON PERCEPTION & THOUGHT

The verse: *Then Allāh sent a crow digging up the earth so that he might show him how he should cover the dead body of his brother. He said: "Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother?" So he became of those who regret* is a unique one; there is no other like it in the Qur'ān. It portrays man's ability of benefiting from perception; that he acquires knowledge of characteristic properties of various things through perception, and then thinking on it arrives at its aims and objects in life. It is what has been discovered by academic research that human knowledge and cognition emanates from perception (or call it sensitivity), in contrast to those who believe in remembrance and natural knowledge. We may explain it as follows:

Look at a man with all his cognitive pictures – be it ideas or propositions, particular or general, whatever the characteristic of his knowledge and consciousness – you will find that he has got numerous pictures and a great deal of cognition, even if he be the most ignorant, and extremely weak in understanding and thinking; and no one can enumerate the pictures in his mind; in fact only Allāh knows their limit.

Although it is beyond the limit of human computation, it is seen that it goes on growing and increasing so long as the man remains alive in this world. If we retreat and go back in human life, we shall find it decreasing and decreasing until it will become cipher, and man will become like a blank slate without any knowledge. Allāh says: [Allāh] *taught man what he knew not* (96:5).

The above verse does not mean that Allāh taught him what he

did not know; but as for the things he knew, he had no need of divine teaching. Obviously, human knowledge, of whatever type it may be, is needed to guide him to what will make his existence perfect and will benefit him in his life; the goal to which inorganic things proceed by natural laws, the organic ones – including man – proceed and are guided to it in the light of knowledge. Thus knowledge is guidance.

Allãh has ascribed guidance to Himself, as He quotes Mūsã as saying: *"Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided."* (20:50). Again He says: *And Who made* (things) *according to a measure, then guided* (87:3). Also He says, and in a sense it points to guidance through perception and thought: *Or, Who guides you in utter darkness of the land and sea, . . .* (27:63). In previous volumes, we have discussed to a certain extent meaning of guidance. In short, every knowledge is guidance; and every guidance is from Allãh; therefore, whatever knowledge man has got, has come to him through divine teaching.

Also, the verse, *And Allãh has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers – you did not know anything – and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts . . .*(16:78), gives the connotation near to that of the verse: [Allãh] *taught man what he knew not*.

Contemplation of man's condition and meditation on Qur'ãnic verses show that man's theoretical knowledge, i.e. knowledge of things' characteristics and the resulting intellectual cognition, all emanate from the senses, and Allãh through it teaches him the things' characteristics, as is seen in the divine words: *Then Allãh sent a crow digging up the earth so that he might show him how he should cover the dead body . . .*

Attribution of sending the crow for showing how the dead body should be covered is exactly the attribution of teaching the way of covering to Him. The crow did not know that it was Allãh Who had sent it; likewise, the son of Adam did not perceive that there was a planner who had arranged the matter for his thinking and learning; and the fact that apparently the crow and its digging had caused him to learn the way of burial, was merely a chance factor like all chance factors which teach man ways of his life in both worlds. However, it is Allãh Who has created mankind and led him to perfection of knowledge for the goal of his life. The laid down system of creation is such as makes man seek perfection through knowledge, with continuous contacts and knocks between him and various parts of creation; and by

this process man learns the means of acquiring his aims and objects. It is Allāh Who sends the crow and other mediums to engage in some activity that helps man in his learnings; so He is the real teacher of man.

There are many similar expressions in the Qur'ān. For example: *. . . and what you have taught the beasts of prey, training them to hunt – you teach them of what Allāh has taught you . . .* (5:4); the verse counts what they have learnt and what they teach as part of what Allāh has taught them, although they have learnt it from other people or found it out by themselves. Again: *. . . and fear Allāh; and Allāh teaches you, . . .* (2:282); but it was the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) who was teaching them. Also: *. . . and the scribe should not refuse to write as Allāh has taught him* (2:282); while the scribe had learnt the art of writing from another scribe. However, all these matters are an integral part of creation and management; and the resulting knowledge helps man in arriving at his perfection. Therefore, it is Allāh who has taught him these means of perfection, as a teacher teaches through speech and training, and a scribe teaches others through speech and pen.

This is the way of all activities, which are attributed in this world of cause-and-effect to Allāh. Allāh is their creator, and there is a chain of causes between Him and His creatures, which are apparent causes like instruments and tools, which bring a thing into existence.

You may say that these causes are conditions on which a thing's existence depends – everything is covered from all sides by these causes. Zayd comes into this world; he is son of 'Amr and Hind. Now, 'Amr and Hind should have been born long before Zayd, and they should have united in marriage; only then the said Zayd could be born. Likewise, for seeing through a seeing eye, there should be a seeing eye before the sight.

Some people think that belief in oneness of God (monotheism) demands that one should totally negate chain of causes; only then one can establish God's absolute power and dismiss the idea of any weakness in him. They say that the idea of necessity of intermediary causes is tantamount to saying that Allāh is compelled to use a particular way for creating things and has no free will or power. However, those people have inadvertently contradicted themselves.

In short, it is Allāh Who has taught human beings characteristics of the things which are perceived by their senses; He has taught them through the senses; then made all that is in the earth and the sky

subservient to them; He says: *And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself;* . . . (45:13)

This subjugation has a purpose behind it: Man by managing these things reaches his goals and attains to his wishes in life. Allãh has made them connected to his existence so that he may benefit from them. The Creator has bestowed on man the faculty of contemplation in order that he may understand how to manage and use them, how to proceed ahead through them. The following verses points to this reality: *Do you not see that Allãh has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the earth and the ships running in the sea by His command?* . . . (22:65). . . . *and made for you of the ships and the cattle what you ride on* (43:12). . . . *and upon them* [the cattle] *and upon the ships you are borne* (40:80). There are many verses of similar connotation. Look at their language, how they ascribe making of ships to Allãh, while they are manufactured by man; how they attribute carrying of man to Allãh, while it is done by the ships and the cattle; how they assign the ships' movement to His order, while it takes place because of the flow of the river, winds or steam, etc. All these phenomena have been described as God's subjugating them to man, because his will has some control on ships, cattle and in the earth and sky which pulls them to the desired goal.

In short, Allãh has given man thinking power over the senses, so that he may use it as a means to reach the perfection appointed for him; he is helped by his intellectual cognition covering the creation, in other words, the theoretical knowledge.

Allãh says: . . . *and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts that you may give thanks*. (16:78)

As for the knowledge related to action, which guides man to what is to be done and what not to be done, it comes to man through divine inspiration [or call it, instinct] without the agency of the senses or theoretical intellect. Allãh says: *And* [I swear by] *the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it; he will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it* (91:7-10). *Then set your face upright for religion in natural devotion* (to the truth), *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allãh's creation; that is the right religion,* . . . (30:30). In these verses Allãh ascribes the knowledge of what should be done (i.e. good deed) and what should not be done (i.e. evil deed) to divine inspiration; and it is

what is thrown into the heart.

So, whatever knowledge is gained by man is a divine guidance and through divine guidance. However, there is difference among various types of knowledge: (i) As for the characteristics of things found outside human mind, Allāh gives him their knowledge through the five senses; (ii) The general comprehensive intellectual knowledge is given by Allāh and through His subjugation; the senses do not interfere in it, nor can man be able to dispense with it; (iii) The knowledge related to action, which is related to good or evil deed, and decides what is good for it and what is bad; this comes from divine inspiration, thrown into the heart, knocking on the nature's door.

This third type of knowledge, which in fact emanates from divine inspiration, can only succeed in doing its work and complete its effect if the second type is in order and has grown up with health and uprightness; as even intellect can only do its work properly if man is upright and firm in piety and on the natural religion. Allāh says: *. . . and none do mind except those having understanding* (3:7). *. . . and none minds but he who turns* (to Allāh) *again and again* (40:13). *And We will turn their hearts and their sights, even as they did not believe in it the first time, . . .* (6:110). *And who turns away from the religion of Ibrāhīm but he who makes himself a fool, . . .* (2:130). That is, none discards the demands of nature except he whose understanding is defective, and therefore he treads on a wrong path.

Reason supports this concomitance between understanding and piety. If man's theoretical power becomes defective, and he does not perceive truth as truth or falsehood as falsehood, then how can he be inspired to adhere to that or avoid this? Look at someone who believes that there is no life after this world's life; obviously he would not be inspired to observe religious piety which is the best provision for the life hereafter.

Likewise, if a man's natural religion is perverted, and he does not acquire the provision of religious piety, then his inner powers which give rise to desire or anger, love or hate, etc. cannot remain moderate; and when these powers' balance is disturbed, the power of theoretical perception cannot discharge its functions properly.

As the Qur'ānic statements aim at spreading the religious cognition and teaching the people useful knowledge, they tread the same path and stick to the above methods which it has prescribed for acquiring knowledge: (i) If the matter concerns particular items which have perceivable characteristics, it clearly appeals to the senses; for

example, verses which contain phrases like, "have you not seen", "do they not see", "have you seen","do you not then see?" (ii) If the topic covers rational generality – whether it is related to general physical matters, or is beyond this phenomenal world – then it pays full regard to understanding and reason, although it is beyond the jurisdiction of the senses and outside the circle of matter and materials. For example, most of the verses related to genesis and resurrection, which contain phrases like, "for a people who understand", "for a people who reflect", "for a people who remember, "for a people who understand", etc. (iii) As for practical propositions which touch upon good and evil, profit and loss in deed, or piety and impiety, they rely on divine inspiration and describe the things which make the person remember his inner inspiration; like the verses which contain such phrases as, "it is better for you", "his heart is surely sinful", "in both of them there is a great sin", "and sin and rebellion without justice", "surely Allãh does not guide", etc. You should meditate on them.

Now, it is clear that the Qur'ãn demonstrates the error of materialists – those who rely on sense and experiment alone and reject pure rational propositions in practical matters. We know that the first concern of the Qur'ãn is the topic of monotheism, and it is on foundation of monotheism that it builds all true cognition, which it explains and invites people to. There is no need to remind that monotheism is a topic which is the furthest removed from the senses, has the least connection with matter and is deeply related to the pure rational affair.

The Qur'ãn explains that this true cognition is a part of nature and creation. Allãh says: *Then set your face upright for religion in natural devotion* (to the truth), *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allãh's creation* . . . (30:30).

It means that human creation is such an origination as it results in these perceptions and cognition. What does alteration of a creation imply? That alteration itself would be another creation and origination. But if altering of general creation is taken to mean negation of actual function then it is beyond comprehension. Far be it from him to negate his natural knowledge and to tread in life on a totally different path. Those who deviate from natural orders do not negate the dictate of nature; they rather use it in a wrong way. Sometimes an archer misses the target; now the bow and arrow as well as other conditions of shooting are originally made and laid down for hitting the target, but mistake in using throws it into error. If knives, saws, augers, needles, and other such things are fitted wrongly in their machines,

they will perform the same functions for which they have been made but in an undesired way. However, it will be impossible for them to deviate from their natural function and do some other work, e.g. a saw cannot do the work of needle by sewing clothes, and so on.

The above matters are clear for him who thinks over general arguments offered by those who oppose rational proofs. For example, they say: 'Pure rational proofs and syllogisms composed of such premises which are not based on perceptions of five senses, often throw one into error. Look, for instance, at irreconcilable disputes in pure rational matters. Therefore, one should not rely on them because they do not reassure mind.'

Also they argue for correctness of the way of senses and experiments in the following manner: Obviously, the senses are the tools through which we acquire the knowledge of the characteristics of various things. When we perceive a thing's effect in the framework of some particular conditions, and observe the same effects repeatedly appearing with the same conditions – without fail and without any discrepancy – then we become sure that the said effect was the characteristic of the said thing and that it was not merely a matter of chance, because chance is not a permanent phenomenon.

Both these arguments have been offered to prove that one should compulsorily depend on perception and experiment, and should discard pure rational methods. But it is amusing to note that all the premises used therein are rational and outside the purview of perception and experiment. These people have used these rational premises for rebutting the use of these very premises. That is what we have earlier said that nature cannot be negated, although man errs in its use.

And more abominable than that is the use of experiment and test in evaluation of legislated rules and enacted laws; a law is made and enforced in public with the aim of testing its effect through statistics, etc.; if good results get the upper hand, the law is confirmed as a permanent one, otherwise it is set aside and replaced by another, and so on. The same is the case of making a law through analogy or discretional liking.[29]

The Qur'ān negates all the above methods and proves that the laid down laws are natural and clear; general piety and impiety are

[29] As for analogy in *fiqh* and personal liking and what is termed as olefaction of jurisprudential knowledge, they are the signs for "discovery" of law, not for laying it down; and its discussion is related to the *uṣūlu 'l-fiqh*. (*Author's Note*)

academic and based on inspiration; and their details should be learnt from the side of revelation. Allãh says: *And pursue not that of which you have not the knowledge; . . .* (17:36); *and do not follow the footsteps of the Satan . . .* (2:168). It names the laid down *sharī'ah* as truth: *. . . and He sent down with them the book with truth, so that it might judge between people in that in which they had differed; . . .* (2:213). *. . . and surely conjecture does not avail against the truth at all* (53:28). How can conjecture avail when by following it one puts oneself in danger of falling into untruth which is error? Allãh says: *. . . and what is there after the truth but error; . . .* (10:32) *. . . yet surely Allãh does not guide him who leads astray, . . .* (16:37). In other words, error cannot be a way to lead man to good and felicity. Whoever wants to reach truth through falsehood, achieve justice through injustice, do a good by means of evil, or acquire piety through impiety, he has certainly lost the way; he craves to get from the creation (which is the foundation of law and *sharī'ah*) what it can never deliver. Had it ever been possible, this interchange would have happened in characteristics of opposite things, and one side of opposite would have served what the other side was supposed to do.

Likewise, the Qur'ãn negates the path of remembrance (which invalidates the procedure of thinking academics and dismisses the natural logic); and we have earlier discussed this topic in detail.

In the same way, the Qur'ãn forbids people to indulge in contemplation without accompaniment of fear of Allãh. (We have talked briefly on this subject too.) That is why when Qur'ãn teaches the laws of religion; it follows that legislation with description of moral virtues and good characteristics, which in their turn awaken the instinct of piety in man, with which he is able to understand the law. Look for example the following verses: *And when you have divorced the women and they have ended their term* (of waiting), *then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner; with this is admonished whosoever among you believes in Allãh and the last day; this is more profitable and purer for you; and Allãh knows while you do not know* (2:232). *And fight with them until there is no more mischief* (disbelief)*, and religion be only for Allãh; but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors* (2:193). *. . . and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps* (one) *away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allãh is the greatest, and Allãh knows what you do* (29:45).

QUR'ĀN: ***For this reason did We prescribed to the Children of Israel that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men; . . .:*** *Majma'u 'l-bayān* says: *"al-Ajl* (اَلأَجْلُ) literally means felony." ar-Rāghib says in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān*: "*al-Ajl* is that felony (retribution of) which is feared immediately; thus every *ajl* is a felony, but not every felony is *ajl*; it is said: 'I did it because of him.'"

Then it was used for describing the cause; it is said: 'I did it for this cause,' i.e., this is the cause of my action. Probably its use for description of cause began in the context of felony and crime, as we say: 'Zayd did evil and for this crime [*ajl*] I punished him with hitting,' i.e. my hitting Zayd sprang from his crime which was his evil-doing, or from crime of his evil-doing; then it was used for general cause and reason, as for example, I visited you for the reason of my love to you, or because of my love to you.

The context apparently shows that the phrase, "For this reason", refers to the story of the two sons of Adam given in the preceding verses. That is, the occurance of that distressing event was the reason of our prescribing to the Children of Israel this and this. Some people have said that this phrase is a part of the preceding sentence: *So he became of those who regret*; i.e. this was the cause of his regretting. This in itself is not far-fetched, as we see in the verses 2:219-20: *. . . Thus does Allāh make clear to you the signs, that you may ponder* (219) *about this world and the hereafter. And they ask you concerning the orphans . . .* But in that case the words: "We prescribed", would begin a new sentence, and the usual style of the Qur'ān would demand a وَ (*wa*) for recommencement of another sentence, as we have seen in the above-mentioned verse 2:220.

Why does this phrase refer to the story of the two sons of Adam? It is because the story shows that this human species by nature is entangled in desire and jealousy; thus he hates people for things that are beyond their power [i.e., are gifted by God]. This jealousy for even ordinary things instigates him against divine decrees for negating the purpose of creation; it blinds him so that he kills another human being, even his own brother.

Individual men belong to a single species and have the same essence and reality. Each of them possesses [in miniature] the same humanity that is possessed by all others, and *vice versa*. Allāh created

so many individuals and multiplied the human race in order that this reality should survive, in view of the fact that individuals remain alive only for short periods; by this increase in population, new generations will replace the old, and the worship of Allãh will continue. In this background, destroying an individual by murder is tantamount to doing mischief in creation and negating the divine aim of keeping the humanity alive through increased population and succeeding generations. To this fact the killed son of Adam had pointed while talking to his brother: *"I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you; surely I fear Allãh, the Lord of the worlds."* Thus he indicated that slaying someone without genuine reason was tantamount to waging war against Allãh's Lordship.

As the human nature is such that a trivial cause incites him to commit injustice and oppression, which in the long run, negates the laws given by the Lord and contradicts the purpose of creation of humanity in general; and as the Children of Israel were sunk in jealousy and envy, pride and haughtiness, pursuit of desire and rejection of truth – as the preceding verses have described and their narrated stories show – Allãh explained to them the reality of this heinous oppression and its position in depth, and informed them that in His eyes slaying one man was equal to slaying all people, and conversely keeping one person alive was tantamount to keeping alive all of them.

The phrase: "We prescribed to the Children of Israel", does not indicate any laid down law, yet it is not without emphasis looking at its importance and approach; and it has effect in provoking the divine wrath in this world or the next.

In short, the verse means: As man, by nature, is pushed even by a trivial motive to commit this great oppression [i.e. murder], and peculiar characteristics of the Children of Israel were well-known, We described to them the gravity of manslaughter, in order that they should desist from extravagance, and there came to them Our messengers with clear proofs, but even after that they certainly act extravagantly in the land.

The sentence: "whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men". Here Allãh has made exception of two categories of killing: (i) In punishment, i.e., for retribution, as He says: . . . *retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain;* . . . (2:178). (ii) In punishment of mischief in the land, as He says in the next verse: *The punishment of those who wage war against Allãh and His messenger*

and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides . . . (5:33).

The seriousness of killing is elaborated by the phrase: "it is as though he slew all men." We have already explained that each individual man possesses the same reality and quiddity, which is found in all members of the species, this reality lives and dies with him. All human beings, be he an individual or the whole species, one man or a multitude, all are one in this reality. Naturally, murdering one soul should be tantamount to killing the whole species. Conversely, keeping alive one man should be equal to keeping all men alive, as the verse says.

First Objection: This equalization leads to nullification of the main purpose of the verse. The verse aims at showing the seriousness and gravity of slaying a soul and its great sin and dire conesquences. Obviously, the more men one kills the more serious and grave its consequences should be. If one slaying is made equal to slaying all men, then what would be said for a man who kills ten men? One victim's murder becomes equal to murdering all men; and the remaining nine victims are left without anything to compare with.

This objection cannot be removed by saying that: 'Killing ten persons is equal to ten times murdering all men; and killing all of them is equal to murdering all multiplied by the total number of all'; because it means multiplication of punishment number, and the text of the verse does not support it.

Moreover, the total is made of units each of which is equal to the total, which is again made of such units; and this computation is not going to end at any point, and such a total is meaningless, because it has no unit, and there is no total without unit.

Apart from that, Allãh says: *. . . and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall not be recompensed but only with the like of it, . . .* (6:160).

Second Objection: What is the meaning of saying that killing one person is equal to killing all? If this "all" includes this one person who is killed, it means that the said person is equal to a collection of himself and others taken together. But it is obviously impossible. If "killing all" connotes killing all persons accept this one, it means that whoever killed a man, it is as though he killed all men except this one. Obviously, it is a rotten claim that contradicts the purpose of speech, i.e. elaboration of the extreme seriousness of this oppression. More-

over, the phrase: "it is as though he slew all men", is unconditional and without any exception; so it does not allow this hypothesis.

This objection cannot be cleared by saying that: 'The aim is to show equality as far as punishment is concerned, or in other words, multiplication of punishment or other such matters.' And it is clear.

The reply to both the above objections is this: The divine words: "whoever slays a soul, . . . it is as though he slew all men", are an allusion to the fact that all men have one single reality, that is humanity in which all are united, and one and all are equal in it; whoever attacks the humanity found in one of them, he attacks the humanity found in all of them. For example, there is water divided in numerous glasses; whoever drinks from one glass he drinks the water – and he desires the water because it is water – and what is found in all other glasses is no more than water; thus it is as though he has drunk from all glasses. Therefore, the above-mentioned sentence is an allusion in the form of a simile.

In this way both objections are removed, because those objections have treated it as a simple simile in which the factor of similarity intensifies when the number of a side of simile increases; obviously if in this case one is equalized with all the meaning will be disturbed and objection will arise, as if someone says: One of this group of people is like a lion, and one among them is like all in bravery and valour.

As for the sentence: "and whoever keeps it alive it is as though he kept alive all men", it will be explained in the same way as the preceding sentence was. Keeping alive alludes to what the sane persons would call giving life, like delivering a drowning person and freeing a captive. Allãh in His Book has counted guiding to the truth as giving life, as He says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, . . .* (6:122). Therefore, one who guides a soul to the true faith has raised him to life.

The clause: "and certainly Our messengers came to them with clear proofs", is related to the beginning of the verse, i.e., 'Certainly, Our messengers came to them warning them against murder and other related ways of making mischief in the land.' The next sentence: "but even after that many of them certainly act extravagantly in the land", completes the speech, and its addition gives the intended result of this talk – a clear idea that the Children of Israel were extravagant, persisting in their arrogance and impertinence. We certainly described to

them the gravity of murder, and Our messengers came to them with proofs, explaining this and other related topics. They clearly described it to them and warned them of its consequences; even then they did not desist from their haughtiness and insolence. They certainly acted extravagantly in the past, and continue to do so even now.

Extravagance means going beyond the boundary and exceeding this limit in all activities, although it is mostly used in monetary context. Allāh says: *And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and* (keep) *between these the just mean* (25:67), as ar-Rāghib has said in his *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān*.

TRADITIONS

Hishām ibn Sālim narrates through Ḥabīb as-Sijistānī from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said, "When the two sons of Adam offered (their) offerings, and it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other; [the Imām] said, 'It was accepted from Hābīl and not accepted from Qābīl. Because of it he (Qābīl) was overcome by intense jealousy and he committed outrage against Hābīl. He was lying in wait for him, watching when he would be alone, until he got the better of him, away from Adam; so he attacked and killed him. A part of their story is what Allāh has described in his Book concerning their talk before his killing . . .' " (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyāshī)

The author says: This is one of the best traditions narrated about this story. It is a lengthy tradition in which the Imām (a.s.) describes: the birth of Hibatullāh Shīth after this event, Adam's will for him; and continuation of will among the prophets. We shall write it in some appropriate place.

The tradition clearly shows that Qābīl assassinated Hābīl when Hābīl was unaware of it, and he did not submit himself to the killer's design, as it agrees with reason; and we have elaborated it in the preceding Commentary.

It should be noted that our traditions give the names of the two sons as Hābīl and Qābīl, while the prevalent Bible says: Abel (Hābīl) and Cain (Qābīl). But there is no authenticity in it, because the narration of the Torah ends on one person whose details are unknown, apart from the alterations in the Torah, which are widely known.

al-Qummī narrates from his father, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb,

from Hishãm ibn Sãlim, from Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumãlī, from Thuwayr ibn Abī Fãkhitah that he said, "I heard ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), talking to some Qurayshites. He said, 'When the two sons of Adam offered (their) offering, one of them offered the fattest ram which he kept, and the other offered a bunch of ear of grain; so it was accepted from the owner of the ram – and he was Hãbīl – and not accepted from the other one. Thus Qãbīl was angry, and said to Hãbīl, "By Allãh! *I will most certainly slay you."* Hãbīl said, *"Allãh only accepts from those who are pious. If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you; surely I fear Allãh, the Lord of the worlds. Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your own sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the Fire, and this is the recompense of the unjust." Then his mind facilitated to him the slaying of his brother;* but he did not know how to kill him until Iblīs came and taught him, saying, "Put his head between two rocks, then crush it." So when he killed him, he did not know what should he do with him. Then came two crows, and they came forward fighting and combating with one another; so one of them killed his companion; then the survivor dug into the land with his claws and buried his companion in it. Qãbīl said, *"Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother? So he became of those who regret."* Then he dug for him a ditch and buried him into it; thus it became a custom to bury the dead bodies.

"'Thereafter Qãbīl returned to his father, and he did not see Hãbīl with him. Adam said to him, "Where have you left my son?" Qãbīl told him, "Had you sent me as his guardian?" Adam said, "Come with me to the place of offering." And [Adam] had a fore boding of what Qãbīl had done. When he arrived at the place of offering, Hãbīl's murder became clear to him. Then Adam cursed the land that accepted Hãbīl's blood [i.e. drank the blood, leaving nothing above]; and Adam ordered that Qãbīl be cursed, and Qãbīl was called from the sky: "You are cursed as you killed your brother." It is for the above reason that the earth does not drink blood.

"'Then Adam returned, weeping for Hãbīl forty days and nights. When he felt grief for him, he complained to Allãh about it. So Allãh revealed to him: "I am going to give you a male child who will be a replacement of Hãbīl." Thus Ḥawwã' gave birth to a son, pure and blessed; when it was the seventh day, Allãh revealed to him: "O Adam! This son is my gift to you; therefore you name him Hibatullãh [i.e. Allãh's gift];

so Adam gave him the name Hibatullāh.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

The author says: This is the most moderate of the traditions narrated about this story and the matters connected with it. Even so, it is not free of some confusion in the text; as it shows that Qābīl threatened Hābīl to kill him, and then he did not know how to kill him; it is an unimaginable idea, except if it is taken to mean that he was perplexed which method he should use to kill his brother, so Iblīs (may Allāh curse him!) advised him to crush his head with rock. There are other traditions, narrated through the Shī'ah and Sunnī chains, whose theme is nearer to this tradition.

It should be noted that many diverse traditions have been narrated about this event with astonishing themes, like:

The one that says that Allāh took the ram of Hābīl, and kept it in the Garden for forty autumns, then offered it as Ismā'īl's ransom, so Ibrāhīm slaughtered it:

Or that which says that Hābīl surrendered himself to Qābīl's control and desisted from stretching forth his hand towards his brother;

Or that which says that when Qābīl killed his brother, Allāh bound one of his legs to its thigh from the day of murder to the Day of Resurrection, and turned his face to right side, wherever he turns it turns; on him is a hedge of ice in winter, and a hedge of fire in summer; there are with him seven angels, when one of them goes, another one comes;

Or that which says that he is undergoing punishment in an island in sea; Allāh has hanged him upside down, and he will remain in the same condition upto the Day of Resurrection;

Or that which says that Qābīl son of Adam hangs by his hair in core of the sun; it takes him with it in its circulation – in winter and summer – upto the Day of Resurrection; when that day comes. Allāh will send him into the Fire;

Or that which says that the son of Adam, who killed his brother, was Qābīl who was born in the Garden;

Or that which says that when Adam came to know of the murder of Hābīl, he elegized him in a few lines of Arabic poem;

Or that which says that according to their *sharī'ah* if someone intended to attack another person, the victim left him free to do whatever he wanted, without resistence.

In addition to other such traditions, most or all of these and other similar traditions are weak; they go against the dictates of

reason, and the Book does not support them. Some of them are clearly forged; others are distorted, while many are the result of the narrators' mistake who tried to narrate them in their own words.

Ibn Abī Shaybah narrates from ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, "Does one of you lack the strength, if a man comes to him to slay him, to say like it?" – He said it pointing with one of his hands to the other – "Then he would be like the good one of the two sons of Adam; he would be in the Garden and his killer in the Fire. (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: It is among the traditions describing civil strifes and trials. There are many others like it, and as-Suyūṭī has narrated most of them in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*. For example, the following one which he has quoted through al-Bayhaqī, from Abū Mūsã from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: "Break your swords" – i.e., during civil strife – "and cut your strings, and stay inside the houses, and be in it like the good one of the two sons of Adam."

Another tradition he has quoted through Ibn Jarīr and ‘Abdu 'r-Razzãq from al-Ḥasan that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.), said, 'Verily the two sons of Adam have been offered as an example for this *ummah;* so adhere to the good one of them.'" There are other narrations like them.

These traditions apparently are not consistent with correct consideration, which is supported by correct traditions, which command people to defend themselves and fight in support of truth. Allãh has said: *And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongly until it returns to Allãh's command* (49:9).

Moreover, all of these traditions purport to explain the words of Hãbīl in this story: *"If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you"*, and try to show that Hãbīl gave his brother power over himself enabling him to kill him without any attempt to defend himself. And you have seen that this idea is not in conformity with the Qur’ãnic text.

Apart from that, what makes one suspicious of these traditions is the fact that they have been narrated by people who sat during turmoils that led to ‘Uthmãn's murder, and during ‘Alī's reign they

joined Mu‘āwiyah, the Khārijites and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr. Therefore, it is necessary to interpret them in a sensible way if possible, failing which they should be discarded.

Ibn ‘Asākir has narrated from ‘Alī (a.s.) that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, "There is a mountain in Damascus, called Qāsiyūn; son of Adam killed his brother in it." (*ibid.*)

The author says: There is no objection to this tradition. However, Ibn ‘Asākir has narrated through one chain from Ka‘bu 'l-Aḥbār that he said, "The blood, which is on the mountain of Qāsiyūn, is that of the son of Adam." Also he narrates through another chain from ‘Amr ibn Khabīr ash-Sha‘bānī that he said, "I was with Ka‘bu 'l-Aḥbār on the mountain, Dayru 'l-Murrān; and he saw a flowing chasm in it; so he said, 'Here the son of Adam had killed his brother, and this is the trace of his blood; Allāh has made it a sign for the worlds.'"

These two traditions show that there was there some firm sign, which was claimed to be the blood of Hābīl. In all probability, it looks like so many myths which crafty people have invented, so that people should come there to visit it, bringing with them large votive offerings and precious gifts, not unlike so many palm-prints and foot-prints on stones,[30] and the grave of the grandmother[31] and other such things.

Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), said, 'No soul will be slain unjustly but a portion of its blood shall be apportioned to the first son of Adam, because he was the first to establish the custom of killing.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: This theme has been narrated through other Sunnī and Shī‘ah chain

Ḥumrān said, "I said to Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), 'What is the meaning of the words of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *For this reason did We prescribe to the Children of Israel that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew*

[30] It is attributed mostly to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). (*tr.*)

[31] In Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) there is a large grave, which public attributes to Ḥawwā’ (Adam's wife); they even claim that this was the reason the town was named *Jaddah* (grand-mother)! (*tr.*)

all men?'" He [Ḥumrãn] said, "How can it be as though he slew all men, while he had slain a single soul? He (a.s.) said, 'He will be put in a place in Jahannam (Gehenna) where the punishment of the people of the Fire reaches its utmost limit; if he had killed all men, he would have entered the same place.' I said, 'Then if he killed another (man)?' He said, 'It will be increased for him.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadūq too has narrated a similar tradition in *Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr* from Ḥumrãn.

Ḥumran's question, "Then if he killed another (man)?" points to the above-mentioned objection that it makes one murder equal to that murder plus all others. The Imãm (a.s.) has replied that his punishment will be increased for him.

At this juncture someone may think that this reply of the Imãm (a.s.) goes against the equality mentioned in the verse: *whoever slays a soul . . . it is as though he slew all men*, because increase means that murder of one or many or all is not equal. But this objection is not sustainable, because equality refers to the nature of punishment, i.e. all murderers – whether of one or many or all – will be put in one valley of Jahannam, and to this fact refer the Imãm's words: "if he had killed all men, he would have entered the same place."

The evidence for this explanation is found in a tradition narrated by al-'Ayyãshī in his *at-Tafsīr*, from the same Ḥumrãn from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) about this verse, that the Imãm (a.s.) said, "There is a place in the Fire where the punishment of all the people of the Fire reaches its utmost limit, so he will be put in it." "I [i.e. Ḥumrãn] said, 'And if he had killed two?' (The Imãm, a.s.), said, 'Don't you see that there is no place in the Fire more severe in punishment than this?' Then he said, '[His punishment] will be increased according to his deed . . .'"

The Imãm (a.s.) has joined negative and positive in his reply; it points to what we have already explained that equality is in the nature of punishment and difference will be in intensity of punishment and the effect it will have on the killer.

Some more evidence may be found in what Ḥannãn ibn Sudayr has narrated from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said about the verse: *whoever slays a soul, . . . it is as though he slew all men*. "There is a valley in Jahannam, if he slew all men, he will be (put) in it, and if he slew one soul he will be (put) in it." This too is narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyãshī.

The author says: It is as though the verse is quoted not verbatum in this *ḥadīth*.

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from Fuḍayl ibn Yasār that he said, "I asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.), about the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, in His Book: *and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men.* He said, '(It is saving) from burning or drowning.' I said, 'He who takes him out from error to guidance?' He said, 'That is its greatest *ta'wīl*.'" (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: ash-Shaykh has narrated it in his *al-Amālī,* and al-Barqī in his *al-Maḥāsin*, through Fuḍayl from Abū Ja'far (a.s.); and it has been narrated by Sumā'ah and Ḥumrān from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.).

The statement that saving from error is the greatest *ta'wīl* of this verse means that it is its finest and most subtle explanation. In early period of Islam the word, *ta'wīl*, was often used as a synonym of *tafsīr*.

This explanation of ours is supported by what has been narrated in *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said, "I asked the Imām (a.s.), about the word of Allāh: *whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men*. (The Imām) said, 'For him there is a place in the Fire, if he killed all men, his punishment will not increase on it.' He said, '*and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men*. He did not kill him, or saved him from drowning or burning; and the greatest of this all is that he takes him out from error to guidance.'"

The author says: The Imām's saying, "He did not kill him", means: 'He did not take revenge against him (the victim) though he could do so after the killing has been proved.'

al-'Ayyāshī also says in his *at-Tafsīr* that Abū Baṣīr narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said, "I asked him (the Imām, about the verse): *whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men;* he (a.s.), said, 'Whoever saves one from the unbelief (*kufr*) to belief (*īmān*).'"

The author says: This theme has been mentioned in many traditions narrated through Sunnī chains.

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said, "Extravagants are those who regard unlawful things as lawful and shed blood." (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

AN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE AND APPLICATION

The Torah says:

1. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.
2. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.
3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.
4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:
5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.
6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy cauntenance fallen?
7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.
8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.
9. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?
10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.
11. And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;
12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.
13. And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear.
14. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me.
15. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven fold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

16. And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. (Genesis, 4:1-16)

The Qur'ān says about the story of the two sons of Adam:

27. *And relate to them the story of the two sons of Adam with truth when they both offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. He said: "I will most certainly slay you."* (The other) *said: "Allāh only accepts from those who are pious.*
28. *"If you will stretch forth your hand towards me to slay me, I am not one to stretch forth my hand towards you to slay you; surely I fear Allāh the Lord of the worlds.*
29. *"Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your own sin, and so you would be of the inmates of the Fire, and this is the recompense of the unjust."*
30. *Then his mind facilitated to him the slaying of his brother, so he slew him; then he became one of the losers.*
31. *Then Allāh sent a crow digging up the earth so that he might show him how he should cover the dead body of his brother. He said: "Woe me! Do I lack the strength that I should be like this crow and cover the dead body of my brother?" So he became of those who regret.* (Qur'ān, 5:27-31)

You should contemplate on this story as described by the Torah and then compare it with the narrative of the Qur'ān; then decide for yourself.

The first thing which hits your eyes in the story of the Torah is that it has turned God the Lord into an earthly creature in the image of man, who lives with the men, issues decrees for and against them as another man may do; he comes near him and talks to him as one man to another; then he hides himself by going away and becoming absent; so he does not see an absent and far away thing or person as he sees a nearby and present person. In short, he is just like a terresterial man in every aspect; the only difference is that his intentions come into force and his orders are carried out. On this basis are built all the teachings of the Tawrāt and the Injīl; far exalted be Allāh from such insinuations!

This Biblical story makes us to understand that man at that time lived face to face with Allāh and his physical presence; then Allāh hid himself from Cain or from Cain and people like him, while the others continued to see him plainly. But irrefutable proofs show that mankind is one species, its individuals have similar faculties and powers, and they live in this world the material lives, while Allāh is totally

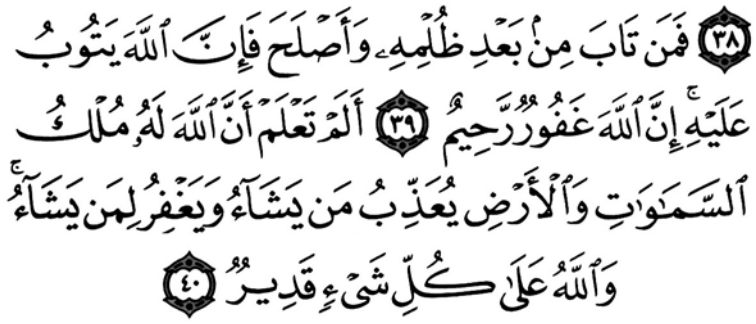
free of material attributes and conditions; accidents of possibility and attributes of defect cannot touch his subtle position – and this is what the Qur'ãn describes.

As for the Qur'ãn, its story is based on the fact that all men share similar traits and is joined in humanity. Then it goes on to tell the story of the appearance of the crow on the scene, and discloses the fact that man gradually advances to his perfection, and that his step-by-step perfection is based on his sensory perception and contemplation. Then it describes the talk of the two brothers; and quotes Hãbīl's discourse which contains brilliant cognition of human nature, and fundamental religious factors like *tawḥīd*, prophethood and resurrection; then he explains piety and impiety, justice and injustice – the two basics which govern all divine laws and *sharī'ah*'s rules; finally he elaborates the principle of justice of God concerning acceptance and non-acceptance and the recompense in the next world.

Then the Qur'ãn describes the remorse and regret of the killer and his loss in this world and the next. Lastly, it shows the gravity of the crime of murder that to slay one soul is tantamount to slaying all men; and whoever keeps one soul alive is as though he kept alive all men.

* * * * *

إِنَّمَا جَزَٰٓؤُاْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَيَسۡعَوۡنَ فِي
ٱلۡأَرۡضِ فَسَادًا أَن يُقَتَّلُوٓاْ أَوۡ يُصَلَّبُوٓاْ أَوۡ تُقَطَّعَ أَيۡدِيهِمۡ
وَأَرۡجُلُهُم مِّنۡ خِلَٰفٍ أَوۡ يُنفَوۡاْ مِنَ ٱلۡأَرۡضِۚ ذَٰلِكَ
لَهُمۡ خِزۡيٞ فِي ٱلدُّنۡيَاۖ وَلَهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
﴿٣٣﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُواْ مِن قَبۡلِ أَن تَقۡدِرُواْ عَلَيۡهِمۡۖ فَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ
أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ﴿٣٤﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ
ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱبۡتَغُوٓاْ إِلَيۡهِ ٱلۡوَسِيلَةَ وَجَٰهِدُواْ فِي سَبِيلِهِۦ
لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ لَوۡ أَنَّ
لَهُم مَّا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ جَمِيعٗا وَمِثۡلَهُۥ مَعَهُۥ لِيَفۡتَدُواْ بِهِۦ مِنۡ
عَذَابِ يَوۡمِ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ مَا تُقُبِّلَ مِنۡهُمۡۖ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ ﴿٣٦﴾
يُرِيدُونَ أَن يَخۡرُجُواْ مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ وَمَا هُم بِخَٰرِجِينَ مِنۡهَاۖ
وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٞ مُّقِيمٞ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَٱلسَّارِقُ وَٱلسَّارِقَةُ فَٱقۡطَعُوٓاْ
أَيۡدِيَهُمَا جَزَآءَۢ بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَٰلٗا مِّنَ ٱللَّهِۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٞ



The punishment of those who wage war against Allãh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be banished from the land; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement (33). *Except those who repent before you have them in your power; so know that Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (34). *O you who believe! Fear Allãh and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful* (35). *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve even if they had what is in the earth, all of it, and the like of it with it, that they might ransom themselves with it from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and they shall have a painful punishment* (36). *They would desire to go forth from the Fire, and they shall not go forth from it, and they shall have a lasting punishment* (37). *And* (as for) *the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from Allãh; and Allãh is Mighty, Wise* (38). *But whoever repents after his inquity and reforms* (himself), *then surely Allãh will turn to him* (mercifully); *surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (39). *Do you not know that Allãh – His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He chastises whom he pleases; and forgives whom he pleases and Allãh has the power over all things* (40).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses are not without some connection with the preceding ones. Although the story of the slaying of a son of Adam by his brother and the subsequent prescription to the Children of Israel regarding murder, had not specifically laid down any punishment or sentence, yet the topics have affinity with these verses that describe the punishment of thieves and those who make mischief in the land.

QUR'ĀN: ***The punishment of those who wage war against Allāh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this:*** *Fasādan* (فَسَادًا = mischief) is a *maṣdar* used in the sentence as a circumstantial clause. Waging war against Allāh: It is impossible to take it in its literal sense; it can only be interpreted metaphorically. But the metaphorical meaning is very wide and it can be applied on disobeying any rule of the *sharī'ah* and on every injustice and extravagance; yet the verse joins the Messenger with Allāh and it means that the disobedience covers those rulings in which the Messenger had some involvement. This narrows the circle to include only those affairs for which Allāh has given His Messenger certain authority, like fighting the disbelievers under the banner of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and keeping the roads safe from highway robbers, by maintaining the general law and order which the Prophet had established in the land. The clause: "and strive to make mischief in the land", pinpoints the intended meaning, i.e. to make mischief in the land by disturbing the peace and highway robbery; it does not refer to fighting against the Muslims. Moreover, it is known that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had never meted out the above-mentioned punishments of killing, crucifying, cutting their hands and feet on opposite sides or imprisonment to the disbelievers who were vanquished in wars.

Apart from that, the exception contained in the next verse indicates that waging war against Allāh and the Messenger only means this making mischief in the land, because one may repent from waging war, and not from polytheism, etc.

Therefore, waging war and making mischief obviously mean the same thing, i.e. disturbing general law and order. Law and order is upset when fear and anxiety prevail in society; normally this happens when arms are used and lead to killings. That is why the *sunnah* explains making mischief as drawing sword, etc., as we shall write under "Traditions", God willing.

QUR'ÃN: ***that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be banished from the land*****:** *at-Taqtīl* (اَلتَّقْتِيْل), *at-taṣlīb* (اَلتَّصْلِيبُ) *and at-taqṭī'* (اَلتَّقْطِيعُ) are on the stem of *at-taf'īl* from the roots, *al-qatl* (اَلْقَتْلُ = to kill), *aṣ-ṣalb* (اَلصَّلْبُ = to crucify) and *al-qaṭ'* (اَلْقَطْعُ = to cut off), and accord-ingly emphasize or enhance the root meanings. The conjunctive *aw* (اَوْ = or) indicates alternatives, showing that the two (or more) sides can-not appear together. The question arises whether there is any sequence or choice between the four alternative punishments mentioned here; the conjunctive does not throw light on it, and some other spoken words, or circumstantial factor is needed for deciding it. Thus the verse in this sense is vague. However, traditions have explained it and those narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) shows that the four laid down punishments are applied according to the level of the mischief made. For example, a man draws sword and kills and takes property; another one only kills, a third one only takes property, and a fourth only draws sword – obviously each one's punishment would differ from the others, as will be explained under "Traditions".

The words: "their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides", mean that if the hand is cut on the right side, the foot should be cut on the left; this only shows that cutting the hands and the feet means cutting one hand and one foot (on opposite sides), not both hands and both feet.

As for the words: "or they should be banished from the land", *an-nafy* (اَلنَّفْى) means banishment; tradition explains it as banishing him from one town to another.

The verse contains other matters concerned with the law; their details should be seen in books of jurisprudence.

QUR'ÃN: ***this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement*****:** *al-Khizy* (اَلْخِزْى = disgrace); its meaning is clear. It has been argued on the strength of this verse that if the prescribed punishment is meted out to a guilty man, it does not necessarily mean that he will not be punished in the hereafter; and it is true to a certain extent.

QUR'ÃN: ***Except those who repent before you have them in your power; so know that Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful*****:** However, after one is caught and proof is established against him, the prescribed

punishment is not waived. The sentence: "so know that Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful", alludes to the waiver of the said punishment. It is one of the verses where forgiveness is used for affairs other than of the next world.

QUR'ĀN: ***O you who believe! Fear Allāh and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful*****:** ar-Rāghib has written in *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān*: "*al-Wasīlah* (اَلْوَسِيْلَةُ) means attaining something with longing; it is more particular than *al-waṣilah* (اَلْوَصِيْلَةُ = joining, attaining) as it has added connotation of longing. Allāh says: *and seek means of nearness to Him*; the reality of this means of nearness to Allāh is to comply with demands of His path with knowledge and worship, and pursuit of virtues of the *sharī'ah*, and it is like *al-qurbah* (اَلْقُرْبَةُ = nearness)."

It is a sort of joining together, i.e. a spiritual joining which connects the slave with his master; there is no link that connects man with his Lord except the submissiveness of worship and veneration. Therefore, the means of nearness means ensuring the reality of veneration and turning the face of humility and poverty to His direction – this is then the connecting link that joins the servant to his Lord. As for knowledge and good deed, these are obviously its tools and concomitants, except if knowledge and deed are used to this very condition.

It is clear from the above discourse that in the clause: "and strive hard in His way", the word *al-jihād* (اَلْجِهَادُ = fighting, striving) has been used in its wider sense which covers both fighting the unbelievers and struggling against one's base desires and anger. There is no reason to restrict it to the fight against unbelievers, especially as the clause is connected to the preceding order to seek means of nearness to Allāh, and you have seen what it means. Moreover, the reason given in the two following verses is more appropriate to that wider connotation.

However, it is possible to restrict this *jihād* to the fight against unbelievers, keeping in view the Qur'ānic style: The *jihād* in this verse is qualified with the phrase: "in His way", and this qualification has been used in all the verses which exhort Muslims to fight the enemy; while general striving does not contain this condition, as Allāh says: *And* (as for) *those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways; and Allāh is most surely with the doers of good* (29:69). Accordingly, the order to fight in the way of Allāh after

the order to seek means of nearness to Him mentions a particular after the general for showing its importance; and probably the same is the case of the order of seeking means of nearness to Him coming after the order of fearing Allãh.

QUR'ÃN: ***Surely*** **(as for)** ***those who disbelieve even if they had what is in the earth, all of it, and the like of it with it, that they might ransom themselves with it from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and they shall have a painful punishment. They would desire to go forth from the Fire, and they shall not go forth from it, and they shall have a lasting punishment*****:** As we have pointed out above, the two verses apparently give the reason of the theme of the preceding verse. The three verses together enjoin people to fear Allãh, seek means of nearness to Him and fight in His way, because these are the important means for warding off the painful lasting punishment from them. That is the only relevant factor, and nothing else can take its place; because if the unbelievers (who had not feared Allãh, and had not saught any means of nearness to Him, nor had they fought in His way) had possession of all that is in the earth – and usually it is the utmost that a man desires – and then they were given again as much, and they wished to ransom themselves with it from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and they shall have a painful chastisement; naturally they would desire to go out of the Fire but they shall not succeed, because it is a lasting punishment which would never go away from them.

The verses show that:

First: The punishment is the basic aspect which is nearer to man; it is only *īmãn* and piety which ward off this punishment from him, as the words of Allãh point to it: *And there is not one of you but shall come down to it; this is a decided decree of your Lord. Then We shall deliver those who were pious, and We shall leave the unjust therein on their knees* (19:71-72). *Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience* (103:2-3).

Second: The original human nature, which feels pain from fire in this world, will not become inactive or null and void in the next world; otherwise they would not have felt pain or agony of fire, nor would have they desired to go forth from it.

QUR'ĀN: ***And*** **(as for)** ***the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut of their hands as a punishment for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from Allāh; and Allāh is Mighty, Wise. But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms*** **(himself),** ***then surely Allāh will turn to him*** **(mercifully);** ***surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful*****:** "And" begins the new sentennce, and here it stands for *ammā* (اَمَّا = as for); that is why the predicate "cut off" has taken *fā* (فَا = then – not translated in English), as is usual for the clause which comes in reply of *ammā*; it is said by the exegetes. The word, *aydi* (اَيْدِ = hands) is plural, which in Arabic is used for at least three items, while here it means only two hands. It is said that such usage is common; some, rather many, organs in human body are double, like eyes, ears, hands, feet and legs; when two persons are involved the total of these organs comes to four, which demands plural, like their eyes, hands and legs, etc. The usage of plural spread to organs of two persons, even if the said organ was not double. For example, they say: 'I covered the backs and stomachs [in plural] of the two with hitting.' Allāh says: *If you both turn to Allāh, then indeed your hearts* [in plural] *are already inclined* . . . (66:4). "Hand" is used for the organ attached to shoulder; according to traditions here it refers to the right hand; cutting of hand means severing the whole or part of it with a sharp instrument.

The words: "as a punishment for what they have earned", are apparently a circumstantial clause connected to the cutting, i.e. while the cutting is a punishment from Allāh for what they have earned; *an-nakāl* (اَلنَّكَالُ = exemplary punishment, meted out so as to make the culprit as well as the others desist from the crime.)

As the cutting of hand is an exemplary punishment, the statement quite appropriately follows it: "But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms (himself), then surely Allāh will turn to him (mercifully)". The meaning: As the cutting of hand is an exemplary punishment given with the aim of making the culprit desist in future from his crime, so whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms himself and does not think of stealing – and it is this factor by which repentance is established – then surely Allāh will accept his repentance and turn to him with forgiveness and mercy, because He is Forgiving, Merciful. He says: *Why should Allāh chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allāh is the Appreciator, Knowing* (4:147).

There are many other jurisprudential topics connected with this

verse; interested readers should consult books of *fiqh* for them.

QUR'ÃN: ***Do you not know that Allãh – His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He chastises whom He pleases; and forgives whom He pleases and Allãh has power over all things*****:** It gives the reason why He accepts the repentance of the stealing man and woman when they repent and reform themselves after their iniquity: To Allãh belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and the King has full authority and power to decide about his kingdom and his subjects as he pleases – be it punishment or mercy. Therefore Allãh has the power and authority to chastise whom He pleases and forgive whom He pleases, according to the underlying reason and wisdom – thus He chastises the stealing man and woman if they do not repent, and forgives them if they repent.

The end clause: "and Allãh has power over all things", explains the reason of the sentence: "His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth"; Kingdom is an aspect of power while ownership emanates from creation and origination, i.e., divine guardianship.

We may explain it as follows: Allãh is the Creator and Originator of all things; there is nothing whose self and its effects do not belong to Allãh. He is the Giver of what He gives and Withholder of what He withholds; He has power to do with every thing as He pleases – and it is the ownership. Allãh says: *Say: "Allãh is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Subduer."* (13:16). *Allãh is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His* (2:255). Also He has power to do with all the things whatever He pleases and intends; it is because everything begins from Him, and His decree is enforced and His will effective – and it is the kingdom and rulership on everything. Thus Allãh is the Owner because everything subsists by Him, and is the King because He is Powerful, He is neither powerless nor prevented from enforcing His pleasure and will.

TRADITIONS

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from Abū Ṣāliḥ from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said, "There came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), a group from Banū Ḍubbah, (who were) sick. So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said to them, 'Stay with me; when you

will recover, I shall send you in an expedition.' They said, 'Keep us out of Medina.' So he sent them to the *Ibili 'ṣ-Ṣadaqah*[*], they drank its (camel's) urine and ate from its milk. When they were cured and became strong, they killed three camel-herders. It (the news) reached the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and he sent ‘Alī (a.s.) to them, and lo! They were in a valley wandering, unable to go out of it, near the land of Yemen. He captured them and brought them to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). Then this verse was revealed: *The punishment of those who wage war against Allãh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be banished from the land; . . .*" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: ash-Shaykh has narrated it in *at-Tahdhīb* through his chain from Abū Ṣãliḥ (a.s.) with minor difference; and al-‘Ayyãshī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from the same Imãm (a.s.) and there is in it at the end the addition: So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) chose to cut off their hands and feet on opposite sides.

This story is narrated in Sunnī collections of *aḥãdīth* (including *aṣ-Ṣiḥãḥu 's-Sittah*) with different chains and varying particulars. Some of those traditions say that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) cut their hands and feet on opposite sides and gouged out their eyes; others say that he killed some of them and crucified some others and cut off and gouged out eyes of yet others; others tell us that he gouged out their eyes because they had gouged out the eyes of the camel-herders; still others say that Allãh forbade him to gouge out the eyes, and that the verse was revealed admonishing him for this mutilation; some of them say that he wanted to gouge out their eyes but did not do so; etc.

However, the traditions narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) do not mention the gouging out at all

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmãn ibn ‘Ubaydullãh al-Madãinī from Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍã (a.s.) that he was asked about the words of Allãh; the Mighty, the Great: *The punishment of those who wage war against Allãh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be banished from the land*. "What is it

[*] A place where camels – donated as *ṣadaqah* (alms-giving, etc.) to Baytu 'l-Mãl – were kept. (*ed.*)

that when he does it he becomes liable to one of the four (punishments)? Then he (the Imãm, a.s.) said, 'When he wages war against Allãh and His Messenger and strives to make mischief in the land and kills someone, he will be killed; and if he kills and takes (other's) property, he will be killed and crucified; and if he takes property without killing, his hand and foot will be cut off on opposite sides; and if he draws out sword, wages war against Allãh and His Messenger and strives to make mischief in the land but does not kill and does not take property, he will be banished from the land.' I said, 'How will he be banished from the land and what is the limit of his banishment?' He said, 'He shall be banished from the town where he had done what he had done to another town, and it will be written to the people of that (another) town that he has been banished, so they should not sit with him, nor should they sell anything to him, establish marriage ties with him, or take food or drink with him; this will be done to him for a year; if he leaves that town for another town, the people of that town will be informed in similar terms, until the year comes to end. I said, 'And if he proceeds to the land of polytheism to enter it?' He said, 'If he proceeds to the land of polytheism to enter it, its people will be fought against.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: ash-Shaykh in *at-Tahdhīb* and al-ʻAyyãshī in his *at-Tafsīr* have narrated it from Abū Isḥãq al-Madãinī from the same Imãm (a.s.); and nealy-*mutawãtir* traditions of this meaning have been narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.). Also it has been narrated through various Sunnī chains; and some of their traditions say that it depends on Imãm's discretion, he shall kill if he pleases, and shall crucify if he pleases, and shall cut off hands and feet on opposite sides if he pleases, and shall banish if he pleases. Some Shīʻah traditions too likewise say that the Imãm has the discretion. For example, see the tradition narrated in *al-Kãfī* from Jamīl ibn Darrãj from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) about this verse: He says: "I said, 'What are they liable to form these prescribed punishments that Allãh has named?' He said, 'It is upto Imãm; he shall cut off if he pleases, and banish if he pleases, and crucify if he pleases, and kill if he pleases.' I said, 'Banishment, up to where?' He (a.s.) said, 'He shall be banished from one town to another;' and said that ʻAlī (a.s.) had banished two men from Kūfah to Baṣrah." Its details may be found in *fiqh*. However, the verse is not without a certain indication that there is a sequence in these laid down punishments according to the levels of disorder. The alternatives – killing, crucifying, cutting of hand and foot on opposite

sides and banishment – are not on the same level, on a par; they greatly differ in intensity and degree, and this in itself is a rational proof of this sequential order.

Also, the verse clearly shows that these are the laid down punishments for waging such war and making mischief in the land; so whoever draws out a sword and strives to make mischief in the land or slays someone, he will have to be killed because he is a fighter against Allãh and His Messenger and a mischief-maker; it does not come under retribution, i.e., he is not being killed because he has slayed a respectable soul; so even if the heirs of the slain person agree to take blood-money, his punishment of killing is not waived. al-ʻAyyãshī has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) a tradition which says, *inter alia*, "Abū ʻUbaydah said, 'May Allãh ameliorate you! (What) do you see if the heir of the slain person pardoned him (i.e. the slayer)?' Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, 'If they pardoned, then it is incumbent on the Imãm to kill him, because he certainly had waged war, killed and stolen.' Then Abū ʻUbaydah said, 'Then if the heirs of the slain wanted to take blood-money from him and let him go free, do they have the right to do so?' He said, 'No. His (punishment) is to be killed.'"

[as-Suyūṭī] narrates from Ibn Abī Shaybah, ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Abi 'd-Dunyã (in *Kitãbu 'l-Ashrãf*), Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥãtim from ash-Shaʻbī that he said, "Ḥãrithah ibn Badr at-Tamīmī, a resident of Baṣrah, had made mischief in the land and waged war; and he talked with some men from Quraysh to obtain from ʻAlī a promise of security for him, but they refused. Then he came to Saʻīd ibn Qays al-Hamadãnī. So he approached ʻAlī and said, 'O Leader of the Faithful! What is the recompense of those who wage war against Allãh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land?' He said, '(It is) *that they should be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite side, or they should be banished from the land*.' Then (the Imãm) said, *'Except those who repent before you have them in your power*.' Then Saʻīd said, 'Even if it be Ḥãrithah ibn Badr.' Thereafter, Saʻīd said, 'This is Ḥãrithah ibn Badr; he has come repenting; is he then safe?' [The Imãm, a.s.], said, 'Yes.' So [Saʻīd] brough him to ʻAlī, and he did his *bayʻah*; and the Imãm accepted it from him and wrote for him a warrant of safety." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: Saʻīd spoke the words, 'Even if it be Ḥãrithah

ibn Badr', as an appendix he attached to the verse, with the aim of showing its unrestricted generality which covers everyone who repents after waging war and making mischief. Such additions are found generally in every speech.

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from Sawrah Banī Kulayb that he said, "I said to Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), 'A man comes out of his house, proceeding to mosque or for some other work; another man meets him and going behind him, beats him and takes away his clothes?' (The Imãm) said, 'What do they say about it those who are in your place?' I said, 'They say that it is open immorality; and war mongering happens in the towns of polytheists.' He said, 'Which has more sanctity, the house of Islam or the house of polytheism?' I said, 'The house of Islam.' Then (the Imãm) said, 'Such people are covered by this verse: *The punishment of those who wage war against Allãh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be killed . . .*'" (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: What the narrator has pointed out concerning the opinion of the people has been narrated in some Sunnī traditions. For example, aḍ-Ḍaḥḥãk has explained the reason of its revelation in these words: "This verse was revealed about the polytheists, and aṭ-Ṭabarī has written in his *at-Tafsīr* that ʻAbdu 'l-Malik ibn Marwãn wrote to Anas asking him about this verse. So Anas wrote to him: 'Surely this verse was revealed about those people from the ʻArniyyīn, and they were from Bujaylah.' Anas said, 'Then they apostatized from Islam, killed the camel-herder, took away the camels, and spread terror in the way and committed adultary. So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) asked Jibrīl about the judgement regarding those who wage war. He said, "Whoever steals and spreads terror in the way and thinks unlawful hidden part as lawful, you crucify him."'" There are several other traditions.

The verse, with its generality, supports the tradition of *al-Kãfī*; and it is known that reason or occasion of revelation does not restrict the apparent meaning of a verse.

al-Qummī has written about the words of Allãh: *O you who believe! Fear Allãh and seek means of nearness to Him . .* , that (the Imãm) said, "Come near Allãh through the Imãm."

The author says: That is, through obedience to the Imãm. Thus it is based on the flow of the Qur'ãn, and applies the verse to its best

import. A similar narrative has come from Ibn Shahrāshūb that he said, "The Leader of the Faithful (a.s.), said about the divine word: *and seek means of nearness to Him*: 'I am the means of nearness to Him.'" And nearer to it is the narration of *Baṣāiru 'd-darajāt*, through his chains from Salmān from ʻAlī (a.s.). Also possibly the two narratives may be a sort of interpretation. Ponder on it.

Majmaʻu 'l-bayān quotes a tradition from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said, "Ask from Allāh for me the *wasīlah*, as it is a rank in the Garden, will not get it except one servant, and I hope that I shall be him."

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates through his chain from Abū Saʻīd al-Khudrī that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), said, 'When you ask from Allāh, ask for me the *wasīlah*.' We asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the *wasīlah*; so he said, 'It is my rank in the Garden . . .'" (It is a long narrative, known as the *Ḥadīth* of *Wasīlah*.)

If you meditate on this *ḥadīth* and as to how the meaning of the verse fits on it, you will find that *wasīlah* is the position of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in presence of his Lord, with which he gets nearer to Allāh; and joins him there his pure progeny, then the good servants from among his *ummah*. And it has been narrated in some traditions narrated from them that verily the Messenger of Allāh adheres to his Lord, and we adhere to him and you [the Shīʻahs] adhere to us.

And to this returns what we have written concerning the two narratives of al-Qummī and Ibn Shahrāshūb that possibly they are a sort of interpretation. Probably Allāh will help us to explain this theme in a more appropriate place further on.

Appended to these traditions is the narration of al-ʻAyyāshī from Abū Baṣīr that he said, "I heard Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.), saying, "Enemies of ʻAlī, they shall abide in the Fire; Allāh has said: *and they shall not go forth from it.*"

Tafsīru 'l-burhān writes about the verse: *And* (as for) *the man who steals and the woman who steals cut off their hands*, quoting ash-Shaykh who narrates in *at-Tahdhīb* through his chain from Abū Ibrāhīm (a.s.) that he said, "The hand of the thief will be cut and his thumb and palm left (intact), and his foot will be cut and his heel left (intact) so he shall walk with it."

[ash-Shaykh] also narrates through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he said, "I said to Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), 'In (theft of) how much will the thief's hand be cut?' He said, 'In one-fourth of

dīnār.'" He (Muḥammad) says, "I told him, 'In two dirhams?' He said, 'In one-fourth of dīnār; whatever the value of dīnār may be.'" He (Muḥammad) says, "Then I said to him, 'What do you think? One who steals less than one-fourth of a dīnār, will the name of thief apply to him? And is he in that condition, a thief before Allāh?' So he said, 'Anyone who steals from a Muslim a thing which he owns and keeps preserved, the name, thief, will apply to him, and he is a thief before Allāh, yet (his hand) shall not be cut off except in one-fourth of a dīnār or more; and if the hand of a thief were to be cut off in less than one-fourth of a dīnār you would have found the people in general amputated.'" (*at-Tahdhīb*)

The author says: The words of the Imām (a.s.), if the hand of a thief were to be cut off in less than one-fourth of a dīnār . . ., indicate that this law of cutting of hand (with this condition) is a relief from Allāh and His mercy towards His servants. This rule, i.e., restriction of this order to the theft of one-fourth of a dīnār or more, is narrated through some Sunnī chains too; it has been narrated in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukharī and *aṣ-Ṣaḥīh* oḥ Muslim through their chains from ʿĀishah that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "Will not be cut the hand of a thief except in one-fourth of a dīnār and more."

Samāʿah narrates from Abū ʿAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said, "When a thief is caught his middle of palm will be cut off, then if he returned (stole again) his leg will be cut off from middle of foot; then if he returned he will be put in prison; then if he stole in the prison, he will be killed." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʿAyyāshī)

Zurārah narrates from Abū Jaʿfar (a.s.), (that he was asked) about a man who stole and his right hand was cut off, then he (again) stole and his left leg was cut off, and (now) he steals the third time? (The Imām) said, "The Leader of the Faithful (a.s.), used to imprison him for ever, and he used to say, 'I feel ashamed of my Lord that I should leave him without any hand with which he should cleanse himself and without any leg with which he should go for his needs.' (The Imām then) said, 'So when he cut the hand he cut it below the joint of fingers with the palm, and when he cut the leg he cut it below the ankle.' (The Imām) said, 'He did not think it proper to disregard any of the laid down punishments.'" (*ibid.*)

Zarqān (companion and fast friend of Ibn Abī Duwād) said, "One day Ibn Abī Duwād returned from al-Muʿtaṣim's presence and he was distressed. So I asked him about it. He said, 'Today I wish that

I had died twenty years earlier.'" He (Zarqān) said, "I told him, 'Why?' He said, 'Because of what happened from this black, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Mūsā, today in presence of Amīru 'l-mu'minīn al-Mu'taṣim.'" (Zarqan says) "I said, 'And how was it?' He said, 'A thief confessed to stealing and asked the caliph to cleanse him by punishing him according to the *sharī'ah*. The caliph gathered jurisprudents in his presence and Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (too) was brought there. So (the caliph) asked us about the cutting (of hand), from which place it should be cut off.' He (Ibn Abī Duwād) said, 'I said, "From wrist, because Allāh says regarding *tayammum*: *and wipe your faces and your hands* [5:6];" and a group joined me in this (opinion); and some others said, "Rather it must be cut from elbow." He (the caliph) asked, "And what is its proof?" They said, "Because when Allāh said: *and your hands upto elbows*, regarding the washing (in *wuḍū'*), it proved that the limit of hand is upto elbow."' (Ibn Abī Duwād) said, 'Then he turned towards Muḥammad ibn 'Alī and said, "What do you say about it, O Abū Ja'far!" He said, "The people have already spoken about it, O Amīru 'l-mu'minīn!" He said, "Leave aside what they have said; what do you have (about it)?" He said, "Excuse me from it, O Amiru 'l-mu'minīn!" He said, "I adjure you by Allāh that you should tell (me) what you know about it." He said, "Now that you have adjured me by Allāh, I say that they have made a mistake in the *sunnah*; because cutting must compulsorily be at the joint of the fingers, and palm should be left (intact)." (The caliph) said, "And what is its proof?" He said, "The saying of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a. w.a.): *sajdah* is on seven organs: face and two hands and two knees and two feet; if his hand is cut off from wrist or elbow, he will not have a hand to do *sajdah* upon; and Allāh, the Blessed, the High, says: *And that the places of* sajdah *are Allāh's*, i.e. these seven organs on which *sajdah* is done: *therefore call not upon any one with Allāh* [72:18], and what is Allāh's is not cut off."' (Ibn Abī Duwād) said, 'So al-Mu'taṣim liked it (very much) and ordered the thief's hand to be cut off from the fingers' joint, below the palm.' Ibn Abī Duwād said, 'I was extremely shocked and wished that I were dead.'"

Ibn Abī Zarqān said that Ibn Abī Duwād then continued, "After the third day I went to al-Mu'taṣim and said, 'It is incumbent upon me to give sincere advice to Amiru 'l-mu'minīn; and I am going to tell him that because of which, I know, I shall enter the Fire.' He said, 'And what is it?' I said, 'When Amiru 'l-mu'minīn gathers in his presence jurisprudents and scholars of his subjects for a problem in a

religious matter, and asks them about its law, and they tell him what they know of the order concerning it; and there are in that gathering his sons, commanders, ministers and secretaries; and people have heard that [question and answers] from behind his door; then he leaves aside the opinions of all of them because of one man's opinion (in whose *imãmah* a group of this *ummah* believes, and claims that that man has more right to this position than the caliph), then the caliph gives order according to that man's opinion, instead of the jurisprudents' order?' " (Ibn Abī Duwãd) said, "So his colour changed and he understood what I wanted to tell him; and said, 'May Allãh give you good reward for your sincere advice!' "

He said, "On the fourth day he ordered a certain man from among his minister-secretaries to invite [Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī] to his house. He (the Imãm) refused to accept and said, 'You know that I do not attend your gatherings.' He said, 'I only invite you for a meal, and I love that you should step on my clothes (i.e. carpets) and enter my house, so I should be blessed with your blessing; and so-and-so, son of so-and-so, a minister of the caliph, desires to meet you.' So he went to his place; when he was offered the meal, he felt the pain of poison, and (at once) called for his riding animal. The host asked him to stay; he said, 'My going out of your house is better for you.' So he remained in agony the whole day and night until he died." (*ibid.*)

The author says: This story has been narrated through other chains too. We have copied the whole narration, in spite of its length (like some preceding repeated traditions) because it contains some deep Qur'ãnic discourses that may help in understanding of the Qur'ãnic verses.

[as-Suyūṭī] narrates from Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, and Ibn Abī Ḥãtim from ʻAbdullãh ibn ʻUmar that a woman committed theft in the time of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and her right hand was cut off. So she said, "Do I have repentance? O Messenger of Allãh!" He said, "Yes. Today you are (free) from your sin like the day you were born of your mother." Then Allãh revealed the verse in the chapter of "The Table": *But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms* (himself), *then surely Allãh will turn to him* (mercifully), *surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful*.

The author says: The tradition is in the style of application and looks at the connection of the verse with the preceding one. Obviously, both verses were revealed together.

* * * * *

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ

لَا يَحۡزُنكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِي ٱلۡكُفۡرِ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ
قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِأَفۡوَٰهِهِمۡ وَلَمۡ تُؤۡمِن قُلُوبُهُمۡۛ وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ
هَادُواْۛ سَمَّٰعُونَ لِلۡكَذِبِ سَمَّٰعُونَ لِقَوۡمٍ
ءَاخَرِينَ لَمۡ يَأۡتُوكَۖ يُحَرِّفُونَ ٱلۡكَلِمَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَوَاضِعِهِۦۖ
يَقُولُونَ إِنۡ أُوتِيتُمۡ هَٰذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِن لَّمۡ تُؤۡتَوۡهُ فَٱحۡذَرُواْۚ
وَمَن يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ فِتۡنَتَهُۥ فَلَن تَمۡلِكَ لَهُۥ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيۡـٔٗاۚ
أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَمۡ يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ أَن يُطَهِّرَ قُلُوبَهُمۡۚ لَهُمۡ فِي
ٱلدُّنۡيَا خِزۡيٞۖ وَلَهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٞ ﴿٤١﴾
سَمَّٰعُونَ لِلۡكَذِبِ أَكَّٰلُونَ لِلسُّحۡتِۚ فَإِن جَآءُوكَ
فَٱحۡكُم بَيۡنَهُمۡ أَوۡ أَعۡرِضۡ عَنۡهُمۡۖ وَإِن تُعۡرِضۡ عَنۡهُمۡ فَلَن
يَضُرُّوكَ شَيۡـٔٗاۖ وَإِنۡ حَكَمۡتَ فَٱحۡكُم بَيۡنَهُم بِٱلۡقِسۡطِۚ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلۡمُقۡسِطِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَكَيۡفَ يُحَكِّمُونَكَ وَعِندَهُمُ

ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةُ فِيهَا حُكۡمُ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوۡنَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ ذَٰلِكَۚ
وَمَآ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ بِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِنَّآ أَنزَلۡنَا ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةَ فِيهَا
هُدٗى وَنُورٞۖ يَحۡكُمُ بِهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسۡلَمُواْ لِلَّذِينَ
هَادُواْ وَٱلرَّبَّٰنِيُّونَ وَٱلۡأَحۡبَارُ بِمَا ٱسۡتُحۡفِظُواْ مِن كِتَٰبِ
ٱللَّهِ وَكَانُواْ عَلَيۡهِ شُهَدَآءَۚ فَلَا تَخۡشَوُاْ ٱلنَّاسَ
وَٱخۡشَوۡنِۖ وَلَا تَشۡتَرُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِي ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلٗاۚ وَمَن لَّمۡ يَحۡكُم
بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكَتَبۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ
فِيهَآ أَنَّ ٱلنَّفۡسَ بِٱلنَّفۡسِ وَٱلۡعَيۡنَ بِٱلۡعَيۡنِ وَٱلۡأَنفَ
بِٱلۡأَنفِ وَٱلۡأُذُنَ بِٱلۡأُذُنِ وَٱلسِّنَّ بِٱلسِّنِّ وَٱلۡجُرُوحَ
قِصَاصٞۚ فَمَن تَصَدَّقَ بِهِۦ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٞ لَّهُۥۚ وَمَن
لَّمۡ يَحۡكُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾
وَقَفَّيۡنَا عَلَىٰٓ ءَاثَٰرِهِم بِعِيسَى ٱبۡنِ مَرۡيَمَ مُصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيۡهِ مِنَ
ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةِۖ وَءَاتَيۡنَٰهُ ٱلۡإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدٗى وَنُورٞ وَمُصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ
يَدَيۡهِ مِنَ ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةِ وَهُدٗى وَمَوۡعِظَةٗ لِّلۡمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلۡيَحۡكُمۡ
أَهۡلُ ٱلۡإِنجِيلِ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فِيهِۚ وَمَن لَّمۡ يَحۡكُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ
ٱللَّهُ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَأَنزَلۡنَآ إِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ
بِٱلۡحَقِّ مُصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيۡهِ مِنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَمُهَيۡمِنًا

فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا
أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَن يَفْتِنُوكَ عَن
بَعْضِ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يُصِيبَهُم
بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَفَحُكْمَ
الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together in hastening in unbelief from among those who say with their mouths: "We believe", and their hearts do not believe, and from among those who are Jews; (they are) *listeners for the sake of a lie, listeners for another people who have not come to you; they alter the words from their places, saying: "If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, be cautious;" and as for him whose temptation Allãh desires, you cannot control anything for him with Allãh. Those are they for whom Allãh does not desire that He should purify their hearts; they shall have disgrace in this world, and they shall have a grievous chastisement in the hereafter* (41). (They are) *listeners of a lie, devourers of what is forbidden; therefore if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allãh loves those who judge equitably* (42). *And how do they make you a judge and they have the Torah wherein is Allãh's judgement? Yet they turn back after that, and these are not the believers* (43). *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets who submitted themselves* (to Allãh) *were judging* (matters) *for those who were Jews, and* (so did) *the Divines and the scholars, as they were required to guard* (part) *of the Book of Allãh, and they were witnesses thereof; therefore fear not the people and fear Me, and barter not My signs for a small price; and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers* (44). *And We prescribed*

to them in it that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and (that there is) *reprisal in wounds; but he who foregoes it, it shall be an expiation for him; and whoever did not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the unjust* (45). *And We sent after them in their footsteps 'Īsā, son of Maryam, verifying what was before him of the Torah and We gave him the Injīl in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of Torah and a guidance and an admonition for those who are pious* (46). *And the People of the Injīl should have judged by what Allāh revealed in it; and whoever did not judged by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the transgressors* (47). *And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it, therefore judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their* (low) *desires* (diverging) *from the truth that has come to you; for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way, and if Allāh had pleased He would have made you* (all) *a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to Allāh is the return, of all of you, then He will let you know that in which you differed* (48); *And that you should judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you from part of what Allāh has revealed to you; but if they turn back then know that Allāh desires to afflict them on account of some of their faults; and most surely many of the people are transgressors* (49). *Is it then the judgement of* (the times of) *ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allāh to judge for a people who are sure?* (50).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses are interlinked revealed in a single context. Clearly they speak about a group from the People of the Book who had approached the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) regarding some laws of the Torah, hoping that he would give a judgement other than that of

the Torah; and thus they would get relief from the strict ruling of their own Book. They told each other: "If you are given this – i.e. what they desired – take it; and if you are not given this – i.e. are given the same law of the Torah – then be cautious." The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) referred them to the ruling of the Torah, so they turned away from him. Also there was a group of hypocrites which had a tendency similar to that of the Jews; they wanted to put the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) into temptation, so that he might judge between them according to their desire, favouring the powerful segments of the society, as they were doing in the days of ignorance; and who is better than Allãh to judge for a people who are sure?

The verses give credence to what has been narrated regarding its reason of revelation. That they were revealed concerning the Jews when two distinguished married persons from among them committed adultery; and their religious scholars desired to change the scriptural law of stoning to flogging. So they sent some people to ask the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) for the ruling about adultery of married persons; they enjoined them to accept it if he sentenced them to flogging, and reject it if he sentenced them to be stoned. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) gave judgement for stoning, so they turned away from him. Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) asked Ibn Ṣūriyã what was the law of the Torah on this matter, and he adjured him by Allãh and His signs not to hide what he knew of the truth; so he confirmed to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) that the law of stoning was there in the Torah . . . This story will come under "Traditions", God willing.

However, the verses independently throw light on their theme; they are not restricted in their connotation to their reason of revelation. This is the case in general with all the verses, which were revealed on particular occasions; the reasons or events of their revelation have no significance except as one, among many, of their applications. It is because the Qur'ãn is a comprehensive and everlasting Book, which is not, confined to a time or space and not restricted to a particular group or event. Allãh says: . . . *it is nothing but a reminder for all mankind* (12:104). *Blessed is He Who sent down the Furqãn to His servant so that he may be a warner to the worlds* (25:1). . . . *and most surely it is a Mighty Book; falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it;* . . . (41:41-42).

QUR'ÃN: *O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together in hastening in unbelief . . .*: The verse consoles the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

and placates him because of what he had to endure at the hands of those who are mentioned here. They were those who were striving together in hastening in disbelief; they went ahead rapidly on this path; their motives of disbelief were reflected in their words and deeds one after another; thus they were unbelievers striving in unbelief. It should be noted that striving in unbelief is not the same as striving to unbelief.

The clause: "from among those who say with their mouths: 'We believe', and their hearts do not believe", describes those who strive together in hastening in unbelief, i.e., from among the hypocrites. It has given the attribute instead of naming the persons concerned, in order to describe the reason of this prohibition. Likewise, the attribute: "who strive together in hastening in unbelief", points to the reason for not grieving. Meaning therefore will be as follows, and Allãh knows better: These people should not grieve you by striving together in hastening in disbelief, because they have entered into Islam with their mouths only, not with their hearts; and they are not the believers; of the same character are the Jews who have approached you and have said what they said.

The context shows that the phrase: "and from among those who are Jews", is in conjunctive with the phrase: "from among those who say with their mouths: . . ."; it is not an independent sentence. Accordingly, the words: "listeners for the sake of a lie, listeners for another people who have not come to you", are predicate of an omitted subject, that is, they are. These sentences describe the condition of the Jews; as for the hypocrites who have been mentioned at the beginning of the verse, obviously, their condition does not fit this description. These Jews are "listeners for the sake of a lie"; they avidly listen to a lie although they know it to be a lie; otherwise they were not liable to be blamed; and they are "listeners for another people who have not come to you"; that is, they accept whatever is reported to them and do whatever they are told. This variation in the import of listening necessitated the repetation of the word, "listeners". The first indicates paying attention to while the second signifies acceptance.

The clause: "they alter the words from their places", i.e., after the words have been put in their proper places; it shows the attribute of "another people"; also with the same phrase is connected the sentence: "saying: 'If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, be cautious.'"

It all shows that a group of the Jews were involved in a religious problem; their Book contained clear divine order for it, but their scholars changed it knowingly; then they sent some people to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to seek his judgement on that matter, enjoining them to accept his decision if he decided according to their corrupted order, and be on guard if he decided otherwise.

The sentence: "and as for him whose temptation Allãh desires, you cannot control anything for him with Allãh", is parentetical; it shows that the Jews in this affair are enmeshed in divine temptation and trial; therefore the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) should set his mind at rest that this affair is from Allãh and it has to return to Him, and no one else has any authority on any of it; why should he feel grieved for a matter from which no one except Allãh can remove.

"Those are they for whom Allãh does not desire that He should purify their hearts": Their hearts continue to wallow in their original filth and dirtiness, because they are piling up sin over sin, so Allãh has left them to their error: . . . *but and He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* [2:26].

"they shall have disgrace in this world, and they shall have a grievous chastisement in the hereafter": It is a threat that the Jews will be disgraced in this world – and it has already been done – and shall have grievous punishment in the life hereafter.

QUR'ÃN: (They are) ***listeners of a lie, devourers of what is forbidden***: ar-Rãghib says in *Mufradãtu 'l-Qur'ãn*: "*as-Suḥt* (اَلسُّحْتُ = rind, bark which is destroyed); Allãh says: *fa-yusḥitakum bi-'adhãb* ('lest He destroys you by a punishment' [20:61]); it has also been recited as *fa-yasḥitakum*; it is said: *suḥtuh* and *asuḥtuh*; from this root is derived *as-suḥt*, a forbidden thing which brings shame to the user or doer, as though it destroys his religion and honour; Allãh says: *devourers of what is forbidden*; and the Prophet (a.s.), has said: 'All flesh that grows from forbidden things, Fire is more entitled to it;' and bribe is named *suḥt*."

Thus every property obtained unlawfully is *suḥt* (forbidden). The context shows that in this verse "what is forbidden" refers to bribe. This adjective as used here indicates that those Jewish scholars who had sent that group to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had taken bribe in that matter for altering the divine law; some people's safety was under threat because of that law, so they averted it with bribery; they took bribe and changed the order of Allãh.

It is now clear that the two phrases: "listeners of a lie, devourers of what is forbidden", taken together describe the condition of the whole nation; but taken separately, the words, "listeners of a lie", describe the attribute of preceding: *those who are Jews*, i.e. those who were sent to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and their companions; and: "devourers of what is forbidden", points to the preceding: *another people who have not come to you*. In short, the scholars of the Jews devour bribe, and their followers, the general public, listen to their lies.

QUR'ĀN: ***therefore if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them, and if you turn aside from them, they shall not harm you in any way; and if you judge, judge between them with equity; surely Allāh loves those who judge equitably*****:** The verse leaves it to the Prophet's discretion to judge between them – when they come to him for judgement – or to turn aside from them. It is understood that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was not to choose either of the two without an underlying reason and justification. In short, the matter was left to his own outlook. Further elaborating this option, Allāh says that if the Prophet turned aside from them refusing to judge between them, they could not harm him in any way; and if he decided to judge, he was to judge with justice and equity.

Ultimately, it means that Allāh does not like them to be judged except according to His law; the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was to enforce divine law among them, if it was not acceptable to them, he should not involve himself with them because he could not apply any other law anywhere.

QUR'ĀN: ***And how do they make you a judge and they have the Torah wherein is Allāh's judgement? Yet they turn back after that, and these are not the believers*****:** The verse points to a surprising behaviour of the Jews: They are a nation having their own Book and *Sharī'ah*; they reject your Prophethood, Book and *Sharī'ah*; then they are faced with a problem about which their book contains a clear divine order; yet they turn back from the Torah with its divine order, while they are not those who believe in it.

Accordingly, the phrase: "Yet they turn back after that", means: they turn back from the law concerning that event although they do have the Torah, which contains divine commandments. The phrase: "and these are not the believers", means: they do not believe in the Torah and its law; they have abandoned belief in the Book and its law,

and turned to disbelief.

It is possible to take the words: "Yet they turn back", as referring to their rejection of the Prophet's judgement; and the phrase: "these are not the believers", as pointing to their disbelief in the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), even though they had come to him and sought his judgement; or it could refer to their disbelief in the Torah and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) together. But the explanation we have given earlier is more in keeping with the context.

The verse confirms to a certain extent the Torah now prevalent among the Jews. It is the book collected by Ezra by the permission of Cyrus, king of Persia, after he conquered Babylon, released the Children of Israel from captivity of Babylon, and allowed them to return to Palestine and rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. It is the same Torah, which was in their hands during the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and it is the same, which they have with them today. The Qur'ãn confirms that this present Torah contains laws of Allãh, and it also says that alterations and changes have corrupted it.

The above discourse proves that the present Torah, prevalent among the Jews today, contains some parts of the original Torah sent down to Mūsã (a.s.), also many of its parts have been changed and corrupted through addition, omission, change of word or context, etc. This is the Qur'ãnic view of the Torah and extensive research leads to the same conclusion.[32]

QUR'ÃN: ***Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets who submitted themselves*** **(to Allãh)** ***were judging*** **(matters)** ***for those who were Jews, and*** **(so did)** ***the Divines and the scholars, as they were required to guard*** **(part)** ***of the Book of Allãh, and they were witnesses thereof; therefore fear not the people and fear Me, and barter not My signs for a small price; and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers*****:** It gives the reason of what was explained in the preceding verse. This and the following verses describe that Allãh had laid down for these nations, in their successive times, laws, and wrote them in the books revealed to them, in order that they should be guided by them and acquire insight through them,

[32] For a concise, yet informative, discourse on compilation of Torah and Injīl see the translator's book, *The Qur'ãn and Ḥadīth*, available from Bilal Muslim Mission, P.O. Box 20033, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. (*tr.*)

and they should serve as reference points in matters in which they differed; He ordered their prophets and scholars to judge matters by them; they were given the responsibility to guard the books and protect them from corruption and alteration; they were admonished not to accept any price for giving judgement – a price which was bound to be trivial [in comparison to Allāh's pleasure]; they should not fear the people, rather they should fear Allāh.

He emphasized it again and warned them of following their low desires, lest the worldly people seduce them from divinely revealed truth. He has appointed various sets of law for various people in different times, so that He might try them thoroughly; it is because abilities of times differ with changing eras, and two things which differ in strength and weakness cannot be perfected with one factor with one style.

"Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light": There was in it some guidance and some light with which the Israelites were led to some cognizance and laws adequately suitable to their condition, conforming to their capabilities. Allāh has described in His book their general behaviour and the particulars of their national affairs and limits of their understanding. Accordingly they were given a part of guidance and a part of light because they had appeared on the scene in remote past and primitive age with simple understanding; Allāh says: *And We wrote for him in the tablets admonition from every thing and clear explanation of all things* . . . (7:145).

"with it the prophets who submitted themselves (to Allāh) were judging (matters) for those who were Jews": The prophets followed Islam, i.e. submission to Allāh, which is the religion with Allāh. This nomenclature has been used to show that there is only one religion, and that is to submit to Allāh and not to refrain from worshipping Him. A man who believes in Allāh and submits to Him has no right to reject any of His commandments and laws.

"and (so did) the Divines and the scholars as they were required to guard (part) of the Book of Allāh, and they were witnesses thereof": The Divines, i.e., those scholars whose knowledge and action were exclusively devoted to Allāh (if the word is derived from *ar-Rab* (اَلرَّبُ = Lord); it may also be taken to mean those scholars who train and raise up people by their knowledge (if it is derived from *at-tarbiyah* (اَلتَّرْبِيَةُ = to raise up). *al-Aḥbār* (اَلأَحْبَارُ) are those knowledgeable and expert scholars who judge according to the divine order, and who guard the *sharī'ah* as contained in the Book of Allāh; and because

they were its guardians and preservers, they were called its witnesses; the sacred book was safe from change and alteration because they had memorized it perfectly. The clause: "and they were witnesses thereof", is a sort of result of the phrase: "as they were required to guard (part) of the Book of Allãh". In other words, they were told to guard it, so they were guarding it by being its witnesses.

This meaning of witnessing is supported by the context. Some people have said that it refers to attesting about the Prophet's judgement of stoning that it is found in the Torah; some others have said that it means testifying for the Book that it has come from Allãh. But the context does not support either of these two interpretations in any way.

"therefore fear not the people and fear Me, and barter not My signs for a small price": It branches out from the clause: "Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets . . ." Meaning: As the Torah was sent down by Us, and it contained the laws with which the prophets, the divines and the scholars judged between you, therefore you should not hide anything of it nor should you make any alteration in it, be it for fear or for greed. As for fear, it may happen, if you fear the people and forget your Lord; but you should fear Allãh only, it will liberate you from people's fear; and as for greed, it may take place if you barter the signs of Allãh for a small price, like worldly riches or glory – all of which is transitory and ephemeral.

There is also another possibility: It could have branched out from the phrase: "as they were required to guard (part) of the Book of Allãh, and they were witnesses thereof"; because the requirement to guard the Book is tantamount to take covenant for guarding it. Thus the meaning will be as follows: We made covenant with them for guarding the Book and made them witnesses for it, that they would not change it, would not be afraid of anyone except Me in making it known and would not barter My signs for small price. Allãh says: *And when Allãh made a covenant with those who were given the Book: You shall certainly make it known to men and you shall not hide it; but they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it; . . .* (3:187). *Then there came after them an evil posterity who inherited the Book, taking only the frail good of this low life and saying: "It will be forgiven us." And if the like good came to them, they would take it* (too). *Was not a promise taken from them in the Book that they would not speak anything about Allãh but the truth, and they have read what*

is in it? And the abode of the hereafter is better for those who guard (against evil). *Do you not then understand? And* (as for) *those who hold fast by the Book and keep up prayer; surely We do not waste the reward of the right-doers* (7:169-70).

And this second meaning is more appropriate, keeping in view the forceful emphasis at the end piece of the subsequent verse: *and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are unjust.*

QUR'ÃN: ***And We prescribed to them in it that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and*** **(that there is)** ***reprisal in wounds*****:** The context, and especially or the mention of reprisal in wounds proves that the aim here is to describe the law of retribution in various types of felonies, like murder, cutting wounding. The contraposition in "life for life" and subsequent phrases places the avenger against the felon. It means that a life is taken in retaliation for life, an eye in reprisal of eye and so on. *ba* (بَ = for) is used here for exchange, as you say: "I sold it for so much."

These sentences, then, give the following meaning: A life would be taken in place of a life, an eye would be gouged for an eye, a nose would be cut for a nose, an ear would be severed for an ear, a tooth would be extracted for a tooth and there is reprisal in wounds. In short, all limbs and organs of man shall be avenged with similar limb and organ of the felon.

Probably that is the purpose of the suggestion offered by someone that: "life is for life", actually has an omitted but understood predicate, 'avenged' or 'killed'. Otherwise, there is no need of this supposition; sentences are grammatically complete without that addition.

The verse is not without a certain indication that this law is other than that for which they had come to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and which has been mentioned in preceding verses; because the context has changed with the verse: *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light*.

The law described in the verse under discussion is found in the present Torah, as will be quoted in the forthcoming "Traditions", God willing.

QUR'ÃN: ***but he who foregoes it, it shall be an expiation for him; and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are the unjust*****:** If the possessor of the right of retribution, like the

heir of the slain, the victim of attack himself or the wounded forgives the felon and remits the retribution, then "it", i.e. this remission shall be an expiation for the sins of the remitter; or it shall be an expiation for the felon in that particular felony.

The meaning therefore is as follows: If the holder of the right of retaliation forgives the culprit, it shall be expiation for him; but if he does not forgive then he must decide according to the law revealed regarding retaliation; and whoever does not judge by what Allãh has revealed, those are the unjust people.

It clearly shows that:

First: The conjunctive: *wa* (وَ = and) in the clause: "and whoever did not judge", joins it with the clause: "but he who foregoes"; i.e., it does not begin a new sentence. Also, the conjunctive, *fa* (فَ = translated here as 'but') has the import of branching out, i.e. it makes the details grow from the general order of retaliation. It is not unlike another verse of retaliation, which *inter alia* says: . . . *but if any remission is made to any one by his* (aggrieved) *brother, then* (the demand for the bloodwit) *should be made according to the usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner* (2:178).

Second: The clause: ″and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed . . .", metaphorically puts the reason in place of its effect. The full construction shall be as follows: and if he does not forego, then he should judge by what Allãh has revealed, because whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are the unjust.

QUR'ÃN: ***And We sent after them in their footsteps 'Īsã, son of Maryam, verifying what was before him of the Torah*****:** *at-Taqfiyah* (اَلتَّقْفِيَةُ = to send something behind another thing); it is derived from *al-qafã* (اَلْقَفَا= back); *al-ãthãr* (اَلآثَارُ) is plural of *al-athar* (أَثَرٌ = track, trace, sign), it is mostly used for footsteps; "after them" i.e. after the prophets.

The sentence: "And We sent after them in their footsteps 'Īsã, son of Maryam", is an extended metaphor, intimating that Allãh made 'Īsã (a.s.) to proceed on the same path on which had gone the preceding prophets; and it is the way of invitation to monotheism and submission to Allãh.

The clause: "verifying what was before him of the Torah", makes the preceding statement clearer; it points to the fact that the call of 'Īsã was the same as the call of Mūsã (peace be on them both), without any difference at all.

QUR'ĀN: ***and We gave him the Injīl in which was guidance and light, and verifying what was before it of Torah, and a guidance and an admonition for those who are pious*****:** As the verses speak about the *sharī'ah* of Mūsā, 'Īsā and Muḥammad (may Allāh's blessing be on him and his progeny and on them both), and as they have been revealed concerning their Books, it proves that the Books tally with each other.

It follows that:

First: The Injīl mentioned in this verse – and it means Good News – was a book revealed to 'Īsā (a.s.); it was not merely a "good news" without a book. But Allāh has not given any detail in His Book as to how it was revealed, contrary to what He has done regarding the Torah and the Qur'ān. He says about the Torah:

He said: "O Mūsā! Surely I have chosen you above the people with My messages and with My words, therefore take hold of what I give to you and be of the grateful ones." And We wrote for him in the tablets admonition from everything and clear explanation of all things . . . (7:144-5). *. . . he took up the tablets, and in the writing thereof was guidance and mercy for those who fear for the sake of their Lord* (7:154).

And He says especially for the Qur'ān:

The Faithful Sprit has descended with it, upon your heart that you may be of the warners, in plain Arabic language (26:193-5). *Most surely it is the Word of an honoured messenger, the possessor of strength, having an honourable place with the Lord of the Throne, one* (to be) *obeyed, and faithful in trust* (81:19-21). *In honoured books, exalted, purified, in the hands of scribes, noble, virtuous* (80:13-16). Although Allāh has not mentioned anything regarding revelation of Injīl and its particulars, yet the verse under discussion mentions its revelation to 'Īsā (a.s.) side by side with the coming down of Torah on Mūsā (a.s.), and revelation of the Qur'ān on Muḥammad (may Allāh's blessings be on him and his progeny) and it proves that Injīl too was a book like the other two.

Second: Allāh says about Injīl: *in which was guidance and light*, parallel to what He had said about Torah [in 5:44]: *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light*; these words point to the cognition and laws contained in the Book. He says at the end of this very verse 5:46 [about Injīl]: *and a guidance and an admonition for those who are pious*. By putting the two phrases [about Injīl] side by side, it is understood that the guidance mentioned in the former

phrase is something separate from the one mentioned in the latter phrase and which has been explained as admonition. The former guidance is related to cognition, which guides in matters of faith and belief, while the latter refers to that cognition which leads one to fear of Allãh and piety in religion.

Now, what is meant by light? It can only mean the laws and *sharī'ah*; and meditation gives support to this interpretation. The laws of religion are the light, which illuminates the path of life and man proceeds in that light to his destination. Allãh says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, . . .* (6:122).

It is now clear that the guidance, mentioned first in description of the Torah and the Injīl, refers to matters of faith and belief; like Oneness of God and resurrection; and the light in both places denotes *sharī'ah* and laws; while the guidance mentioned second time as attribute of the Injīl refers to sermon and admonition. And Allãh knows better.

Also, now one may understand the reason of repetition of "guidance" in the verse; it is because the second "guidance" is different from the first one; in the second instance, in the phrase: "a guidance and an admonition", there is an explicative apposition, inasmuch as "admonition" gives the meaning of "guidance". And Allãh knows better.

Third: The phrase: "and verifying what was before it of Torah", as attribute of Injīl, is not a repetition for the sake of emphasis[33], etc.; rather it denotes that Injīl follows the *sharī'ah* of Torah, because there was nothing in Injīl other than confirmation of Torah's *sharī'ah* and call to follow it. Of course, there were a few exceptions made by 'Īsã (a.s.), as Allãh quotes him as saying: *. . . and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden you, . . .* (3:50).

Its proof is seen in the next but one verse: *And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it*, as will be explained in the "Commentary".

QUR'ÃN: *and a guidance and an admonition for those who are pious*: This clause has already been explained. It proves that the Injīl

[33] In fact, there is no repetition at all. The first clause: *And We sent . . . 'Īsã . . ., verifying what was before him*, is an attribute of 'Īsã (a.s.), while this second one describes Injīl's position. (*tr.*)

revealed to ʻĪsā paid special care to piety, in addition to matters of belief and faith and practical laws which were found in the Torah. Although the Qur'ān does not verify totally the Torah which is in their hands today; and although the four Gospels attributed to Mathew, Marks, Luke and John, are not the same Injīl which Qur'ān says was revealed to ʻĪsā himself, yet they all confirm this matter, as will be explained later, God willing.

QUR'ĀN: ***And the people of the Injīl should have judged by what Allāh revealed in it; and whoever did not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the transgressors*****:** Allāh had revealed in the Injīl confirmation and verification of the Torah in its laws, except some abrogated rules which were described in the Book revealed to ʻĪsā (a.s.); obviously when Injīl verified the laws of Torah and made lawful some things which had been forbidden in it, then following the Torah in its laws – except those unlawful things which were made lawful by Injīl – was tantamount to obeying the law of Injīl.

Some exegetes have claimed on the strength of this verse that Injīl too contained, like Torah, elaborated laws and *sharīʻah*; but the explanation given above show the weakness of this claim.

The statement: "and whoever did not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the transgressors", puts emphasis on the order contained in the preceding sentence: "And the people of the Injīl should have judged . . ." Allāh has repeated this sentence three times with minor difference all for emphasis; twice relating to the Jews and once regarding the Christians; as He has said: *and whoever did not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers* [5:44]. *. . . those are they that are the unjust* [5:45]. *. . . those are they that are the transgressors* [5:47]. In this way, their disbelief, injustice, and transgression have officially been put on record.

What is the reason that the Christians have been called transgressors while the Jews were described as unbelievers and unjust? It is because the Christians changed monotheism to trinity and abandoned the laws of Torah; they were misled by Paul who preached that ʻĪsā had brought an independent religion, separate from that of Mūsā, and that that new religion had abrogated all laws through ʻĪsā's atonement; thus the Christians went out of the fold of monotheism and its *sharīʻah* through mistaken interpretation; so they transgressed the

boundary of the true divine religion. Transgression means exit of a thing from its prescribed place, like exit of the core of date from its cover.

As for the Jews, they had no doubt whatsoever about the religion of Mūsã (a.s.); they had rejected knowingly the laws and beliefs, which they had, full knowledge of; and it was nothing but injustice and disbelief in Allãh's signs.

It should however be noted that the three verses, i.e.: *and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they: that are the unbelievers*; *that are the unjust*; *that are the transgressors*, are unrestricted; they are not confined to any one group, religion or nation, although here they have been applied to the People of the Book.

There is a difference of opinion among exegetes regarding the import of the unbelief of him who does not judge by what Allãh has revealed, e.g., a judge who decides a case contrary to what Allãh has revealed, or a ruler who rules against what Allãh has revealed, or an innovator who invents a system other than that of divine religion. This question comes under the purview of *fiqh*. The fact is that violation of any rule of the *sharī'ah* or any other established matter of religion, when one knows that it is an established fact and then rejects it, is disbelief, if one violates it, knowing its factuality but without rejecting it, it is transgression. But of one does not know that it is an established religious matter and then rejects it, it is neither disbelief nor transgression, because it is an excusable incapability (except if there was negligence in investigation of facts and proofs). See books of *fiqh* for details.

QUR'ÃN: ***And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it*****:** *Haymanah* (هَيْمَنَة) of a thing over another thing entails its authority over it, involving its protection, safety and management. This describes the position of the Qur'ãn, which Allãh says is explanation of everything *vis-à-vis* the previous divine books. It preserves from those books' contents, the permanent unchangeable fundamentals and abrogates what deserves it from the subsidiary items that are liable to change and alteration, in order to make it conform to man's position, keeping in view his step-by-step development and perfection with passage of time. Allãh says: *Surely this Qur'ãn guides to that which is most upright* (17:9). *Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be*

forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it (2:106). *Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the* Ummī*, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Injīl*, (who) *enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them; so* (as for) *those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful* (7:157).

The phrase: "a guardian over it", is an explanatory conclusion of the preceding, *verifying what is before it of the Book*; without it the mention of verification could cause a misunderstanding that the Qur'ān confirmed the laws of the Torah and the Injīl and let them continue without any change; but with this phrase in place, the verification only means that the Qur'ān accepts that those laws and cognitive matters had truly come from Allāh and Allāh has full power to manage them as He pleases, He may abrogate them or may complete them with other laws, as He points to it in this very verse: *and if Allāh had pleased He would have made you* (all) *a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you.*

Therefore, the words: "verifying what is before it", mean that the Qur'ān has kept intact that part of the law and knowledge of Injīl which were suitable for this *ummah*, as such the consequent addition, omission or abrogation was not contrary to this verification – in the same way as 'Īsā (a.s.) and his Injīl had verified the Torah even when they had made lawful some things prohibited by the Torah, as Allāh quotes him as saying: *And a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden you* . . . (3:50).

QUR'ĀN: ***therefore judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their*** **(low)** ***desires*** **(diverging)** ***from the truth that has come to you*****:** As the *sharī'ah*, which has been revealed to you and is contained in the Book, is truth, and as it is truth when it tallies with the Books revealed earlier, and is truth when it goes against those Books, because it is a guardian over them, therefore you are inevitably required to judge between the People of the Book (as is apparently supported by the preceding verses), or between the people (as is supported by following verses), by what Allāh has revealed to you; you should not follow their desires or turn away from the truth that

has come to you.

The above discourse shows that the pronoun in: "judge between them", may refer to the People of the Book or to the people in general. But the first alternative necessitates taking the phrase as meaning, judge between them if you decide to judge, because Allãh had not obligated him to judge between the People of the Book, but had left it to his discretion whether he wanted to judge or turned aside from them. He says: *therefore if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them* [5:42]. Moreover, Allãh has at the beginning of this set of verses, mentioned the hypocrites together with the Jews. So there is no reason why the pronoun, "them", should be taken to refer to the Jews only when another group was mentioned together with them. Therefore, looking at it in this context, the second alternative seems more appropriate, i.e. judge between the people.

Obviously, the words: "do not follow their desires from the truth", are well connected and they imply divergence from the truth.

QUR'ÃN: ***for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way*****:** ar-Rãghib says in his *Mufradãtu 'l-Qur'ãn*: "*ash-Shar'* (اَلشَرْعُ) is the way of a clear path; it is said: 'I opened for him a path.' *ash-Shar'* is a *maṣdar*, then it was used as a noun for open path; it is pronounced *ash-shir'*, *ash-shar'* and *ash-sharī'ah*; then it was used for the divine path; Allãh says: *a law and a way* . . . Some people have said, 'The *sharī'ah* was given this name to liken it to drinking place.'"

Probably, the case is *vice versa*, i.e., the drinking place was the original meaning which was then borrowed for the law; because they knew clearly the ways to water holes, etc. which were frequently visited by them. And he has said: "*an-Nahj* (اَلنَهْجُ) is clear path; *nahaja 'l-amr* and *anhaja* both mean the matter became clear; *manhaj* and *minhãj* of path mean open road."

MEANING OF *SHARĪ'AH* AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *SHARĪ'AH*, *DĪN* AND *MILLAH* IN QUR'ÃNIC USAGE

Sharī'ah, as you have seen, means path and religion; likewise *millah* is an adopted path. However, apparently the Qur'ãn uses the word, *sharī'ah* in a meaning more particular than *dīn* (religion). For proof, see the verse: *Surely the religion with Allãh is Islam* . . . (3:19).

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers (3:85); when read together with the verse under discussion: *for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way*, and the verse: *Then We have made you follow a course in the affair, therefore follow it . . .* (45:18).

Thus, *sharī'ah* is the way prepared for an *ummah* or a prophet who was sent with it, as we say, *sharī'ah* of Nūḥ, *sharī'ah* of Ibrãhīm, *sharī'ah* of Mūsã, *sharī'ah* of 'Īsã and *sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.); and religion is the divine course and system which covers all nations; so *sharī'ah* is liable to abrogation but not religion in its wider sense.

There is one more difference: Religion is attributed to singular or plural whatever their position; but *sharī'ah* is not attributed to a singular unless it be its Legislator or its principle head who manages it. They say: Muslims' religion, Jews' religion, Muslims' *sharī'ah*, Jews' *sharī'ah*; again they say: Allãh's religion, Allãh's *sharī'ah*, Muḥammad's religion, Muḥammad's *sharī'ah*; Also they say: Zayd's religion, 'Amr's religion, but they never say: Zayd's *sharī'ah* or 'Amr's *sharī'ah*. May be it is so because the term, *sharī'ah*, carries a hint of incidental happening, an allusion of preparing and paving the path. It is perfectly right to say: the path prepared by Allãh, the way laid down for the prophet or for a certain *ummah*; but it is not right to say: the way which was laid down for Zayd, because Zayd has no particular connection to it.

In any case, it is inferred from the above that *sharī'ah*'s meaning is more particular than that of religion. As for the verse, 42:13 (*He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrãhīm and Mūsã and 'Īsã . . .*), it does not go against it, because it shows that the *sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), laid down for his *ummah* is the sum total of what was enjoined upon Nūḥ, Ibrãhīm, Mūsã and 'Īsã (peace be upon them), added to what was revealed to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). It is either an allusion to the fact that Islam [is a comprehensive religion which] combines the merits of all previous *sharī'ah* plus the excellence of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)'s revelation, or it aims at proving that all the laws do have a single reality and essence, even though they were somewhat different among themselves because the people for whom they were sent had different [intellectual and social] standards; as is hinted or proved by the words

of verse 13 of chapter 42 coming after the clause quoted above: *. . . that establish the religion and be not divided therein*.

Religion is one and unalterable, while laws differ [from nation to nation, time to time, and] are liable to abrogation. The relationship of a particular *sharī'ah* with religion is like that of minor rules of Islam (with their abrogator and abrogated ones) with the basic religion. Allãh has not obligated His servants except to adhere to one religion, i.e. submission to Him; but He has taken them to that destination through different paths, legislating for them various systems according to their various abilities, and these are the laws of Nūḥ, Ibrãhīm, Mūsã, 'Īsã and Muḥammad (may Allãh's blessing be upon him and his progeny and on them); exactly as He sometimes abrogated within one *sharī'ah* some laws replacing them with others because the abrogated law had lost its benefit and the abrogator one had become more appropriate and beneficial. See for example the replacement of the punishment of life-imprisonment for a fornicatress with flogging and stoning, etc. This is proved by the divine words: *and if Allãh had pleased He would have made you* (all) *a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you . . .*

As for *millah*, it is as though it points to norms and customs observed by people in their lives; and it probably has a shade of meaning of *imlã'* (إِمْلاَءُ) and *imlãl* (إِمْلاَل) i.e., 'dictation'; as such it would be a custom handed down by others; its root meaning is not so clear; therefore more likely it is synonymous to *sharī'ah* inasmuch as, contrary to religion, *milla* like *sharī'ah* denotes a system and way related to a particular group; yet there is difference between the two: *sharī'ah* is used for the system or way keeping in view the reality that it has been laid down by Allah for people's use; while *millah* is used for the system as it is handed down practically among the people generation after generation. Probably that is the reason that *millah* is not ascribed to Allãh in genitive construction, i.e. they never say, *millah* of Allãh, while they say, religion of Allãh, *sharī'ah* of Allãh.

However, it is ascribed to a prophet to denote his tradition and habit, or to an *ummah* because they follow and observe that custom and tradition. Allãh says: . . . *the* millah *of Ibrãhīm, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists* (2:135); and Allãh quotes Yūsuf (a.s.) as saying: . . . *surely I have forsaken the* millah *of a people who do not believe in Allãh, and they are deniers of the hereafter; and I follow the* millah *of my fathers, Ibrãhīm and Isḥãq and Ya'qūb . . .* (12:37-38). And He quotes the unbelievers' threat to their prophets:

. . . We will most certainly drive you forth from our land, or else you shall come back into our millah . . . (14:13).

It is thus seen that *dīn* (religion) in Qur'ānic usage is more general than *sharī'ah* and *millah*; and these two are synonymous, with some difference in their usage.

QUR'ĀN: ***and if Allāh had pleased He would have made you* (all) *a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you*:** It gives the reason why there were sent various laws. Making all a single people does not mean making them a single species, because all of them already belong to a single species living in the same way, as Allāh says: *And were it not that all people would have been a single nation, We would certainly have assigned to those who disbelieve in the Beneficent God* (to make) *of silver the roofs of their houses and the stairs by which they ascend* (43:33).

Rather it means treating whole mankind as a single people considering them to be on a single level of intellectual capacity and social behaviour, in which case a single set of laws would have been made for all, because of proximity of their ranks. Accordingly, the clause: "if Allāh had pleased He would have made you (all) a single people", has metaphorically put the reason of condition in place of condition; the idea is to make the meaning of the following clause clearer: "but that He might try you in what He gave you", that is, He might test you with the favours He bestowed on you. Naturally, the favours, pointed to in the verse, differed from nation to nation. The differences were not based on their habitations, languages and colours, because Allāh had never sent more than one *sharī'ah* in one period; rather the differences occurred by passage of time because of man's gradual development intellectually and socially. Divinely prescribed responsibilities and laid down laws are but means of trial with which Allāh tests man in various stages of life. In other words He brings man's potential to fulfilment, be it on the side of felicity or infelicity. You may say that it is done for differentiating the party of Allāh from the party of Satan. These different expressions used above have been taken from the divine Book, and sum total of all is the same. Allāh says keeping in view the aspect of test: *. . . and We bring these days to men by turns and that Allāh may know those who believe and take witnesses from among you; and Allāh loves not the unjust; and that Allāh may purge those who believe and eradicate the unbelievers. Do you think that you will enter the Garden while Allāh has not yet known*

those who strive hard from among you, *and* (He has not) *known the patient!* (3:140-2). There are many verses of this theme.

As for the bringing man's potential to fulfilment, Allãh says: *So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind* (20:123-4).

And He says regarding the third aspect (i.e., distinguishing the party of Allãh from that of Satan): *And when your Lord said to the angels: "Surely I am going to create a mortal of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape . . ."* [Satan] *said: "My Lord! Because Thou hast left me to stray, I will certainly make* (evil) *fair seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly cause them all to deviate, except Thy servants from among them, the freed ones." He said: "This is a straight path with Me: Surely as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who follow thee of the deviators. And surely Hell is the promised place of them all."* (15:28-43). There are many such verses.

In short, Allãh had bestowed on mankind different types of capabilities and potentialities in different times and eras; also the divine laws, whose enforcement among them was essential in order to complete their lives' felicity were sent for man's test which varies according to the variance in examinees' abilities – all these factors together had caused difference in various laws. That is why Allãh has said that this difference of laws has happened because He has wished to test and examine you in what He has bestowed on you of His favours, as He says: *for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way, and if Allãh had pleased He would have made you* (all) *a single people*.

The meaning of this verse is then as follows, and Allãh knows better: For each nation from among you We have laid down and legislated a different law and distinct way; if Allãh had pleased He would have made you (creatively) a single nation and legislated for you a single set of law. But He has laid down for you different laws in order to test you in what He has given you of various favours. This difference in favours demanded difference in test (which in their turn) give rise to divine laws and legislations. Naturally there was difference in various laws.

The different nations mentioned here are those of Nūḥ, Ibrãhīm, Mūsã, ‘Īsã and Muḥammad (may Allãh's blessing be upon him and his

progeny and on them) as He says describing His favours on this *ummah*: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and ʻĪsā* . . . (42:13).

QUR'ĀN: ***therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to Allāh is the return of all of you, then He will let you know that in which you differed*:** *al-Istibāq* (اَلإِسْتِبَاقُ = to vie, to compete) is derived from the root *as-sabq* (اَلسَبْقُ = to get ahead of some one); *al-marjaʻ* (اَلْمَرْجَعُ = return) is a *maṣdar* derived from *ar-rujūʻ* (اَلرُجُوْعُ = return). The speech has branched out as a concomitant from the preceding: *for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way.* The meaning: And We have prescribed for you this true *sharīʻah* which is superior to all previous ones, and it contains your good and welfare, therefore you should vie with each other to hasten to good deeds, i.e., the divinely prescribed laws and responsibilities; you should not entangle yourselves in the differences that are there between you and the others, because all of you are to return to your Lord, and then He will let you know that in which you differed, and will judge between you clearly and decide with justice.

QUR'ĀN: ***And that you should judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, . . . many of the people are transgressors*:** The beginning of the verse: "And that you should judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their low desires", corresponds with the clause in the preceding verse: *therefore judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their* (low) *desires*; then the two separate in their ramifications, and one realizes that the repetition has occurred for this purpose. The former verse tells them to judge by what Allāh has revealed and admonishes them not to follow their low desires – because this *sharīʻah* revealed by Allāh is the one prescribed for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his people. Therefore, it is incumbent upon them to vie with one another in virtuous deeds. The latter verse orders them to judge by what Allāh has revealed and not to follow their low desires – explaining that if they turned back from what Allāh has revealed, it would show that Allāh has left them in their error on account of their transgression. Allāh has said: . . . *He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it; but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26).

It results from the above that this verse elaborates some themes

of the preceding verse which needed more explanation: The only reason that people of low desire turn away from following what Allãh has revealed with truth is that they are transgressors; Allãh desires to afflict them on account of some of their sins which have caused their transgression. This affliction apparently means that He leaves them to err. Thus the clause: "And that you should judge between them by what Allãh has revealed", is in conjunction, as has been said, with the word, "Book", in the preceding verse's opening sentence: *And We have revealed to you the Book* . . . In that case, it is more appropriate to take the *al* (اَلْ = the) in, "the Book", as connoting a new occurence; the meaning then will be as follows: We have revealed to you the laws which have been prescribed for them, and that you should judge between them by what Allãh has revealed.

"and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you from part of what Allãh has revealed to you": Here Allãh warns His Prophet against their seduction and temptation, although he (s.a.w.a.) was *ma'ṣūm* and sinless through divine protection. It is because the power of *'iṣmah* (sinlessness) does not nullify the free will and choice, nor does it repeal the laws based on that will and choice. *Iṣmah* is in fact an academic and intellectual aptitude; knowledge and perception do not deprive practical powers and faculties from their middle position between doing and not doing. It is these faculties, which move the limbs and organs of a man and cause his activities.

For example, a sure knowledge that a certain food is poisoned prevents man from taking that food. But the organs used in eating, like hand, mouth, tongue, and teeth may perform their activities in this eating, or they may remain inert although they could possibly become active; so the action is within power, although it has become like impossible to do because of that knowledge.

We have written to some extent on this topic when explaining the verse: . . . *and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allãh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allãh's grace on you is very great* (4:113).

"But if they turn back, then know that Allãh desires to afflict them on account of some of their faults": As mentioned above, it describes that they were left to err because of their transgression. This clause reverts to the initial theme of this set of verses, where it says: *O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together in hastening in unbelief* . . . [5:41]. The verse aims at putting the Prophet's mind at rest and cheers him up; it teaches him that which would keep grief and

sorrow away from his heart. This is what Allāh has done in most of the places where He has told him not to grieve if the unbelievers turn away from the true Call or disdain to accept, that which would lead them to the path of guidance and success. So Allāh explained to him that they were not going to weaken the kingdom of Allāh, nor were they to overwhelm Him; it is Allāh Who is dominant in His affairs; it is He Who leaves them to err because of their transgression, makes their hearts deviated because of their deviation, and puts uncleanness on them by removing His help from them and luring them into evil. Allāh says: *And let not those who disbelieve think that they shall come in first; surely they will not escape* (8:59). So, as all matters are in Allāh's hand, and He drives away all types of uncleanness from His clean religion, so nothing can escape from Him if He wants it; therefore there was no cause to grieve, as nothing was lost.

Probably, that is the reason that Allāh has said: "but if they turn back, then know that Allāh desires to afflict them on account of some of their faults"; instead of saying, 'but if they turn back, then Allāh desires . . .' or some other expression to that effect. In its present structure the verse intends to teach the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that their turning back is caused by divine subjugation, as such it should not cause grief to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); he is a Messenger inviting people to the way of his Lord; if anything grieves him it should do so because Allāh's will is predominant in the affairs of religious Call. As nothing can overcome Allāh's will, and it is He Who leads them here and there by His subjugation, helping some and leaving some in their deception, therefore there was no reason to be grieved.

Allāh has explained this reality in other words: *Then may be you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement. Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* (as to) *which of them is best in deed. And most surely We will make what is on it bare ground without herbage.* (18:6-8) Thus Allāh has made it clear that the aim of sending messengers, and their coming with religious warning and good news was not that all people should enter into the fold of true religion, as a man plans and thinks concerning his requirements and needs. The only purpose of this all is to test the people and put them on trial, so that it may be known who is best in deed. Otherwise, this world and all that is in it is going to perish very soon, nothing will remain except a bare ground, free from these disbelievers who turn away from the speech of truth, and cleansed

from all their hearts' attachments. So, there is no reason to be sorry, because it is not going to bring any failure in Our endeavours, nullify Our power or cause weariness in Our will.

"and most surely many of the people are transgressors": As mentioned earlier, it gives the reason of the preceding sentence: *then know that Allãh desires to afflict them on account of some of their sins.*

QUR'ÃN: ***Is it then the judgement of*** **(the times of)** ***ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allãh to judge for a people who are sure?*****:** This question branches out from the theme of the preceding verse that describes their turning back from what is in reality the judgement of Allãh that was revealed to them and which, they knew very well, was truth. Also possibly the verse may be taken as the conclusion of the themes of previous verses.

Its meaning: As these laws and rules are the truth revealed by Allãh, and as other than these there is no true *sharī'ah*, there is nothing besides them except the system of the days of ignorance, emanating from low desires. What do these people, who turn aside from judgement of truth, want after all? There is noting else except the judgement of the Days of Ignorance. Do they then want that judgement, when there is no one better than Allãh to judge for these people who claim to be believers?

So, the sentence: "Is it the judgement of (the time of) ignorance that they desire?" is a reprimand in the form of question; and: "who is better than Allãh to judge?" Is a question with implied negative reply, i.e. no one is better than Allãh to judge, and a judgement is followed because of its good. The clause: "for a people who are sure", is an insinuation to them that if they are truthful in their claim of believing in Allãh, then they are sure of His signs; and those who are sure of His signs deny that any one can be better than Allãh in judgement.

It should be noted that these verses in several places turn from singular or plural first person pronoun to that of third person and *vice versa*. For example, the clause: *surely Allãh loves those who judge equitably*, followed by: *Surely We sent down Torah*, which is followed by: *as they were required to guard* (part) *of the Book of Allãh*, after which comes: *and fear Me*, and so on. Whenever the third person uses the proper Divine Name: Allãh, it reflects on the importance of the subject. Where the first person singular pronoun is used, it shows that all affairs are in the hand of Allãh alone, without any inter-

ference from any friend or intercessor. If the verse speaks of any good promise or attraction, it is Allāh who is going to manage it and He is the Most Noble of those who fulfil their promise. If it contains a threat or warning then it is really most troublesome and hardest and no friend or intercessor can avert it from man, because the matter is in Allāh's hand alone. And He [by using singular pronoun] has nullified every intermediate link and rejected every intervening cause. Ponder on it; and some aspects of it have been described earlier.

TRADITIONS

Majmaʿu 'l-bayān narrates under the verse: *O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together in hastening in unbelief . . .*, from al-Baqir (a.s.) that he said, "A woman of high status in Khaybar committed adultery with a man of high rank from among them – and both had spouses. So they did not like to stone them. They sent (some one) to the Jews of Medina and wrote to them to ask the Prophet about it, hoping that he would allow them some latitude. So a group of them, including Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf, Kaʿb ibn Usayd, Shuʿbah ibn ʿAmr, Mālik ibn aṣ-Ṣayf and Kināhah ibn Abi 'l-Ḥaqīq, etc., went (to the Prophet, s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Muḥammad! Tell us about a fornicator and a fornicatress, when they have their spouses, what is the prescribed punishment for them?' He said, 'And will you agree to my judgement in this?' They said, 'Yes.' So Jibrīl came down with (the order of) stoning. (The Prophet) told it to them; they refused to accept it. Jibrīl said, 'Make Ibn Ṣūriyā (arbitrator) between you and them;' and gave his particulars to (the Prophet).

"So the Prophet said, 'Do you know a young man, beardless, white, one-eyed, who lives in Fadak and is called Ibn Ṣūriyā?' They said, 'Yes.' He said, 'What position does he have among you? They said, '(He is) the most knowledgeable Jew (living on the face of the earth) of what Allāh had revealed to Mūsā.' He said, 'Then you send (message) to call him.' They did so, and ʿAbdullāh ibn Ṣūriyā came to them.

"So the Prophet said to him, 'I adjure you by Allāh, that which there is no god but He, and Who sent down Torah to Mūsā, and parted the sea for you, and delivered you and drowned the people of Pharaoh, and made the clouds to give shade over you and sent to you manna and quails, do you find in your Book (the punishment of) stoning for

the one who commits adultery while having a spouse?' Ibn Ṣūriyã said, 'Yes. By Him Whom you have reminded me, if it were not for the fear that the Lord of Torah would burn me down if I lied or changed, I would not have confessed to you. However, (now) you tell me how it is in your Book, O Muḥammad!' He said, 'When four witnesses of approved probity testify that he had entered into her as kohl stick enters kohl container, then he becomes liable to stoning.' Ibn Ṣūriyã said, 'Exactly like it had Allãh revealed to Mūsã in Torah.'

Then the Prophet said to him, 'What was the first time you became lax in the judgement of Allãh?' He said, '[It was our custom that] when a man of status committed adultery, we did nothing to him, and when a weak person did so, we enforced the punishment to him; thus fornication increased in our high class society, until a cousin of one of our kings committed adultery and we did not subject him to stoning. Then another man committed the same and the King wanted to stone him. But the man's people told the King, "Never, until you stone that person, i.e., the King's cousin." So we said, "Come together, so that we lay down something below stoning that will be applied to men of high and low status both." Thus we laid down flogging and *taḥmīm*, that is, the fornicator and fornicatress should each be flogged forty strokes, then their faces be blackened, and they be put on two donkeys their faces being towards the donkey's posterior, and they be made to go round (the town). They prescribed it in place of stoning.'

"The Jews then said to Ibn Ṣūriyã, 'How quickly you told him (everything); you did not deserve what we had said about you, but you were absent, and we did not like to slander your reputation.' He said, 'He adjured me by Torah, otherwise I would not have informed him.'

The Prophet gave his judgement and the two were stoned near the door of his mosque. And he said, 'I am the first to revive your judgement when they had made it dead.' Then Allãh revealed in this connection: *O People of the Book! Indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much.* Then Ibn Ṣūriyã stood up and put his hands on the knees of the Messenger of Allãh and said, 'This is the place of the one who seeks protection by Allãh and you, that you should not mention to us the "much" which you have been told to pass over.' So the Prophet did not mention it.

"Then Ibn Ṣūriyã asked him about his sleep. He (the Prophet) said, 'My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.' He said, 'You said the truth; now tell me (why) a child resembles his father and has no

resemblance with his mother at all, or resembles his mother without having any resemblance to his father.' He said, 'The water of whichever of the parents tops that of the other, his or her resemblance will prevail.' He said, 'You said the truth; now tell me which parts of the child belong to the man and which to the woman?'" (The Imām, a.s.), said, "Then the Messenger of Allāh went into trance for a long time; then he came out of it, with ruddy face and pouring sweat; and he said, 'Flesh, blood, nail and fat belong to the woman, and bone, sinew and veins belong to the man.' He said, 'You said the truth; your affairs are those of a prophet.'

"So Ibn Ṣūriyā accepted Islam at this stage. And he said, 'O Muḥammad! Which of the angels comes to you?' He said, 'Jibrīl. He said, 'Describe his attributes to me; and the Prophet described it.' He said, 'I bear witness that he is in Torah as you have said and that you are truly the Messenger of Allāh.'

"When Ibn Ṣūriyā accepted Islam, the Jews quarrelled with him and abused him.

"When they wanted to leave, Banū Qurayẓah caught the hold of Banu 'n-Naḍīr and said, 'O Muḥammad! (These are) our brothers, Banu 'n-Naḍīr, our father is one, and our religion is one, and our prophet is one. When they slay one of us, (the slain one) is not avenged [i.e. his killer is not killed], rather they give us his blood money seventy *wasaq*[34] of date; and when we slay one of them, they kill the killer and take from us double the amount, one hundred and forty *wasaq* of date. If the slain one is a woman, they kill (in her retaliation) one of our men, and (they kill) two of our men in place of their one man, and one of our free men in place of their slave; and our wounds are recompensed at half of their wounds. Therefore, you judge between them and us. So, Allāh revealed the verse about stoning and retaliation.'"

The author says: aṭ-Ṭabrisī has also narrated in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*, through a group of exegetes, in addition to his narration from al-Bāqir (a.s.). Also, there are traditions in Sunnī *tafsīr*s and collections of *aḥādīth*, somewhat nearer to the beginning of the above story, narrated through several chains from Abū Hurayrah, Barā' ibn 'Āzib, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās and others. The traditions are nearer in meaning to each other. The end part of the tradition has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Abu 'sh-Shaykh from Qatādah, and from Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Isḥāq, aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Ibn

[34] A weight (*tr.*)

Abī Shaybah, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and others from Ibn ʻAbbās.

As for the confirmation (in the tradition) by Ibn Ṣūriyã that the order of stoning was found in the Torah, and that it was the meaning of the verse: *And how do they make you a judge and they have the Torah . . .*, it is also supported by the fact that nearly similar order is found in the Torah which is prevalent among them, as may be seen in the Deuteronomy, ch. 22, vs. 22-24:

22. If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.
23. If a damsel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;
24. Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.[35]

As you have seen, this reserves stoning for some eventualities.

As for the report in the tradition that they had also asked the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) about the law of blood money, apart from their question regarding the law of adultery, it has been written earlier that the verses are not without some support to it. As for the order of retaliation of slaying and wounding which the verse says was prescribed in the Torah, this too is found in the present Torah, as may be seen in Exodus, ch. 21, vs. 12-13 & 23-25:

12. He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.
13. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver *him* into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.

. . . . . .

23. And if *any* mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life,
24. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,
25. Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Further, the Leviticus, ch. 24, vs. 17-20, says:

17. And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.
18. And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast.
19. And if a man causes a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done,

[35] These quotations as well as all others from the Old and New Testaments throughout various volumes of the English al-Mīzãn have been taken from the Authorized (King James) Version of the Holy Bible. (*tr.*)

so shall it be done to him;
20. Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him *again*.

as-Suyūṭī narrates through Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh from Ibn ʻAbbās that he said, "Surely Allāh revealed: *and whoever did not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers. . . . that are the unjust. . . . that are the transgressors.* He revealed it about two groups of the Jews, one of them subdued the other in the Era of Ignorance, until they reconciliated and made peace (on the condition) that if the mighty group slayed someone of the weaker group, his blood money should be fifty *wasaq*, and if the weaker one slayed a member of the mighty group, his blood money should be a hundred *wasaq*. This continued until the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) came to Medina. The two groups came down to welcome the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and he had not overpowered them yet. Then the weaker group stood up and said, 'Was there ever such a thing between two tribes? Their religion is one, their lineage is one and their town is one and (yet) blood money of one is half of that of the other? Certainly, we had given it to you only because of the injustice you did to us and in fear of you. But now that Muḥammad has arrived, we shall not give in to you.' War was almost to erupt between them, and then they agreed to make the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) (Arbitrator) between them. Then the mighty group thought it over and said, 'By Allāh! Muḥammad is not going to give you from them the double of what he would give them from you;' and they have truly said that they had not given it to us but because of (our) injustice and coercion to them. So, they engaged in secret intrigue against the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.). Allāh informed His Messenger of all their affairs and what they wanted. Then Allāh revealed: *O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together . . . and most surely many of the people are transgressors.*" [5:41-49] Then he said, "By Allāh! It was revealed about them." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: al-Qummī has narrated this story *inter alia* in a lengthy tradition in his *at-Tafsīr*; and it says that it was ʻAbdullāh ibn Ubayy who talked on behalf of Banu 'n-Naḍīr – and it was the mighty one – and tried to frighten the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) of them, and that it was he who had said: *If you are given this, take it,*

and if you are not given this, be cautious.

But the first tradition is truer in text, because its meaning is more in conformity with the context of the verses; the first parts of the verses – particularly the first two – do not fit the story of the blood money between Banu 'n-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayẓah, as is not hidden from a person who recognizes the literary styles. It is not unlikely that it is an attempt to apply the story to the Qur'ãn, as is the case with a lot of traditions purporting to describe the reason of revelation of verses. It is as though the narrator found this story applicable to the verse: *And We prescribed to them in it that life is for life, . . .* and preceding ones; then he found that the verses are connected with one another beginning from: *O Messenger! Let not those grieve you who strive together . . .* so he took all these verses as revealed in this story, and became oblivious of the story of stoning. And Allãh knows better.

Sulaymãn ibn Khãlid said, "I heard Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), saying, 'When Allãh intends good for a servant, He scratches up a white spot in his heart, and deputes to him an angel who keeps him on right (path); and when He intends evil for a servant, He scratches up a black spot in his heart, and closes the hearing of his heart, and deputes to him a Satan who leads him astray.' Then he recited this verse: *Therefore* (for) *whomsoever Allãh intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam; and* (for) *whosoever He intends that He should leave him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending into the sky . . .* [6:125]. Then he said: *Surely those against whom the word of your Lord has proved true will not believe* [10:95]; and he said: *. . . Those are they for whom Allãh does not desire that He should purify their hearts; . . .* [5:41]." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyãshī)

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from as-Sakūnī that Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) said, "*as-Suḥt* (forbidden) is the price of dead body, and price of dog, and dowery for fornication, and bribe in judgement and wage of *al-kãhin* (**اَلْكَاهِن** = fortuneteller, soothsayer)." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: The tradition describes a number of forbidden and unlawful earnings, without encompassing all such things. There are a lot of unlawful earnings as detailed in traditions. There are many traditions of this theme narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.).

ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated that ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭãlib was asked

about *suḥt*, he said, "Bribe." It was said to him, "In judgement?" He said, "That is disbelief." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: "That is disbelief" points to what has come in the verses under discussion in condemnation of *suḥt* and taking bribe in judgement: *and barter not My signs for a small price and whoever did not judge by what Allāh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers*. Many traditions from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) have repeatedly said that: 'As for taking bribe in judgement, it is disbelief in Allāh and His Messenger.' There are numerous traditions in exegesis of *suḥt* and its prohibition, narrated through Shī'ah and Sunnī chains and recorded in their collections of *aḥādīth*.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim, an-Naḥḥās (in his *an-Nāsikh wa 'l-mansūkh*), aṭ-Ṭabarānī, al-Ḥākim (saying that it was correct), Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunanu 'l-kubrā*) have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said, "Two verses of this chapter – i.e. 'The Table' – were abrogated: the verse of *al-qalāid* (اَلْقَلاَئِدُ = sacrificial animals with symbolic garlands) and: *therefore if they come to you, judge between them or turn aside from them.* Thus the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had option, if he wished he would judge between them and if he wished he would turn aside from them and return them to their laws. Then was revealed (the verse): *And that you should judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their low desires.*" (Ibn 'Abbās) said, "So the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was ordered to judge between then according to our Book." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Abū 'Ubayd, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said about the verse: *judge between them or turn aside from them*, that it was abrogated by the verse: *And that you should judge between them by what Allāh has revealed*. (*ibid.*)

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has also narrated it through 'Abdu 'r-Razzāq from 'Ikrimah. However, the theme of the verses does not agree with this claim of abrogation. The clear context of the verses shows them to be interlinked and proves that they were revealed all together. As such there is no sense in saying that some of its verses have abrogated some others. Moreover, the verse: *And that you should judge between them by what Allāh has revealed*, is not independent in its meaning; it is connected with the preceding verses; therefore there is no reason to treat it as an abrogating one. (However, if abrogation is OK with all these difficulties, then the clause: *therefore judge between*

them by what Allãh has revealed, in the preceding verse, has more right to be treated as abrogating.) Apart from that, you have seen that the pronoun, *them*, in, *judge between them*, more manifestly refers to the people in general, rather than the People of the Book or particularly the Jews. Moreover, we have described in the beginning of this chapter that the chapter of "The Table" is abrogating, and not abrogated.

Abū ‘Amr az-Zubayrī narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said, "Surely the things because of which one deserves *Imãmah* are: Purification, cleanliness from sins and grave offences which make one liable to the hell; then enlightened – and another copy says, (hidden) knowledge of all that the *ummah* needs, its *ḥalãl* and *ḥarãm*, knowledge of its Book, its particular and general, decisive and ambiguous, intricacies of its knowledge and marvels of its interpretation, its abrogating and abrogated."

"I said, 'What is the proof that Imãm cannot be except he who has the knowledge of these things you have mentioned?' He said, 'The word of Allãh regarding those whom He has given permission to rule and made them deserving to it: *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets who submitted themselves* (to Allãh) *were judging* (matters) *for those who were Jews, and* (so did) *the Divines and the scholars, . . .* So these are the Imãms, below the prophets, who raised up the people by their knowledge; and as for *al-aḥbãr* (اَلأَحْبَارُ), they are the scholars, below the Divines; then Allãh gave information and said: *as they were required to guard* (part) *of the Book of Allãh*; and He did not say, they were put under the burden of the Book.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: It is a very fine argument presented by the Imãm (a.s.); it shows a wonderful connotation of the verse, finer than the previously given explanation: It describes that the sequence used in the verse – the prophets, then the Divines, then the scholars – points to their descending ranks in excellence and perfection; thus the Divines are below the prophets and above the scholars, and the scholars are those men of religious erudition who have been entrusted with its knowledge through teaching and learning.

Allãh has described the mode of the Divines' knowledge in these words: *as they were required to guard* (part) *of the Book of Allãh, and they were witnesses thereof.* If the idea were to show its similarity to the scholars' knowledge, it would have been said, as they

were placed under it, as Allāh says: *The similitude of those who were placed under the Torah, then they did not hold it* . . . (62:5). It is because *al-istiḥfāẓ* (اَلإِسْتِحْفَاظ) means to ask someone to guard; it implies obligating him to guard and protect; it is similar to the words of Allāh: *That He may question the truthful of their truth*, . . . (33:8), i.e. that He may obligate them to display the attribute of truthfulness that is hidden in their souls.

This guarding of the Book and its witnessing cannot be complete without *'iṣmah* (عِصْمَةٌ = sinlessness) which Allāh does not grant to non-*ma'ṣūm*s. *'Iṣmah*'s essentiality is understood from the fact that Allāh has based His permission to them to judge on their guarding of the Book, and has given credence to their witnessing based on the same; and it is impossible to give credence to their witnessing if there were any possibility of their falling into error or committing any mistake – because it is on their testimony that the Book is confirmed.

So, this guarding and witnessing is something quite different from the protection and the testimony, which we are familiar with, in our society. Rather it is of the type of the protection of deeds and witnessing that has been mentioned in the verse: . . . *that you may be the witnesses for the people and* (that) *the Messenger may be a witness for you* . . . (2:143). Its explanation was given in the first volume of the Book.[36]

This guarding and witnessing is ascribed to all, although only some of them were going to do it, in the same way as witnessing of deeds has been ascribed to the whole *ummah*, although only a few shall do it. Such usage is common in the Qur'ān; e.g. Allāh says: *And certainly We gave the Book and the Wisdom and the Prophecy to the Children of Israel* . . . (45:16). Of course, the scholars too were given the responsibility of guarding and witnessing and covenant was taken to that effect from them too. But it was only a subjective religious affirmation, quite apart from real affirmation that depends on real guarding, free from mistake and error; and divine religion cannot be complete without this as it cannot be without that.

It is now established that there is a position between those of the prophets and the scholars, and it is the position of the Imāms. Allāh has told us about it in His word: *And We made of them Imāms to guide by Our command as they were patient, and they were certain of our signs* (32:24). It does not go against the verses, which say: *And*

[36] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.2, pp.155-60. (*tr.*)

We gave him Isḥãq, and Ya'qūb, as a further gift, and We made (them) *all good ones. And We made them Imãms, to guide* (people) *by Our command, . . .* (21:72-73). It is because joining of prophethood and Imãmate in a group does not prevent separation of the two positions in others. Some details about Imãmate have been given in the first volume under the divine words: *And* (remember) *when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words, . . .* (2:124).[37]

In short, the divines and Imãms, who hold the middle rank between the prophets and the scholars, do have the knowledge of the Book as it should be known, and do bear witness thereof as it should be done.

The verse speaks about the divines and Imãms of the Children of Israel. But the verse shows that it was because Torah was a Book revealed by Allãh which contained guidance and light, i.e., matters of belief and deed required of the *ummah*; and if that demanded this guarding and witnessing which can only be done by the divines and Imãms, then the same will apply to every Book revealed by Allãh which contained divine gnosis and practical laws. And this proves our intended purpose.

Therefore, the Imãm's words, 'so these are the Imãms below prophets', mean that the Imãms' rank is below that of the prophets, according to the sequence given in the verse; likewise, the scholars are below the Imãms. The words, they bring up the people with their knowledge, make it clear that the Imãm has taken the word, *ar-rabbãnī* (اَلرَّبَّانى) as being derived from *at-tarbiyah* (اَلتَّرْبِيَةُ = to bring up) and not from *ar-rububiyyah* (اَلرُّبُوبِيَّةُ = lordship). The meanings of other clauses are clear from earlier explanation.

Perhaps this meaning was intended by al-Bãqir (a.s.) when he said that the verse: *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light . . . required to guard* (part) *of the Book of Allãh . . .*, was revealed about the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.). Mãlik al-Juhanī narrates that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said about the above verse, "About us was it revealed." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

Tafsīru 'l-burhãn writes under the verse: *and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers*, that [al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from 'Abdullãh ibn Muskãn that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said,

[37] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.2, pp.71-86 (*tr.*)

'Whoever judged about two dirhams a judgement of injustice, then enforced it by coercion, he shall be from among the people of this verse: *and whoeverr did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers*.' I said, 'And how does he coerce in this matter?' He said, 'He will be having whip and prison; so he gives judgement against someone; then if he agreed to his judgement, (well and good); otherwise, he would beat him with his whip and put him in prison.'"

The author says: ash-Shaykh has narrated it in *at-Tahdhīb* through his chain from Ibn Muskãn, from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); and al-ʻAyyãshī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from him. The beginning of the *ḥadīth* is narrated through other chains too from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.).

In this tradition, the judgement is made conditional on coercion. It implies that the judgement should be of such a nature as would produce an affect; it would be a decree, which by its very nature would show some definite result. Otherwise, mere utterance is not called judgement.

Saʻīd ibn Manṣūr, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn ʻAbbãs that he said: *and whoever did not judge by what Allãh revealed, those are they that are the unbelievers, . . . that are the unjust, . . . that are the transgressors,* (were revealed) especially about the Jews. (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: The three verses are unrestricted and there is no cause to justify their restriction; place of application does not permit change in word's generality. Apart from that, the third verse is related to the Christians, not the Jews. Moreover, a contrary tradition is narrated from the same Ibn ʻAbbãs.

ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd narrates from Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr that he said, "I asked Saʻīd ibn Jubayr about these verses of 'The Table'; I told (him) that a group thinks that they were revealed to the Children of Israel, and not to us. He said, 'Recite what is before it and what is after it,' so I recited them before him. So he said, 'No; but it was revealed to us.' Then I met Muqassim, *mawlã* of Ibn ʻAbbãs; and I asked him about these verses in 'The Table'; I told (him) that a group thinks that they were revealed to the Children of Israel, and not to us. He said, 'It was revealed to the Children of Israel and revealed to us, and whatever was revealed to them and to us, it is for them and for us.'

"Then I went to ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), and asked him about these verses in 'The Table'; and I told him that I had asked Saʻīd ibn Jubayr and Muqassim about them. He (the Imãm) said, 'Then what did Muqassim say?' So I informed him of it." (Ḥakīm) said, "The Imãm said, 'He has said truth; but it is an unbelief, not like the unbelief of polytheism; and a transgression, not like the transgression of polytheism; and an injustice, not like the injustice of polytheism.' Then I met Saʻīd ibn Jubayr and informed him of what he (the Imãm) had said. Saʻīd ibn Jubayr said to his son, 'How did you find him?' [He said], 'Indeed I found for him excellence over you and Muqassim." (*ibid.*)

The author says: The earlier given commentary shows that the tradition fits the apparent meaning of the verse.

al-Kulaynī narrates in *al-Kafī* through his chain from al-Ḥalabī from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.); and al-ʻAyyãshī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* from Abū Baṣīr from the same Imãm (a.s.) that he said about the verse: *but he who foregoes it, it shall be an expiation for him*; "Shall be expiated from his sins as much as he will forego of his wound or other things."

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from a man from the Helpers that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said regarding the words of Allãh: *but he who foregoes it, it shall be an expiation for him*. "A man, his tooth is broken, or his hand is cut, or any organ of his body is cut or wounded, and he foregoes it, so (similar) quantity of his faults is reduced from him. If it was one-fourth of blood-money, then one-fourth of his faults, and if it was one-third, then one-third of his faults; and if it was (full) blood-money (all) his faults will fall down from him in similar way." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: A similar tradition has been narrated by ad-Daylamī from Ibn ʻUmar. Probably, what this and the preceding traditions say that the expiation is divided according to the division of foregoing, is inferred from the fact that in the *sharīʻah*, blood-money, which is divisible, has the same position as retailation; then retaliation and blood-money together are weighed *vis-à-vis* expiation of sins, and this too is divisible. Therefore part of it would stand opposite to part of that, as the whole stands opposite to the whole.

al-Qummī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr*, under the verse: *for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way*, that he (a.s.) said: "For

every prophet was a *sharī'ah* and a way."

Tafsīru 'l-burhān writes under the verse: *Is it then the judgement of* (the times of) *ignorance that they desire?*, that [al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid from his father from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said, "Judges are four (types), three are in the Fire and one is in the Garden; a man judges unjustly and knowingly, so he is in the Fire; and a man judges unjustly and he does not know, so he is in the Fire; and a man judges justly but he does not know, so he is in the Fire; and a man judges justly and he knows, so he is in the Garden."

And he (a.s.) said, "Judgements are (of) two (categories): Judgement of Allāh and judgement of (the Era of) Ignorance; so whoever misses the judgement of Allāh, judges according to the (Era of) Ignorance."

The author says: There are many traditions of these two themes from the Shī'ah and Sunnī chains, recorded under the chapters of judgement and evidence. The verse hints at, rather clearly denotes both meanings. As for the first meaning, it is because judging unjustly – whether he knew it to be unjust, or judged without knowledge and it chanced to be unjust – and likewise judging justly but without knowing it, all this is following the low desire, and Allāh has forbidden it in His words: *therefore judge between them by what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their low disires* (diverging) *from the truth that has come to you*. In this verse, Allāh warned against following low desires and has put it parallel to the judgement by the revealed truth. It is understood from it that permission of judgement is conditional on knowledge of truth; otherwise giving judgement is not allowed because it is merely following the low desires. Moreover, the name, judgement of the Era of Ignorance, is applicable to it, which stands face to face with the judgement of Allāh.

As for the second theme, i.e., the division of judgement between that of Allāh and that of the Era of Ignorance, it is inferred from the apparent meaning of the words of Allāh: *Is it then the judgement of* (the times of) *ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allāh to judge . . .?* See how the two judgements stand opposite each other.

aṭ-Ṭabarī has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* from Qatādah, under the verse: *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets who submitted themselves* (to Allāh) *were*

judging (matters) *for those who were Jews, and* (so did) *the Divines and the scholars*, that he said, "As for the Divines, they were jurisprudents of the Jews; and as for the *aḥbãr*, they were their scholars." He (also) said, "And it has been reported to us that the Prophet of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, when this verse was revealed, "We do judge the Jews and the others from people of (other) religions."

The author says: as-Suyūṭī too has narrated it under the same verse through ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd and through Ibn Jarīr from Qatãdah.

This tradition apparently shows that the reported utterance of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is related to this verse, i.e., the verse is the proof of this statement. But the difficulty is that the said verse proves only that the judgement was based on the Torah and was reserved for the Jews because it contains the word: *for these who were Jews*; it did not extend to non-Jews, or to judging by other than Torah, contrary to what appears from the tradition. It could be said that the Prophet's word, "We do judge", means that the prophets do so; but it is a ridiculous meaning and has no relevance to the verse.

However, it appears that one of the narrators has erred in quoting the verse, and that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had spoken those words after revelation of the verse: *And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, . . . therefore judge between them by what Allãh has revealed and do not follow their low desires . . .* This hypothesis fits on what has earlier been mentioned that apparently the pronoun in, *judge between them*, refers to the people and not particularly to the Jews. However, the narrator has quoted one verse (5:44) in place of the other (5:48).

* * * * *

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَتَّخِذُواْ ٱلۡيَهُودَ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰٓ أَوۡلِيَآءَۘ بَعۡضُهُمۡ
أَوۡلِيَآءُ بَعۡضٖۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُم مِّنكُمۡ فَإِنَّهُۥ مِنۡهُمۡۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهۡدِي ٱلۡقَوۡمَ
ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ٥١ فَتَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٞ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِيهِمۡ
يَقُولُونَ نَخۡشَىٰٓ أَن تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٞۚ فَعَسَى ٱللَّهُ أَن يَأۡتِيَ بِٱلۡفَتۡحِ أَوۡ أَمۡرٖ
مِّنۡ عِندِهِۦ فَيُصۡبِحُواْ عَلَىٰ مَآ أَسَرُّواْ فِيٓ أَنفُسِهِمۡ نَٰدِمِينَ ٥٢
وَيَقُولُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَهَٰٓؤُلَآءِ ٱلَّذِينَ أَقۡسَمُواْ بِٱللَّهِ جَهۡدَ أَيۡمَٰنِهِمۡ
إِنَّهُمۡ لَمَعَكُمۡۚ حَبِطَتۡ أَعۡمَٰلُهُمۡ فَأَصۡبَحُواْ خَٰسِرِينَ ٥٣ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا
ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَن يَرۡتَدَّ مِنكُمۡ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَسَوۡفَ يَأۡتِي ٱللَّهُ بِقَوۡمٖ يُحِبُّهُمۡ
وَيُحِبُّونَهُۥٓ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ يُجَٰهِدُونَ فِي
سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوۡمَةَ لَآئِمٖۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضۡلُ ٱللَّهِ يُؤۡتِيهِ مَن يَشَآءُۚ
وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥٤

O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely

Allãh does not guide the unjust people (51). *So you will see those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening in them, saying: "We fear lest a calamity should befall us;" but it may be that Allãh will bring the victory or a thing from Himself, so that they shall be regretting on account of what they hid in their souls* (52). *And those who believe will say: "Are these they who swore by Allãh with the most forcible of their oaths that they were most surely with you? Their deeds shall go for nothing, so they shall become losers."* (53). *O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion, then soon Allãh will bring a people that He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allãh's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allãh's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allãh is Ample-giving, knowing* (54).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

It is difficult to say anything about these verses' connection with the preceding ones or the ones that follow, like: *Only Allãh is your Guardian . . . then surely the party of Allãh are they that shall be triumphant*; and then its connection with that which follows: *O you who believe! Do not take for guardians . . .*, and finally their connection with the verse: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you . . .*

But as for the four verses under discussion, they speak about the Jews and the Christians. The Qur'ăn had not talked about them in the Meccan verses, because there was no such need at that time. It however describes their maneuvers in the verses revealed at Medina. Even then, the ones revealed in the early Medinan period are not concerned with the Christians, because Muslims in those days were involved with the Jews. They had to mingle with them, live with them, keep good relations with them, or evert their deceit and neutralize their plot. They were entangled with the Christians in the later half of the Prophet's stay at Medina. Therefore, probably these four verses were revealed in that period; and perhaps the 'victory' alludes to the conquest of Mecca.

But it has been mentioned earlier that more reliably the chapter of "The Table" was revealed in the year of the Last pilgrimage, when Mecca was already conquered. So, does this victory refer to some conquest other than that of Mecca? Or, were these four verses revealed before Meccan conquest, and before the complete chapter was revealed? Again, is the last verse: *O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion, then soon Allãh will bring a people . . .*, connected with the three preceding ones? Which was the group whose apostasy was expected? Who were those people whom Allãh promised to bring in place of the apostates? All these unanswered questions have compounded the confusion. The narratives giving the reason of revelation are varied and conflicting; actually they are merely personal opinions of the ancient exegetes, as is the case with most of such traditions. This excessive contradiction perplexes the mind and it fails to understand the verses' meaning. Add to it the intermingling of sectarian prejudice with personal interpretations, as you will see later in the traditions and exegetes' writings – both ancient and modern.

Meditation on these verses proves that the four are interlinked and independent having no relation with the preceding and the following verses; and the fourth one completes the intended theme. However one must be wary, in looking for its meaning, of laxities and carelessness indulged in by exegetes who have based their interpretations on personal views, especially regarding the attributes mentioned in the verses.

In a nutshell, Allãh warns the believers against taking the Jews and the Christians for friends, and threatens them most severely; then points in an apocalyptical way where such friendship was to take them and how it would turn into ruins the magnificent structure of religious character; then Allãh will bring on scene a people who will manage the affairs and restore the religion's structure to its original splendour.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other*****:** *Majma'u 'l-bayan* says: "*al-Ittikhãdh* (اَلإِتِّخَاذُ) means to rely on a thing in preparation for an affair; it is on the stem of *ifti'ãl* (اِفْتِعَالُ) from the root, *al-akhdh* (اَلأَخْذُ = to take); actually it was *al-i'tikhãdh* (اَلإِئْتِخَاذُ), then " ' (= ء)" was changed to "*t* (=تَاء)" and that was amalgamated in the other "*t*". The same has happened with *al-itti'ãd* (اَلاِتِّعَادُ) from *al-wa'd* (اَلْوَعْدُ = to promise). *al-Akhdh* (to take) is used in various ways: You say, 'He took the book (when he placed it in his hand)', 'He took the offering

(when he accepted it)', 'Allãh took him from his refuge (when He caused him to die);' it originally means passing of a thing from one direction to another."

ar-Rãghib says in *Mufradãtu 'l-Qur'ãn*: "*al-Wilã'* (اَلْوِلاَءُ) and *at-tawãllī* (اَلتَّوَلِّى) = two or more things appear together in such a way that nothing extraneous comes between them. As an extended metaphor, it is used for proximity and nearness – in place, in relationship, in religion, in friendship, belief and mutual helping." More will be explained later.

In short, *al-wilãyah* is a sort of proximity, which removes barriers and partitions between two things, keeping in view the purpose of that proximity. If the proximity is with respect to piety and help, then *waliyy* (وَلِىّ) is the helper whom nothing can prevent from helping the person who is near him. If it is in respect of harmony and love (which is spiritual attraction) then *waliyy* is the beloved before whom man cannot keep his own will and gives him whatever he desires; and if it is in respect of relationship, the *waliyy* is the one who interits him without any hindrance; and if it is with respect of obedience, then the *waliyy* is the one who controls his affairs in any way he pleases.

Allãh, the Sublime, in His words: "do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends", has not put any condition or speciality on friendship; it is unrestricted [and as such should be prohibiting any kind of nearness]. But the words in the next verse: *But you will see those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening towards them, saying: "We fear lest a calamity should befall us"*, show that *wilãyah* in this verse is a sort of proximity and joining which is in affinity with the excuse offered by them, "We fear lest a calamity should befall us." As such it points to the turn of fortune, which alternates between the people. Such calamities could befall them through other than the Jews and Christians in which case these hypocrites hoped to get help from these two groups by taking them for *awliyã'*, in the meaning of helpers; in the same way they were afraid of calamities befalling them from these two groups, and hoped to avert it by taking them for *awliyã'*, in the meaning of nearness in love and friendship.

Wilãyah in the meaning of nearness in love and friendship gives both benefits of help and spiritual blending. Therefore, it is the meaning intended in the verse. We shall describe under the last verse, *O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion . . .*, that *wilãyah* here means only friendship, nothing else.

An exegete has forcefully claimed that *wilãyah* in these verses means *wilãyah* of helping – two persons or two groups enter into alliance or covenant that when need arises each party would help the other. His argument runs as follows:

"The verses – as their apparent meaning shows – were revealed before the Last Pilgrimage, in the early days of *hijrah*, when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and the Muslims were not finished with the affairs of the Jews in Medina and around it in Fadak and Khaybar, etc. and beyond them were the Christians. Those Jews and Christians had entered into pacts and covenants of mutual help with various Arab tribes.

"This statement might fit on what has been narrated (in reasons of revelation) that ‘Ubãdah ibn aṣ-Ṣãmit (from Banū ‘Awf ibn al-Khazraj) disavowed Banū Qaynuqã‘ when they fought the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and upto that time there was a *wilãyah* of covenant between him and them; but ‘Abdullãh ibn Ubayy (the leader of the hypocrites) did not separate from them and hastened towards them, saying: *'We fear lest a calamity should befall us.'*

"Or, as has been narrated in the story of Abū Lubãbah that when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), sent him to Banū Qurayẓah, so that he should make them come out of their fortress and accept the Prophet's judgement, he pointed with his hand to his throat, hinting to them that it meant slaughter.

"Or, as is narrated that some of them used to write the news of Medina to the Christians of Syria, and some were reporting to the Jews of Medina in order to benefit from their wealth, even if it be a loan.

"Or, as is reported that after the killings and defeat in the battle of Uḥud, some of them said that he would attach himself to so-and-so Jew or Christian.

"All these narratives almost unanimously claim that it were the hypocrites who had said: *'We fear lest a calamity should befall us.'*

"In short, the verses forbid entering into covenant and *wilãyah* of mutual help between the Muslims and the Jews and the Christians.

"Some people have emphasized it, claiming that linguistically the words and context of the verse totally oppose taking *wilãyah* in it in the meaning of *wilãyah* of love and reliance; it is also opposed by the reason of revelation and the overall condition under which the Muslims and the People of the Book lived in the era of revelation.

"How can the verse be taken to prohibit living and mingling

with them even if they were *dhimmī*s or had pact with Muslims? We know that the Jews lived with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims in Medina, and the Muslims dealt with them with total equality."

COMMENT: All this shows a laxity and carelessness in finding out the verse's connotation:

What has he said that the verses were revealed before the year of the Last Pilgrimage – and it was the year when the chapter of "The Table" was revealed – presents not much difficulty; but it does not prove that the *wilãyah* denotes entering into covenant and not *wilãyah* of love.

As for the narrated reasons of revelation that show that the verses were revealed particularly about the covenant and the *wilãyah* of mutual help between some Arab tribes and the Jews and the Christians, the following comments apply to them:

First: The said reasons of revelation are mutually contradictory and do not present a single connotation which could be relied upon;

Second: It does not cover the *wilãyah* of the Christians, even if it covers somehow that of the Jews, because the Arabs did not have any *wilãyah* of covenant with the Christians.

Third: We agree to the reasons of revelation in what they say; yet you have been told several times that most of those traditions, apart from being weak, are merely attempts to apply historic events on the Qur'ãnic verses which appear to have some relevance to them – although we find no difficulty in it.

However, the idea, that such narrated events particularize or restrict the generality of a Qur'ãnic verse, is not tenable, nor does its apparent meaning support it. If the apparent meanings of the verses were particularized or restricted because of some speciality of reasons of revelation, without taking it from the wordings of the verse, the Qur'ãn would have died with the death of those about whom such verses were revealed, and it could not be used in any argumentation related to any later event or incident; such an idea is not approvable by the Book or the *Sunnah* nor by reason.

He has also claimed, "Linguistically the words, and context of the verse totally oppose taking *wilãyah* here in the meaning of *wilãyah* of love and reliance. It is also opposed by the reason of revelation and the overall condition under which the Muslims and the People of the Book lived in the era of revelation." Ponder on it as much as you like but you cannot deduce any worthwhile meaning from it. When apparent meaning of a verse does not go against application of a theme to it,

reason of its revelation and overall prevailing condition of the time become irrelevant. You have known that there is no justification in restricting the verse to its reason of revelation and to the overall condition of the era. Rather, the argument goes totally against it, because a verse in its unrestricted appearance is in itself an authentic proof. You have seen that this verse too is unrestricted (and nothing points to its being restricted); therefore, it is an authentic authority in its unrestricted meaning, i.e., the *wilãyah* in the meaning of love.

The claim that meanings of single words used in the verse and its context disavow totally taking *wilãyah* in the meaning of love is really astonishing. Would that I knew what he has meant with this total disavowal, and more than that he has used the 'context' too in this argument!

How can the wording or context of the verse reject this meaning, when the clause: "do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends", is followed by the clause: "they are friends of each other", and doubtlessly *wilãyah* in this latter clause denotes love, unity and affection, and not *wilãyah* of covenant and pact. There is no sense in saying: 'Do not make a covenant with the Jews and the Christians; they have covenant with each other.' Whatever unity and relation there was among the Jews, it was the *wilãyah* of national love. The same was the case with the Christians; there was no pact or covenant made by them, it was only the love and unity based on religion.

Likewise, the words of Allãh, coming after this clause, prove this meaning: *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them*. The reason that turns a friend of a group into a member of it, is this: Love unites scattered things, unites different souls; because of love perceptions of the lovers become one, their characters mirror one another; their actions reflect each other's. The two lovers, when love overwhelms them, become as if they are one person, having a single psyche, a single will, doing a single action; one does not go against the other in the passage of life and in social norms.

This is what makes a lover of a group a member of that group and unites him with it. It has been said: Whoever loves a people, he is one of them; also [it is said]: A man is with whom he loves. And Allãh has said forbidding loving the polytheists: *O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, . . .* (60:1). The verses go on in the same vein, until it says: *. . . and*

whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust (60:9). Also He says: *You shall not find a people who believe in Allãh and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allãh and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk; . . .* (58:22). Allãh has also said regarding the love of the unbelievers – and the wording is general which includes the Jews, the Christians and the polytheists – *Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; and whoever does this, he shall have nothing* (to do) *with Allãh, except* (when) *you guard yourselves against* (them) *for fear from them; and Allãh cautions you of Himself; . . .* (3:28). The verse clearly speaks about the *wilãyah* of love and affection rather than that of covenant and pact. Remember that when the third chapter, "The House of ‘Imrãn", was revealed; the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had already concluded pacts and truce with the Jews and the polytheists.

In short, the *wilãyah* that makes one people attached to another people is that of love and affection, and not that of covenant and help; and it is quite clear. If the clause: *and whoever amongst you takes them as* awliyã’*, then surely he is one of them*, is taken to mean, whoever among you entered into a pact of mutual help after this prohibition, then surely he because of his going against this prohibition would be unjust, and would be joined to those unjust people in injustice, then it would be a vulgar meaning and would need additional conditions to be attached to the speech.

If the Qur’ãn prohibits something which was hitherto lawful, it always points to its being lawful uptil then; it does so to preserve the honour of that order which is now being changed; and to keep the sanctity of the Prophetic tradition and practice. Ponder on these verses: *O you who believe! The idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year; . . .* (9:28). *. . . Wherefore now be in contact with them and seek what Allãh has written for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct unto you from the black thread* (of night) *. . .* (2:187). *It is not allowed to you to take women afterwards, nor that you should change them for other wives, . . .* (33:52); and many other such verses.

Now, it is clear that the language of the verse, in meanings of words and in context, does not disallow *wilãyah* to be taken for love and affection; if there is any rejection, it rejects other meanings.

As for their claim that clause: *in whose hearts is a disease*, refers to the hypocrites, you will soon see that the context does not

support it.

Thus, the clause: "do not take the Jews and the Christians for *awliyā'*," clearly forbids loving them or having any affection towards them; because such feelings pull the souls and spirits towards each other and it creates mutual moral effects on both sides; and if Muslims are influenced by un-Islamic behaviour, their society will diverge from its religious way (which is based on the felicity of following the truth) to the way of unbelief (which is based on following the low desires and worshipping the Satan); and thus it will go astray from the path of the natural life.

Allāh has used for them their names of Jews and Christians, instead of saying, the People of the Book; because the phrase: "People of the Book", indicates that they are somewhat nearer to the Muslims, which in its turn gives rise to some affection and love which is opposite to what this verse orders that they should not be taken as friends. However, a coming verse mentions them as being given the Book: *O you who believe! Do not take for guardians those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke, from among those who were given the Book before you and the unbelievers; . . .* (5:57). They were given the Book and yet they take the divine religion for a mockery and a joke. This mockery and joke turns the good point of their being given the Book into utmost condemnation. When the people who were given the Book which invited to the truth and made it clear, began ridiculing the religion of truth and playing with it, they certainly deserved to be shunned and avoided; they should not be taken as friends; the believers must avoid living with them, mingling with them and having any soft feeling towards them.

"they are friends of each other": As explained earlier, *wilāyah* here means friendship, because their hearts are nearer to each other and their souls have mutual attraction. Consequently, they think in similar way; they join hands in following their low desires, and their haughtiness leads them to reject the truth; they strive together to extinguish the light of Allāh, and help each other in fighting against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims. It seems, as all of them are one person of one religion. Although actually they are not of one religion, yet they have joined their forces and have become one power against the Muslims, simply because Islam calls them to truth and opposes what in their eyes is the greatest goal: To follow their low desires and licentiousness in objects of desire and enjoyment of worldly attractions.

It is this factor that has made the Jews and the Christians – in spite of their mutual discord and enmity – into one society; they come near each other and return to one another; the Jews love the Christians and the Christians love the Jews; Jewish groups love each other, and the Christian nations are attracted to one another. That is why the clause: "they are friends of each other", has been left vague [so that it may cover all situations]. This clause explains the reason of the foregoing one: ″do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends." It means as follows: 'Do not take them for friends because, in spite of their internal discord and mutual enmity, they are fully united against you; you will not get any benefit from going near them with love and affection.'

It is possible to infer another meaning from this clause: "they are friends of each other." Do not take them for friends; because with this friendship, you expect the group, which you have befriended to help you against another group, which is not your friends; but your expectation can never materialize, because they are friends of each other, so naturally they will not help you against their own people.

QUR'ÃN: ***and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allãh does not guide the unjust people***: *at-Tawallī* (اَلتَّوَلِّی = To take as friend); *min* (مِنْ = from, part). The meaning is as follows: Whoever from amongst you takes them for friend; he is a part of them. This is an attachment brought into effect by revelation and it makes some believers members of Jewish and Christian groups. It shows that faith is a reality which has different stages, some blemished, some pure; some adulterated, some clean. This is inferred from Qur'ãnic verses like: *And most of them do not believe in Allãh without associating other*s (with Him) (12:106). This blemish and turbidity is what Allãh describes as the disease of hearts: *So you will see those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening in them, . . .*

Thus, those who love the Jews and the Christians, Allãh has counted them as belonging to the Jewish and Christian communities, although apparently they were believers. It shows at least that they were proceeding, not on the path of guidance (that is, belief), but on a way used by the said communities, it leads them where they are being led and takes them where they are taken.

That is why Allãh has explained the reason of their adherence to them by the clause: "surely Allãh does not guide the unjust people." The meaning: A man from amongst you who takes them as a friend,

then surely he is one of them, and he is proceeding on a path other than yours, because the path of belief is the path of divine guidance; this man who befriends them is unjust like them, and Allāh does not guide the unjust people.

As you see, the verse just shows that the position of the believers who befriend the Jews and the Christians is the same as theirs; but it does not go ahead, i.e. does not describe the effects branching from it. The wording is unrestricted; yet because it describes a fundamental reality (like the clauses: . . . *and that you fast is better for you* . . . [2:184]; . . . *surely prayer keeps* [one] *away from indecency and evil* . . . [29:45], etc.). It is inevitably vague, and if one wants to prove from it a subsidiary law, one should refer to the *sunnah*; and it is *fiqh* that looks into such orders.

QUR'ĀN: ***So you will see those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening in them, . . .*:** It sprouts from the preceding statement: *surely Allāh does not guide the unjust people*. As the divine guidance does not cover them, so they are in error, they do hasten in them and offer an excuse that does not deserve attention. Allāh has said, "hastening in them," instead of 'towards them'; so they are a part of them, occupying their place in error. They hasten in them not because they are afraid of befalling a calamity over them; actually they had no such fear; it was an excuse they had contrived for averting the admonition and blame they expected from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims. In fact, this hastening emanated from their friendship with, and love of those Jews and Christians.

Every injustice and falsity is bound to vanish and disappear any day; its ignominy becomes exposed before public eyes; and anyone who seeks to attain unlawful objects through wrongful means disguised as truthful, has to be bitterly disappointed; as Allāh has said: *surely Allāh does not guide the unjust people.* Consequently, it was definitely expected that Allāh would bring a victory or a thing from Himself, then they would be regretting on account of what they were doing, and the believers would clearly see through their falsehood and pretence.

The above talk makes it clear how the clause: "So you will see those in whose hearts is a disease," branches from the preceding: *surely Allāh does not guide the unjust people.* We have somewhere earlier have written the meaning of the unjust people not getting any guidance in their injustice.

The group mentioned in these verses was hypocrites, because

they showed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the believers what was not in their hearts. They claimed that they hastened in the Jews and the Christians, lest a calamity should befall them, while the real cause (which conformed to what was in their hearts) was their love of, and inclination towards Allãh's enemies. This was the aspect of their hypocrisy. But they were not hypocrites, in the meaning of unbelievers pretending to be believers, because the context does not agree with it.

Some exegetes have written that the verses refer to the hypocrites, in the latter meaning, like ‘Abdullãh ibn Ubayy and his companions, as appears from the traditions giving reason of revelations. Those hypocrites participated with the believers in their gatherings and dealt with them in an amicable way; on the other hand they had made with the Jews and the Christians covenants and pacts of mutual help. This double-dealing was done in the hope of getting benefits from both sides, and as a matter of precaution to safeguard their personal interests. In this way, they hoped to triumph either way; they would be safe from calamity on whichever side it befel.

But this interpretation of theirs is not in agreement with the context, because it contains a hope that they shall be regretting because of the victory or a thing from Allãh. The victory may refer to the conquest of Mecca or taking the fortresses of the Jews and the Christians' towns, or so on. But in all these situations there was no reason why they should be regretting, as they had taken the precaution to protect their both flanks, and there is no regret in precaution. Their regret could be in place if they had totally separated from the believers and joined the Jews and the Christians, and then calamity had befallen on their group. Likewise, the forfeiture of their deeds and the loss mentioned in the next verse, (*their deeds shall go for nothing, so they shall became losers*), have no relevance with their hypocrisy, as the hypocrites practised precaution to safeguard their interests; and if someone does so for fear of some untoward happening, and perchance that happening does not take place, he suffers no loss and won't be called a loser. In fact, precaution is a wise method in practice and does not entail any blame or condemnation.

It could be claimed that they became liable to condemnation because they went against divine prohibition and had no faith in the divine promise of victory. There is nothing wrong in this idea in itself, but the verse's wording does not support it.

QUR'ĀN: ***but it may be that Allāh will bring the victory or a thing from Himself, so that they shall be regretting on account of what they hid in their souls*****:** *'Asā* (عَسَى = may be), in divine speech, like other talks, denotes a hope, an expectation – as we have already explained that the said expectation relates to the listener, or to the situation. But this verse contains a definite association that shows that the expected event must certainly take place. The clause aims at confirming the truth of the preceding one: *surely Allāh does not guide the unjust people*; as such what it says must happen without fail.

The victory which Allāh has mentioned – and has presented it as an alternative to a thing which is unknown to us – probably supports the view that "the" in "the victory" denotes generic noun, not a particular victory. As such it does not point to the victory of Mecca, which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was promised in verses like: *Most surely He Who has made the Qur'ān binding on you will bring you back to the destination . . .* (28:85); *. . . you shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allāh pleases . . .* (48:27), and others.

Although the word, "victory" when used in the Qur'ān, refers in most of the places to the conquest of Mecca, yet in some places it is not possible to apply it on that usual theme. For example: *And they say: "When will this victory take place, if you are truthful?" Say: "On the day of victory the faith of those who* (now) *disbelieve will not profit them, nor will they be respited." Therefore, turn away from them and wait, surely they too are waiting* (32:28-30). Allāh declares here that when this victory gained the faith of those who had hitherto disbelieved will not profit them and that the unbelievers were waiting for it. Obviously, these two attributes do not apply to the Meccan conquest, nor to any other victory which Muslims have achieved upto this time. [For this reason the word, *al-fatḥ* (اَلْفَتْحُ) is rendered in many Qur'ānic translations as "judgement".]

We can think of only two situations where the faith, repentance, will not be of any profit, as we have described when writing about Repentance.[38] One: With change of this world with the next world when there will remain no free will and power. Two: If a man acquires such characteristics and traits that his heart becomes stone hard, and every hope of repentance and returning to Allāh is lost. Allāh says: *. . . On the day when some of the signs of your Lord shall come, its faith shall not profit a soul, which did not believe before, or*

[38] See *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.8, pp.64-74, under the verse 17-18 of the ch.4. (*tr.*)

earn good through its faith . . . (6:158). *And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: "Surely, now I repent;" nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers . . .* (4:18)

In any case, if the victory refers to the conquest of Mecca or victory over the Jewish fortresses or Christian towns, so be it; but there is a vagueness in application of the clauses: "they shall be regretting . . ." and the verse: *And those who believe will say . . .*, on this meaning.

And if the victory denotes victory of Islam over disbelief and clear judgement between the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and his people, then it is a Qur'anic apocalyptic text which points to the happenings which this *ummah* is to face in future; and it fits what has been stated in the chapter of "Yūnus": *And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And they say: "When will this threat come about, if you are truthful?" . . . every nation has a term; when their term comes, they shall not remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before* (their time). *Say: "Tell me if . . . What! Now* (you believe)! *And already you wished to have it hastened on." . . . And they ask you: "Is that true?" Say: Aye! By my Lord! It is most surely the truth, and you will not escape." . . . and they will manifest regret when they see the chastisement. . . .* (10:47-56).

"so that they shall be regretting on account of what they hid in their souls": One happens to regret when one does what should not have been done or neglects what should not have been neglected; and those people had done some undesirable thing; and Allãh describes in the next verse, that their deeds were forfeited and they had incurred loss. It was because they had hid in their hearts love of the Jews and the Christians, in order to accomplish through it and by hastening in them what those enemies of Islam had wanted, i.e., to extinguish the light of Allãh and acquire the worldly objects of desire – without there being any hindrance from religion. Probably, this was what they hid in their hearts and for this purpose hastened in them; and they soon shall be regretting when their endeavours shall come to naught when Allãh will grant victory to the truth.

QUR'ÃN: ***And those who believe will say: "Are these they who swore by Allãh with the most forcible of their oaths that they were most surely with you? Their deeds shall go for nothing, so they shall***

***become losers"*:** *Yaqūlu* (يَقُولُ = will say) has also been recited *yaqūla* (يَقُولَ) in which case it will be in conjunction with: *so that they shall be regretting*; and then the meaning will be, they shall be regretting while the believers will be saying . . . This recital is preferable because it is more in conformity with the context. Their regretting on account of what they hid in their souls, and the believers' statement all are a rebuke to them because of their love of, and hastening in the Jews and the Christians. The demonstrative pronoun, in "Are these they" points to the Jews and the Christians; while the second person plural pronoun in "with you" addresses those in whose hearts there is a disease; also it may be *vice versa*; likewise, the pronouns in the clauses: "Their deeds shall go for nothing, so they shall become losers", may point to the Jews and the Christians or to those in whose hearts there is a disease.

However, the context shows that "with you" refers to those in whose hearts there is a disease, and the demonstrative pronoun points to the Jews and the Christians; while the clauses: "Their deeds shall go for nothing . . .", are a reply to an unasked question. The meaning: It may be that Allãh will bring the victory or a thing from Himself, then those who believe will say to those of weak faith when the wrath of Allãh will overtake them, 'Are these Jews and Christians they who swore by Allãh so forcefully, with the most forcible of their oaths that they were most surely with you? So why they are not doing something to benefit you?' Then arose in minds the unspoken question: 'So what was the ultimate result of those who loved these Jews and Christians?' And the reply came: 'Their deeds were forfeited and they became losers.'

A DISCOURSE ON THE MEANING OF DISEASE OF HEART

The phrase: *in whose hearts is a disease*, clearly says that hearts become diseased; conversely it shows that they also may be healthy, because health and disease are opposite each other; if one is found in a subject, inevitably that subject is capable of accepting its opposite, like blindness and eye-night. Don't you see that a wall is not called sick because it does not accept the attribute of healthiness?

In all places where Allãh ascribes disease to hearts, He describes such conditions and attributes of hearts, which prove that they have gone out of straight nature and deviated from right path. For

example: *And when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease began to say: "Allãh and His Messenger did not promise us* (victory) *but only to deceive"* (33:12). *When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was disease said: "Their religion has deceived these* (Muslims)*"* . . . (8:49). *So that He may make what the Satan casts a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard;* . . . (22:53), apart from other verses.

In short, heart's disease means its involvement with a sort of suspicion and doubt that pollutes the faith in Allãh and removes confidence in His signs; it blends faith with polytheism. That is why such a heart experiences such conditions, and such a man commits such deeds as have affinity with disbelief in Allãh and rejection of his communications.

Conversely, heart's health and freedom from disease means its being steadfast in straight nature and its adherence to the right path; it leads man to sincerity in monetheistic belief and reliance on Allãh, discarding all things to which his low desires are attracted. Allãh says: *The day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allãh with a heart free* (from evil), (26:88-89).

It is evident from above that those in whose hearts is a disease, are other than the hypocrites, as the Qur'ãnic expression in so many places shows: *the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease*. It is because the hypocrites are those who believed with their tongues and their hearts did not believe, while total disbelief is the death of the heart, not a disease. Allãh says: *Is he who was dead then we raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people,* . . . (6:122). *Only those accept who listen; and* (as to) *the dead Allãh will raise them,* . . . (6:36).

Obviously, the heart's disease, in Qur'ãnic expression, means the doubt and suspicion that overwhelms man's perception regarding Allãh and His signs, which makes the heart unable to adhere to a religious belief.

Thus, those in whose hearts is a disease are the people of weak faith who listen to every loud-mouthed person; and like a weather-cock turn with winds; this phrase does not refer to the hypocrites who pretended to believe and kept their disbelief hidden, caring for their worldly interests, is order that they might get benefits from the believers – through their manifested belief – and from the disbelievers through their hidden disbelief.

Of course, sometimes the Qur'ãn calls them hypocrites analyti-

cally, because both groups in their inner selves are devoid of faith. It is separate from using the phrase: *those in whose hearts is a disease*, for those whom are unbelievers pretending to believe. Allāh says: *Announce to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastisement, those who take the unbelievers for guardians rather than believers. Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allāh. And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allāh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; surely Allāh will gather together the hypocrites and the unbelievers all in Hell.* (4:138-40)

As for the words of Allāh in the chapter of "The Cow": *And there are some people who say: "We believe in Allāh and in the last day"; while they are not at all believers . . . There is a disease in their hearts, so Allāh added to their disease . . . . . And when it is said to them: "Believe as the people have believed", they say: "Shall we believe as the fools have believed?" . . .* (2:8-13); it goes on describing their double-facedness upto verse 20; and it gives a picture of their hearts' journey from doubt in truth to its denial; and declares that in the beginning they were diseased because they wrongfully claimed to be believers while they were in doubt and had not believed yet; so Allāh added to their disease, until they perished because they disbelieved in truth and mocked it.

Allāh has explained that the heart's disease, like that of the body, sometimes goes on increasing until it becomes deep-rooted and chronic and ends in perdition; it happens when harmful things are taken or done – which in this case is disobedience of Allāh. Allāh says: *There is a disease in their hearts, so Allāh added to their disease . . .* (2:10). *And whenever a chapter is revealed, . . . And as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it adds uncleanness to their uncleanness and they die while they are unbelievers. Do they not see that they are tried once or twice in every year, yet they do not turn* (to Allāh) *nor do they mind?* (9:124-6). Then Allāh comments in a general way: *Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allāh and used to mock them* (30:10).

Allāh then says that the cure of this disease is to believe in Him; as He says in a general way: *. . . their Lord will guide them by their faith; . . .* (10:9). Also He says: *To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed, lifts them up; . . .* (35:10). Therefore, if a heart-patient wants to cure his disease, he must repent and return to Allāh;

in other words, he must believe in Him and must practise good thought and good deed, as the above-mentioned verse alludes to it: . . . *yet they do not turn* (to Allãh) *nor do they mind* (9:126).

Allãh has revealed a comprehensive statement on this subject in the chapter of "Women": *O you who believe! Do not take the unbelievers for friends rather than the believers; do you desire that you should give to Allãh a manifest proof against yourselves? Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire, and you shall not find a helper for them; except those who repent and amend and hold fast to Allãh and are sincere in their religion to Allãh; these are with the believers, and Allãh will grant the believers a mighty reward* (4:144-6). It has been explained that it means returning to Allãh with belief, remaining steadfast on it and adhering to to the Book and the *Sunnah*, and being sincere in all this.

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QUR'ÃN: *O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion, . . .*: *al-Irtidãd* (اَلإِرْتِدَاد) literally means to turn back. In Muslims' terminology, turning back from religion means apostasy, forsaking belief for disbelief, no matter whether that belief was preceded by disbelief or not. If an unbeliever accepts Islam and then apostatizes, he is called *murtadd millī*; if a born Muslim turns back from Islam, he is called *murtadd fiṭrī*. This terminology is either laid down by the *sharī'ah* or by the Muslims themselves.

It may appear at the first glance that the turning back in this verse denotes the terminological meaning in which the Muslims use this word. As such the verse will have no connection with the preceding verses. It would be an independent verse showing that Allãh might dispense with belief of one people replacing it with that of the others. But this likelihood is removed, when one meditates on this and the preceding verses. The verse in fact makes the believers remember that Allãh has power that He should be worshipped in His earth, and He will soon bring there a people who would not turn back from His religion; they would adhere to it to the end. He says: . . . *therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have* (already) *entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it* (6:89). . . . *and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allãh is Self-sufficient* (independent) *of the worlds* (3:97). . . . *If you disbelieved, you and those on earth all together, most surely Allãh is Self-sufficient, Praised* (14:8).

Such a sublime position does not demand more than paying attention to the basic theme, i.e., appraising them that Allãh would

bring a community of believers who would not turn back from His religion. The other attributes that they shall love Allāh and He shall love them, and that they will be lowly before the believers and mighty against the unbelievers, etc. are additional characteristics that have been described here keeping in view additional requirements of context and condition.

Looking at it from another angle, we realize that the said attributes are not without some connection with the theme of the preceding verses regarding befriending the Jews and the Christians rather than the believers. Taking them as friends rather than the believers, shows a certain inclination of heart towards them, a connection of love and affinity; and how could such a polluted heart contain the love of Allāh – as Allāh says: *Allāh has not made for any man two hearts within him*; . . . (33:4).

This friendship would lead the believer to become lowly before the disbelievers and mighty against the believers and show haughtiness before them, as Allāh says: . . . *Do they seek honour from them? Then surely all honour is for Allāh* (4:139).

Another concomitant of this friendship is that they would show laxity in fighting against those disbelievers and would shrink from *jihād*; they would not have any patience if they were deprived of any comfort in the way of Allāh, nor would they be ready to cut off all social contacts with them. But Allāh says: *O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, . . . If you go forth fighting in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love to them*? . . . (60:1). Further Allāh says: *Indeed, there is for you a good example in Ibrāhīm and those with him when they said to their people: "Surely we dissociate from you and from what you worship other than Allāh; we renounce you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you for ever until you believe in Allāh alone";* . . . (60:4).

Likewise, *irtidād*, in its literal meaning, or by analytical process, is applicable to befriending the disbelievers, as Allāh has said in the preceding verse: *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them*. Also He has said [in this context]: . . . *and whoever does this, he shall have nothing* (to do) *with Allāh,* . . (3:28); . . . *surely then you would be like them;* . . . (4:140).

The above discussion shows that the verse has some connection with the preceding ones; and it makes it clear that Allāh's religion does

not need such people who are prone to fall into the pit of disobedience and befriend the Jews and the Christians, because hypocrisy has crept into their community, and now it contains a lot of people with diseased hearts. They sell religion for worldly benefits, and covet the falacious honour and transient influence rather than the honour and power, which are reserved for Allãh, His Messenger, and the believers. They do not care for the real felicity, which covers life of this world as well as that of the next.

The verse expounds it by giving information about a future upheaval: If religion suffers from unsteady capricious behaviour of these people of weak faith who prefer love of other than Allãh over that of Allãh, seek honour near enemies of Allãh, show laxity in fighting in His way and fear blames and admonition of His enemies, then certainly soon Allãh will bring a people who shall love Him and He shall love them; who shall be lowly before the believers, mighty before the unbelievers, and who shall fight in the way of Allãh and shall not fear the censure of any censurer.

Although many exegetes were aware that the verse contains information of a future catacalysm, and spent much time on deciding whom the verse should be applied to; yet they did not take trouble to properly explain its wordings. As a result, they failed to correctly interpret the attributes mentioned in it. Consequently, they treated the divine speech just like a human talk which includes many a loop-holes and inaccuracies.

No doubt, the Qur'ãn uses the same words, which the Arabs did, and construction of its sentences is not different from the usual Arab style – in short, its oratorial system is the same as the Arabs of the time of revelation were familiar with. Yet it totally differs from other speeches in one aspect: When we speak, no matter whether we are eloquent or not, we base our talk on the meanings we understand, and our understanding is drawn from the social life which we have created through our human social nature. This nature usually passes a judgement in accordance with analogy. This opens before us the door of inexactitude and inaccuracy. We start saying 'all' in place of 'most', and 'ever-lasting' instead of 'long-lasting'. We take an analogical statement as unconditional truth; we confuse 'rare' with 'non-existent', and 'a little' with 'extinct'. We unreservedly say: This is good, that is bad; this is liked, that is disliked; this is praiseworthy, that is condemnable; this is beneficial, that is harmful; this man is noble, that one is evil, and so on. We give unconditional judgement. But in reality it is

correct only in some conditions, with some assumptions, in view of a few people, in comparison to some things only – but not unreservedly. However, we treat a few contrary situations as non-existant, thus showing a laxity in its perception and the judgement. This concerns those items, which actually exist independently. As for those things of which man is oblivious because of his limited perception of related matters, they are even more numerous. Therefore, whatever man speaks about and about which he assumes some knowledge and perception, is all based on inexactitude in some aspects, and ignorance of others. If we could comprehend the reality and then tried to apply that speech on it, we would find that it was merely a joke. Ponder on it.

This is the condition of human speech, which is based on the knowledge acquired by man. As for the divine speech, it must be above such short-comings, because Allãh encompasses all things in His knowledge; and He says about His speech: *Most surely it is a decisive word, and it is not a jest* (86:13-14).

And it guides us how we should explain the divine words without attaching to it any condition when the said words are unrestricted and are not followed by any joint or separate condition; and this is how we should look at the attributes mentioned therein as they point to the underlying reason of the statement. When Allãh says: *He shall love them*, then He shall not dislike them in anything and in any manner – otherwise He would have attached an exception. And when He praises them as being lowly before the believers, it implies that they would be lowly before them because of their belief in Allãh, and they would remain lowly in all conditions and in all situations; otherwise it would not be a decisive word.

Of course, there are some attributes ascribed to a large group while in reality it applies to a select band from among them – when both groups are united in a way that justifies such usage. Allãh says: *And certainly We gave the Book and the Wisdom and the Prophecy to the Children of Israel, and We gave them of the goodly things, and We made them excel the nations* (45:16). *. . . He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion; . . .* (22:78); *You are the best of the nations raised up for the* (benefit of) *men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong . . .* (3:110); *. . . that you may be witnesses for the people and the Messenger may be a witness for you . . .* (2:143); *And the Messenger cried out: "O my Lord! Surely my people have treated this Qur'ãn as a foresaken thing.* (25:30), apart from other verses which describe sociological attributes which are

found in individuals and society. Such expressions are not based on any laxity; they are attributes ascribed to a part and the whole, to the society as well as to an individual, because of some relevance. For example, we have a handful of earth containing a gem; now we may say, there is earth in our hand; and equally truthfully it may be said that there is a gem in our hand, and the real purpose is to take that gem.

Now, let us return to our original topic:

"O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion": As explained earlier, turning back from religion here means taking the Jews and the Christians for a friend. The verse, like the preceding one, is addressed to the believers. The main theme is to declare that the true religion does not need such people's belief, which is polluted with love of the enemies of Allãh. Allãh has counted such friendship as disbelief and polytheism, as He has said: *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them*. It is because Allãh is the Guardian and Helper of His religion, and as an aspect of His help to His religion, He will certainly bring a people who will renounce the enemies of Allãh, and love His friends and will not love any except Him.

"then soon Allãh will bring a people": Allãh has ascribed the bringing to Himself to confirm the meaning of His help to His religion. The context makes it clear that this religion has got a Helper, besides Whom it does not need any helper – and that is Allãh Himself.

The speech puts the help to religion given by these people *vis-à-vis* the national help sought by those who love Allãh's enemies. Likewise, the word, "people", and mention of their attributes and related verbs in plural show that the people whose appearance is promised, will be a community not one or two individuals. In other words, it does not say that Allãh will bring in every period a person who will love Allãh and whom Allãh will love, and who will be lowly before believers and mighty before disbelievers, and who will fight in the way of Allãh and will not be afraid of the censure of any censurer.

Bringing of these people is attributed to Allãh. It does not mean that He will create them, because there is no creator except Allãh. He has said: *Allãh is the Creator of everything . . .* (39:62). Rather this bringing connotes that it is He Who shall arouse them to take the opportunity to help the religion; and shall enhance their honour by loving them and being loved by them; He will help them in being lowly before His friends and mighty against His enemies, and in fight-

ing in His way and ignoring every censurer's comments. Therefore, their help to the religion is Allāh's help to it through them and by means of them. Whether this promise is implemented at once or after sometime is all the same for Allāh, although our mind because of its limitation differentiates between nearness and farness.

"He shall love them and they shall love Him": Love is unrestricted with any attribute or adjective; thus this mutual love is for 'person' only without any condition. They love Allāh; it follows that they give preference to their Lord over anything else, be it wealth, honour, family, or other such things. They do not love anyone among the enemies of Allāh; if they love any one, it is reserved for the friends of Allāh because of the love of Allāh.

As for His love to them, it means that they are free from every injustice, clean of every spiritual uncleanness, be it disbelief or sin. They attain this cleanness through divine protection, or through divine forgiveness resulting from repentance. It is because Allāh does not love any injustice or sin as He says: . . . *then surely Allāh does not love the unbelievers* (3:32); . . . *and Allāh does not love the unjust* (3:57); . . . *surely He does not love the extravagants* (6:141); . . . *and Allāh does not love the mischief-makers* (5:64); . . . *Surely Allāh does not love those who exceed the limits* (2:190); . . . *surely He does not love the proud* (16:23); . . . *surely Allāh does not love the treacherous* (8:58); apart from other such verses.

These verses condemn all evils. When these evils are removed from man, as Allāh's love to him testifies, he will acquire their opposite virtues. After all man cannot be devoid of both characteristics; he must compulsorily adhere to this side or that.

In short, they are the true believers whose belief is not tainted with injustice, and Allāh has said: *Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright* (6:82). So, they are protected from going astray; and Allāh has said: . . . *surely Allāh does not guide him who leads astray,* . . . (16:37). Thus, they are under divine protection against every straying and are led by divine guidance onto His straight path. They because of their faith – confirmed by Allāh – are guided to following the Messenger and total submission to him, as they have surrendered totally to Allāh. Allāh says: *But no! By your Lord! They do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total*

submission (4:65).

When they shall reach that stage, then the words of Allãh shall be truly applicable to them: *Say: "If you love Allãh, then follow me, Allãh will love you . . .*" (3:31) It also clearly proves that following the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and being loved by Allãh are concomitants and inseparable; whoever follows the Prophet, Allãh loves him; and Allãh does not love anyone unless he is a follower of His Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

When they shall follow the Messenger, they will acquire every good, which Allãh loves and is pleased with, like piety, justice, magnanimity, patience, reliance on Allãh, repentance, cleanness, and other such virtues. Allãh says: *. . . then surely Allãh love the pious* (3:76); *. . . surely Allãh loves the doers of good* (2:195*)*; *. . . and Allãh loves the patient* (3:146); *surely Allãh loves those who fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and compact wall* (61:4); *. . . surely Allãh loves those who trust* (in Him) (3:159*)*; *. . . surely Allãh loves those who turn much* (to Him), *and He loves those who purify themselves* (2:222), apart from other such verses.

If you search and ponder on the verses which expound the effects of these qualities and their concomitant virtues, you will come upon a great many good characteristics; and you will find that all lead to the conclusion that the people having those virtues are the heirs who shall inherit the earth, and for them will be the good end of the abode, as the verse under discussion (*O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back . . .*) points to it; and Allãh has stated it in a short but comprehensive sentence: *. . . and the* (good) *end is for piety* (20:132). We shall explain the underlying theme of this verse in another relevant place, God willing.

QUR'ÃN: ***lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers*****:** *al-Adhillah* and *al-a'izzah* (اَلأَذِلَّةُ ، اَلأَعِزَّةُ) are plurals of *al-dhalīl* (اَلذَّلِيْلُ = lowly) and *al-'azīz* (اَلْعَزِيْزُ = mighty) respectively. It is an allusion that they should be gentle to the believers in respect to Allãh Who is their friend and they are His friend; and should not pay any attention to the false honour which the unbelievers manifest and to which the divine religion does not attach any importance. Allãh has guided His Prophet to this reality when He has said: *Do not strain your eyes after what We have given certain classes of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and make yourself gentle to the believers* (15:88). Probably, the preposition *'alã* (عَلى = on, over) has been used for *adhillah* (أَذِلَّةُ = lowly) because it contains the meaning of love and

compassion or of bending down, as has been claimed.

QUR'ĀN: *they shall strive hard in Allāh's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; . . .*: Fighting in the way of Allāh has been especially singled out from among their numerous virtues because the context demanded it, as Allāh has declared that He will raise them for helping His religion. The phrase: "and shall not fear the censure of any censurer", is apparently a conditional clause related to all preceding sentences and not with the immediately preceding one (*they shall fight in Allāh's way*), although it is the safest interpretation in such constructions. No doubt, fighting in the way of Allāh is often faced by censurers' censure who warns the believers that if they went for *jihād*, they would be in danger of losing their wealth, lives, and would have to bear untold hardships and difficulties. But the same is the case of being lowly before the believers and mighty against the unbelievers. After all, the latter have, in their hands, worldly embellishments, desirable luxuries, and necessities of life, which the believers do not have. And if one turns away from those unbelievers, he invites censure of the censurers. Yet the true believers do not fear such things.

The verse contains a prophecy of undesirable unseen events that were to appear in future, and we shall discuss them, God willing, under "A Qur'ānic-Cum-Traditional Discourse and Discussion".

TRADITIONS

as-Suyūṭī writes under the verse: *O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends*: Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh, al-Bayhaqī (in his *ad-Dalāil*) and Ibn 'Asākir have narrated from 'Ubādah ibn al-Walīd that 'Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit said, "When Banū Qaynuqā' fought the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl held fast to them and stood by them, while 'Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit went to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and renounced their covenant before Allāh and His Messenger, he was from Banū 'Awf ibn al-Khazraj, and he had got a covenant with them just as they had got a covenant with 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy; so ['Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit] renounced them before the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'I love Allāh and His Messenger and the believers, and renounce before Allāh and His Messenger the covenant of these unbelievers and their friendship.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The same book says that it was about ʻAbdullãh ibn Ubayy that these verses were revealed: *O you who believe! Do not take the Jews . . . . . then surely the party of Allãh are they that shall be triumphant* (5:51 & 56).

The same book says: Ibn Abī Shaybah and Ibn Jarīr have narrated from ʻAṭiyyah ibn Saʻd that he said, "ʻUbãdah ibn aṣ-Ṣãmit (from Banu 'l-Ḥãrith ibn al-Khazraj) came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! I have numerous friends among the Jews and I adhere to Allãh and His Messenger getting clear of the friendship of the Jews, and I love Allãh and His Messenger.' Then ʻAbdullãh ibn Ubayy said, 'I am a man who fears lest a calamity should befall me, I shall not renounce the friendship of my guardians.' So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said to ʻAbdullãh ibn Ubayy, 'O Abu 'l-Ḥubãb! Do you think that what you have spoken of the Jews' friendship is for you against ʻUbãdah?' He said, 'Then I'll accept.' So Allãh revealed [the following] verses: *O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and . . . . . and Allãh will protect you from the people; . . .* [5:51-67]."

Again the same book narrates: Ibn Marduwayh narrates from Ibn ʻAbbãs that he said, "ʻAbdullãh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl accepted Islam; then he said, 'Surely there is a pact between me and Banū Qurayẓah and Banu 'n-Naḍīr, and I fear calamities;' so he turned back and became an unbeliever. And ʻUbãdah ibn aṣ-Ṣãmit said, 'I renounce the pact of Qurayẓah and an-Naḍīr turning towards Allãh, and I love Allãh and His Messenger.' Then Allãh revealed: *O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; . . . So you will see those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening in them,* [i.e. ʻAbdullãh ibn Ubayy] *. . . Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the* zakãt *while they bow* [i.e. ʻUbãdah ibn aṣ-Ṣãmit and the companions of the Messenger of Allãh, s.a.w.a.]. He [Ibn ʻAbbãs] said [reciting the verse]: "*And had they believed in Allãh and the Prophet and what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them for friends, but most of them are transgressors* [5:81]."

The author says: This story has been narrated through other chains too. However, we have repeatedly explained that such "reasons of revelation" are merely the personal opinions of exegetes who have applied the stories to the verses that seemed somehow relevant. There are other signs in them that point to this fact. How could these stories have caused revelation of these verses, when they mention the Chris-

tians with the Jews, and there was no trace of Christians in the events of Banū Qaynuqā‘ nor in the affairs of Banū Qurayẓah or Banu 'n-Naḍīr? The Muslims had no dealing with the Christians in all those happenings. And there is no reason justifying their uncalled for inclusion in divine speech. There are many verses in the Qur'ān describing the Jews' condition in the happenings that had taken place between them and the Muslims. Also where it deals with the hypocrites' meddlings it particularly mentions the Jews and has not said anything about the Christians, as for example in the chapter of "The Mustering" and others. So how can we treat the mention of the Christians in these verses as uncalled-for?

Moreover, the tradition says that not less then 17 verses (5:51-67) were revealed about ‘Ubādah ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit and ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy. However, first of all, these verses are not inter-connected, so that it may be claimed that they were revealed at one go.

Second: There is among them the verse [of *wilāyah*]: *Only Allāh is your Guardian* . . . [5:55], and there are *mutawātir* traditions narrated by the Shī‘ahs and Sunnīs that it was revealed about ‘Alī (a.s.).

Third: There is also the verse [of *balligh*]: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord* . . . [5:67], and it has no connection with the narrated stories.

Apparently, the narrator looked at the story of ‘Ubādah and ‘Abdullāh, and then found that some of the above verses have some relevance to it; so he applied the story to the verses. There can be no other explanation. However, the application was not done properly, as he put seventeen verses in place of three, just because they all speak about the People of the Book.

as-Suyūṭī narrates, through Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, from ‘Ikrimah that [he said], "The verse: *O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other*, was revealed about Banū Qurayẓah; when they committed treachery and broke the pact they had made with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), by writing to Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, calling them and the Quraysh to enter into their fortresses. So the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) sent Abū Lubābah ibn Abdu 'l-Mundhir to them in order that he might urge them to come down from their fortresses. When they agreed to come down, he pointed to his throat – meaning slaughter. At the same time, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr were corresponding with the Christians and the Syrians. And I have been told that some companions of the Prophet

(s.a.w.a.) were afraid of being afflicted with poverty and indigence, so they corresponded with the Jews of Banū Qurayẓah and Banu 'n-Naḍīr, giving them news about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), [expecting] to seek from them loan and (other) benefits [afterwards]. So they were forbidden it." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: There is no difficulty in (accepting) this tradition. It explains the *wilãyah* in the verse as love and affinity, and the preceding discourse supports it. If that was really the reason of revelation, then the verses are unrestricted and will also apply to other similar situations; and if the tradition is merely an application, then the case is clear.

Majma'u 'l-bayãn writes under the verse: *O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion, then soon Allãh will bring a people He shall love them and they shall love Him*. And it has been said, 'They are: the Leader of the faithful ʻAlī (a.s.) and his companions, when he fought those who fought against him – the *nãkithīn* (pledge-breakers), the *qãsiṭīn* (deviators from the truth), the *mãriqīn* (heretics).[39] It has been narrated from ʻAmmãr, Ḥudhayfah and Ibn ʻAbbãs; and it is also narrated from Abū Ja'far and Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.).

The author says: [aṭ-Ṭabrisī] has written in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* after quoting the above tradition, "This statement is supported by the fact that the Prophet had praised ʻAlī (a.s.), with the very attributes mentioned in the verse. He said about him when he called him to conquer Khaybar (after dismissing previous standard-bearers one after the other when they came back accusing the people of cowardice while the people accused them of the same), 'Surely, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allãh and His Messenger, and Allãh and His Messenger love him; repeatedly attacking, never fleeing; he will not return until Allãh gives victory on his hand;' and then he gave the standard to him.

"As for the attributes of being gentle with the believers and hard against the unbelievers, and waging war in the way of Allãh, without being afraid of a censure of any censurer, nobody can deny that ʻAlī (a.s.), fully deserved these virtues. His *jihãd* against polytheists and unbelievers is well known, and everyone is aware of his strivings in strengthening of Islam and helping the religion, as well as his gentle-

[39] In the battles of Jamal, Ṣiffīn and Nahrawãn, respectively. (*tr*.)

ness before the believers.

"It is also supported by the warning given by the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), to the Quraysh that ‘Alī might fight them after him. It happened when Suhayl ibn ‘Amr came to him with a group; they said: 'O Muhammad! Our slaves have come to you and you return them to us.' Thereupon, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said, 'You should desist (from such behaviour), O people of Quraysh! Otherwise, Allãh will certainly raise over you a man who will beat you on the interpretation of the Qur’ãn as I had beaten you on its revelation.' Some of his companions said, 'who it is, O Messenger of Allãh? Abū Bakr?' He said, 'No; rather it is the repairer of shoes inside the room.' And ‘Alī (a.s.) was (then) repairing the shoes of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.).

"It has been narrated from ‘Alī (a.s.), that he said on the day of Baṣrah, 'By Allãh! The people of this verse were not fought against till today;' then he recited this verse.

"And Abū Isḥãq ath-Tha‘labī has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* through his chain from az-Zuhrī from Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab from Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Will come to me on the Day of Resurrection a group of my companions, and they will be removed from the *ḥawḍ*; so I will say, "O my Lord! My companions, my companions"; and it will be said, "Surely you do not know what they did after you, surely they fell back (from religion)."'"

What aṭ-Ṭabrisī has written fits on ‘Alī (a.s.). There is no doubt that he is the best example of the attributes mentioned in the verse; but there is a question about its application on the whole group who were with him in the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, because many of them had changed after that, while the words in the verse: *He shall love them and they shall love Him*, have come without any exception, and you have known its meaning.

Also ath-Tha‘labī says, "And it has been narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), was asked about this verse, and he tapped his hand on Salmãns shoulder and said, 'He and his people.' Then he said, 'If the religion were fastened to the Milky Way, certainly some people from Persia would have got it.'"

The author says: The comment mentioned above applies here also, except if it is taken to mean that they would be raised from his people.

ath-Tha‘labī goes on to record, "And it has been said that they

are the people of Yemen. They are most gentle-hearted, mildest in temper; the faith is Yemenite, and the wisdom is Yemenite. ʻAyãḍ ibn Ghanam al-Ashʻarī said, 'When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) pointed to Abū Mūsã al-Ashʻarī and said, "They are his people."'"

The author says: This theme has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*, through several chains; and the preceding comment applies here too.

aṭ-Ṭabarī narrates through his chain from Qatãdah that he said, "Allãh revealed this verse and He certainly knew that a group of people would soon apostatize; when Allãh took away His Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), most of the Arabs turned back from Islam except three mosques: people of Medina, people of Mecca and people of Bahrain. They (i.e. the others) said, 'We shall pray but we shall not pay *zakãt*, and our wealth shall not be taken by force.' So Abū Bakr talked (with companions) about it, and it was said to him, 'Surely if they had its knowledge they would pay it and increased over it.' But he said, 'No, by Allãh! I will not separate a thing which Allãh has joined; and if they refused (to give) a cord which Allãh and His Messenger have made compulsory, we should fight them for it.' Then Allãh raised a group with Abū Bakr, and he fought on what the Prophet of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had fought on, until he captured, killed and burned into fire many people who had turned back from Islam and had refused *zakãt*; and he fought them until they agreed to pay *zakãt*, with humility and inferiority. . . ."

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* through ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, al-Bayhaqī and Ibn ʻAsãkir from Qatãdah; and also from aḍ-Ḍaḥḥãk and al-Ḥasan.

The wording of the narrative clearly testifies that it is merely an application based on personal opinion. Therefore, the objections against previous narratives would also apply in this case. These battles and fightings contain many happenings and affairs, and among the fighters were people like Khãlid ibn al-Walīd, Mughīrah ibn Shuʻbah, Busr ibn al-Arṭãh, and Sumrah ibn Jundab. History records about them in these battles and in later days such injustice and sins which do not leave any chance to apply to them the verse: *He shall love them and they shall love Him* . . . You should study history books and then ponder on the verse's meaning, which we have given.

An exegete has indulged in such an exaggeration in this idea that he shows his astonishment on someone's saying: 'The verse is more clearly applicable to the Ash‘arites from Yemen than to those who had fought the apostates.' We append below a gist of his comments:

> "The verse is general and covers all those who helped the religion from among those good Muslims who had got the virtues mentioned in it; right from the believers during the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), to those who came after him; and it fits on all the previously mentioned traditions, like the one saying that it is about Salmãn and his people (in spite of its weakness), and the one that it concerns Abū Mūsã Ash‘arī and his people, and the one that it is about Abū Bakr and his companions. However, it does not fit on the tradition which says that the verse is about ‘Alī (a.s.), because the verse contains the word, *people*, and it is not used for one person, as it is made for a group."

This is the gist of his opinion. It only shows that he has treated the divine speech with its praising phrases, just like poetries in which the praise of the subjects is entirely based on imagination. Whatever the poet can imagine, he applies it to his praised one, without caring whether it was true or false, but Allãh says: *and who is truer of word than Allãh?* (4:122) Or he has taken it as our usual talk, which is generally based on laxity and carelessness; and whenever somebody objects on any such expression, we offer the excuse of indulgence. But Allãh says: *Most surely it is a decisive word, and it is not a jest* (86:13-14). You have understood from the preceding explanation that if the verse is taken in its proper meaning with all the attributes that it contains, it will be clear that its application has not appeared yet. Read that part again, think over it, and then decide for yourself.

Even more astonishing is his comment at the end [that it does not fit on ‘Alī because the word *people* is not used for one person]: Whoever has mentioned ‘Alī, has said, "‘Alī and his companions"; just as others have mentioned: Salmãn and his people, Abū Mūsã and his people, and Abū Bakr and his companions. Likewise, the traditions about ‘Alī (a.s.) – and some have been mentioned earlier – speak about ‘Alī and his companions. No one has said that it was revealed for ‘Alī (a.s.) alone, so that it could be said that the verse's wordings fit on a group, not on an individual.

Of course ath-Tha‘labī has written in his *at-Tafsīr* that it was revealed about ‘Alī (a.s.). Also it is narrated in *Nahju 'l-bayãn* (of al-

Shaybānī) from al-Bãqir and aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) that it was revealed about ʻAlī (a.s.). But looking at them in conjunction with other traditions, it becomes clear that these too mean ʻAlī and his companions who stood with him to help the religion in the battles of the Camel, Ṣiffīn and the Khawãrij.

Apart from that, there are a lot of traditions narrated through Sunnī chains that the verse: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers . . .*, was revealed for ʻAlī (a.s.) although it uses plurals.

Moreover, there is another objection on the traditions of Qatãdah, aḍ-Ḍaḥḥãk and al-Ḥasan: The verse: *O you who believe! Whoever of you turns back from his religion, then soon Allãh will bring a people He shall love them and they shall love Him . . .*, very clearly shows that there shall be an exchange and that Allãh does not need these people who are present now; no matter whether the verse is addressed to those who were present at the time of its revelation, or to the combined group of those present and those not yet born. The aim is to declare to a group of believers that if they all or some of them turned away from the religion, Allãh shall soon bring in their place a people He shall love them and they shall love Him – and obviously neither He does love apostates nor they do love Him – and who shall have such and such good characteristics and they shall help His religion.

It is clear that the promised group shall be different from the people who were present at the time of revelation. But those who fought against the apostates so soon after the Prophet's death were present at the time of revelation and it is they who were addressed with the clause: *O you who believe! . . .* Therefore, the promise: *soon Allãh will bring a people He shall love them and they shall love Him . . .*, cannot be applied to them.

The verse runs on the line of the verse: *. . . and if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, then they will not be like you* (47:38).

an-Nuʻmānī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr*, through his chain from Sulaymãn ibn Hãrūn al-ʻIjillī that he said, "I heard Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), saying, 'Surely, the master of this matter has (companions) reserved for him; if all the people went away, Allãh would bring his companions; and it is they about whom Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has said: *. . . therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have already*

entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it (6:89); and about them He has said: *then soon Allãh will bring a people He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers.*

The author says: This connotation has been narrated by al-ʻAyyãshī and al-Qummī in their books of *tafsīr*.

A QUR'ÃNIC-CUM-TRADITIONAL DISCOURSE AND DISCUSSION

We have repeatedly hinted previously that when Qur'ãn puts too much emphasis on a certain topic, and imperatively asserts and goes to the utmost limit in affirming it, it gives an indication that the causes and factors that were then present would surely join forces to push man to the pitfalls of perdition and make him liable to the wrath of Allãh. Look, for example, at the verses of interest and of the love of the kindred, etc.

This inference springs from the nature of speech. When a wise speaker gives a simple and easy to comply with order, and then goes to the extreme in emphasizing it; or when he addresses a respected personality in a way that such people are not talked to in that manner (for example, a divine scholar, deep-rooted in self-denial and worship is openly admonished not to commit heinous debauchery), it shows that there is some hidden reason behind it, and that there lies ahead a great dangerous situation and an imminent perdition.

The Qur'ãnic talks of this style were certainly followed by such events and happenings that confirmed that allusion, or let us say, prophecy; although those who heard the verse on the day of revelation probably were not aware of the hints and allusions it contained.

Look at how the Qur'ãn ordered people to love the Prophet's kindred, and how it emphasized it until it was counted as the wage of messengership, and then see how the Muslims inflicted calamitous oppressions and massacres on his family-members, to such an extent that if they were ordered to do such things they could not do more.

The Qur'ãn forbade discord and disagreement, and emphasized this prohibition to the utmost degree; and then the *ummah* was disunited and divided into so many sects that exceeded the disunity of the Jews and the Christians. The Jews had divided into seventyone sects and the Christians into seventytwo, but the Muslim went to seventy-

three sects. This was only in matters of belief and theology; as for their divisions in social orders and political systems, etc., nobody can fully compute it.

The Qur'ãn forbids judging by what Allãh has not revealed. It prohibited creating discord between various classes, and clearly told the *ummah* not to transgress the boundary or to follow their low desires, etc. In spite of all this emphasis there happened what we all are aware of.

This prohibition of taking the unbelievers and the People of the Book as friends did not fare any differently from other forcefully emphasized Qur'ãnic prohibitions. It may rather be said that no other prohibition in the circle of the branches of religion reaches near this forbiddance. Its importance was raised to such a level that Allãh counted the friends of the People of the Book and the unbelievers as being one of them: *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them*; He declared that they are not from Allãh: . . . *and whoever does this, he shall have nothing* (to do) *with Allãh,* . . . (3:28); He warned them most forcefully, and said time and again: . . . *and Allãh cautions you of Himself;* . . . (3:30); and we have explained under the verse that it indicates that what they had been warned of, was bound to happen without any change.

If you want more clarification then think over the verses 111 and 113 of chapter 11 (Hūd): Allãh has before that given the stories of the peoples of Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and others and described the discord of the Jews in their books. Then He says: *And your Lord will most surely pay back to all their deeds in full; surely He is aware of what they do. Stand fast then* (in the right path) *as you are commanded, as also he who has turned* (to Allãh) – Note that the address is to the community – *and be not inordinate* (O men!), *surely He sees what you do*. Now, ponder on the next verse: *And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the Fire touch you, and you have no guardians besides Allãh, then you shall not be helped.*

The verse is unrestricted and, therefore, the fire shall touch them in this world too before the next; and He has threatened them by the clause: *and Allãh cautions you of Himself*; this touching of the Fire is explained in the verse: . . . *This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me*. . . . (5:3). It makes it clear that what the believers were afraid of regarding their religion, until this verse was revealed, from the disbelievers, i.e. the polytheists and the People of the Book, now they are safe from it;

therefore, they should not fear them about their religion; rather they should fear their Lord. What were they afraid of regarding their religion from the disbelievers? It was because they were aware that the only goal that the disbelievers had before their eyes was to extinguish the light of religion, and to snatch away this precious commodity from their hands by any means available. They were under this apprehension before today; but revelation of the chapter of "The Table" brought a feeling of security to them, and their hearts became tranquil. Even so, they should fear their Lord, lest He takes away their light and deprives them of their religion.

It is known that Allāh does not inflict any misfortune or punishment on any people unless they fully deserve it. He says: *This is because Allāh never change a bounty which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition; . . .* (8:53). Thus, He made it clear that His changing of bounty does not take place unless the people concerned deserve it, which is then followed by change of bounty. Allāh has called religion or religious guardianship a favour or bounty, as He says soon after it: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as religion.*

If this favour is changed it is through their own agency. It is expected that they would go out of divine protection by cutting relation from Him, inclining towards the unjust people and taking the disbelievers and the People of the Book for friends. It is incumbent on them to fear Allāh concerning their selves, – fearing His wrath which nobody can avert; He has threatened them of it in these words: *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allāh does not guide the unjust people* (5:51). Allāh in these words has declared that He will not guide them to their felicity; and it is this felicity with which guidance is connected. Their felicity in the world means that they would live on religious tradition and general Islamic custom in their society.

When the structure of this system comes down, its manifest bearings are disrupted, like enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, which had preserved its real meaning; general Islamic practices give way to disbelievers' traditions; this un-Islamic behaviour gradually takes firm roots and is permanently established – and this is the situation of Muslims' society in these days.

Ponder on general Islamic behaviour arranged by the Book and the *Sunnah*, which they try to establish among the Muslims. Then look

at this corrupt behaviour burdened over the Muslims' shoulders today. Lastly think over the divine words: *then soon Allãh will bring a people He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall fight in Allãh's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer* (5:54). Then you will realize that all the evils which have today encompassed our Muslim society, and have taken deep roots – that we had borrowed from the unbelievers and then it has grown and generated – are the opposites of what Allãh has mentioned as the attributes of the people whose appearance He has promised. In other words, all our bad characteristics are encapsuled in the fact that our people today do not love Allãh, nor does He love them, they are lowly before the unbelievers, haughty against the believers; they do not fight in Allãh's way and fear the censure of every censurer.

It was this degeneration that the Qur'ãn had read in those people's faces. You may say that it was a news of the unseen which the knowing God had given the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): That the Islamic society will turn back from the religion; it would not be the terminological apostacy; rather it would be a degradation for which Allãh says: *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allãh does not guide the unjust people* (5:51); *And had they believed in Allãh and the Prophet and what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them for friends, but most of them are transgressors* (5:81).

Allãh had promised to help them if they would help Him, and to weaken their enemies if the Muslim themselves did not strengthen and help them. He says: . . . *If you help Allãh, He will help you* (47:7); . . . *and if the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them; of them* (some) *are believers and most of them are transgressors. They shall by no means harm you but with a slight distress; and if they fight you they shall turn* (their) *backs to you, then they shall not be helped. Abasement is brought down upon them wherever they are found, except under a protection from Allãh and a protection from men,* . . . (3:110-12). It is not far-fetched to infer from the words: *except under a protection from Allãh and a protection from men*, that they could come out of that abasement if they established friendship with people or if Allãh gave them mastery over people.

Then Allãh promised the Muslim society – and we have seen its condition – that He shall *bring a people* that *He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the un-*

believers, they shall fight in Allāh's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer.

These attributes, which Allāh has ascribed to them, are the very characteristics that the today's Islamic society does not have. If you ponder on them, you may infer the detail of the evils, which the verse alludes, shall soon afflict the Islamic society.

Those evils are enumerated in a lot of traditions giving the news of the upheavals of the last days; they are narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.). Despite their great numbers, on the whole they are not free from the defects of interpolation and alteration; yet among them are traditions whose authenticity is confirmed by subsequent events and happenings. Those traditions are recorded in the books compiled by ancient scholars a thousand years or more before our time. Their authorship is established and people have been quoting from them during all that period.

Moreover, those traditions spoke about such events and happenings that had not taken place at that time, nor had the people in those days ever expected such things to happen. Therefore, we have no option but to admit their authenticity and accept that they have come from the fountain-head of revelation.

For example, al-Qummī has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr*, from his father, from Sulaymān ibn Muslim al-Khashshāb, from ʻAbdullāh ibn Jarīḥ al-Makkī, from ʻAṭāʼ ibn Abī Riyāḥ, from ʻAbdullāh ibn ʻAbbās that he said: "We performed *ḥajj* – the Last Pilgrimage – with the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), and then he took hold of the door of Kaʻbah, thereupon he (stood) facing us said, 'May I inform you of the Signs of the Day of Resurrection?' Salmān al-Fārisī (r.a.), who was the nearest of all there, replied, 'Surely, O Messenger of Allāh!'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Verily, amongst the Sings of the Hour is that people will neglect the prayer (i.e., will not pray at all, or will pray without fulfilling its conditions, or will not pray in the preferred time), and will follow their own desires (desires will supersede the commands of Allāh, they will follow only those rules which will appeal to them, and will leave other rules), and will incline towards their own preferences, and will respect the wealthy people (forgetting the Islamic criterion of honour, i.e., piety), and will sell the religion for worldly benefits (for example, the greed of worldly riches will instigate them to go to such places where, they very well know, it would be difficult to observe religious commands); at that time the heart and soul of the believer will melt (from grief) as salt melts in

water, because he will see the unlawful things (and actions) and will not be able to change them.'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! At that time their rulers will be tyrant, the ministers transgressors, the leaders unjust and the trustees embezzlers.'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said: 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! Verily at that time evil will become virtue, and virtue will become evil; embezzlers will be trusted, and trustworthy people will be thought untrustworthy; and the liars will be authenticated, and the truthful one will be considered a liar.'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! At that time, women will be rulers and concubines will be consulted; (it may mean the governments of the women and/or the domination of women over their husbands – so much so that the husbands will not, or cannot, ask them to remain within the limits of the *sharī'ah*, leaving them free to go wherever they want in whatever clothes they like) and the children will sit upon *minbar*s (pulpits). (It may mean that children will sit upon pulpit of the Prophet even though they cannot appreciate the sanctity of the *minbar*. Or it may mean that such people will ascend the pulpit who will not deserve such honour. The *minbar* was created for delivering the commands of Allãh to His servants. Its only purpose was to enjoin good and to forbid evil, and later on the narration of the tragedy of Karbalã' was included in it, because the *faḍīlah* [superiority] and sufferings of the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* [a.s.] are important parts of religion. If someone wants to exhort others to do good, he must sincerely follow the *sharī'ah* himself; and if he wants to forbid others from doing evil, he, first of all, must abstain from the sins himself. Unfortunately, nowadays anyone who can recite a few poems of Iqbãl or Rumī, and who is unrestrained enough to invent *faḍãil* and *maṣãib* of the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* [a.s.] on the spur of the moment, is given the titles *al-'allãmah*, *mawlãnã* and *dhãkir* and is offered heavy fee to demonstrate his oratorical power, even if he shaves his beard, even if he knows nothing about Qur'ãn and *Ḥadīth*, even if he expresses his own opinions against the sayings of the Holy Prophet and the Imãms [peace be on them all], even if he uses the pulpit to mislead the masses); and the lie will be considered as cleverness; and *zakat* will be (disliked) as fines;

and the booty of war will be like personal property (or in present days' context, public property will be squandered as personal property); and man will be tyrant to his parents and generous to his friend; and at that time comets will appear.'

"Salmān (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allāh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allāh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmān! At that time woman will become a partner of her husband in trade; (it means, more probably, that she will help her husband in the shop, acting as sales-girl, accountant and what not); and the rain will be very hot; (its meaning is not clear yet. Does it mean radioactive rain?), and virtuous people will remain very sorrowful; and the poor person will be humiliated; at that time, the markets will come nearer; (it has already happened, thanks to the fantastic developments in the means of communications, like teleprinters, fax and internet. A man sitting in New York buys and sells in Tokyo). Then this will say. "I did not sell anything" and that will say, "I did not get any profit". Thus, you will see none who is not complaining against Allāh.'

"Salmān (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allāh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes; By (Allāh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmān! And then it will happen that their rulers will be such people that if they talked, they would kill them and if they remained silent, they would confiscate their wealth, would put their honour under their feet and would shed their blood – and the people's hearts will fill with fear; then you will not find anyone but that he would be afraid, fearful, awed and in terror.'

"Salmān (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allāh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allāh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmān! Verily at that time some things will be brought from the East, and some things from the West, and my *ummah* (Muslims) will be dyed in them. [It means that un-Islamic behaviour and character will be imported from the East and the West and Muslims will imitate those things and will be dyed in un-Islamic colour.] Then woe be unto the weaker people of my *ummah* from them; and woe be unto those (un-Islamic agents) from Allāh. They will not have mercy upon the little ones and will not respect the old ones; and will not pardon anyone who committed a mistake. Their bodies will be of human beings, and their hearts will be of Satans.'

"Salmān (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allāh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allāh) in Whose

hand is my soul, O Salmãn! And at that time males will satisfy their lust with males; and females will satisfy their lust with females; and minor boys will be mounted upon like the women; and the males will liken themselves to females [i.e., will look like females]; and females will look like males. [The clean-shaved faces and long hair on one side, and pants and bell-bottoms on the other are proof of the fulfilment of this forecast], and females will ride the saddles (i.e., horses, cycles, scooters and motor-cycles). So there will be curse of Allãh upon those women of my *ummah*.'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! Verily, at that time mosques will be decorated (by gold, etc.) as are synagogues and cathedrals; and the (copies of the) Qur'ãn will be beautified (with designs and golden colours, etc.); and the minarets (of the mosques) will be high, and the lines of the people standing in prayers will increase but their hearts will be hating each other and their talks will be different from each other, [i.e., though the external show of religion will be on the increase, the spirit of religion will disappear. Even when they will pray together, the Islamic brotherhood and unity will be absent. They will hate each other; they will not speak with one voice.]'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! At that time males will use golden ornaments. [In many marriages, bridegroom wears golden ring. I wonder why it is thought necessary to start the married life by defying the command of Allãh. Will such wilful affront to religion bring the blessings of Allãh and the Fourteen Ma'ṣūmīn (a.s.), upon the newlyweds?]; and they (the males) will wear silk and (people) will use cheetah-skins.'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! And at that time "interest" will appear (everywhere), and people will deal with (the help of) backbiting and bribe; and the Religion will be suppressed, and the world (worldly affairs) will be raised (in importance).'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! At that time, divorce will increase. And the *ḥudūd* (punishments of various crimes and sins prescribed in

Islam) of Allāh will not be established [i.e., the penal code given by Allāh will not be followed, as is the case nowadays]. But it will not do any harm to Allāh. [It will harm them only; they will suffer.]'

"Salmān (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allāh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allāh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmān! And at that time will appear female singers and musical instruments ["will appear" means "will be openly used"]; and will rule upon them most evil of my *ummah* (worst people will rule upon the Muslims).'

"Salmān (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allāh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allāh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmān! And at that time the rich of my *ummah* will go to pilgrimage for recreation, and the middle class for trade [What about foreign exchange, gold, watches and radios?], and the poor to show off. Thus, at that time, there will be people who will learn the Qur'ān for other than Allāh [i.e., for earning worldly benefits] and will treat the Qur'ān as musical instrument [as is happening today in Islamic countries where the Qur'ān is recited on the radios, not to make people follow the religious commands, but just to entertain the listeners].'

"'And there will be people who will study religion for other than Allāh [i.e., for earning prestige or wealth, as is happening today when the main purpose of religious studies in many circles is to become a good orator, so that higher and higher fees may be demanded from the audience] and the number of illegitimate children will increase; and people will sing the Qur'ān, and will fall upon one another in greed of the worldly (riches).'

"Salmān (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allāh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allāh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmān! This will happen when honours will be defiled, and sins will be committed, and the evil people will have authority upon good people, and falsehood will be prevalent, and disputes will appear [talks will be full of obstinacy], and poverty will be wide-spread and people will be proud of their clothes [fine clothes will be the criterion of greatness], and there will be rains at wrong times; and they will like chess and gambling apparatus and musical instruments; and will dislike enjoining the good and forbidding the evil; so much so that the (true) believer will, at that time have less respect than a slave-girl; and the reciters (of the Qur'ān) and those who spend their time in worshipping God will blame each other.

[Mudslinging amongst apparently religious people is not an uncommon sight nowadays.] Those are the people who will be called unclean and filthy in the kingdom of heavens.'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! At that time the rich will not fear (anything) except the poor so much so that a beggar will continue begging between two Fridays and will not find anyone putting anything in his hands.'

"Salmãn (r.a.), said, 'And is this to happen, O Messenger of Allãh?'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Yes, By (Allãh) in Whose hand is my soul, O Salmãn! At that time will talk Ruwaybiḍah.'

"Salman asked, 'And what is Ruwaybiḍah? O Messenger of Allãh, may my father and mother be made your ransom!'

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Such persons will talk about public affairs who had not talked in such matter before. Then in a short time chaos will appear upon earth, and every nation will think that chaos was only in their land [but it will cover the whole world].

"'They will remain in that condition so long as Allãh would wish them to remain; then the earth will throw out the pieces of its heart – gold, silver and other minerals' – (Then the Holy Prophet [s.a.w.a.], pointed towards the pillars, and said) 'like these (in size), but on that day neither gold nor silver will be of any benefit to anyone. And this is the meaning of the words of Allãh: *So surely did come its* (i.e., qiyãmah's) *Signs* [47:18].'" (*Biḥãru 'l-anwãr*, vol.3).

[al-Kulaynī] narrates in *ar-Rawḍatu 'l-Kãfī*, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyã, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from some of his companions. Also ʻAlī ibn Ibrãhīm narrates from his father, from Ibn Abī ʻUmayr; both from Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥamzah, from Ḥumrãn that he said: "Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), said – when it was mentioned before him about those (in power), and the bad condition of the Shīʻahs near them – 'I (once) went with Abū Jaʻfar al-Manṣūr, and he was in his procession. He was on a horse, and before him and behind him were many horses [i.e. riders]; and I was at his side on a donkey. So he said to me, "O Abū ʻAbdillãh! It were proper if you had been glad at the power Allãh had given us and the honour He had opened to us; and you should not tell people that you and your family have more right for this affair [i.e. caliphate] than we have – thus inciting us against yourself and them."' "He (the Imãm), said, 'So I told him, "Whoever has brought it to you from me is a lier." He said to me, "Do you swear

[by Allāh] for what you have said?"' He (the Imām) said, 'I said, "Surely the people are enchanters, i.e., they desire to turn your heart against me, therefore you should not listen to them, because we have more need of you than you have of us." Then he (al-Manṣūr) said, "Do you remember the day I asked you, 'Is there any kingdom (decreed) for us?' And you said, 'Yes. Long, wide, strong; you will continue in respite in your affair and spaciousness in your world, until you afflict us with a sacred blood in a sacred month in a sacred town?'"' He [the Imām) said, 'So I knew that he has memorized the *ḥadīth*, and I said, "May be Allāh will suffice you, because I had not said it particularly for you, it was only a *ḥadīth* which I had narrated, then may be some other person from your family would do it." So he became silent.

"'When I returned to my residence, one of our followers came to me and said, "May I be made your ransom! By Allāh! I saw you in the procession of Abū Ja'far; you rode a donkey and he was on a horse, and he talked to you looking down on you as you were under him. So I thought in my mind: 'He is the Allāh's proof on the creation, and the master of this authority who is followed, while this other one commits oppression, murders the children of the prophets and indulges in bloodshed in the earth which Allāh does not love; and yet he is in his procession and you are on a donkey.' This created such a doubt in my heart that I was afraid about my religion and my life."

"The Imām (a.s.), said, 'I said to him, "Had you seen the angels who were around me, before and behind me, and on my right and left, you would have looked at him and his splendour with disdain." Then (the follower) said, "Now I am satisfied."

"'Then he asked, "Upto how long will they continue to rule? When will release from them come?" I said, "Don't you know that there is a (fixed) term for everything?" He said, "Yes." Then I said, "Will it benefit you to know that when this thing came it would be quicker than the twinkling of an eye? If you were to know what and how was their condition before Allāh, the Mighty the Great, you would most forcefully hate them; and if you and all the inhabitants of the earth were to strive to make them enter into the most serious sin they do, they would not be able to do so. So the Satan should not unsettle you, because *honour is only for Allāh, and His Messenger, and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know*. Don't you know that whoever waits for our affair (power), and remains patient on what he experiences of harm and fear, he will be tomorrow in our group?

"'"**So when you see:**

– that truth has died and truthful people have gone;
– that oppression has encompassed towns;
– that the Qur'ãn has become old and such things have been innovated in it, which were not therein, and it is interpreted according to desires;
– that religion has retreated as water goes back in its hole;
– that people of falsity tower over people of truth;
– that evil is manifested, and not forbidden; and evil men are absolved from guilt;
– that sin is wide-spread;
– that men content themselves with men, and women with women;
– that the believer is silent, his words are not accepted;
– that the sinner speaks untruth and his falsity and lie is not rebutted;
– that the younger looks at the elder with disdain;
– that relationships are cut off;
– that the one who is praised for sin, laughs at it and does not refute it;
– that a boy offers what a woman offers;
– that women marry women;
– that praise has increased;
– that man spends wealth in other than Allãh's obedience and he is not forbidden nor his hand caught;
– that an onlooker seeks protection of God from the endeavours of a believer;
– that neighbour troubles his neighbour and nobody stops him;
– that the unbeliever is glad with the condition he sees the believer in, happy on the mischief he sees in the earth;
– that intoxicants are drunk openly and gather on it those who do not fear Allãh, the Mighty the Great;
– that enjoiner of good is humiliated;
– that sinner (committing) what Allãh does not like, is powerful, praised;
– that people of Qur'ãn and *ḥadīth* are disdained, and so is the one who loves them;
– that the path of good is closed; and the path of evil well-trodden;
– that the House of Allãh is abandoned and order is given to leave it;

– that man says what he does not do;
– that man are desirous of men and women of women;
– that a man lives on the earning of his posterior, and a woman on that of her vulva;
– that women hold gatherings [of amusements] like men;
– that femininity has appeared in the Children of ‘Abbās, they use hair-dye and comb (their hair) as a woman combs [i.e. makes herself up] for her husband;
– that men are given wealth for their genitals, people vie with each other for a man, and jealousy is shown about men;
– that a wealthy person is more honoured than a believer;
– that interest is openly [taken and given], without any shame;
– that women get praised for fornication;
– that woman cajoles her husband to establish sexual relations with men;
– that most of the people – and the best household – are those who help (their) women in their sins;
– that the believer is sorrowful, humiliated and disdained;
– that innovations and fornication are wide-spread;
– that people give credence to false witnesses;
– that unlawful is made lawful, and lawful is made unlawful;
– that religion is [explained] by opinion, and the Book and its laws are suspended;
– that people do not wait for night [to commit their debaucheries] because of their boldness against Allāh;
– that a believer has no power to negate (an evil) except in his heart;
– that a great many wealth is used in [things that bring] the wrath of Allāh, the Sublime, the Mighty;
– that the rulers bring the disbelievers nearer to themselves and keep the good people at distance;
– that the (rulers and) judges take bribe for judgement;
– that rulership is given to whoever increases his bid;
– that women of prohibited degrees are married, and are thought sufficient;
– that man is killed on suspicion and on insinuation;
– that man shows jealousy for man and spends his soul and wealth on him;
– that man is put to shame for his going to the women;
– that man eats from his wife's earning through debauchery – he

knows it and stands for it;

– that a woman subdues her husband, and does what he does not want, and spends on her husband;

– that a man leases his wife or maid on hire, and is pleased with food and drink of inferior quality;

– that too much of false oaths are sworn in the name of Allãh, the Sublime, the Mighty;

– that gambling is widespread, and intoxicant is openly sold, without any hindrance;

– that women offer themselves to the unbelievers;

– that (instruments of) amusements have spread, people pass by them but no one stops anyone, nor anyone dares to stop them;

– that a noble person is humiliated by someone whose power people are afraid of;

– that nearest person to the rulers is the one who is praised for abusing us, the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt*;

– that the one who loves us is accused of lying and his evidence is rejected;

– that people compete with one another in falsehood;

– that listening to the Qur'ãn has become a burden for the people; while listening to falsehood is (considered) refreshing;

– that a neighbour shows respect to his neighbour for fear of his tongue;

– that the divinely prescribed punishments are suspended; and deeds are (done) according to desires;

– that mosques are embellished;

– that the most truthful man in the eyes of the people is the one who is a lier, caluminater;

– that evil has gained ground as well as hastening with slander;

– that wrong has spread;

– that backbiting is enjoyed and people greet each other with it;

– that *ḥajj* and *jihãd* are sought for other than Allãh;

– that the *sulṭãn* humiliates a believer to please a disbeliever;

– that ruin is changed to structure;

– that man earns his livelihood by giving short measure and weight;

– that bloodshed is considered unimportant;

– that man seeks leadership for the sake of the world; and makes himself notorious for evil tongue in order that he is feared and entrusted with the affairs;

– that prayer is disdained;
– that man has a lot of wealth, which he has not paid *zakãt* of since he became its owner;
– that dead body is exhumed from its grave, is troubled and its shroud is sold;
– that disturbance has increased;
– that a man remains intoxicated in evenings and mornings, without caring for the people's condition;
– that cattles are abused sexually;
– that cattles gore one another;
– that man goes to his place of prayer and returns without any of his clothes on him;
– that people's hearts have become hard and their eyes are dry, and remembrance (of Allãh) weights heavily on them;
– that unlawful earning is spread and vied for;
– that one prays to show the people;
– that a *faqīh* learns jurisprudence for other than religion, seeking the world and leadership;
– that people attach themselves to whoever gains ascendancy;
– that one who seeks his livelihood through lawful means is criticized and put to shame; and one who seeks it through unlawful means is praised and respected;
– that in Mecca and Medina things are done which Allãh does not like [but] no one stops them nor anyone puts obstacles between those evils and their doers;
– that instruments of amusements are openly used in Mecca and Medina;
– that if a man speaks some truth, enjoins good, and forbids evil, someone stands up to admonish him and says: 'It is no concern of yours';
– that people look at each other and follow the people of evil;
– that the path of good and its way is empty, nobody uses it;
– That a dead body is shaken and nobody feels pity for it;
– that every year innovation and evil takesplace more than it was before;
– that people and gatherings do not follow except rich ones;
– that a needy person is paid for being laughed at, and is shown mercy for other than Allãh's sake;
– that nobody is afraid of the heavenly signs;
– that people cohabit together like cattles; nobody forbids a bad

thing for fear of people;

– that man spends a lot in other than Allãh's obedience, and refuses a small amount in Allãh's obedience;

– that disobedience of parents is wide-spread and parents are disdained; they (live) with the child in the most wretched condition, and he is glad if they are slandered;

– that women have taken possession of the kingdom and gained ascendancy over everything, nothing is done except what they desire;

– that a son slanders his father and invokes God against his parents and becomes happy on their death;

– that if a day passes for a man in which he did not commit a great sin – debauchery, giving short weight or measure, fornication, or drinking intoxicants – he would remain depressed and melancholy, thinking that that day of his life was a loss;

– that the *sulṭãn* hoards food-stuff [with intention of increasing the price];

– that the money [Allãh has given to the Prophet's] kindred is distributed in wrong ways, and used in gambling and drinking intoxicants;

– that intoxicants are used for medicine, and are prescribed to patients and cure is sought in them;

– that all people are equally guilty of abandoning enjoinment of good and forbiddance of evil; they do not consider it a part of religion;

– that hypocrites live in clover and the people of truth are in oblivion;

– that *ãdhãn* is given on wages, and prayer is led on wages;

– that the mosque is full of people who do not fear Allãh, and have gathered there for backbiting and eating the flesh of the people of truth, and describe to one another [various kinds of] intoxicants;

– that an intoxicated person leads the people in prayer without understanding anything;

– that intoxication is not disgraced, and when a man is drunk, he is accorded respect and is feared, he is left without punishment and excuse is found for his intoxication;

– that the one who eats orphans' property is praised for his goodness;

– that the judges judge contrary to what Allãh has ordered;

– that the rulers have trust in embezzlers for greed;

– that the rulers have allotted the inheritance to sinners who are audacious against Allãh; they take [something] from them and leave

them to do whatever they like;

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	as-Sūrah	Chapter	Place of Revelation
74.	المُدَّثِّـر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded	Makkah
75.	القِـيَامَـة	*al-Qiyāmah*	The Resurrection	"
76.	الإِنْسَـان (اَلدَّهْـر)	*al-Insān* (or, *ad-Dahr*)	Man (or, The Time)	Madīnah
77.	المُرْسَـلاَت	*al-Mursalāt*	The Loosed Ones	Makkah
78.	النَّـبَاءِ	*an-Nabā'*	The Tiding	"
79.	النَّـازِعَات	*an-Nāzi'āt*	The Pluckers	"
80.	عَـبَسَ	*'Abasa*	He Frowned	"
81.	التَّـكْوِيـر	*at-Takwīr*	The Darkening	"
82.	الإِنْفِطَـار	*al-Infiṭār*	The Splitting	"
83.	المُطَفِّـفِـين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters	"
84.	الإِنْشِقَـاق	*al-Inshiqāq*	The Rending	"
85.	البُـرُوج	*al-Burūj*	The Constellation	"
86.	الطَّـارِق	*aṭ-Ṭāriq*	The Night-Star	"
87.	الأَعْلىٰ	*al-A'lā*	The Most High	"
88.	الغَـاشِيَـة	*al-Ghāshiyah*	The Enveloper	"
89.	الفَجْـر	*al-Fajr*	The Dawn	"
90.	البَـلَد	*al-Balad*	The Land	"
91.	الشَّـمْس	*ash-Shams*	The Sun	"
92.	الَّيْـل	*al-Layl*	The Night	"
93.	الضُّـحَىٰ	*aḍ-Ḍuḥā*	The Forenoon	"
94.	الإِنْشِـرَاح	*al-Inshirāḥ*	The Expanding	"
95.	التِّـين	*at-Tīn*	The Fig	"
96.	العَـلَق	*al-'Alaq*	The Blood-Clot	"
97.	القَـدْر	*al-Qadr*	Power	"
98.	البَـيِّنَـة	*al-Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign	Madīnah
99.	الزِّلْـزَال	*az-Zilzāl*	The Earthquake	"

LIST OF THE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS DEALT WITH IN THIS VOLUME

No. of Verse/s	Subject	Nature of Discussion	Page
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–	Comparison of the Story of the Two Sons of Adam with what Torah says	Academic	154
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NOTE: By the grace and help of Allãh, this English translation of this volume of *al-Mīzãn* was completed at Dar-es-Salaam, (Tanzania), on Saturday, 1st Rajab 1421 = 30th September 2000, at the hand of the humble servant of Allãh, Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

APPENDIX 'A'
A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES
THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by Means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh.	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh,	Rasūlu 'llāh, Nabiyyu 'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabi' I, in the Year of Elephant, (25/8/570 AD).	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH, (25/5/632 AD).	Natural	Holy Madīnah, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles.	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth year after the declaration of the Prophethood, (2/1/615 AD).	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH, (26/8/632 AD).	Injured	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 years before the declaration of the Prophethood, (25/5/600 AD).	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH, (27/1/661 AD).	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)`.
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar).	15th Ramaḍān. 3 AH, (1/3/625 AD).	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH, (6/3/670 AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Aṣghar).	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH, (8/1/626 AD).	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH, (10/10/680 AD).	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā.	Holy Karbalā' (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH, (6/1/659 AD).	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH, (31/10/712 or 20/10/713AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH, (16/12/676 AD).	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH, (28/1/733 AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH, (20/4/702 AD).	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH, (14/12/765 AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm.	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abdu 'ṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH, (28/10/746 AD).	25th Rajab, 183 AH, (1/9/799 AD).	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second).	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah,148 AH, (29/12/765 AD).	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH, (24/8/818 AD).	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs – Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second).	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH, (8/4/811 AD).	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH, (25/11/835 AD).	Poison	Holy Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third).	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH, (27/9/827 AD).	3rd Rajab, 254 AH, (28/6/868 AD).	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā) Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH, (3/12/846 AD).	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH, (1/1/874 AD).	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā', Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qāim, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghāib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH, (29/7/869 AD).	Still alive, but in occultation.	---	---

APPENDIX 'B'

List of the *sūrah*s (chapters) of the Holy Qur'ān, their serial number, names, transliteration in Latin and place of their revelation.

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	*as-Sūrah*	Chapter	Place of Revelation
1.	الفَـاتِحَـة (فَاتِحَةُ الْكِتَاب)	*al-Fãtiḥah* (or, *Fãtiḥatu'l-Kitãb*)	The Opening (or, the Openning of the Scripture)	Makkah
2.	البَقَـرَة	*al-Baqarah*	The Cow	Madīnah
3.	آل عِـمْرَآن	*Āl 'Imrãn*	The House of 'Imrãn	"
4.	النِّسَآء	*an-Nisã'*	Women	"
5.	المَـائِـدَة	*al-Mãidah*	The Table	"
6.	الأنْـعَام	*al-An'ãm*	Cattle	Makkah
7.	الأعْـرَاف	*al-A'rãf*	The Battlements	"
8.	الأنْـفَـال	*al-Anfãl*	The Spoils	Madīnah
9.	التَّـوْبَـة	*at-Tawbah*	Repentance	"
10.	يُـونُس	*Yūnus*	Jonah	Makkah
11.	هُـود	*Hūd*	Hood	"
12.	يُـوسُف	*Yūsuf*	Joseph	"
13.	الـرَّعْـد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder	Madīnah
14.	إبْـرَاهِـيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham	Makkah
15.	الحِجْـر	*al-Ḥijr*	El-Hijr	"
16.	النَّحْل	*an-Naḥl*	The Bee	"
17.	الإسْـرَاء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey	"
18.	الـكَهْـف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave	"
19.	مَرْيَـم	*Maryam*	Mary	"
20.	طٰـهٰ	*Ṭã hã*	Ta ha	"

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	as-Sūrah	Chapter	Place of Revelation
21.	الأَنْبِيَـآء	*al-Anbiyã'*	The Prophets	Makkah
22.	الحَـجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage	Madīnah
23.	المُؤمِنُـون	*al-Mu'minūn*	The Believers	Makkah
24.	النُّـور	*an-Nūr*	Light	Madīnah
25.	الفُـرْقَـان	*al-Furqãn*	Salvation	Makkah
26.	الشُّعَرَآء	*ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets	"
27.	النَّمْـل	*an-Naml*	The Ants	"
28.	القَصَصْ	*al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Story	"
29.	العَـنْكَبُوت	*al-'Ankabūt*	The Spider	"
30.	الـرُّوم	*ar-Rūm*	The Greeks	"
31.	لُقْـمَان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman	"
32.	السَّجْـدَة	*as-Sajdah*	Prostration	"
33.	الأَحْـزَاب	*al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates	Madīnah
34.	سَـبَاء	*Sabã'*	Sheba	Makkah
35.	فَـاطِـر (المَـلَئِكَـة)	*Fãṭir* (or, *al-Malãikah*)	The Originator (or, The Angels)	"
36.	يسٓ	Yã Sīn	Ya Sin	"
37.	الصَّافَات	*aṣ-Ṣãfãt*	The Rangers	"
38.	صٓ	*Ṣãd*	Sad	"
39.	الزُّمَـرْ	*az-Zumar*	The Companies	"
40.	المُؤمِـنْ	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer	"
41.	فُصِّـلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished	"
42.	الشُّـورَىٰ	*ash-Shurã*	Counsel	"
43.	الزُّخْـرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments	"
44.	الدُّخَـان	*ad-Dukhãn*	Smoke	"
45.	الجَاثِيَـة	*al-Jãthiyah*	Hobbling	"
46.	الأَحْقَـاف	*al-Aḥqãf*	The Sand-Dunes	"

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	as-Sūrah	Chapter	Place of Revelation
47.	مُحَـمَّد (ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad	Madīnah
48.	الفَـتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory	"
49.	الحُجرَات	*al-Ḥujarāt*	Apartments	"
50.	قٓ	*Qāf*	Qaf	Makkah
51.	الذَّارِيات	*adh-Dhāriyāt*	The Scatters	"
52.	الطُّـور	*aṭ-Ṭūr*	The Mount	"
53.	النَّجْـم	*an-Najm*	The Star	"
54.	القَـمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon	"
55.	الرَّحْمٰـن	*ar-Raḥmān*	The All-Merciful	Madīnah
56.	الوٰاقِعَـة	*al-Wāqi'ah*	The Terror	Makkah
57.	الحَـدِيْد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron	Madīnah
58.	المُجَـادَلَة	*al-Mujādalah*	The Disputer	"
59.	الحَشْـر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering	"
60.	المُمْتَحَنَـة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman Tested	"
61.	الصَّـفْ	*aṣ-Ṣaf*	The Ranks	"
62.	الجُمُعَـة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation	"
63.	المُنَـافِقُون	*al-Munāfiqūn*	The Hypocrites	"
64.	التَّغَـابُن	*at-Taghābun*	Mutual Fraud	"
65.	الطَّـلاَق	*aṭ-Ṭalāq*	Divorce	"
66.	التَّحْـرِيم	*at-Taḥrīm*	The Forbidding	"
67.	المُـلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom	Makkah
68.	القَـلَم	*al-Qalam*	The Pen	"
69.	الحَاقَّـة	*al-Ḥāqqah*	The Indubitable	"
70.	المَعَـارِج	*al-Ma'ārij*	The Stairways	"
71.	نُـوح	*Nūḥ*	Noah	"
72.	الجِـنّ	*al-Jinn*	The Jinn	"
73.	المُـزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped	"

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	*as-Sūrah*	Chapter	Place of Revelation
100.	العَـادِيَات	*al-ʻÃdiyãt*	The Chargers	Makkah
101.	القَـارِعَـة	*al-Qãriʻah*	The Clatterer	"
102.	التَّـكَاثُـر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry	"
103.	العَصْـر	*al-ʻAṣr*	Afternoon	"
104.	الهُـمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter	"
105.	الفِـيْل	*al-Fīl*	The Elephant	"
106.	قُـرَيْـش	*Quraysh*	Koraish	"
107.	المَـاعُـون	*al-Mãʻūn*	Charity	"
108.	الـكَوْثَـر	*al-Kawthar*	Abundance	"
109.	الـكَافِـرُون	*al-Kãfirūn*	The Unbelievers	"
110.	النَّصْـر	*an-Naṣr*	Help	Madīnah
111.	تَبَّـتْ (لَهَـبْ)	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab*)	Perish (or, Flame)	Makkah
112.	الإِخْـلاَص (التَّوحِيْـد)	*al-Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd*)	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)	"
113.	الفَـلَق	*al-Falaq*	Daybreak	"
114.	النَّـاس	*an-Nãs*	Men	"

Al-MIZÃN

An Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ãn

By:
al-'Allãmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã'ī

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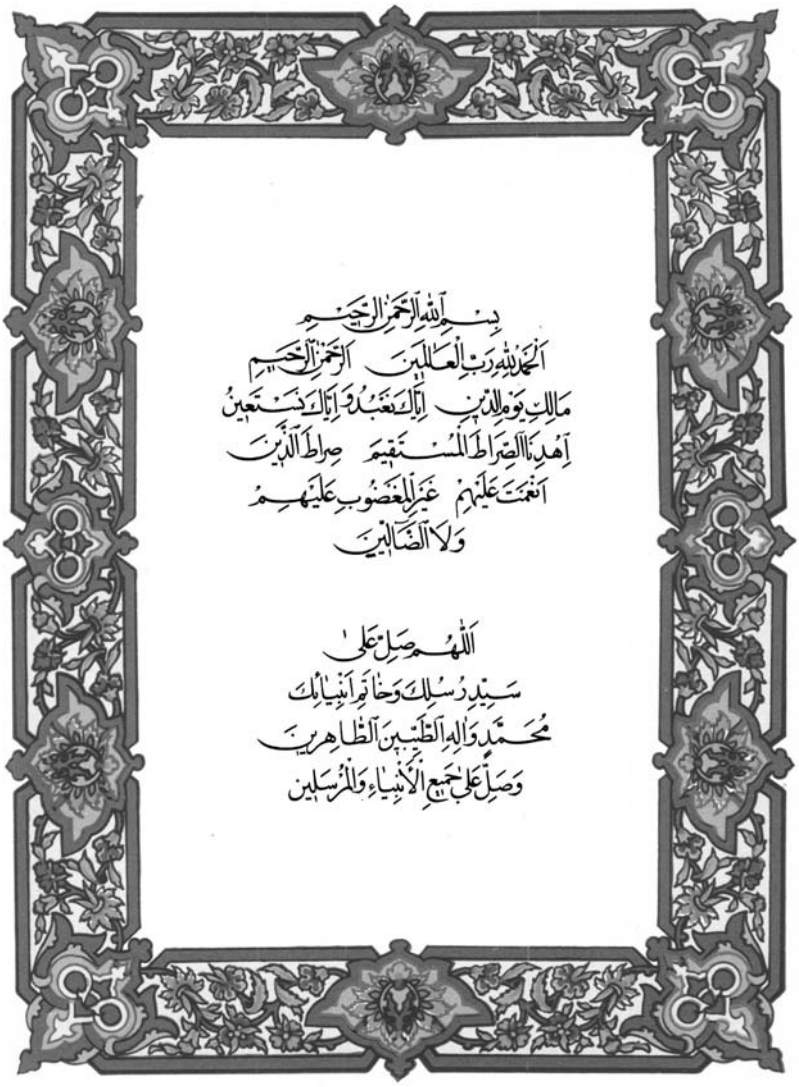
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In the Name of Allãh
The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful

Praise belongs to Allãh, the Lord of all Being;
the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement.
Thee only we serve; and to Thee alone we pray for succour.
Guide us in the straight path,
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allãh! Send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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TRANSLITERATION

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ء }	’
ا }	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ي	y
ة	ah
	.
Short Vowel	
ـَ	a
ـِ (or ـٖ)	i
ـُ	u
Long Vowels	
آ	ā
ـِي	ī
ـُو	ū

تـصـديـر

1- المرحوم العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (1321/1904-1402/1981) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

2- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

3- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة الى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالإنجليزيّة، و بعد مداولات و استشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لأ نّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما ، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرأن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، و كفائته الأدبيّة في التعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الإنجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هو الزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

4- و نحن اذ ننشر (الجزء الحادي عشر) من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة لتفسير (الميزان) و يطابق النّصف الاوّل من الجزء السّادس للنّصّ العربيّ، لنرجوا من الله سبحانه أن يأخذ بأيدينا و يعيننا علي إعداد التّرجمة الكاملة للكتاب و نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة. و لكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصاً لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولي و نعم النّصير.

1422/3/17
2002/5/30

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف و التّرجمة و النّشر)
طهران – ايران

FOREWORD

1. The late al-‘Allãmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã’ī (1321/1904 – 1402/1981) – may Allãh have mercy upon him – was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contem-porary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the translation of *al-Mīzãn*.

2. al-‘Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzãn fī tafsīri 'l-Qur’ãn* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allãmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ãn in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzãn* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ãn and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustãdh al-‘Allãmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the eleventh volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzãn*. This volume corre-sponds with the first half of the sixth volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allãh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendices included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mīzãn*: One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * * *

We implore upon Allãh to affect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work, which we have started. May Allãh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES

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al-Mīzān

Volume Eleven

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Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the zakãt *while they bow* (55). *And whoever takes Allãh and His Messenger and those who believe for a Guardian, then surely the party of Allãh are they that shall be triumphant* (56).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The two verses, as you see, are placed between the verses, which prohibit taking the People of the Book and the unbelievers for a helper or guardian. That is why a group of Sunnī exegetes has tried to join these two with the preceding and following verses in a single context; they have taken the whole group in one connotation, aiming to describe the believers' responsibility regarding people's *wilãyah* (in the meaning of helping), and prohibition of taking the Jews, the Christians and the unbelievers as a helper. It confines the *wilãyah* to Allãh, His Messenger,

and those believers who establish prayers and pay the *zakāt* while they are bowing – they indeed are true believers. Thus it excludes the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease; leaving the true believers whose *wilāyah* is incumbent. The verse gives the same import that is shown by a collection of such verses as: . . . *and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers* (3:68); *The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves,* . . . (33:6); [and about the believers that] . . . *these are guardians of each other;* . . . (8:72); *And* (as for) *the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other;* . . . (9:71). [According to these exegetes] the verse under discussion makes Allāh, His Messenger and the believers *awliyā'* (**أَوْلِيَاء** = here meaning 'helpers') of the believers.

However, there remains the difficulty of the circumstantial clause, *while they bow*, which is attached to the clause, *and pay* zakāt. They have tried to remove this difficulty by taking the bowing in a metaphorical sense, i.e., they submit themselves to Allāh; or they are financially in a low position, etc. The verse then would mean: The Jews, the Christians and the hypocrites are not your guardian; rather your Guardians are Allāh, His Messenger and those believers who keep up prayers and pay *zakāt*, and they in all this surrender them-selves to Allāh with total obedience – or, they pay *zakāt* while they themselves are poor and in straitened condition.

This was the explanation given by them. But if you ponder on, and look minutely at the two verses and the ones surrounding them, and then at the general position of this chapter, you will reach at a conclusion different from what they have said.

The first thing which goes out of window is their claim that all these verses were in a single context, and that their aim was to describe the *wilāyah* of helping and to differentiate between genuine and false help.

Yet, although it is accepted that the chapter was revealed during the last days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in the Last Pilgrim-age; but it is also accepted that all its verses were not revealed to-gether in one go; the chapter contains verses which were doubtlessly revealed before that time, and their meanings clearly show it; also their narrated reasons of revelation support their earlier revelation. If a verse is placed before or after a verse it does not give an indication that their context is one; nor does some affinity between one verse and another show that they were revealed together or in one context.

Moreover, the preceding verses [*O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends . . .*] forbid the believers to befriend the Jews and the Christians, and put to shame the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease for hastening to them and looking after their interests, without addressing the Jews and the Christians or talking to them. And the following ones [*O you who believe! Do not take for guardians those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke, from among those who were given the Book before you and the unbelievers; . . . Say: "O People of the Book! Do you find fault with us* (for aught) *except that we believe in Allãh . . ., and that most of you are transgressors?"*], prohibit taking them for guardians and expose their condition by ordering to talk to them and put them to shame for hypocrisy and transgression. Thus the aims in the two sets of verses are quite different from each other. So, how the context can be the same?

Apart from that you have seen in the commentary of preceding verses [*O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends . . .*] that the *wilãyah* in the meaning of help is not suitable in that context, and the particularities of those verses and especially the words, *they are friends of each other*, and the words, *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them,* are not appropriate for such interpretation. Establishing the *wilãyah* of help and its undertaking between two nations does not make the two into one nation nor does it attach one to the other. Also such prohibi-tion cannot be justified by saying that, *they are friends of each other*. Such expressions can only be used when the aim is to prohibit *wilãyah* of love, because love creates psychological and spiritual blending of both parties, and permits each to affect psychological and spiritual management in the other's life affairs; it brings two groups near each other in character and activities in a way that obliterates national characteristics.

Not only that. It is not correct to count the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as a *waliyy* (in the meaning of helper) of the believers, while its opposite is correct. This help which is given by Allãh, and the Qur'ãn mentions it in many of its verses, is the help in religion. Accordingly, it is pro-per to say that the religion belongs to Allãh – in the meaning that He has established it and laid down its *sharī'ah*. Thus the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) or the believers or both together are exhorted to help it, or some helpers are invited to help Allãh regarding the laid down religion, as He says: . . . *The disciples said: "We are helper of Allãh" . . .* (61:14); . . . *if you help Allãh, He will help you . . .* (47:7); *And when Allãh made a covenant with the*

prophets: ". . . you must believe in him, and you must aid him." . . . (3:81); apart from other many such verses.

Also, it is proper to say that the religion belongs to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) – in the meaning that it is he who has called to it and con-veyed it to us, for example. Or that the religion belongs to Allãh and His Messenger – in the meaning of legislation and guidance, and so they call people to help it or praise the believers for helping it; as Allãh says: *. . . so those who believe in him and honour him and help him, . . .* (7:157); *. . . seeking grace of Allãh and* (His) *pleasure, and assisting Allãh and His Messenger . . .* (59:8); *. . . and those who gave shelter and helped . . .* (8:72); and other such verses.

Likewise, it is proper to say that the religion belongs to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the believers – in the meaning that they are obligated to follow its laws and act on it, so it is said that Allãh is their Guardian and Helper; as He says: *. . . and surely Allãh will help him who helps Him; . . .* (22:40); *Most surely We help Our messengers, and those who believe in this world's life and on the day when the witnesses shall stand up* (40:51); *. . . and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us.* (30:47), apart from other such verses.

However, it is not correct to ascribe the religion to the believers alone, thus making them as principal and putting the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) aside, and then to count the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as their helper in their affairs; because whatever religious dignity there is, the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) has the lion's share in it. That is why we do not find a single ex-ample in the Qur'ãn where the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has been mentioned as the believer's helper. Far be it from the divine speech to neglect the noble divine decorum in any instance.

This is one of the strongest proofs that wherever the Qur'ãn ascribes *wilãyah* to the Prophet, it means the *wilãyah* of Guardianship and authority or that of love and affection, as Allãh says: *The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves, . . .* (33:6); *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, . . .* (5:55); note that the verse is addressed to the believers, and as you have been told earlier, there is no meaning in counting the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) their *waliyy* in the meaning of helper.

It is now clear that these two verses are different in the context from the preceding ones, even if we take the *wilãyah* in the meaning of helping; do not be confused by the clause: *the party of Allãh are they that shall be triumphant*, because triumph and prevailing points to the

connotation of helping as much as it does to that of management and authority, and to that of love and affinity. Triumph of religion – the topmost desire of the people of religion – takes place when the believers attach themselves to Allãh and His Messenger with any possible means. Allãh has clearly announced it to them in His words: *Allãh has written down: "I will most certainly prevail, I and My Mess-engers;"* . . . (58:21); *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the messengers: most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victori-ous ones* (37:171-3).

On top of all, there are a lot of traditions declaring that these two verses were revealed about ‘Alī (a.s.) when he gave his ring in charity while he was praying. Thus these verses are reserved for him and are not general. God willing, many of those traditions will be quoted under "Traditions".

If such numerous and so many accumulated traditions pointing to the reason of revelation can be ignored while explaining a verse, then obviously not a single verse could be explained with the help of the narrated reasons of revelation in the whole Qur’ãn. Therefore, there is no justification for generalizing the two verses and claiming that they point to the believers' friendship with one another.

However, the exegetes have objected to these traditions – although they should not have done so in view of their overwhelming numbers – as follows:

First: These traditions are against the context of the verses that apparently point to the *wilãyah* of help, as mentioned above.

Second: They want us to use plural and mean singular; because according to them, the clauses: *those who believe and those* . . ., refer to ‘Alī, but language does not support it.

Third: According to these traditions, *zakãt* would mean giving the ring in charity, and it is not called *zakãt*.

Based on these objections, they say that the verses are general, and restrict the *wilãyah* to the group mentioned therein. The hyp-ocrites were hastening to the help of the People of the Book and em-phasizing its importance; so Allãh forbade it and said that their only helpers are Allãh, His Messenger and the true believers, rather than the People of the Book and the hypocrites. There would remain only one difficulty: that this explanation did not agree with the apparent meaning of the conditional clause: *while they bow*. But, it could easily be removed if we took it in its metaphorical meaning, i.e. while they are humble before Allãh; or even

when they are themselves in need, in wretched condition.

This was the gist of their objections. But if you meditate on this and other similar verses, you will see that none of these stands on its legs.

As for the verse's position in the context of the ones denoting *wilãyah* of help: You have seen that those verses do not give the mean-ing of help; and even if we suppose that the previous verses denote that meaning, this verse is not compatible with it.

As for the problem of using plural and meaning singular: You have seen the detailed reply to it under the verse of *Mubãhalah* (3:61) in volume three of this book.[1] Also, it was explained there that there were two ways of speaking:

1. To use a plural word and mean a singular, a single entity.
2. To describe a general proposition, using a plural word, in order that it may be applied to all suitable candidates, even if at present there be only one person or thing to which it could be applied.

The language rejects the first style; but the second one is very common in use.

Would that I knew what they would say about the verse: *O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends: would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, . . . would you manifest love to them*? . . . (60:1). It is undoubtedly known that the verse refers to one man, Ḥãṭib ibn Abī Balta'ah, when he corresponded with the Quraysh.

Or about the verse: *They say: "If we return to Medina, the mighty will surely drive out the meaner therefrom;"* . . . (63:8). It is well known that the speaker one man, was 'Abdullãh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl.

Or about the verse: *They ask you as to what they should spend.* . . . (2:215), and the questioner was one man.

Or about the verse: (As for) *those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have their reward* . . . (2:274). It is narrated that the spender was 'Alī or Abū Bakr.

There are a lot of such verses in the Qur'ãn.

A very strange phenomenon appears before our eyes when we look at the clause: (they say), *"We fear lest a calamity should befall us;"* . . . (5:52). The speaker was 'Abdullãh ibn Ubayy, according to the narrated reason of revelation, which the objectors themselves do accept; and it is in between the verses under discussion. [They find no difficulty in

[1] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.6, pp.59-63. (*tr.*)

applying the plurals to one man in this clause!]

It could be said that in the above-mentioned verses there were many people who agreed with that one person's views, or were pleased with their action; therefore Allãh has used plurals in order that it may cover the doer together with those who agreed with him. However, it would show that using a plural for a single person was justified if there was a good reason for it. The verse under discussion too would come into this category; as it would prove that the religious nobilities – including the said *wilãyah* – is not confined to one person to the exclusion of the others; rather it only depends on priority in sincerity and deeds.

Moreover, all the narrators of these traditions were the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and their disciples who were with them in that very era. All of them were pure Arabs whose language was not perverted and whose tongues were not mixed up. If such usage was not allowed in the speech and people were not familiar with such expressions, they would not have accepted these narrations, rather they would have been the first to put forward this objection; but none of them is on record to speak against it on this ground.

As for the saying that charity of a ring is not called *zakãt*: It should be kept in mind that the use of the word, *zakãt,* specifically in its terminological meaning took place in the Muslim's expressions after the Qur'ãn laid it down as an obligatory act of religion; but in its literal sense it covers that terminological meaning and other spendings altogether. When it is used without any restriction or joined with keep-ing up prayer, it indicates spending the property for the sake of Allãh. See, for example, what Allãh has mentioned regarding the previous prophets: He says about Ibrãhīm, Isḥãq, and Ya'qūb: . . . *and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of* zakãt*,* . . . (21:73); and He says about Ismã'īl: *And he enjoined on his family prayer and* zakãt*, and was one in whom his Lord was well pleased.* (19:55); and He quotes 'Īsã (a.s.) saying in the cradle: . . . *and He has enjoined on me prayer and* zakãt *so long as I live* (19:31). And it is known that their *sharī'ah* did not have the *zakãt* of wealth as we understand it in Islam.

Likewise, look at the following verses, which were revealed in Mecca in early days of prophethood when the *zakãt* (as we know it) was not legislated yet:

He indeed shall be successful who pays zakãt*, and remembers the name of his Lord and prays* (87:14-15); [He] *who gives away his wealth for* zakãt (92:18); *Those who do not give* zakãt *and they are unbelievers in*

the hereafter. (41:7); *And who are givers of* zakāt (23:4). Would that I knew what the Muslims understood from the word, *zakāt*, in these verses!

Even the verse of *zakāt* itself: *Take alms out of their wealth, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them; surely your prayer is a relief to them; . . .* (9:103), shows that *zakāt* is a sort of alms and charity, and it has been named *zakāt* [lit: purification] only because charity cleanses and purifies in general; and then its was predominantly used for that particular alms.

All of it clearly shows that there is no hindrance in calling gen-eral alms and spending in the way of Allāh as *zakāt*. Also it is evident that there is no reason for interpreting the word, bowing, in metaphori-cal sense. Similarly, there is no reason to look for far-fetched justifi-cations as to why Allāh used in the beginning of the verse the word: *your Guardian*, in singular and brought in its predicate: *those who believe*, in plural. Think over it.

QUR'ĀN: ***Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe*****:** ar-Rāghib has said in his *Mufradātu 'l-Qur'ān:* "*al-Walā'* and *at-tawālī* (اَلْوَلاَء ، اَلتَوَالي) denote that two or more things are so positioned as nothing extraneous comes between them. Metaphorically it is used to indicate proximity in place, or affinity, or friendship, and in help, or in belief. *al-Wilāyah* (اَلْوِلاَيَة) is help, and/or management of affairs. It has been said that *al-walāyah* and *al-wilāyah* (اَلْوَلاَيَة ، اَلْوِلاَيَة) both are one like *al-dalālah* and *al-dilālah* (اَلدَلاَلَة ، اَلدِلاَلَة); and it really means management of affairs; and *al-waliyy* and *al-mawlā* (اَلْوَلِيّ، اَلْمَوْلى) denote this meaning, and both are used as *nomen agentis*, i.e. guardian /manager; and as *nomen patientis*, i.e. one whose affairs are managed. A believer is called *waliyy* of Allāh, but nowhere is he referred to as *mawlā* of Allāh; while Allāh is called *waliyy* of the believers, as well as their *mawlā*."

Further he says: "They say, *tawallī* when used without any preposition, gives the meaning of *wilāyah*, indicating that it is related to the nearest objective; they say, 'I turned my ears/eyes/face to so-and-so'. Allāh says: *. . . so We shall surely turn thee to a* qiblah *which thou shalt be pleased with; turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it; . . .* (2:144); but when it is followed by preposition *min* (مِنْ = from) clearly or implied, it means turning away and leaving the proximity."

Apparently, man perceived the proximity (pointed to by *wilāyah*) first of all physically in bodies and their places and times; then it was

borrowed for immaterial nearness, opposite to the above-mentioned idea. We know that primitive man began his perceptive journey with the material things perceived through the five senses and was involved with them long before thinking about rational proposi-tions and immaterial ideas and their related things.

When *wilãyah* – a special proximity – is affected in spiritual/ immaterial affairs, it follows that *waliyy* has a right and an authority over the *mawlã* which others do not have (except through him). All such managemental aspects that may be delegated to another will automatically be taken over by the *waliyy*, e.g. the *waliyy* of a deceased person. The estate, which the deceased used to manage by right of ownership, his heir, has the right to manage it by *wilãyah* of inheritance. Likewise, the guardian of a minor manages that minor's financial affairs by *wilãyah* of guardianship; and the helper manages the affairs of the helped one strengthening him in his defence; and Allãh is the Guardian (*Waliyy*) of His servants and manages their affairs in this world and the hereafter – there is no guardian except Him. So Allãh is the Guardian of the believers, inasmuch as He man-ages the affairs of their religion through guiding, calling, and helping them and so on. And the Prophet is the Guardian of the believers inas-much as he has the authority to decide between them, for them and against them through legislation and judgement. Likewise, the *ḥãkim* (ruler, judge) is the guardian of the people over whom he rules within his jurisdiction. The same is the case with other examples of *wilãyah*, like that of emancipation, covenant, protection, neighbourhood and divorce; similarly, the *wilãyah* of a cousin, of love and of a designated successor, and so on.

Also, His word: *they shall turn* (their) *backs to you* [33:15], i.e. they shall turn their backs towards the war and ignore its demands.

And His word: *you turned back* [5:92], i.e. you turned away from accepting it; you faced its opposite direction by turning away from it.

In short, looking at *wilãyah* in its different usages, we get the meaning of a sort of proximity that gives its subject some authority of management and possession of planning.

Looking at the context of the verse under discussion: "Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe", we find that the meaning of *wilãyah* (guardianship) for all the guard-ians is the same, because "Allãh, His Messenger and the believers", have all been ascribed to one word: "your Guardian", and clearly guardianship of each has the same meaning. This is also supported by the clause at the end of the

second verse: *then surely the party of Allāh are they that shall be triumphant*, as it indicates or clearly shows that all the guardians are the party of Allāh, because they are under His Guardianship; thus the guardianship of the Messenger and of those who believe sprout from the root of Allāh's Guardianship.

Allāh has ascribed to Himself the following aspects of *wilāyah*:

al-Wilāyatu 't-Takwīniyyah (The Authority Over Creation): Through this authority He manages everything and disposes the creatures' affairs as He pleases and in whatever way He pleases. He says: *Or have they taken guardians besides Him? But Allāh is the Guardian, . . .* (42:9); *. . . you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor; will you not then mind?* (32:4); *. . . Thou art my guardian in this world and the hereafter; . . .* (12:101); *. . . he has no guardian after Him; . . .* (42:44). The same is the implication of the verses: *. . . and We are nearer to Him than his life-vein.* (50:16); *. . . and know that Allāh intervenes between man and his heart, . . .* (8:24).

Possibly related to it is the *wilāyah* of help which Allāh ascribes to Himself: *That is because Allāh is the Protector of those who believe, and because the unbelievers shall have no protector for them* (47:11); *. . . then surely Allāh it is Who is his Guardian, . . .* (66:4); and the same connotation is seen in the verse: *. . . and helping the believers is ever incumbent on Us* (30:47).

al-Wilāyatu 't-Tashrī'iyyah (The Authority Over Legislation): Allāh has ascribed to Himself this *wilāyah*, which concerns the believers' religious affairs: Legislation of the laws, guidance, advice, help and so on. He says: *Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into light; . . .* (2:257); *. . . and Allāh is the Guardian of the believers* (3:68); *and Allāh is the Guardian of the pious . . .* (45:19) The same is the theme of the verse: *And it is not for a believing man nor for a believing woman to have any choice in their affairs when Allāh and His Messenger have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger, he surely strays off a manifest straying* (33:36).

This is what Allāh has described related to His *wilāyah*, and it concerns the authority over creation and authority over legislation. You may also call them the real *wilāyah* and the *wilāyah* from a subjective point of view.

Then Allāh has mentioned for His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) the *wilāyah* which is reserved for him, and it is *al-Wilāyatu 't-Tashrī'iyyah*: The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has the right and authority to legislate the laws, call

people to it, train the *ummah* accordingly, rule over them and decide in their affairs. Allãh says: *The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves*, . . . (33:6). The same is the connotation of the verses: *Surely We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allãh has taught you;* . . . (4:105*)*; . . . *and most surely you guide to the right path* (42:52); . . . *a Messenger from among them-selves, who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom,* . . . (62:2); . . . *that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them,* . . . (16:44); . . . *obey Allãh and obey the Messenger* . . . (4:59); *And it is not for a believing man nor for a believing woman to have any choice in their affairs when Allãh and His Messenger have decided a matter;* . . . (33:36); *And that you should judge between them by what Allãh has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you from part of what Allãh has revealed to you;* . . . (5:49). It has been mentioned that Allãh has not ascribed to the Prophet the *wilãyah* of help for the *ummah*.

In short, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has the *wilãyah* over the *ummah*, inasmuch as he leads them to Allãh, rules over them, judges and decides in all their affairs. It is incumbent on them to obey him uncon-ditionally. In this way, his *wilãyah* springs from Allãh's *wilãyah*, in the meaning of the authority of legislation. In other words, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has precedence over them as they are bound to obey him, because his obedience is Allãh's obedience. Thus, his *wilãyah* is the *wilãyah* of Allãh, as some previously quoted verses prove, for example: . . . *obey Allãh and obey the Messenger* . . . (4:59); *And it is not for a believing man, nor for a believing woman to have any choice in their affairs when Allãh and His Messenger have decided a matter;* . . . (33:36), apart from other such verses.

It is this meaning of *wilãyah* as ascribed to Allãh and His Mess-enger, which is bestowed on the believers in the verse under dis-cussion, when it says: "Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Mess-enger and those who believe." You have seen that the context proves that it is only one *wilãyah*, and it belongs to Allãh directly and to the Messenger and to those who believe indirectly by permission of Allãh.

Had the *wilãyah* ascribed to Allãh in this verse, been different from that ascribed to those who believe, it was more appropriate, in order to avoid any confusion, to bring another word of *wilãyah* before mentioning "those who believe", as Allãh has done in similar situ-ations. For

example, He says: *Say: "A hearer of good for you* (who) *believes in Allāh and believes the faithful . . ."* (9:61). The word: "believes", has been repeated because its connotations in the two clauses are different. A similar style was used in the verse: *. . . obey Allāh and obey the Messenger* . . . (4:59), as was explained in volume five of this book.[2]

Moreover, the word: "Your Guardian", is singular and is ascribed to, "those who believe", i.e. plural. According to the exegetes, it is because *wilāyah* here has a single meaning, and it directly belongs to Allāh and as for the Messenger and the believers, it is indirectly, through Allāh.

It is clear from above that the restriction in "Only" aims at confining the *wilāyah* to those mentioned in the verse. It removes the possible misunderstanding that it might cover those who are men-tioned and also the others. There is another possibility that this restric-tion negates the *wilāyah* of all persons other than those mentioned therein.

QUR'ĀN: ***those who keep up prayers and pay the* zakāt *while they bow*:** It gives further particulars of "those who believe"; "while they bow" is the conditional clause attached to the subject hidden in the verb "pay". *ar-Rukū'* (**اَلرُّكُوع**) is a particular position of body which is found in human beings only. An old man with bent back is called *ar-rāki'* (**اَلرَّاكِع** = one who bows down.) In the language of *sharī'ah* it is the name of a special position in worship. Allāh says: . . . (those) *who bow down, who prostrate* . . . (9:112). Symbolically it represents humil-ity and submission [to Allāh]; but in Islam it is not allowed except in prayer, contrary to prostration.

And because it shows humility and submission, the word is sometimes used to allude to general humbleness, or to poverty and need, because a man in straitened circumstances usually shows humil-ity before others.

QUR'ĀN: ***And whoever takes Allāh and His Messenger and those who believe for guardian, then surely the party of Allāh are they that shall be triumphant:*** *at-Tawallī* (**اَلتَّوَلِّي** = to take as a friend); "those who believe" points to the preceding: *those who believe,* together with their attributes: *those who keep up prayers and pay the* zakāt *while they bow;* the clause: "then surely the party of Allāh are they that shall be triumphant", is put in the place of the complement for the pre-ceding

[2] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.8, pp.277-8. (*tr.*)

conditional clause, although it is not the complement. Rather, the speech has put the major premise in place of the conclusion, in order to show the reason of the proposition. In effect it says: Whoever takes Allãh and His Messenger and those who believe for guardian, shall be triumphant, because he belongs to the party of Allãh and the party of Allãh are they that are triumphant. It is an allusion that they are the party of Allãh.

al-ḥizb (اَلْحِزْب), according to ar-Rãghib, is a group having coarseness, ruthlessness, and harshness. Allãh has described His party in another place in the Qur'ãn, with a nearly similar theme and has ascribed success to them. He says: *You shall not find a people who believe in Allãh and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allãh and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers or their kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and whom He has strengthened with a spirit from Him: and He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; Allãh is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him; they are Allãh's party: now surely the party of Allãh are the successful ones* (58:22).

al-Falãḥ (اَلْفَلاَح) means victory and acquisition of the object of desire, i.e., triumph. It is this triumph and success, which Allãh has promised to bestow on the believers – this being His best promise to them. He says: *succeful indeed are the believers* (23:1). Many verses have this theme; and in all of them the promise is without any con-dition; obviously it denotes unrestricted victory and unconditional success. Gaining felicity, adhering to truth, vanquishing infelicity and refuting falsity in this world and the hereafter: In this world through good life which is found in virtuous society made up of the friends of Allãh, in an earth cleansed from the friends of Satan, based on piety; and in the hereafter, in neighbourhood of the Lord of the worlds.

TRADITIONS

[al-Kulaynī] narrates from ʻAlī ibn Ibrãhīm, from his father, from Ibn Abī ʻUmayr from ʻUmar ibn Udhaynah, from Zurãrah, al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasãr, Bakīr ibn Aʻyan, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, Barīd ibn Muʻãwiyah and Abu 'l-Jãrūd, all together from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, "Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, ordered His Messenger (to have) *wilãyah* of ʻAlī, and revealed to him: *Only Allãh is your Guard-ian and His Messenger*

and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the zakāt *while they bow;* and the *wilāyah* of *ulu 'l-amr* [was made] incumbent; and they did not know what it was. So Allāh ordered Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) that he should explain the *wilāyah* to them as he had explained prayer, *zakāt*, fast and *ḥajj*.

"When this (order) came to him from Allāh, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), felt uneasy and he was afraid lest they turn away from their religion and call him a liar; so his breast was straitened and he appealed to his Lord, the Mighty, the Great. Then Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, revealed to him: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allāh will protect you from the people.* So he complied with the order of Allāh, Mighty is His remembrance! He stood up (to announce) the *wilāyah* of ʻAlī on the day of Ghadīr Khumm; so he called out: The Prayer of Congregation; and (then) ordered the people that those present should convey (this message) to those who were not there."

ʻUmar ibn Udhaynah said, "All (the above-mentioned narrators) except Abu 'l-Jārūd (further) said, 'Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, "This was another duty, and the *wilāyah* was the last of the obligations. Then Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, revealed: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as religion.*" Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, "Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, says, 'I shall not send to you any duty after this; I have perfected for you all the duties.' "'" (*al-Kāfī*)

al-Burhān and *Ghāyatu 'l-marām* narrate from aṣ-Ṣadūq through his chain, from Abu 'l-Jārūd, from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said about the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe*, "A group of the Jews accepted Islam; there were among them ʻAbdullāh ibn Salām, Asad, Thaʻlabah, Ibn Yāmīn and Ibn Ṣūriyā. So they came to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Prophet of Allāh! Verily Mūsā had made Yūshaʻ ibn Nūn his *waṣiyy* (successor); so who is your *waṣiyy*? O Messenger of Allāh! And who is our Guardian after you?' Then this verse was revealed: *Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, who keep up prayers and pay* zakāt *while they bow*.

"The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), said (to the companions): 'Stand you up.' They stood up and came to the mosque, and lo! A beggar was coming out. The (Prophet, s.a.w.a.), said, 'O beggar! Has anyone given you anything?' He said, 'Yes. 'This ring.' (The Prophet) said, 'Who

gave it to you?' He said, 'Gave it to me that man who is praying.' He (the Prophet) said, 'In which position had he given it to you?' He said, 'He was bowing.' So the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, '*Allãhu Akbar*,' and the people in the mosque said, '*Allãhu Akbar*.'

"Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), said, '‘Alī is your *waliyy* (Guardian) after me.' They said, 'We are pleased with Allãh as the Lord, and with Muḥammad as the Prophet, and with ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib as the Guardian.' So Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, revealed: *And whoever takes Allãh and His Messenger and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allãh are they that shall be triumphant*."

al-Qummī narrates from his father, from Ṣafwãn, from Abãn ibn ‘Uthmãn from Abū Ḥamzah ath-Thumãlī, from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, "While the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), was sitting with a group of the Jews including ‘Abdullãh ibn Salãm, this verse was revealed to him. So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) went out to the mosque, and a beggar came before him. Then (the Messenger, s.a.w.a.) said, 'Has anyone given you something?' He said, 'Yes. That one who is praying.' So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) came there and lo! It was ‘Alī (a.s.)." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: al-‘Ayyãshī also has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr* from the same Imãm (a.s.)

ash-Shaykh writes: Narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, i.e. al-Mufīd; he said: narrated to us Abu 'l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Kãtib; he said: narrated to us al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī az-Za‘farãnī; he said: narrated to us Abū Isḥãq Ibrãhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Thaqafī; he said: narrated to us Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī; he said: narrated to us al-‘Abbãs ibn ‘Abdillãh al-‘Anbãrī, from ‘Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī al-Yashkurī, from ‘Awn ibn ‘Ubaydillãh, from his father, from his grandfather Abū Rãfi‘, that he said, "I went, one day, to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), while he was asleep and a snake was in, a side of the house; but I did not like to kill it lest I awake the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and I thought that [probably] revelation was being sent to him, so I laid between him and the snake, and said (to myself): 'If there was any evil from it (the snake), it would come to me, not to him.'

"So I was (there) a little while, and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) woke up, and he was reciting: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messen-ger and those who believe* . . . until he came to the end of the verse. Then he said, 'Praise be to Allãh Who completed for ‘Alī His favour, and

congratulations to him for the grace of Allãh which He has bestowed on him.' Then he said to me, 'What are you doing here?' So I informed him about the snake, he said to me, 'Kill it.' So I killed it. Then he said to me, 'O [Abū] Rãfi‘! What will be your position when a group will fight against ‘Alī and he will be on right and they on wrong? To fight them, is a right of Allãh (on His creatures), Mighty is His name! So whoever could not [fight, he should hate them] by his heart; there is nothing beyond Allãh.' So I said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! Pray to Allãh for me that if I find them He should strengthen me to fight them.' " (Abū Rãfi‘) said, "Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), prayed for me; and said, 'Verily, every prophet had a trustee, and verily, my trustee is Abū Rãfi‘.' "

He said, "When people did *bay‘ah* of ‘Alī after ‘Uthmãn, and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr proceeded (against him), I remembered the saying of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). So I sold my house at Medina and a piece of land (I had) at Khaybar; and I came out my sons – and –myself with the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) in order to be martyred in his army. But I could not reach him until he returned from Baṣrah. And I went with him to Ṣiffīn; I fought in his presence in Ṣiffīn and also in Nahrawãn. I remained with him constantly until ‘Alī (a.s.) was martyred. I returned to Medina, and I had neither any house there nor any land. So al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (a.s.) gave me a land in Yanbū‘, and divided for me a part of the house of the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.); and I lived in it with my dependents." (*al-Amãlī*)

al-‘Ayyashī narrates through his chain from al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd, from his father Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan, from his grand father that he said, "I heard ‘Ammãr ibn Yãsir saying, 'A beggar stood near ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib, while he was bowing in a supererogatory prayer; so he pulled out his ring and gave it to the beggar. Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) came and was informed of it. Then this verse was revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow* (to the end of the verse). So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) recited it before us, then said, "Anyone whose *mawlã* (guardian) am I, ‘Alī is his *mawlã*; O Allãh! Be friend of him who is his friend, and be enemy of him who is his enemy."' " (*at-Tafsīr*)

Also, al-‘Ayyãshī narrates from al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Ṣãliḥ, from some of his companions, from the Fifth or Sixth Imãm (a.s.) that he said, "When this verse was revealed: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe*, it proved troublesome to the Prophet

(s.a.w.a.), as he was afraid that the Quraysh would accuse him of lying. So, Allãh revealed: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord* (to the end of the verse). So he carried it out on the day of Ghadīr Khumm." (*ibid*.)

Also, he narrates from Abū Jamīlah, from some of his companions, from either of the two Imãms (a.s.) that he said, "Indeed the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Verily Allãh revealed to me to love four: ‘Alī, Abū Dharr, Salmãn and al-Miqdãd.' " [The narrator says:] "I said, 'Well, with all that multitude of the people, was not there anyone who knew this matter?' (The Imãm) said, 'Certainly; (there were) three.' I said, '[When] these verses were revealed: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe*, and: *Obey Allãh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*: was there no one to ask about whom they were revealed?' He said, 'For that reason (perdition) came to them, they were not asking.' " (*ibid*.)

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain from Abū Sa‘īd al-Warrãq, from his father, from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from his grandfather, in the *ḥadīth* of adjuration of ‘Alī (a.s.) against Abū Bakr when Abū Bakr acquired caliphate; and ‘Alī (a.s.) mentioned his excellent virtues to Abū Bakr, and described the clear wordings of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) concerning his appointment; so he said *inter alia*, "I adjure you by Allãh; is it I who have the *wilãyah* from Allãh, (joined) with the *wilãyah* of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), in the verse of the *zakãt* of the ring, or you?" (Abū Bakr) said, "Nay! It is for you." (*Ghãyãtu 'l-marãm*)

ash-Shaykh narrates through his chain from Abū Dharr, the *ḥadīth* of adjuration of the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) against ‘Uthmãn, az-Zubayr, ‘Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn ‘Awf and Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqãṣ, on the day of consultation, and his arguments against them with the clear declarations of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) – and everyone of them was confirming what he was saying. And he (a.s.) had said *inter alia*, "Is there anyone among you – except me – who had paid *zakãt* while he bowed; and the verse was revealed about him: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow*?" They said, "No." (*al-Majãlis*)

Abu 'l-Ḥasan ath-Thãlith ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Hãdī (a.s.) wrote an epistle to the people of Ahwãz when they had asked him about Compulsion and Delegation. He (a.s.) wrote in it, *inter alia*:

"The *ummah* unanimously agrees, without any difference at all, that

the Qur'ān is truth, there is no doubt in it, according to the belief of all sects. Therefore, when they unite on it they are on the right, and they are guided aright to confirm what Allāh has revealed, because the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said, 'My *ummah* shall not unite on error.' He (s.a.w.a.) has thus told us that what the (whole) *ummah* agrees upon and some of them are not in discord with others on it, is the truth. This is the (true) connotation of this *ḥadīth*; not what the ignorant ones say in its interpretation; nor that which the enemies have said: negation of the order of the Book, following the commands of forged traditions and vain narrations, and following the perilous and ruinous desires which go against the clear verdict of the Book and confirmed meanings of clear and brilliant verses. And we pray to Allāh that He should help us for *ṣalāt* and guide us to good conduct."

Then he (a.s.) said:

"Therefore, when the Book testifies for the truth and actuality of news, then a group of the *ummah* refutes it and argues against it by one of those forged narrations, they become lost in error because of its rejection and refutation. The most correct *ḥadīth* is that whose truth is known from the Book. For example, the *hadīth* of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) which is unanimously agreed upon by all, that he said, 'Indeed I am leaving behind among you two caliphs: the Book of Allāh and my Progeny, as long as you adhere to them both you shall never go astray after me, and they shall never separate from each other until they come to me on the *ḥawḍ* (reservoir)'. And there is another wording narrated from him in the same meaning, 'Indeed I am leaving among you two precious (or weighty) things: the Book of Allāh and my Progeny (who are) people of my house, and they shall never separate from each other until they come to me on the reservoir, as long as you adhere to them both you shall never go astray.'

"We find evidence of this *ḥadīth* in clear words in the Book of Allāh, like His word: *Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakāt *while they bow*. Then the traditions of the scholars in this respect unani-mously point to the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) that he gave his ring in alms while he was in *rukū'*; so Allāh appreciated it from him and revealed the verse about him.

"Then we find that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), distinguished him from his companions by (saying) this word: 'He whose guardian am I, 'Alī is his guardian; O Allāh! Be friend of him who is his friend, and be

enemy of him who is his enemy'; and by his word: ''Alī shall repay my debt and fulfil my promise; and he is my successor over you after me'; and by his word when he appointed him as his successor in Medina and he said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! Are you leaving me (to look after) women and children?' So he (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Are you not pleased that you have the same position with me as Hãrūn had with Mūsã, except that there is no prophet after me?'

"Thus we know that the Book testifies verifying these traditions and confirming this evidence; therefore the *ummah* is bound to acknowl-edge them, because these traditions agree with the Qur'ãn. So when we find them in agreement with the Qur'ãn, and find the Qur'ãn in agree-ment with these traditions, and proving them, then to follow them be-comes a duty which no one will transgress except the people of enmity and mischief." (aṭ-Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijãj*)

The Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) said, *inter alia*, in a *ḥadīth*:

"The hypocrites said to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), 'Is there any duty pending which your Lord intends to impose on us after all that has already been laid down? So you (better) tell (it to us) so our souls may be at rest that now nothing else is pending.' So Allãh revealed in this respect: *Say: 'I exhort you only to one thing'* (34:46), i.e. the *wilãyah*. Then Allãh revealed: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow*; and there is no difference in the *ummah* that on that day no one gave *zakãt* while bowing, except one man . . ." (*ibid*.)

al-Mufīd narrates from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsã, from al-Qãsim ibn Muḥammad al-Jawharī, from al-Ḥasan ibn Abi 'l-'Alã' that he said, "I said to Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.), 'The successors, is their obedience incumbent?' He said, 'Yes. They are those (about whom) Allãh has said: *Obey Allãh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you*; and they are those (about whom) Allãh has said: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow*.'" (*al-Ikhtiṣãṣ*)

The author says: [al-Kulaynī] has narrated it in *al-Kãfī* from al-Ḥusayn ibn Abi 'l-'Alã' from the same Imãm (a.s.); and has also narrated another tradition of the same meaning from Aḥmad ibn 'Īsã from the same Imãm (a.s.).

The chain of various narrations of what was revealed about 'Alī (a.s.) ends at all the Imãms (a.s.), because they are the people of one house, and their affair is one.

ath-Thaʻlabī has written in his *at-Tafsīr*: Informed us Abu 'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn al-Qãsim al-Faqīh; he said: narrated to us ʻAbdullãh ibn Aḥmad ash-Shaʻrãnī; he said: informed us Abū ʻAlī Aḥmad ibn ʻAlī ibn Razīn; he said: narrated to us al-Muẓaffar ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anṣãrī; he said: narrated to us as-Sariyy ibn ʻAlī al-Warrãq; he said: narrated to us Yaḥyã ibn ʻAbdi 'l-Ḥamīd al-Jummãnī, from Qays ibn ar-Rabīʻ, from al-Aʻmash, from ʻAbãyah ibn ar-Rabʻī; he said: narrated to us ʻAbdullãh ibn ʻAbbãs (may Allãh be pleased with him), while he was sitting at the rim of Zamzam, saying: "The Mess-enger of Allãh said" – when a man wearing a turban came there. Now, whenever Ibn ʻAbbãs said, "The Messenger of Allãh said," that man also said, "The Messenger of Allãh said."

So, Ibn ʻAbbãs said to him, "I ask you by Allãh! Who are you?" (The narrator) said, "Then he removed the turban from his face and said, 'O people! Whoever knows me, he knows me; and whoever does not know me, then I am Jundab ibn Junãdah al-Badrī Abū Dharr al-Ghifãrī. I heard the Messenger of Allãh by these two [ears], else they should become deaf, and I saw him by these two [eyes], else they should become blind, (while) he was saying, "ʻAlī is the leader of the righteous ones and the killer of the unbelievers; helped is he who helps him and foresaken is he who foresakes him." Indeed I prayed one day the prayer of *ẓuhr* with the Messenger of Allãh. A beggar asked in the mosque but no one gave him anything. So the beggar raised his hand to the heavens and said, "O Allãh! Be (my) witness that I asked in the mosque of the Messenger of Allãh, but nobody gave me anything"; and ʻAlī was in *rukūʻ*, so he pointed out to him with his right little finger, and he had a ring in it. So the beggar came forward till he took the ring from his little finger; and all this was in the sight of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). When he finished his prayer, he raised his head towards the heavens and said, "O Allãh! Mūsã had asked You saying: '*O my Lord! Expand my breast for me, and make my affairs easy to me, and loose the knot from my tongue,* (that) *they may understand my word, and give to me an aider from my family, Hãrūn, my brother, strengthen my back by him, and associate him* (with me) *in my affair'* [20:25-32]. So You revealed for him a speaking Qur'ãn: *We will surely strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both a power, so that they shall not reach you; with Our signs;* [28:35]. O Allãh! And I am Muḥammad, Your Prophet, and Your chosen one. O Allãh! So expand my breast for me, and make my affairs easy to me, and give to me an aider, ʻAlī; strengthen my back by him."'"

Abū Dharr said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), had not finished his words when Jibrīl came to him from near Allãh, the High, and said, 'O Muḥammad! Recite.' He (s.a.w.a.), said, 'What should I recite?' He said, '*Only Allãh is your Guardiann and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow*."

The book *al-Jam' Bayna 'ṣ-Ṣiḥãḥi 's-Sittah* (by Zarīn, vol.3, *tafsīr* of the chapter of "The Table") quotes under the verse: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger . . .*, from *Ṣaḥīḥụ 'n-Nasã'ī*, from Ibn Salãm that he said, "I came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), and we said, 'Verily our people became our enemy when we accepted the truth of Allãh and His Messenger, and they swore that they would not talk to us.' Then Allãh revealed: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow*.

"Then Bilãl called *ãdhãn* for *ẓuhr* prayer, and people stood up praying; some were prostrating and some bowing, some asking Allãh; when a beggar (came there) begging; and 'Alī gave (him) his ring while he was bowing. So the beggar informed the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.). Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) recited before us: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow. And whoever takes Allãh and His Messenger and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allãh are they that shall be triumphant*."

Ibnu 'l-Maghãzilī ash-Shãfi'ī narrates explaining the word of Allãh: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger . . .*: Informed us Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Uthmãn; he said: informed us Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ibrãhīm ibn Shãdhãn al-Bazzãz by permission; he said: narrated to us al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī al-'Adawī; he said: narrated to us Salamah ibn Shabīb; he said: narrated to us 'Abdu 'r-Razzãq; he said: informed us Mujãhid from Ibn 'Abbãs that he said about the word of Allãh: *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow*, that it was revealed about 'Alī. (*al-Manãqib*)

Also, he narrates: Informed us Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭãwãn; he said: informed us Abū Aḥmad 'Umar ibn 'Abdillãh ibn Shawdhab; he said: narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-'Askarī ad-Daqqãq; he said: narrated to us Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmãn; he said: narrated to us Ibrãhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Maymūn; he said: narrated to us 'Alī ibn 'Ãbis; he said: Abū Maryam and I called on 'Abdullãh ibn 'Aṭã'. Abū Maryam said

(to him): "Narrate to ʻAlī the *ḥadīth* which you had narrated to me from Abū Jaʻfar." He said, "I was sitting near Abū Jaʻfar, when passed by him the son of ʻAbdullāh ibn Salām. I said, 'May Allāh make me your ransom! Is he the son of him who had knowledge of the Book?' He said, 'No. Rather it is your companion, ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib about whom were revealed verses of the Book of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *and he who has knowledge of the Book* [13:43]; *Is he then who has with him clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from Him recites it* [11:17]; *Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe.*'" [5:55]. (*ibid*.)

al-Khaṭīb al-Khwārazmī has narrated the correspondence be-tween Muʻāwiyah and ʻAmr ibn al-ʻĀṣ, in which the latter writes *inter alia*: "You certainly know, O Muʻāwiyah! What (Allāh) has revealed in His Book, of the verses, which are recited regarding [ʻAlī's] excellent virtues, which no one shares with him. For example, the word of Allāh, the High: *They fulfil vows* [76:7]; *Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakāt *while they bow* [5:55]; *Is he then who has with him clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from Him recites it* [11:17]; and Allāh, the High, has said: *. . . men who are true to the covenant which they made with Allāh* [33:23]; and Allāh, the High, has said to His Messenger: *Say*: *'I do not ask of you any recompense for it except the love of* (my*) near relatives'* [42:23]."

al-Khaṭīb narrates through his chain, from Abū Ṣāliḥ, from Ibn ʻAbbās, that he said, "ʻAbdullāh ibn Salām came with some of his people who had believed in the Prophet (s.a.w.a), and they said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Our houses are far away, indeed; and we do not have any place for assembly or discussion except this place (of yours); and when our people saw that we had believed in Allāh and His Mess-enger and had accepted his veracity, they abandoned us and swore to themselves that they would not sit with us, nor enter into marriage-tie with us or talk with us; and it has proved very hard for us.' So the Prophet (s.a.w.) said to them: '*Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakāt *while they bow*.'

"Then the Prophet (s.a.w.), went out to the mosque and some people were standing (in prayer) and others bowing. (The Prophet) saw a beggar; and he said to him, 'Has anyone given you anything?' He said, 'Yes; a golden ring.' The Prophet (s.a.w.) said to him, 'Who has given it to you?' He said, 'That one standing (in prayer)' – and he pointed with his

hand to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib. Then the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, 'In which position he gave (it) to you?' He said, 'He gave to me while he was in *rukū‘*.' Then the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: '*Allãhu Akbar*', and then recited: *And whoever takes Allãh and His Messenger and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allãh are they that shall be triumphant.*"

Then Ḥassãn ibn Thãbit composed and recited (the following poem):

O Abu 'l-Ḥasan! May my soul be your ransom, and my life-blood!
As well as every slow and fast in (the way of) *guidance!*
Will my praise and of (your) *lovers go in vain?*
But praise for Allãh's sake is never lost.
So it is you, who gave while bowing,
The souls of the people are your ransom! O the best bowing one!
Your blessed ring; O the best Master,
And the best buyer and the best seller!
So Allãh revealed about you, the best wilãyah,
And made it clear in decisive sharī‘ah. (*ibid.*)

al-Ḥamawaynī [al-Ḥamū’ī] narrates through his chain from Abū Hadbah Ibrãhīm ibn Hadbah that he said, "Informed us Anas ibn Mãlik that a beggar came into the Mosque and he was saying, 'Who will lend to the Rich, the Trustworthy (Allãh)?' And ‘Alī was bowing, indicating by his hand to the beggar to take off the ring from his hand. (Anas) said, 'Then the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "O ‘Umar! It became incumbent." (‘Umar) said, "May my father and mother be your ransom! O Messen-ger of Allãh! What became incumbent?" He (s.a.w.) said, "The Garden became incumbent for him. By Allãh! He (the beggar) did not take it off from his hand, but he removed him from every sin and every fault."'"

al-Ḥamawaynī narrates through his chain from Zayd ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from his grandfather that he said, "I heard ‘Ammar ibn Yãsir – may Allãh be pleased with him – saying, 'A beggar stood near ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib, and he was in *rukū‘* of a super-erogatory prayer; so he removed his ring and gave it to the beggar. Then he came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) and informed him of it. Then this verse was revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.): *Only Allãh is your Guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay* zakãt *while they bow.* So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) recited it; then said, "Anyone whose *mawlã* am I, ‘Alī is his *mawlã*."'"

al-Ḥãfiẓ Abū Nu‘aym narrates from Abu 'z-Zubayr, from Jãbir

(may Allāh be pleased with him) that he said, "'Abdullāh ibn Salām came [to the Prophet] with a group, complaining that people have avoided them since they have entered into Islam. So the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.) said, 'Find for me a beggar.' We entered the Mosque and a beggar came near him. (The Prophet) said to him, 'Has anyone given you anything?' He said, 'Yes, I passed by a man who was bowing, so he gave me his ring.' (The Prophet) said, 'Come along and show me.'" (Jābir said) "So we proceeded and lo! 'Alī was in standing position, so (the beggar) said, 'This.' Then was revealed: *Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger* . . ."

Also, al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu'aym narrates from 'Awf ibn 'Ubayd ibn Abū Rāfi', from his father, from his grandfather that he said, "I went to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.) while he was asleep, and a snake was in a side of the house; but I did not like to kill it lest I awake the Prophet. So I lay between him and the snake, so that if there was any- thing (i.e. snake-bite) it would be in me, not him. Then (the Prophet) woke up and he was reciting this verse: *Only Allāh is your Guardian and His Messenger*. He said, 'All praise is for Allāh!' Then he came to my side and said, 'Why do you lie here?' I said, 'Because of the pres-ence of this snake.' He said, 'Go to it and kill it.' So I killed it.

"Then he took my hand and said, 'O Abū Rāfi'! There shall soon be after me some people who would fight 'Alī; to fight them will be a right of Allāh; so whoever could not fight them by his hand, he should do so by his tongue, and whoever could not do so, then by his heart; there is nothing beyond that.'"

The author says: The traditions showing that the two verses were revealed concerning the alms of the ring are very numerous. We have quoted some of them here from al-Baḥrānī's book, *Ghāyatu 'l-marām*; and it has been ascertained that they are found in the books al-Baḥrānī has copied from. We have quoted only as much as was necessary to show various versions of the story.

Many companions have narrated this event, like Abū Dharr, Ibn 'Abbās, Anas ibn Mālik, 'Ammār, Jābir, Salamah ibn Kuhayl, Abū Rāfi', 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ and 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn; and likewise as-Sajjād, al-Bāqir, aṣ-Ṣādiq, al-Hādī and other Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt*.

Also, *Aimmatu 't-Tafsīr* (those who explain the verses with the help of traditions) unanimously agree on this tradition, without any objection, like Aḥmad, an-Nasā'ī, aṭ-Ṭabarī, aṭ-Ṭabarānī, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd and many other *ḥuffāẓ* (memorizers) and *imām*s (masters) of *ḥadīth*. The scholars of

'ilmu 'l-kalãm (Islamic Theology) have accepted the tradition. The jurisprudents have used it as their proof in the question of a great many actions during prayer, and in the discussion whether supererogatory alms is called *zakãt*.

And the outstanding luminaries of language and literature from among the exegetes, like az-Zamakhsharī in *al-Kashshãf* and Abū Ḥayyãn in his *at-Tafsīr* have not disputed regarding the application of this verse on this tradition; nor has any narrator showed any reluctance in it – and they were the people of this language.

Therefore, no attention should be paid to someone's claim that the tradition of the revelation of this verse in connection with the story of the ring is forged and fabricated. Some of them, like Shaykhu 'l-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, have transgressed the limit and claimed *ijmã'*, unanimity, that this tradition was forged. It is really an astonishing claim. You have, however, seen in the preceding commentary, what is the truth and reality of this matter.

* * * * *

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ

لَا تَتَّخِذُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُواْ دِينَكُمۡ هُزُوٗا وَلَعِبٗا مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ
ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ وَٱلۡكُفَّارَ أَوۡلِيَآءَۚ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤۡمِنِينَ ٥٧
وَإِذَا نَادَيۡتُمۡ إِلَى ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ٱتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوٗا وَلَعِبٗاۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمۡ قَوۡمٞ
لَّا يَعۡقِلُونَ ٥٨ قُلۡ يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ هَلۡ تَنقِمُونَ مِنَّآ إِلَّآ أَنۡ ءَامَنَّا
بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ مِن قَبۡلُ وَأَنَّ أَكۡثَرَكُمۡ فَٰسِقُونَ ٥٩ قُلۡ
هَلۡ أُنَبِّئُكُم بِشَرّٖ مِّن ذَٰلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِندَ ٱللَّهِۚ مَن لَّعَنَهُ ٱللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ
عَلَيۡهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنۡهُمُ ٱلۡقِرَدَةَ وَٱلۡخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَۚ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ شَرّٞ
مَّكَانٗا وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَآءِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ٦٠ وَإِذَا جَآءُوكُمۡ قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا
وَقَد دَّخَلُواْ بِٱلۡكُفۡرِ وَهُمۡ قَدۡ خَرَجُواْ بِهِۦۚ وَٱللَّهُ أَعۡلَمُ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكۡتُمُونَ
٦١ وَتَرَىٰ كَثِيرٗا مِّنۡهُمۡ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِي ٱلۡإِثۡمِ وَٱلۡعُدۡوَٰنِ وَأَكۡلِهِمُ
ٱلسُّحۡتَۚ لَبِئۡسَ مَا كَانُواْ يَعۡمَلُونَ ٦٢ لَوۡلَا يَنۡهَىٰهُمُ ٱلرَّبَّٰنِيُّونَ
وَٱلۡأَحۡبَارُ عَن قَوۡلِهِمُ ٱلۡإِثۡمَ وَأَكۡلِهِمُ ٱلسُّحۡتَۚ لَبِئۡسَ مَا كَانُواْ

يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ يَدُ ٱللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ ۚ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا۟
بِمَا قَالُوا۟ ۘ بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ ۚ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنْهُم مَّآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَٰنًا وَكُفْرًا ۚ وَأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةَ
وَٱلْبَغْضَآءَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۚ كُلَّمَآ أَوْقَدُوا۟ نَارًا لِّلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا ٱللَّهُ ۚ
وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا ۚ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱتَّقَوْا۟ لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ
سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ وَلَأَدْخَلْنَٰهُمْ جَنَّٰتِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا۟
ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِم مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا۟ مِن
فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِم ۚ مِّنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ
سَآءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

O you who believe! Do not take for friends those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke, from among those who were given the Book before you and the unbelivers; and fear Allãh if you are believers (57). *And when you call to prayer they take it as a mockery and a joke; this is because they are a people who do not understand* (58). *Say: "O People of the Book! Do you find fault with us* (for ought) *except that we believe in Allãh and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed before, and that most of you are transgressors"* (59). *Say: "Shall I inform you of* (him who is) *worse than this in retribution near Allãh?* (It is he) *whom Allãh has cursed and brought His wrath upon, and of whom He made apes and swine, and he who served the Satan; these are worse in place and more erring from the straight path"* (60). *And when they come to you, they say: "We believe;" and indeed they come in with disbelief and indeed they go forth with it; and Allãh knows best*

what they concealed (61). *And you will see many of them striving with one another to hasten in sin and exceeding the limits, and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired; certainly evil is that which they do* (62). *Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law prohibit them from their speaking of what is sinful and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired? Certainly evil is that which they work* (63). *And the Jews say: "The hand of Allãh is tied up!" Their hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they say. Nay, both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases; and what has been revealed to you from your Lord will certainly make many of them increase in inordinacy and in unbelief; and We have put enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection; whenever they kindle a fire for war Allãh puts it out, and they strive to make mischief in the land; and Allãh does not love the mischief-makers* (64). *And if the People of the Book had believed and guarded* (against evil) *We would certainly have covered their evil deeds and We would certainly have made them enter gardens of bliss* (65). *And if they had kept up the Tawrãt and the Injīl and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet; there is a party of them keeping to the moderate course, and* (as for) *most of them, evil is that which they do* (66).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses forbid taking those who make mockery of Allãh and His communications as friends from among the People of the Book and unbelievers, and enumerate some of their evil characteristics in-cluding their breaking the covenants of Allãh and so on – the matters related to the theme of this chapter, i.e. exhorting people to keep their promises and covenants and showing the demerit of going against promises, etc.

All the verses seem to be revealed in one context, although possibly some of them could have particular reason of revelation.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Do not take for friends . . . who were***

***given the Book before you and . . .*:** ar-Rãghib has said: "*al-Huz'* (اَلْهُزْوُ) = secret jest, sometimes it is used for something like a jest." Then he says explaining *la'ib*: "They used the verb, *la'ib* (لَعِب), when the doer does not have a correct purpose for his action."

A thing is taken as a mockery and a jest when it is handled in an unserious way to show that it does not deserve any attention. Similarly, a thing is taken as a plaything and a joke when it is not intended for a correct reasonable purpose, is rather taken for some unrealistic themes. Thus, they take the religion for a mockery and a joke in order to show that it only serves some false motives – incorrect and unserious. Had they taken it to be truly a religion or believed that its Legislator and the Caller to it as well as the Believers in it were truly serious and paid them the respect due to them, they would not have placed them in this place. So, they take the religion as a mockery and a jest to show that the religion does not have any reality or any established position; it is merely a toy to be played with and jested about.

It appears from the above that:

First: Those, whose friendship is forbidden, are described as "those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke"; this description points to the reason of this prohibition. As described earlier, friendship entails spiritual mingling and management of personal and sociological affairs. Obviously, a *waliyy* (friend) will not treat as a joke or a mockery those things, which his friend respects and pays honour to, and con-siders it more distinguished and honourable than everything, even his own self. It is therefore necessary not to take such a person as a friend and not to let him interfere in one's spiritual and physical affairs.

Second: The verse is very appropriately addressed to: "you who believe," as it stands parallel to: "those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke"; also there is the fine point of the genetic con-struction: "your religion", [as it emphasizes their strong connection with the religion of Islam, and puts them on guard against the enemies' manipulation].

Third: The clause: "and fear Allãh if you are believers," puts a sort of emphasis to the preceding wordings: "Do not take for friends those who take your religion for a mockery and a joke," by repeating it in a more inclusive and comprehensive wording. Obviously, a believer who adheres to the cord of true faith cannot be pleased if the matters he believes in were to be taken as a mockery or joke. Therefore, these people, if they are truly associated with belief and are attached to the religion, are bound to fear

Allāh regarding those inimical persons and not to take them as friends.

Another possibility: The clause: "and fear Allāh if you are believers", may point to the verses which were revealed a little earlier, e.g. *and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them*. The meaning then will be as follows: Be afraid of Allāh in taking them for a friend if you are not one of them. But the first meaning is more manifest.

QUR'ĀN: ***And when you call to prayer they take it as a mockery and a joke; . . .*:** It confirms the preceding statement that the unbelievers take the religion of those who believe for a mockery and a joke. The call for prayer refers to the *adhān*, which was laid down in Islam before the legislation of the daily five prayers. It is said that *adhān* has not been mentioned in the noble Qur'ān except in this place.[3]

"they take it": The pronoun "it" refers to the prayer, or to the verbal noun, the call, understood from the verb: "when you call to prayer". A pronoun referring to a verbal noun may be brought in either gender.

The end clause: "this is because they are a people who do not understand", puts their misdeed in its true perspective. It says that they take the prayer or the *adhān* for a mockery and a joke because they are a people devoid of understanding. As such, they cannot appreciate the underlying spiritual realities behind the pillars and acts of religious worship – the reality of servitude, the benefits of attaining nearness to Allāh and convergence of life's happiness in this world and the hereafter.

QUR'ĀN: ***Say: "O People of the Book! Do you find fault with us*** **(for aught)** ***except that we believe in Allāh and . . ."*:** ar-Rāghib has said in his *al-Mufradāt*: "*an-Naqam* and *an-naqim* (اَلنَّقِم ، اَلنَّقَم) mean to deny, to vengeance through tongue or punishment; Allāh says: *and they did not find fault except because Allāh and His Messenger enriched them out of His grace* [9:74]; *and they did not take vengeance on them for aught except that they believed in Allāh . . .* [85:8]; *do you dind fault with us . . .* [5:59]"

an-Naqimah (اَلنَّقِمَة) is punishment, Allāh says: *Therefore We inflicted retribution on them and drowned them in the sea* [7:136].

Thus, the verse under discussion means: Do you deny or dislike from us anything except that we believe in Allāh and in His revelation

[3] This is a strange claim. See ch.62, vr.9: *O you who believe! When the call is made for prayer on Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allāh . . .* (*tr.*)

while you are transgressors. It is as people say: Do you disavow me for anything except that I am a chaste person and you are profligate? Do you find any fault with me except that I am wealthy and you are poor? This verse speaks in the same vein. Do you find any fault with us except that we are believers and most of you are transgressors?

Some people have said that the end clause gives the reason of their hostility; in other words, it means: You do not deny or dislike anything from us except because you are transgressors.

"that we believe in Allãh and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed before": It means, what has been revealed to us and to you. But the former revelation was not ascribed to them as an allusion against them – As they did not fulfil the covenant they had made with Allãh and did not follow the commandments given in their books, so it was as though their books were not sent to them nor were they qualified to receive them.

The meaning: We do not differentiate between one revealed Book and the other; as such we do not make any difference between the messengers of Allãh. It is an adverse allusion to the People of the Book that they make difference between one messenger and another and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others. Also they used to say: *"Avow belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe* (in) *the first part of the day, and disbelieve* (at) *the end of it, . . .* [3:72]. Allãh says: *Surely those who disbelieve in Allãh and His messengers and desire to differentiate between Allãh and His messen-gers, and say: "We believe in some and disbelieve in others"; and desire to take a way between* (this and) *that. These it is that are truly unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement* (4:150-1).

QUR'ÃN: ***Say: "Shall I inform you of*** **(him who is)** ***worse than this in retribution near Allãh?*** **(It is he)** ***whom Allãh has cursed and . . ."*****:** The exegetes have said that in this verse Allãh tells His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) to address those who indulged in mockery of religion in a just manner bringing himself down to their level, in order to complete his proof against them. He should tell them that if they hated the believers because they believed in Allãh and in what He has revealed to His messengers, then they should hate their own selves too, because they are worse in place and more erring from the straight path, be-cause they are afflicted by divine curse and were changed into apes and swine and indulged in the worship of Satan. If they do not hate their own selves in spite of all these

demerits and evils, which invite hatred, they have no reason to hate those who are less liable to any evil or demerit. They are the believers keeping firm on their belief – this is in case we accept that their belief in Allāh and His Books is an evil; but we know that it can never be an evil. Accordingly, *al-mathubah* (اَلْمَثُوبَة = lit. reward) here means recompense; probably it has been borrowed for end-result and inseparable attribute, as may be inferred from the phrase: "near Allāh", which qualifies the clause: "worse than this in retribution"; because what is near Allāh is perma-nent, enduring and unchangeable; and Allāh has adjudged and ordered it. He says: *. . . and what is with Allāh is enduring; . . .* (16:96); *. . . there is no repeller of His decree . . .* (13:41). This recompense or ret-ribution is therefore an enduring one because it is near Allāh or with Allāh.

There is a sort of reversal in this speech. Normally, the sentence should have been framed as follows: Being cursed and transmuted and worshipping the Satan is worse and more erring than believing in Allāh and His Books. But here it says: He whom Allāh has cursed and changed into apes and swine is worse in place and more erring. It puts the described person in place of the description or attribute; and this style is common in the Qur'ān, as Allāh says: *. . . but righteousness is the one who believes in Allāh and . . .* [2:177]

In short, the verse declares that if our belief in Allāh and His revealed Books was an evil in your opinion, then I inform you of what is more evil than that, and which you should truly hate, and it is the characteristics, which is found in yourselves.

It has been said by some that the demonstrative pronoun: "this", in the phrase: "worse than this", points to the entire community of the believers that is mentioned in the clause: "find fault with us". Accordingly the speech will be straight forward, without any reversal; and the meaning will be as follows: Shall I inform you of his who is worse than the believers, so that you should find fault with him? It is you yourselves who were afflicted with divine curse and transmutation and worshipped the Satan.

Someone else has said that, the pronoun: "this", in the phrase: "worse than this", points to the verbal noun, to find fault, to hate, which is hidden in the verb: "do you find fault with us". The meaning: Should I inform you of what is worse than this fault-finding and hate of yours in retribution? Well, it is what you have been afflicted with, i.e. the divine curse, transmutation, and so on.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when they come to you, they say: "We believe;" and indeed they come in with disbelief and indeed they go forth with it; and Allãh knows best what they concealed*****:** Here Allãh exposes their hidden hypocrisy, and that they keep in their hearts what Allãh is not pleased with – when they meet the believers. So He says: When they come to you they claim that they have believed while actually they come to you with disbelief and they go forth with the same disbelief. Their entry and exit both take place in the same one condition i.e. disbelief without any change; they merely pretend to believe while Allãh knows what they concealed of treachery and perfidy.

Accordingly the clause: *and indeed they come in with disbelief and indeed they go forth with it*, means: Their condition in disbelief has not changed at all; the nominative pronoun: *hum* (هُمْ = they) has been added for emphasis, to show that disbelief has firmly taken root in their hearts.

It has been said that the said clause indicates that they take turns from one condition of disbelief to another.

QUR'ÃN: ***And you will see many of them striving with one another to hasten in sin and exceeding the limits . . . Certainly evil is that which they work*****:** Apparently, the word: "sin", indicates their rashly plunging into the religious verses revealed to the believers, and speaking regarding religion's cognition what would cause disbelief and transgression, as is shown by the clause: "their speaking of what is sinful", in the following verse.

Accordingly, the three items, i.e. sin, transgression, and eating of what is unlawfully acquired, encompass samples of their trans-gression in words and deeds. They indulge in verbal misdeeds (and it is the sin in words) and misdeeds in actions – and it can be either against other believers (and it is transgression against them) or against their own selves, e.g. their eating what is unlawfully acquired, like interest, bribe, and things like that. Then Allãh has condemned all these activities and said: "Certainly evil is that which they work." Then He has strongly rebuked their doctors of law and scholars of religion for their keeping silent and not prohibiting them from com-mitting these grave sins and misdeeds, although they are aware that these are very grave sins. So He says: "Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law prohibit them from their speaking of what is sinful and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired? Certainly evil is that which they work."

The former verse speaks of "sin and exceeding the limits, and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired", while the latter speaks only of "speaking of what is sinful and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired". The omission of exceeding the limits in this verse indicates that sin and exceeding the limits are one and the same – sin is exceed-ing the divine limits verbally, which stands parallel to exceeding those limits in action, an example of which is seen in eating unlawful things.

Accordingly, the clause: "striving with one another to hasten in sin and exceeding the limits, and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired", aims at exposing their one fault of words (and it is sin and exceeding the limits) and another one of deeds, and it is their eating of what is unlawfully acquired.

al-Musãra'ah (**اَلْمُسَارَعَة**) puts emphasis on *as-sur'ah* (**اَلسُرْعَة** = hastening); it is opposite of *al-buṭ'* (**اَلْبُطْىء** = tardiness). The difference between *as-sur'ah* and *al-'ajalah* (**اَلْعَجَلَة** = hurring), as inferred from usage of these words is this: *as-sur'ah* is more relevant to the actions of body, while *al-'ajalah* is more concerned with activities of heart. It is not unlike the difference between *al-khuḍū'* (**اَلْخُضُوع** = to bow, to defer) and *al-khushū'* (**اَلْخُشُوع** = to submit, to be humble); and between *al-khawf* (**اَلْخَوف** = fear) and *al-khashyah* (**اَلْخَشْيَة** = dread, apprehen-sion). ar-Rãghib has said in his *al-Mufradãt*: "*as-Sur'ah* is opposite of *al-buṭ'*; it is used in description of bodies and actions; it is said: *saru'a* (he hastened); its nomen agentis is *sarī'* (**سَرِيْع** = hastener); and [they say]: *asra'a* and *musri'* in the same meanings."

It has been said that *al-musãra'ah* and *al-'ajalah* are synony-mous; but *al-musãra'ah* is mostly used for good works; the use of this word here – although the context is of bad deeds, and *al-'ajalah* would have been more appropriate – is aimed at showing that they indulge in it as if they were doing a good work. But this seems far-fetched.

QUR'ÃN: ***And the Jews say: "The hand of Allãh is tied up!" Their hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they say. Nay, both His hands are spread out, He expands as He pleases*****:** The Jews did not agree that the laws of religion could be abrogated, and, for this reason, they did not accept that Tawrãt could be abrogated; rather they rebuked the Muslims for abrogation of some of their laws. Similarly, they did not accept the doctrine of *al-badã'* (**اَلْبَدَاء**) in matters of creation, as is seen from various Qur'ãnic verses. We have elabor-ated this topic in the first volume of this book, under the verse: *What-ever signs We*

abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it, . . . (2:106). Some light has been thrown on it in other places too.

The verse: "And the Jews say: 'The hand of Allãh is tied up!' " might be referring to their above-mentioned views; however, the following clause in their rebuttal: "Nay both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases", does not leave room for such interpretation. It rather shows that they had uttered these sinful words particularly with reference to sustenance:

Either they had said it especially about the believers, because generally they were afflicted with poverty and their condition was straitened. So, they talked in this way as a mockery against Allãh, alluding that He does not have power to give riches to His believing servants nor can He rescue them from need and humiliation. But this opinion is not worthy of consideration, because the verse is in the chapter of "The Table", which was revealed [in the last years of the Prophet's life] when the Muslims enjoyed abundance of livelihood and lived a pleasant and luxurious life.

Or, they said it because of the famine and draught, which had made their lives miserable, disturbed their economic system, and lowered their standard of living, as appears from some of the traditions that explain the reason of revelation. But this explanation too does not agree with the context of the verses, because evidently the verses expose their various characteristics like their enmity and treachery against the Muslims whom they hated to the extreme. These verses do not allude to the sinful talks they had uttered regarding their own selves.

Or, they said it when they heard the Qur'ãnic verses, e.g.: *Who is it that will lend to Allãh a goodly loan* (73:20). So they said: "*The hand of Allãh is tied up!* He is not able to obtain the necessary funds to spend in His requirements for propagating His religion and reviving His mission." They had said it as a mockery and a jest against Allãh, as appears from some other traditions relating to the cause of revelation.

This explanation appears nearer to reality.

In any case, this ascription – that the hand of Allãh was tied up and He was over-powered in His plans, when some adverse situation had developed – does not go against their religious teachings nor is it alien to the descriptions and comments found in the present Tawrãt. According to Tawrãt, there were many things which Allãh was unable to do and which prevented Him from enforcing His will time and again, as strong persons hinder weaker ones in their activities. You may look at the stories of the prophets, like Adam and others as they appear in Tawrãt.

So, many aspects of their belief allow them to ascribe to Allāh what is totally against the sanctity of His status, although in the present context they had uttered these words as a jest and mockery – we know that every action of a man emanates from some aspects of belief which he holds and which encourages him to do it.

"Their hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they say"*:* It is an invocation of evil against them, of the same type which they had ascribed to Allāh, and which went so clearly against His sanctity and sacredness – their declaration that Allāh's hand was tied up and He has no power to do what he pleases. Accordingly, the clause: "and they shall be cursed for what they say", is in explanatory conjunction with the clause: "Their hands shall be shackled", inas-much as their hands being shackled displays the divine curse on them, because Allāh's speech is His action, and He curses someone only through penalizing him with punishment either in this world or the next. Thus, this curse means a punishment equal to shackling of their hands or more total and comprehensive.

Someone has opined that: "Their hands shall be shackled", is [not a curse, but] a statement showing that they have already been inflicted with chastisement because of their arrogance against Allāh in saying: "The hand of Allāh is tied up!" But the former interpretation is more understandable.

"Nay, both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases": It is the rebuttal of their claim: "The hand of Allāh is tied up!"

The sentence: "both His hands are spread out", is an allusion to His all-encompassing firmly rooted power; and such usage is very common.

Allāh has said: "both His hands" (although the Jews had used singular in their talk, "The hand of Allāh is tied up!") in order to show His complete and perfect power; as is the case in the verse: *He said: "O Iblīs! What prevented thee that thou shouldst do obeisance to him whom I created with My two hands? Art thou proud or art thou of the exalted ones?"* (38:75), as it indicates or rather clearly shows the use of perfect power in Adam's creation; or as they say: 'You do not have two hands on her, to emphasize absence of every power and every favour.'

The dictionaries often give various meanings for 'hand' other than the body organ, like power, strength, favour, ownership and so on. However, the fact remains that word was originally coined for the said organ, and it is used in other meanings as allusion, because all other meanings have some affinity with various aspects of the hand, e.g.

magnanimity and spending is related to it in its management and raising up or putting down.

Therefore, when the Book or *Sunnah* ascribes hand to Allãh, its connotation changes with the context. For example, in the clauses: "both His hands are spread out [5:64]"; and: *whom I created with My two hands* (38:75), "hands" means power and its perfection; and in the clauses: *. . . in Thine hand is the good . . .* (3:26); *Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the Kingdom of everything . . .* (36:83); *Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Kingdom, . . .* (67:1) and other such verses, "hand" means kingdom and authority; likewise, in the verse: *. . . Be not forward in the presence of Allãh and His Messenger . . .* (49:1) the phrase means 'in the presence of' as translated above.

"He expends as He pleases": It elaborates the clause: "both His hands are spread out".

QUR'ÃN: ***and what has been revealed to you from your Lord will certainly make many of them increase in inordinacy and in unbelief*****:** The context shows that this and the sentences coming after it aim at elaborating the foregoing clauses, "And the Jews say: 'The hand of Allãh is tied up!' Their hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what they say."

The sentence under discussion indicates that their arrogance against Allãh and their utterances like: "The hand of Allãh is tied up!" are not something unexpected from them, because they have been steeped in transgression and disbelief from their earliest days; and it has emanated from their oppression and envy. When a man with such characteristics sees that Allãh has given someone else excellence over him and bestows on that person inesteemable favours, his inordinacy and disbelief is bound to increase.

The Jews believed that they were lords, and the most developed nation of the world; they called themselves People of the Book, were proud of their doctors of law and scholars, and of their knowledge and wisdom; they called all other nations gentiles. Now, they saw that a Divine Book was revealed to a people who uptil then submitted to the Jewish knowledge and Book – as was the case between them and the Arabs in the Days of Ignorance. Then they looked in that Book and found it truly a Book revealed by Allãh as a Guardian over all Divine Books of yore. They realized that it contained clear truth, sublime teaching, and complete guidance. They felt that this Book would sub-due them and put

them to shame in the very field that was the source of their pride, that is, the knowledge, and the Book. Naturally, they became alarmed and outraged, and their transgression and disbelief increased.

Their increase in transgression and disbelief has been ascribed to the Qur'ān inasmuch as no sooner had their unjust and envious souls seen the revelation of the Qur'ān and realized the true knowledge and manifest Call contained in it, than they rose up in transgression and disbelief.

Moreover, Allāh has often attributed in His Book guiding and causing to go astray to Himself. For example: *All do We aid – these as well as those – out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:20); *And We reveal of the Qur'ān that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it adds only to the perdition of the unjust* (17:82). Causing someone to go astray – or some-thing similar to it – is considered blameworthy, if it is done initially, without any cause. But if it done as a retribution of moral depravity or sins committed by the one gone astray, then there is nothing wrong in such causing to go astray; because the man's depravity has brought down the divine wrath on him as a recompense of his wrong-doings. As Allāh says: . . . *but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26); . . . *but when they turned aside, Allāh made their hearts turn aside* . . . (61:5).

Ultimately, the statement that the Qur'ān increases in their inordinacy and disbelief, means that they are deprived of divine help, and Allāh does not bring them out of their inordinacy and disbelief to submission to His will and acceptance of the true Call. This topic was explained in the first volume of this book under the verse: *but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26).

Let us return to our original discussion. The verse: "and what has been revealed to you from your Lord will certainly make many of them increase in ordinacy and in unbelief;" aims at removing any astonishment as to how could those people who called themselves the People of the Book and claimed to be the sons and beloveds of Allāh, could dare to utter this contemptuous and insulting sentence that the hand of Allāh was tied up.

They are most certainly steeped in inordinacy and disbelief, a trace of which is seen in this statement; and it is bound to be followed by signs after hideous signs; and this is what is inferred from the verb having the prefix of the *la* (ل) of oath and sufix of the *nun* (ن) of emphasis.

The verse mentions inordincy before disbelief, keeping in view the natural sequence, because disbelief is among the vestiges and results of

inordinacy.

QUR'ÃN: ***and We have put enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection:*** The pronoun "them" refers to the Jews, as is evident from the position of the sentence within the talk relating particularly to the Jews, although it had initially covered the People of the Book in general. Accordingly, the enmity and hatred points to the discord and difference that is found in their various sects and schools of thought. Allãh has pointed to it in various places in His Book; for example: *And certainly We gave the Book and the Wisdom and the Prophecy to the Children of Israel, and We gave them of the goodly things, and We made them excel the nations. And We gave them clear arguments in the affair, but they did not differ until after knowledge had come to them, revolting among themselves; surely your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differed* (45:16-17), apart from other similar verses.

It seems that enmity points to the hate that is accompanied by transgression in action, and hatred indicates aversion of the heart, even if it does not show in action. The combination of the two in the verse indicates a hate that causes injustice against another party and the one, which does not reach that stage.

The clause: "till the Day of Resurrection", obviously shows that their *ummah* will continue upto the end of the world.

QUR'ÃN: ***whenever they kindle a fire for war Allãh puts it out*****:** To kindle a fire is to inflame it, and to put it out is to extinguish it. The meaning is clear. There is another possibility that the clause: "whenever they kindle a fire", explains the preceding clause: "and We put enmity and hatred . . ." Thus the meaning will be as follows: Whenever they kindled a fire of war against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the believers, Allãh puts it out by reviving their internal discords and differences.

The context points to the divine decree that their endeavours in kindling the fire of war against the divine religion and against the Muslims (because of their belief in Allãh and His signs) are bound to fail. However, it does not cover those wars, which the Jews might wage against the Muslims, not for religious motive, but because of politics, or because of ideas of racial or national superiority.

QUR'ÃN: ***and they strive to make mischief in the land; and Allãh does***

***not love the mischief-makers*:** *as-Sa'y* (اَلسَعْی = translated here as strive) literally means moving quickly, running; *fasādan* (فُسَادًا) shows the motive of action, i.e., to make mischief. However, Allāh does not love the mischief-makers; and He will not leave them free to achieve what they want, so their endeavours to make mischief in the land are bound to fail. And Allāh knows better.

All of this explains how their hands are tied up and how they are cursed because of their demeaning utterances; they shall never succeed in achieving what they aimed at by waging war after war against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims, and for which they were continuously trying to make mischief in the land.

QUR'ĀN: ***And if the People of the Book had believed and guarded* (against evil) *We would certainly have covered their evil deeds and We would certainly have made them enter gardens of bliss*:** The talk again returns to the condition of People of the Book in general as was the case in beginning; and it ends on description of the favours they have missed in this world and the next – the gardens of bliss there and the happy life here.

The *taqwā* (اَلتَقْوٰی) mentioned after belief means abstaining from the forbidden things and guarding against the sins which bring down divine wrath and chastisement of fire in their wake. Such sins are ascribing a partner to Allāh and all those major sins, which Allāh has threatened with fire. Accordingly, the evil deeds mentioned here which Allāh has promised to cover would mean minor misdeeds; and it fits the theme of the verse: *If you avoid great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins and cause you to enter an honourable place of entering* (4:31).

QUR'ĀN: ***And if they had kept up the Tawrāt and the Injīl and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet*:** The Tawrāt and the Injīl mentioned here refer to the two Divine Books which the Qur'ān says were revealed to Mūsā and 'Īsā (peace be on them), rather than the Old and the New Testaments which these people have got in their hands and which have reportedly been extensively manipulated and altered by succeeding generations.

Apparently, the clause: "that which was revealed to them from their Lord", refers to all scriptures attributed to various prophets, which these

people have got, like the Psalms of David which the Qur'ãn calls Zabūr, and other such Books.

The opinion that this clause refers to the Qur'ãn is not sustain-able, because the Qur'ãn with its *sharī'ah* has abrogated the laws of the Tawrãt and the Injīl, and therefore there is no reason to count it with them and to express the desire that they should have kept those Books up together with the Qur'ãn which had abrogated them. May be some one would say that to follow the Qur'ãn is to follow also the Tawrãt and the Injīl; for when one acts on the abrogating rules in Islam, one acts on the *sharī'ah* of Islam in its totality – which includes the abro-gating and the abrogated rules together, because the divine religion is one, and its parts are not in conflict with one another; utmost that can be said is that some laws are temporary, are valid upto a fixed time without any contradiction. But this view is not correct, because Allãh describes this act as "keeping up" that is firmly preserving something on its roots. Such expression is not suitable for abrogated laws *per se*; so the Tawrãt and the Injīl could correctly be kept up at the time when they were not abrogated by any other *sharī'ah*; and the Injīl did not abrogate the *sharī'ah* of the Tawrãt except in some minor aspects.

Moreover, the clause: "that which was revealed to them from their Lord", refers to the Books, which were revealed to the Jews and the Christians, and we have never seen the Qur'ãn to be described as being revealed to them.

Obviously, this clause refers to the scriptures, which were revealed after the Tawrãt and the Injīl, including various kinds of revelations sent to the prophets of the Israelites, like the Psalms of David, etc. To keep those Books up means diligently obeying the divine laws contained in those Books, and believing the gnosis of genesis and return which Allãh had described therein. It is a far cry from manipulating those truths through alteration, concealment, and abandonment. If they had properly kept up the Books they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet.

The eating mentioned in this clause alludes to a life of ease and comfort, whether it is through eating or using some other luxuries. The use of "eating" for general management and unrestricted enjoyment is common in the language.

"from above them" indicates from the heaven, and "from beneath their feet" means from the earth. The sentence alludes that they would enjoy the blessings of the heaven and the earth, and would be encom-

passed by those blessings. It is the same theme which is given in the verse: *And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded* (against evil), *We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth; but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned* (7:96).

The verse proves that the belief and good deeds of the human species have an effect on the good of the creative system inasmuch as it has a connection with this species. So if this species behaved properly the whole system of the world would remain good, because it would fulfil what is necessary for a happy life of man – by repelling the mis-fortune and abundance of blessings.

Many other Qur'ãnic verses prove it in clear words: *Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return. Say: "Travel in the land, then see how was the end of those before; most of them were polytheists* (30:41-42); *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought . . .* (42:30), apart from other such verses. We have mentioned in the second volume[4] of our book some matters relevant to the effects of human deeds.

QUR'ÃN: ***there is a party of them keeping to the moderate course, and* (as for)** ***most of them, evil is that which they do*****:** *al-Iqtiṣãd* (**ٱلإِقْتِصَاد**) is to adhere to *al-qaṣd* (**ٱلْقَصْد** = the middle course); thus the moderate group is the one which keeps to the middle course in religious affairs and submits to the commandments of Allãh.

The talk is a fresh start to describe that all that has been attributed to them – their exceeding the limits imposed by Allãh, their disbelief in divine signs, their affliction by divine wrath and the curse on their bands – portrays the condition of their majority; and that is why all these evils have been ascribed to them; however, there is among them a moderate group which is above these demerits. This is an example of the justice the divine speech contains, as it does not ignore anyone's right, and shows appreciation of reviving the affairs of truth however little it may be.

This reality has been alluded to in many preceding verses, but not so clearly; for example, the divine words: *. . . and that most of you are transgressors* [5:59]; *And you will see many of them striving with one*

[4] *al-Mīzãn* [Eng.], vol.3, pp.245-323. (*tr.*)

another to hasten in sin and exceeding the limit . . . [5:62]; *. . . and what has been revealed to you from your Lord will certainly make many of them increase in inordinacy and in unbelief* [5:64].

TRADITIONS

al-Qummī writes under the verse: *And when they come to you they say: "We believe;" . . .* "It was revealed about ʻAbdullãh ibn Ubayy, when he pretended to accept Islam, while they had come in with disbelief. (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: The context clearly shows that these verses were revealed about the People of the Book, not about the hypocrites, except if this verse is claimed to be revealed alone.

The same book says about the words: *and indeed they go forth with it*, i.e. they went forth with disbelief, without faith. (*ibid.*)

al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain from Abū Baṣīr, from ʻUmar ibn Riyãḥ, from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, "I told him, 'I have been informed that you say that whoever divorced in contravention to *sunnah* you do not consider his divorce (to be) anything.' Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, 'It is not I that say so; but Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says it. Why by Allãh! Were we to give you legal opinion with injustice, we would have been worse than you. Verily, Allãh says: *Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law prohibit them from their speaking of what is sinful and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired?* (*al-Kãfī*)

al-ʻAyyãshī narrates from Abū Baṣīr that he said, "I said to Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), 'Verily, ʻUmar ibn Riyãḥ thinks that you have said, "There is no divorce except with proof [i.e. with two just witnesses]."'" Abū Baṣīr said that (the Imãm, a.s.) said, "It is not I that have said so, but Allãh, the Blessed, the Sublime, says it. Why, by Allãh! Were we to give you legal opinion with injustice, we would have been worse than you. Verily, Allãh says: *Why do not the learned men and the doctors of law . . .* (*at-Tafsīr*)

ash-Shaykh narrates through his chain from Ibn Abī ʻUmayr, from Hishãm ibn Sãlim, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) regarding the words of Allãh, the High: *And the Jews say: "The hand of Allãh is tied up."* "He said that they used to say, 'He has concluded all affairs.'" (*al-Majãlis*)

The author says: al-ʻAyyãshī has narrated this connotation in his

at-Tafsīr from Ya‘qūb ibn Shu‘ayb and Ḥammād from the same Imām (a.s.).

al-Qummī narrates [from the same Imām, a.s.] that he said, "They used to say, 'Allāh has concluded all affairs; He does not bring forth other than that which He had ordained in the first ordination.' Therefore, Allāh rebutted them and said: *Nay, both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases*, i.e. He brings (something) forward and puts (another) back, and He increases and decreases; to Him belong *al-badā'* and volition." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated this theme in his *Ma‘ānī 'l-akhbār*, through his chain, from Isḥāq ibn ‘Ammār, from the one who heard it, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.).

al-‘Ayyāshī narrates from Hishām al-Mashriqī from Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī (a.s.), [i.e. ar-Riḍā, a.s.], that he said, "Indeed Allāh is as He has described Himself, the One, on Whom all depend, the Light." Then he said, "Rather, both His hands are spread out." [Hishām says,] "I said to him, 'Well, does He have two hands like this?' – and I pointed with my hand to his hand. He said, 'If He were like this, He would have been a created thing.'" *(at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated it in *al-‘Uyūn*, through his chain from al-Mashriqī from the Imām (a.s.).

aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he said, "I asked Ja‘far (a.s.), and said, '(What is the ex-planation of) His word, the Mighty, the Great: *O Iblīs! What prevented thee that thou shouldst do obeisance to him whom I created with My two hands*? [38:75].' (The Imām, a.s.), said, 'Hand in the language of Arabs is (used) for power and favour; He has said: *And remember Our servant Dāwūd, the powerful* [38:17], [lit: owner of hands]; *and the heaven, We created it by hands*, (i.e. by power) *and verily We are expanding* [51:47]; and He has said: *and He strengthened them with a spirit from Himself* [58:22];' (the Imām said) 'i.e. He gave them strength; and it is said, "I owe that man a bright hand," i.e. a boon and grace.'" (*Ma‘ānī 'l-akhbār*)

al-Qummī writes in his *at-Tafsīr* about the word of Allāh: *And if they had kept up the Tawrāt and the Injīl* – i.e. the Jews and the Christians – *they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet* – from above them (alludes to) rain, and from beneath

their feet, vegetation.

al-‘Ayyāshī narrates under the divine word: *there is a party of them keeping to the moderate course*, from Abu 'ṣ-Ṣahbā’ al-Kubrā that he said, "I heard ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib [who] invited Ra’su 'l-Jālūt and the Bishop of the Christians and said, 'I am going to ask you of a matter – and I know it better than you do – so do not conceal (it).' Then he called the Bishop of the Christians and said, 'I adjure you by Allāh, Who sent down Injīl to ‘Īsā, and put blessings on his foot, and (because of which, ‘Īsā) healed the blind and the lepers, and removed the pain of the eye, and made for you birds out of clay and he informed you of what you ate and what you stored.' (The bishop) said, 'I would tell truth (even) for less than that.'

"So ‘Alī (a.s.), said, 'Into how many (sects) were the Israelites divided after ‘Īsā?' He said, 'No, by Allāh! Not even a single sect.' Then ‘Alī (a.s.) said, 'You have told untruth. By Allāh, that there is no god except Him! Indeed they had divided into seventy-two sects; all of them are in the Fire except one sect. Verily, Allāh says: *there is a part of them keeping to the moderate course, and* (as for) *most of them, evil is that which they do*; it is that which shall be saved.'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

The same book narrates from Zayd ibn Aslam, from Anas ibn Mālik, that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), used to say, 'The *ummah* of Mūsā divided into seventy-one sects, seventy of them were in the Fire and one in the Garden; and the *ummah* of ‘Īsā into seventy-two sects, seventy-one of them is in the Fire and one is in the Garden; and my *ummah* will rise over the two sects together with one group in the Garden, and seventy-two (of their sects) (will go) to the Fire.' They (the companions) said, 'Who are they? O Messenger of Allāh!' He said, 'The groups, the groups.'" (*ibid.*)

Ya‘qūb ibn Yazīd said, "Whenever ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.), narrated this *ḥadīth* from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), he used to recite the (verse of the) Qur’ān: *And if the People of the Book had believed and guarded* (against evil) *We would certainly have covered their evil deeds . . . evil is that which they do*; and he also recited, *and from among those We created, there is a group who guide with truth and they do justice with it* – i.e. the *ummah* of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.)."

* * * * *

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُۥ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ
مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message; and Allãh will protect you from the people; surely Allãh will not guide the unbelieving people (67).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The meaning of the verse in itself is clear. It contains an order in the form of threat to the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) to convey the mess-age, and promises to protect him from the people.

If we ponder on the verse looking at the position it has been placed in, and look at the verses preceding and following it, you will see them exposing the condition of the People of the Book and admon-ishing and condemning them for their various transgressions, their crossing the limit and indulging in things prohibited by Allãh and their rejection of divine communications. For example, the preceding verse says: *And if they had kept up the Tawrãt and the Injīl and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and*

from beneath their feet; . . .; and the following one says: *Say: "O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon until you keep up the Tawrãt and the Injīl and that which is revealed to you from your Lord;" . . .*

Then ponder on the verse itself and see how its clauses are inter-linked together. Now, you will be astonished, [and realize that this verse is not connected with the preceding or following verses].

Had this verse been connected to the preceding and following verses which deal with the People of the Book, it would have meant that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was ordered – in extremely harsh words – to deliver what Allãh had revealed regarding the People of the Book; and the context would show that: *what has been revealed to you from your Lord* refers to what he was told to convey in the immediately follow-ing verse: *Say: "O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon until you keep up the Tawrãt and the Injīl and that which is revealed to you from your Lord;" . . .*

But the context of the verse itself rejects this interpretation. The clause: *and Allãh will protect you from the people*, shows that the revealed order which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is urged to convey is a very important one; the delivery of which would put the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in peril or would cause the divine religion to fail in its aim. But the Jews or the Christians did not have such a power during the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as to put his life in danger to such an extent as to justify holding back or delaying its conveyance, until Allãh gives him a promise to protect him from the people if he conveys the revealed order. Even in the early days of the Prophet's *hijrah* to Medina the People of the Book were not in a position to put his life in danger, although the Jews were fiercely opposed to him and their active opposition ultimately led to the battle of Khaybar, etc.

Moreover, this verse does not contain any tough order or any vehement word. The Prophet had delivered before that the verses, which were harder, sharper and much bitter than it for the Jews. Also, before that he was told to convey to the unbelievers of the Quraysh and the polytheists of Arabia what was more distasteful than it, e.g. the message of *tawḥīd* and the rebuttal of idol-worship. Besides, those people were more ruthless, more violent and more given to bloodshed than the Jews and other People of the Book. Hence, Allãh did not use any threatening word when ordering him to convey His message, nor did He find it necessary to give him assurance of His protection.

Apart from that, the verses describing the condition of the People of the Book constitute the major part of the chapter, "The Table". Therefore, this verse was certainly revealed in it; and at the time this chapter was revealed, the Jews' power was already broken, their fire had died down, and they were engulfed by the divine curse and wrath. Whenever they kindled a fire for war, Allãh put it out. In this back-ground, there was no reason for the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) to fear them regarding the divine religion. They had already entered through peace treaties in the domain of Islam and they, as well as the Christians, had agreed to pay *jizyah*. How could Allãh talk, in this environment, about the Messenger's fear and worry in delivering the divine message to them; while he had conveyed to them messages which were much harder, and stood before them in surroundings which were more frightful and more weired.

Thus, there is no room for any doubt that this verse is totally separate in its context from that of the preceding and following verses; and has no connection with them. In short, it is a single verse, which was revealed alone.

The verse speaks about an order which was sent to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) – the entire religion or some parts of it – and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was afraid of the people in delivering that message and kept postponing it waiting for a suitable time. If there were no fear and no delaying there was no reason why he should be addressed in such a threatening way: *and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message.* Compare it with the verses revealed in early period of the Call none of which has any shade of threat. For example: *Read in the name of thy Lord Who created . . .* (to the end of ch.96); *O you who are enwrapped, arise and warn* (74:1-2); *. . . therefore, follow the right way to Him and ask His forgiveness; and woe to the polytheists* (41:6), apart from other such verses.

No doubt, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was afraid of the people, but he was not afraid of sacrificing his life in the cause of Allãh, because his whole life and character is a rebuttal of such thinking. Moreover, Allãh Himself testifies about His Messengers that they did not fear the adversaries. For example: *There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allãh has ordained for him; such has been the course of Allãh with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allãh is a decree that is made absolute. Those who deliver the message of Allãh and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allãh; and Allãh is suff-icient to take account* (33:38-39). Also, Allãh has said concerning such situations:

. . . so do not fear them, and fear Me if you are believers (3:175). And He has praised a group of believers that they were not afraid of the people although the people had tried to frighten them: *Those to whom the people said: "Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them"; but this* (only) *increased their faith, and they said: "Allãh is sufficient for us and most excellent Protector is* (He)*." So they returned with favour from Allãh and* (His) *grace; no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allãh; and Allãh is the Lord of mighty grace* (3:173-4).

Also, it is not possible to say that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was afraid for his life because if he were killed the divine mission was bound to perish, and for this reason he was delaying its conveyance waiting for a suitable time. But this hypothesis is patently false, be-cause Allãh says: *You have no concern in the affair . . .* (3:128); and if they had killed the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) Allãh had power to revive His mission through any means He pleased and any cause He wished.

Of course, it is possible to infer from the clause: *and Allãh will protect you from the people*, that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was afraid of the people concerning the delivery that they would accuse him [of having selfish motive], which would irreparably damage the whole fabric of conveyance. He had permission from Allãh to use his discre-tion in such matters, and it had no connection with any fear regarding his own self.

The above description makes it clear that the verse was not revealed in the early days of prophethood, as some exegetes have thought; as in that case there would be no sense in the clause: *and Allãh will protect you from the people*; because such an interpretation would imply that Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was delaying the delivery of the divine message because he was afraid that they would kill him and it would cost him his life, or would nullify the effects of *tablīgh*. But such a hypothesis is not tenable.

Again, let us see what is the connotation of the phrase: *what has been revealed to you from your Lord.* Does it mean the whole religion? If so, then the clauses: *and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message*, would mean: O Messenger! Deliver the religion, and if you do not deliver the religion, then you did not deliver the religion!

Someone has said: The verse means: If you do not deliver the message, then you will be liable to blame for dereliction of duty and negligence of what Allãh had most emphatically commanded you to do and it is in the same vein as the well known Arab poet, Abu 'n-Najm, has said:

I'm Abu 'n-Najm, and my poem is my poem.

But this explanation is wrong; such rhetorical expressions are used regarding the general and the particular, or the unrestricted and the restricted, and such expressions allude that the both are one and the same; as Abu 'n-Najm says that my poem is my poem, i.e., no one should think that my talent has now dulled, or vicissitudes of time have adversely affected my genius and robbed me of the gift of poetry; be-cause the poem which I compose today has the same brilliance which my poems had in the past.

However, this explanation cannot be applied to the divine speech: *and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message.* Because if it is believed that the verse was revealed in early days of prophet-hood, then the message – the religion in its totality or the basic religion – was a single unit, not changeable or alterable. Then how can it be said that if you did not deliver this message then you did not deliver that message of the basic messages; admittedly in the beginning it was the basic message that was a collection of religious cognition.

It is now clear that the verse could not have been revealed in the early period of prophethood, nor can the phrase: *what has been revealed to you from your Lord*, point to the basic religion or totality of religion – either in the early days or at any later period; because all such interpretations would render the clause: *and if you do it not then you have not delivered His message,* devoid of meaning and irrelevant.

We should reiterate here that:

If message were to refer to the basic or total religion, then the words: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord,* could not have been revealed except in the early days of prophet-hood, as is clear;

And the problem would remain as before, that the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) was afraid of the people in delivering the divine message.

Apparently, the matter which was revealed to the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) and this verse put emphasis on its delivery was not the religion in its totality, or basic religion – whatever meaning is understood from it. Therefore, we have to admit that it was a part of religion. The mean-ing in this case will be as follows: O Messenger! Deliver the particular command revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do it not, then you have not delivered Allãh's message at all. According to this inter-pretation, "His message" means all the things that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had brought as part of religion. Otherwise, the previ-ous trouble – that the speech would be devoid of meaning – would continue. Let us put it in this

way: If "His message" means this par-ticular order, it would means: 'Deliver this order, and if you did it not, you did not deliver this message!' It is clearly absurd.

The verse therefore means: 'O Messenger! Deliver this particu-lar command, and if you do it not, then you have not delivered the basic message or the message in its totality.' This meaning is correct and understandable and then the speech will be in the style of the poem of Abu 'n-Najm:

I'm Abu 'n-Najm, and my poem is poem.

Why was this order so important that if it was not conveyed then the message was not conveyed at all? It was because religion's knowledge and commands are inter-linked, inter-twined with one another on all sides; if one coil is unravelled, the whole material is destructed – especially in the sphere of delivery – because each item is connected with all others. This supposition has no defect in itself, yet the clauses coming after it: *and Allãh will protect you from the people; surely Allãh will not guide the unbelieving people*, do not fit on it. These clauses clearly show that some unbelieving people had decided to oppose this revealed command, or, seeing their tendency, they were expected to oppose it to the extreme. They would use every strategem to nullify this divine mission and neutralize it, so that it could not bring about any effect or benefit. Therefore, Allãh promised His Messenger that He would protect him from them, nullify their artifice and leave them wandering in their own viles.

This meaning does not fit on any revealed order whatsoever; because the religious cognition and orders in Islam are not all of them of the same importance, some are the pillars of religion, others are like the invocation on sighting the crescent, there is prohibition of adultery and that of looking at a stranger woman. The fear that the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) had and for which Allãh promised him His protection, cannot be related to every such order; obviously it had emanated from some es-pecial commandment.

The fact, that if this commandment was not conveyed, then no other order was conveyed, shows its utmost importance, and makes it crystal clear that this particular order occupies such a central position in the whole structure that if it was left unannounced, it would amount to leaving all other orders unannounced, because its relation to other items is like that of soul with body; if it is disconnected, there would remain only a dead body, devoid of feeling, movement [and percep-tion, etc.].

The verse thus proves that Allãh had sent to his Messenger (s.a.w.a.) an order which was to complete the religion, and by which the religion would firmly settle in its proper pedestal. As such there was a danger that the people would oppose it and strive hard to over-turn it against the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) aiming at demolishing the structure of religion he had built and disintegrating all its parts. The Prophet (s.a. w.a.), having intuitive knowledge of the people's nature, understood their tendency and was afraid that they would contrive to neutralize all his endeavours. Accordingly, he kept postponing its delivery from time to time, waiting for a suitable circumstances and peaceful atmosphere, in order that his mission might be successful and his endeavours fruit-ful. But Allãh ordered him to make haste in conveying that message, showing to him its importance, and promising to protect him from the people. In this way, He assured him that He would not let their plans succeed, nor would they be able to overturn his Mission's affairs.

Overturning the Prophetic Mission and negating his efforts after the spread of Islam was not possible for the polytheists and idol-worshippers of Arabia or outside. In other words, it is not possible to suppose that the verse was revealed in Mecca before *hijrah*, and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was afraid that the people would slander and accuse him of lying in his affairs, as Allãh quotes their calumnies in the Qur'ãn: *"One taught* (by others), *a madman"* (44:14); "*A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time"* (52:30); *"A magician or a mad man"* (51:52); *"You follow only a man deprived of reason"* (17:47); *"This is not but enchantment, narrated"* (74:24); *"The stories of the ancients – he has got them written – so these are read out to him morning and evening"* (25:5); *"Only a mortal teaches him . . ."* (16: 103); *"Go and steadily adhere to your gods; this is most surely a thing sought after"* (38:6); and other such things which they used to say about him (s.a.w.a.). However, such talks could not shake the founda-tion of religion. They only show – if they show anything – the confu-sion and perturbation in their ideas and their crookedness. Moreover, such slanders were not reserved for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), so that he would be disturbed because of them or afraid of their appearance; in fact all the messengers and prophets were equally made targets of such afflictions and misfortunes; they all had to face such unpalatable situations from their people, as Allãh has described in the stories of Nūḥ and the succeeding prophets who are mentioned in the Qur'ãn.

If there was something like that – and there must have been – it

could be imagined after the *hijrah* when the religion was firmly established in the Islamic society. The Muslims were then a mixed lot: There were good believers, and there were the hypocrites who were powerful and could not be under-rated. Lastly there were those whose hearts were diseased whom the Mighty Book calls "the listeners". These people dealt with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) – although they believed in him really or apparently – like the kings are dealt with; and the divine religion in their eyes was not different from man-made national laws. All this may be seen in various sets of Qur'ãnic verses; and some of them have already been explained in previous valumes of this book.[5]

In this background, it could possibly happen that delivery of some orders which could apparently give some advantage to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), could generate a misconception in those people's minds that he is a king in the guise of prophethood, and his *sharī'ah* is the worldly law disguised as religion; as we find its evidence in some people's talk on various occasions.[6]

If this or similar doubt had entered into their hearts, it would have generated such corruption and perversion in religion which no power on earth could rectify or anyone could remove. Obviously, this revealed order which the Prophet had to deliver was of such a nature that people could think of it to be especially benefitting the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and that it was particularly reserved to him without any Muslim having any part in it, like the story of Zayd, and plurality of marriages and the one-fifth of the war booty, etc.

However, the especial rules, if not affecting general Muslims, were not expected to create doubts in minds. For examples, permission of marriage with a woman divorced by an adopted son was not particu-larly reserved to him. Likewise, if marrying more than four wives were based on his own desire without permission of Allãh, there was nothing to prevent him from allowing it to all Muslims. His life-long conduct of giving preference to Muslims over his own self in division of wealth, etc. which came into his hands leaves no room for any doubt in such affairs.

All the above elaboration makes it clear that the verse speaks about a revealed order that could create a misunderstanding that it con-tains a sort of personal benefit and interest for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and gives

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[5] For example, the verses giving the story of Uḥud in ch.3; and verses 105-6 of ch.4. (*Author's Note*)

[6] As Abū Sufyãn is reported to speak in the presence of 'Uthmãn when he got the caliphate. (*Author's Note*)

him a privilege which the others too would have desired; and its delivery and enforcement would deprive them of its enjoy-ment. That is why the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was afraid of its delivery. But Allãh ordered him to convey it and put utmost emphasis on this delivery, and promised to protect him from the people, telling him that his adver-saries will not succeed in their machination, even if they tried.

This supports the traditions, narrated by both sects, that the verse was revealed about the guardianship of ʻAlī (a.s.); that Allãh had sent direction to convey this commandment, but the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was afraid that the people would accuse him regarding his cousin; that was why he kept postponing its delivery until this verse was sent down; and he delivered it at Ghadīr Khumm, and announced: "He whose *mawlã* (Guardian) am I, this ʻAlī is his *mawlã*."

The essentiality of the Guardianship of the affairs of the *ummah* for religion is clear without any doubt. Islam is a religion so compre-hensive and all-encompassing that it has laid down for the whole mankind in all regions and for all times all fundamental gnosis, ethical principles and practical rules which cover all human movement and stillness, separately and collectively, contrary to other general legal systems. How can it be imagined that such a comprehensive system does not need a guardian who should protect and preserve it properly. Or, can it be said that of all the human societies, only the Muslim *ummah* and Islamic society is so self-sufficient that it does not need any ruler to manage its affairs and look after its interests. What excuse can be offered to a research scholar who looks at the social system established by the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and finds that whenever he went out of Medina, he invariably always put a man in his place to manage the society. He had appointed ʻAlī in his place in Medina at the time of going forth to Tabūk; ʻAlī said: "O Messenger of Allãh! Are you leaving me among the women and children?" The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "Well, are you not pleased that you should be to me as Hãrūn was to Mūsã, except that there is no prophet after me?"

And the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to appoint governors in all towns, which were in the hands of the Muslims, e.g., Mecca, Ṭãif and Yemen, etc. Likewise, he appointed people at the head of expeditions and battalians, which he used to send around. And what difference is there between his lifetime and after his death? Rather the essentiality of such appointment is more emphatic for the time after his departure from this world; and the need of such a ruler at that time is more and more pressing.

QUR'ÃN: ***O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord*****:** The order is addressed to the Messenger, as it is the most appropriate attribute to the conveying the divine order, which was revealed. It is a sort of proof that the delivery mentioned in the verse is obligatory and compulsory; because the only function of a messenger is to convey the message he is entrusted with. In other words, the office of messengership obligates him to deliver the message.

The verse does not elaborate what was revealed to him from his Lord. It alludes to it just as a thing revealed to him. This vagueness points to the greatness of that message, and shows that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had no hand in it, nor did he have any authority in his own affairs. It would be another proof that he (s.a.w.a.) had no power or discretion to keep the order secret and postpone its convey-ance from this time to that. It also provided him with an excuse that he had been obligated to deliver this order; and showed that he was perfectly justified in fearing the people in this respect; but at the same time indicated that this important order had to be announced by him, in his own words, through his own tongue.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if you do it not, then you have not delivered his message*****:** Some reciters have read, "his messages" in plural. In any case, it means the totality of the messages that was sent by Allãh to His Messenger (s.a.w.a.). We have explained above that this clause shows the utmost importance of the order alluded to; and that it enjoyed such a dignity and position that if it was not conveyed then it would be as if no message was ever delivered by him.

The speech is constructed as a threat; and in reality it connotes the importance of the order – if this one order was not conveyed to the people and its implications were not preserved, it would be as though no other part of religion was ever conveyed.

It is a conditional sentence, to show the importance of the conditional clause; that its subordinate clause depends totally on the principle one for its existence.

This conditional sentence is not like such sentences found in our speech. We use conditional sentences because we do not know whether the principle clause would lake place, bringing about with it the subor-dinate clause. But far be it from the position of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that the Qur'ãn should imply that it was not sure whether the Prophet would

convey or not the revealed message. And Allāh says: *Allāh best knows where He places His message* (6:124).

In short, this sentence apparently contains a threat, but in fact it makes it known to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and other people the utmost importance of the order and that the Messenger had no power to delay its delivery.

QUR'ĀN: ***and Allāh will protect you from the people; surely Allāh will not guide the unbelieving people*****:** ar-Rāghib has said: "*al-'Aṣm* (اَلْعَصْم) means to take hold; and *al-i'tiṣām* (اَلإِعْتِصَام) is to adhere. *al-'Iṣām* (اَلْعِصَام) is strap, that which is used for binding; the prophets enjoy *'iṣmah* (عِصْمَة) – i.e. Allāh protects them, first through the pure nature which is reserved for them; then through the physical and psy-chological virtues which He has bestowed upon them. Then through helping them and keeping their feet firm [on righteousness]; then by sending tranquillity upon them and protecting their hearts, and finally through *tawfīq* (تَوْفِيْق = divine help); Allāh says: "and Allāh will protect you from the people". And *al-'iṣmah* is like bracelet, and *al-mi'ṣam* (اَلْمِعْصَم) is wrist, the part of hand where it is worn; the wrist's whiteness is called *'iṣmah*, likening it to bracelet, as the whiteness of foot is called *taḥjīl* (تَحْجِيْل = wearing anklet); in the same vein they say, *a'ṣam* (أَعْصَم white-footed) crow [i.e. rare]."

The author says: The explanation given above of the prophets' *'iṣmah* is good, there is no objection to it; but those meanings cannot be applied to the verse under discussion: *and Allāh will protect you from the people*; if we were to apply it, it may be applied to the verse: . . . *and they shall not harm you in any way, and Allāh has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom, and He has taught you what you did not know, and Allāh's grace on you is very great* (4:113). As for the clause: *and Allāh will protect you from the people,* the verb, *ya'ṣim*, in it apparently denotes protection and safety from the people's evil which they aimed at the noble person of the Prophet, or his religious objec-tives or at the success of his Call and the triumph of his endeavours – in short, any connotation appropriate to his sacred office.

However, looking at the usage of this word, we find that it actually means holding fast and clutching. Therefore, its use in the meaning of protection is based on allusion, because protection necessi-tates holding it fast.

Protection from the people is unrestricted and general. It does not

say from which type of machination of the people the Prophet shall be protected. Does it point to their transgression and endeavours to harm him in body, like murder, poisoning, or assassination? Or through speech, like abusing and slandering? Or through some other devices, like disrupting his affairs one way or another through treach-ery, deception and double-dealing? In short this non-identification of things protected against, implies a sort of generalization; yet the con-text confines it to their evil that could have disrupted and destroyed what he had built and raised of the structure of religion.

"The people" refers to all human beings, without looking at any especiality, be it natural and in field of creation, like masculinity and femininity, or otherwise, like knowledge, virtues, and richness, etc. That is why it is seldom used for other than a group; and for this very reason, it often points to virtuous human beings if the virtue spoken of has some relation with humanity, as Allãh says: *And when it is said to them: "Believe as the people have believed"* [2:13], i.e. those in whom meaning of humanity is found, and it is by which truth is perceived and distinguished from falsity.

Also, sometimes it denotes a sort of vileness and downfall in circumstances. This happens when the subject of talk is a thing in which some such human virtues are contemplated which are extraneous to the basic theme of the species, as Allãh says: . . . *but most people do not know* (30:30). Or, as you may say: Don't put trust in the people's pro-mises; or, don't seek help from their masses. In the above clauses, you want to express the idea that trust or appeal to help should be placed in virtuous people who have natural disposition to fulfil their under-takings and to remain firm on their stand; that you should not trust such people who are merely called humans, without any praise or blame being attached to them; [especially] when the main theme does not indicate any merit or demerit other than the basic meaning of humanity, as Allãh says: *O you people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allãh is the one who is most pious; . . .* (49:13).

Probably, the word: "the people", in the clause: "and Allãh will protect you from the people", points to the multitude of people which encompasses believers and hypocrites and those whose hearts are dis-eased; all of them are mixed together without any distinction. There-fore, if there is a cause to fear them, all of them combinedly will be feared.

Probably the clause: "surely Allāh will not guide the unbe-lieving people," points to it. This clause explains the reason of the preceding one: "and Allāh will protect you from the people"; it has been described earlier that the verse was revealed after *hijrah* when the Islam had gained upper hand in Arabia, and most of the people had apparently entered into the fold of Islam, although there were among them the hypocrites and those whose hearts were diseased. Therefore, the phrase: "unbelieving people" denotes those who were mingled with the general public, who were not called "unbelievers" yet the charac-teristics of disbelief had taken root in their hearts. And through this clause, Allāh has given assurance that He will nullify their machina-tions and protect His Messenger from their evil.

Also, it seems clear that in this clause, disbelief, means disbelieving in one of the commandments of Allāh, i.e. the order to which the phrase: *what has been revealed to you from your Lord*, points; it is the same style that has been used in the verse of *Ḥājj*: . . . *and who-ever disbelieves, then surely Allāh is Self-sufficient* (independent) *of the worlds* (3:97).

In any case, the context of the verse does not allow taking "disbelief" in the meaning of rejection of the two testimonies. Such views can only be considered if we take: *what has been revealed to you from your Lord*, as referring to the sum total of all the revealed messages, but you have seen that this interpretation has no leg to stand upon.

The statement that Allāh will not guide the disbelievers, means that He will not guide them in their treachery and machinations, and will prevent usual causes to submit to them when they proceed to their objectives of evil and mischief. It is like the verses: . . . *surely Allāh does not guide the transgressing people* (63:6); . . . *and Allāh does not guide aright the unjust people* (2:258). Detailed discussion on this subject may be seen in volume two of this book.[7]

It is certainly not correct to say that the non-guidance here means not guiding them to correct faith, because it goes against the basic concept of Divine Call. How can Allāh tell His Messenger: You call them to Allāh, or, invite them to obey the divine command, but I will not guide them to it, except for the purpose of completing the proof against them!

Moreover, we see with our own eyes that Allāh guides a lot of unbelievers to faith, and continues to do so every day; and He Himself

[7] *al-Mīzān* (Eng), vol.4, pp.190-3. (*tr.*)

has said: . . . *and Allãh guides whom He pleases to the straight path* (2:213).

Now, it is crystal clear that not guiding the unbelievers means that Allãh does not let them achieve their goal of negating the word of truth and extinguishing the light of the revealed commandments. The unbelievers as well as the unjust people and the transgressors, under the influence of their sinister minds and erroneous views, want to change the custom of Allãh, which encompasses the whole creation. They intend to divert the proceedings of true causes (which are free from stigma of disobeying the Lord of the universe) towards their own false goals and wicked destinations. But their formal powers can never debilitate Almighty Lord. Let them ponder on this question. Who has put these powers in their body? The only answer is: Allãh. [How can these powers overpower their Creator?]

They might occasionally succeed in their endeavours and obtain for a short time what they want, but soon all this is turned upside down and their trickery turns against themselves: . . . *and the evil plan does not beset any save the authors of it* . . . [35:43]; . . . *thus does Allãh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth; thus does Allãh set forth parables* [13:17].

Accordingly, the clause: "surely Allãh will not guide the unbelieving people", elaborates the preceding one: "and Allãh will protect you from the people", putting some limitation on its generality. The protection then means that Allãh will protect him (s.a.w.a.) so that the people do not inflict any harm on him before he achieves his objectives of delivering this order and announcing it to the *ummah*. For example, He will not let them kill him before he conveys the message; they would not be able to rise against him or overturn his affairs, or accuse him of such matters which would make the believers go out of his religion, or affect such devices which would destroy and annihilate this *sharī'ah*. Nay, Allãh will certainly make the word of truth victorious, and estab-lish the religion as He pleases, wherever He pleases and whenever He pleases. Allãh says: *If He pleases, He can make you pass away, O people! And bring others; and Allãh has the power to do this* (4:133).

However, the verse: "and Allãh will protect you from the people", cannot be taken to imply a general and all-encompassing protection from all and every trouble and harm; because such a view is rebutted by the Qur'ãn, the *ḥadīth* and accepted history. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had to suffer from

his people – be they believers, unbelievers or hypocrites – such misfortunes, tribulations and multifarious afflictions and griev-ances which nobody could ever bear – except the noble Prophet (s.a. w.a.); and he has said – in a famous *ḥadīth*: "No prophet was ever harmed like I have been."

TRADITIONS

al-ʻAyyāshī narrates from Abū Ṣāliḥ, from Ibn ʻAbbās and Jābir ibn ʻAbdillāh, that they said, "Allāh, the High, ordered His Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), to set up ʻAlī (as a) standard among the people, in order to inform them of his *wilāyah* (guardianship); so the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), was afraid lest they say, 'He has brought his cousin to us,' and speak against him in this matter. Then Allāh revealed to him the verse: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message; and Allāh will protect you from the people.* So, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), raised up his *wilāyah* on the day of Ghadīr Khumm." (*at-Tafsīr*)

Also, he narrates from Ḥanān ibn Sadīr, from his father, from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, "When Jibrīl brought, in the days of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), in the Last Pilgrimage, (the order of) announcement of the matter of ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s.): *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord* (to the end of the verse); so the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) delayed (it) for three days until he reached Juḥfah, yet he did not take ʻAlī's hand, for fear of the people. Then when he came down at Juḥfah on the day of Ghadīr at a place called Mahyaʻah, he (ordered to announce): The congregational prayer. The people gathered together. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.), then said, 'Who has more authority on you than you have yourselves?' They loudly said, 'Allāh and His Messenger.' Then he asked them the second time and they said, 'Allāh and His Messenger.' Then he again asked the third time and they said, 'Allāh and His Messenger.'

"Then he caught the hand of ʻAlī (a.s.) and said, 'Whoever whose Master I am, ʻAlī is his Master; O Allāh! Love him who loves ʻAlī, and be the enemy of the enemy of ʻAlī; help him who helps ʻAlī, and forsake him who forsakes ʻAlī; for indeed he is from me and I am from him; and he has the same position in relation to me as Hārūn had to Mūsā except that there is no prophet after me.'" (*ibid.*)

Also he narrates from Abu 'l-Jārūd, from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, "When Allāh revealed to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.): *O Messenger!*

Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message; and Allãh will protect you from the people; surely Allãh will not guide the unbelieving people, [The Imãm said], 'Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) caught the hand of ‘Alī (a.s.) and said, "O people! Surely there was not any prophet, among the prophets who were before me, but he lived his life then (Allãh) called him (back) and he accepted (the call); and the time is near that I'll be called and I'll accept it; and I shall be asked and you shall be asked; so what are you going to say?" They said, "We shall bear witness that you had certainly delivered (the message) and acted in good faith and fulfilled what was incumbent upon you, so may Allãh recompense you the best of the recompense He had given to the Messengers." (The Prophet) said, "O Allãh! Be witness (of it)."

"'Then he (s.a.w.a.), said, "O group of the Muslims! He who is present should convey it to those who are absent. Whoever believes in me and gives credence to my truth, I enjoin on him the *wilãyah* of ‘Alī. Well certainly ‘Alī's *wilãyah* is my *wilãyah*, being a covenant which my Lord made with me; and He has ordered me to convey it to you." Then he said, "Did you hear?" – saying it three times – so some one said, "Indeed we have heard, O Messenger of Allãh!"'" (*ibid.*)

[aṣ-Ṣaffãr] narrates through his chain from al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasãr, from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allãh: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message*, that "It is *wilãyah*." (*Baṣãiru 'd-darajãt*)

The author says: al-Kulaynī has narrated about the revelation of this verse in relation to *wilãyah* with the story of Ghadīr in *al-Kãfī*, through his chain, from Abu 'l-Jārūd, from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) in a lengthy *ḥadīth*. Also, this meaning has been narrated by aṣ-Ṣadūq, in *Ma‘ãni 'l-akhbãr*, through his chain, from Muḥammad ibn al-Fayḍ ibn al-Mukhtãr, from his father, from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) in a lengthy *ḥadīth*. Also, al-‘Ayyãshī has narrated from Abu 'l-Jārūd in a lengthy narration; and from ‘Amr ibn Yazīd from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) in abbreviated form.

ath-Tha‘labī writes in his *at-Tafsīr*: "Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad said explaining the word of Allãh: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord,* (that it was revealed) about the excellence of ‘Alī; so when it was revealed, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) caught the hand of ‘Alī and said, 'Whoever whose Master am I, ‘Alī is his Master.'"

The same writer narrates through his chain from al-Kalbī, from Abū Ṣāliḥ, from Ibn ʻAbbās that he said about this verse, "It was revealed about ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib; Allāh ordered the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he should convey (the order) about him; so he caught the hand of ʻAlī and said, 'Whoever whose Master am I, ʻAlī is his Master; O Allāh! Love him who loves ʻAlī, and be enemy of the enemy of ʻAlī.'"

[al-Baḥrānī] narrates from Ibrāhīm ath-Thaqafī through his chain, from al-Khudrī and Buraydah al-Aslamī and Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī that it was revealed on the day of Ghadīr about ʻAlī. (*at-Tafsīr*)

ath-Thaʻlabī writes about its meaning that Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī said, "It means, deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord about ʻAlī."

Tafsīru 'l-Manār quotes the following from *at-Tafsīr* of ath-Thaʻlabī:

"Verily this word of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), regarding the love of ʻAlī spread about and reached all towns; it was conveyed to al-Ḥārith ibn an-Nuʻmān al-Fihrī; so he came to the Prophet (s.a.w.), on his camel, and (the Prophet) was in al-Abṭaḥ; he came down and tied his camel, and said to the Prophet (s.a.w.) – and he was in a gathering of his companions – 'O Muḥammad! You ordered us on behalf of Allāh that we should bear witness that there is no god except Allāh and that you are the Messenger of Allāh; and we accepted (it) from you.' (Then he likewise mentioned all the pillars of Islam.) 'Yet you were not pleased with all this until you caught the upper arm of your cousin and gave him preference over us saying: "Whoever whose Master am I, ʻAlī is his Master;" so is this from you or from Allāh?' He (s.a.w.) said, 'By Allāh, except Whom there is no god! It is the order of Allāh.' Thereupon al-Ḥārith turned back towards his riding camel, and he was saying: *'O Allāh! If this is the truth from Thee, then rain upon us stones from heaven or inflict on us a painful punishment.'* So he had not yet reached his camel when Allāh struck him with a stone, it fell on his head and came out from his rear; and Allāh revealed: *One demanding* (person) *demanded the chastisement which must befall the unbelievers – there is none to avert it* [70:1-2]."

The author says: The author of *al-Manār* after quoting this *ḥadīth* has commented as follows:-

"This tradition is forged; and this *sūrah* of *al-Maʻārij* (ch.70) is of Meccan period; and the saying of some unbelievers of the Quraysh (*"O Allāh! If this is the truth from Thee, . . ."*) which Allāh has quoted [in 8:32] was a reminder of what they had said before *hijrah*. That reminder

is in the *sūrah* of *al-Anfãl* (ch.8) which was revealed after the battle of Badr, years before the revelation of "The Table"; while this tradition apparently shows that al-Ḥãrith ibn an-Nu‘mãn was a Muslim and then he apostatized, but he is not known as a companion. al-Abṭaḥ is in Mecca, and the Prophet (s.a.w.) did not return from Ghadīr Khumm to Mecca, as he had come down at Ghadīr when he was returning to Medina after the Last Pilgrimage."

You may clearly see how arbitrarily he has pontificated. [Let us look at it, sentence by sentence]:

al-Manãr: "This tradition is forged; and this chapter of *al-Ma‘ãrij* is of Meccan period."

COMMENT: This claim relies on some traditions narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs and Ibn az-Zubayr that the chapter of *al-Ma‘ãrij* was revealed at Mecca. Would that I knew why those traditions should be given preference over this tradition, because both of them are *khabaru 'l-wãḥid* (solitary tradition).

Let us accept that this chapter is of Meccan period, as the theme of most of its verses support it. Yet what is the proof that all its verses were revealed at Mecca? May be the chapter was Meccan but these two verses were non-Meccan. For example, this chapter "The Table" is of Medina period which was revealed during the last days of the Mess-enger of Allãh (may Allãh bless him and his progeny!), and in this Medinan chapter, the verse under discussion (*O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord . . .*) has been placed, which, many exegetes insist, was revealed at Mecca in the early days of the Mission. Thus, if a Meccan verse (*O Messenger! Deliver . . .*) can be placed in a Madinan chapter, "The Table", why cannot a Madinan verse (*One demanding* (person) *demanded . . .*) be put in a Meccan chapter, *al-Ma‘ãrij*?

al-Manar: And the saying of some unbelievers of the Quraysh . . .:

COMMENT: It is not less than the preceding sentence in arbitrariness. Even if we accept that the chapter of *al-Anfãl* was revealed several years before the chapter of "The Table" is there any reason to say that at the time of compilation some later revealed verses could not be placed in it. For example, the verses of usury and the verse: *And fear the day in which you shall be returned to Allãh; . . .* (2:281), (which according to them were the last verses revealed to the Prophet, s.a.w.a.), were placed in the chapter of "The Cow" (which was revealed in the early days of *hijrah* several years before those verses).

al-Manār: The quotation of the saying of some unbelievers of the Quraysh (*O Allāh! If this is the truth from Thee, . . .*) was a reminder of what they had said before *hijrah*:

COMMENT: It is another arbitrary statement for which there is no proof at all – if we do not say that the context proves the opposite. Those who understand the style of literature cannot entertain any doubt that the words: *O Allāh! If this is the truth from Thee, then rain upon us stones from heaven or inflict on us a painful punishment,* were not uttered by an idolater polytheist. This verse contains a demonstra-tive pronoun strengthened with a detached pronoun, then the word "the truth" which has been turned into a proper noun by addition of *al* (اَلْ = the), and the clause: *from Thee*, all these factors show that, far from being the talk of an idolator who mocks the truth and takes it as a joke, it is the speech of the one who believes in Allāh's Lordship and knows that the truthful affairs are decided by Him, and the laws are sent by Him. But he is not sure about a matter, which is attributed to Allāh, and a claimant says that it is the Truth – to the exclusion of all other things – nevertheless he finds himself unable to accept it. At this stage he curses himself invoking Allāh's wrath on himself, as is done by someone who is wearied and tired of life.

al-Manār: This tradition apparently shows that al-Ḥārith ibn an-Nu‘mān was a Muslim and then he apostatized; but he is not known as a companion:

COMMENT: Again the same arbitrary attitude! Can anyone claim that the Muslims had recorded the names of all those who had seen the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and believed in him? Or of those who believed and then went out of Islam? And if they need any proof, then this tradition may be treated as the proof of this man's companionship.

al-Manār: al-Abṭaḥ is in Mecca, and the Prophet (s.a.w.) did not return from Ghadīr Khumm to Mecca.

COMMENT: It shows that he has taken the word, al-Abṭaḥ, as the name of a particular place in Mecca, instead of taking it in its general [or literal] meaning, as the word is used for any sandy place. But there is no proof to support his interpretation; rather the proof goes against it – and it is the narrative given in this tradition and other places.

There is a verse:

I was saved and al-Murādī (Ibn Muljam) *had made his sword wet, from* (the blood of) *the son of Abū Ṭālib, the Chief of al-Abāṭiḥ.*

It may be inferred from it that Mecca and its adjacent areas were

called al-Abāṭiḥ.

It is written in *Marāṣidu 'l-iṭṭilā'*: "*Abṭaḥ* = every riverbed containing smaller pebbles is called *abṭaḥ*. Ibn Durayd has said, '*al-Abṭaḥ* and *al-Baṭḥā'* = soft ground spread out.' Abū Zayd has said, '*al-Abṭaḥ* = sign of a riverbed, be it narrow or wide. al-Abṭaḥ is correlated to Mecca as well as to Minā because it is equidistant from both, and possibly it is nearer to Minā and it is al-Muḥaṣṣab, and it is Khīf Banī Kinānah; and it has also been said that it is Dhū Ṭuwā, but it is separate from it.'"

Apart from that, this very tradition has been narrated by other than ath-Tha'labī, and there is no mention of al-Abṭaḥ in it – this tradition is coming below from *Majma'u 'l-bayān* through the Sunnī chains and other books.

However, the tradition is a solitary one; it is neither *mutawātir* nor is it verified and confirmed by definite associations; and you have known from our previous discourses that we do not rely on solitary traditions in other than the rules of practical *fiqh*. It is in accordance with the general system of the intelligent persons on which man has based his life. Anyhow, the following discussion merely aims at show-ing the untenability of the proofs he has offered for the putetic forgery of this tradition.

[aṭ-Ṭabrisī] writes: Informed us as-Sayyid Abu 'l-Ḥamd; he said: narrated to us al-Ḥākim Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Ḥaskānī; he said: informed us Abū 'Abdillāh ash-Shīrāzī; he said: informed us Abū Bakr al-Jurjānī; he said: informed us Abū Aḥmad al-Baṣrī; he said: narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Sahl; he said: narrated to us Zayd ibn Ismā'īl Mawlā of al-Anṣār; he said: narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb al-Wāsiṭī; he said: narrated to us Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣādiq, from his fathers, that he said, "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), installed 'Alī on the day of Ghadīr Khumm (and) said, 'Whoever whose Master am I, this 'Alī is his Master,' and it reached (various) towns, so an-Nu'mān ibn al-Ḥārith al-Fihrī came to the Prophet and said, 'You ordered us from Allāh that we should bear witness that there is no god except Allāh and that you are the Messenger of Allāh; and you ordered us to fight (in the way of Allāh) and to perform *ḥajj*, and to fast, and to pray, and to pay *zakāt*; so we accepted it (all); yet you were not pleased until you have installed this youth, and you said, "Whoever whose Master am I, 'Alī is his Master." Now, is this thing from you or is it an order from Allāh, the High?' So (the Prophet) said, 'Certainly, by Allāh other than Whom there is no god! Indeed it is from Allāh.'

"Then an-Nu‘mān ibn al-Ḥārith turned away, and he was saying: *'O Allāh! If this is the truth from Thee, then rain upon us stones from heaven* [. . .].' So Allāh struck a stone on his head and killed him. Then Allāh revealed: *One demanding* (person) *demanded the chastisement which must befall*. (*Majma‘u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: This theme is narrated also in *al-Kafī*.

al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu‘aym narrates a *ḥadīth* which he has ascribed to ‘Alī ibn ‘Āmir, from Abu 'l-Ḥajjāf, from al-A‘mash, from ‘Aṭiyyah that he said, "This verse was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (may Allāh bless him and his progeny and send peace on them), about ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*: O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord*; and Allāh has said: *This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as religion.*" (*Nuzūlu 'l-Qur’ān*)

al-Mālikī has said, "al-Imām Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī has narrated in his book, *Asbābu 'n-nuzūl*, ascribing it through his chain to Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (may Allāh be pleased with him), that he said, 'This verse: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord*, was revealed on the day of Ghadīr Khumm about ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.'" (*al-Fuṣūlu 'l-muhimmah*)

The author says: And it has been narrated in *Fatḥu 'l-Qadīr*, from Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Marduwayh and Ibn ‘Asākir, from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī; and likewise in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*.

ash-Shaykh Muḥyi 'd-Dīn an-Nawawī has explained the word Khumm as follows: "It is the name of a field, three miles from al-Juḥfah; in it is a well-known Ghadīr (غَدِيْر = pond) which is ascribed to this field."

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Ibn Mas‘ūd that he said, "We used to recite during the time of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.): *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord that ‘Alī is the Master of the believers, and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message; and Allāh will protect you from the people*." (*Fatḥu 'l-qadīr*)

The author says: This is a small portion of the traditions, which show that, the verse: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord . . .*, was revealed about ‘Alī on the day of Ghadīr Khumm. As for the *ḥadīth* of Ghadīr, (i.e. the Prophet's declaration:

'Whoever whose Master am I, ‘Alī is his Master'), it is a *mutawãtir ḥadīth* which has been narrated in Shī‘ah and Sunnī sources through more than a hundred chains.

It has been narrated from a great multitude of the companions, among them being al-Barã’ ibn ‘Ãzib, Zayd ibn Arqam, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib, Salmãn al-Fãrisī, Abū Dharr al-Ghifãrī, ‘Ammãr ibn Yãsir, Buraydah, Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, ‘Abdullãh ibn ‘Abbãs, Abū Hurayrah, Jãbir ibn ‘Abdillãh, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Anas ibn Mãlik, ‘Imrãn ibn al-Ḥuṣayn, Ibn Abī Awfã, Su‘dãnah and the wife of Zayd ibn Arqam.

The Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) are all agreed on it; and ‘Alī (a.s.) had adjured the people by Allãh at the public square [of Kūfah] about this *ḥadīth*, and a group of the companions who were present there stood up and testified that they had heard the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) saying it on the day of Ghadīr.

Many of these traditions show that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) said in his speech, *inter alia*: "O people! Don't you know that certainly I have more authority over the believers than they have themselves?" They said, "Certainly." He said, "Whoever whose Master am I, ‘Alī is his Master." These wordings are seen in many traditions narrated by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his *Musnad*, and by others. The Sunnīs and the Shī‘ahs both have compiled many books especially to enumerate the chains of the tradition and to discuss and comment on its text; and they have done full justice to it which has not left any room for further elaboration.[8]

al-Ḥamawaynī narrates through his chain from Abū Hurayrah that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), said, 'The night when I was taken to the seventh heaven, I heard a voice from under the Throne: "Verily ‘Alī is the sign of guidance and beloved of him who believes in Me; convey (it) to ‘Alī." When the Prophet (s.a.w.) descended from the heaven, he was made to forget it. Then Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, revealed (to him): *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message; and Allãh will protect you from the people; surely Allãh will not guide the unbelieving people.*'" (*Farãidu 's-simṭayn*)

Ibn Abī Ḥãtim has narrated from Jãbir ibn ‘Abdillãh that he said,

[8] For a concise yet comprehensive review of the *ḥadīth* of Ghadīr, see my book, *Imãmate*, published by WOFIS, Tehran, 1985/1405, pp.62-81. (*tr.*)

"When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), fought Banū Anmãr, he came down at Dhãtu 'r-Raqī‘ in the higher part of the date orchard. So while he was sitting on the top of a well, dangling his feet (in it), al-Wãrith of Banu 'n-Najjãr, said, 'Indeed I'll certainly kill Muḥammad.' His companions said, 'How will you kill him?' He said, 'I'll tell him: "Give me your sword"; and when he will give me it I'll kill him with it.' So he came to him and said, 'O Muḥammad! Give me your sword, so that I may smell it.' So he gave it to him. But his hand trembled un-til the sword fell down from his hand. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) said, 'Allãh intervened between you and what you had intended.' Then Allãh revealed: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord . . .*" (*Fatḥu 'l-qadīr*).

The author says: After the above, ash-Shawkãnī has written in *Fatḥu 'l-qadīr*: "Ibn Ḥibbãn has narrated it in his *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Also Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Abū Hurayrah nearly the same story without giving the man's name; and Ibn Jarīr has narrated likewise from Muḥammad ibn Ka‘b al-Qaraẓī; and the story of Ghawrath ibn al-Ḥãrith is written in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, and it is famous and well-known." However, the problem here is to fit the story on the theme of this verse – and it will never fit on it.

It is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* and *Fatḥu 'l-qadīr*, etc. from Ibn Marduwayh and aḍ-Ḍiyã’ in *al-Mukhtãrah*, from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said, "Verily the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), was asked, 'Which of the verses sent down from the heaven was the hardest for you?' He said, 'I was in Minã during the *ḥajj* period; and gathered there – in those days – the polytheists of Arabia and other people. Then Jibrīl brought to me and said: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you . . .*' (The Prophet) said, 'Then I stood near the mountain-pass and called out, "O people! Who will help me in delivering the message of my Lord, and he shall enter the Garden? O people! Say: 'There is no god except Allãh and I am Allãh's Messenger to you', (and) you will be successful and will prosper, and you shall get the Garden."'

"(The Prophet) said, 'Then there was not any man, woman or child, but they were hurling earth and stone (at me) and spitting on my face and saying, "The Liar, the Ṣãbian." Then someone appeared before me and said, "O Muḥammad! If you are the Messenger, then the time has come for you to curse them, as Nūḥ had invoked against his people to annihilate them." But the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "O Allãh! Guide my people, because

they do not know."'

"Then his uncle, ‘Abbãs, came and rescued him from them and removed them from him."

The author says: The complete verse does not fit on this story, as you have known its details. However, if it is taken to mean that only a part of the verse (*O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord*) was revealed on that occasion it could be tenable. But the tradition apparently rejects this view. And the same is the position of the following traditions:

It is written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* and *Fatḥu 'l-qadīr*. ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim and Abu 'sh-Shaykh have narrated from Mujãhid that he said, "When the verse: *Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord*, was revealed, (the Prophet) said, 'O my Lord! I'm but one, how should I do it? The people will combine together again me.' Then it was revealed: *and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message.*"

The same two books narrate from al-Ḥasan, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), said, 'Verily Allãh sent me with His message, and I felt uneasy about it, and I knew that the people would accuse me of lying. Then (Allãh) promised me that I must deliver (it) or He would punish me; so He revealed: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord*.'"

The author says: These two traditions, in addition to being *maqṭū‘* and *mursal*, have the same defect as the preceding one – that they do not fit the theme of the verse. Similar is the condition of some traditions saying that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to keep guards for himself; but when this verse was revealed he let them disperse and said, "Verily my Lord has promised to protect me."

Tafsīru 'l-manãr says: It has been narrated by those exegetes who base their exegesis on tradition, as well as by at-Tirmidhī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, al-Ḥãkim, Abū Nu‘aym, al-Bayhaqī and aṭ-Ṭabarãnī from several companions that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to keep guards in Mecca before revelation of this verse; when it was revealed, he dis-carded them; and Abū Ṭãlib was the first person to manage his guarding; and ‘Abbãs too used to guard him.

Also, it is written therein: Among the traditions on this subject, it is narrated from Jãbir and Ibn ‘Abbãs that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to

keep guards, and his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, used to send with him everyday some men from Banū Hāshim (for protection), until this verse was revealed; then he said, "O Uncle! Verily Allāh has given me protection. (Now), I have no need of anyone to be sent (with me)."

The author says: These two traditions, as you see, show that the verse was revealed in the middle of the Prophet's stay at Mecca. They imply that he (s.a.w.a.) conveyed for sometime his message, but then he felt unable to bear the people's offensives and their denials of his veracity, until he feared that they would kill him. So he abandoned the delivery of the Message and the Divine Call. Then he was ordered again to engage in the Call, and Allāh threatened him if he neglected it, and also promised to protect him, then he began the noble work the second time. But the Prophet's dignity and sanctity totally rejects such an idea.

Also, *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* and *Fatḥu 'l-qadīr* have reported: ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, at-Tirmidhī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, al-Ḥākim and Ibn Marduwayh as well as Abū Nuʻaym and al-Bayhaqī (both in *ad-Dalāil*) have narrated from ʻĀishah that she said, "The Messenger of Allāh used to keep guards until the verse: *and Allāh will protect you from the people*, was revealed. So he stuck his head out of the cupola and said, 'O people! Go away (now) because Allāh has (promised to) protect me.'"

The author says: As you see, the tradition apparently shows that the verse was revealed at Medina.

aṭ-Ṭabarī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* from Ibn ʻAbbās in explana-tion of: *and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message*, that it means: "If you hide a verse out of what has been revealed to you, then you have not delivered His message."

The author says: If this refers to a particular verse – a particu-lar order – that was revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), then it may be treated as correct. But if it means a threat concerning any unspecified verse or order, then you have seen earlier that the verse does not fit such interpretation.

* * * * *

ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُوا۟ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ
وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۗ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُم مَّآ أُنزِلَ
إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَٰنًا وَكُفْرًا ۖ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ
﴿٦٨﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟ وَٱلصَّٰبِـُٔونَ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ
مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَ بَنِىٓ
إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ وَأَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَيْهِمْ رُسُلًا ۖ كُلَّمَا جَآءَهُمْ رَسُولٌۢ بِمَا
لَا تَهْوَىٰٓ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا۟ وَفَرِيقًا يَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾
وَحَسِبُوٓا۟ أَلَّا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ فَعَمُوا۟ وَصَمُّوا۟ ثُمَّ تَابَ ٱللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ عَمُوا۟ وَصَمُّوا۟ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ بَصِيرٌۢ بِمَا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ
ٱلْمَسِيحُ ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَقَالَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ يَٰبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱعْبُدُوا۟

ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾
لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَٰثَةٍ ۘ وَمَا مِنْ
إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّآ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُوا۟ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ
ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ
إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُۥ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾
مَّا ٱلْمَسِيحُ ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ
ٱلرُّسُلُ ۖ وَأُمُّهُۥ صِدِّيقَةٌ ۖ كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ ٱلطَّعَامَ ۗ
ٱنظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ ثُمَّ ٱنظُرْ أَنَّىٰ
يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا
يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا ۚ وَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٦﴾
قُلْ يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغْلُوا۟ فِى دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ ٱلْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوٓا۟ أَهْوَآءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا۟
كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا۟ عَن سَوَآءِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾ لُعِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا۟ مِنۢ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ عَلَىٰ لِسَانِ دَاوُۥدَ وَعِيسَى
ٱبْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا۟ وَّكَانُوا۟ يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾
كَانُوا۟ لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَن مُّنكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ ۚ لَبِئْسَ

مَا كَانُوا۟ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَرَىٰ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ
يَتَوَلَّوْنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ۚ لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ
أَن سَخِطَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِى ٱلْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾
وَلَوْ كَانُوا۟ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلنَّبِىِّ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ
مَا ٱتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءَ وَلَٰكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ فَٰسِقُونَ
﴿٨١﴾ لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ ٱلنَّاسِ عَدَٰوَةً لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱلْيَهُودَ
وَٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا۟ ۖ وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُم مَّوَدَّةً لِّلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّا نَصَٰرَىٰ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ
قِسِّيسِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾
وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا۟ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ تَرَىٰٓ أَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ
ٱلدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ ۖ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا فَٱكْتُبْنَا مَعَ
ٱلشَّٰهِدِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ ۛ
وَنَطْمَعُ أَن يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَأَثَٰبَهُمُ
ٱللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا۟ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ
وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَكَذَّبُوا۟
بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْجَحِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾

Say: "O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon until you keep up the Tawrāt and the Injīl and that which is revealed to you from your Lord"; and surely that which has been revealed to you from your Lord shall make many of them increase in inordinacy and unbelief; grieve not therefore for the unbelieving people (68). *Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabaeans and the Christians whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day and does good – they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve* (69). *Certainly We made a covenant with the Children of Israel and We sent to them mess-engers; whenever there came to them a messenger with what their souls did not desire, some* (of them) *did they call liars and some they used to slay* (70). *And they thought that there would be no affliction, so they became blind and deaf; then Allāh turned to them mercifully, but* (again) *many of them became blind and deaf; and Allāh is well seeing what they do* (71). *Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Surely Allāh, He is the Messiah, son of Mary"; and the Messiah said: "O Children of Israel! Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates* (others) *with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the Fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust"* (72). *Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Surely Allāh is the third of the three"; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve* (73). *Will they not then turn to Allāh and ask His forgiveness? And Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (74). *The Messiah, son of Mary is but a messenger; messengers before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food. See how We make the signs clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away* (75). *Say: "Do you worship besides Allāh that which does not control for you any harm or any profit? And Allāh – He is the Hearing, the knowing."* (76). *Say: "O People of the Book! Be not unduly immoderate in your religion, and do not follow the low desires of people who went astray before and led many astray and went astray from the right path"* (77). *Those who disbelieved from among the Children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of Dāwūd and ʿĪsā, son of Maryam; this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit* (78). *They used not to forbid each other the*

hateful things (which) *they did; certainly evil was that which they did* (79). *You will see many of them befriending those who disbelieve; certainly evil is that which their souls have sent before for them, that Allãh became displeased with them and in chastisement shall they abide* (80). *And had they believed in Allãh and the Prophet and what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them for friends, but most of them are trans-gressors* (81). *Certainly you will find the most violent of people in enmity for those who believe* (to be) *the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friend-ship to those who believe* (to be) *those who say: "We are Christians"; this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly* (82). *And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you will see their eyes over-flowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize; they say: "Our Lord! We believe, so write us down with the witnesses* (of truth) (83). *And what* (reason) *have we that we should not believe in Allãh and in the truth that has come to us, while we earnestly desire that our Lord should cause us to enter with the good people*?" (84). *Therefore Allãh rewarded them on account of what they said, with gardens in which rivers flow to abide in them; and this is the reward of those who do good* (85). *And* (as for) *those who disbelieve and reject Our signs, these are the companions of the flame* (86).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses in themselves are inter-linked and appear to be in the same context. But they are not connected with the verse: *And if they had kept up the Tawrãt and the Injīl* . . . (5:66) even if we do not look at the verse: *O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord;* (5:67). As for the connection of the verse 5:67, you have known its details.

It is more likely that these verses run on the same track which is used by the preceding verses from the beginning of the chapter upto this point. Look at the theme of the verse 5:12 (*And certainly Allãh made a*

covenant with the Children of Israel . . .) upto the end of the verses under discussion, and you will see that, except for a few inter-vening verses like those of *wilãyah* and *tablīgh*, etc.; all deal with the affairs of the People of the Book; and the same is the topic of the following verses upto the end of the chapter.

QUR'ÃN: ***Say: O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon until you keep up the Tawrãt and the Injīl . . .*:** It is a common experience of human beings that when they want to perform a labori-ous and hard work that requires the use of utmost strength, they let their bodies or organs rely on some firmly fixed things. For example, if a man wants to pull a heavy thing, or to push, or remove it, or to carry it or make it stand, he firmly puts his feet on earth and then begins the work he has to do. He knows that if his feet are not firmly held by some strong surface, he will not be able to do his work.

If we apply the same principle in immaterial affairs, e.g., man's spiritual activities, or psychological affairs, it would indicate that per-formance of great activities and prodigious deeds depends on a spiri-tual base, strong psychological foundation; i.e. such actions depend on patience, firmness, high ambition and strong will-power. Likewise, man can succeed in his dealings with Allãh only through true piety and desistence from forbidden things.

All this shows that the clause: "you have no ground to stand upon" [*lit.* you are not on anything], alludes to the fact that they do not rely on a thing which would keep their feet firmly in place, in order that they could keep up the Tawrãt and the Injīl and what has been revealed to them from their Lord. It signals that Allãh's religion and His commands are a heavy burden which man cannot easily pick up or bear on his shoulders without depending on a firm foundation and surface; he cannot keep the religion up merely by his desire. Allãh has pointed to this heavy burden in relation to the noble Qur'ãn: *Surely We will send down to you a weighty word.* (73:5); *Had We sent down this Qur'ãn on a mountain, you would certainly have seen it falling down, splitting asunder because of the fear of Allãh, and We set forth these parables to men that they may reflect.* (59:21); *Surely We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof; and man undertook it, verily he was unjust ignorant* (33:72).

And He says in relation to the Tawrãt, addressing Mūsã: . . . *so take hold of it with firmness and enjoin your people to take hold of what*

is best thereof; . . . (7:145).

And says addressing the Children of Israel: . . . *Take hold of what We have given you with firmness . . .* (2:63).

And He says addressing Yaḥyã: *O Yaḥyã! Take hold of the Book with strength.* (19:12)

The verse in short says that you do not have anything to rely upon in your desire to keep up the religion of Allãh, which He has revealed to you in His Books. You could get that support if you practise piety, return to Him repeatedly through repentance time and again, hold fast to His cord, and rely on His pillar. But your attitude is contrary to it; you haughtily turn away from His worship and transgress His limits.

The same meaning appears from the verse: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrãhīm and Mūsã and ʻĪsã,* (42:13). It makes it clear that the sum total of religion is what is mentioned in these words. Then it is followed by the admoni-tion: *that keep up the religion and be not divided therein.* It puts em-phasis on unity and warns them of division and disunity. Then the verse says: *hard to the polytheists is that which you call them to*. It is because they do not like to see you united; it is hard for them to see you firm in obedience to religious commands. Then Allãh further says: *Allãh chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns* (to Him) *frequently.* It declares that keeping up the religion is not feasible without guidance from Allãh. Only such a person is capable of doing it who repents to Allãh, holds to His cord fast without breaking it, and returns to Him again and again. Then Allãh says: *And they did not become divided until after the knowledge had come to them, out of rivalry among themselves* (42:14). It shows that the only reason of their division and disunity and of their not keeping up to religion is their rivalry and envy and their transgressing the via media laid down for them.

Allãh likewise mentions this factor in similar verses: *Then set your face upright for religion in natural devotion* (to truth), *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allãh's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know – turning to Him, and be careful of* (your duty to) *Him, and keep up prayer and be not of the polytheists, of those who divided their religion and became sects; every party rejoicing in what they had with them* (30:30-32). This too clearly says that the means of keeping up the natural religion is to return to Allãh and keeping the cord intact which attaches him to the divine

presence, and not letting that cord be cut or severed at all.

He had pointed to this reality in the verses preceding these verses under discussion, where He had mentioned that Allāh had cursed the Jews and was displeased with them because of their transgressing His limits; consequently He put enmity and hatred among them. Also, He has mentioned this theme particularly about the Christians in another context as He said in this verse: . . . *therefore We excited among them enmity and hatred to the Day of Resurrection;* . . . (5:14).

Allāh had warned the Muslims of similar painful affliction that was to fall down on the People of the Book – the Jews and the Chris-tians. He informed them that they shall never be able to keep up the Tawrāt and the Injīl and what was revealed to them from their Lord. History testifies that what the Qur'ān had foretold, has actually taken place. They are divided into untold denominations and their mutual enmity and hatred goes on unabated. So, Allāh warned the Muslim *ummah* lest they follow in their track and their relation with Allāh be severed and they do not return to Allāh, as He said in the verse: *Then set your face upright for religion in natural devotion* . . . [30:30], among many other verses in the same chapter 30.

We have elaborated on various verses of this theme in previous volumes of this book, and, God willing, some other verses will be explained in coming volumes.

As for the divine word: "and surely that which has been revealed to you from your Lord shall make many of them increase in inordinacy and disbelief;" its explanation has already been given before. The clause: "grieve not therefore for the unbelieving people", aims at giving consolation to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in the form of prohibition.

QUR'ĀN: ***Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabaeans and the Christians . . .*:** Apparently, the word *aṣ-ṣābiūn* (**اَلصَّابِئُون**) in nominative case, is in conjunction with "those who believe". A group of grammarians says that the subject of *inna* (**إِنَّ** = *Surely*) [in this instance: *those who believe*] cannot be placed in conjunction with another word of nominative case before its predicate is mentioned. But this verse disproves their view.

The verse aims at explaining that so far as the ultimate happi-ness is concerned, nomenclatures and titles have no effect on it. A group is called believers, another is named Jews, a third is labelled Sabaeans, and a fourth is branded Christians. But none of the titles will be of any benefit

before Allãh; the only quality needed is the belief in Allãh, the Last Day and good deeds.

In the first volume of this book, detailed discussion of this topic has been given[9] under the verse 62 of chapter 2.

QUR'ÃN: ***Certainly We made a covenant with the Children of Israel and We sent to them messengers; whenever there came to them a messenger with what their souls did not desire, some*** **(of them)** ***did they call liars and some they used to slay*****:** This and the following verses describe the condition of the People of the Book, as a proof of what has been said in the preceding verse: *O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon until you keep up the Tawrãt . . .* It is because the crimes and sins committed by them (as mentioned in the verse under discussion) have cut asunder any connection that they might have had with their Lord; consequently they are not in a posi-tion to keep up the Books of Allãh or to rely on them.

Another possibility: The verses may be connected with the preceding one (*Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabaeans and the Christians . . .*). Accordingly, it would confirm that the names and titles would not avail anyone at all in the matter of actual bliss and happiness; had it been of any benefit it would have prevented them from slaying the prophets and calling them liars, and would have protected them from perils of mischief and hazards of sins.

Also, possibly these verses may be taken as an elaboration of the verse: *Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabaeans and the Christians . . .*, which in its turn could be an elaboration of the verse: *O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon . . .* The meaning is clear.

The clauses: "some (of them) did they call liars and some they used to slay." Obviously, the words "some" in both clauses are the objects of the verbs coming after them. These objects have been put before their verbs to show their importance. The sentences in normal sequence will be as follows: they did call some of them liars and used to slay some others. The whole phrase completes the preceding clause: "whenever there came to them a messenger . . ." The meaning is as follows: Whenever there came to them a messenger with what their hearts did not like or desire, they stood against him haughtily and rejected his call; they dealt with the

[9] See *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.1, pp.276-8 (*tr.*)

messengers, sent to them, in two ways: some of them they called liars and some others they used to kill.

[aṭ-Ṭabrisī] writes in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*: "If it is asked: 'Why did Allāh put a future tense in conjunction with a past tense, [as the clauses should literally be translated as follows], some of them did they call liars and some they will slay?' Then the reply is as follows: 'This style was used to show that it is their confirmed habit; it actually means: They called them liars and killed them and will call others liars and kill them. Apart from that, *yaqtulūn* (يَقْتُلُوْنْ = they will slay) comes at the end of the verse and therefore it was necessary to make it rhyme to other such endings.'"

QUR'ĀN: ***And they thought that there would be no affliction, so they became blind and deaf*:** It completes the topic of the preceding verse. *al-Ḥusbān* (اَلْحُسْبَان = reckoning, thinking); *al-fitnah* (اَلْفِتْنَة = an ordeal that beguiles a man, or evil and tribulation in general); *al-'amā* (اَلْعَمَى = blindness; here it indicates not seeing the truth, not differentiating between good and evil). *aṣ-Ṣamam* (اَلصَمَم = deafness; here it means not listening to admonition, indifference to good advice). This blind-ness and deafness have been caused by their delusion that there would be no affliction; and apparently that delusion had emanated from their vanity and conceit that they had a special status before Allāh because they were from the seed of Israel, and they were sons and beloveds of Allāh. Therefore, no evil would fall to them no matter what they did and what they indulged in.

The meaning of the verse then is as follows – and Allāh knows better: They, because of their vanity that they enjoyed the prestige of Jewishness, thought that they would not be afflicted by any evil, and would not be put on trial no matter what they did; this thought and delusion blinded their eyes – so they cannot see the truth – and deafened their ears – so they cannot listen to their Prophets' call which would have benefited them.

This interpretation favours what we have said earlier that these verses are a sort of proof of the verse: *Surely those who believe and those who are Jews* . . . It shows in short that names and titles are not to avail anyone anything. Look at these Jews who thought that they had a special prestige because they were Jews; yet this delusion did not do them any good, rather it made them blind and deaf and led them to perils of destruction and tribulation when they called the Prophets of Allāh liars and

murdered them.

QUR'ÃN: ***then Allãh turned to them mercifully, but*** **(again)** ***many of them became blind and deaf; and Allãh is well seeing what they do*****:** [As explained in Eng. vol.8, *at-tawbah* means to return. When a servant of Allãh repents from his sin, he returns to Allãh seeking forgiveness, and] when Allãh accepts that repentance, He returns to the servant with mercy. It shows that Allãh had removed them away from His mercy and care, and therefore they got involved in that delusion which resulted in their blindness and deafness. But Allãh turned to them second time accepting their repentance, and they were freed from that delusion and their eyes and ears were cured of that blindness and deafness respect-ively. Then they recognized themselves, knew that they were servants of Allãh and they had no prestige or status except through piety. So they saw the truth, and listened to divine admonition delivered by the tongues of the Prophets. Thus, they realized that mere names and titles would never bring any benefit to anyone.

Again many of them became blind and deaf.

Allãh has ascribed blindness and deafness first to the whole group and then to many of them. It is based on justice in speech.

First: It shows that the ascription of blindness and deafness to the whole group uses the style of attaching the majority's attribute to the whole, because in reality only majority, and not the whole group, has this attribute.

Second: It however indicates that the said blindness and deafness had covered the whole group in the beginning.

Third: It shows that Allãh's turning to them with mercy was not in vein, and had not passed away without benefit, without any effect. Rather some of them were saved through repentance, and that is why that minority had remained immune from the blindness and deafness that had affected the majority second time.

Allãh ends the verse on the clause: "and Allãh is well seeing what they do"; it proves that nothing can make Allãh oblivious of realities. When persons, other than Allãh, bestow an honour to a group, it puts a veil on their eyes, which prevents them from seeing any defect or drawback in that group. But Allãh is not like that; He is the All-Seeing; He sees all aspects and facets; an outward appearance does not hide other iner layers from Him.

QUR'ĀN: ***Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Surely Allāh, He is the Messiah, son of Mary"*****:** It further explains that the Christians did not get any benefit from calling themselves Christians and tracing their origin to the Christ; as in spite of these factors, they were counted as disbelievers, because they ascribed partners to Allāh and did not believe in Him in true sense, when they said: Surely Allāh is the Christ, son of Mary.

The Christians have differed among themselves in explaining as to how the Christ comprises the essence of divinity. Some say that the Person of the Christ (i.e. the knowledge) had branched out from the Person of the Lord (i.e. the life); and this is the meaning of one of them being the Father, and the other being the Son. Some others say that the Lord was transformed and changed into the Christ. A third group says that the Lord became incarnate in the Christ. We have described this topic in detail while writing about ʻĪsā, son of Maryam, in the chapter of "The House of ʻImrān", in the third volume of our book.[10]

However, each of the three views fits this clause: "Certainly they disbelieve who say: 'Surely Allāh, He is the Messiah, son of Mary.'" Obviously therefore, all the Christians are included in this verdict of disbelief, because all believe in his divinity and have exceeded the limits. In short, this verse does not speak about those only who believe in incarnation.

The description of the Messiah as the son of Mary proves – or at least indicates – how and why they became disbelievers; it was because they believed in divinity of a man, son of a woman, both of whom were created from dust. How can dust become the Lord of Lords?

QUR'ĀN: ***and the Messiah said: "O Children of Israel! Worship Allāh, my Lord, and your Lord. Surely whoever associates*** **(others)** ***with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the Fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust"*****:** This argument proves their disbelief and rebuts their view through the Messiah's own words. When he said: "Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord," he clearly showed that he himself is a created servant like them and in the same way he needs a Lord Who would look after all his affairs and manage them. Then he said: "Surely whoever associ-ates (others) with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden to him the garden"; thus he declared that whoever ascribes a partner to Allāh, he becomes a polytheist and the garden is forbidden to

[10] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.) vol.6, pp.145 ff (*tr.*)

him.

Allãh quotes the Christ as saying: "then Allãh has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the Fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust." This quotation refutes what they say about atonement. They believe that the Christ atoned the Christians' sins by offering his own self as redemption and that is why he was crucified. The beliefs of atonement and crucifixion have assured them that all their sins are forgiven in advance. They are not obliged to follow the divine law, since they would go directly to the garden, and the fire will not touch them at all. (We have described all these things under the chapter of "The House of ‘Imrãn", in the above mentioned volume of our book.)

What the verse quotes ‘Īsã (a.s.) as saying may be seen in dif-ferent chapters of the Gospels, e.g. the order to believe in One God[11], refutation of polytheistic worship[12], and the declaration that the unjust people would abide in the Fire[13].

QUR’ÃN: ***Certainly they disbelieve who say: "Surely Allãh is the third of the three"*****:** That is, He is one of the three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and He corresponds with each of the three. It intrinsically results from their saying that the Father is god, the Son is god and the Holy Ghost is god; and He is three and He is one. They try to give the example of the sentence: Verily Zayd son of ‘Amr is man. Now, there are three things in this statement: Zayd, son of ‘Amr and man, and at the same time there is only one person to whom all three attributes are applied. But they are oblivious of the fact that if this plurality were real (not based on a subjective approach), then the persons too should have been plural; and when the said person is in reality one, then the plurality would be based on the subjective ap-proach, and would never be real. It is beyond human understanding to imagine that Zayd combines in himself the real singularity and the real plurality at the same time.

And probably that is the reason why some Christian missionaries say that the trinity in which they believe, is an idea, which has come to them from the early fathers of the Church, and that it is a claim that cannot be proved through rational arguments or logic. They do not realize that it is incumbent on men to demand proof for any claim they hear, no matter whether it has reached them from their elders or from the coming

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[11] *Mark*, 12:29
[12] *Luke*, 6:24
[13] *Matt*., 13:47-50; 25:31-46

generations.

QUR'ĀN: ***and there is no god but one God*****:** It is a rebuttal of their saying that Allāh is the third of the three. It portrays that the Sublime Person of Allāh cannot accept or admit any plurality by any means. He is One in His Person; even when His noble adjectives are attrib-uted to Him, or His good names are ascribed to Him; it does not add anything to His One Person. Also when an adjective is added to an-other adjective, it does not create any numerousness or plurality in His Person. He is One Person and is not divisible at all – neither in reality nor in imagination or in reason. Allāh is not such as may be divided into such and such parts or ingredients; nor anything can be ascribed to Him that He could become two or more. How can it be? Because it is Allāh Who has made that thing which one wants to attach to Him in reality, imagination, or supposition.

Allāh, the High, is One in His Person. But it is not the numeri-cal oneness that the created things have and which gives rise to plu-rality and multitude. Nor is He subject to numerousness in His Person or name or adjective. How can it be? Because this numerical oneness, and the plurality which results from this unity, both are the effects of His making and His innovation. How then can He accept the attrib-utes, which He Himself has created?

The sentence: "and there is no god but one God", affirms the oneness of God with an emphasis and intensity not possible in other expressions: The sentence begins with negation followed by excep-tion, which in itself is sufficient for emphasis; then the preposition *min* (مِنْ = from) is added to the particle of negation which further empha-sizes all-inclusiveness of the statement. And lastly the clause: "one God", is used as common noun which denotes species of oneness; if it were used as proper noun, i.e. except the one God, it would not have expressed the intended essence of unity.

The meaning then is as follows: There does not exist in the genes of god any species except one God Whose Oneness does not accept any plurality at all – neither in person nor in attributes, neither in reality nor in supposition. If Allāh had said: There is no god but the One God, it would not have refuted the Christians' claim that "Allāh is the third of the three", because they do not deny His Unity; yet they say that He is one being which has three Persons, He is One although He is three in reality.

The Christians' supposition can be rebutted only when we prove the unity from which no plurality can be formed; and it is this unity

which the Qur'ãn asserts in the sentence: "and there is no god but One God".

It is a very fine theme to which the divine Book eludes concern-ing the reality of unity; and we shall further discuss it thoroughly in a special Qur'ãnic Discussion, then in a Rational one followed by a Traditional one.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastise-ment shall befall those among them who disbelieve*****:** Apparently, the verse threatens them with a painful chastisement of the hereafter.

It is a fact that the theory of Trinity (as contained in the sen-tence, Allãh is the third of the three) is beyond the understanding of general public. Most of the Christians receive it as a religious creed accepting its verbal formula without understanding, or hoping ever to understand, its meaning; and it is beyond the capacity of unimpaired reason to comprehend it properly. The mind places it side by side with other impossible suppositions, like a man who is no-man, a number that is neither one nor more, neither odd nor even. That is why the general Christian public accepts it without looking at its meaning. As for their expressions – God the Father, God the son – they take it as a matter of protocol. Such people, in fact, are not trinitarians; they merely utter the words and cling to it without thinking. But the position of their elite class is quite different. It is they whom Allãh says are responsible for creating discord in religion because of their internal rivalry. He says: . . . *that keep up the religion and be not divided therein; . . . And they did not become divided until after the knowledge had come to them out of rivalry among themselves;* . . . (42:13-14)

Accordingly, the real disbelief (which does not emanate from being deemed weak), which entails rejection of the belief in Unity of God and denial of divine communications, applies to some – not all – of them. And Allãh has addressed the threat of ever-lasting fire to only those who disbelieve and deny the divine communications, as He says: *And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in, and deny Our signs, they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide* (2:39). There are many such verses, and we have explained this topic fully under the verse 98 of the chapter 4.

Probably, that is why the verse under discussion threatens only a particular group, and not all, of the disbelievers.

Or it may be an indication that there were some Christians who did not believe in Trinity, and accepted Jesus Christ only as a servant of

Allāh and His Messenger, as the history records about the Ethiopian Christians, for example.

The meaning: If the Christians do not desist from what they say [it ascribes the belief of some people to the whole community], then those among them who disbelieve [i.e., believe in Trinity] shall be afflicted with a painful chastisement.

Some exegetes have opined: The clause: "a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve", uses the noun in place of pronoun; it wants to say "shall befall them", but has used "shall befall those among them", in order to show that such thought is disbelief, and that this disbelief has invited the threatened punishment.

COMMENT: There would have been no difficulty in agreeing with this opinion if the verse itself had not begun with the words: *Certainly they disbelieve who say . . .*

No less far-fetched is another opinion that the phrase: "those among them who disbelieve", actually means, those who disbelieve and they are these; it is a claim without proof.

QUR'ĀN: ***Will they not then turn to Allāh and ask His forgiveness? And Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful*****:** It exhorts them to repent and seek Allāh's forgiveness and reminds them of His pardon and mercy. Alternatively, the question may stand for admonition, or for denial, i.e. they do not turn to Allāh nor do they seek His forgiveness.

QUR'ĀN: ***The Messiah, son of Mary is but a messenger; messengers before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food*****:** It is a rebuttal of their claim that *"Surely Allāh is the third of the three"*, or of this together with earlier mentioned claim that: "*Surely Allāh, He is the Messiah, son of Mary*". These claims are based on the belief that Messiah has got in him the essence of divinity. The verse under discussion proves that Messiah is not different from other messengers of Allāh, who had appeared before him and whom Allāh had given death. All of them, including Messiah, were human beings, mortals, who were sent by Allāh for guidance of mankind, and none of them was a Lord apart from Allāh. Likewise his mother, Maryam, was a truthful woman who attested to the truth of the divine signs – and she too was a mortal human being. Both Messiah and his mother used to eat food; and eating food with all that it entails, is words, based on the foundation of 'need.' 'Need' is the first sign of transience, and the

'needy' is something made and transient. In other Messiah was a transient, born of a transient; he was a servant and messenger of Allãh, born from his mother; both mother and son worshipped Allãh, and proceeded in their lives on the path of need and dependence – in short they were not Lords.

The Gospels accept the above reports. They clearly say that Maryam was a young lady who believed in, and worshipped, Allãh. They declare that Jesus was born of her, as a human from another human. They further assert that Allãh sent Jesus to the mankind not unlike all other messengers. Also, they make it clear that Jesus and his mother used to eat food. These are the phenomena, which the Gospels explicitly declare, and they prove that he was a servant and a messen-ger of Allãh.

Possibly the verse may be aiming at refuting the idea of divinity of Jesus and his mother both; because the verse: *And when Allãh will say: "O ʻĪsã son of Maryam! Did you say to men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh?'"* (5:116), clearly shows that there were some people at that time who believed in the divinity of Maryam too side by side with that of Jesus.

Or, the expression, taking Maryam for god, may have been used in the same meaning as in the verse [9:31], which says: *They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allãh*. It actually points to their total submission to their scholars in a manner, which reason and *sharīʻah* do not approve.

Be it as it may. The verse accordingly altogether refutes their belief that Jesus and his mother were lords, declaring that Jesus was only a messenger like other messengers, his mother was a truthful woman, both used to consume food; and all these facts speak against their divinity.

The clause: "the messengers before him have indeed passed away", reinforces the proof of his humanity, by pointing out that he is subject to life and death like other preceding messengers.

QUR'ÃN: ***See how We make the signs clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away:*** The verse is addressed to the Prophet (s.a. w.a.), and draws his attention to a strange phenomenon. See how Allãh offers the clearest explanation of the clearest proof that negates the Christians' claim of the Christ's divinity, and then see how they refuse to understand these proofs. How long will they turn a blind eye to this reality? How long will their intellect remain oblivious to the falsity of their claim?

QUR'ĀN: ***Say: "Do you worship besides Allāh that which does not control for you any harm, or any profit? And Allāh, He is the Hearing, the Knowing."*:** Submission to the idea of Lordship was wide-spread among the mankind since the earliest days, and especially among the general public – that public worshipped idols, hoping that through that worship, the Lord would ward off evil from them and bring them benefits, as the historical researches of ancient eras have shown. So far as the worship of Allāh – because He is Allāh – was concerned, it was not found beyond a small circle of some chosen servants like the prophets and the divine scholars among their nations.

It is in this background that Allāh orders His Messenger (s.a.w.a.) to talk to them exactly as a simple man is talked to, who follows the dictates of his simple primitive nature regarding the divine worship. It is the same manner in which He had addressed the idol-worshippers. He reminds them that what had led the man to the divine worship was his awareness that Allāh holds the reins of good and evil, profit and harm in His hand; and man hopes to avoid harms and obtain benefits through the worship of Allāh.

And clearly nothing besides Allāh owns or controls any benefit or harm, because everything is owned by Allāh and has no power whatsoever of its own. Therefore, how can any such thing be selected for worship and joined with Allāh, the Lord, for submission? Allāh is the Owner of him and the others, and it was necessary that He (Allāh) should be worshipped exclusively, without extending this homage to others. It is only Allāh who hears and answers; He hears the call of the servant and answers it; it is He who is fully aware of the needs of His servants, and neither ignores it nor is confused in it contrary to what others do – because others own only that which Allāh gives into their possession, and can do only that which Allāh empowers them to do.

The above discourse has made it clear that:

First: The proof contained in this verse is quite separate from the one contained in the preceding verse [*The Messiah, . . . is but a messenger, . . . and his mother was a truthful women; they both used to eat food*], although both depend on a common premise, i.e. the Messiah and his mother both were transients and needy. The preceding verse, quoted in square brackets above, argues that they both were mortals, needy and obedient servants of Allāh, and anyone with such attributes cannot be a Lord or worthy of being worshipped. And the verse under discussion argues that the Messiah is a transient and needy person who himself is

owned by Allãh, and has no control on any benefit or harm. And a person in this situation cannot be accepted as a Lord or worthy of worship.

Second: The argument is based on what a simple man expects from his acts of worship, because his only aim in accepting someone as his Lord, and in worshipping Him is to ward off possible harms and acquire possible gains. But the power to control harm and benefit belongs exclusively to Allãh. So why should anyone worship other than Allãh? It is essential that such submission and worship [i.e. to other than Allãh] be totally rejected.

Third: In the clause: *"that which does not control for you any harm or any profit*", the relative pronoun *mã* (مَا = that which) has been used, which is reserved for other than rational beings, even though the Messiah was a rational person. It is because the same proof is used against those who worship insensate things, like idol-worshippers; and the Messiah's rationality has no effect on the perfection of this proof – it is applicable against all "worshipped" things other than Allãh.

Moreover, the creatures (all things besides Allãh) even if they do have perception and understanding, do not possess that perception and understanding by their own power, nor do they own other aspects of their 'being'. Allãh says: *Surely those whom you call on besides Allãh are in a state of subjugation, like yourselves; therefore call on them, then let them answer you if you are truthful. Have they feet with which they walk, or have they hands with which they strike, or have they eyes with which they see, or have they ears with which they hear? Say: "Call your associates, then make a struggle* (to prevail) *against me and give me no respite."* (7:194-5)

In the clause: "any harm or any profit", harm precedes profit; this too follows the same pattern to which the simple primitive nature invites, as described above. Man by nature thinks that whatever bless-ings and benefits he has got are owned by him, are his to remain; he does not imagine that these benefits might be lost, and does not antici-pate the sorrow or pain that would follow that loss. But as for the harm which he presently experiences, and the benefits and blessings which are lost and he presently feels the pain of that loss, the nature alerts him to take refuge in a Lord Who would ward off that loss and harm, and would restore the lost blessings; as Allãh says: *And when afflic-tion touches a man, he calls on Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove his affliction from him, he passes on as though he had never called on Us on account of an affliction that touched him; . . .* (10:12). *And if We make*

him taste mercy from Us after distress that has touched him, he would most certainly say: "This is of me . . ." (41:50). *And when We show favour to man, he turns aside and withdraws himself; and when evil touches him, he makes lengthy supplications* (41:51).

It all proves that a touch of affliction induces a man to submit to the Lord and worship him, rather more than gaining a profit does. That is why in the clause: "that which does not control for you any harm or any profit", 'harm' precedes 'profit'. The same reason applies to other similar expressions, like: *And they have taken besides Him gods, who do not create anything while they are themselves created, and they control not for themselves any harm or profit, and they control not death, nor life, nor raising* (the dead) *to life* (25:3).

Fourth: The complete verse: "Say: 'Do you worship besides Allãh . . . the Knowing'", proves that worship is exclusively reserved for Allãh, and none else should be joined with Him in it. This short verse actually contains two proofs: One, Submission to a God and worship-ping Him is resorted to for averting harm and acquiring benefit; as such, it is necessary that the worshipped God should control the harm and benefit. Therefore, it is not correct to worship one who has no control on anything. Two, only Allãh is the Hearing, Who answers the call of the distressed, and knows the true nature of his need; none other than Allãh has this attribute. Therefore, it is necessary to wor-ship Him exclusively, without joining others to Him.

QUR'ĀN: ***Say: "O People of the Book! Be not unduly immoderate in your religion*:** Another call to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), ordering him to invite the People of the Book to abandon immoderation in their religion. The People of the Book, and especially the Christians, are entangled in it. *al-Ghãlī* (اَلْغَالِي = one who transgresses the limit, on the side of excess); its opposite is *al-qãlī* (اَلْقَالِي = one who does not reach the required goal). The divine religion, as explained by His revealed Books, orders the people to believe in one God Who has no partner, and forbids believing in any partner to Him. The People of the Book, the Jews, and the Christians in general, were afflicted with this desease, although the condition of the Christians was more ignominious and abominable. Allãh says: *And the Jews say: "Ezra is the son of Allãh"; and the Christians say: "The Messiah is the son of Allãh"; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the sayings of those who disbelieved before; may Allãh destroy them; how they are turned away! They have taken their doctors of law and their*

monks for lords besides Allãh, and (also) *the Messiah son of Mary; and they were not enjoined but that they should worship one God only, there is no god but He; far from His glory be what they set up* (with Him), (9:30-31).

Although the belief, that Ezra is the son of God, is apparently not found today in the Jewish community, but the verse testifies that such as belief was prevalent at the time of the Qur'ãnic revelation.

Apparently, son of God was an honorific title which they used for Ezra, in view of the valuable services he rendered and the good he did to them: He brought them back to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity; and rewrote the Torah after it was lost in the devastative attack of Nebuchanazzar. The Jews treated the sonship of God as an honorific title, in the same way as the Christians nowadays treat "fatherhood", as they call the Popes, bishops and priest Fathers – the word Pope itself means father. Allãh says: *And the Jews and the Christians say: "We are the sons of Allãh and his beloved ones"* (5:18). Further, the verse 9:31 quoted earlier (*They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allãh, and* (also) *the Messiah son of Mary*) indicates it, as it mentions only the Messiah, but not Ezra. It means that Ezra is included in the expression: *their doctors of law and their monks*. In other words they called Ezra the son of God in the same sense as they name their scholars and monks as sons of God. However, they chose to mention his name in particular because he had done much good to them, as described above.

In short, they had placed some of their prophets, scholars and monks on the throne of lordship, and submitted to them in a manner that is reserved exclusively for Allãh. It was their inordinacy in religion that Allãh forbids them here through his Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

The phrase: "unduly immoderate in your religion", if literally translated would be written as, immoderate without truth in your religion. In fact, immoderation is always without truth, it can never be with truth. Yet, here the Qur'ãn qualifies it with the word, unduly or with-out truth, in order to put emphasis on the prohibition of immoderation; and also to remind the hearer of a concomitant item with its principal – after all, he had forgotten or nearly forgotten this indespensibility when he indulged in inordinacy.

The reason does not reject the idea of using the word, father, for God, provided its meaning is purified of all material and physical defects and stigmas – if it is taken in the meaning of "One who has control on creation and upbringing." The same applies to the word, son, when used

for God in its non-physical sense. But the *sharī'ah* strictly forbids use of these words for Allāh, because we are obliged to use only those names for Him, which He has approved. We cannot use self-invented names or titles for Him, because it would lead to corrup-tion and scandals. We have only to look at the Jews and the Christians – and especially the latter – to realize how much depravity they were afflicted with through the Church 'fathers' in all those long centuries. The things are not much better even today!

QUR'ĀN: ***and do not follow the low desires of people who went astray before and led many astray and went astray from the right path"*****:** Apparently the context shows that the people who went astray before and whose low desires were not to be followed, were the leaders whose opinions and orders were obeyed. They themselves went astray by holding fast to their views and opinions, and led many astray as others followed them. Thus, their going astray from the right path was the sum total of their going astray and leading astray – it was a compound error.

Also, the context shows that the people whose low desires were not to be followed were the idol-worshippers. The verse is addressed to the whole community of the People of the Book and not only to those who were contemporaries of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). So, it cannot be said that their later generations are here admonished not to follow their forefathers.

This interpretation is supported, rather it is proved, by the words of Allāh: *And the Jews say: "Ezra is the son of Allāh"; and the Chris-tians say: "The Messiah is the son of Allāh"; these are the words of their months; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before* (9:30).

This is then the historical fact as analysed by the Qur'ān. It indicates that the belief in divine fatherhood and sonship has infiltrated into People of the Book from the idol-worshippers who had passed before them. We have described in the third volume of this book (in chapter 3, story of Jesus, a.s.[14]) that this belief was prevalent among the Hindus and the Buddhists of India and China, as well as in ancient Egypt and other places. Then, gradually, it was brought into Christian community, clothed in religious dress by its religious leaders. The name remained monotheistic and the meaning became idolatrous.

QUR'ĀN: ***Those who disbelieved from among the Children of Israel***

[14] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.6, pp.145-217 (*tr.*)

were cursed by the tongue of Dãwūd and 'Īsã son of Maryam; this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. They used not to forbid each other the hateful things **(which)** ***they did; certain-ly evil was that which they did*****:** It reveals that their prophets cursed the disbelievers from among them. It adversely alludes to the Jews who were cursed by their own prophets, and it was because they exceeded the limit, and continued in this transgression generation after gener-ation. The words: "They used not to forbid . . . evil was that which they did", explain that transgression.

QUR'ÃN: ***You will see many of them befriending those who disbe-lieve; certainly evil is that which their souls have sent before for them, that Allãh became displeased with them and in chastisement shall they abide*****:** It is a perceivable proof that they had exceeded the limit. If they had any respect for their religion, they would have adhered to it and not exceeded its limit. As a concomitant of that, it was necess-ary for them to befriend those who believe in one God, and avoid those who disbelieve. If a nation respects somethings and considers them sacred, and another group has animosity towards those things, this group would be an enemy of the nation. Now, if that nation befriends this group, it would mean that that nation had abandoned that thing which it hitherto considered sacred. And a friend of enemy is enemy. Then Allãh condemns them in these words: "certainly evil is that which their souls have sent before for them." It points to their befriending the disbelievers as because of their low desires. Consequently, its recom-pense was, "that Allãh became displeased with them and in chastise-ment shall they abide." The verse has put the recompense in place of action. It is as though their souls had sent for them the recompense by sending ahead the action.

QUR'ÃN: ***And had they believed in Allãh and the Prophet and what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them for friends, but most of them are transgressors*****:** If these People of the Book had believed in Allãh and the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and what was revealed to him; or if they had believed in their own prophet, e.g. Mūsã and what was revealed to him, i.e., the Torah, they would not have taken those disbelievers for friends, because Islam cuts asunder all worldly ties; but most of them are transgressors, recalcitrants from belief.

Some people have suggested another explanation: They have taken the pronouns in "they believed" and "them [for friends]", as refer-ring to

"those who disbelieve" [in the preceding verse]. Accordingly, the meaning will be as follows: If those disbelievers, whom the People of the Book have taken for friends, had believed in Allāh, the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and the Qur'ān, these People of the Book would not have taken them for friends. They have only befriended them because they disbelieve in the Prophet and the Qur'ān.

COMMENT: There is no difficulty in accepting this interpretation, but the end phrase: "but most of them are transgressors", does not agree with it.

QUR'ĀN: ***Certainly you will find the most violent of people in enmity for those who believe*** **(to be)** ***the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe*** **(to be)** ***those who say: "We are Christians"*****:** Allāh has described in the preceding verses the depravities found in the People of the Book in general, and some which apply to only a particular group among them, e.g., the saying of the Jews that the hand of Allāh is tied up; and the saying of the Christians that surely Allāh, He is the Messiah son of Mary. Now, He describes their attitude *vis-à-vis* the believers and Islam; and adds to it the attitude of the polytheists, in order to present a complete picture of the non-Muslim communities' mental disposition towards Islam, and how near or far they are from accepting it. Its sum-total is that the Christians are the nearest of all those groups in friendship to the Muslims and readier to listen to the call of the truth.

They have been counted as the nearest in friendship to the believers, because a group of them did believe in the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as the next verse shows: *And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize; they say: "Our Lord! We believe, so write us down with the witnesses* (of truth)." [5:83].

However, if acceptance of faith by a group can justify its ascription to the whole community, then the Jews and the polytheists too must be joined with the Christians in this matter, because a Jewish group led by ʻAbdullāh ibn Salām had entered into Islam, and so had a lot of the polytheists of Arabia – in fact, the latter formed the majority of the Muslims at that time. In this background, singling the Christians out for the praise contained in the above verse – to the exclusion of the Jews and polytheists – points to their sincere acceptance of the call of Islam, even when they had other options than entering into Islam: they could have

opted to continue on their religion and pay *jizyah*, or to fight against Islam.

The case of the polytheists was totally different, because they had no alternative to acceptance of Islam [or to fight]. In this situation, the fact that the majority of Muslims had come from that group does not prove that they had entered into Islam sincerely. This is quite apart from the sufferings they inflicted upon the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the tortures they wreaked on Muslims.

Coming to the Jews, although they had the same alternatives as the Christians, and they could remain on their religion with payment of *jizyah*, yet they continued in their haughtiness, became harder in their bigotry, and turned to double dealing and deception. They broke their covenants, eagerly waited calamities to befall the Muslims and dealt to them bitterest deal.

The attitude the Christians had towards the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Muslims, and their attraction to Islam; and also the enmity of the Jews and polytheists toward the divine religion and their sustained arrogance and bigotry, have continued exactly in the same manner even after the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Innumerable were the Christians who answered the call to Islam during the past centuries, while the number of the Jews and the polytheists was so insignificant. These unchanged characteristics in both groups confirm what the Mighty Book had indicated.

The verse: "Certainly you will find the most violent . . .", lays down a general all-inclusive principle, although it is addressed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) alone. It is the style used in many preceding verses: *You will see many of them befriending those who disbelieve* . . . (5:80); *And you will see many of them striving with one another* . . . (5:62). All these verses use the second person singular pronoun; but their connotation is general.

QUR'ÃN: ***this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly*****:** *al-Qissīs* (**اَلْقِسِّيس** = priest, clergyman); *ar-ruhbãn* (**اَلرُّهْبَانُ**) is plural of *ar-rãhib* (**اَلرَّاهِبُ** = monk), sometimes it is used as singular. *ar-Rãghib* has said: "*ar-rahbah* (**اَلرَّهْبَة**) and *ar-ruhb* (**اَلرُّهْبُ**) mean to fear with cautiousness . . . *at-tarahhub* (**اَلتَّرَهُّب** = devoutness); *ar-ruhbãniyyah* (**اَلرُهْبَانِيَّة** = excessive devotion based on extreme fear [of God]; monasticism). Allãh says: *and* (as for) *monasticism, they innovated it* [57:27]. *ar-Ruhbãn* is used both as a singular and a plural; those who take it as singular, make its plural

ruhãbīn (رُهَابِيْن)."

Allãh has given three reasons for the Christians being the near-est in friendship to the believers, and of their geniality and cordiality towards the Muslims; these reasons are their exclusive attributes, which are not found in the Jews and the polytheists: (i) There are priests among them, (ii) and monks and ascetics, and (iii) they are not proud. These three are the keys to prepare them for felicity.

The felicity of religious life depends on good deeds, which emanate from knowledge. You may say that that felicity is achieved when one believes in the Truth and acts accordingly. He, first of all, needs knowledge in order to perceive the right of religion and it is the religion of truth. However, mere perception of truth is not enough to prepare him to act according to its dictates unless and until man removes from his soul the opposite factors, i.e. the arrogance which prevents him from submitting to truth, the bigotry, prejudice, and other such things. When man is armed with beneficial knowledge, and becomes ready to deal justly *vis-à-vis* the truth by discarding haughtiness and arrogance, then he is ready to submit to the truth by acting according to its demands – provided the environment is not incompatible to it, because compatibility of environment with action has great effect on that action. The activities, which are performed, by the society, where children grow up in that atmosphere; their sub-conscience forms a habit to go on doing it and it continues generation after generation. The conscious mind is not given a chance to think over it, to ponder or meditate as to how to get rid of that habit – even if he understands that the habit is harmful and against his felicity. The same is the case of good deeds and activities if they become deep-rooted in the society – it is extremely difficult to neglect them. That is why it is said that habit is second nature. Also it is because of this factor that when one intends to do something, which one does not like, it seems very diffi-cult to accomplish, but with each repetation its difficulty is decreased.

When a man, therefore, makes sure that a certain deed is correct and good, and removes from his soul the tendency of obstinacy and stubbornness by negating haughtiness, then it will be fully helpful to him if he sees another person doing that deed, as it would prove to him that the said deed is not beyond his own power.

This shows that the society will be ready to accept a truth if there are in it knowledgeable persons who know it and teach it, and there are people who act upon that truth, so that general public ascertains that the

deed is not impossible and is really good, and finally the general public is accustomed to submit to the truth and not to be too proud to accept it when it appears before their eyes.

It is because of these factors that Allãh has said about Christians that they are nearer to accept the call of the true religion because they have their religious scholars and monks who do not behave proudly. Their scholars continue to teach them cognizance of truth and realities of religion – verbally. Their ascetics remind them the greatness of their Lord and the importance of their felicity in this world and the next – practically. And they do not have pride and haughtiness, which would prevent them from accepting the truth.

As for the Jews, they had their own scholars, no doubt; but they behaved proudly, and their arrogance and stubbornness did not let them be prepared for accepting the truth.

And as for the polytheists, they did not have any religious scholar or ascetics, and on top of that, they did behave arrogantly.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize; they say: "Our Lord! We believe, so write us down with the witnesses*** **(of truth):** Eyes overflowing with tears i.e. shedding plentiful tears; *min* (**مِنْ**) in *mina 'd-dam'* (**مِنَ الدَّمْعِ** = with tears) denotes beginning; and in *mimmã 'arafū* (**مِمَّا عَرَفُو** = that they recognize) shows emergence; and in *mina 'l-ḥaqq* (**مِنَ الْحَقِّ** = of the truth) gives explanation.

QUR'ÃN: ***"And what*** **(reason)** ***have we that we should not believe in Allãh and in the truth that has come to us, while we earnestly desire that our Lord should cause us to enter with the good people?"*****:** The word, "cause us to enter", implies the meaning, put us/place us; that is why it is followed by the preposition *ma'* (**مَعَ** with).

The meaning: that our Lord should place us with the good people and include us among them.

The words and the deeds which Allãh has attributed to them prove what He has said about them that they are nearest in friendship to the believers, and ascertain that they possess beneficial knowledge and good deed and they surrender to the truth because there are among them priests and monks and they do not behave proudly.

QUR'ĀN: ***Therefore Allāh rewarded them on account of what they said, with gardens in which rivers flow to abide in them; and this is the reward of those who do good. And*** **(as for)** ***those who disbelieve and reject Our signs, these are the companions of the flame*****:** *al-Ithābah* (اَلإِثَابَة = to reward). The first verse here describes, their reward, and the second one recompense of those who oppose them. Thus, all groups are dealt with.

TRADITIONS

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates through his chain from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) from his forefathers from ʻAlī (a.s.) that the clause: *they both used to eat food*, means: "They both evacuated the bowels." (*Maʻānī 'l-akhbār*)

The author says: al-ʻAyyāshī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr*.

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from Abū ʻUbaydah al-Ḥadhdhā' from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said about the word of Allāh: *Those who disbelieved from among the Children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of Dāwūd and ʻĪsā*, "Swines are [those who were cursed] by the tongue of Dāwūd, and monkeys by the tongue of ʻĪsā son of Maryam." (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: Also, al-Qummī and al-ʻAyyāshī have nar-rated it from the same Imām (a.s.). The Sunnī traditions from Mujāhid and Qatādah, etc. narrate that monkeys were cursed by the tongue of Dāwūd and swines by the tongue of ʻĪsā son of Maryam; and some Shīʻah traditions agree with it, as will be seen later.

Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said: "As for Dāwūd, he cursed the people of Eilat, when they transgressed on their Sabbath day, and their trans-gression had occurred in his days. So he said, 'O Allāh! Dress them with curse like robe and like belt on waist.' So Allāh transformed them into monkeys. And as for ʻĪsā, he cursed those to whom the food was sent down and then they disbelieved." Then Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.), said, "They befriended tyrant kings and made their [i.e. kings'] desires fair seeming to them in order to get (a share) from their world." (*Majmaʻu 'l-bayān*)

The author says: The Qur'ān supports this report that the people of the Sabbath were transformed into monkeys. Allāh says: *And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, so We said to them: "Be apes, despised and hated"* (2:65). *And ask them*

about the town which stood by the sea; when they exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water, and on the day on which they did not keep the Sabbath they did not come to them; . . . And when a party of them said: "Why do you admonish a people whom Allãh would destroy or whom He would chastise with a severe chastisement?" They said: "To be free from blame before your Lord, and that haply they may guard (against evil)*" . . . Therefore when they revoltingly persisted in what they had been forbidden, We said to them: "Be apes, despised and hated"* (7:163-6).

ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn Masʻūd that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), said, 'Verily whenever the Children of Israel committed a sin, their scholars forbade them (to do it) in rebuke, and then they sat with them and ate and drank with them as if they had not committed any sin yesterday. So when Allãh saw this conduct of theirs, He let discord to appear among them, and cursed them by the tongue of a prophet.' Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'By Allãh! You will most certainly enjoin the right and forbid the wrong; and you most certainly bend them to turn to truth; otherwise, Allãh will most certainly let discord appear among you, and will most certainly curse you as He had cursed them.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated from Maʻãdh ibn Jabal that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Accept gift as long as it is gift; and if it is a bribe to divert you from your religion, then do not take it. But you shall never leave it – need and fear shall not let you avoid it. Surely the children of Gog have arrived. And certainly the handmill of Islam will soon start going round, so wherever the Qur'ãn revolves, you should revolve with it. It is about to happen that the worldly power and the Qur'ãn shall fight each other and separate. Surely soon you will get kings who will judge you according to one standard and judge themselves with another standard; if you would obey them they would lead you astray, and if you would disobey them they would kill you.'

"They (companions) said, 'How should we [behave] if we found that (era)?' He said, 'You should be like the companions of ʻĪsã. They were sawed with handsaws and hoisted on wood (i.e. crucified). Death in obedience (of Allãh) is better than life in disobedience. Surely the first defect that appeared in the Children of Israel was that they used to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, rebuking (the evil-doer), and then when one

of them met the fellow whom he used to rebuke, he ate and drank with him as though he had not rebuked him for anything. So Allãh cursed them by the tongue of Dãwūd, and it was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. (I swear) by Him in Whose hand my soul is! You should certainly enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; otherwise Allãh will most certainly impose your evil ones as rulers over you, then your good ones will call (on Allãh) and their call will not be answered. (I swear) by Him in Whose hand my soul is! You should most certainly enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and you will most certainly take the hand of the unjust and twist it over him; otherwise Allãh will cause discord to appear among you.'" (*ibid*.)

Ibn Rãhwayh, al-Bukhãrī (in *al-Waḥdãniyyãt*), Ibnu 's-Sakan, Ibn Mandah, al-Bãwardī (in *Ma'rifatu 's-ṣaḥãbah*), aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, Abū Nu'aym, and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn Abzī, from his father that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), delivered a sermon; he offered thanks to Allãh and praised Him; then he mentioned some groups of the Muslims and lauded them in good terms; there-after he said, 'What has happened to some people that they do not teach their neighbours and do not impart to them the knowledge of religion? Why they do not enjoin them (to do good) and do not forbid them (the evil)? And why is it that some people do not learn from their neighbours, and do not acquire religious knowledge and do not become knowledge-able? (I swear) by Him in Whose hand my soul is! They should most certainly teach their neighbours, or they should most certainly acquire religious knowledge, or they should most certainly become knowledge-able; otherwise I shall most certainly hasten to their chastisement in this world.'

"Thereafter he came down and entered his house. The compan-ions of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) said, 'Whom does he mean by this talk?' They said, 'We do not know whom does he mean by this talk except the tribe of Ash'arites. (They are) religious scholars, knowl-edgeable and they have neighbours, uncouth, ignorant.'

"Then a group of Ash'arites came together and visited the Prophet (s.a.w.). They said, 'You mentioned some groups of Muslims in good (terms) and mentioned us in bad (terms); so what should we do?' The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) said, 'You should most certainly teach your neighbours, and most certainly give them religious knowledge, and most certainly enjoin them and forbid them; otherwise I shall most certainly hasten to your chastisement in this world.' They said, 'O Mess-enger of Allãh! Give us one year's time; as in that one year we shall teach them

and they shall learn.' So he gave them time of one year. Then the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) recited: *Those who disbelieved from among the Children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of Dãwūd and ʻĪsã son of Maryam; this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. They used not to forbid each other the hateful things* (which) *they did; certainly evil was that which they did.* (*ibid.*)

Muḥammad ibn al-Haytham at-Tamīmī narrates from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said about the word of Allãh, *They used not to forbid each other the hateful things* (which) *they did; certainly evil was that which they did:* "Well, they did not enter their places nor did they sit in their sessions; but when they met them, they showed glad-ness on seeing them and showed friendliness towards them." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

Marwãn narrates through some of his companions, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he described the Christians and their enmity (towards Muslims); then he mentioned the word of Allãh: *that is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly*, (and) said, "Those were the people who were between ʻĪsã and Muḥammad, (who) were awaiting coming of Muḥammad (s.a. w.a.)." (*ibid.*)

The author says: Apparently the verse is general and not restricted to a certain period. Probably, the tradition means that the praise is applied to them only as long as they did not change, exactly as the praise of the Muslims too is conditional to their not changing.

ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Saʻīd ibn Jubayr that he said explaining the word of Allãh: *that is because there are priests and monks among them* . . . "It refers to the messengers of Negus whom he sent with (news of) his Islam and that of his people; they were seventy persons whom he selected from among his nation, good ones. So good is in religious knowledge and age." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Another version says: He sent to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) thirty men from among his good companions. They came to him, and he recited before them the chapter of *Yã-Sīn*; so they wept when they heard the Qur'ãn and recognized that it was truth. Therefore, Allãh revealed about them: *that is because there are priests and monks among them* . . . Also it was revealed about them: (As to) *those whom We gave the Book before it, they are believers in it. And when it is recited to them they say:*

"We believe in it; surely it is the truth from our Lord; surely we were submitters before it." These shall be granted their reward twice . . . [28:52-54]. (*ibid.*)

Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn ʻAbbās that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.), while in Mecca, was afraid of polytheists regarding his companions. So he sent Jaʻfar ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ibn Masʻūd and ʻUthmān ibn Maẓʻūn with a party of his companions to Negus, the king of Ethiopea. When the news reached the polytheists, they sent ʻAmr ibn al-ʻĀṣ with a group of theirs. It is said that they arrived at Negus' (court) before the com-panions of the Prophet (s.a.w.), and said, 'Indeed, has appeared among us a man who has declared as foolish the wisdom and aspirations of Quraysh; he thinks he is a prophet. He has sent a party to you in order to sabotage your nation against you; therefore, we liked to come to you and give you his report.'

"(Negus) said, 'If they came to me, I'll look into what they say.' When the companions of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.) arrived (there), they came to the gate of Negus and said [to the door-keeper], 'Take permission for the friends of Allāh.' (Negus) said, 'Give permission to them; welcome to the friends of Allāh.' When they came to him, they greeted him with *salām*. The group of the polytheists said, 'Do you not see, O King! That we have told you the truth, and they have not greeted you with the formula you are (usually) addressed with.' (The King) said to them (the Muslims): 'What has prevented you from greeting me with my (usual) greeting?' They said, 'We have greeted you with the greeting of the people of Garden, and the greeting of the angels.'

"Then he said to them, 'What does your companion say about ʻĪsā and his mother?' They said, 'He says, "A servant of Allāh and His Messenger; a word from Allāh and a spirit from Him which He sent to Maryam"; and he says about Maryam that she was a virgin, pure and untouched.' The King took up a (small) piece of wood from the earth and said, 'ʻĪsā and his mother were not more than what your com-panion says even to the extent of this wood.' The polytheist did not like his words and their faces underwent a change.

"Then (Negus) said, 'Would you recite something from what has been revealed to you?' They said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Then recite (it).' They began to recite. And there were around the King, priests, monks, and all other Christians. A group of the priests and monks [was so over-whelmed that] whenever they recited a verse, their (the Christians') eyes overflowed with tears because of what they recognized of the truth. Allāh

says: *this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly. And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you will see their eyes over-flowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize.* (*ibid.*)

The author says: al-Qummī has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* this event in a lengthy tradition, and it says at the end: [The envoys sent by Negus] returned to him and gave him the information about the Mess-enger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and recited to him what the Prophet had recited to them. So, Negus wept and the priests wept, then he became Muslim but did not disclose his Islam to the Ethiopeans, because he was afraid of them regarding his life. So he came out of Ethiopea proceeding to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); when he crossed the sea, he expired[15]. . . .

MEANING OF *TAWḤĪD* IN THE QUR'ÃN

A deep thinker on matters of general cognizance certainly recognizes that the subject of *tawḥīd* (monotheism, oneness of God) is the deepest of all problems. It is the most difficult to imagine and con-ceive, and most entangled to unravel, because it is highly above the general topics which human understanding grasps, and much beyond the common propositions which minds are familiar with.

Such a complicated subject is bound to be perceived in diverse ways by different minds, because of multiplicity of thinking which mankind is created with, as every individual has a separate body-construction, and this leads to diversity of the senses in their actions. This in its turn affects thought and understanding ranging from sharp intelligence to idiocy, from steadfastness to deviation. All this is generally accepted and no one has any doubt about it. The Qur'ãn has affirmed this difference and diversity in various places. Allãh says: *Say: "Are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only those pos-sessed of understanding shall bear in mind* (39:9). *Therefore turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our reminder and does not desire anything but this world's life. That is the* (last) *reach of their knowl-edge;* (53:29-30). *. . . but what is the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told* (them)? (4:78). *. . . See how we make the signs clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away* (5:75).

[15] The story of Negus' journeying towards Mecca and dying on the way is not supported by history. (*tr.*)

A clear example of this difference in understanding is their difference in cognizance of the meaning of oneness of God. Although the human nature through its secret inspiration has united all men together in believing that there is a Creator, yet there is a great difference and vast chasm between one mind and the other in grasping its meaning.

Some people's intellect led them to idol-worship. He carves idols and statues from wood and stone, even from [flour,] cheese and clay made with urine of goats and sheep. Then he declares these to be part-ners and colleagues of God. He worships God exactly as he worships these idols, and asks God for his needs as he asks them, and shows devotion to Him as he does to them. It did not take him long to give precedence to those idols over God; he came closer to them and left Him; put all his needs in their hands and discarded Him.

Utmost that such a man can understand about the existence of God is what he does about his idols, which were made by himself or by another man like himself. That is why they ascribed to God the attribute of oneness in the same way as they did to each of their idols, and it was the oneness in number; one is a number from which other numbers are made. Allãh says: *And they wonder that there has come to them a Warner from among themselves, and the disbelievers say: "This is an enchanter, a lier." What! Makes he the gods a single God? A strange thing is this, to be sure!* (38:4-5)

These people looked at the Qur'ãnic call to monotheism as a call to numerical oneness, as opposed to numerical multitude. Allãh says: *And your God is one God! There is no god but He; . . .* (2:163); *He is the Living, there is no god but He, therefore call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience* (40:65); apart from many verses which call man to discard numerous gods and turn his face exclusively to the One God. Also, He says: *. . . and our God and your God is One . . .* (29:46); in addition to other verses which call men not to be divided by worship-ping different gods, as every nation, group and tribe used to worship a god which exclusively belonged to it, and discarded others' gods.

Qur'ãn's sublime teachings negate numerical unity concerning God; a thing, which is numerically one, must inevitably be distinguished from another similar one through confinement of limit and dimension. For example, there is water in a reservoir; if we put it in various pots, then the water in each pot would be a unit, separate from other units found in other pots. Likewise, Zayd is one man because he does not have the particulars found in other men. If there were no such distinc-tion, their

humanity would not be called one or more numerically.

Limitedness of existence compels the numerical one to be one. When this unity is curtailed in some aspects, the numerical multitude is formed; for example, when some units gather together to form a group.

Allãh is the Subduer, not subdued; the Victor whom nothing can subjugate, as the Qur'ãnic teachings make clear. As such, numerical unity or numerousness *vis-à-vis* God is unimaginable. Allãh says: . . . *and He is the One, the Subduer* (13:16). . . . *are sundry lords better or Allãh the One the Subduer? You do not worship besides Him but names, which you have named, you and your fathers;* . . . (12: 39-40). . . . *and there is no god but Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (38:65); *If Allãh had intended to take a son to Himself, He would surely choose those He pleases from what He has created. Glory be to Him! He is Allãh, the One, the Subduer.* (39:4)

These verses, in their contexts, negate every unity which stands face to face with opposite numerousness: No matter whether it is numerical unity, like a single member of a species, which if joined with another member would become two. (This individual member is subdued by the limit imposed on it by the second member, who is distinguished from it.) Or, if it is unity in species genes or any other general conception, parallel to numerousness of the same type. For example, when man as a species, is looked at side by side with other species, e.g. horse, cow, sheep, etc., is subdued by the limit imposed on it by the other species.

However, we know that nothing can subdue Allãh in any aspect, be it His person, His attributes, or His actions. He is the Subduer, above all things; nothing can impose any limit on Him. He is Existent without any taint of non-existence; He is the Truth that no nullity can touch Him; the Living that death cannot come near Him; the Knowing that ignorance cannot creep to Him; the Powerful that weakness can-not overcome Him; the Owner and the King that nothing can possess Him, and the Mighty Who is far above meakness – and so on. He has the essence of perfection. If you want to understand more this Qur'ãnic reality, then imagine one thing finite, and another infinite. You will find that the infinite encompasses the finite in a way that the finite does not push the infinite away from its perfection; rather, the infinite dominates the finite and is present in every aspect of the finite's perfection; the infinite stands independently, and is the witness over the finite and encompasses it. Keeping this scenario in view, look at the connotation of these verses: *Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things? Now surely they are in doubt as to the meeting of their Lord; now surely*

He encompasses all things (41:53-54).

This is what is proved by all those verses that describe divine attributes and which clearly or apparently shows all-inclusiveness. For examples: *Allāh – there is no god but He; . . .* (20:8); *. . . and they shall know that Allāh is the evident Truth* (24:25); *He is the Living, there is no god but He . . .* (40:65); *. . . and He is the Knowing, the Powerful* (30:54); *. . . that the power is wholly Allāh's . . .* (2:165); *. . . to Him belongs the kingdom, and to Him is due* (all) *praise . . .* (64:1); *. . . surely might is wholly Allāh's . . .* (10:65); *The truth is from your Lord, . . .* (2:147); *. . . you are the ones who stand in need of Allāh, and Allāh is He Who is the Self-sufficient, the Praised one* (35:15), in addition to other many similar verses.

As you see, these verses loudly declare that every imaginable perfection originally belongs to Allāh; others do not have any perfec-tion unless and until He gives it to them; even then He does not lose any perfection by giving it to the others, contrary to what happens to us when we give something into others' possession – that we lose our hold on it and our possession of it is negated.

In this backdrop, when we imagine a perfect thing *vis-à-vis* Allāh, with a view to make it His second and His partner, we will find that all its perfection actually belongs to Allāh and comes from Him; He is the Truth, Who owns everything; and whatever is besides Him is worthless and owns nothing for itself. Allāh says: *. . . and they control not for themselves any harm or benefit, and they control not death, nor life, nor raising* (the dead) *to life.* (25:3)

It is this connotation that negates numerical unity in respect of Allāh. Had He been numerically one, He would have been confined to His own person and unable to encompass other beings; and then it would have been possible in reason to suppose His second like Him – no matter whether that second could exist in reality or was impossible to exist. Then the reason could attribute numerousness to Him looking at His person, even if such multitude was impossible in actuality. But it is not so.

He is One, i.e. His existence cannot be limited with any limit; otherwise it would have been possible to imagine His second beyond that limit. This is the connotation of the chapter of "The Unity": *Say: "He, Allāh, is Unique. Allāh is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like unto Him."* The word *aḥad* denotes uniqueness. It does not mean one, so that we may start counting, two, three, and so on. This attribute removes the possibility of numbering. In a negative

sentence it is translated as "no one" or "nobody". They say: 'No one came to me.' It negates coming of one, two or more. Allãh says: *And if one of the idolators seek protection from you, grant him protection* . . . (9:6). The 'one' here encompasses one, two and group; no number is out of its circle. Also He says: . . . *or one of you come from the privy* . . . (5:6). Here too 'one' covers all numbers endlessly.

The word One or Unique in the first verse [of the chapter of "The Unity"] is used in a positive sentence. There is no negation, nor is it qualified with any adjective or genetive construction; and it con-notes that in His essence Allãh is such as no like unto Him can even be imagined – be it one or more. Therefore, regardless of its condition in actuality, it is impossible even to imagine it properly.

Allãh has gone ahead, mentioning the attribute of *aṣ-ṣamad* (اَلصَّمَدُ): It means something solid, not hollow. [That is why it is translated as the One on Whom all depend and Who does not depend on anything.]

Then it says: "He begets not", followed by, "nor is He begotten", and finally comes: *And none is like unto Him.*

The last three attributes negate such factors that impose some limits and isolation.

This is the reason why the attributes imagined or invented by the creatures in respect of Allãh cannot be applied to Him properly. Allãh says: *Glory be to Allãh* (for freedom) *from what they describe; except the servants of Allãh, freed* (from sins) (37:159-60); . . . *they do not comprehend Him in knowledge* (20:110). The fact is that the attributes of perfection that we use for Allãh are limited attributes, and far be it from His glory to be subject to limitation and restriction. This was the idea which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) expressed in his famous words: "I do not count Your praise, You are as You have praised Yourself."

This meaning of unity removes the idea of the Christian trinity. They are Unitarians and at the same time are Trinitarians. But the unity they believe in is the numerical unity, which does not negate numerousness from other sides. They say: There are three persons (the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost) (or say: the self, the knowledge, the life), yet they are one, like: A living learned man; he is one, yet he is three because there is man, life, and knowledge.

But the Qur'ãnic teaching rebuts this idea, because it affirms such a unity, which leaves no room for a supposition of any type of multitude, numerousness, or distinction either in His person or His attributes.

Whatever attribute is supposed for Him is exactly the other attribute, because there is no limit or boundary here. Allãh's person is exactly His attribute; and each attribute supposed for Him is His other attribute. May He be exalted above what they associate with Him and Glory be to Him from what they ascribe to Him.

This is the reason that the verses that describe Him as the Sub-duer first ascribe to Him the attribute of Oneness and then mentions His subdueing. It shows that His unity does not leave any room to anyone even to imagine His second who could be similar to Him in any way, not to speak of that second's actual existence. Allãh says: . . . *are sundry lords better or Allãh the One, the Subduer? You do not worship besides Him but names which you have named, you and your fathers;* . . . (12:39-40). In this speech, Yūsuf (a.s.) ascribes to Allãh the unity, which has subdued every imaginary partner, and this sub-dueing does leave nothing to any other supposed god except name. Also He says: . . . *Or have they set up with Allãh associates who have created creation like His, so that what is created became confused to them? Say: "Allãh is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Subduer"* (13:16); . . . *To whom belongs the Kingdom this day? To Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (40:16). It is because His unrestricted kingdom does not leave any other supposed owner without turning him and his possession into His hand as His possession. Also He says: . . . *and there is no god but Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (38:65); *If Allãh had intended to take a son to Himself, He would surely have chosen those He pleases from what He has created. Glory be to Him: He is Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (39:4). Thus, you see that in all these verses, His Oneness precedes His attribute of subdueing.

TRADITIONS

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates through his chain of narrators, from al-Miqdãm ibn Shurayḥ ibn Hãnī, from his father that he said, "Verily a Bedouin stood up on the day of the Camel to the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) and said, 'O Leader of the Faithful! Do you say that Allãh is one?'" (The narrator) said that the people bore down on him and said, "O Bedouin! Do you not see how disturbed the Leader of the Faithful is at present?" The Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) said, "Leave him, because what this Bedouin wants is exactly what we want from these people [our adversaries]."

Then he said, "O Bedouin! The statement that, Allãh is One is of four kinds [i.e., it can be interpreted in four ways]: Two sides (meanings) of them are not applicable to Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, and two sides are affirmed about Him. As for the two meaning which are not allowed to attach to Him: [One:] It is the word of a speaker, 'one', when he intends it as a number; so this is not allowed [in respect of Allãh], because that which has no 'second' does not enter into the fold of numbers [i.e. cannot be counted]. Don't you see that He has declared them disbelievers who said that He was the third of the three? [Two:] It is the word of a speaker [for someone] that he is one of the people; he means a species from genes; so it is not allowed because it likens Him [to others], and our Lord is far greater and more sublime than it.

"And as for the two meanings which are affirmed about Him: [One:] It is the word of a speaker: He is One, there is nothing like unto Him; such is our Lord. [Two:] It is the word of a speaker: He is of one meaning, i.e. He cannot be divided in existence, or in reason, or in imagination. Such is our Lord, the Mighty, the Great." (*at-Tawḥīd; al-Khiṣãl*)

The author says: He has also narrated it in *Ma'ãni 'l-akhbãr*, through another chain, from Abu 'l-Miqdãm ibn Shurayḥ ibn Hãnī, from his father from the Imãm (a.s.).

['Alī, a.s. said:] "The foremost in religion is the knowledge of Him, the perfection of knowing Him is to testify Him, the perfection of testifying Him is to believe in His Oneness, the perfection of be-lieving in His Oneness is to adhere to Him purely, and the perfection of adhering to Him purely is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute testifies that it is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed testifies that it is different from the attribute.

"Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allãh joins Him (to another thing) and who joins Him (to another thing) regards Him two; and who regards Him two reconizes parts for Him; and who recognizes parts for Him is ignorant of Him; and who is ignorant of Him pointed at Him; and who pointed at Him admitted limitations for Him; and who admitted limitations for Him numbered Him . . ."[16]

The author says: It is a most amazing expression. The gist of the first paragraph is that cognition of Allãh in its perfection ultimately leads to

[16] *Nahju 'l-balãghah*; part of Sermon 1. (*tr*.)

denying Him attributes. And the gist of the second paragraph (beginning with, "Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allāh . . .") is that affirmation of attributes entails affirmation of numerical unity that in its turn depends on putting limitations on Him, which is not allowed for Allāh. The two premises lead to the conclusion that perfection of Allāh's cognition entails denying numerical unity/oneness for Him, and seeking some other meaning for divine unity. And that is the theme of the Imām (a.s.) in this sermon.

As for the question of denying Him attributes, the Imām (a.s.) has explained it in his word: The foremost in religion is the knowl-edge of Him. Apparently, one, who does not know Allāh in any way, is yet to enter into the fold of religion. That knowledge is sometimes accompanied by deeds and at other times is devoid of deeds. Obvious-ly, if one had a knowledge, which was somewhat, related to deed and action that knowledge would settle in the psyche only when it was acted upon. Otherwise, the knowledge would go on losing its power if contrary actions were performed, until it would become futile, null and void. The Imām (a.s.) has explained the same principle some-where else in the same book: Knowledge is joined with action, he who knows acts; knowledge calls action loudly, if it answers the call, (well and good); otherwise knowledge too departs.

The knowledge and cognition becomes complete when the knower holds truly to "the known", and manifests it in his interior and exterior, in his heart and limbs, by submitting to it in spirit and flesh. And it is the faith, which spreads to his inner and outer self. This reality is expressed in a nutshell in the sentence: the perfection of knowing Him is to testify Him.

Although this submission, which is called testifying Him, may take place with ascribing a partner to the Lord, as we see idol-worshippers submitting to Allāh together with their other gods, yet obviously submission to a thing cannot be complete without turning away from other things. Thus submission to one of the gods means to turn away from other gods and in a way behaving arrogantly towards them. By the same standard, testifying to Allāh and submission to Him cannot be complete without turning away from submission to the partners ascribed to Him and from the call to multitude of gods. This takes us to the sentence: the perfection of testifying Him is to believe in His Oneness.

Now, the belief in unity of God has different grades one over another; and it is not perfected until the One God is given His due right of

exclusive divinity. It is not enough just to call Him One God, but every factor having any part in existence and perfection must be attributed to Him, e.g., creation, giving sustenance, raising to life, causing to die, and bestowal and withholding. Submission and worship must be reserved to Him, without showing humility to other than Him in any way; one should not hope except for His mercy, should not fear except His wrath, should not covet except what is with Him, and should not adhere except to His door. In other words, one must devote oneself solely to Him in knowledge and practice. This factor is described by ‘Alī (a.s.) in these words: the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to adhere to Him purely.

When man settles on throne of sincerity, and divine solicitude attaches him to the near friends of Allãh, then appear before his in-sight the signs manifesting his inability to properly acquire His cog-nition or to ascribe to Him the attributes worthy of His Greatness and Majesty. He sees that whatever attributes he uses for Allãh are merely the ideas, which he has perceived by looking at, created things and the happening that he has observed in transient creatures. These are limited and restricted forms, each repelling the others; they cannot be mixed and mingled. Look for example at the meanings of existence, knowledge, power, life, sustenance, might, and affluence.

The limited meanings repel each other because clearly each meaning is devoid of the other meaning; for example, meaning of knowledge is devoid of that of power. When we imagine knowledge our attention is diverted from power, and we do not see the meaning of power in that of knowledge; and when we imagine the meaning of knowledge (which is one of the attributes) we are diverted from the meaning of His person, to Whom these attributes are attached.

Thus, these meanings, perceptions, and knowledge fall short of the ability to be applied properly to Allãh, or to express exactly His splendour. A sincere servant, who intends to describe his Lord, inevitably feels the need to confess his shortcomings, which are not redeemable, his weakness that cannot be restored. Then he looks again to himself and negates what he had affirmed; and wanders in bewilder-ment from which he can't come out. This is the connotation of the words of ‘Alī (a.s.): "and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute testifies that it is different from that to which it is attributed, and everything to which it is attributed testifies that it is different from the attribute."

This explanation given by us of the first paragraph is supported by the beginning of the sermon where the Imãm (a.s.) says: ". . . Whom the height of intellect cannot appreciate, and the divings of under-standing cannot reach; He for Whose description no limit is laid down, no eulogy exists, no time is ordained and no duration is fixed", as is clear to an intelligent contemplator.

The next paragraph: "Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allãh joins Him (to another thing) . . ." This section analyses the implication of attaching attributes to Allãh and in this way arrives at the aim that Allãh is not subject to limitation or counting; while the first paragraph had reached through analysis of cognition to the denial of attributes.

"Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allãh joins Him (to an-other thing)" because attribute and that to which it is attributed are two separate things; and whoever attaches them together, joins them; and whoever joins them recognizes them as two; and whoever recognizes Allãh and His attributes as two, recognizes parts for Him, and who-ever recognizes parts for Him is ignorant of Him, because in his imagin-ation he points to Him; and whoever points to Him admits limitations for Him – because pointing shows that the one who is pointed at is separate from the one who points; and it creates a distance between the two, as the pointing begins from one and ends at the other; and whoever puts limitation on Him, numbers Him. In other words, he believes in Him as a numerical one, because counting is concomitant with division and isolation: Far be it from His glory.

ʿAlī (a.s.) says in another sermon:

"Praise be to Allãh for whom one condition does not precede another so that He may be the First before being the Last or He may be Manifest before being the Hidden. Everyone called one (alone) except Him is by virtue of being small (in number); and everyone enjoying honour other than Him is humble. Every powerful person other than Him is weak. Every master (owner) other than Him is slave (owned). Every knower other than Him is seeker of knowledge. Every powerful other than Him is sometimes imbued with power and some-times with disability. Every listener other than Him is deaf to faint voices while loud voices make him deaf and distant voices also get away from him. Every onlooker other than Him is blind to hidden colours and delicate bodies. Every manifest thing other than Him is hidden, but every hidden thing other than Him is

incapable of becoming manifest."[17]

The author says: It is based on the principle that Allãh is not limited and all other things are limited. When these and similar attrib-utes and ideas are subjected to limitation, they have some relationship with other things; and limitation causes them to be isolated from those other things, and be turned into opposite meaning.

Manifestation, when it is taken as limited, will be limited to a certain thing or a certain direction, and not to another thing or direction. Rather this manifest thing will turn into a hidden one when looked at in relation to that another thing or direction. When honour is subjected to limitation, will become null and void beyond that limit – will become humility. Power, when confined to a limit, will turn into disability beyond that limit. Manifestation is concealment beyond its location, and concealment is manifestation outside its context.

When ownership is restricted then the one who restricts shall be guardian and supervisor over this owner – in this way, both the owner and the thing he owns will be under ownership of someone else. Knowledge, when it is limited, does not belong to the knower, because a thing does not restrict itself – it has come to him by bestowal of someone else and his teaching. And so on.

The proof that the Imãm (a.s.) has based his talk on the meaning of limit, may be seen in the sentences: "Every listener other than Him is deaf to faint voices" [to the end of the paragraph,] as all of it shows that all the created things are subject to limitation; and all is in the same context.

The sentence: "Everyone called one (alone) except Him is by virtue of being small (in number)," is the reason why we have quoted the whole paragraph. Manifestly it is based on the meaning of limit. The numerical oneness branches out from the limitedness of what is called one; and it entails division and multiplication. The more this division increases, the smaller and weaker that 'one' becomes – in comparison to the resulting multitude. Obviously, every numerical 'one' is small in comparison to the resulting multitude – even if in imagination only.

As for the 'one' which has no limit nor end, we cannot imagine any numerousness in it, because it does not accept any limit or distinc-tion, and its being encompasses all its essence. As nothing of its essence is left out, there is nothing to add to it or to subtract from it – so it cannot

[17] *Nahjul 'l-balãghah*, part of Sermon 64. (*tr*.)

increase nor decrease; what we imagine as that one's second, is exactly the same 'one'.

ʻAlī (a.s.) has also said:

"All praise be to Allāh Who gives proof of His existence through His creation, of His being eternal through the newness of His creation, and through their mutual similarities proves that nothing is similar to Him. Senses cannot touch Him, because of the difference between the Maker and the made, the Limiter, the limited, the Sustainer, and the sustained.

"He is One but not by being the first in counting; is Creator but not through movement or labour; is Hearer but not by means of any physical organ; is Looker but not by a stretching of eyelids; is Witness but not by nearness; is Distant but not by measurement of distance; is Manifest but not by seeing and is Hidden but not through a rarefied (body).

"He is Distinct from things because of their subjugation to Him and their turning to Him.

"He who describes Him puts limits on Him, he who puts limits on Him counts Him, and he who counts Him rejects His eternity."[18]

The author says: The beginning of this sermon indicates that all attributes and ideas found in transient creation, are limited affairs; they cannot take place until and unless there is a Limiter to fix their limits, a Maker to make them and a Sustainer to sustain them, and that Limiter, Maker and Sustainer is Allāh. Obviously, limit is of His making, and as such it has come into being when He has made it; so it cannot cover its Maker. Far sublime is His Glory from these limits.

As such, whatever attributes are ascribed to Him are not subject to any limit – although our words are incapable of describing this idea properly. Allāh, therefore, is One but not in the sense of number, because number and count leads to limitation. In the same way should be interpreted the further descriptions of His creation, His hearing, His seeing, His presence and so on.

It sprouts from it that His being distant from His creation does not mean separation and isolation. Far High is He from attachment and separation, incarnation and isolation. Rather it means that He subdues the creation and controls it, while the creatures are subjugated to Him and return to Him.

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[18] *Nahju 'l-balaghah*, Sermon 152. *Azal* (ازل) means eternity (without beginning), while *abad* (ابد) denote eternity (without end). Unfortunately, there are no words in English to express this difference in meaning, and one is constrained to use 'eternity' in both places. However, in the above sentence it denotes eternity without beginning. (*tr*.)

The clauses: "He who describes Him puts limits on Him, and he who puts limits on Him counts Him, and he who counts Him rejects His eternity", prove that affirmation of numerical unity entails rejection of His eternity. Eternity in its essence means that Allãh is not finite in His person and attributes, nor is He limited in any way. When we think of Him with regard to His being unprecedented by any former thing, it is His eternity without beginning; and when we regard Him as being not followed by any later thing, it is His eternity without end; and when one is regarded eternal on both sides, it is perpetuity.

Some scholars think that Allãh's eternity without beginning means that He precedes the created things, which He has created, and there had passed untold time before it when there was no news of any creation or its trace. [In other words, His precedence is seen within the framework of time.] But it is a most repulsive mistake. What is time? It is but the amount of the movement of moving things. How can such a thing join Allãh in His eternity?

ʻAlī (a.s.) again says:

"All praise be to Allãh, Creator of the people, Who has spread the earth, has made streams to flow and vegetation to grow on high lands. His primality has no beginning, nor has His eternity any end. He is the First and from ever, and the everlasting without limit. Foreheads bow before Him and lips declare His Oneness. He determined the limits of things at the time of His creating them, keeping Himself away from any likeness.

"Imagination cannot surmise Him with limits and movements, limbs or senses. It cannot be said about Him: When? and no time duration can be attributed to Him by saying: till. He is Manifest, but it cannot be said: from what. He is Hidden but it cannot be said: in what. He is not a body that can die, nor is He veiled so as to be enclosed within. He is not near to things by way of touch, nor is He remote from them by way of separation.

"The gazing of people's eyes is not hidden from Him, nor the repetition of words, nor the glimpse of hillocks, nor the tread of a foot-step in the dark night or in the deep gloom, where the shining moon casts its light and the effulgent sun comes in its wake, through its setting and appearing again and again with the rotation of time and periods, by the approach of the advancing night or the passing away of the running day.

"He precedes every extremity and limit, and every counting and number. He is far above what those whose regard is limited attribute to

Him, such as the qualities of measure, having extremities, living in houses, and dwelling in abodes, because limits are meant for creation and are attributable only to other than Allãh.

"He did not create things from eternal matter, nor after ever-existing examples. But He created whatever He created and then He fixed limits thereto, and He shaped whatever He shaped and gave the best shape thereto."[19]

Again he (a.s.) says:

"He who assigns to Him (different) conditions does not believe in His oneness, nor does he who likens Him (to something) grasp His reality, He who illustrates Him does not signify Him. He who points at Him and imagines Him does not mean Him. Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of other tings is the effect (of a cause). He works, but not with the help of instruments. He fixes measures, but not with the activity of thinking. He is rich, but not by acquisition.

"Times do not keep company with Him, and implements do not help Him. His being precedes times. His existence precedes non-existence, and His eternity precedes beginning. By His creating the sense it is known that He has no senses. By His creating contrariness in various matters it is known that He has no contrary; and by His creating simi-larity between things it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness that of gloom, dryness that of moisture, and heat that of cold. He produces affection among inimical things, fuses together diverse things, brings near remote things, and separates things, which are joined together.

"He is not confined by limits, nor counted by numbers. Material parts can surround things of their own kind, and organs can point out things similar to themselves. The word, 'since', disproves their eternity; the word, *qad* (قَدْ) [that denotes nearness of time of occurrence], disproves their being from ever; and the word *lawlã* (لَوْلا = if it were not) keeps them remote from perfection.

"Through them the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence; and through them He is guarded from the sight of the eyes. Stillness and motion do not occur in Him: How can that thing occur in Him, which He Himself has made to occur? And how can a thing revert to Him, which He first created? And how can a thing appear in Him, which He first

[19] *Nahju 'l-balãghah*, part of Sermon 163. (*tr.*)

brought to appearance? Had it not been so, His Self would have become subject to diversity, His Being would have become divisible (into parts), and His reality would have been prevented from being deemed Eternal. If there was a front to Him, there would have been a rear also for Him, and He would have needed completion when shortage befell Him. In that case signs of the created would appear in Him, and He would become a sign (leading to other objects) instead of signs leading to Him."[20]

The Author says: The first parts aim at showing that Allãh cannot admit limitation. We have briefly explained it earlier.

"He is not confined by limits, nor counted by numbers": It gives the sum total of the preceding paragraphs.

"Material parts can surround things of their own kind, and organs can point out things similar to themselves": It further elaborates immedi-ately preceding result. The preceding clauses showed that the limits encompassing the created things are the handiwork of the Creator, and have occurred after Him as an action occurs after its doer. Obviously, such a thing cannot encompass the doer. But these clauses under discussion look at the same aspect from another angle. Quantification and limitation, which are affected by these organs and material parts, take place within the framework of the given species. For example, gram is a unit of weight, and it is used in weighing loads, not colours or sounds; time which is amount of motion is used for gauging move-ments; a man's social prestige and weight is measured by comparing him to that of another. In short, each of these limits gives its object a frame of its own kind. Now, every transient attribute, whatever it may be, is based on a measure and limit, and adheres to a term and end; this being the case, how can its limited meaning be applied to Allãh Who is eternal, without beginning and without end, remaining for ever?

This is what the Imãm (a.s.) means, and that is why it is fol-lowed by the clauses: "The word, 'since', disproves their eternity; the word, *qad* (that denotes nearness of time of occurance), disproves their being from ever; and the word, *lawlã* (= if it were not) keeps them remote from perfection." The words, since and *qad*, both indicate new occurrence in time; obviously their objects cannot be described as being eternal or without beginning. Likewise, the word, *lawlã*, points to shortcoming and defect, which has kept it far from perfection.

"Through them the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence;

[20] *Nahju 'l-balãgha*, part of Sermonn 186. (*tr.*)

and through them He is guarded from the sight of the eyes": 'Through them' i.e. through these things. Meaning: The things are the signs of Allāh, the Creator; and signs show only that whose signs they are. They are like mirrors that show only His power and knowledge; through them He has shown Himself to intelligence; and also through them He prevents the eyes to see Him. The only way to see Him is through these signs – and these are limited and can cover only those things, which are limited like them. How can they encompass the Lord who encompasses everything?

For the same reason, eyes cannot see Him. Eyes are delicately made organs, which have their own limitations and can comprehend only those things, which are similarly limited. And far be it from the Glory of the Lord to be subject of limitation!

"Stillness and motion do not occur in Him . . .": It reiterates the forgoing theme in a different way. These actions and occurrences, which are ultimately a combination of stillness and motion, are not applicable to Him; they do not return to Him, nor do they occur in Him. They are merely the effects of His influence on a thing. And man cannot influ-ence himself, except through a sort of analysis that would divide his person somehow, like a man hitting his hand on his head, or a physician treating himself through his medicine, etc. This looks Ok because of variation of aspects or imaginary separation of limbs. Otherwise it would have been impossible. For example, eye does not see itself, and fire does not burn itself; similarly no active agent shows its action except in other than itself, (save where compounding or analysis is entailed). This is the connotation of the Imām's words: "Had it not been so, His Self would have become subject to diversity, His Being would have become divisible (into parts), and His reality would have been prevented from being deemed Eternal."

"In that case signs of the created would appear in Him, and He would become a sign (leading to other objects) instead of signs leading to Him": If He were subject to limits and dimension, He would be afflicted with shortage and defect, in need of somethings to remove that shortfall. But defect and shortage are signs of 'made' objects, and are proofs of transience; and in that case He would carry in Himself signs of being created; Glorified and High be He from such aspects! Such an idea would place Him side by side with other made things, which through their defects, limitations and transience, point to an Eternal Being Who is free from all defects and limitations – and He is Allāh, Whom hands of limitation and dimension cannot reach.

The Imām (a.s.) has shown here that only a transient and made

thing leads to its Eternal Maker. In other contexts, the same Imãm as well as all other Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) have asserted that Allãh is known by Himself while other things are known through Him; that He is the Guide to His Own Self as well as to His created things. Apparently, these two stands seem contrary to each other. But it is not so, because this knowledge is different from that, and this guidance is dissimilar to that. I hope that Allãh will help me to explain it fully in a related discourse in some later study – God Willing!

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates through his chain from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said, "While the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) was delivering a sermon on the pulpit of Kūfah, a man named Dhiʻlib stood up – and he had a fluent tongue, eloquent speech and a brave heart – and said, 'O Leader of the Faithful! Have you seen your Lord?' He said, 'Woe unto thee, O Dhiʻlib! I am not the one to worship Whom I have not seen.' (Dhiʻlib) said, 'O Leader of the Faithful! How did you see Him?' He said, 'O Dhiʻlib! Eyes have not seen Him through the eye-sight; but hearts perceive Him through the realities of belief. Woe unto thee, O Dhiʻlib! Verily my Lord is the most kind,[21] and He is not described in terms of kindness; the most exalted, but is not described in terms of exaltedness; the greatest, but not described in terms of greatness; the most grand, but not described in terms of thickness. He is before every thing, it is not said that anything is before Him; He is after everything, it is not said that for Him there is an after. He wished (creation of) thing but not through endeavour; He is successful, not through treachery. He is in the things, but not intermingled with them, or separate from them. He is Manifest but not in physical sense, is Evident but not through sight-ing with eyes. He is separate but not because of distance, is near but not by proximity. He is delicate, but not through embodiment, existing, not after non-existence. He is the Doer, but not under compulsion, the Ordainer, but not with movement, the Preceptor, not with any worry; He is the Hearer, not with an organ, the Seer, not with a body part. Places do not encompass Him, and times do not accompany Him and attributes do not limit Him. His Being preceded times, and His exist-ence (preceded) non-existence, and His eternity (preceded) the begin-ning. By His creating the senses it was known that He has no senses, and by His making the substances it was recognized that He has no substance; and by His creating the contraries in

[21] Its literal translation will be, "kind of the kindness"; the same is the case with the following three clauses. (*tr*.)

various matters it is known that He has no contrary, and by the similarity between things it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light contrary of darkness, dryness that of moisture, and cold that of heat. He produces affinity between inimical things (and) separates things, which are joined together. (These things) by their separation lead to their separator, and by their joining point to their joiner; and this is the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *And of every thing We have created pairs that you may be mindful* [51:49]. In this way He separated them between before and after, in order that it may be known that for Him there is no before or after; they prove through their natures that their Creator has no nature; their being bound by time makes it known that He Who thus binds them is not bound by time. He veils some of them from others, that it may be understood that there is no veil between Him and His creation – except the creation itself. He was the Sustainer when there was no sustained, the God when there was no worshipper, the Knower when there was no known, and the Hearer when there was nothing to be heard. (Then he recited saying:)

"'*And my Master was always well-known by praise,*
And my Master was always described for magnaminity;
And He was when there was no light to illuminate,
Nor was darkness keeping to horizons;
So our Master is unlike the whole creation,
And unlike all that could be imagined by minds.'"[22]

The author says: As you see, the speech of the Imām (a.s.) explains the theme of the uniqueness of Allāh's person in all its manifestations; and that His Person is neither finite nor limited. No self-stands opposite His Self, otherwise it would have threatened Him through limitation and subdued Him through determination. He encompasses everything, and controls every affair. No attribute is ascribed to Him, which is separate from His person; otherwise it would negate His eternity and go against His limitlessness.

His attribute of perfection is not bound with any limit, which would push away other thing or be pushed away by it. For example, our knowledge is other than our power because both are separate from each other in meaning as well as in external existence; but so far as Allāh's person is concerned, the two attributes are not separate from one another; this attribute is exactly that, and is not distinguishable from His many

[22] aṣ-Ṣadūq, *at-Tawḥīd*; some pieces of this sermon are found also in *Nahju 'l-balāghah*, Sermons 179 and 186. (*tr*.)

other attributes; His one name denotes all His beauty-ful names.

Going one step further, we find another meaning – finer and deeper than above: These meanings and ideas are like weights and measures for intelligence. The intelligence uses them to weigh and measure external existence, the actual being. As such these meanings and ideas are subject to limits, and boundaries. They cannot be devoid of this aspect, even if we join them together and even if they were to support one another; they cannot weigh or measure except the things, which are subject to limits and boundaries like them. Now, if we sup-pose something unlimited, and then try to guage it with these limited weights and measures, we cannot get except a limited thing and it will not be the One Who is above limits and boundaries; and the more we try to get Him in this way, the higher and remoter He will go.

Let us look at the meaning of knowledge: It is a meaning we have taken from an attribute which is limited in existence and which we deem as perfection for the knower. This theme is bounded in such a way that it cannot accommodate power and life, for example. Sometimes we may use this word for Allãh and try to overcome its limitedness by adding to it some phrases, e.g. "knowledge unlike other knowledge"; now it would release it from some limitations, yet it cannot go beyond its basic meaning and will not cover other attributes of perfection. (Every meaning has a limit that it cannot go beyond.) Just adding one theme to another does not lead to negation of the particular theme, as it is clear.

This leaves man bewildered when he tries to describe Allãh according to his own wisdom and understanding. It is this theme that is inferred from his clause, "and attributes do not limit Him", and from another clause in the first sermon quoted earlier, "and the perfection of adhering to Him purely is to deny Him attributes", and again in the same sermon [not quoted here]: "He for Whose description no limit has been laid down, and no eulogy exists". Here you see that he (a.s.) asserts attribute at the same time when he negates it or negates its limit; and it is understood that its assertion cannot be free from limit; thus negating its limit is tantamount to rejecting it after admitting it. It means that asserting for Him an attribute of perfection does not negate other attributes. In this way His attributes combine with one another and then become one with His Self and there is no limit; then it does not negate what is beyond these attribute (that which we do not under-stand that we may narrate, nor do we perceive that could be attached to Him). Understand it.

Had it not been that meanings fall down when they reach near His

Majesty and Greatness (in the sense described above), it would have been possible for the reason to encompass Him with all the general and vague ideas which surround Him, like His description that He is a person not like persons, He has knowledge unlike knowledges, power not like others' power, and life different from all types of life. This manner of discription does not leave anything without counting and encompassing it in general. The question is: Is it possible for any- thing to encompass Him? Or is it that one cannot comprehend Him in detail, but there is no difficulty in encompassing Him in a general way? But Allãh has said: . . . *while they do not comprehend Him in knowledge* (20:110); . . . *now surely He encompasses all things*, (41:54). So, nothing encompasses Allãh from any direction in any manner of encompassing; and His Glorified Self does not accept any detail or generality, so that there could be one verdict for His detail and another for His generality. Understand it.

ʻAlī (a.s.) says in another sermon:

"His proof is His signs, and His existence is His affirmation; and His cognition is His Oneness, and His Oneness is to distinguish Him from His creation; and the verdict of distinction is the separation of attribute, not separation of isolation. Verily He is the Sustainer (and) Creator, not sustained (or) created; anything imagined, He is opposite to it. [Thereafter he, a.s. said]: He is not a god who is recognized by his self; He guides the proof to lead to Him, and leads the cognition to Himself."[23]

The author says: Meditation on foregoing statement makes it clear that this sermon aims at showing that the divine unity is an one-ness unrelated to number. See how clearly he (a.s.) says that His cognition is His oneness; in other words, affirmation of His existence is exactly the affirmation of His oneness. Had this oneness been of number, it would have been separate from His Self, and the Self, *per se*, would not have sufficed for oneness except through an external factor separate from affirmation of the Self.

It is an amazing logic and a most profound description of the divine unity; if we were to go into its proper explanation, it would require a deep and extensive discourse beyond the scope of this book. A finest point included therein is his clause: "His existence is His affirmation"; the Imãm (a.s.) means that His proof is His actual existence, i.e. mind does not grasp Him and reason does not encompass Him.

[23] aṭ-Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijãj*. (*Author's Note*)

"anything imagined, He is opposite to it": The Imãm (a.s.) does not mean that He is opposite the imagined form, because everything found outside imagination shares this quality. The actual meaning is that Allãh is opposite to what the mind imagines about Him, whatever it may be; as such imagined form cannot encompass Him. However, you should not forget that He is much beyond even this imagination, i.e. the imagination that He is opposite to every imagination.

"He is not a god who is recognized by his self": Allãh's Majesty is so great that cognition cannot reach Him and He subdues all under-standing and perception. Everyone whom we recognize by his own self, his self is other than ours and his cognition is likewise separate from ours, and that is how our cognition is attached to him. But Allãh encompasses and supervises our cognition and us. There is no safety-hold to which our cognition or we might cling to avoid His all-encom-passing power and to adhere to it in isolation.

The Imãm (a.s.) has explained this stage in his words: "He guides the proof to lead to Him, and leads the cognition to Himself." It means that Allãh is the Guide Who leads the proof to guide to Him, and leads the cognition to have a sort of relation to Him; it is because He encom-passes everything and has power and authority over everything. That being the case, how can anything find a way to His Self or encompass Him, while Allãh encompasses it and controls its guidance to Himself?

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates from ʻUmar ibn ʻAlī from ʻAlī (a.s.) that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has said, 'The Unity (of God), its exterior is in its interior, and its interior is in its exterior; its exterior is attributed (which) is not seen and its interior is existant (which) is not hidden. He is saught in every place while no place is devoid of Him even for one moment; (He is) present, without any limit, absent (but) not lost.'" (*Maʻãni 'l-akhbãr*)

The author says: This speech too aims at describing Allãh's numberless oneness; it is based on the fact that Allãh is not limited by any limit. This limitlessness shows that His unity's exterior is not separ-ate from its interior, and *vice versa*. It is because exterior and interior become separated and isolated from one another when there is a limit and boundary between them, but when that boundary is removed, both mingle together and become one.

Likewise, the attributed exterior is encompassed and the extant interior is hidden and veiled when they are fettered with a limit, and

cannot trespass that boundary. Likewise, a thing present is limited and its presence is perceived by those who are near it, while the absent is unperceived and lost because of its limitedness. Otherwise, the present with all its being would not have gathered near those who are in its proximity, and the absent would not have been hidden from those who are far away. And it is clear.

A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

The belief that there is a Creator for the universe, and that He is One, is among the earliest ideas prevalent among the thinkers of this species, to which it is guided by its natural instincts. If we ponder deeply on even the idol worship, which is based on polytheism, we shall find that it is founded on the Oneness of the Creator, and the idols are taken merely as interceders near Him (*We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to Allãh* [39:3]), although with passage of time it deviated from its original path, and finally they treated those idols as independent dieties besides Allãh.

The human nature, which calls to the Unity of God, was inviting human beings to the One God Who is not bound with any limit in His Greatness and Majesty, neither in Person nor in attribute (as we have explained earlier with the help of the Mighty-Book); yet man in his life is intimately familiar with units in numbers; and the people of relig-ion were entangled with idol-worshippers and dualists, etc. to refute plurality of gods, on the other hand. Both these factors stamped the idea of oneness of number on the minds, so much so that the above-mentioned natural dictate was almost forgotten.

That was the reason that the ancient philosophers of Egypt, Greece, Alexanderia, as well as those who came after them, affirm divine unity in terms of oneness in number; even such a genius as Avicenna has clearly affirmed it in his *Kitãbu 'sh-Shifã'*. And the same path was trodden by later ones upto about the year 1000 of *hijrah*.

As for the scholars of scholastic theology, their arguments too for the Unity do not prove other than the oneness in number, although they have based their lalk on the Qur'ãnic general declarations. So, this is what is understood from the scholars' writings on this subject.

In fact, what the Qur'ãn has explained concerning the meaning of the divine unity was the first and the foremost step for teaching this

reality of cognition. Unfortunately, the Companions, their disciples, and their pupils who dealt with the Qur'ãnic explanation and who pursued the knowledge of the Book, left this noble topic in abeyance. Look into the collections of traditions, and the book of exegesis narrated on their authority; you will not find in all that multitude any trace of this reality – neither with an explanatory description nor in a logical manner.

We did not find in all our searching anything which could un-cover its veil, except what has come into the speeches of the Imãm 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib (a.s.) exclusively. It is his speech that has opened its door and raised its curtain, showing the straightest path and the clearest way of proofs. Thereafter we come straight to the Muslim philosophers who appeared after the year one thousand of *hijrah*, and they have clearly said that they have learned it from the Imãm (a.s.)'s speeches.

That is the reason that we had no alternative to quoting only from his pure speeches in the preceding section of Traditions, because nowhere else can we find description of this topic and its explanation with logical arguments – May Allãh's peace be on him.

Also because of the same reason, we have not included an independent philosophical discussion of this subject. The fact is that the proofs presented in their books are composed of the same premises, which have been explained in the Imãm's speeches; and all are based on the theme of the oneness of His Person.[24]

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[24] If one looks with critical eyes and meditates deeply, one cannot fail to be astonished by the blunder committed by some scholars who have claimed that these Sermons of 'Alī (a.s.), which are included in *Nahju 'l-balãghah*, are spurious and not genuine; some have said that they were forged by ash-Sharīf ar-Raḍī (may Allãh have mercy on him!). Comments on some aspects of this mistake have been given somewhere earlier.

Would that I knew, how could forgery and unauthorized insertion cover such a complicated and fine academic subject which had for long centuries remained beyond the grasp of scholars even when the Imãm (a.s.) had opened its door and raised its curtain – until the developing intellect had trodden on this path for one thousand years; and which had remained beyond the understanding of the Companions and their disciples.

The claim of these proponents of forgery loudly speaks that they had thought that the Qur'ãnic realities and the high academic principles were only some banal and vulgar ideas, and they are only distinguished by literary language and erudite expression. (*Author's Note*)


يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟
لَا تُحَرِّمُوا۟ طَيِّبَٰتِ مَآ أَحَلَّ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَكُلُوا۟ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ حَلَٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۚ
وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنتُم بِهِۦ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ
بِٱللَّغْوِ فِىٓ أَيْمَٰنِكُمْ وَلَٰكِن يُؤَاخِذُكُم بِمَا عَقَّدتُّمُ ٱلْأَيْمَٰنَ ۖ
فَكَفَّٰرَتُهُۥٓ إِطْعَامُ عَشَرَةِ مَسَٰكِينَ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعِمُونَ
أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ ۖ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ
ثَلَٰثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ كَفَّٰرَةُ أَيْمَٰنِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ ۚ وَٱحْفَظُوٓا۟
أَيْمَٰنَكُمْ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) *the good thing which Allãh has made lawful for you and do not exceed the limits; surely Allãh does not love those who exceed the limits* (87). *And eat of the lawful and good* (things) *that Allãh has given you, and fear Allãh in Whom you believe* (88). *Allãh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation is the feeding of*

ten poor men out of the average (food) *you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck; but whosoever cannot find* (means) *then fasting for three days; this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear. And guard your oaths. Thus does Allãh make clear to you His signs, that you may be grateful* (89).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These three verses together with the following ones [upto the verse 108] give details of various commandments related to branches of religion. This whole group is inserted between the verses describing the story of the Messiah (a.s.) and the Christians. These verses consist of various groups laying down diverse orders, each being independent and complete in its theme. As such, it is difficult to decide whether a given group was revealed separately or had accompanied other verses, because context supports neither alternative. As for the traditions showing reasons of revelation, important ones shall be quoted under Traditions.

The above comment is applicable to these three verses too, because the third one is independent in its theme, and the first one too is independent; although they are not devoid of a sort of affinity, because one type of vain oath may be related to forbidding oneself the good things which have been made lawful by Allãh. Perhaps this was the reason why some exegetes have narrated that all verses were revealed about vain oaths.

This applies to the first verse *vis-à-vis* the third. As for the second, it in a way completes the first verse, as evidenced by some factors in it; that is, the command to: *fear Allãh in Whom you believe*, and the conjunction: *and* at its beginning, as well as the order to "eat of the lawful things," forbidding which has been prohibited in the first one. In this way the two verses are harmonized, give the same order and have the same context.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Do not forbid*** **(yourselves)** ***the good things which Allãh has made lawful for you*****:** ar-Rãghib says in *al-Mufradãt:* "*al-Ḥarãm* (**اَلْحَرَام**) denotes the forbidden thing, be it by divine subjugation or forcible obstruction; whether this prohibition is by

reason or *sharī'ah* or by one whose orders are followed."

Again he says: "*al-Ḥill* (اَلْحِلّ) basically means to untie a knot; the verse: *and loose the knot from my tongue* [20:27], is used in this meaning; and *ḥalaltu* (حَلَلْتُ) means: 'I descended'; this is based on the fact that one unties one's luggage on dismounting, then it was used for dismounting and disembarkation in general, and in this sense they say: 'He disembarked'; someone made him disembark, i.e., hosted him. Allāh says: *or it will alight close by their abodes* [13:31]; *and made their people to alight into the abode of perdition* [14:28]. When time to repay a loan comes, they say, the loan has arrived; *al-ḥillah* (اَلْحِلَّة) is used for the people who alight; the same is the meaning of *ḥayy ḥallāl* (حَيّ حَلاَّل); *al-maḥillah* (اَلْمَحِلَّة) is the place of disembarking; *ḥalla ḥillan* (حَلّ حِلاً) means it is lawful – this metaphorical expression is derived from 'untying the knot'. Allāh says: *And eat of the lawful and good* (things) *that Allāh has given you;* also He says: *This is lawful and this is unlawful* [16:116]."

Apparently the contraposition between *ḥill* (lawfulness) and *ḥurmah* (unlawfulness), and opposition between *ḥill* (area beyond a sanctuary) and *ḥaram* (sanctuary) or *iḥrām* (the robe worn when entering *ḥaram*) is based on imaginary tying of knot when forbidding something, i.e. unlawfulness; then it (*ḥurmah*) is put opposite of *ḥill* (which is metaphorically used for lawfulness). The two words, *ḥill,* and *ḥurmah* were generally used for lawfulness and unlawfulness, respectively, even before Islam; it is not that *sharī'ah* or its followers have coined them.

The verse: "O you who believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you . . ." prohibits to the believers forbidding themselves what Allāh has made lawful for them. This forbidding what has been made lawful by Allāh can be done either by laying down a legislation contrary to divine legislation, or by forbidding others or abstention, i.e. one leaves out a lawful thing by abstaining from it or prohibiting it to oneself or others. All this behaviour is tantamount to forbidding what Allāh has made lawful, and it is equal to fighting Allāh in His Power; this trangression against Him is contrary to the belief in Allāh and in His communication. That is why the verse begins with the phrase: "O you who believe!" it implies that you are believers in Allāh and have submitted to His commandments; therefore you should not forbid to yourself what Allāh has made law-ful. This explanation is further supported by the end clause of the next verse: *and fear Allāh in Whom you believe.*

"the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you": The

addition of the word, "good", – although the sentence would be com-plete even without it – aims at completing the cause of prohibition: If the believers forbid themselves the things which Allãh has made lawful for them, then it is not only that they commit transgression against Allãh in His authority and defy the demands of their belief in, and submission to, Allãh, but also go against the law of nature, which takes these law-ful things as good without reservation. Allãh has pointed to it where He says about His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the *sharī'ah* which he has brought: *Those who follow the Messenger Prophet, the* ummī*, whom they find written down with them in the Tawrãt and the Injīl,* (who) *enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them; so* (as for) *those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful* (7:157).

The above description supports the following:

First: Forbidding the good things that Allãh has made lawful means abstaining, and making others desist, from lawful things.

Second: Lawful, as opposite of unlawful, includes the permissible and the commendable, even the obligatory things.

Third: Addition of "the good things" to that "which Allãh has made lawful for you" aims at further elaboration of the same idea.

Fourth: Exceeding the limits (in "do not exceed the limits") means transgression against Allãh in His legislative authority; or over-step-ping the limits laid down by Allãh by revolting against His obedience, refusing to submit to Him, and forbidding what He has made lawful. As Allãh says, *inter alia*, describing the laws of divorce: *These are the limits of Allãh, so do not exceed them, and whoever exceeds the limits of Allãh then these it is that are the unjust* (2:229). Likewise He says at the end of the verses of inheritance: *These are Allãh's limits; and whoever obeys Allãh and His Messenger, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them; and this is the great achievement. And whoever disobeys Allãh and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He will cause him to enter Fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement* (4:13-14).

As you see, the verses count uprightness and adherence to the *sharī'ah* in obedience to Allãh and His Messenger as praiseworthy; and stepping out of obedience and submission to Him, and trans-gression and exceeding the limits of Allãh as condemnable act that makes one liable to

chastisement.

In short, the verse prohibits one from forbidding oneself what Allāh has made lawful, by keeping away from it and avoiding it, because it goes contrary to the belief in Allāh and His signs. Also it opposes the fact of their being lawful and good, and of their being free of impurity; otherwise, why should one abstain from them? It is nothing but exceeding the limits, and Allāh does not love those who exceed the limits.

QUR'ĀN: ***and do not exceed the limits; surely Allāh does not love those who exceed the limits*****:** You have seen and the context appar-ently shows that exceeding the limits connotes the self-imposed abstain-ing of the preceding sentence. As such the prohibition: "do not exceed the limits," aims at emphasizing the one in: *do not forbid* (yourselves).

Some people have said: Exceeding the limits means over-step-ping the line of moderation regarding the lawful things, by throwing oneself down to enjoying them without restraint, contrary to discard-ing them abstemiously. So, the verse would mean: Do not forbid your-selves the good and tasteful things that Allāh has made lawful for you. Do not intentionally avoid enjoying them abstemiously believing that it would bring you nearer to Allāh. And do not exceed the limits by transgressing the line of moderation, going to extravagance and excess which would be harmful for your bodies or souls.

Or, exceeding the limits may mean overstepping the good and lawful things, indulging in bad and unlawful things. Then the connota-tion will be as follows: Do not avoid lawful thing and do not use un-lawful things. In other words, do not forbid yourselves what Allāh has made lawful for you and do not indulge in what Allāh has forbidden you.

Although these two meanings are correct in themselves and the Qur'ān clearly supports both themes, but neither fits the verse under discussion as its context and that of the following verse shows. Obvi-ously, not every correct theme can be applied to every word without looking at its context and position.

QUR'ĀN: ***And eat of the lawful and good*** **(things)** ***that Allāh has given you, and fear Allāh in Whom you believe*****:** The conjunction, "And", joins the imperative: "eat", with the prohibition: *do not forbid*. As such, this verse apparently repeats and emphasizes the connotation of the preceding one. This is further supported by its opening phrase, "the lawful and good (things)" which stands parallel to the phrase in the preceding verse: *the*

good things which Allãh has made lawful for you, and the preceding verse's clause: *O you who believe!* as explained earlier.

Accordingly, the word: 'eat', coming after the prohibition: *do not forbid*, implies permission. Allowing one to eat in particular after the overall prohibition of forbidding is merely a verbal particulariza-tion, and the word: 'eat', implies unrestricted use of good bounties bestowed by Allãh. Also, the word may mean only partaking of food or all aspects of usufruct and disposal. It has been repeatedly described that use of the word, eating, for general management and disposal is very common and widespread in literature.

Alternatively, the word 'eat' could have possibly been used here in its literal sense. Thus the two verses were revealed when some believers had forbidden themselves the good and tastey food, and the verses were sent down to stop them from it. The first verse is compre-hensive and includes eating as well as other modes of management, and it covers things which are lawful to eat and lawful to use otherwise.

The clause: "that Allãh has given you", is object of the verb: 'eat'; and the words: "the lawful and good (things)", are its circum-stantial phrases – in this way, both verses do conform to each other.

Some others have said that, the words: "the lawful and good (things)", are the object of the verb: 'eat'; and the clause: "that Allãh has given you", is attached to that verb; alternatively this clause might be a circumstatial phrase connected with the words: "the lawful and good (things)", and has preceded the connecting clause (*the lawful* . . .) because it is a common noun; as a second alternative, the words: "the lawful and good (things)", might be adjectives to an omitted verbal noun, sustenance: And eat of the lawful and good sustenance . . . There may also be some other interpretations.

Some people believe that sustenance includes lawful and unlaw-ful both, and have argued for it by the adjective: "lawful", attached to it here.

Reply: The "lawful and good" is not a circumspectional condition for keeping out unlawful and bad sustenance; it is rather an explanatory condition and has the same connotation as the word explained – in this case, sustenance. The reason why it has been added here is that its being lawful and good does not leave any excuse for anyone for avoiding and keeping aloof from it, as explained earlier. We have elaborated the mean-ing of sustenance under the verse 27 of the chapter of "The House of ‘Imrãn", in

the third volume of this book.[25]

QUR'ĀN: ***Allāh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oath, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths*****:** *al-Laghw* (اَللَّغْو = inconsequential action); *al-aymān* (اَلأَيْمَان) is plural of *al-yamīn* (اَلْيَمِيْن = vow, oath). ar-Rāghib says in *al-Mufradāt*: "*al-Yamīn* in context of oath is an allusion to the [right] hand, keeping in view what the parties of treaty or agreement do [that they shake their right hands at the conclusion of the agreement]. Allāh says: *Or have you received from Us an agreement confirmed by an oath extending to the Day of Resurrection . . .* [68:39]; *And they swear by Allāh with the strongest of their oaths, . . .* [6:109]; *Allāh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, . . .* [5:89]". *at-Ta'qīd* (اَلتَّعْقِيْد) puts emphasis on *al-'aqd* (اَلْعَقْدُ = to tie); it is also recited without intensified pronunciation; "in your oath" is related to "does not call you to account", or to "what is vain", and this is nearer.

The clause, "what is vain in your oath", has been placed face to face with, "the making of deliberate oaths"; it shows that the vain oath is the one regarding which the maker of oath is not serious, his heart is not in it, he merely uses the formula of oath by force of habit, as they generally say – and particularly in trade dealings – 'No, by Allāh!' 'Certainly by Allāh!' It is a far cry from serious deliberation when one declares on oath that: 'By Allāh! I'll most certainly do it', or 'By Allāh! I'll most certainly not do it'.

This is what appears from the verse. But the *sharī'ah* also counts it as vain oaths if someone says: "By Allāh! I'll do this unlaw-ful deed"; or, "By Allāh! I'll not do that obligatory deed"; it is because the Supreme Legislator has counted it as vain oath when it is used for something that has no preference in *sharī'ah*. This rule is added to the above Qur'ānic one by the *sunnah*; and it is not necessary that the Qur'ān should speak about everything that is affirmed by the *sunnah* particularly.

As for the clause: "but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths," it includes only that oath which is endorsed by the *sharī'ah*, as it says at the end: *And guard your oaths*. Inevitably it refers to such oaths, and obviously the order to guard your oaths can-not point to that oath which Allāh has declared vain. In short, a vain oath is that one which is not taken with deliberation; and the one made seriously is

[25] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.5, pp.206-12. (*tr*.)

endorsed by *sharī'ah*.

QUR'ÃN: ***so its expiation is the feeding of ten poor men . . . or the freeing of a neck*:** *al-Kufr* (اَلْكُفْر = to cover, to hide); *al-kaffãrah* (اَلْكَفَّارَة = an action which somehow hides or covers the evil of disobedience). Allãh says: . . . *We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins* . . . [4:31]. ar-Rãghib says: "*al-Kaffãrah* is that which covers the sin; and from it is the *kaffãrah* (expiation) of oath."

The words: "so its expiation", have branched out from the description of oath, keeping in view some omitted but understood words; for example: Then if you break your oath, so its expiation . . . It is because the word: "expiation", points to a disobedience which demands expiation; and that disobedience cannot be the oath itself, otherwise the end section of the verse would not have said: *guard your oaths*, be-cause there is no sense in guarding an act of disobedience. Obviously, expiation is related to the breaking of oath, not the oath itself.

It also shows that the calling to account mentioned in the sentence: *but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths,* is related to the breaking of, not the making of the oath. This calling to accounts is related to oaths because it points to its breaking. The word, *its expiation*, branches from its breaking because the sentence, *He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths*, points to it. Similar explanation applies to the sentence: *this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear*, i.e. when you swear and break it.

The clauses: "the feeding of ten poor men out of the average (food) you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck", mention three items of expiation, any one of which may be chosen by the person concerned – because of the conjunction, 'or'; i.e. all three are not to be joined together.

The clause: *but whoever cannot find* (means) *then fasting for three days*, prove that the above three items are matters of choice, without looking at their sequence. Otherwise, the clause: *but whoever cannot find* . . ., would be meaningless, as in case of sequential expi-ation, it should have been, "or fasting for three days".

The verse contains many legislative details, for which reference should be made to Jurisprudence.

QUR'ÃN: ***this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear; . . .*:** As mentioned earlier, it means: when you swear and break it.

The demonstrative pronouns, *dhālika* (ذٰلِكَ = this is) and *kadhālika* (كَذٰلِكَ = thus) are of second person singular, while the pro-nouns that follow them in: "your oaths", and, *clear to you*, are second person plural. In a way, the speech turns from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to the believers. Probably, it is because the divine elaboration reaches the people through the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), as Allāh has said: . . . *and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect* (16:44).

QUR'ĀN: ***Thus does Allāh make clear to you His signs, that you may be grateful*****:** He makes clear to you, through His Prophet, His commandments, so that you may express your gratitude to Him by learning those commandments and acting on them.

TRADITIONS

al-Qummī narrates under the verse: *O you who believe! Do not forbid* (yourselves) *the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you*. Narrated to me my father, from Ibn Abī ʻUmayr, from some of his men, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), that he said, "This verse was revealed about the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.), Bilāl and ʻUthmān ibn Maẓʻūn. As for the Leader of the faithful (a.s.), he had sworn that he would never sleep at night; and as for Bilāl, he had sworn that he would never eat during day-time [i.e. would always keep fast]; and as for ʻUthmān ibn Maẓʻūn, he had sworn that he would never indulge in sexual relation.

"Then ʻUthmān's wife came to ʻĀishah – and she was a beauti-ful woman. ʻĀishah said to her, 'Why do I see you without make-up?' She said, 'For whom should I make myself up? By Allāh! My husband has not come near me since a long time, because he has become a monastic, wears course clothes, and has become an ascetic.'

"When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), entered (the house) ʻĀishah informed him of it. So, he came out, and call was given for congregational prayer. People assembled and (the Prophet, s.a.w.a.) ascended the pulpit. He thanked Allāh and praised Him; then said, 'What has happened to (some) people that they have forbidden them-selves good things? Well, surely I sleep at night, and establish sexual relation and eat during day-time; so whoever dislikes my *sunnah*, he is not from me.'

"Then people stood up and said, 'But O Messenger of Allãh! We have sworn to it. Then Allãh revealed to him: *Allãh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation is . . . this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear*." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: It is not clear how the sentences: *Allãh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths*, could refer to their oaths; and some explanation of it has been given earlier. aṭ-Ṭabrisī has narrated the story in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) and that narrative does not have the last paragraph; so meditate over it.

Imãm al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (peace be on both) said to Mu'ãwiyah and his companions *inter alia*, in a *ḥadīth*:

"I adjure you by Allãh, do you know that 'Alī was the first among the companions of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), to forbid the desires to himself; then Allãh revealed: *O you who believe! Do not forbid* (yourselves) *the good things which Allãh has made lawful for you.* (*al-Iḥtijãj*)

[aṭ-Ṭabrisī] writes under the above-mentioned verse: The exegetes have said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), sat one day and reminded the people and described the resurrection. The people were over-whelmed and cried; and ten companions gathered in the house of 'Uthmãn ibn Maẓ'ūn al-Jumaḥī, and they were: 'Alī, Abū Bakr, 'Abdullãh ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Dharr al-Ghifãrī, Sãlim *mawlã* Abū Ḥudhayfah, 'Abdullãh ibn 'Umar, al-Miqdãd ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī, Salmãn al-Fãrisī and Mu'qil ibn Muqrin. They agreed among them-selves that they would fast in the day and stand (for worship) in the night, would not sleep on bedding; would not partake of meat or fat, nor would go near women or perfume. (They decided) to wear coarse fabrics, discard the world and roam into the earth; some of them even intended to cut off their genitals.

"This news reached the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). He went to the house of 'Uthmãn (ibn Maẓ'ūn) but did not find him there. So he said to his wife – her name was Ḥawlã' and she was a perfume vendor – 'Is it true what I have been informed about your husband and his companions?' She did not like to tell lie to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) nor did she like to speak against her husband; so she said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! If 'Uthmãn has told you so then he has told you the truth.' So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) returned. When 'Uthmãn entered (his house) she

informed him about it. So, he and his companions came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to them, 'Have not I been informed that you have agreed on such and such?' They said, 'Certainly, O Messenger of Allāh! And we did not intend except good.' The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, "I have not been ordered this. Then he said, 'Surely your souls have rights on you; so keep fast and eat, stand (at nights) and sleep. Certainly, I stand (at nights) and sleep, and keep fast and eat, and I partake of meat and fat, and I go to women; and whoever dislikes my *sunnah*, is not from me.'

"Then he gathered the people and spoke to them; and said, 'What has happened to some people that they have forbidden them-selves women, food and perfume, as well as sleep and desirable things of the world? Well, certainly I have not ordered you to become monks, because it is not in my religion to abstain from meat or women, nor (to live in) hermitages; and surely the wandering of my *ummah* is fast, and their monasticism is *jihād*. Worship Allāh and do not associate anything with Him; perform *ḥajj* and *'umrah*, establish prayer, pay *zakāt* and keep fast of Ramaḍān; and remain straight, it will remain right for you. Those who were before you fell in perdition only because of zealotry. They put heavy burdens on themselves, so Allāh intensified their load. So, these are their remnants in hermitages and monastries. Then Allāh revealed this verse.'" (*Majma'u 'l-bayān*)

The author says: It appears by referring to the traditions that this narrative is a synopsis of traditions on this topic; there are a lot of such traditions, and aṭ-Ṭabrisī has written it here after combining them together and abridging them into one tradition.

As for those numerous narrations, none of them mentions names of those companions together. The most comprehensive of them says, 'Uthmān ibn Maẓ'ūn and his companions; some others say, a group of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); still others say, some people among the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.)[26]. Likewise, the differ-ent sentences of the Prophet's talk and his detailed sermon are found scattered in various traditions. In the same way, the narratives do not say clearly that each of those companions had intended to avoid all those good things. Rather some traditions clearly show that various companions had wanted to leave out various things. al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate from 'Āishah that some companions had asked the wives of the Prophet

[26] aṭ-Ṭabrisī has named nine of them in this composite narration. Obviously, he has gleaned these names from various traditions. (*tr*.)

(s.a.w.) about his life in secret. Then some of them said: "I'll not eat meat"; some said: "I'll not go to women"; and some others said: "I'll not sleep in bedding." This news reached the Prophet (s.a.w.), so he said, "What is the matter with the people, that some of them say this and this? But as for me, I keep fast and eat, sleep and stand (in prayer), and eat meat and go to the women; so whoever dislikes my *sunnah* is not from me."

Probably, when aṭ-Ṭabrisī says that "they agreed among themselves that they would fast . . .", he does not mean that each of them had intended to do all those things; he only means that those people among themselves had decided to do one or the other of those things.

Although the traditions vary in their themes and there are weak, *mursal* and reliable ones among them, yet meditation on all of them creates a certainty that a group of the companions had decided to adopt that type of abstinence and asceticism, and ‘Alī (a.s.) and ‘Uthmān ibn Maẓ‘ūn were among them, and that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had said to them, "Whoever dislikes my *sunnah* is not from me." And Allāh knows better. You should refer to the books of exegesis which explain the Qur’ān with the help of traditions, like *at-Tafsīr* of aṭ-Ṭabarī, *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr, Fatḥu 'l-qadīr* and so on.

It has been narrated by at-Tirmidhī (who said that it was good), Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn ‘Udayy (in *al-Kāmil*), aṭ-Ṭabarānī and Ibn Marduwayh, from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said, "A man came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Whenever I eat meat I become roused and overcome by sexual desire; and I have forbidden meat to myself.' Then the verse was revealed: *O you who believe! Do not forbid* (yourselves) *the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you*." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Zayd ibn Aslam that he said, "Verily ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah had a guest from among his relatives; and he (‘Abdullāh) was near the Prophet (s.a.w.). Then he returned to his family and found that they had not given food to their guest, waiting for him (to return). So he said to his wife, 'You detained my guest because of me, this (food) is unlawful to me.' So his wife said, 'It is unlawful to me'; the guest said, 'It is unlawful to me. When (‘Abdullāh) saw this, he put his hand (in food) and said, 'Eat you in the name of Allāh.' Then he went to the Prophet (s.a.w.) and informed him. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, 'You did right.' Then Allāh revealed: *O you who*

believe! Do not forbid (yourselves) *the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you*. (*ibid.*)

The author says: Possibly, the two reasons mentioned in the last two traditions are the narrators' attempts to fit an event on the verse, and this is very common in the reasons of revelation. Also, possibly there may be several reasons for a single verse.

ʻAbdullāh ibn Sinān said, "I asked him [the Imām] about a man who said that his wife would be divorced, or his slaves would be free, if he drank any unlawful or lawful (drink). (The Imām) said, 'As for the unlawful he should not go near it, whether he swore the oath or did not swear; and as for the lawful he should not leave it, because he has no right to forbid what Allāh has made lawful, because Allāh says: *O you who believe! Do not forbid* (yourselves) *the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you*; therefore, there is nothing on him regarding his oath concerning lawful things.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from Masʻadah ibn Ṣadaqah that he heard Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) saying about the words of Allāh: *Allāh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths*: "*al-Laghw* (vain) is the word of a man, 'No, by Allāh', and 'Certainly, by Allāh', while he has no serious thought of anything." (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: al-ʻAyyāshī has narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* a similar *ḥadīth* from ʻAbdullāh ibn Sinān; and another similar one from Muḥammad ibn Muslim with one difference at the end where it says, "no serious thought on it."

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn ʻAbbās that he said, "When the verse: *O you who believe! Do not forbid* (yourselves) *the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you*, was revealed regarding those who had forbidden women and meat to themselves, they said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! What should we do with the oaths which we have made?' Then Allāh revealed: *Allāh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths.*" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This tradition resembles the end part of the first tradition, which we have quoted in the beginning. The trouble is that it does not fit the apparent meaning of the verse, because making oath for avoiding an obligatory or permissible action is not devoid of deliberate serious thought; the verse has put: *what is vain in your oaths*, opposite the clause: *making of deliberate oaths*; it shows that a vain oath is that which

is devoid of deliberation and thinking. This apparent meaning agrees with the *ḥadīth* which explains vain oath as someone's saying, 'No, by Allãh', and 'Certainly, by Allãh' without any serious thought on it. As for that oath which is nullified by the *sharī'ah*, it is, or was, made with deliberate seriousness. Therefore it is impera-tive to ascribe its nullification to the *sunnah*, not the Book.

Moreover, the context of the verse is the strongest proof that it aims independently at describing the expiation of breaking of oath, and orders to preserve its sanctity; and it is not just an aside, as that explanation would make it.

* * * * *

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِنَّمَا ٱلْخَمْرُ وَٱلْمَيْسِرُ وَٱلْأَنصَابُ وَٱلْأَزْلَٰمُ رِجْسٌ
مِّنْ عَمَلِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ فَٱجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ
ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ أَن يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةَ وَٱلْبَغْضَآءَ فِى ٱلْخَمْرِ وَٱلْمَيْسِرِ
وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَعَنِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّنتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا۟
ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَٱحْذَرُوا۟ ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّمَا عَلَىٰ
رَسُولِنَا ٱلْبَلَٰغُ ٱلْمُبِينُ ﴿٩٢﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟
ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوٓا۟ إِذَا مَا ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟
ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ ثُمَّ ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّءَامَنُوا۟ ثُمَّ ٱتَّقَوا۟ وَّأَحْسَنُوا۟ ۗ
وَٱللَّهُ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of the Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful* (90). *The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allãh and from prayer. Will you then desist?* (91). *And obey Allãh and obey*

the Messenger and be cautious; but if you turn back, then know that only a clear deliverance (of the message) *is* (incumbent) *on Our Messenger* (92). *There is no blame on those who believe and do good deeds for what they have eaten, when they fear Allãh and believe and do good deeds, then they fear Allãh and believe, then they fear Allãh and do good, and Allãh loves those who do good* (93).

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COMMENTARY

The verses are in conformity with each other in context; prob-ably they all were revealed together or at short intervals. The last verse aims at removing a possible misunderstanding, as we shall describe. All this deals with the topic of intoxicants, although one adds to it the games of chance; and the other, games of chance and sacrificing to set up stones and dividing by arrows.

It has been mentioned earlier in volume two of the book under the verse[27]: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit."* (2:219); and in volume four[28] under the verse: *O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know* (well) *what you say, . . .* (4:43), that these two verses together with the verse: *Say: "My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin . . .* (7:33), and the verses under dis-cussion, i.e.: *O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of the Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful. The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allãh and from prayer. Will you then desist?* If these verses are studied together, their diverse context shows that the Legislator had adopted a course of gradual pro-gression in prohibition of intoxicants.

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[27] a*l-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.3, pp.279-80. (*tr.*)
[28] a*l-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.8, pp.233-4. (*tr.*)

By gradual progression we do not mean that He had gone step by step; that it began with aversion and loathing, then displeasure, and finally ended at clear prohibition; giving an example of abrogation. Nor do we say that it had progressed from vague description to clear declaration, or from secret allusion to clear statement because of the religious policy in enforcement of the laws of *sharī'ah*. Such ideas are untenable because the verse 7:33 had clearly prohibited 'sin', and it was in a Meccan chapter; then came the verse that in *them there is a great sin* (2:219), and it is in the chapter of "The Cow" which was the first detailed chapter revealed at Medina. When these two verses are studied in conjunction, they clearly show the prohibition of intoxicants without leaving any room for any excuse or re-interpretation.

The gradual progression mentioned above, in fact, means that the Qur'ān first forbade the intoxicants in a general context, and it was when it described it as a sin. Then it went ahead by prohibiting it in particular in the form of advice and admonition; this method was used in the verses: *Say: "In both of them there is a great sin and some profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit"*; and, *do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know* (well) *what you say* (if this verse had spoken about intoxication of liquor, and not of sleep). Finally, there came the prohibition of intoxicants in particular conjoined with the most emphatic intensity which is seen in the verses under discussion: *O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of the Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful. The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allāh and from prayer. Will you then desist*?

These verses were the last to be revealed concerning the intoxicants. We may easily see as to how many devices of emphasis have been used in them: They begin with *innamā* (إِنَّمَا = but only); then name it "an abomination" and ascribe it to the Satan's handiwork; then give an unambiguous order to shun it and give the hope that by shun-ning it "you may be successful"; then it elaborates the evil conse-quences of taking intoxicants, and asks them whether they would desist.[29] This is followed by the order of obeying Allāh and His Messenger and warning them to be cautious, implying that Allāh and His Messenger have no need of them if

[29] Giving the order of desisting by using the mode of question has intensified its impact. (*tr.*)

they disobey their laws. The last verse of this piece (*There is no blame on those who . . .*) also hints to this connotation, as we shall explain later.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to)** ***stones set up and* (dividing by)** ***arrows are only an abomination of the Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful*:** The meanings of intoxicant, games of chance, sacri-ficing to set up stones and dividing by arrows have been explained in the beginning of this chapter. *al-Khamr* (اَلْخَمْرُ) is every intoxicating fermented liquid, which covers the reason. *al-Maysir* (اَلْمَيْسِرُ) is gamb-ling of any type. *al-Anṣãb* (اَلأَنْصَابُ) means the idols or stones which were set up for slaughtering the sacrificial animals upon, and which were held in esteem and considered a source of blessings. *al-Azlãm* (اَلأَزْلاَمُ) were the arrows used for division of a camel's shares; often this name was given to the arrows used for omen before beginning an important work like journey, etc. But this word has been used in the chapter's beginning for the former meaning (because it is included among the things unlawful to eat); therefore, it has the same meaning in this verse too.

Objection: Games of chance in its general meaning includes the former meaning of *al-azlãm*, i.e. division by arrows; and there is no reason to mention a particular after the general without any apparent cause. Therefore, the only alternative would be to interprete *al-azlãm* as the arrows of oracle, which was common feature in the Era of Ignorance. A poet had said:

If the tribe of Judhaymah have killed their (own) *chiefs,*
So their women hit with arrows.

Reportedly, the method of oracle-seeking through arrows was like this: They used to take three slim arrow-like pieces of wood; on one was written, 'Do'; on another was written, 'Don't do'; and the third was left blank; all three were put in a small bag, and all were similar (in size, etc.). When a man wanted to begin any important work, like a journey, etc., he took out one arrow; if it was the one with 'Do', he determined to do it; if the arrow was the one with 'Don't do', the idea was abandoned; if the blank arrow came out, the process was repeated – until one of the written arrows came out. This method was called *istiqsãm* (to seek a share), i.e. what is in his fate like sustenance or some other good things. The verse proves its unlawfulness because it contains the claim of the knowledge of future. The same is the position of similar other things like *istikhãrah* by rosary and so on.

Reply: You have seen that the clause: [*Forbidden to you is*] . . . *that you divide by the arrows*, which has come at the beginning of the chapter [verse 3], manifestly speaks about prohibition of dividing the meat of an animal by using the arrows, which was a sort of gambling, because it is included among the unlawful food; and it supports the view that in this verse too 'arrows' has the same connotation.

However, if we admit that this verse has no connection with the verse 3, then the word 'arrows' will be having more than one meaning, and it will need an association for pinpointing its intended meaning; in sort, its interpretation will depend on traditions. And there are numer-ous traditions narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlul 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) which allow seeking divine guidance through rosary, etc. when one feels really perplexed. [It is generally called *istikhãrah*, i.e to seek good. (*tr*.)]

What is *istikhãrah*? When man intends to embark on an import-ant work, it is possible for him to know of its appropriateness, by using the power of thought which Allãh has given him, or by seeking the advice of those who have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. However, if these two methods fail to make him recognize the correct way, and he is still bewildered, then he should choose his course of action after paying some attention to his Lord, and seeking His help.

When man chooses what he chooses through this type of seeking good, or *istikhãrah*, he cannot be accused of claiming to know the unseen; nor does he meddle with the divine affairs, which are ex-clusively reserved with Allãh. It does not involve allowing someone other than Allãh to join with Him in management of affairs, nor it entails any other religious problem. Because the only function of *istikhãrah* is to decide positively or negatively about a course of action without making it obligatory or unlawful or giving it any other shade of religious responsibility. Also, it does not claim to unveil the good or the evil that is hidden behind the curtains of the unseen. It only shows what is better for the man concerned whether he should or should not do that work; in this way he comes out of bewilderment and hesitation [with a firm resolve.]

As for what follows that action or non-action, it may turn out to be good and it may equally result in evil – in the same way as it hap-pens when a man opts for a course of action by his own thinking or by someone's advice. Thus, *istikhãrah*, like one's own thinking or well-wishers' advice, is merely a way to remove hesitation or confusion while taking a practical step; and the result of acting upon it is not different from that of an action done by one's own meditation or by someone's

advice.

Of course, someone may think looking at the traditions about seeking good omens from the Qur'ãn, etc., that it entails a sort of a claim of the knowledge of the unseen; because often the soul expects from it good or bad result, or benefit or harm. But it has been narrated in correct *ḥadīth*, through the chains of both sects that the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) saught good omen by good things and ordered it, and forbade (to believe in) ill omen and ordered to pass over it and rely on Allãh.

Therefore, there is nothing to prevent seeking omen from the Qur'ãn, etc.; if the result of that omen seeking is good, it is OK. Otherwise, he should proceed ahead in that affair relying on Allãh, the High. Its ultimate effect is to creat satisfaction in mind about the affairs and actions, which he believes, would bring happiness and benefit to him. We shall write on this topic in detail in a place devoted to it particularly.

Now, it is clear that some exegetes are totally wrong when they have taken the 'arrows' as referring to their practice of oracle seeking; and then arriving at the conclusion that *istikhãrah* was unlawful.

As for the clause: *an abomination of the satan's handiwork: ar-rijs* (اَلرِّجْسُ = abomination) is dirty thing as ar-Rãghib has said in his *al-Mufradãt*; so *ar-rajãsah* (اَلرَّجَاسَة) like *an-najãsah* (اَلنَّجَاسَة) and *al-qadhãrah* (اَلْقَذَارَة) is that factor because of which one keeps away and refrains from a thing as the nature distastes it.

The items enumerated in the verse – intoxicants, games of chance, sacrificing to set up stones and dividing by arrows – are described as abominations because they have such a characteristic which the human nature is repulsed with and does not like to go near it. And that characteristic is its being devoid of all such things that contain human happiness – the happiness which sometimes appears in its pure form, which is probably alluded to in the divine words: *they ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit"* (2:219). Note how sin is given dominance over profit without exception.

Probably, that is the reason why these abominations have been ascribed to the Satan's handiwork alone without joining him to others. Then He says in the next verse: *The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from remembrance of Allãh and from prayer.*

It is because Allãh has clearly described the Satan as the enemy of man who never wants any good to reach to man. He says: . . . *surely the*

Satan is an open enemy to man (12:5). *Against him it is written down that whoever takes him for a friend, he shall lead him astray . . .* (22:4); *. . . and they do not call on anything but a rebellious Satan; Allāh has cursed him; . . .* (4:117-8) In these verses Allāh has confirmed His curse on the Satan and has removed him away from every good.

Also, He has mentioned that the Satan's contact with man and the extent of his action about him is only through seduction, temptation and enticement by putting ideas in his mind; as Allāh quotes him as saying: *He said: "My Lord! Because thou hast left me to stray, I will certainly make* (evil) *fair seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly cause them all to deviate, except Thy servants from among them, the freed ones." He said: "This is a straight path with Me: Surely as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who follow thee of the deviators."* (15:39-42). It should be noted that the Satan had threatened only to cause them to deviate, and Allāh negated the Satan's authority except on his followers from among the deviators. Again, Allāh quotes him as speaking to the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection: *. . . and I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you answered my call, . . .* (14:22). And Allāh describes the Satan's call in these words: *O children of Adam! Let not the Satan cause you to fall into affliction as he got your parents out from the garden, . . . he surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you cannot see them; . . .* (7:27). It means that his call is not like men calling someone being face to face with each other; but the Satan calls men while he sees them but not *vice versa*.

This topic has been clarified in the chapter 114, where it says: *From the evil of the whisperings of the slinking Satan, who whispers into the hearts of men, from among the jinn and the men* (vrs.4-6). Thus, Allāh makes it clear that the Satan's dealings with man are based on his creating ideas in man's heart, and in this way he calls him to error.

All this shows that when intoxicants and other items are called abominations of the Satan's handiwork, it is because these items are ultimately based on the Satan's action which is exclusively related to him; and his modus operandi is creating ideas in man's heart – the Satanic whispering that calls him to error. That is why it is called abomination or uncleanness; Allāh has called error as uncleanness, as He says: *. . . and* (for) *whomsoever He intends that He should leave him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending into the sky; thus does Allāh lay uncleanness on those who do not believe* (6:126).

What is the connotation of intoxicants and other items being an abomination of the Satan's handiwork? The next verse clarifies it: *The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allãh and from prayer.* That is, the Satan's motive in calling you to intoxicants and games of chance is nothing except evil; thus it is an abomination of his handiwork.

Objection: The sum total of the above explanation is that the intoxicants and other items mentioned therein are abominations only because making it, drinking it [or using it] ultimately returns to the satanic temptation. But several traditions prove that it was the Satan himself who appeared before man and made liquor for the first time and taught him how to make it.

Reply: Yes. Although these traditions are merely solitary and as such it is not incumbent on us to accept them; yet there are many and diver-sified traditions, narrated under different chapters, which show that the Satan took shape and appeared before many prophets and friends of Allãh and even before some other men. Also, there are reports about the angels appearing before them. There are still other nar-rations showing that the world and the deeds take [human or other] shapes; and so on. The divine Book too supports this view to some extent, as Allãh says: . . . *then We sent to her Our spirit, and so he appeared to her as a well-made man* (19:17). We shall fully discuss this topic, God willing, in the exegesis of the chapter 15, under the verse: *Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go on a night* . . . (vr.1), or in some other appropriate place.

It should be understood that if a report or story appears in one or more traditions, it does not have the authority to change the appar-ent connotation of a Qur'ãnic verse, especially when it is supported by other verses. The verses clearly show that the Satan has no more authority on man than creating ideas in his mind. Even if he appeared in physical form before a man and made something or taught him to make it, the net result was no more than seduction and temptation in his mind or imparting some information and knowledge. You should wait for the coming elaborate discussion.

"Shun it therefore that you may be successful": It lays down the prohibition in unambiguous words, after describing its evil effects; this style has more impact on the souls. Then is expressed the hope of being successful if they would shun it. This gives intense emphasis to the prohibition, as it asserts that there would be no hope of success for those

who would not refrain from these abominations.

QUR'ĀN: ***The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst . . . Will you then desist?*:** ar-Rāghib has said in his *al-Mufradāt*: "*al-'Adw* (اَلْعَدْو) connotes overstepping, transgression and disharmony; sometimes it is related to heart, then it is called enmity and feud; at other times it is ascribed to walking, then it is called running; yet at other occasions it refers to lack of justice in dealings, then it means transgression and overstepping; Allāh says: . . . *lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allāh out of ignorance*. . . . [6:108]; at times it refers to parts of habitation, and then it is said, *al-'adwā'* (اَلْعَدْوَاء), they say: a place having *'adwā'*, i.e. whose parts are not in harmony with each other; from 'enmity' is derived *'aduww* (عَدُوّ) so they say, enemy man, enemy nation; Allāh says: . . . *some of you being the enemies of others;* . . . [2:36]. Its plural comes as *'idayy* (عِدًى) and *a'dā'* (اَعْدَاء); Allāh says: *And on the day that the enemies of Allāh shall be brought together* . . ." [41:19].

al-Bughḍ (اَلْبُغْضُ) and *al-baghḍā'* (اَلْبَغْضَاءُ) are the opposites of love (اَلْحُبُّ); *aṣ-ṣadd* (اَلصَدُّ = to turn away); *al-intihā'* (اَلإِنْتِهَاءُ) is to obey a prohibition; also it is opposite of beginning (اَلإِبْتِدَاءُ).

As mentioned earlier, this verse aims at explaining the clause: *the Satan's handiwork*, or *an abomination of the Satan's handiwork.* It is the reality of these items being: *the Satan's handiwork*, or *an abom-ination of the Satan's handiwork*, that the only goal and purpose he wants to achieve from the intoxicants and the games of chance (which are abominations of his handiwork only) is to create enmity and hatred amongst you by making you transgress your limits and hate one another, as well as to divert your attention from the remembrance of Allāh and from prayer, keeping you engaged in the intoxicants, games of chance, sacrifing to set up stones and dividing by arrows.

Only the intoxicants and the games of chance are singled out as causing enimity and hatred, because the two effects are their more appar-ent results. Look at liquor and intoxicants: Its use agitates nervous system in such a way that it covers and dominates the reason and brings up bigotry. If it incites anger, it lets the intoxicated person commit any felony, however serious and ugly it might be, which even beasts of pray do not do. If incites desire and lust, it makes to seem fair in his eyes all types of ugliness and debauchery, be it in his self, property or honour, in what he believes to be sacred and sanctified in religion or society, etc. He will

commit theft and embezzlement, will not keep a secret, nor maintain the limit of a prohibited thing; in short he will indulge in affairs, which are destructive to humanity. Available data show that intoxicants have the lion's share in various types of felonies and debaucheries in that society where drinking liquor is prevalent.

As for the games of chance, i.e. gambling, it squanders in a short time all the endeavours a man had exercised for a long period in acquirement of wealth, property and status. Gambling throws the wealth away, and often it destroys honour, life, and prestige. If a gam-bler wins and gets wealth, it encourages him to abandon moderate way of life and indulge extravagantly in debauchery; he becomes indiffer-ent towards earning his livelihood through lawful means. And if he loses, the loss of wealth and bitterness of defeat, leads to enemy and hatred towards the winner, and leaves irritation and grief in its wake.

Although these evil results do not manifest themselves so clearly to the simple minds in infrequent and rare cases for the first or second time, but the rare leads to dominant, the little pulls to numerous, and once becomes many times; and it does not take long for this evil to prevail in the society, and seep through all strata of the community; it thus turns into a barbaric free for all where unruly passions dominate and destructive desires rule.

All this shows that the exclusive particle *innamã* (إِنَّمَا = only, but) in the verse: "The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allãh and from prayer", covers all the items enumerated earlier on the whole, yet prevention from the remembrance of Allãh and from prayer is inflicted by all, and the enmity and hatred are especial effects of the intoxicants and games of chance by nature.

Although prayer is a kind of the remembrance of Allãh, yet Allãh has mentioned it separately in the clause: "and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allãh and from prayer"; it shows how much importance the prayer has in the eyes of *sharī'ah*, because it is the perfect entity of the remembrance. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said in a correct *ḥadīth*: 'The prayer is the pillar of religion'; and the Qur'ãn in numerous verses shows its unparalleled significance, which no one can entertain any doubt about. For example: *Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers* (23:1-2); *And* (as for) *those who hold fast by the Book and keep up prayer, surely We do not waste the reward of the right-doers*

(7:170); *Surely man is created of a hasty temperament; being greatly grieved when evil afflicts him, and niggardly when good befalls him, except those who pray* (70:19-22); *Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps* (one) *away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allãh is the greatest . . .* (29:45); *. . . then hasten to the remembrance of Allãh . . .* (62:9), [it refers to prayer]; *. . . and keep up prayer for My remembrance* (20:14); and there are many other such verses.

Allãh, in this verse under discussion, has given precedence to His remembrance over prayer, because the remembrance is the only objective of the Divine Mission; it is the spirit of life in the body of servitude, and the basis of happiness in this world and the next. It may be seen in the words of Allãh to Adam the first day He laid down the *sharī'ah* for him: *He said: "Get down you two therefrom, all* (of you), *one of you* (is) *enemy to another. So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We shall raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind."* (20:123-4); *And on the day when He shall gather them, and whatever they worshipped besides Allãh, He shall say: "Was it you who led astray these my servants, or did they themselves go astray from the path?" They shall say: "Glory be to Thee! It was not beseeming for us that we should take any guardians besides Thee, but Thou didst make them and their fathers to enjoy until they forsook the remembrance, and they were a people in perdition."* (25:17-18); *Therefore turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our remem-brance and does not desire anything but this world's life. That is the* (last) *reach of their knowledge; . . .* (53:29-30).

Remembrance in the Qur'ãnic verses only connotes that which stands opposite to oblivion of the side of Lordship which brings in its wake oblivion of the side of servitude; and the servitude, the humble adoration, is that religious behaviour which is the only path to bring good fortune and happiness to the soul. Allãh says: *And be not like those who forgot Allãh, so He made them forget their own souls . . .* (59:19).

As for the end clause: "Will you then desist?" it is a reproving question, which indicates that the Muslims had somehow failed to desist from the prohibitions that had preceded this one. The verse: "The Satan only desires . . ." is a sort of explanation that explains the verse: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "In both of them there is*

a great sin and some profit for men; and their sin is greater than their profit." (2:219). That is, their profit which is sup-posed to accompany the great sin is not of a type that could be separ-ated at sometime from the sin or the greater sin; unlike the lie which contains sin and profit, and occasionally its profit may be separated from its sin, e.g., a lie spoken for removing misunderstanding between two persons.

It is because of the exclusive particle: "only", in the verse: "The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allãh and from prayer", which comes after the words: *only an abomination of the Satan's handiwork*. It means that it is nothing other than an abomination of the Satan's handiwork, and the Satan's only aim is to create enmity and hatred among you through the intoxicants and the games of chance, and to prevent you from the remem-brance of Allãh and from the prayer. In this framework, no situation can arise where these items' profit could be separated from their sin. In no circustances they could ever be supposed to be lawful. Understand it.

QUR'ÃN: ***And obey Allãh and the Messenger and be cautious; . . . on Our Messenger*****:** The verse emphasizes the preceding command to abstain from these abominations. It does so by first ordering obedi-ence to Allãh, and He has the authority to lay down a law; then by ordering obedience to the Messenger, and he has the authority of implementation; and lastly by giving warning in clear words.

Then comes further emphasis in the words: "but if you turn back, then know that only a clear deliverance (of the message) is (incumbent) on Our Messenger." This emphasis contains a serious warning, particularly as it begins with the word: "then know"; it has an allusion that if you turn back and indulge in these sins, probably you think that you are showing arrogance to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) by going against his prohibition and that in this way you have defeated him; but you do not understand – or you have forgotten – that he is Our Messenger to you; he has no authority except a clear delivery of the message which is revealed to him and which he is ordered to deliver; actually you are only disputing with Allãh in His Lordship.

It has been described in the beginning that these verses contain numerous modes of emphasizing the prohibition of these items. Look how it begins with the words: *O you who believe*! Then comes the exclusive particle, *innamã* (only), then its description as an abomin-ation,

then its ascription to the Satan's handiwork, then the clear order to shun it; then the hope of success resulting from that shunning. Then comes the description of their general evil – enmity and hatred, averting from remembrance of Allāh and from prayer. Then the rebuke at their indifference to desisting followed by the command to obey Allāh and the Messenger, and the final warning in case of turning away after the clear deliverance.

QUR'ĀN: ***There is no blame on those who believe and do good for what they have eaten, when they fear Allāh and believe and do good, then they fear Allāh and believe, then they fear Allāh and do good, and Allāh loves those who do good*:** *aṭ-Ṭa'm* (اَلطَّعْمُ) and *aṭ-ṭa'ām* (اَلطَعَامُ) means to eat; it is used for taking food, not drink; the Madinans use it for wheat only; sometimes it is used in the meaning of taste, and then it is used for drinking too, as it is for eating. Allāh says: . . . *whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me,* . . . (2:249). And it has come in a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said about the water of Zamzam: "Verily it is (*ṭa'ām ṭu'min* – طَعَامُ طُعْمٍ) a satisfier of the stomach (of man, like as is food), and a remady for a disease."

The context of the verse makes it certain that it is connected with the preceding verses. As such it aims at answering an unspoken question: What will be the position of those believers who were indulged in drinking liquor before the revelation of (its) prohibition, or before the revelation of these verses? It is because the words: "for what they have eaten" are general, it is not restricted by anything that could restrict it. The verse aims at removing blame from this general food, and this removal of blame has been qualified with the clauses: "when they fear Allāh and believe, then they fear Allāh and do good." This condition in which fear of Allāh or piety has been mentioned three times makes it certain that it means intense piety, as the piety should be.

Now, let us see what would be the implication of the disavowal of blame from pious believers for whatever they eat (lawful nourish-ment): If it implies assertion of blame for the opposite group, i.e. affirmation of general prohibition to non-pious persons from all be-lievers and unbelievers, it is rebuttable by verses such as: *Say: "Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allāh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?" Say: "These are for the believers in the life of this world, purely* (theirs) *on the Resurrection Day; . . ."* (7:32).

Moreover, it is known from the taste of this religion that it does not stop anyone from savouring the lawful good things which human nature is bound to use in the life.

Alternatively, if the verse is not meant to show its prohibition to the opposite group, then it would imply that that food is lawful for those who believe and do good provided that they fear Allãh, then fear Allãh, and then fear Allãh. But it is known that its lawfulness is not restricted to the believers who do good, rather it is common to be-lievers and unbelievers altogether; and even if we suppose that it is restricted to them, no one says that the permission depends on such a hard condition. [As both these alternatives are untenable, the suppo-sition, that the verse removes blame from pious believers for whatever lawful food they eat, has no leg to stand upon.]

There are many such interpretations, based on the view that: "for what they have eaten" refers to lawful food in a general way; but none is free from either of the two objections mentioned above. It is because the meaning given by them revolves around the following proposition: There is no blame on those who believe and do good, when they avoid unlawful things, for eating lawful things. And this meaning cannot be free from either objection, as is clearly understood.

Some have said: There is an omission in verse; the complete verse is as follows: There is no blame on those who believe and do good for what they have eaten and for other things when they abstain from unlawful things.

COMMENT: It supposes an omission without any proof to support it; apart from that, the original objection still stands.

Someone else has said: The belief and good deed altogether is not a real condition; the main idea is to show the obligatoriness of avoiding unlawful things, and belief and good deed have been joined to it to show its compulsoriness.

COMMENT: The verse manifestly shows that it aims at removal of blame for what they have eaten, and it is not dependent on belief, good deed, or avoidance of unlawful things – as we have explained earlier. How far is this supposed meaning from the apparent meaning of the verse!

A third one has said: So far as a believer is concerned, it is all right to say that there is no blame on him; but an unbeliever deserves punishment, so he cannot be declared blameless.

COMMENT: There is no reason why the verse should be restricted to the believers. In fact, it is not unlike the verse: *Say: "Who has pro-hibited the*

embellishment of Allāh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provision?" . . . (7:32); and the verse: *Say: "I do not find in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth, or flesh of swine . . ."* (6:145), inasmuch as it lays down a general principle without addressing it to believer or unbeliever. Or it is like the verse: *O you people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one among you who is most pious.* (49:13), as it is addressed to the people, which include believers and unbelievers both.

Another one has said: The unbeliever has closed for himself the path of knowing unlawfulness and lawfulness; that is why the verse speaks particularly about the believers.

COMMENT: The objections mentioned earlier apply to this interpretation also; moreover, it does not remove the difficulty arising out of the words: *when they fear Allāh . . .*

Thus, it is appropriate to say that the verse is connected with the preceding ones, and it looks at the condition of those Muslims who had indulged in drinking liquor, or in using it or eating from winnings of gambling or from what had been sacrificed to idols. It appears as if they had asked, after the clear prohibition was revealed to them, regarding him who had used liquor or indulged in other unlawful things mentioned above, before the revelation of prohibition – from among those Muslims who had passed away, or those who were present at that time and had willingly surrendered to the divine law.

Now, this verse answers their question, saying that there was no blame on those Muslims provided they were among those who believed and did good deeds, if they were proceeding on the path of piety with belief in Allāh and good deeds, then believing in every law revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), then doing good in acting according to the revealed commandment.

It appears from the above discourse that the relative clause: "what they have eaten", refers to intoxicants [and 'eaten' stands for drunk]; or it includes all the above mentioned items – intoxicants, gamb-ling, and animals sacrificed to stones or divided by arrows – while the eating points to their various uses. The meaning: There is no blame on those who believe and do good for what they have tasted – before the revelation of prohibition – of intoxicants; or of intoxicants and the other unlawful items described in

the verse.

The clauses: "when they fear Allãh and believe and do good deeds, then they fear Allãh and believes, then they fear Allãh and do good." Apparently, the clause: "when they fear Allãh and believe and do good deeds," repeats the same theme that has been described in the preceding clause: "There is no blame on those who believe and do good deeds"; it shows that these characteristics of belief and good deeds have a hand in nullification of blame. The same style is seen in the verse: . . . *with this is admonished whosoever among you believes in Allãh and the last day* . . . (2:232). Such expressions are widely used in the language.

The clause: *then they fear Allãh and believe:* It takes into account "belief after the first mentioned belief." It can only mean a detailed belief in every law brought by the Messenger (s.a.w.a.) from his Lord, without rejection or denial; inevitably it implies submission to the Messenger in all that he orders and forbids. Allãh says: *O you who believe! Fear Allãh and believe in His Messenger:* . . . (57:28); *And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allãh's permission; . . . But no! By your Lord! They do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with total submission* (4:64-65). There are numerous verses of this theme.

The clause: "then they fear Allãh and do good." Apparently, it adds doing good to the belief after belief, with an aim to show its im-portance. *al-Iḥsãn* (اَلإِحْسَانُ) means performance of an act because of its goodness – without false intentions. Allãh says: *Surely* (as for) *those who believe and do good, We do not waste the reward of him who does a good work* (18:30). Also, He says: (As for) *those who responded to the call of Allãh and the Messenger* (even) *after the wound had afflicted them, those among them who do good and fear* (Allãh) *shall have a great reward* (3:172). That is, their response emanates from their seeking near-ness to Allãh and their total submission to Him, and not for any other motive. *al-Iḥsãn* (doing good) is also used as transitive verb, i.e., to do with someone what he thinks good; as Allãh says: . . . *and* (you shall do) *good to* (your) *parents,* . . . (2:83); . . . *and do good* (to others) *as Allãh has done good to you*, . . . (28:77).

According to the context the first of the two meanings is more appropriate for the clause under discussion, i.e. to do a work because of its goodness. The religious piety is not given its full due with merely believing in Allãh and affirming truth of His religion, unless one believes

in detail in each and every laid down law of the *sharī'ah*; because rejection of even one of those laws is rejection of the religion itself. And even the detailed belief in each and every law does not give piety its full due unless he acts according to the law in good manner, proceeding according to the demands of the law by implementing it or abstaining from it; and that proceeding must be based on total obedi-ence, not on a hypocritical intention. Therefore, it is incumbent on him who is equipped with provision of piety to believe in Allãh and do good deeds, and to believe in His Messenger in all that he has brought with him, proceeding in all this on the path of obedience and good-doing.

The verse has repeated piety (fear of Allãh) three times and has qualified all the three stages with it. It emphatically points to the fact that all three stages must be connected to real piety without any shade of any other irreligious motive. It has been mentioned somewhere in the preceding discourses that piety is not a special religious position; it is rather a spiritual condition that co-exists with all spiritual positions. In other words, each spiritual station has a particular piety, which is reserved to it.

In short, the foregoing discourse shows that the verse means as follows: There is no blame on those who believe and do good deeds for what they had tasted and used of the intoxicants and the other un-lawful items, provided they adhere to piety in all their conditions, hold fast to the belief in Allãh and His Messenger, and do good deeds by performing all obligatory things and refraining from all unlawful things prohibited to them. However, if they had indulged in any abomination of the Satan's handiwork, before the revelation of the prohibiting verse, before it had reached them, or before they understood its connotation, it will do them no harm.

It is like the words of Allãh in the matter of the change of *qiblah*, in reply to their query regarding the prayers which they had prayed facing other than the Ka'bah: . . . *and Allãh was not going to make your faith to be fruitless;* . . . (2:143).

Its context is another witness that the verse: "There is no blame on those who believe and do good deeds, . . ." is connected with the preceding verses, and that it was revealed with those verses (whose language testifies that they were the last to be revealed on the subject of intoxicants); and that some Muslims had not discarded the habit of drinking liquor between the period when the first verses were revealed till the revelation of these verses.

Then the question arose, after these verses were revealed, about the condition of those who had indulged in it: Some had used it before the prohibition; others had done so before learning the law, and some without any excuse. Allãh replied them specifying for each group its order as related to its particular condition. He who drank it while he believed and did good deed – and it could be only those believers who did so before the revelation of prohibition or because they did not know of its unlawfulness – there was no blame on him; and as for others, the law concerning them is different.

The exegetes have written lengthy discussions on this verse. Some are concerned with explanation of: "what they have eaten," and we have given a short detail of it.

Others have expressed their opinions about the end portion of the verse, where it repeats piety and fear of Allãh three times, and repeats belief and then good deeds and ends at doing good. [Their opinions may be summerized as follows]:

The clause: "when they fear Allãh and believe and do good deeds", means: When they avoid unlawful things and remain steadfast on belief and good deeds; then the clause: "then they fear Allãh and believe", means: Then they avoid what has been forbidden them like intoxicants, and believe in its prohibition; and the clause: "then they fear Allãh and do good", means: Then they remain steadfast and con-tinue to firmly shun the disobedience, and remain engaged in good deeds.

This repetition looks at three situations as man uses belief and piety between himself and his soul, between himself and the people, and between himself and Allãh; accordingly doing good means doing good to others.

The repetition looks at three stages: The beginning, the middle, and the end, i.e. the piety as it should be.

The repetition is in consideration of what is feared of. One should leave the forbidden things for fear of chastisement; should avoid doubtful things as a precaution against falling into unlawful things, and should abstain from some permissible things for pre-venting the soul from meanness and keeping it clean from blemish.

The first piety is avoidance of drinking liquor, and the first belief is the belief in Allãh; the second piety is the continuation of the first piety, and the second belief is the continuation of the first one; and the third piety is performance of obligatory deeds, and doing good is performance of supererogatory deeds.

The first piety is avoidance of sins known through reason, and the first belief is believing in Allāh and in evil of theses sins; the second piety is avoidance of sins known through *sharī'ah*, and the second belief is believing in obligatoriness of avoiding these sins; and the third piety concerns especially with rights of the people and with the injustice and iniquity *vis-à-vis* other persons; and doing good refers to doing good to others.

The first condition [i.e. when they fear Allāh . . .] is reserved for the past; the second, for its continuation, and the third one is reserved particularly to the people's rights.

There are many similar opinions. But there is no proof either in the wording of the verse or somewhere else that could justify appli-cation of the verse on any of their interpretations; and it becomes manifest when one contemplates on its context and refers to what we have explained earlier.

TRADITIONS

Hishām ibn Sālim narrates from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he heard him saying, "While Ḥamzah ibn 'Abdi 'l-Muṭṭalib and (some of) his companions were (drinking) a liquor named *as-sukarkah*[30]." He said, "Then they talked about *ash-sharīf*[31], and Ḥamzah said, 'How can we find it?' They said, 'There is this she-camel of your nephew, 'Alī.' So he went forth to it and slaughtered it; then took its liver and hump and brought it to them." He said, "When 'Alī (a.s.), came and saw his she-camel, he was smitten by it. They said to him, 'Your uncle Ḥamzah has done it.'" He said, "So he went to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and com-plained to him of it."

He said, "Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) came with him. Ḥamzah was told, 'Here is the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) at the door.'" He said, "So Ḥamzah came out and he was enraged. When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) saw (the sign of) anger in his face, he returned." He said, "Then Ḥamzah said to him, 'If the son of Abū Ṭālib wanted to lead you by a halter he could do it.' Then Ḥamzah entered his house and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) came back."

He said, "It was before (the battle of) Uḥud." He said, "Then Allāh revealed the prohibition of liquor. So, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)

[30] Liquor made from a variety of sorghum or millet. (*tr.*)
[31] Its meaning in this context is not clear. (*tr.*)

ordered their (liquor) pots to be turned over." He said, "Then the call went out to the people to proceed to Uḥud. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) went forth, and the people went forth, and Ḥamzah went forth. He stood in the side of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)." He said, "When they stood in line, he attacked the people (i.e. unbelievers) until he was swallowed up among them; then he returned to his place. The people (i.e. the believers) said to him: 'Allãh! Allãh! O Uncle of the Messenger of Allãh! That you should go (i.e. die) and there be some-thing against you in the heart of the Messenger of Allãh.'" He said, "Then he attacked again until he disappeared amongst the people; then he returned to his place. They (again) said to him: 'Allãh! Allãh! O Uncle of the Messenger of Allãh! That you should go and there be something against you in the heart of the Messenger of Allãh.'

"So he proceeded towards the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). When he saw him (coming towards him), he proceeded to his direction, embraced him, and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) kissed his forhead, then said, 'Launch attack on the people.' Then Ḥamzah was martyred, and the Messenger of Allãh gave him a shroud of *tamrah*." Then Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) explained it saying, "Like this *suryãnī*. When his face was covered his feet were opened, and when his feet were covered his face was opened." He said, "So he covered his face with it and put *idhkhir*[32] on his feet."

He said, "The people fled away and ʻAlī (a.s.) remained. The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said to him, 'What did you do?' He said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! I adhered to (this) place.' He said, 'This was expected of you.'" He said, "And the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said, 'Fulfil, O my Lord! Your promise to me, because, if you wished (so), You would not be worshipped.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyãshī)

az-Zamakhsharī has written: Three verses were revealed on the subject of intoxicants: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance,* . . . [2:219]. Some Muslims then left it and some continued to drink; until a man drank it, began his prayer, and talked nonsense. Then was revealed: *O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know* (well) *what you say,* . . . [4:43]. Still some Muslims continued drinking it; until ʻUmar drank it; then he took a jaw-bone of a camel and bashed with it the skull of ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn ibn ʻAwf, and then sat lamenting those (unbelievers) who were killed in the battle of Badr, reciting the poem of al-Aswad ibn Yaghfūr:

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[32] A well-known wide-leafed aromatic grass; it was used in thatching roofs, and was burned in place of firewood. (*tr.*)

How many spears (i.e. braves) *and noble drinkers are* (thrown)
In the well – the well of Badr?[33]
How many nobles and feeders of humps are (there)
In the well – the well of Badr?
Does Ibn Abī Kabshah[34] *threaten us that we shall be made alive again?*
And how can (happen) *the life of ghosts and skulls?*
Is he helpless in averting death from me?
And will raise me (again) *when my bones become rotten?*
Well, who will convey my message to the Beneficent (God)
That I am abandoning the month of fast;
So tell Allãh to stop my drink from me,
And tell Allãh to stop my food from me.

This (news) reached the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and he came out enraged, dragging his cloak along; he raised something that was in his hand to strike him (‘Umar). So he (‘Umar) said, "I seek refuge in Allãh from the wrath of Allãh and the wrath of His Messenger." Then Allãh, the Glorified, the Sublime, sent down (the verse): *The Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred . . . Will you then desist?* So ‘Umar said, "We desist." (*Rabī‘u 'l-abrãr*)

Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh, and an-Naḥḥãs (in his *an-Nãsikh*) have narrated from Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqãṣ that he said, "Regarding me was revealed the prohibition of intoxicants. A man from the Helpers prepared a feast, and he invited us. People came to him, ate, and drank until they became intoxicated with liquor – and it was before the intoxicants were pro-hibited. So they began boasting. The Helpers said, 'The Helpers are superior;' and the Quraysh said, 'The Quraysh are superior.' Then a man came down with a jaw-bone of a camel and hit at my nose tearing it – and Sa‘d's nose was torn." He said, "Then I came to the Prophet (s.a.w.) and mentioned it to him. So this verse was revealed: *O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance . . . (ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)*

The author says: The traditions about the stories, which resulted in prohibition of intoxicants, are numerous, through the Sunnī chains, with great discrepancies among them. As for those traditions which mention some companions who had been drinking, we have no con-cern to go into

[33] The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had thrown after the battle of Badr the bodies of the seventy unbelievers who were killed therein. (*tr.*)
[34] The polytheists of Quraysh used this nickname for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in a sneering manner. (*tr.*)

them analysing and sifting, because our purpose is to explain the Qur'ãnic verse. However, these narratives support what we have written in the Commentary that these verses imply, nay, rather clearly say, that a group of Muslims had not left drinking liquor since the verse, 2:219 was revealed until these verses of chapter five came down.

Of course, some traditions say that ʻAlī (a.s.) and ʻUthmãn ibn Maẓʻūn had forbidden intoxicants to themselves before the verse of prohibition was revealed; and it has been mentioned in *al-Milal wa 'n-Niḥal*, that a few Arabs in the Era of Ignorance had forbidden intoxicants to themselves, and Allãh helped some of them to find Islam and enter into its fold. Among them were ʻÃmir ibn aẓ-Ẓarīb al-ʻUdwãnī and Qays ibn ʻÃmir at-Tamīmī (who attained Islam). Also, among them were Ṣafwãn ibn Umayyah ibn Muḥrith al-Kinãnī, ʻAfīf ibn Maʻdī Karb al-Kindī, al-Uslūm al-Yãmī (who forbad to himself both intoxi-cants and fornication). These few individuals were those on whose tongue the word of truth had appeared. Otherwise, generally the Arabs of that era like all other people of the world (except the Jews) were habituated to drink freely, until Allãh forbade it in His Book.

It appears from the verses of the mighty Book that intoxicants were forbidden in Mecca before the *hijrah*, as is shown by the verse: *Say: "My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and rebellion without justice . . ."* (7:33). It is a Meccan verse; and when it is joined to the divine words: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit." . . .* (2:219); which is Medinite verse revealed in early days of *hijrah*, there does not remain room for any doubt that at that time its prohibition was clear to the Muslims. And if we meditate on the context of the verses of the chap-ter 5, "The Table", and especially on the implications of the words: *Will you then desist?* And the verse: *There is no blame on those who believe and do good deeds for what they have eaten, when they fear Allãh and believe . . .* it will be clear that the indulgence of a group among them in drinking liquor between the revelation of chapter 2 and 5, was a residue of the previous bad habit. It was like some people's continuing to sinfully cohabit in the nights of Ramaḍãn until Allãh revealed: *It is made lawful to you on the night of fast to go in unto your wives; they are an apparel to you and you are an apparel for them; Allãh knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and forgave*

you. . . . (2:187).

However, it is clear that these traditions invite two observations:

One: They differ among themselves concerning the date of the prohibition of intoxicants. The first narrative says that it was shortly before the battle of Uḥud [i.e. the 3rd year of *hijrah*], while other reports say that it was after the battle of the Allies[35] [i.e. the 5th year of *hijrah*]. But it is not a big problem, because possibly the latter may be referring to the revelation of the verses of the chapter "The Table" in the 5th year of A.H. – although the wording of some of the tradi-tions do not fully agree with it.

Two: They say that intoxicants were not prohibited before the revelation of the verse of "The Table", or that its prohibition was not clear before it for people and particularly for the companions. But the verse 33 of chapter 7, "The Battlements", clearly forbids sin, and the verse 219 of the chapter 2, "The Cow", clearly declares it to be a great sin; and these two declarations cannot be interpreted away.

Rather it looks far-fetched to think that prohibition of sin was revealed at Mecca before *hijrah*, in the verse which included a general summary of forbidden things, i.e.: *Say: "My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and rebellion without justice, and that you associ-ate with Allãh that for which He has not sent down any authority, and that you say against Allãh what you do not know."* (7:33), and then a long time would pass after it and neither the believers would ask its meaning from their Prophet, nor polytheists would seek from him its explanation, while their biggest concern was to refute the Book of Allãh and object against it in any way they could imagine.

Rather the history shows that the Prophet's prohibition of the intoxicants like his forbidding polytheism and fornication was widely known to the polytheists. For the proof, look at the report given by Ibn Hishãm in his *as-Sīrah*; quoting Khallãd ibn Qurrah and other learned elders of the tribe of Bakr ibn Wãil that, A‘shã ibn Qays went forth towards the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) intending to accept Islam. He said a *Qaṣīdah* in praise of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), [which began with these lines]:-

Did not your eyes remain sore at night?
And did you not spend the night awake like one bitten by snake?

[35] It has been narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarī in his *at-Tafsīr*, and by as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*, quoting aṭ-Ṭabarī and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir from Qatãdah. (*Author's Note*)

When he reached Mecca – or was near it – some polytheists of Quraysh intercepted him and asked him his news. He told him that he had come intending to see the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) in order to enter into Islam. (The Qurayshite) said to him, "O Abū Baṣīr! He for-bids fornication." A‘shã said, "By God! Certainly, it is a thing that I have no desire of." The Qurayshite said, "O Abū Baṣīr! And he forbids intoxicants." A‘shã said, "As for this, certainly there are some consola-tions about it in (my) soul; but I am going back and shall quench my thirst with it this year, then I'll come to him and accept Islam." So he returned, and died the same year and did not come back to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.).

Thus, no weight remains at all for the above-mentioned tradi-tions. We can only say that the narrators had inferred them by their independent thinking on the verses, while they had forgotten the verse 7:33. The exegetes have offered strange interpretations with an aim to justify these traditions.[36]

However, after all this lengthy discourse, the net result remains that the Book of Allãh had clearly announced prohibition of intoxi-cants in Islam before *hijrah*; and the only purpose of these verses of the chapter 5, "The Table", was to put intense pressure on the people because they had not shown any seriousness in submitting to this divine prohibition and enforcing this law.

Hishãm narrates through a trustworthy person from Abū ‘Abdil-lãh (a.s.) that he was asked, "Is it true what has been narrated from you that intoxicants, set up stones and dividing arrows are men?" He said, "Allãh was not to address His creatures in a language that they did not understand." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyãshī)

‘Abdullãh ibn Sinãn narrates from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said, Qudãmah ibn Maẓ‘ūn was brough before ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭãb; and he had drunk liquor and proof was established against him. (‘Umar) asked ‘Alī (about it) and he ordered him to be flogged eighty stripes. Qudãmah said, "O Leader of the Faithful! There is no penalty for me; I am of the people of this verse: *There is no blame on those who be-lieve and do good deeds for what they have eaten* (upto the end of the verse)." ‘Alī (a.s.) said to him, "You tell a lie; you are not from among the people of this verse. What its people had eaten, it was lawful for them; and they do

[36] One of them has said that the companions were interpreting the verse 2:219, *Say: "In both of them there is a great sin . . ."*, that it means pure sin. And this was in spite of the verse 7:33, which had clearly forbidden sin before it. (*Author's Note*)

not eat or drink except what is lawful for them." (*ibid*.)

The author says: This meaning has also been narrated from Abu 'r-Rabī‘ from the same Imām (a.s.). Also, ash-Shaykh has narrated it in *at-Tahdhīb* through his chain from Ibn Sinān from the same Imām (a.s.); and this meaning is narrated through the Sunnī chains too. The Imām's words, "What its people had eaten, it was lawful for them; and they do not eat or drink except what is lawful for them," agrees with what we have explained in the foregoing Commentary; so refer to it.

aṭ-Ṭabarī narrates from ash-Sha‘bī that he said, "Four verses were revealed about the intoxicants: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance* . . . [2:219], so they left it; then was revealed: . . . *you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision* . . . [16:67], so they drank it; then the two verses of "The Table" were revealed: *intoxicants and games of chances and* . . . *Will you then desist*? [5:90-91]. (*at-Tafsīr,* aṭ-Ṭabarī)

The author says: It appears from it that the verse 16:67 abro-gated the verse 2:219, and this in its turn was abrogated by 5:90-91; this in itself is sufficient to show this claim's invalidity.

[al-Kulaynī and ash-Shaykh] have narrated through their chains from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, "Allāh did never raise any prophet but it was in Allāh's knowledge that when He would perfect his relig-ion it would include prohibition of intoxicants; and intoxicants were always unlawful, but they are only carried away from [one] trait to [another] trait; and if it were imposed on them all together, it would have cut them off short of religion." (The narrator) said, "Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), said, 'There is no one more kind than Allāh, the Sublime; and it is from His kindness (the Blessed, the Sublime) that He transfers them from (one) trait to (another) trait; and if He had imposed on them all together, they would have perished.'" (*al-Kāfī*; *at-Tahdhīb*)

(al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ‘Amr ibn Shimr from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, "When Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, revealed to His Messenger (s.a.w.a.), *intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of the Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore*, it was said to him, 'What is games of chance? O Messenger of Allāh!' He said: 'Anything you make a bet with, even cubes and walnut.' It was said, 'Then what is stones set up?' He said, 'What they sacrifice to their deities.' It was said, 'Then what is arrows?' He said, 'Their arrows which they used

for division [of meat].'" (*al-Kãfī*)

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from ‘Atã’ ibn Yasãr from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said," The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Every intoxicant is unlawful, and every intoxicant is liquor.'" (*ibid*.)

The author says: This tradition is narrated also through Sunnī chains, from ‘Abdullãh ibn ‘Umar from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and its wording is as follows, "Every intoxicant is liquor and every liquor is unlawful." al-Bayhaqī and others have narrated it too. There are numerous traditions narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) which are nearly *mutawãtir* that every intoxicant is unlawful, and that whatever is used for betting on, is game of chance.

Abu 'ṣ-Ṣabãḥ narrates that he asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) about *nabīdh* and intoxicants, "Do they have the same position? (The Imãm, a.s.), said, 'No. Surely *nabīdh* is not of the rank of intoxicants. Certainly, Allãh has prohibited intoxicants a little of it and more of it, as He has prohibited dead body, blood and flesh of swine; and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has prohibited the intoxicant from among the drinks, and what the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has prohibited, Allãh has prohibited it.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyãshī)

[al-Kulaynī and ash-Shaykh] have narrated through their chains from Mūsã ibn Ja‘far (a.s.) that he said, "Verily, Allãh has not prohi-bited the liquor because of its name; but He has prohibited it because of its effect. Therefore, anything, which has the effect of liquor, is liquor." (In another version, the last sentence is, 'Therefore, anything which does the action of liquor is liquor.') (*al-Kãfī*; *at-Tahdhīb*)

The author says: The tradition in condemnation of intoxicants and gambling that has come through the Sunnī and Shī‘ah chains are beyond the limit of enumeration; whoever wants to study them should consult the Collections of Traditions.

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يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَيَبۡلُوَنَّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِشَيۡءٖ مِّنَ ٱلصَّيۡدِ تَنَالُهُۥٓ
أَيۡدِيكُمۡ وَرِمَاحُكُمۡ لِيَعۡلَمَ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُۥ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِۚ فَمَنِ ٱعۡتَدَىٰ بَعۡدَ
ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُۥ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ ٩٤ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَقۡتُلُواْ ٱلصَّيۡدَ
وَأَنتُمۡ حُرُمٞۚ وَمَن قَتَلَهُۥ مِنكُم مُّتَعَمِّدٗا فَجَزَآءٞ مِّثۡلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ ٱلنَّعَمِ
يَحۡكُمُ بِهِۦ ذَوَا عَدۡلٖ مِّنكُمۡ هَدۡيَۢا بَٰلِغَ ٱلۡكَعۡبَةِ أَوۡ كَفَّٰرَةٞ طَعَامُ
مَسَٰكِينَ أَوۡ عَدۡلُ ذَٰلِكَ صِيَامٗا لِّيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ أَمۡرِهِۦۗ عَفَا ٱللَّهُ عَمَّا
سَلَفَۚ وَمَنۡ عَادَ فَيَنتَقِمُ ٱللَّهُ مِنۡهُۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٞ ذُو ٱنتِقَامٍ ٩٥
أُحِلَّ لَكُمۡ صَيۡدُ ٱلۡبَحۡرِ وَطَعَامُهُۥ مَتَٰعٗا لَّكُمۡ وَلِلسَّيَّارَةِۖ وَحُرِّمَ
عَلَيۡكُمۡ صَيۡدُ ٱلۡبَرِّ مَا دُمۡتُمۡ حُرُمٗاۗ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِيٓ إِلَيۡهِ
تُحۡشَرُونَ ٩٦ ۞ جَعَلَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلۡكَعۡبَةَ ٱلۡبَيۡتَ ٱلۡحَرَامَ
قِيَٰمٗا لِّلنَّاسِ وَٱلشَّهۡرَ ٱلۡحَرَامَ وَٱلۡهَدۡيَ وَٱلۡقَلَٰٓئِدَۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِتَعۡلَمُوٓاْ
أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِكُلِّ
شَيۡءٍ عَلِيمٌ ٩٧ ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلۡعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ

غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾ مَّا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا
تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

O you who believe! Allãh will certainly try you in respect of some game which your hands and your lances can reach, that Allãh might know who fears Him in secret; but whoever exceeds the limit after this, he shall have a painful punishment (94). *O you who believe! Do not kill game while you are in the pilgrim garb, and whoever among you shall kill it intentionally, the compensation* (of it) *is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka'bah or the expiation* (of it) *is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent of it in fasting, that he may taste the unwholesome result of his deed; Allãh has pardoned what is gone by; and whoever returns* (to it), *Allãh will inflict retribu-tion on him; and Allãh is Mighty, Lord of Retribution* (95). *Lawful to you is the game of the sea and its food, a provision for you and for the travellers, and the game of the land is for-bidden to you so long as you are in the pilgrim garb, and fear Allãh, to Whom you shall be gathered* (96). *Allãh has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a sanctuary for the people, and the sacred month and the offerings and the* (animals with the) *gar-lands; this is that you may know that Allãh knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and that Allãh is the Knower of all things* (97). *Know that Allãh is severe in requit-ing* (evil) *and that Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful* (98). *Nothing is* (incumbent) *on the Messenger but to deliver* (the message), *and Allãh knows what you reveal and what you hide* (99).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verses describe the law regarding the game of land and sea when a man is in the state of sanctity, wearing the robes of pilgrims.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Allãh will certainly try you in respect of***

***some game which your hands and your lances can reach*:** *al-Balã'* (اَلْبَلَاءُ = test, trial); *layabluwannakum* (لَيَبْلُوَنَّكُم = will certainly try you); *la* (لا) is for oath, which together with the doubling of *n* (ن) connotes emphasis and intensity. The word: "some game", indicates insignificance, in order that it would help the audience to comply with the coming prohibition. The clause: "which your hands and your lances can reach", includes in its ambit game which can be caught easily by hand, like young birds, cubs of wild animals and eggs; or with difficulty like big games that usually cannot be hunted except with arms.

This verse apparently aims at paving the way for the severe law which follows in the next one; and that is the reason that this clause is followed by the words: *that Allãh might know who fears Him in secret*; as it indicates that the ensuing law would be prohibitive; then comes the concluding statement: *but whoever exceeds the limit after this he shall have a painful punishment*.

QUR'ĀN: *that Allãh might know who fears Him in secret; . . .*: It is not unlikely that the divine words: "Allãh will certainly try you . . . that Allãh might know", allude to the fact that He will certainly fore-ordain it in order to distinguish those of you who fear Allãh in secret from those who do not fear Him. Obviously, Allãh is not afflicted by ignorance, which should be removed by knowledge! A full explanation of the meaning of test has been given under the verse: *Do you think that you will enter the garden* . . . (3:142), in the fourth volume of this book[37]; and also another meaning of knowledge was given earlier. As for the clause: "who fears Him in secret", the adverb: "in secret", is related to: "fears"; fearing in secret indicates that man fears his Lord and is cautious of the next world's punishment and its sufferings which the Lord has warned him of; all those aspects are unseen for man, and he does not perceive any part of it with his five senses. Allãh says: *You can only warn him who follows the reminder and fears the Beneficent God in secret;* . . . (36:11); *And the garden shall be brought near to those who guard* (against evil), *not far off: This is what you were promised, for every one who turns frequently* (to Allãh), *keeps* (his limits); *who fears the Beneficent God in secret and comes with a patient heart* (50:31-33); *Those who fear their Lord in secret and they are fearful of the hour* (21:49).

The clause: "but whoever exceeds the limit after this", means:

[37] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.7, pp.44-53. (*tr*.)

Whoever exceeds the limit which Allãh fixes for him after the said test and trial, shall have a painful chastisement.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Do not kill game while you are in the pilgrim garb, . . . may taste the unwholesome result of his deed*****:** *al-ḥurum* (اَلْحُرُم = in the pilgrim garb. It is a *ṣifah mushabbahah* (صِفَة مُشَبَّهَة = adjective which resembles a verb). [aṭ-Ṭabrisī] writes: "*Ḥarãm* and *muḥrim* both have the same meaning; likewise the opposite *ḥalãl* and *muḥill* have the same meaning; *aḥrama 'r-rajul* (اَحْرَمَ الرَّجُلُ = 'The man entered into sacred month.'), also it means: 'He entered into the Sanctuary.' Also, *aḥrama* (اَحْرَمَ) means: 'He entered into *ḥajj* (by saying *talbiyah* تَلْبِيَة).' *al-Ḥarm* (اَلْحَرْم) means the pilgrim garb; this is the mean-ing of the *ḥadīth*, 'I was applying perfume to the Prophet for his *iḥrãm*.' The basic meaning of the root-word (*ḥ-r-m*) is to protect, to prohibit; the women are called *ḥaram* (حَرَم) because they are protected; and *al-maḥrūm* (اَلْمَحْرُوم) is the one who is deprived of sustenance."

He has also said: "*al-Mithl*, *al-mathal* (اَلْمِثْلُ ، اَلْمَثَلُ) as well as *ash-shibh* and *ash-shabah* (اَلشِبْهُ ، اَشَبَهُ) have all one meaning [i.e. like, likeness.]"

He says: "*an-Na'am* (اَلنَّعَم) denotes camel, cow, sheep and goat; if there is camel alone, it is called *na'am*; but if there are cow and sheep or goat alone, they are not called *na'am*. This has been men-tioned by az-Zajjãj."

Again he says: "al-Farrã' has said: '*al-'Adl* (اَلْعَدْلُ) is a thing which is equal to another thing not from the same species. *al-'Idl* (اَلْعِدْلُ) is like; you say: 'I have *'idl* of your slave or goat,' when you have a slave like his slave or goat like his goat; but if you mean his/its value from another species, you will say, '*'adl*.' The Baṣrite gram-marians say that *al-'adl* and *al-idl* both mean 'like', no matter it is of the same species or not."

Also, he has said: "*al-Wabãl* (اَلْوَبَال = translated here as 'the un-wholesome result') means burden of a thing in hateful situation; accord-ingly they say: *Ta'ãm wabīl* (طَعَامُ وَبِيْلُ) and *mã' wabīl* (مَاءُ وَبِيْلُ) when the food and water are heavy, not nourishing; thus Allãh says: . . . *so We laid on him a violent hold* [73:16]; i.e. heavy and hard; and for this reason, the board of washerman is called *wabīl*."

The words: "Do not kill game while you are in the pilgrim garb," forbid the killing of game. But it is partially elaborated by the next verse: *Lawful to you is the game of the sea* – this explains the kind of game; and

the nature of killing is elaborated by the next sentence: "and whoever among you shall kill it intentionally . . ." The word: 'intentionally' is the circumstantial clause related to: "whoever among you shall kill it." Apparently, intentional killing is opposite of unin-tentional one, i.e. killing without intention, e.g. one shoots arrow to a certain target, and it missing the target hits a game. The verse makes it clear that he must pay the compensation if he did have the intention of killing the game, no matter whether he remembered that he was in the pilgrim garb, or had forgotten it or was oblivious to it.

The sentence: "the compensation (of it) is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka'bah." Its meaning is clear: He has to offer a compensation, which should be like the game he has killed; it should be from a kind of cattle which is like the killed game; that similar cattle will be decided by two just religious persons among you; that offering should be brought to the Ka'bah and slaughtered in the sanctuary in Mecca or Minã, as explained by the Prophetic *sunnah*.

Grammatically the word: 'compensation' is a subject whose predicate is omitted [although this aspect is lost in English translation. *tr.*]. The clauses: "the like of what he killed, from the cattle," and, "two just persons . . . shall judge", are descriptions of the compensa-tion; the clauses: "an offering," and "to be brought to the Ka'bah," are the noun and its adjective, respectively, while the "offering" is the circumstantial clause related to "the compensation", as described above. The verse has been analysed in some other ways too.

The clauses: "or the expiation (of it) is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent of it in fasting", lay down two other alternatives for the expiation of killing a game. The particle, 'or', does not show more than alternativeness, and its elaboration comes from the *sunnah*; however, the verse, first names the feeding of the poor as its expiation, and then mention its equivalent fasting, and it is not without some indication of sequence between these alternatives.

The clause: "that he may taste the unwholesome result of his deed": The letter, *l* (ل = that) indicates the objective; this and the preceding sentences to which it is attached, show that it is a kind of retribution.

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh has pardoned what is gone by; and whoever returns*** **(to it),** ***Allãh will inflict retribution on him; and Allãh is Mighty, Lord of Retribution*****:** Pardon is bestowed to what is gone by. It shows that "what

is gone by" refers to those game killings, which had occurred before the verse was revealed giving this law. Obviously, if pardon was to apply to the game killed when it was being revealed or after its revelation, it would contradict the law. This sentence was revealed to remove the possible misunderstanding that the law of compensation was retroactively applicable to the incidents preceding the time of revelation.

The verse proves that pardon may be applied to such deeds too which are not sins, provided those deeds contain evil, which by their nature would be liable to attract legislative prohibition. The clauses: "and whoever returns (to it), Allãh will inflict retribution on him; and Allãh is Mighty, Lord of Retribution." Apparently, returning to it means repeating the sin, and the clause: "Allãh will inflict retribution on him," speaks about future recurrence, not to a present order. It shows that the returning means repeating the deed that had attracted compensation, and the divine retribution refers to something other than the imposed compensation.

In this backdrop, the verse, together with the preceding and the following ones, deals with various aspects of the law of killing the game. Allãh has pardoned those who had done so before revelation of the law; but he who would kill a game after law was promulgated, would have to offer in compensation cattle like of what he had killed – this is for the first offence. However, if he repeats the sin, Allãh will inflict retribution on him, and there is no compensation on him. This is seen in most of the traditions of the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) which deal with the explanation of this verse.

Had not this explanation been given in traditions, we would have to say that the retribution, mentioned in the clause: "Allãh will inflict retribution", covered general laws including expiation; and the returning connoted killing a game again; it would then mean: Whoever indulged in killing a game as they were doing before promulgation of this law – i.e. whoever would kill a game – Allãh would inflict retribution on him – i.e. would make him liable to pay the compensation/expiation. But, as you see, this meaning is far from the wording of the verse.

QUR'ÃN: ***Lawful to you is the game of the sea . . . and fear Allãh, to Whom you shall be gathered*****:** All these verses aim at describing the law of hunting [intentionally, while the hunter is in *iḥrãm*] on land or in sea. It proves that what is made lawful in this verse is hunting the game of the sea, not [only] its eating; in this context, the word, *ṭa'ãmuhu* [**طَعَامُهُ** = which can be translated as, its food, or its eating] gives here the meaning

of food, and not of eating; and it means that you are allowed to eat from the game of the sea. In short, the verse says that you are allowed to hunt the game of the sea, and also to eat from what you have hunted.

The seafood covers what is hunted from it, like good meat of the game, as well as what is thrown up by sea like a dead animal, etc. However, the traditions of the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) explain it as good meat of game, salted or otherwise.

The words: "a provision for you and for the travellers," is a circumstantial clause related to "the game of sea and its food." It contains a shade of bestowal of gracious boon.

The verse is addressed to the believers who are in condition of *iḥrãm*; therefore the clause: "a provision for you and for the travelers", may be translated as, a provision for those in the condition of *iḥrãm* and for others.

It should be noted that there are numerous topics of jurispru-dence contained in these verses, which are written in detail in the books of *fiqh*; and whoever wants to know more should refer to those books.

QUR'ĀN: ***Allãh has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a sanctuary for the people, and the sacred month and the offerings and the*** **(ani-mals with the)** ***garlands; . . .*****:** The talk begins with the Ka'bah, which is followed by its explicative apposition the Sacred House; then month is described with the attribute, the sacred, which is followed by the offerings and the animals with garlands, which in their turn are related to the sanctity of the House. All this shows that the essential prerequi-site of this verse's topic is Sanctity.

Qiyãm (اَلْقِيَام = that with which something stands). ar-Rãghib has said: "*al-Qiyãm* and *al-qawãm* (اَلْقوَام) is the name of that with which a thing stands, i.e. remains firm; like *al-'imãd* (اَلْعِمَاد = pillar) and *as-sinãd* (اَلسِنَاد= prop) which are used for that with which a thing remains upright; as Allãh says: *And do not give away your property which Allãh has made for you a* (means of) *support to the weak of understanding, . . .* [4:5], i.e. He has made it for you a means to keep you upright; and He says: *Allãh has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a support for the people*, i.e. it provides their means of support in this life and in the hereafter;[38] al-Aṣamm has said: '(It means), firmly standing which will not be abrogated. It has an alternative version, *qayyiman* (قَيِّمًا), with the same

[38] We have translated the key word, *qiyãman*, as sanctuary, because in this context it means refuge, safety, and peace. (*tr.*)

meaning.'"

The verse basically means that Allãh has made the Ka'bah a sacred house and laid down its sanctity. Also, He has made some months sacred, and joined them together in some respects, like the *ḥajj* which is done in the sacred month of Dhi 'l-Ḥijjah. He has also ordained something connected to it, which share in this sanctity like sacrificial animals [marked as such by cutting off a piece of their ears, or putting garlands on their necks]. All this has been prescribed as a means of support for the people's blissful social life.

So, He has prescribed the Sacred House as the *qiblah*, towards which the people face in their prayers, keep to it the faces of their dead bodies and slaughtered animals, and maintain its respect in their shameful conditions [i.e. they do not face it while evacuating the bowels]. In this way their community is united and their ties are strengthened; their religion is revived and maintained; they come to it for *ḥajj* from different lands and furthest regions, and therein witness advantages for themselves and proceed on the path of servitude. The people throughout the world get guidance by the Ka'bah's name, by its remembrance and by looking at it. They seek divine nearness through it and by fixing their attention to it. Allãh has described its excellence in another way which is not far from above, as He says: *Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakkah, blessed and a guidance for the nations* (3:96). And you have seen a discourse in volume three of this book, under this verse, which illuminates this subject.[39]

Similar is the case of the sacred month, inasmuch as it is a sanctuary for men. Allãh has forbidden fighting in it, and has therein given them safety and security in their lives, honour and properties so that they get a chance to mend what had gone bad in the affairs of their lives. The position of sacred month within all months is like a station where a wayfarer – weary and tired – gets an opportunity to rest and restore himself. In short, the sacred house and the sacred month with the sacrificial animals connected with them are a means of support for the people, encompassing various aspects of their lives here and in the hereafter. If a deep-thinking meditater reflects comprehensively on the particulars of the benefits which the people acquire from the Ka'bah and the sacred month – the benefits that are ever-flowing or firmly fixed – he will get enormous blessings and will be highly amazed: He will see that

[39] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.6, pp.263-70. (*tr.*)

because of the sacred house and sacred month, blood relationships are strengthened, friendships are fortified, wealth is gladly spent on needy and poor; markets flourish, mutual love between near relatives blossoms, and strangers recognize each other; hearts come nearer, souls become purified and powers are revitalized; the com-munity gets support from one another, religion is revived, and standards of truth and banners of monotheism are raised high.

It seems this fact is mentioned here after the verses forbidding the game in order to remove any misgiving that these laws were of little or no benefit at all. What is the benefit of forbidding hunting in a certain place or time? What is the advantage of bringing sacrificial animals to a fixed area? And so on. Were not these laws merely vestiges of the superstitious rites of the ignorant and barbaric nations?

This doubt was removed here by saying that the dignity of the sacred house and the sacred month and related rules are based on an academic reality and serious basis, i.e., they are the means of support for their lives.

This explanation shows how the verse: "this is that you may know that Allãh knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and that Allãh is the Knower of all things", is connected with the preceding verses. The demonstrative pronoun: "this" may point to the law described in the preceding verses (the underlying reason of whose legislation is explained in the sentence: "Allãh has made the Ka‘bah . . ."). In this case the meaning will be as follows: Verily Allãh has made the sacred house and the sacred month sanctuaries for the people and has laid down relevant laws, in order that by preserving their sanctity, obeying the laws enacted about them, the people may proceed to the realization that Allãh knows what is in the heavens and the earth, and is fully cognizant of what is beneficial for them; that is why He has laid down for you these laws with full knowledge. There is no superstition involved in these laws that could have emanated from delusive imagination.

Alternatively, that pronoun (*this*) may be pointing to the explanation of the law which is elaborated in the sentence: "Allãh has made the Ka‘bah . . ." In this case, the meaning will be as follows: We have explained to you this reality (i.e., making the sacred house and the sacred month and their related affairs as sanctuaries for the people) in order that you may understand that Allãh fully knows what is in the heavens and in the earth and the related laws which are beneficial to their affairs.

Therefore, you should not think that these laid down laws were useless and ineffectual, or were based on superstition.

QUR'ÃN: ***Know that Allãh is severe in requiting*** **(evil)** ***and that Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful. Nothing is*** **(incumbent)** ***on the Messenger but to deliver*** **(the message),** ***and Allãh knows what you reveal and what you hide*****:** It re-enforces the preceding declarations and firmly establishes the ground of the above-mentioned laws; it threatens disobedient persons and offers (good) promise to obedient ones. The both clauses have a shade of threatening; that is why Allãh has described Himself first as being severe in punishment and then has mentioned His forgiveness and mercy. Also, it is for this reason that the talk has ended with the sentences: "Nothing is (incumbent) on the Messenger . . . and what you hide."

TRADITIONS

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chains from Ḥammãd ibn ʻĪsã and Ibn Abī ʻUmayr, from Muʻãwiyah ibn ʻAmmãr, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said in explanation of the words of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *Allãh will certainly try you in respect of some game which your hands and your lances can reach*. "Wild animals were crowded for the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), in the *ʻumrah* of Ḥudaybiyyah until their hands and their lances could reach them." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: Also, al-ʻAyyãshī has narrated it as a *mursal* tradition from Muʻãwiyah ibn ʻAmmãr; and this theme has been narrated by al-Kulaynī and ash-Shaykh (in *al-Kãfī* and *at-Tahdhīb*, respectively) through their chains to al-Ḥalabī from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.). al-ʻAyyãshī has also narrated it from Samãʻah from the same Imãm, as a *mursal* one; and similarly al-Qummī has narrated it as a *mursal*; this is also narrated from Muqãtil ibn Ḥayyãn as quoted below.

[as-Suyūṭī says:] Ibn Abī Ḥãtim has narrated from Muqãtil ibn Ḥayyãn that he said: "This verse was revealed in the *ʻumrah* of Ḥudaybiyyah; wild animals, birds and games used to come to them in their stations like of which they had never seen in the past; so Allãh forbade them to kill it while they were in the condition of *iḥrãm*; so that He might know who fears Him in secret." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: These two traditions do not go against what we

have written in the Commentary that the verse's meaning is general.

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chains from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, about the words of Allāh, the Blessed, the Sublime: *which your hands and your lances can reach*; he said, "What the hands can reach are eggs and nestlings, and what the lances can reach refers to what cannot be caught by hands." (*al-Kāfī*)

[al-Ayyāshī] narrates, through his chains in his *at-Tafsīr*, from Ḥarīz, from Abū ʿAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said, "If a *muḥrim* (مُحْرِم = one in the condition of *iḥrām*) kills a pigeon, then in it [its expiation] is a goat; if he kills a bird chick, then in it is a camel; and if he sets foot on an egg and breaks it, then on him is one dirham, all these (expiations) shall be given in *ṣadaqah* at Mecca and Minā; and this is (the meaning of) the word of Allāh in His Book: *Allāh will certainly try you in respect of some game which your hands will reach* – eggs and chicks – *and your lances* – big mothers."

The author says: ash-Shaykh has narrated it in *at-Tahdhīb*, from Ḥarīz from the same Imām (a.s.), giving only its last section.

ash-Shaykh narrates through his chains from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from Ḥammād, from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū ʿAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said, "When a *muḥrim* kills a game, then its compensation is (incumbent) on him, and the (killed) game will be given to a poor as *ṣadaqah*; then if he repeats and kills another game, there is no compensation on him, and Allāh will inflict retribution on him, and (that) retribution (will be) in the next world." (*at-Tahdhīb*)

[ash-Shaykh] narrates from al-Kulaynī, from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from some of his companions, from Abū ʿAbdillāh (a.s.), that he said: "If a *muḥrim* kills a game by mistake, then compensation is incumbent on him; then if he kills it again intentionally, then he is from those on whom Allāh will inflict retribution, and he is not liable to pay expiation." (*ibid.*)

[ash-Shaykh] narrates from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from Muʿāwiyah ibn ʿAmmār, that he said, "I said to Abū ʿAbdillāh (a.s.), 'A *muḥrim* has killed a game?' He said, 'He has to give its expiation.' I said, 'Then if he repeats?' He said, 'He has to give expiation whenever he repeats.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: As you see, the traditions differ one from another; and ash-Shaykh has reconciled them by saying that they mean: 'If a *muḥrim* intentionally kills a game it is incumbent on him to give expiation; and if he intentionally repeats then there is no expiation on him

and he is among those on whom Allãh will inflict retribution; and as for him who kills forgetfully, he has to give expiation when-ever he repeats.'

[ash-Shaykh] narrates through his chains from Zurãrah from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) about the words of Allãh, the Mighty, the Great: *as two just persons among you shall judge*. "So the just is the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and the Imãm after him, who shall judge, and he is just. So, when you have known what Allãh has ordered from the Messenger of Allãh and the Imãm, then it is sufficient for you and you should not ask (others) about it." (*ibid.*)

The author says: There are several traditions of this meaning; one of which says, "I recited near Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.), '*dhawã 'adlin minkum'* (two just persons among you); he said, '*dhū 'adlin minkum'* (just person among you); it is among the mistakes of the scribes. And it returns to variations of recital, as is apparent."

[al-Kulaynī] narrates from az-Zuhrī from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), that he said, "Fast in compensation of game is obligatory; Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, has said: *and whoever among you shall kill it intentionally, the compensation* (of it) *is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka'bah or the expiation* (of it) *is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent of it in fasting.* Well, do you know how will the equivalent of it in fasting be? O Zuhrī!" (Zuhrī) says, "I said, 'I do not know.' He said, 'The (price of) the game will be assessed; then that price will be broken up on wheat (i.e., it will be seen how much wheat may be bought with that price); then the wheat will be measured in *ṣã'* (**صَاع** = equivalent of 3 kg.), and he will fast one day for each half a *ṣã'*.'" (*al-Kãfī*)

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chains from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad from one of his men, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said, "Whoever is obligated to offer a sacrifice in his *iḥrãm*, he is free to slaughter it wherever he wishes, except the compensation of game, because Allãh says: *an offering brought to the Ka'bah.*" (*ibid.*)

al-'Ayyãshī narrates from Ḥarīz, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said about the words: *Lawful to you is the game of the sea and its food, a provision for you and for the travelers*. "Its salty one, which they eat." (And he said:) "Distinguish between the two: Every bird that lives in thickets, lays egg in land and brings up its chick on land is a game of land; and whatever bird lives in land, and lays egg in sea and bring up its

chick (there) is among the game of the sea." (*at-Tafsīr*)

[al-ʻAyyāshī narrates] from Zayd ash-Shaḥḥām that he said, "I asked Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), about the word of Allāh: *Lawful to you is the game of the sea and its food, a provision for you and for the travel-lers*; he said, 'It is salty fish; also whatever you take from it as supply, even if it is not salty, it is provision.'" (*ibid*.)

The author says: There are numerous traditions of this mean-ing narrated through Shīʻah chains from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.).

[as-Suyūṭī quotes] Ibn Abī Shaybah from Muʻāwiyah ibn Qurrah and Aḥmad, from a man of the Helpers, "Verily a camel of a man trode a nest of an ostrich and broke its eggs. So the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.) said, '(Incumbent) on you is fast of one day in lieu of every egg, or feeding of poor.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: He has also narrated this theme from Ibn Abī Shaybah, from ʻAbdullāh ibn Dhakwān, from the Prophet (s.a.w.); and has also narrated it from Abu 'z-Zinād, from ʻĀishah from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated through the chain of Abu 'l-Muhzim, from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said, "In the eggs of ostrich it is (incumbent to pay) its price." (*ibid*.)

Also, he quotes Ḥātim from Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī [a.s.]: A man asked ʻAlī about sacrificial animal, from what it is (i.e. from which species it should be). He said, "From the eight pairs." Then it seemed as if the man had some doubts; so ʻAlī said, "Do you read Qur'ān?" It seemed as if the man said, "Yes." (ʻAlī) said, "Then have you heard Allāh saying: *O you who believe! Fulfil the covenants. The cattle quadrupeds are made lawful for you* . . . [5:1]." He said, "Yes." (ʻAlī) said, "Have you heard Him saying: . . . *and mention the name of Allāh during stated days over what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds* . . . [22:28]; *And of the cattle* (He created) *beasts of burden and those which are fit for slaughter only;* . . . [6:142]?" He said, "Yes." (ʻAlī) said, "And have you heard Him saying: . . . *two of sheep and two of goats* . . . [6:143]? *And two of camels and two of cows* . . . [6:144]?" He said, "Yes." (ʻAlī) said, "And have you heard Him saying: *O you who believe! Do not kill game while you are in the pilgrim garb* . . . *as an offering to be brought to the Kaʻbah*?" The man said, "Yes." Then (ʻAlī) said, "If I killed a deer, then what is (incumbent) on me?" He said, "A

goat." ‘Alī said, "An offering to be brought to the Ka‘bah?" The man said, "Yes." Then ‘Alī said, "Allāh has named it: *to be brought to the Ka’bah*, as you hear." (*ibid*.)

Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrates from ‘Aṭā’ al-Khurāsānī that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ibn ‘Abbās, Zayd ibn Thābit and Mu‘āwiyah had judged that if a *muḥrim* kills a game for which an offering is given in compensation, the price of that offer-ing should be assessed and poor persons fed from it. (*ibid*).

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.), said, '*Lawful to you is the game of the sea and its food, a provision for you*.' He said, 'Whatever dead animals it throws (on the shore), it is its food.'" (*ibid*.)

The author says: Similar themes have been narrated from some companions too; but what is narrated from the chains of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* contradicts it, as described earlier.

[al-‘Ayyāshī] narrates from Abān ibn Taghlib that he said, "I said to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.), '(What is the meaning of:) *Allāh has made the Ka‘bah, the Sacred House, a sanctuary for the people*?' He said, 'Livelihood.'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: The explanation of this tradition has been given earlier.

* * * * *

قُل لَّا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ
وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

Say: "The bad and the good are not equal, though the abun-dance of the bad may enchant you;" so fear Allãh, O men of understanding, that you may be successful (100).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The verse seems as if it is independent and complete in itself, because its connection with the preceding and the following verses is not clear. Therefore, one should not needlessly strive to seek its con-nection with foregoing verses. It only explains a universal parable Allãh has used to describe a characteristic which distinguishes the True Religion from other prevalent religions and customs: That consideration and respect belongs to the Truth even if the people adhering to it are few and its band scattered; that one should rely on good and bliss even if majority has turned away from it and powerful people have forgotten it. It is because Truth does not rely in its intrinsic values except on sound reason; and far be it from the sound reason to lead to other than the good of human society – the good which supports man in the affairs of life and means of

pleasant livelihood, no matter whether it agrees with majority's desires or not (and often it goes against majority's wishes!). So it is this system prevalent in creation, and it is the basis of correct views and opinions; it does never follow their desires, and if the Truth were to follow their desires, the heavens and the earth would perish.

QUR'ÃN: ***Say: "The bad and the good are not equal, though the abundance of the bad may enchant you;"*****:** Apparently, unequality of the bad and the good means that the good is better than the bad. It is a very clear idea; therefore the speech must be an allusion to some deeper factor: The good by it very nature enjoys a higher status than the bad; now if we suppose the opposite, that because of some acci-dental development, the bad becomes better than the good, it would mean that the bad had gradually risen and ascended the stairs until it reached a step where it became level with the good in rank and status, before surpassing it and gaining ascendancy over it. So, when equality between them is negated, it more clearly and forcefully would negate the idea of the bad being better than the good.

It also makes it clear why "the bad" has been placed in this verse before "the good." It is because the speech aims at showing that abundance of the bad does not make it better than the good; and it could only happen if the bad rose from the abyss of vileness and meanness to the height of nobility and glory until it became level with the good in its position and then ascended higher. If the speaker were to say: 'The good and the bad are not equal,' then the motive would be to show that the good cannot be more vile and mean than the bad, and in that case it should have mentioned smallness of the good in place of abundance of the bad. Understand it.

Goodness and badness are two real attributes for real things found outside imagination, like good/bad food, good/bad land. Allãh says: *And as for good land, its vegetation springs forth* (abundantly) *by the permission of its Lord, and* (as for) *that which is bad* (its herb-age) *comes forth but scantily; . . .* (7:58); *. . . and the good provisions?* (7:32). If at any time, goodness and badness are used for any type of subjective approach or situation, like good/bad judgement or good/bad behaviour, then it is based on a sort of consideration.

However, in this speech, the clauses: *so fear Allãh, O men of understanding, that you may be successful,* have branched out from, "The bad and the good are not equal . . .;" and fear of Allãh or piety results

from action or inaction, while its goodness and badness ema-nate from metaphorical consideration; and the sentence: "The bad and the good are not equal," is taken as a well-accepted principle; all these factors together offer the strongest proof that goodness and badness here connote the real things outside imagination – only then the proof will be successful. If on the other hand, it were to describe good and bad and behaviour, the meaning would not be so clear, because every community believes that its system is the good one and what goes against its wishes and opposes its desires is bad.

Therefore, the speech is based on another meaning which Allãh has described in various places in His Book; that is, the religion is based on nature and creation, and what the religion invites to is the life that is good, and what it forbids is the bad; that Allãh has not made lawful except the good things, and has not forbidden except the bad things. Allãh says: *Then set your face upright for religion in natural devotion* (to truth); *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allãh's creation; that is the right relig-ion, . . .* (30:30); *. . . and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, . . .* (7:157); *Say: "Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allãh which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?" . . .* (7:32)

It comes out from above that the sentence: "The bad and the good are not equal, though the abundance of the bad may enchant you," is a parable to show that religious laws, which are based on the things' good or bad inherent attributes, do affect the human bliss and misery; that they do not vary because of smallness or abundance; the good is good even it is in small quantity, and the bad is bad even it is in abundance.

Thus it is incumbent on every man of understanding to distin-guish the bad from the good, and to decide that the good is better than the bad. He must realize that man is obligated to exert himself to make his life blissful, and to opt for the good against the bad; he must fear Allãh, his Lord, and proceed on His path. He should not be deceived when he sees the multitude of the people addicted to heinous deeds and perilous characteristics and conditions; base desires should not turn him away from following the truth, and fear or favour should not influence him in anyway. Probably then he will succeed in attaining the human bliss.

QUR'ĀN: ***so fear Allãh, O men of understanding, that you may be successful*:** It branches out from the preceding parable. The meaning:

Piety and fear of Allãh are connected with divine *sharī'ah*, which in its turn is based on creative good and bad for looking after the interest of the man's bliss and success; and no man of reason can entertain any doubt about it. Therefore, O men of understanding! It is incumbent on you to fear Allãh by acting on His *sharī'ah*, in order that you may be successful.

* * * * *

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تَسْـَٔلُوا۟
عَنْ أَشْيَآءَ إِن تُبْدَ لَكُمْ تَسُؤْكُمْ ۖ وَإِن تَسْـَٔلُوا۟ عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ
ٱلْقُرْءَانُ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ ۖ عَفَا ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾ قَدْ
سَأَلَهَا قَوْمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَصْبَحُوا۟ بِهَا كَٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, and if you question about them while the Qur'ãn is being revealed, they shall be declared to you; Allãh has pardoned of this, and Allãh is Forgiving, Forbearing (101). *A people before you indeed asked such questions, and then became disbelievers in them* (102).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The two verses clearly have no connection with the preceding ones, and their meaning does not require any relation with any previ-ous talk for clarification of any of their part. Therefore, there is no need for the over-exertion and the mental gymnastic which many exegetes have indulged into to discover the verses' connection with the theme preceding ones, or with the beginning of the chapter, or with its; so it is better to

ignore it altogether.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you . . . and Allãh is Forgiving, Forbearing*****:** *al-Ibdã'* (اَلإِبْدَاءُ = to declare, to disclose); *sã'ahu* (سَاءَهُ) is opposite of *sarrahu* (سَرَّهُ = it pleased him).

The verse forbids the believers to put questions about such things, which may pain and displease them if disclosed. It has left it vague who was the person asked from. But the sentence: "if you ques-tion about them while the Qur'ãn is being revealed", as well as the next verse: *A people before you indeed asked such questions, then became disbelievers on account of them*, clearly show that it is the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who is intended here – that the believers should not put such questions to him which would result in such and such. However, the underlying reason of this prohibition conveys the idea that it covers also other situations; that it forbids man to enquire about, and search, the things Allãh has lelf vague and put a veil on them which cannot be removed by normal means and usual ways. Obvious-ly, there is a strong chance of misery and perdition if one were to acquire somehow the knowledge of such realities as, for example, the date when he would die, the cause of his death, the life-span of his near and dear ones, the fall of his kingdom and honour; probably the very knowledge might cause his perdition or misery.

The system of life has been streamlined by Allãh and imple-mented by Him in the world. He has disclosed some things and put veil on the others. He has not made open what He has but for an under-lying reason; and has not hidden what He has but for an underlying reason. Therefore, to cause hiding of what is apparent or to disclose what is hidden would disrupt the system, which covers the universe. It is not unlike the human life based on the body-system which is made up of various powers, organs and limbs – if one of it is removed from, or added to it, a major function of life would be lost, and may be at times the life itself – or its meaning – will be ruined.

The second factor, which the verse has left vague, is the nature of the things about which they are forbidden to ask. It only describes them as being such that they may pain or trouble you if they are dis-closed. There is no doubt that the words: "which if declared to you may trouble you," are the attribute of the preceding word: "things." It is a conditional sentence that shows that if the condition takes place, its concomitant is bound to take place. As those things were of such a nature that if disclosed they would certainly trouble them; therefore, putting questions

about them and seeking to unearth their hidden affairs was tantamount to asking to be troubled and pained.

Objection: A sane person does not seek that which would give him pain or put him in trouble. Therefore, it would have been better if the prohibition was rephrased, for example: do not put question about things that contain factors which if disclosed to you may trouble you. Or, do not put questions about things which you are not sure would not trouble you if disclosed to you.

Someone has replied to it in a really strange way. He has said: "It is established in the Arabic grammar that the particle, *in* (إِنْ = if) describes a condition which is not certain to take place, to appear; and the concomitant follows the condition in coming into existence or not coming; as Qur'ãn has used *in*, and not *idhã* (إِذَا = if, when) [which gives a shade of certainty], it proves that mere possibility of its dis-closure being troublesome, is sufficient to forbid putting questions about it."

COMMENT: He has clearly erred in this reply. Would that I knew which rule of the Arabic grammar has said that a condition followed by *in* was not sure to take place; and that consequently its concomitant too was not certain to come into being. What does it mean when we say: 'If (*in*) you come to me I'll bestow honour upon you?' Doesn't it mean that if you came you'll certainly be bestowed honour upon? Therefore, his view that, mere possibility of its disclosure being trouble-some is sufficient to forbid putting questions about it, could hold water only if the verse had forbidden asking about things which could possibly trouble them if disclosed. But as you already know the fact is different; it forbids putting question about things, which were definitely going to trouble them if disclosed. So the objection remains unanswered.

Another Reply: Similar in weakness is another view, based on some traditions, that the: "things which if declared to you may trouble you", points to those unseen things which some people appear eager to know, like dates of deaths, final result of many affairs, flow of the good and the bad, and avidity to unearth the hidden destiny, which by nature is not free from what gives pain to man; for example, when a man asks how many years have remained in his life, how will he die, what will be his end result, who was his father and so on; and such ques-tions were usually asked in the Era of Ignorance. Therefore, the verse forbids them to put questions about such things; because usually such disclosures may expose informations which may afflict man with pain and grief; for example, that his death is nearer, or that his end is disas-trous, or that his real father is

someone other than the one he is affili-ated to. These are the things which usually throw man in trouble and sorrow; and there was a possibility that if questions about them were put to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), he would answer them with what would not please the questioner, and arrogance and pride might push him to refute the words of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and become a disbeliever, as the next verse points to it: *A people before you indeed asked such questions, and then became disbelievers on account of them.*

COMMENT: Although this interpretation seems perfect at the first glance, yet it does not agree with the divine words: *and if you question about them while the Qur'ãn is being revealed, they shall be declared to you* – whether we say that this verse permits such questions at the time of the revelation of Qur'ãn, or that it emphatically forbids it at that time by pointing to the fact that at other times the replier, i.e. the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has the option of not replying to such questions, keeping in view the well-being of the questioners; but such things are in fact unveiled before his eyes, their reality is known to him from the beginning; therefore you should not ask about them while the Qur'ãn is being revealed.

As for its disagreement with the first meaning, it is because the questions about such things, by their nature, entail scandals; therefore, there is no sense in saying that such questioning is allowed while the Qur'ãn is being revealed, as the scandal will remain even then.

As for its being unfit with the second meaning, it is accepted that the time of the revelation of Qur'ãn was the time of disclosure and unveiling for those things which needed to be disclosed and unveiled; yet this especially was reserved to realities of cognition and the laws of do's and don'ts, and related affairs. However, fixing the age of Zayd, disclosing how 'Amr will die, identifying who was that man's father and things like that have no connection at all with the Qur'ãnic descriptions. In this backdrop, there appears no reason why the pro-hibition of putting questions about such things should be followed by the clause: "and if you question about them while the Qur'ãn is being revealed, they shall be declared to you."

Therefore, the more appropriate reply is the one inferred from some other persons' talk that: The next verse: *A people before you indeed asked such questions, and then became disbelievers on account of them*, as well as the clause: "and if you question about them while the Qur'ãn is being revealed, they shall be declared to you," show that the things

questioned about were connected with the laid down laws; the verses discourage and forbid the believers to seek minute details regarding those laws, because too much interrogation and too deep delving in questions would certainly lead to harder details and put the questioners in greater troubles, as Allāh has described in the story of the cow of the Israelites. The more they indulged in enquiry, asking for more and more particulars of the cow which they were told to slaughter the more Allāh went on tightening the conditions and narrowing their choices.

The clause: "Allāh has pardoned of this," is apparently an independent sentence, put here to explain the reason of the prohibition: "do not put question about things which if declared to you may trouble you."

Some exegetes have said: The clause: "Allāh has pardoned of this", is the attribute of "things"; and the speech has to be re-arranged as follows: do not put questions about things, which Allāh has par-doned, which if declared to you may trouble you.

COMMENT: This interpretation is not correct; the verb: *'afā* (عَفَا = pardoned) has taken the preposition: *'an* (عَنْ), and it is the best proof that the things pardoned are those which are related to *sharī'ah* and laws; had they been from among the creative affairs, it was almost certain to be described as, Allāh has pardoned this.

In any case, the reasoning in terms of pardoning, indicates that the word: "things", refers to the particulars of the laws and *sharī'ah*, and the conditions pertaining to them; and makes it clear that if the Qur'ān is silent about them, it is not because Allāh was unmindful of them or had neglected them; it is but a concession from Allāh to His servant which He has bestowed on them to make their lives easier; as He says [at the end of the verse]: "And Allāh is Forgiving, Forbearing." When they put questions asking for an order's particulars, they make themselves liable to more hardship, to further tightening – and it is bound to afflict them with pain and grief as in this way they reject the divine pardon which was offered to them to make life easy to them, and to affirm the divine attributes of forgiveness and forbearance.

The theme of the verse may be expressed in our words as follows: 'O you who believe! Do not ask the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the things regarding which the *sharī'ah* is silent, Allāh has pardoned them and has not spoken about them in order to make your life easy and free from burden; because they are such that if you ask about them while the Qur'ān is being revealed, they shall be declared to you, and they will put you in trouble and pain if they are disclosed to you.'

The above discourse has made it clear that:

The divine words: "and if you question about them while the Qur'ãn is being revealed, they shall be declared to you", are the ending part of the prohibition, as has been explained; they are not intended to erase the prohibition of questioning at the time when the Qur'ãn is being revealed, as some people have thought.

The clause: "Allãh has pardoned of it," is an independent sentence, put here to give the reason of the prohibition of the questioning; it thus gives the benefit of adjective, although grammatically it is not an adjective.

The speech ends with the clause: "and Allãh is Forgiving, Forbearing," although the speech contains prohibition which does not agree with the attributes of forgiveness and forbearance. Therefore these two attributes are related to the pardon mentioned in the clause: "Allãh has pardoned of it," and not to the prohibition contained in the verse.

QUR'ÃN: ***A people before you indeed asked such questions, and they became disbelievers on account of them*****:** It is said that *sa'alahu* (سَأَلَهُ) and *sa'ala 'anhu* (سَأَلَ عَنْهُ) have the same meaning: He asked about him; *thumma* (ثُمَّ = then) indicates delay in terms of speaking, not in terms of time; *bihã* (بِهَا = in them) is connected with, disbelievers, as the verse apparently shows; it is intended to forbid putting questions concerning the conditions of laws and orders which were left vague at the time of legislation. Thus, the disbelief here indicates disbelief in the laws as it entails diffidence of soul and straitness of hearts against their acceptance.

There is also a possibility that *bi* (بِ) in it may be used to show the cause; then the meaning will be: on account of it; but this is a far-fetched idea.

Although the verse has not named the people who had turned disbelievers, yet there are some episodes mentioned in the Qur'ãn to which the verse may be applied, like that of the table (among the Christians' stories) and several others related to the *ummah* of Mūsã and others.

TRADITIONS

[as-Suyūṭī] quotes Ibn Jarīr, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh who have narrated from Abū Hurayrah that he said, "The Messenger of

Allāh (s.a.w.), delivered a sermon before us, and said, 'O people! Allāh has prescribed *ḥajj* for you.' ‘Ukāshah ibn Muḥṣin stood up and said, 'Every year? O Messenger of Allāh!' (The Prophet) said, 'As for it, if I had said, "Yes," it would have become obligatory; and if it had become obligatory and then you were to leave it, you would have gone astray. Remain silent before me when I am silent before you, as those who were before you had perished only because of their questionings and their discord against their prophets.' Then Allāh revealed: *O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you . .* " (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: This story has been narrated by several narrators from Abū Hurayrah and Abū Amāmah, etc.; and it has been narrated in *Majma‘u 'l-bayān* and other Shī‘ite books. It fits on the explanation that we have written earlier.

[as-Suyūṭī] quotes Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim who have nar-rated from as-Suddī about the word of Allāh: *O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you . . .*, that he said, "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.), became angry one day, and stood up to address the people; and he said, 'Ask me, for you will not ask me about anything but I shall inform you about it.' So there stood up a Qurayshite man from Banū Sahm, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥadhāqah by name – and people used to vilify him – and said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Who is my father?' He said, 'Your father is so-and-so (and he asserted his relationship to his father).' ‘Umar betook himself to him, kissed his foot and said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! We are pleased with Allāh as the Lord, and with you as the Prophet, and with the Qur’ān as the leader; so pardon us, may Allāh pardon you!' So he continued beseeching him until his anger subsided. It was on that day that he said, 'The child belongs to the bed and for the adulterer is the stone.' And it was (then) revealed to him: *And people before you indeed asked such questions,* [*and then became disbelievers on account of them*]." (*ibid*.)

The author says: This tradition is narrated through several chains with variations in their wordings. However you have seen earlier that it does not fit on the verse.

[as-Suyūṭī] quotes Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhhir and al-Ḥākim (who said that it is correct), who narrated from Tha‘labah al-Khashnī that he said, "Then the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.), said, 'Verily Allāh has laid

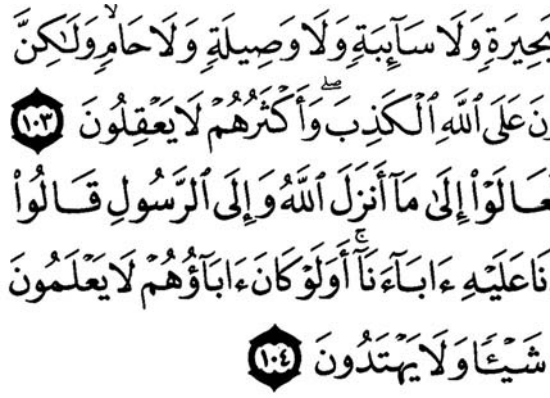
down (some) limits, so do not transgress them; and has prescribed for you (some) obligations, so do not neglect them; and has made (some) things unlawful, so do not commit them; and has left (some) things, not because of forgetfulness, but as a mercy from Himself for you, so accept them and do not delve in them.'" (*ibid*.)

ʿAlī (a.s.) said, "Verily Allãh has enjoined upon you some duties, so do not neglect them; and laid down for you some limits, so do not transgress them; and has forbidden you some things, so do not commit them; and has passed over some things, and has not left them because of forgetfulness, so do not force yourself concerning them." (*Majmaʿu 'l-bayãn*; *Tafsīr aṣ-Ṣãfī*)

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chains from Abu 'l-Jārūd that he said, "Abū Jaʿfar (a.s.), said, 'When I tell you anything, you should ask me for its authority from the Book of Allãh.' Thereafter he said in one of his talks, 'Verily the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had forbid-den idle lalk, squandering of wealth and excessive questioning.' It was said to him, 'O Son of the Messenger of Allãh! Where is it from the Book of Allãh?' He said, 'Verily Allãh, the Mighty, the Great, says: *There is no good in most of their secret talks except* (in his) *who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people* [4:114]; and He has said: *And do not give away your property which Allãh has made for you a* (means of) *support to the weak of understanding* [4:5]; and He has said: *do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you*.'" [5:101] (*al-Kãfī*)

[al-ʿAyyãshī] narrates from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad that he said: "I wrote to Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍã (a.s.), [he wrote its reply] at the end of which he wrote: 'Have not you [people] been forbidden to ask too many questions? Yet you refuse to desist! Beware of it, for those who were before you had perished only because of abundance of their questions. So Allãh, the Blessed, the Sublime, said: *O you who believe! Do not put questions about things which if declared to you may trouble you, . . . A people before you indeed asked such questions, and then became disbelievers in them*.'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

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Allãh has not ordained (the making of) *a* baḥīrah *or a* sãibah *or a* waṣīlah *or a* ḥãmi *but those who disbelieve fabricate a lie against Allãh, and most of them do not understand* (103). *And when it is said to them: "Come to what Allãh has revealed and to the Messenger," they say: "That on which we found our fathers is sufficient for us." What! Even though their fathers knew nothing and did not follow the right way* (104).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

QUR'ÃN: *Allãh has not ordained* (the making) of) *a* baḥīrah *or a* sãibah *or a* waṣīlah *or a* ḥãmi . . .: These were some cattle-groups the people of the Era of Ignorance had made for them some rules which were based on respect and accorded them a sort of freedom, Allãh in this verse

rebuts the idea that He had might have made any of it. [The literal meaning: Allãh has not made]. This negated making is related to those cattles attributes, not their beings; because their beings, their selves, are Allãh's creatures, without any doubt. Likewise, their attributes, so far as they are attributes, are created by Allãh. What may be positively or negatively ascribed to Allãh, are the self-same attri-butes inasmuch as they were thought to be the source of the rules, which those Arabs claimed for them. Thus, the negation of making of *baḥīrah* and its group means that Allãh had not ordained those rules or laws which were ascribed to them and were well-known among Arabs.

The exegetes differ about the meanings of the names of these four kinds of cattle, resulting in difference about details of their related laws – as you will soon see – yet it is accepted by all that those laws accorded them some sort of freedom, respect and care for their well-being; and that three groups were of camels, i.e. *baḥīrah*, *sãibah* and *ḥãmi*, and one, *waṣīlah*, was of goat.

al-Baḥīrah: *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* says: It was a she-camel which gave birth five times, the last one being a male calf; they used to cleave its ear a wide tear; they refrained from riding or slaughtering it; it was not driven away from any water or pasture, and even if a tired traveller found it, he would not ride it. (Reported from az-Zajjãj.)

Also, it is said that when a she-camel had given birth five times, they looked at the fifth issue; if it was a male, they slaughtered it and men and women all partook of it; but if it was a female, they cleaved its ear and it was called *al-baḥīrah*: its fur was not shorn; if it was slaughtered, the name of Allãh was not mentioned on it; nor was it used for loading or riding; women were forbidden to taste even a drop of its milk or to get any benefit from it – its milk and benefits were reserved for men until it died; when it died, men and women joined in eating it. (Reported from Ibn 'Abbãs.)

And it is said that *al-baḥīrah* was the daughter of *as-sãibah*. (Reported from Muḥammad ibn Isḥãq.)

as-Sãibah: *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* says: It was what they used to let go free; a man made a vow that if he returned from his journey, or if he recovered from illness, or so on, then his she-camel would be *sãibah*; then it would be treated like *al-baḥīrah*, in that it would not be used in any way, nor would it be kept back from any water or pasture. (Reported from az-

Zajjāj; and also it is the saying of ‘Alqamah.)

Also, it is said that it is was a she-camel that was freed for idols. Usually, a man freed whatever he wished from among his property; then he brought it to custodians, i.e. servants of their dieties, and they fed way-farers of its milk and so on. (Reported from Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Mas‘ūd.)

Also, it is said that when a she-camel gave birth to ten females consequently, without any male calf coming in between, it was made free; they did not ride it, nor did they shear its fur, and except for a guest, no one could drink its milk; if after that she again bore a female, its ear was torn and it was left to roam with its mother; and it was that was called *al-baḥīrah*. (Reported from Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq.)

al-Waṣīlah: *Majma‘u 'l-bayān* says: It was taken out from goats. When a goat gave birth to a female kid, it belonged to them, and if it bore a male, it was slaughtered to their dieties; but if it gave birth to a male and a female together, they said: It has joined its brother; and then the male kid was not slaughtered for their dieties. (Reported from az-Zajjāj.)

Also, it has been said that when a goat gave birth seven times, then if the seventh was a male kid, they slaughtered it for their dieties, and its meat was exclusively reserved for men; and if it was a female kid, it was allowed to live and joined the herd. But if the seventh preg-nancy brought forth a male and a female kids, they said: The sister has joined its brother, as it is unlawful to us; so both became unlawful, and their benefit and milk was reserved for men to the exclusion of women. (Reported from Ibn Mas‘ūd and Muqātil)

Also, it is said that *al-waṣīlah* was a goat which brought forth ten female kids in five pregnancies, without there being any male among them. Then they said she has joined. Then whatever was born to her after that, was reserved for men, the women being excluded from it. (Reported from Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq.)

al-Ḥāmī: *Majma‘u 'l-bayān* says: It is a male camel. When a male camel had sired ten pregnancies, they used to say: Its back is pro-tected. Nothing was loaded on it, nor was it prevented from water or pasture. (Reported from Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Mas‘ūd, and also from Abū ‘Ubaydah and az-Zajjāj.)

Also, it is said that when a male camel's child's child was im-pregnated, they said: Its back has become protected; so it was not ridden. (Reported from al-Farrā’.)

Although there is all this difference in meanings of these names, there is a strong probability that it portrays the variation in different tribes' usage and customs, because such superstitions were wide spread among ancient barbaric nations.

Be it as it may. The verse aims at refuting the rules they had fabricated for these four types of the cattle, wrongly ascribing them to Allãh. Look at the divine words: "Allãh has not ordained (the making of) a *baḥīrah* or a *sãibah* or a *waṣīlah* or a *ḥãmi*"; followed immediately by the clause: "but those who disbelieve fabricate a lie against Allãh."

This latter clause appears to answer a supposed question: When Allãh denied ordaining *baḥīrah* and other types of cattle, it was as if somebody had asked: 'Then what is the position of the claims made by disbelievers?' And the answer came: *those who disbelieve fabricate a lie against Allãh*. Then it was further explained, adding the clause: "and most of them do not understand." It means that their positions differ in this fabrication; most of them fabricate against Allãh what they do and they do not understand; while the remaining small group do under-stand the Truth, knowing well that what they ascribe to Allãh is mere fabrication. These are the leaders whose words are listened to and who manage the affairs of the masses; and they are the obstinate and stubborn ones.

QUR'ÃN: ***And when it is said to them: "Come to what Allãh has revealed and to the Messenger," they say: "That on which we found our fathers is sufficient for us." What! Even though their fathers knew nothing and did not follow the right way*****:** It describes their attitude when they were invited to come to what Allãh had revealed and to the Messenger whose responsibility was to convey the mess-age. That call invited them to Truth, devoid of fabrication, and knowl-edge clear of ignorance. The preceding verse gathers fabrication and lack of understanding together on their side; obviously nothing remains for the opposite side – the side of Allãh – except truth and knowledge.

But they did not discard it except because of blind imitation, as they said: That on which we found our fathers is sufficient for us.

at-Taqlīd (اَلتَّقْلِيْدُ = imitation, following) is not always wrong; sometimes it might be correct with some conditions – and that is when an ignorant person follows a knowledgeable one. This 'following' is the factor on which the progress of human society is based in all those affairs of life in which man is unable to acquire necessary knowledge. However,

if an ignorant man follows another ignorant one in his ignor-ance, then it is highly condemnable in the eyes of the understanding people. Likewise, it is also objectionable if a learned man follows another learned one, going against his own deductions discarding it for another man's findings.

That is why Allāh has refuted their claim and said: "What! Even though their fathers knew nothing and did not follow the right way." It indicates that reason – if there is reason – does not allow a man to refer to him who has no knowledge, nor does he follow the right way. This is the way of life, and it does not permit to follow a path which is not free of dangers, and whose condition is not known – neither independently nor by following an expert.

Probably, the addition of: "and did not follow the right way", after the clause: "knew nothing", aims at completing the qualifications of speech, in its true sense; although reference by an ignorant person to another ignorant one is condemnable, but it is so only when the followed one is like the follower in ignorance without there being any distinction between the two. But if the followed one, even if ignorant, proceeds on the way guided by a knowledgeable expert, then he follows the right way, and then there is no blame if somebody follows him on the way; because ultimately it turns out to be an imitation of a person who knows the details of the path.

It is now clear from above that the clause: "even though their fathers knew nothing", was not enough by itself to complete the proof against them, because there would have remained a possibility that their ignorant fathers might have been following learned guides, in which case there was no blame on them. Therefore, that possibility was removed by adding the clause: "and did not follow the right way", so there was no justification in imitating such people.

The preceding verse: *Allāh has not ordained* (the making of) *a baḥīrah* . . ., had shown that those people either had no understanding, (and they were the majority) or were stubborn and arrogant [and they were the misleading leaders]; and it had made it clear that such people did not deserved to be addressed by Allāh, or to be presented with divine arguments. That is the reason that this verse does not argue with them directly; it seems to address another group and avoids talking to them face to face; and therefore it says: "What! Even though their fathers knew nothing and did not follow the right way."

There has been given in the first volume[40] of this adoption of other people's concepts and rulings, which you may refer for details.

The verse also makes it clear that referring to the Book of Allãh and to His Messenger, i.e., to the *sunnah* is not a blameworthy imita-tion and following.

TRADITIONS

It is narrated in *Tafsīru 'l-Burhãn* from aṣ-Ṣadūq, through his chains, from Muḥammad ibn Muslim, from Abū Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said about the word of Allãh, the Might, the Great: *Allãh has not ordained* (the making of) *a* baḥīrah *or a* sãibah *or a* waṣīlah *or a* ḥãmi. "The people of (the Era of) Ignorance used to say, when a she-camel brought forth two calfs in one pregnancy, 'it has joined'; then they did not allow its slaughter or partaking of its meat; and when it bore ten (calves), they declared it to be *sãibah*; then they did not allow riding it or eating its meat; and *ḥãmī* was the male camel, they did not allow it [i.e. riding or eating it]. So, Allãh revealed that He had not ordained prohibition of any of these things."

[al-Baḥrãnī says:] Then Ibn Bãbawayh says: "It has been nar-rated that *al-baḥīrah* was a she-camel, when it gave birth five times, then if the fifth calf was a male, they slaughtered it (the calf) and men and women partook of it; and if the fifth was a female they tore its ear, and its meat and milk was unlawful to women, but if it died then it became lawful to women. *as-Sãibah* was a camel, which was freed by *nadhr* (vow); a man vowed that if Allãh gave him recovery from ill- ness or conveyed him to his home, he would do so.

"And *al-waṣīlah* was a goat. If a goat gave birth in seven preg-nancies, and the seventh kid was a male, it was slaughtered, and men and women ate from it, but if it was a female, it was joined to the herd; and if there were two kids, a male and a female, they said: 'It has joined its brother;' then it was not slaughtered, and its meat was unlawful for women, except that it died (of itself), the eating it was lawful for men and women.

"And *al-ḥãm* was a stallion, when a child of its child was (ready to be) ridden, they said: 'Its back is indeed protected.'" Then he (al-Baḥrãnī

[40] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.1, pp.301-5. (*tr.*)

said: "Also, it is narrated that *ḥãmi* is a camel which brought forth ten pregnancies; so they said: 'Its back is indeed protected;' so it was not ridden, nor was it prevented from any pasture or water."

The author says: There are other traditions from the Shī'ite and Sunnite chains, regarding the meanings of these names: *baḥīrah*, *sãibah*, *waṣīlah* and *ḥãmi*, some other have been quoted above from *Majma'u 'l-bayãn*.

What is certain about their meanings, is that these groups of cattle enjoyed some freedom in the Era of Ignorance, and there were related laws, for example, it was not allowed to ride them or eat their meat, and they were never prevented from any pasture or water; also, that *waṣīlah* was from goats and the other three from camels.

Ibn 'Abbãs has narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: "Verily 'Amr ibn Luḥī ibn Qam'ah ibn Khandaf became king of Mecca. He was the first who changed the religion of Ismã'īl and obtained idols and put up graven images[41] and invented *baḥīrah*, *sãibah*, *waṣīlah* and *ḥãmi*." (The Messenger of Allãh, s.a.w.a. said:) "And indeed I saw him in the Fire, the smell of his guts troubles the people of the Fire." Also, it is narrated that [the Holy Prophet said, "I saw him] dragging his guts in the Fire."

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated this chains from Ibn 'Abbãs and others.

as-Suyūṭī quotes 'Abdu 'r-Razzãq, Ibn Abī Shaybah, 'Abd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Jarīr who narrated from Zayd ibn Aslam that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), said 'Verily I know the first man who invented *sãibah* and fixed idols, and the first man who changed the religion of Ibrãhīm.' They said, 'Who was he, O Messenger of Allãh!' He said, 'Amr ibn Luḥī, of Banū Ka'b; I had indeed seen him dragging his guts in the Fire.' [Then he said:] 'And I know who put marks on dedicated animals.' They said, 'Who was he, O Messenger of Allãh?' He said, 'A man from Banū Mudlij; he had two she-camels, and he tore up their ears and forbade (to himself) their milk and backs; and he said, "These two are for Allãh." Thereafter, he felt the need of them, so he drank their milk and rode (on) their backs.' He (the Prophet) said, 'And indeed I saw him in the Fire, and the two (camels) were shattering him with their mouths

[41] In cir. 250 C.E. (*tr.*)

and trampling him down with their hooves.'" (*ad-Durr 'l-manthūr*)

[as-Suyūṭī] quotes Aḥmad, ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī (in *Nawãdiru 'l-uṣūl*), Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim and al-Bayhaqī (in *al-Asmã' wa 'ṣ-ṣifãt*) who narrated from Abu 'l-Aḥwaṣ, from his father, that he said, "I came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) wearing shabby garments. So he said to me, 'Do you have some wealth?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'What type of wealth?' I said, 'From every kind, camels, goats, horses and slaves.' He said, 'When Allãh has bestowed on you, it should be seen on you.' Then he said, 'Do your camels give birth to (calves with) unimpaired ears?' I said, 'Yes; and does camel give birth except like this.' He said, 'Then perhaps you take a razor and cut off the ears of a group of them and then you say: "It is a *baḥīrah*," and split the ears of (another) group of them, and then you say: "It is separated?"' I said, 'Yes.' (The Prophet) said, 'Don't do it; whatever Allãh has given you is lawful to you.' Then he said, '*Allãh has not ordained* (the making of) *a* baḥīrah *or a* sãibah *or a* waṣīlah *or a* ḥãmi.'" (*ibid*.)

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يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ أَنفُسَكُمۡۖ
لَا يَضُرُّكُم مَّن ضَلَّ إِذَا ٱهۡتَدَيۡتُمۡۚ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ مَرۡجِعُكُمۡ جَمِيعٗا
فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُونَ ١٠٥

O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way; to Allãh is your return, of all (of you), *so He will inform you of what you did* (105).

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COMMENTARY

The verse enjoins the believers to take care of themselves and adhere to the path of their guidance; they should not be worried because a group of people has gone astray; everyone is to return to Allãh, and He is to judge everyone according to his deeds.

The speech contains very deep meanings.

QUR'ÃN: ***O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way; . . .:*** *'Alaykum anfusakum* (عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ = translated here, take care of your souls): *'Alaykum* is a verbal noun, and means, adhere; *your soul* is its objective; literally it means, adhere to your souls.

It is known that going astray and being on the right way – the

opposites – take place when one proceeds on a way. If one adheres to the middle of the road, he reaches to the end of the road, and it is the destination that he had intended to arrive at in his life's journey. On the other hand, if he was not serious in his proceeding and deviated from the right path, then he goes astray and misses the intended goal. The verse supposes that man has got a path to tread on and a destination to arrive at; sometimes he adheres to the way and is guided aright; at other times he deviates from it and is led astray. However, there is no other destination that a man aims at except the blissful life and good end. Yet the verse declares that to Allãh is the return to Whom all have to return – those who are guided aright as well as those who go astray.

The reward that a man wants to get in his natural proceeding is only with Allãh; the guided ones achieve it and the misled ones are deprived of it. It inevitably means that all the paths used by the people of guidance and all the ways trodden upon by the people of misguid-ance finally end at Allãh, and with Him is the intended destination, although those paths and ways vary in conveying the man to desire and success or beating him with failure and loss; and likewise regarding nearness and distance; as Allãh says: *O man! Surely thou art striving to thy Lord, a hard striving, so that thou art to meet Him* (84:6); *. . . now surely the party of Allãh are the successful ones* (58:22); *Didn't you see those who changed Allãh's favour for ungratefulness and made their people to alight into the abode of perdition* (14:28); *. . . then verily I am very near; I answer the prayer of suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way* (2:186); *. . . and* (as for) *those who do not believe, there is a heaviness in their ears and it is obscure to them; these shall be called to from a far-off place* (41:44).

Allãh has made it clear in these verses that all men are unavoid-ably proceeding to Him; the road for some of them is short and it leads to guidance and success, while that for the others is long and it does not end at bliss and happiness, but takes the walker to destruction and perdition.

In short, the verse supposes for the believers and the disbelievers two paths, both of which end at Allãh; and it directs the believers to look after their own interests and to turn away from the others, i.e., from the people of misguidance. They should not weary themselves thinking about those people; because their account is on their Lord, not on the believers; these believers will not be asked about them, so why should they involve themselves with them. Thus the verse is near in meaning to another verse:

Say to those who believe (that) *they for-give those who do not hope the days of Allāh that He may reward a people for what they earn* (45:14). And similar is the connotation of the verse: *This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they did* (2:134).

Therefore, a believer must remain occupied only in that which concerns his soul by proceeding on the path of guidance; he should not be shaken by what he sees of misguidance of the people and perva-sion of sins among them; he should not waste his time with involve-ment in their affairs. Truth is truth even if abandoned, and falsehood is falsehood even if taken up, as Allāh says: *Say: "The bad and the good are not equal, though the abundance of the bad may enchant you; so fear Allāh, O men of understanding, that you may be successful."* (5:100); *And not alike are the good and the evil. . . .* (41:34).

In the light of the above discourse, the words of Allāh: "he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way," are a sort of illusion which aims at forbidding the believers to be influenced by mis-guidance of those who are misled, as it may encourage them to leave the way of guidance, and to think that the present world does not sup-port religion and does not allow them to be involved in spiritual affairs, as these things are remnants of the ancient simple customs whose time has passed away. Allāh says: *And they say: "If we follow the guidance with you, we shall be carried off from our country." . . .* (28:57).

It forbids them also to fear the others' misguidance and neglect their own guidance; in this way they would remain engaged in the others' affairs and would forget their own selves; thus they would become like the others. Actually, what is incumbent on a believer is only to call towards his Lord, enjoin the good, and forbid the evil. In short he is to arrange the normal causes, and then he should leave the affairs of the effects in the hands of Allāh, because to Him belong all the affairs. He has not been told to put himself in perdition in trying to rescue others from peril; and he shall not be called upon to account for what others had done; he is not an overseer to check others' activities. Thus the verse is similar in meaning to what the Qur'ān says in other places: *Then may be you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing over them, if they do not believe in this announcement. Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them* (as to) *which of them is best in deed. And most surely We will make what is on it bare*

ground without herbage (18:6-8). *And even if there were a Qur'ãn with which the mountains were made to pass away, or the earth were travelled over with it, or the dead were made to speak thereby; nay! The commandment is wholly Allãh's. Have not yet those who believe known that if Allãh had willed He would certainly guide all the people?. . .* (13:31)

This explanation shows that this verse is not in conflict with those of calling the people, and those telling the believers to enjoin good and forbid evil; because it only forbids the believers to remain involved in the people's misguidance, forgetting their own guidance to the right way. In other words, they should not put their own souls in perdition while endeavouring to rescue others from peril.

Moreover, calling the others to Allãh, and enjoining good and forbidding evil are a part of a believer's involvement with the affairs of his own self, and of his advancing on the path of his Lord. How can this verse be considered as going against the verses of the Call or those of enjoining good and forbidding evil, or taken to be abrogating them, while Allãh has counted these factors as the designation of this relig-ion and a foundation upon which it has been built; as Allãh says: *Say: "This is my way: I invite* (you) *to Allãh; with clear sight* (are) *I and he who follows me; . . ."* (12:108); *You are the best nation raised up for* (the benefit of) *men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong . . .* (3:110).

What is incumbent on a believer is this: that he should invite to Allãh with clear sight, and should enjoin the good and forbid the evil, aiming only at discharging a duty imposed upon him by Allãh. He is not expected to kill himself in grief [if they do not listen] or to exert himself beyond the limit trying to influence the misguided people, as this is not his duty.

The verse proposes that there is one path for the believers that leads them aright, and another one for the disbelievers that misleads them to error. Then it orders the believers to adhere to their souls (as it says, *'alaykum anfusakum*, which literally means, adhere to your souls). All this shows that the soul of the believer itself is the path which he should tread on and adhere to; exhorting one to a path conforms with exhortation to adhere to it, to never leave it; it does not connote adher-ence to the walker of the way; as we clearly see in verses like this: *And* (know) *that this is my path, the right one, therefore follow it; and follow not* (other) *ways, for they will lead you away from His way; . . .* (6:153).

Now, when Allãh wishes to exhort the believers to vigilantly proceed on the path of their guidance, He orders them to adhere to their

souls. It makes it clear that the path, which they have to walk on and adhere to, is their own souls. That is, the soul of the believer is his path on which he proceeds to his Lord; it is the path of his guidance, and it leads him to his ever-lasting bliss.

In this way, this verse throws brilliant light on the aim and goal to which other verses point somewhat vaguely, like the words of Allãh: *O you who believe! Fear Allãh, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the morrow, and fear Allãh; surely Allãh is Aware of what you do. And be not like those who forgot Allãh, so He made them for-get their own souls; these it is that are the transgressors. Not alike are the inmates of the Fire and the dwellers of the garden; the dwellers of the garden are they that are the achievers* (59:18-20).

These verses enjoin on every soul to consider what it has sent on ahead, and to vigilantly guard its good deeds, as it is its provision for tomorrow – and the best provision is piety and fear of Allãh. The soul has a today and a tomorrow, and it is proceeding ahead as it has to go a long way, and its destination is Allãh, and with Him is the best reward, and that is the garden. Therefore, every soul should continu-ously remember its Lord without forgetting Him for a single moment; because Allãh is the destination, and forgetting the destination would make one forget the path; because whoever forgets his Lord forgets his soul; such a person would not gather any provision for his tomor-row and for his future journey, which he could use to preserve his life; and it would mean perdition. This is the meaning of what both sects have narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: "Whoever knew his soul knew his Lord."

It is the meaning that is supported by total meditation and cor-rect consideration. Man, in the journey of his life – no matter to which end it would stretch out – has really no concern at all except the good of his soul and happiness of his life, even when he sometimes is engaged in what looks like benefiting the others. Allãh says: *If you do good, you do good for your own souls, and if you do evil, it is for them* (only) . . . (17:7).

There is only this man who changes from one condition to an-other, and develops from one stage to the other: foetus, child, youth, middle aged, and old; then continues his life in *barzakh*, then on the Day of Resurrection, then to the Garden or the Fire. It is this distance the man completes from his first existence until he reaches his Lord. Allãh says: *And that to your Lord is the end goal* (53:42).

And this man does not go ahead in this journey except with some

activities of mind (i.e., beliefs, etc.) and some actions of limbs – be they good or evil. Whatever he produces today will be his provi-sion tomorrow. Thus, the soul is the path of man to his Lord, and Allãh is the final destination of his journey.

This is a path man has to tread upon compulsorily, as the words of Allãh indicate: *O man! Surely thou art striving to thy Lord, a hard striving, so that thou art to meet Him* (84:6). This path has to be trod-den by each man, be he a believer or disbeliever, alert and cautious or oblivious and careless. The verse, when it exhorts to adhere to this path does not intend to push to it those who do not use it.

The verse's only purpose is to make the believers aware of this reality when they had become oblivious of it. Although this reality, like all other creative realities, is firmly established and is not affected by our knowledge or ignorance, yet man's attention to it does have manifest effect on his activities. And it is the actions that provide to the human soul an upbringing that is proper for its nature. When the actions are appropriate with reality and agree with purpose of creation, then the soul, which is brought up with their help, will be blissful in its endeavours; its projects will not fail and its dealings will not end in loss. We have explained it in many places in this book, which leaves no room for any doubt.

However, it may be elaborated in this background, as follows: Man, like other creatures of Allãh, is placed under divine training and rearing, His attention encompasses all his affairs. And Allãh has said: . . . *there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely my Lord is on the straight path* (11:56). This creative rearing, accord-ing to the training Allãh gives to other things, proceeds together to Him; and He has said: . . . *now surely to Allãh do all affairs eventually come* (42:53). This rearing does not change in any affair, and does not differ even a little between one thing and the other, because the path is straight, and the affair is the same and constant. Allãh has also said: . . . *you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God;* . . . (67:3).

The end goal of man, and the destination of his affairs where his final result (his felicity and infelicity; his success and failure) is estab-lished is based by Allãh's prescription on his character and his soul's aspects, which in their turn are based on deeds which are divided into good and evil, and piety and corruption. Allãh says: *And* (by) *the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it; he will indeed be successful who purifies it,*

and he will indeed fail who corrupts it (91:7-10).

As you see, these verses put the perfected soul at one end, i.e. at the start of his journey, its success, or failure at the other end, and it is the end of the journey. Then they base the two ends of success and failure on the soul's purification and its corruption, i.e. the good and evil deeds, which the verses say, are inspired to man by Allãh.

The verses in all this elaboration do not pass over the condition of soul. They look at soul as a perfected creation of Allãh; it is to which are ascribed the piety and impiety; it is, that is, purified and corrupted; and it is in which the man becomes successful and fails. As you understand, it follows the course dictated by creation.

Keep in view this creative reality: Man in journey of his life proceeds on the path of his soul; he cannot step away from it, even for one step, nor can he leave it, even for a single moment. The condition of the one who is ever alert to it and remembers its demands without being oblivious to it at all, cannot be like the position of the one who forgets it and is oblivious of the inescapable reality, as Allãh has said: . . . *Say: "Are those who know and those who do not know alike?" Only those possessed of understanding shall bear in mind* (39:9); *So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him on the Day of Resurrection, blind. He shall say: "My Lord! Why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?" He will say: "Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall you be forsaken this day."* (20:123-6).

When a man becomes aware of this reality and turns his atten-tion to his actual position *vis-à-vis* his Lord, and compares himself to all the parts of the universe, he finds his soul cut off from others (while previously he saw it in another light) and hidden behind a curtain; no one can encompass or influence it except its Lord Who manages its affairs, and pushes it from behind and pulls it forward by His power and His guidance. He finds that it is alone with its Lord, and besides Him it has no guardian or master. Then the man under-stands the implication of the divine words: "to Allãh is your return, of all (of you), so He will inform you of what you did," coming after the words: "take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way;" and also he knows the meaning of the verse: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like*

him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth?. . . (6:122).

At this point the soul's perception and discernment will change; and it will emigrate from the position of polytheism to the station of servitude and place of monotheism. He will be changing polytheism with monotheism, imaginary with real, distance with proximity, satanic arrogance with divine humility, imaginary self-sufficiency with devo-tional dependence – if divine care takes its hand and leads it ahead.

Regrettably, we are not in a position to perfectly understand these ideas, because we are clinging to the earth and are involved in it, and it stops us from diving to the depth of these realities, which are disclosed by the religion and to which the Divine Book points; but we are very much entangled with unnecessary scums of this transitory life, which the divine speech speaks of only as a play and idle sport, as He says: *And this world's life is naught but a play and an idle sport; . . .* (6:32); *That is the* (last) *reach of their knowledge; . . .* (53:30).

Even so, the correct consideration, deep investigation and ad-equate meditation leads us to general confirmation of its broader out-lines, although we fall short of encircling its details. And Allãh is the Guide.

Well, probably we have gone beyond the limits of brevity; therefore we should return to the beginning of this talk:-

The verse may be taken as addressing the community *per se*. That is the clause: *O you who believe!* may be addressed to the believers' society as a group. In this case, the clause: "take care of your souls," will mean that the believers should reform their Islamic society by acquiring the attribute of being guided aright by divine guidance. They should preserve their religious cognition, virtuous deeds, and general Islamic symbols, as Allãh says: *And hold fast by the cord of Allãh all together and be not divided . . .* (3:103). It was described in its exegesis that this holding fast collectively means adherence to the Book and *Sunnah*.

Accordingly, the clause: "he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way," will mean that the erronous non-Islamic societies cannot hurt them in any way. Therefore, the Muslims are not obligated to exert most strenuously for speading Islam among the non-Muslim nations. They should limit themselves within normal limits, as explained earlier.

Or, it may mean that they should not let the guidance they have got slip out of their hands by looking at the misguided societies as to how

they are engrossed in base desires and how they enjoy the forbid-den fruits of life; because all of them are to return to Allãh and He will inform them of what they had done. Accordingly, the verse has the same implication as the following ones: *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities* (fearlessly). *A brief enjoyment! Then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting-place* (3:196-7); *And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them,* (of) *the splendour of this world's life, . . .* (20:131).

There may also be another meaning for the clause: "he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way." The negative may refer to the harm emanating from the persons of those who err, and not to any of their particular characteristics or actions; thus the meaning will be unrestricted. Accordingly, the verse negates the idea that the disbelievers could hurt the Islamic society by forcefully changing it to a non-Islamic society. In this case, the verse will be similar in impli-cation to the following verses: *. . . This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. . . .* (5:3); *They shall by no means harm you but with a slight distress; and if they fight you they shall turn* (their) *backs to you, . . .* (3:111).

A group of ancient exegetes have said that the verse gives the believers permission to abandon the Call to religion and avoid enjoin-ing the good and forbidding the evil. According to them the verse speaks exclusively about a time or situation when the conditions are not found for the said Call, and the enjoining and forbidding – i.e. when the believer has no security against harm. They have narrated in this respect traditions, which shall be quoted under the ensuing "Traditions".

This interpretation means that the clause: "he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way," is an illusion to removal of responsibility, i.e., you are not responsible for it. Otherwise, no one can have any doubt about the damage that the religious society suffers from spreading of misguidance, disbelief, and debauchery.

However, this meaning seems far-fetched, which does not agree with the context: If this verse is taken as particularizing the generality of the incumbency of the Call to religion and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, then its language is not that of particularization; and if it is taken as an abrogator, then the verses of the Call and en-joining and forbidding confute abrogation. This topic has some addenda, which you will later see.

TRADITIONS

al-Ãmidī narrates from ʻAlī (a.s.) that he said, "He who knew his soul knew his Lord." (*al-Ghurar wa 'd-durar*)

The author says: Both sects have also narrated it form the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); and it is a well-known *ḥadīth*. Some scholars have said that it uses the style of attaching an impossible to an impossible; and that it means that it is impossible for man to know his soul because it is impossible for him to comprehend Allãh. But this view has been refuted: First, because of another Prophetic tradition: The more one of you knows his soul, the more he knows his Lord; and Second, because the *ḥadīth* gives a meaning of contradistinction to the verse: *And be not like those who forgot Allãh, so He made them forget their own souls* [59:19].

ʻAlī (a.s.) has also said, "Astute is he who knows his soul and purifies his deeds." (*ibid*.)

The author says: In previous explanation it was described how purification is interconnected with gnosis of soul.

He (a.s.) has also said, "Gnosis through the soul is the more beneficial of the two gnosis." (*ibid*.)

The author says: Apparently, the two gnosis refers to the gnosis through the signs of the soul and the one through the signs of the universe. Allãh says: *We will soon show them Our signs in the uni-verse and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things?* (41:53). *And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure, and in your own souls* (too); *will you not then see*? (51:20-21).

How is the progress of soul more beneficial than the progress of universe? It is because the gnosis of the soul is usually not separate from the reform in its characteristics and activities, unlike the gnosis of the universe; gnosis of the signs is beneficial only because the signs *per se* lead to the gnosis of Allãh, and of His names and attributes. For example, Allãh is Living, death does not touch Him; Powerful, help-lessness does not vitiate Him; All-knowing, ignorance does not mix with Him; He is the Creator of all things, Owner of everything; He is the Lord who takes care of everything by what it has earned; He created the creatures not because He had any need of them, but in order that He should bestow His favours on them as they deserve; then He will gather them for the day of gathering, there is no doubt in it: *so that He may reward those who do*

evil according to what they did, and He may reward those who do good with goodness [53:31].

This and similar verses describe such true realities which, if man were to receive and master them, would represent before him the reality of his life; he would understand that it is an eternal life having ever-lasting bliss or never-ending misery; that it is not this temporary fantasy, this distracting passtime. This academic stand leads man to realize that he does have responsibilities and duties *vis-à-vis* his Lord and *vis-à-vis* his fellow human beings in this world as well as in the hereafter. No one is devoid of this thought, not even a bedouine, in a sort of a life after death – whatever details they may attach to it – and they strive to practise good deeds in order to make that life happy and blissful. This factor is very clear to all.

The life which man adopts for himself, presents before his eyes the necessities and requirements which that life demands. Thus he is guided to the deeds, which normally guarantee the fulfilment of those needs. So he acts keeping his actions in conformity with those require-ments. And it is what we call custom or religion.

In short, looking at the signs in the souls and in the universe, and arriving through them at the knowledge and gnosis of Allãh, leads man to adhere to the true religion and the divine *sharī'ah*, inasmuch as the said gnosis represents the eternal human life, and it shows this life's connection with Oneness of God, Resurrection and Prophethood.

This guidance to belief and piety is shared by both ways, i.e. the way of looking at the universe and that of looking at the souls. Both of these methods are useful; however that of looking at the signs of the soul is more beneficial. It is because in this process man has every chance to discover his own soul and its powers as well as its spiritual and physical instruments; he will also perceive if its affairs are in a moderate position or are inclined to this or that extreme; which virtu-ous or evil traits it has acquired, and which good or bad situations it has adhered to.

When man is involved in investigation of these affairs and be-comes sure of the security or danger, the felicity or infelicity which are attached to them, he is bound to diagnose his malady and know its treatment from close proximity. Then he can easily be engaged in mending the defective parts and preserving the good ones. It is unlike to looking at the signs in the universe: Although that too calls to the reform of the soul and its purification from inferior and depraved characteristics (and to adorning it with spiritual virtues), but that call comes from a far

away place, and it is clear.

The tradition has another deeper meaning which is derived from the results of real researches in psychology, and it is this: Observation of the signs of the universe and the gnosis acquired through it are aca-demic observation based on process of reasoning and acquired knowl-edge. They are unlike to the observation of the soul, its powers and stages of its existence, and to the gnosis manifested from it, because it is a witnessing observation and automatic (unacquired) knowledge. A reasoned proposition depends for its existence on arrangement of anal-ogous deductions and logical proofs; it continues as long as the man is attentive to its premises, is not oblivious to them, nor has his attention diverted from them. That is why the knowledge disappears as soon as attention is diverted from its proof; and then doubts raise their heads and controversies start.

It is contrary to the gnosis the soul has of its own entity, its own powers and the stages of its existence, because this knowledge is manifest. When man becomes engaged in looking at the signs of his own soul, and witnesses its poverty to its Lord and its neediness in all stages of its existence, he sees an amazing reality. He finds his soul attached to the divine grandeur and majesty, connected in its exist-ence, life, knowledge, power, hearing, sight, will, love and all its attributes and activities, to the infinite splendour and brilliance, beauty and perfection of the [divine] existence, life, knowledge, power and other perfections.

He will then see manifestly what we have described earlier that the human soul has no concern except with itself, and never goes out of itself. Its only occupation is the compulsive progress in its own path; and that it is separated from everything it ever thought that it was joined to and mixed with – except its Lord who encompasses its inner and outer self as well as all things besides it. The soul now finds that it is always in private audience with its Lord, even if it happens to be surrounded by a multitude of the people.

At this stage, it turns away from everything and fixes its atten-tion to its Lord; it forgets everything and remembers only its Lord; now no curtain hides Him from it, nor does any screen conceal Him from it; it is the height of gnosis ordained for man.

This knowledge deserves to be called knowledge of Allãh by Allãh. As for the knowledge acquired through reasoning process, which results from observation of the signs of the universe – be it through analogy, conjecture or some other ways – it is the knowledge of an image

in mind through an image in mind. Far be it from Allāh to be encompassed by a mind, or that His Person could be equated to an image fabricated by any of His creatures: . . . *and they do not compre-hend Him in knowledge* [20:110].

Biḥāru 'l-anwār quotes from *al-Irshād* and *al-Iḥtijāj*, from ash-Sha'bī that the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) said, *inter alia*, in a talk: "Verily Allāh is too great to be hidden from anything, or for anything to be hidden from Him."

Mūsā ibn Ja'far (a.s.) said, *inter alia*, in a talk: "There is no curtain between Him and His creation except the creation (itself); He is hidden without any covering curtain; and is concealed without any hiding veil; there is no god except He, the Great, the Sublime." (*at-Tawḥīd*)

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates from 'Abdu 'l-A'lā from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) *inter alia* in a *ḥadīth*, that he said, "And whoever thinks that he knows Allāh through a curtain, or form, or image, is an idolator; because curtain, form and image are other than Him, and He is only One, professed to be One; how can be he a monotheist who thinks that he declares Him to be One through one other than Him? Only he knows Allāh who knows Him through Allāh; so whoever does not know Him through Him, he [in fact] does not know Him, he only knows someone other than Him . . ." (*ibid*.). The traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.) on this topic are very numerous; probably Allāh will give us *tawfīq* to quote and explain them, God willing, in the *tafsīr* of chapter seven, "The Battlements".

It has indeed come out from the above that observation in the signs of the souls is the most precious and valuable; and only that leads to the real gnosis. Therefore, when 'Alī (a.s.) counted the gnosis through the soul as the more beneficial of the two gnosis, and not as the only appointed way of gnosis, he (a.s.) knew that the general public was incapable of attaining to that gnosis. The Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are agreed, and the custom of the Prophet and his *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* has established, that the belief of the one who believes in Allāh through observation of His creation, is fully accepted; and it is the outlook that is prevalant among the believers; so the ways are beneficial, although the benefit in the way of the soul is more complete and comprehensive.

'Alī (a.s.) said, "The gnostic is he who knows his soul and liberates it and purifies it from all that removes it far." (*ad-Durar wa 'l-ghurar*)

The author says: That is, liberates the soul from captivity of

desire and slavery of lust.

[The author has quoted here many sayings of the same Imãm (a.s.) from the same book, which are enumerated below. (*tr*.)]:-

– The biggest ignorance is a man's oblivion to affairs of his soul.

– The biggest wisdom is man's knowledge of his soul.

– The most knowledgeable of people regarding his soul is the one who fear his Lord most.

The author says: It is because he is the most knowledgeable of all about his Lord, and Allãh has said: . . . *verily fear Allãh only those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge*; . . . [35:28].

– The best understanding is man's knowledge of his soul; so whoever knows his soul is possessed of understanding, and whoever is ignorant of it, has gone astray.

– I am surprised about the man who searches for his lost item, while he has lost his own soul and does not search for it.

– I am surprised about the man who is ignorant of his soul, how does he know his Lord.

– The end goal of knowledge is that man should know his soul.

The author says: It has been explained earlier, why it is the end goal of knowledge, because it is the knowledge in reality.

– How can he know another person who is ignorant of his own soul?

– Enough is for man in knowledge that he should know his soul, and enough is for him in ignorance that he should not know his soul.

– Whoever knew his soul, became free.

The author says: That is, became free from worldly entanglement; or became free from people being secluded from them; or became free from everything through sincere devotion to Allãh.

– Whoever knows his soul fights it, and whoever does not know it leaves it unfettered.

– Whoever knows his soul, his affair (rank) becomes great.

– Whoever knows his soul, shall be more knowledgeable about others; and whoever is ignorant of his soul, shall be more ignorant of others.

– Whoever knows his soul, he has indeed reached the end goal of all gnosis and knowledge.

– Whoever does not know his soul, goes far away from the path of

deliverance, and wanders at random in error and ignorance.

– Knowledge of soul is the most beneficial of all knowledge.

– He attained the great success who achieved the knowledge of the soul.

– Don't be ignorant of your soul, because he, who is ignorant of his soul, is ignorant of everything.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said *inter alia* in a *ḥadīth*: "Whoever thinks that he knows Allāh through mind's imagination, is a polytheist; and who-ever thinks that he knows Allāh by name, not meaning, has indeed agreed to calumny, because the name is of a later appearance; and whoever thinks that he worships the name and the meaning, has indeed made a partner for Allāh; and whoever thinks that he worships through attribute, not through perception, refers to an absentee; and whoever thinks that he joins the characterized [entity] to the attribute, has belittled the great one; *and they esteem not Allāh with the estima-tion due to Him* [6:91]."

He was asked: "Then how is the path of monotheism?" He said, "The door of search is possible, and the pursuit of the way out exists; verily the knowledge of a present person comes before his attributes, and knowledge of the attributes of an absent one comes before his person."

It was said (to him): "And how can the knowledge of a present person come before his attributes?" He said, "You know him, and know (about) his knowledge, and you know your own self through him and do not know your self through your self; and you know that whatever is found in him is for him and through him. As they said to Yūsuf: *'Are you indeed Yūsuf?' He said: 'I am Yūsuf and this is my brother.'* [12:90]. So, they knew him through him, and did not know him through someone else, nor did they assert his identity by them-selves through imagination . . ." (*Tuḥafu 'l-'uqūl*)

The author says: We have described under the second[42] *ḥadīth* of this section ('Gnosis through the soul is the more beneficial of the two gnosis') that when man becomes engaged with signs of his soul and leaves all other things for it, he becomes exclusively connected to Allāh and forgets everything; it brings in its wake the gnosis of his Lord, a direct knowledge without intervention of any intermediary, without causation by any cause. It is because when one adheres exclus-ively to Allāh, then every curtain is raised; and at this juncture man looks at the

[42] It is in fact the third *ḥadīth*. (*tr*.)

arena of Divine Greatness and Majesty which makes him so dazzled and perplexed that he forgets his own self, his own soul. This gnosis, this knowledge truly deserves to be called the Knowledge of Allãh through Allãh.

And then the reality of his soul will be clear to him that it is totally dependent on Allãh, and completely owned by Him in such a way that it is not independent of Him in any affair. And this is the im-plication of the Imãm's words, "and you know your own self through him and do not know your self through your self; and you know that whatever is found in him is for him and through him."

al-Mas‘ūdī has narrated a similar theme in *Ithbãtu 'l-waṣiyyah* from the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) that he said *inter alia* in a sermon:

"So, glory be to Thee! Thou hast filled everything and hast separ-ated from everything; so Thou art such that nothing misses Thee; and Thou art the doer of whatever Thou wishest; Blessed art Thou, O He that every comprehender is of His creation, and every limited is from His make. . . .

"Glory be to Thee! Which eye can stand opposite the splendour of Thy light, or can rise to the light of Thy power's reflection, or which understanding can comprehend (even) what is below it? Except the eyes from which curtains have been removed and the blinding covers have been torn away; thus their spirits have soared high on the wing-tips of the spirits; they talked with Thee in whisper under Thy pillars, and entered in middle of the lights of Thy splendour; they looked from the steps of dust to Thy Majesty; so the people of (heavenly) Kingdom have named them visitors, and the people of (worldly) power have called them settlers." (*Ithbãtu 'l-waṣiyyah*)

[al-Majlisī] has quoted from *Irshãdu 'l-qulūb* of ad-Daylamī (and has written after that two chains of narration for this *ḥadīth*) which *inter alia* says:

"So whoever acts according to My pleasure, I attach to him three characteristics: I introduce to him a thankfulness which is not mixed by ignorance, and a remembrance which is not mingled by forget-fulness, and a love that he does not prefer love of the creatures to My love.

"So when he loves Me, I love him, and I open the eye of his heart towards My greatness; and do not keep hidden from him My special creation; I talk to him in secret in darkness of night and light of day, until his talk with the creatures and his social intercourse with them are discontinued; I make him hear My talk and that of My angels; and I let him know the secret which I have kept hidden from My creatures; I dress

him in modesty until all the creation feels shy of him; he walks on the earth while [his sins are] forgiven to him; I make his heart attentive and seeing; I do not hide from him anything of the Garden and the Fire; and let him know what fright and hardship will afflict the people in resurrection, and how I'll take account of wealthy and poor, ignorant and knowledgeable. I shall make him sleep in his grave and send to him Munkar and Nakīr in order that they should question him; he will not see (feel) the sorrow of death, darkness of grave and *laḥad*[43] and terror of the observing place; then I shall set up for him his balance, and spread his book of accounts, then I'll put his book in his right hand, which he shall read spread about; then I shall not ap-point any interpreter between Me and him. So these are the attributes of the lovers.

"O Aḥmad! Keep your concern, and make your tongue one tongue, and keep your body alive which is never inattentive; whoever is heed-less of Me, I don't care in which valley he perishes."

[The author says:] Although the last three traditions are not related to this topic of uprightness and rectitude, we have quoted them here to let the scholars with critical insight see for themselves, as we have described earlier, that true gnosis of Allãh is not fully acquired through thoughtful knowledge. These traditions mention many items of divine gifts, which can never be attained through rational process.

These are upright and correct traditions, correctness of which is witnessed by the Divine Book, as we shall fully explain, God willing, in exegesis of the seventh chapter, "The Battlements".

al-Qummī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr*, under the verse: *O you who believe! Take care of your souls; (he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way),* that the Imãm (a.s.) said, "Keep your souls good, and do not pursue the people's shortcomings, nor should you remind them [of their defects]; because their misguidance will not harm you when you are good."

The author says: The tradition supports what we have explained earlier that the verse aims at forbidding too much involvement in society's reform, more than is usual for such call and for enjoining good and forbidding evil; but it does not allow negligence of that call and enjoining and forbidding.

[43] *Laḥad* (لَحَد): Charnel vault with a niche for the corpse in the lateral wall. (*tr.*)

aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "This verse was revealed concerning *taqiyyah* (dissimulation)." (*Nahju 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: The tradition explains that the verse speaks particularly for the situation when one is afraid of the people of misguidance in calling to the truth, enjoining good and forbidding evil, because in *sharī'ah* this duty is conditional on there being no danger in it. But we have earlier explained that the apparent meaning of the verse does not support it.

Of course, as-Suyūṭī has quoted in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* words of a group of ancient exegetes giving the same meaning, like Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Ibn 'Abbãs and Makḥūl, but the traditions narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) on this topic do not support it.

The said tradition is the one narrated by at-Tirmidhī (and he has said that it is correct), Ibn Mãjah, Ibn Jarīr, al-Baghawī (in his *Mu'jam*), Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh, al-Ḥãkim (and he has said that it is correct), and al-Bayhaqī (in *Shu'abu 'l-'īmãn*) from Abū 'Umayyah ash-Sha'bãnī that he said, "I came to Abū Tha'labah al-Khashanī and said to him, 'How do you make (i.e. interpret) this verse?' He said, 'Which verse?' I said, 'The word of Allãh: *O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way.*' He said, 'Indeed, by Allãh! You have asked a man who fully knows it. I had asked the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.) about it. He had said, "Rather you should enjoin each other the good and forbid each other the evil; [continue in this way] until when you see that niggardliness is obeyed, base desire is followed, worldly [attraction] is preferred, and every opinion-holder admires his opinion, then you should take care of your own soul especially, and leave alone the affairs of the general people; because there are ahead of you the days of patience, the one patient in those days will be like the one holding live coal in hand; the one doing (good) deeds in those days shall have the reward of fifty men doing (good) deeds like yours."'"

The author says: The same is the theme of what Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Ma'ãdh ibn Jabal from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). The tradition shows that enjoining the good and forbidding the evil were not eliminated by this verse.

[as-Suyūṭī] narrates from Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, aṭ-Ṭabarãnī and Ibn Marduwayh, from Abū 'Ãmir al-Ash'arī, that there was some-thing among them, and he was restrained from (coming to) the Messenger of

Allāh (s.a.w.); then he came to him; (The Prophet) said, "What had kept you away?" He said, "O Messenger of Allāh! I read this verse: *O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way.*" (Abū ʿĀmir) says, "Then the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, 'Where have you gone? It only means: He who errs from among the disbelievers cannot hurt you when you are on the right way.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: As you see, the tradition reserves the order of the verse particularly to the permission of abandoning the call of disbelievers to the truth; and diverts it from the permission of discarding enjoining the good and forbidding the evil in matters of *sharīʿah*. Moreover, the verses which show obligatoriness of the call to truth, and its related verses regarding *jihād* and so on make it crystal clear that the verse under discussion does not go against the verses of en-joining the good and forbidding the evil.

[as-Suyūṭī] narrates from Ibn Marduwayh, from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī that he said, "I mentioned before the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.) the word of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great: *O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way.* The Prophet of Allāh (s.a.w.) said, 'Its interpretation has not come yet; its interpretation will not come until ʿĪsā son of Maryam (a.s.) comes down.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: The same comment, as the above are appli-cable here too.

[as-Suyūṭī] narrates from Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Ḥudhayfah about the verse: *Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way*, that he said: "When you have enjoined the good and forbidden the evil."

The author says: It is a moderate interpretation that in the end returns to what we have explained; and Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab also has narrated like it.

AN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Composed of historical indications and other psychological discussions, etc.; in various sections:

1. Man, even the primitive one, has always been saying, 'I' and 'my soul'; he uses these words to point to a reality of creation; and inevi-tably

he comprehends what he says and knows what he intends. However, his attention is fully focused on mobilization of the basic elements of his physical life, and he remains engaged in bodily works for fulfilling his material needs. This factor prevents him from think-ing deeply on the affairs of this soul to which he refers with the words, 'I' and 'my soul'; and sometimes he imagines that it refers to the body and nothing else.

And sometimes he finds that the distinction between a living person and a dead is apparently the breathing which continues as long as a man is alive; and when it is discontinued, or the breathing system is blocked, he turns dead, he loses all his perceptions, his existence is nullified and his personality is negated. For this reason, he comes to believe that the soul is the breath, which is a wind or a special type of wind; that is why he calls it spirit; and believes that man is a sum total of spirit and body.

Alternatively, he sees that the bodily perception and movement depend on the blood which is retained in the body, circulates in its limbs and flows in his veins and arteries; also he realizes that the life is related to this red liquid and that man dies when blood is completely taken out his body. Keeping these factors in view, he decides that the soul is the blood; so he calls the blood soul, and divides it into a blood, which comes out with a gush and that which does not come out with a gush.

Also, he looks at the changes taking place in semen, when it is swallowed by womb and goes on developing from one stage to the next until it becomes a man. This observation makes him believe that the human soul is the basic ingredients, which are gathered in the semen; and these ingredients continue in the human body throughout his life. May be someone would think that these parts are safe from change and nullity; and humanity continues with continuity of these ingredients, and nullity and change does not affect it. However, if the human soul were the ingredients mentioned above – whether we said that they should combine in a particular form or did not say it – it would entail a lot of impossibilities, described in its place.

These and similar views do not refute what man, *per se*, comprehends from his words, 'I' and 'my soul'; and makes no mistake in it at all. It is not unimaginable that we may correctly comprehend a reality from among the creative ones as a general principle; but we fall into error when we study its quiddity in detail. There are many academic subjects, like exterior or interior perceived objects which we clearly comprehend – not withstanding the sophists and agnostics – and the scholars go on

disputing about them generations after generations.

Likewise, the general public, beyond the circle of research scholars, observes in their souls what the specialists do without any difference, and even then are ignorant of its details, unable to explain the particulars of its existence.

In short, there is no doubt that man at all stages of his existence is aware of a thing, not outside himself, to which he points with the words 'I' and 'my soul'. When he acquires penetrating sight and deep understanding, he finds that it is totally different from what he perceives of physical affairs, which are subject to change and division and are related to time and space. Also, he finds it totally different from this material body which with its limbs and ingredients is governed by the matter's laws; he may sometimes forget one of his limbs or become oblivious of his body altogether, but he never forgets his soul, nor does he become oblivious of it. Don't be misled by such expressions which you may occasionally use, as: 'I forgot myself;' 'I became oblivi-ous of my soul,' or 'I was distracted from my soul;' because they are metaphorical expressions throwing light on different psychological considerations. Don't you see that even now you ascribe this forget-fulness, obliviousness and distraction to your soul, and you say that your perceiving soul had perceived an item?

Also, put aside what some people think that an unconscious person becomes oblivious of his person and soul. Because what he realizes after returning to consciousness is that he does not remember perceiving his soul at the time of unconsciousness, not that he remem-ber that he did not perceive it – and there is a great difference between the two. Also, some people do remember what they had experienced during their unconsciousness like the dream, which we remember after getting up from sleep.

In any case, there is no doubt that man, *per se*, is never devoid of this psychological perception which represents before his eyes the reality of his soul to which he refers as 'I'. If he becomes a little fam-iliar with what he observes about his soul and turns aside from his bodily functions and material desires, he will certainly come to the conclusion that his soul is something different from the root of matter and materials, as he finds that the particulars of his soul and its effects are quite different from the particulars of material things and their effects.

However, its involvement with daily engagements, and concentrating the attention to desires of material life and fulfilling the physical needs lead him to neglect this aspect and to agree with those simple

primitive ideas, stopping at general observation.

2. Although a normal man is deeply involved in affairs of food, clothes and abode and in marital relations, which prevent him from contemplating the reality of his soul and researching various aspects of his person; but various happenings which overwhelm him during his life, are often not devoid of factors which turn away his attention from other than himself and concentrate it to his soul – for example, intense fear which makes him forget everything and turn to his soul as if he were holding it fast lest it perishes and disappears; or like happiness or grief which attracts the soul to what it is pleased with; or like intense love which causes him to cling to his beloved or his remembrance, so much so that he has no care except that of his beloved; or like a high emerg-ency in which man is cut off from everything and turns to himself; and many similar factors.

These various factors and diverse causes, sometimes, place a man (or men) in a position where such things appear before him, which are not conceived by manifest senses or empty thoughts. For example, a man who is locked in a dark desolate place is over-whelmed by fear and often sees dreary things or hears terrible voices that threaten him to utmost degree. It is this phenomenon that they sometimes attribute to ghoul, *jinn*, or an invisible caller, and so on.

Sometimes he is so overwhelmed by intense love, or sharp grief and sorrow that they block his manifest senses and concentrate his perception on what he loves or what he grieves for, and he sees during sleep or in a condition between sleep and wakefulness various past events or future happenings, or such hidden phenomena which other people's senses do not perceive.

Often, when will power is strengthened with certainty, intense belief, and decisive surity, then he accomplishes such feats which a normal man cannot do, nor can usual causes lead to them.

These minor happenings, which are rare in comparison to generally common events, take place because of various factors indicated earlier. However, there is no need to offer proofs to establish that they do take place, because each of us remembers such incidents, which he, or others known to him, has experienced. As for the real cause that brings it into being, this is not the place to look into it.

What we should be aware of is this: All these affairs depend for their occurance on a sort of diversion of the soul from involvement with outside affairs – and particularly physical enjoyments – and its inclination

to its own self. That is why the foundation of all psycho-logycal regime with all its innumerable divergences and differences – is contradiction of the soul in general; and it is only because devotion of soul to the obedience of its desires diverts it from being engaged with itself, and leads it to its extraneous desires. Thus its attention is divided and it adheres to those base desires and forgets its own self.

3. There is no room for doubt that the factors leading to the psychological effects happen to some people temporarily and for short periods, and in the same way happen to some others permanently or for a longer period. Often we find ascetic people abstaining from worldly enjoyments and material objects of desire; their attention is concentrated on training the soul and remaining engaged in proceed-ing on the path of the inner self.

Also, it should not be imagined that this psychological avocation is a newly invented phenomenon of this time of ours. Reports and observation prove that it was prevalent in the society from ancient times. Go back to the earliest days of humanity and you will see this phenomenon present in their midst.

4. Research about various nations, meditation on their customs and traditions and analysis of their beliefs and actions make us aware that engagement in cognition of the soul – with its various ways – for attaining to its wonderful effects, was prevalent among them; rather it was a well-coveted prize for which they spent best of the times and highest prices since ancient eras. For proof, look at the primitive nations in various parts of the Earth, like Africa, etc. and you will find among them even today the remnants of the myths of witchcraft and oracular prophecies, and they firmly believe in their reality and their truth.

Deep consideration of what has been reported to us of old religions and sects, like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sabiism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, indicates that their main concern is cognition of the soul and attainment to its effects. This is deeply ingrained in them, although they may differ in its description, teaching and training.

Although Hinduism – and it is the ancient religion of India – differs from the religions of the Book in monotheism and affairs of prophethood, yet it calls to purification of the soul and cleanliness of the inner self, and especially for the Brahmins themselves.

It has been quoted from al-Bīrūnī (from his book, *Mã lil Hind min maqūlah*) that he said: "A Barahim's life, after completing seven years, is

divided into four stages:

"At the beginning of the first stage, i.e. in his eighth year, the Brahmins gather around him to make him aware and teach him his responsibilities and to enjoin him to hold fast to them and follow them all his life."

He says: "When he enters the first stage upto 25 to 48 years of his age, it is incumbent upon him to abstain from the world; he should make the earth his foothold and proceed to the study of Veda and its explanation, the scholastic theology and jurisprudence, from a teacher whom he should serve day and night, he should take bath three times a day and offer sacrifices to the fire in the morning and the evening, and should prostrate before his teacher after offering the sacrifice; he should fast on alternate day and should abstain from eating meat alto-gether; he should stay in the house of the teacher, coming out of it only once at noon or evening for begging; whatever he gets from begging, he would put before his teacher in order that he may take what he likes from it, allowing him to use whatever is left, and he eats from it; and he should carry firewood to the fire because fire has a high honour in their eyes, and the lights are in proximity with each other.

"The same was the situation in other nations, as they considered a sacrifice accepted if fire came down to it; and the worship of idols, stars, cow, donkeys or images did not turn them away from fire-worship."

He (al-Bīrūnī) said: "As for the second stage, it was from 25 years to 50 or 70 years of his age. At that time the teacher allows him to marry; so he marries and seeks offspring." Then he describes how he lives with his family and the people, how he earns his livelihood, and how he behaves in the society."

Then he said: "As for the third stage, it is from 50 to 70 or 90 years of his life. In this stage, he practices self-denial and asceticism, discards all worldly adornments, entrusts his wife to his children (if she does not accompany him into wilderness); he lives outside civili-zation as he did in the first stage; he does not stay under a roof and does not wear except that which covers his shame from bast of a tree; he does not sleep except on earth without bedding, he takes only fruit and vegetable for his food; he lets his hair grow without putting oil in it."

Then he continued: "As for the fourth stage it continues to the end of his life. He wears red robe, keeps in hand a walking stick, and concentrates on thinking and making his heart free of friendships and enmities; he discards desire, greed and anger, and always remains alone.

"If he intends to go to a place where he would get some spiritual reward, he does not stay in any wayside village longer than a day, nor in a wayside town more than five days; if someone gives him anything he does not keep from it for tomorrow. He has no choice but to persevere in the conditions of the path that leads to deliverance and conveys to a state from which there is no return to the world. Then he describes the general laws which a Brahmin is obligated to follow throughout his life."

As for other sects of the Hindus, like the Yogis who exercise breath control and imaginations, and the spiritualists and the philosophers, etc., each of these groups do have systems of very tough practical regimes, none of which is free from seclusion and solitude and forbidding enjoyable desires to the self.

As for the Buddhists, their religion is based on cleansing of the soul and opposition to its desires; they forbid soul's desires to it in order to attain the real cognition. This was the path trodden by Buddha himself in his life. It is reported that he was a prince or a son of a noble man; he rejected adornments of life and discarded the throne for a desolate jungle in the peak of his youth. He left the company of the people and denied to himself privileges of life. He proceeded to train his soul and to think over the secrets of creation, until the true cogni-tion was thrown into his heart, when he was thirty-six years old. Then he went forth to the people and called them to train their souls and attain cognition. He remained in this mission for about forty-four years, as the history books say.

As for the Sabians, i.e. the people of spirituality and its idols: Although they do not believe in prophethood, yet they do have various ways for reaching the perfect cognition of soul, which do not differ much from the ways of the Hindus and the Buddhists. Their views according to the book, *al-Milal wa 'n- niḥal* are as follows:

"It is incumbent on us to cleanse our souls from the filth of physical desires, and to clear our characteristics from the relations of our desire and anger, in order there happens an affinity between us and the spiritual powers, so that we may ask our requirements from them, present our conditions before them and direct our attention in all our affairs towards them; then they would intercede on our behalf before our and their Creator and our and their Sustainer; this purifica-tion is not attained but through our earning and endeavours when we wean our souls from base desires seeking help from the spiritual world. This help is sought with entreaty, supplication and invocation, keeping up prayer, paying *zakāt*, fasting, offering sacrifices, burning incenses and enchanting spells;

thus our souls acquire ability without any medium."

Although all these groups differ somewhat among themselves in general beliefs related to creation, they however agree that it is incumbent to train the soul for attaining the perfect cognition and happiness of [next] life.

As for the Manichaeans (from the dualists), their religion is known to be based on the belief that the soul is from the sublime illuminated world, which has descended to this material darkened net which is called 'body'; its bliss and perfection depends on the release from this dark house to the sphere of the light, either by choice through psychological regimes, or by compulsion through natural death.

As for the People of the Book, i.e.; the Jews, the Christians and the Zoroastrians, their holy books, i.e. the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Zend-Avesta, are full of the Call to redemption and restoration of the soul and opposition to its desires.

The two Testaments always speak about denial of this world and involvement in cleansing the inner self, and there have been appearing among them large groups of monks and ascetics generation after generation, and especially among the Christians, as monasticism is a well-adopted system of theirs.

The noble Qur'ãn has mentioned their monasticism in two places: *. . . this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly.* (5:82); *. . . and* (as for) *monasticism, they innovated it – We did not prescribe it to them – only to seek Allãh's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance; . . .* (57:27). Also, it has mentioned devout worshippers from among the Jews, as it says: *They are not all alike; of the People of the Book there is an up-right party; they recite Allãh's communi-cations in the night time and they prostrate* (to Him)*. They believe in Allãh and the Last Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and they strive with one another in hastening to good deeds, and those are among the good* (3:113-4).

As for various other groups from among the people who observe tough regimes and psychological exercises, like those who indulge in witchcraft and natural magic, use talismans, strive to subdue the spirits and jinn, and delve in cryptic letters and stars, etc; also those who [claim to] call the spirits and subdue the souls, all of them have their particular psychological regimes which produce a sort of control over affairs of

souls.[44]

In short, what is understood from all the above is this. The ultimate goal of all the people of religions is to purify the soul by rejecting its desires and with engagement in cleansing it from filthy characteristics and undesirable conditions.

5. Probably, you might say that what has been proved from the customs of the people of religions and sects and from their traditions is voluntary renunciation of the world, and it is quite different from the issue of cognition of soul or engagement in its affairs which is the main topic.

In more clear words, what the religions and sects (which call men to servitude towards God in one way or the other) exhort the man, is to abstain from worldly enjoyments by doing good deeds, leaving aside base desires, sins and evil characteristics, in order that he should prepare himself for the best rewards, either in the next world as is clearly indicated by the prophetic religions like Judaism Christianity and Islam, or in this world as maintained by idol-worship-pers and believers in transmigration of souls, etc.

Thus, a man who devoutly worships according to the direction given by religion, follows what he is called to, a sort of self-denial, without ever thinking that there was an immaterial soul, and that that soul may attain to a sort of cognizance which guarantees its happiness and perfection of existence.

Likewise, the people who follow the tough regimes of various ways and systems, indulge in very tough [mental and psychological] exercises, indulge in them only for attaining the promised status and acquiring the result of their activities, like effectiveness of the will for example; and they remain oblivious of the affairs of the said soul from the start to the finish of the said exercise.

Moreover, among these people there are those who believe that soul is merely a material and physical item like blood, or steam mingled with blood, or original ingredients of man's body. There are also those who think that soul is a fine body similar to this physical one, which resides inside it and it is the carrier of life. In this back-ground how can it be said that all people intend with it attainment of cognizance of soul?

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[44] See for it the books: *as-Sirru 'l-maktūm* (by ar-Rãzī), *adh-Dhakhīratu 'l-Iskanda-riyyah* and *al-Kawãkibu 's-sab'ah* (by al-Ḥakīm Ṭamṭam al-Hindī), the *Risãlah* of as-Sakkãkī on *Taskhīr*; also see *ad-Durru 'l-maktūm* (by Ibn 'Arabī), and other books on spiritualism and *iḥḍãr* lately published and others. (*Author's Note*)

However, you should remember what has been stated earlier that man (in all these stations where he indulges in activities which prevent the soul from being engaged in external affairs and various material enjoyments and turn its attention to its own self in order to attain to such characteristics and effects which are not reached through material causes and physical normal factors) desires nothing except to be separated from external causes and factors and to become indepen-dent by himself, so that he may get the particular results to which material and normal factors cannot reach.

Therefore, a devoutly religious person, who lives an ascetic life, believes that it is incumbent on man to choose for himself his real bliss and happiness, and that it is the good life of the next world (according to those who believe in resurrection) or the good worldly life which gathers all good for him and repluses every evil from him (according to those who do not believe in the next world like idol-worshippers and believers in transmigration of soul). Then he finds that wallowing in animalistic enjoyments does not gain for him his happiness, nor does it take him forward to his end-goal. Thus, he has no alternative but to discard his desires and abandon his journey to his soul's crazes. He should be attracted to a cause or causes above the normal material ones, by going near it and joining it; this proximity and joining is achieved by submitting to him and surrendering to his orders. This is a spiritual and psychological affair that can be pre-served through body's commissions and omissions – and these are the acts of religious worship like prayer, *ḥajj,* and so on.

The actions, regimes and various exercises prescribed by relig-ion, ultimately return to a sort of involvement with affairs of the soul. Man sees by his nature that he neither takes nor leaves anything but for his own benefit. We have stated earlier that man is never oblivious – not for a single moment of his existence – of observing his soul and seeing his person, and that he never commits mistake in this percep-tion at all; if there ever occurs a mistake it does in its interpretation based on rational thinking and academic research. It is now clear from this discourse that religions and denominations, in spite of the differ-ences in their customs and ways, do not intend except being involved with affairs of the soul in general, no matter whether they were aware of this fact or not.

Likewise, a man from among those who indulge in various re-gimes and spiritual exercises – even if they do not follow any religion nor they believe in reality of soul – do not aim through the said exer-cises

except obtaining the promised result. And that promised result is not connected with commissions and omissions which he does, in a physical connection, as it appears between the physical causes and their effects; it is rather an immaterial connection emanating from [human] will, which is related to the exerciser's perception and will which are preserved by the sort of activity done by it, it extends from the soul of the exerciser to the promised result. Thus the reality of the said exercise is that it strengthens the soul and completes it in its perception and will for the said result. In other words, it is the effect of the exercise that the soul acquires the condition where it knows that the desired result is within its power. Thus when correct exercise is done and completed, the soul acquires the power that if it wishes to get the result unconditionally, or wishes it with certain conditions (as for example when a child is made to see a spirit in a mirror), that result will certainly appear.

To this aspect points the traditions narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that the people said to him that some disciples of ʻĪsã (a.s.) walked on water. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, "If he had stronger conviction he would have walked on air." As you see, this tradition indi-cates that the whole affair depends on the conviction and certitude about Allãh, when all creative causes are effaced and stripped of inde-pendent effectiveness. The greater the reliance of man on the absolute divine power, the greater the submission of worldly things to his will. Understand it.

The most comprehensive saying on this affair is the word of aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.): "The body does not feel weak from doing what the inten-tion is strong about." Also the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said: "The actions are only according to intentions."

It is now clear that the religious effects of rites and worships as well as those [spiritual and psychological] exercises and regimes are related with human soul only through its inner affairs. When one is engaged in any aspect of its, one is engaged in affairs of the soul.

A man deceives himself if he thinks that the relationship of cause-and-effect exists between the bodies of these good deeds and the goals of the next world; or between them and the strange worldly goals which are not affected by physical causes, like manipulating the souls' perceptions and their various kinds of will, setting things in motion without a mover; acquiring knowledge of hidden ideas of the others, or of things to appear in future; establishing connections with the spiritual world and spirits, etc.; or thinks that action engenders an effect without there being a real

link between them, or merely by divine will without there being any particular reason.

6. Be careful, lest you fall in error of deducing from above discussions that religion is but the cognition and Ṣūfīsm, i.e. cognition of the soul, as some materialist scholars have wrongly inferred, and have divided ways of life prevalent among the people into two branches: materialism and cognition i.e. religion.

It is because what religion teaches is that there is a real happi-ness for man, which he cannot get except by surrendering to super-natural and refusal to concentrate on material enjoyments. And the preceding discourses have shown that religions, whichever they might be – right or wrong – use the reform of soul and its cleansing in an appropriate way, for training the people and leading them to the happi-ness which it promises them and calls them to. And where is this from the idea that cognizance of the soul is religion?

Religion calls man to the worship of Allãh directly or through interceders and partners, because therein is found the human bliss and happiness and the good life which is the only goal of the man; and the man does not acquire it, and shall never acquire it, except through a pure soul which is cleansed of material connections and animalistic unbridled enjoyments. Thus the need arises to include reform of the soul and its cleansing among the parts of its call, in order that the one with that characteristics becomes ready to be covered with good and blessings; and does not become like someone who takes a thing with one hand and throws it away with the other. Thus religion is one thing and cognizance of the soul is quite another, although religion is insep-arable from cognizance to a certain extent.

This same discourse also makes it clear that the systems of exercises and regimens used for diverse and unusal goals too are separate from cognizance of the soul, although some are connected somehow with some others.

Of course, we may come to the conclusion that the cognizance of the soul – whatever the path taken to reach it – is a thing taken from religion. Also, independent research shows that the religions – with all their diversities and differences, have sprouted from one deep-rooted religion to which the human nature invites, and it is the religion of monotheism.

Thus, when we refer to our simple nature, leaving aside the prejudices which come to us by heredity or are transmitted from environ-

ment, we will know with certainty, without a shade of doubt, that the universe, with its unity in plurality, and interconnectedness of its parts in diversity, ends at the one cause above all causes, and it is the Truth to which one must submit and manage the life according to its teach-ing and management – and it is the Religion based on monotheism.

Deep consideration of all religions and customs makes us aware that all of them contain somewhat this living spirit [i.e. monotheism], even idolatry and dualism; what discord there is, it is in fitting the religious system on this fundamentalism, and by hitting the target and missing it. For example, there are those who say: 'He is indeed nearer to us than our life-vein, and He is with us wherever we might be, we do not have beside Him any guardian or intercessor; therefore it is incumbent on us to worship Him alone without ascribing any partner to Him.' Also there are those who say: 'Man's earthly lowliness and baseness of his nature does not leave any way to him to establish any connection with the divine courtyard; what a distance there is between dust and the Lord of lords? Therefore, we have no alternative but to seek proximity with some of His honoured servants, who are freed of the curtain of matter, are pure and cleansed from the dirt of nature, and they are the spirituality of the stars, or lords of species, or nearer humans, and we do not worship them except that they may make us nearer to Allãh. However, because they are beyond our perceptions, far above our sides, it is necessary that we should represent them bodily in stones and idols, so that the matter of nearness in worship may be completed.' The same is the case with all other religions and traditions; and we do not find in their books except that which shows in reality its direction towards divine monotheism.

It is well known that the customs prevalent among the people, no matter how many branches there may be in it and how much serious diversities may appear in it, are all inclined towards unity, when we retreat backwards to its earliest times, and it ultimately ends at the natural and simple human religion, and it is monotheism. Thus the religion of monotheism is the father of all religions, and these in their turn are its sons – good or evil.

Again, the natural religion looks into the cognizance of the soul only to use it to arrive at the human blessings to which it invites, and it is the cognizance of God which is its ultimate goal. In other words, religion invites to the cognizance of the soul as the way, not the desti-nation. In fact, religious taste is not pleased with involvement in any-thing except in the way of servitude; verily the religion with Allãh is the Islam, and He is

not pleased with unbelief in His servants; there-fore how can He be pleased with cognizance of the soul if it acquires the status of independent wantedness.

It is seen from this that the cognizance ultimately ends at the natural religion, because it is not in itself an independent matter to which the human nature might be calling, until its branches and sprouts end at the one root, which is natural cognizance.

This fact may possibly be understood through another way: Although humanity proceeds by nature to civilization and grouping for blissfulness of the life, and reports and research have proved that some people or communities called their groups to the ways of nationalism, or laid down civil systems and enforced them among them, like the tribal customs, monarchical traditions, democratic systems and so on; but neither any report nor any research has claimed that during all the long human history anyone other than the people of religion had called to the cognizance of the soul and reform of its ethics.

Yes, it is possible that some adherents to those irreligious ways, like people of witchcraft and spiritualists, etc, might have awakened to this type of the cognizance of the soul through a path other than relig-ion, yet they would not reach it through the nature, because nature has nothing to do or say in this matter, as you have seen; rather it would have been through accidental observation of some unusual psycholog-ical effects; then his soul yearns to attain to a psychological position with which he can perform wonderous deeds and rare manipulations in the world which souls consider strange; this yearning pushes him to hunt for it and proceed to it stage by stage until the desired goal is achieved.

7. We are often told about many of our good people of religion that they had got, through their religious regimes, super-natural miracles and extraordinary events that were especially bestowed on them. For example, they could see somethings or affairs which were not seen by the others, or they could observe some people or episodes which were not perceived by other persons, or their prayers were answered, some hopelessly sick persons were cured, men were rescued from dangers and perils in other than usual way. Such things sometimes happen even on the hands of a person who is not virtuous, if his intention is true and his soul detached [from worldly involvements]. These people see what they see but they are oblivious of its immediate cause, and they ascribe it directly to Allãh without seeing any intermediary. Although ascription of the affairs and things to Allãh is true and one has no alternative but to accept it, yet

negation of intermediary cause cannot be coveted.

Sometimes a spiritualist brings forth someone's spirit in a mirror or water and so on, by manipulating a child's soul – as is generally known – and he himself, like the others, observes that the child sees [that spirit] with his physical eyes, and that there is a curtain between the said spirit and the eyes of the others, and if that curtain was lifted off, the others too would be able like the child to see it.

Sometimes they find the procured spirit telling lies in its information, and it seems very strange, because the spiritual world is the one of purity and clarity; there is no way for lie, falsity and untruth to reach it.

Sometimes they bring forth a living person's spirit and make it describe his secrets and inner thoughts, and that person is awake and engaged in his daily activities without realizing that his spirit has been procured and is disclosing what he is not pleased with its disclosure.

Sometimes a person is put under hypnotic trance, and is directed to perform a deed and he in the same condition agrees to it. Then on waking up, he performs the same deed with all the conditions told to him; yet he is not aware of what was taught to him, nor does he know that he had agreed to it.

Some spiritualists, after seeing some spiritual apparitions similar to human form or like an animal's, thought that these forms are parts of the material world and receptacles of ever-changing nature. It especially applies to those who do not believe that any immaterial thing exists; so much so that some of them had tried to invent some artificial apparatus to catch the spirits. All this relied on a hypothesis which they had about the soul: that it has a material starting point, or is a characteristic of a material starting point, which acts with perception and will. However, they have not solved the question of life and perception even today.

Similar to it is the hypothesis of those who believe that spirit is a fine body, similar to the physical body in its forms and appearance. It is because they found that man sees himself in dream in the same form, which he sees of himself while awake. Sometimes the people exercising spiritual regimes see their own forms outside their bodies – and it looks totally similar to their bodies' form; so they said that spirit is a fine body which remains incarnated in the physical body as long as man remains alive; when it leaves the body it is death.

But they have failed to realize that this perceived form is found in the man's senses, like his form, which he perceives of his body, and like

the forms of all extraneous things, which are separate from his body. Also, occasionally this separate form appears to some people of exercised regime as more than one, or in a form other than his own form; and sometimes he sees his soul exactly as soul of some another person. Now, if they do not say about the said form that it is the form of the spirit, they also should not say for a form, which is seen by people of exercised regime that it is the form of the spirit.

The fact is that these people did get a part of the cognizance of the soul, but they lost the cognizance of the soul's true nature as it is, so they erred in explanation of what they had got and went astray in directing its affair. However, the truth, to which the proof and experi-ment lead, is that the soul's true perceived nature which is referred to by the word, 'I', is a thing which is quite separate in its essence from these material things, as explained earlier; and its various perceptions and senses – feelings, thought or understanding – inasmuch as they are perceived are settled in their own world and receptacle, other than the physical characteristics which appear in the organs of feeling and perception of the body, because they are material commissions and omissions and have no life or perception in themselves. So these affairs which are especially seen by good people and those who undergo spiri-tual exercises and regimes, are not beyond the grasp of their souls; the only question is: How did this cognizance settle in the soul and where in the soul is its place? And the soul has a sublime sign for all happen-ings and affairs which are somewhat connected to them. So all these strange affairs, which are compliant to the people of exercise and regime, are nourished by their will and intention; and intention emanates from perception. Thus, the human perception has some intervention in all events connected to, and all affairs touching him.

8. Thus, it is proper to divide into two, the people who are gen-erally involved in cognizance of soul: One, those who are engaged in it by acquiring some unusual effects of soul, which are beyond the circle of material cause-and-effect like the people indulging in magic and talisman, or those who subdue the spirituality of stars, jinn or men's spirits, or those who recite invocations or incantations.

Two, those who are engaged in cognizance of the soul by turning away from extraneous things and being attracted towards it for deeply thinking over it and observing its essence and conditions, like the Ṣūfīs in their various categories and paths.

Ṣūfīsm is not something invented by the Muslims on their own. It

is found even in those nations which had appeared before them, like the Christians and even the Hindus and Buddhists; there are in those religions even today those who proceed on this path; it is rather an hereditary way they have inherited from their ancestors.

However, it is not as the usual imitation as people inherit vari-ous types of civilization, one from the other, a later generation follow-ing in the footstep of an earlier one, as is believed by some researchers in religions and sects. You have seen in previous discourses that the natural religion leads to asceticism, and asceticism guides to the cog-nizance of the soul. When religion is settled in a nation and is firmly rooted in their hearts, it adapts and prepares them for inevitable growth in them of the way of cognizance of the soul; and then follow it some of those people who are fully affected by its factors. Thus, if religious life continues for sometime in a nation, this way [of Ṣūfīsm] is bound to appear among them, whether correct or incorrect, even if they remain totally cut-off from other religious nations and groups. An affair of this type should not be counted as a hereditary custom, which is passed on from generation to generation.

9. Now, we should further divide the second category of the people (i.e. those who are engaged in cognizance of the soul) into two groups:

One group proceeds on this way for the soul's own sake, so they are given some of its knowledge, but they fail to get its comprehensive cognizance. It is because their only aim was to know the soul; so they remain oblivious of its Maker, and He is Allāh, Great is His name, Who is the True Cause, Who takes the soul by its forelock in its existence and effects of existence. How can a man fully know a thing when he is oblivious of the knowledge of the causes of its existence? Especially the cause, which is the Cause of every cause? Is he but like someone who claims to have the knowledge of a bed while he is ignorant of the carpenter and his visit, does know nothing of his saw or the purpose of its making, and likewise other causes of the bed's existence.

This type of the soul's cognizance deserves to be called sooth-saying, as it entails acquirement of a little information regarding the soul and its effects.

The other group goes ahead on the path of the soul's cognizance in order that it would lead to the cognizance of the Lord. This way of theirs is the one which religion is somehow pleased with. The man be-comes engaged in the cognition of his soul because it is one of the signs of his Lord, and the nearest sign. The soul becomes the path trodden, and Allāh

is the destination towards which he proceeds: *and that to your Lord is the end goal* [53:42].

These are the different groups, having various beliefs. We do not have much information about the non-Muslims' views and of the paths they tread. As for the Muslims, they have got numerous paths, basic among them are counted to twenty five chains, and each of them is branched out to other smaller chains; all of them (except one) reach in the end to ʻAlī (a.s.). There are some people who are not connected to any of these chains; they call themselves al-Uwaysiyyah (linking themselves to Uways al-Qaranī). Also, there are others who do not have any name nor do they demonstrate with any slogan.

They have their own books and tracts in which they have described their chains and paths, the laws and ethics, which apply to them and have been narrated from their people. In these books they have recorded their narrated revelations, and elaborated their proofs and purposes based on them. Anyone wanting to understand it should consult them. This is not the place for detailed discussion of those paths and ways and confirmation of what is correct and critique of what is incorrect. Also, a discussion was given in the fifth volume of this book, which is not without benefit in this respect. This is in short what we had intended to write here concerning the discussion of the cognizance of the soul.

You should know that cognizance of the soul has a practical purpose, and its full knowledge cannot be attained except through the way of practical, not theoretical, proceeding. As for the knowledge of the soul written by the ancients it is totally useless; and the practical psychology invented by the later scholars is merely a branch of the ethics according to the ancients' categorization. And Allãh is the Guide.

* * * * *

LIST OF THE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS DEALT WITH IN THIS VOLUME

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By:
al-'Allãmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabãṭabã'ī

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هٰذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ

وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

(آل عمران : ١٣٨)

*****

This is a clear statement for men, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones .

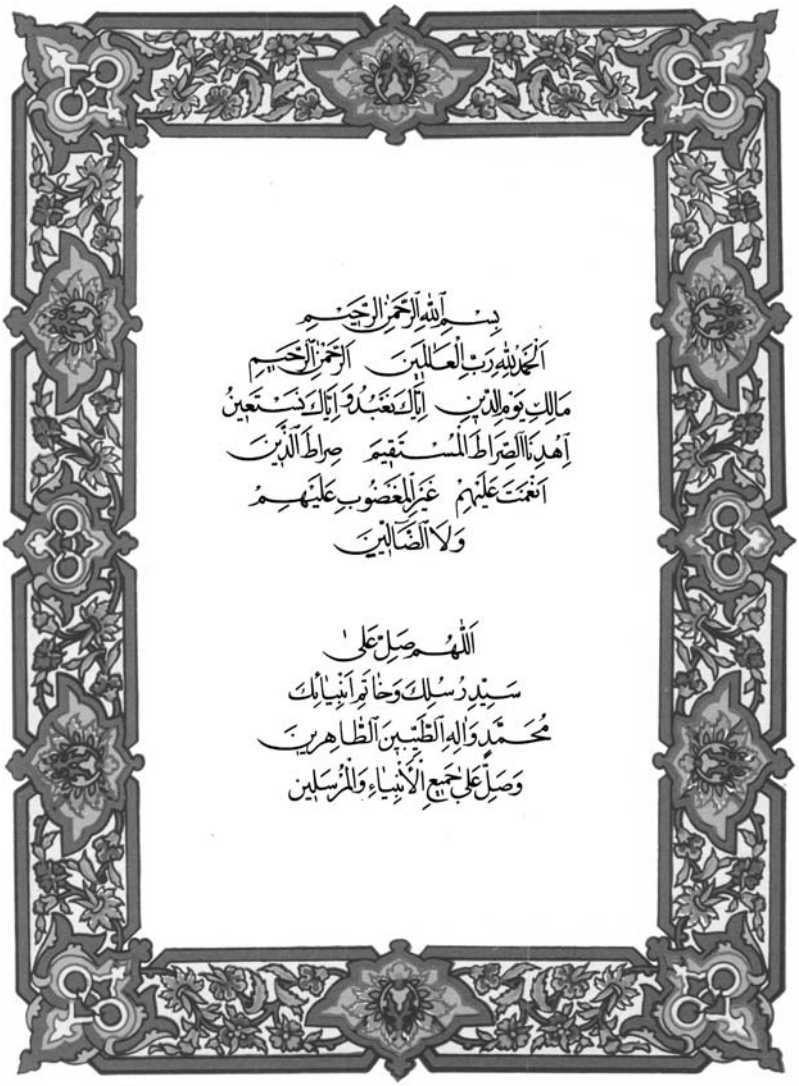
(Qur'ãn , 3:138)

In the Name of Allãh
The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful

Praise belongs to Allãh, the Lord of all Being;
the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement.
Thee only we serve; and to Thee alone we pray for succour.
Guide us in the straight path,
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allãh! Send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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TRANSLITERATION

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ء }	’
ا }	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ي	y
ة	ah
	.

Short Vowel

ـَ	a
ـِ (or ـٖ)	i
ـُ	u

Long Vowels

آ	ā
ـِي	ī
ـُو	ū

تـصـديـر

1- المرحوم العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (1321/1904-1402/1981) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان.

2- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

3- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة الى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالإنجليزيّة، و بعد مداولات و استشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لأ نّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما ، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرأن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على العالم الجليل العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي تغمّدهُ الله برحمته القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما عهدناه فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، و كفائته الأدبيّة في التعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في

ذلك، ليكون هو الكفيل بالتّرجمة الإنجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هو المنضّد لبحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

4- و نحن اذ ننشر (الجزء الثاني عشر) من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة لتفسير (الميزان) و يطابق النّصف الثّاني من الجزء السّادس للنّصّ العربيّ، نرجوا من الله سبحانه أن يأخذ بأيدينا و يعيننا علي إعداد التّرجمة الكاملة للكتاب و نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة. و لكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكلّ جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

و من الله سبحانه نسأل، و اليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصاً لوجهه الكريم، و أن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا و يسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه و خطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى و نعم النّصير.

1424/1/17
2003/5/19

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة
(لجنة التّأليف و التّرجمة و النّشر)
طهران – ايران

FOREWORD

1. The late al-‘Allãmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 – 1402/1981) – may Allãh have mercy upon him – was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contem-porary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the translation of *al-Mīzãn*.

2. al-‘Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzãn fī tafsīri 'l-Qur’ãn* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allãmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ãn in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzãn* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ãn and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to the late great scholar al-‘Allãmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī (may Allãh cover him with His mercy) to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So, we relied on him for this work and considered him responsible for the English translation

as al-‘Allãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have now undertaken the publication of the twelfth volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*. This volume corre-sponds with the second half of the sixth volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allãh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendices included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mīzān*: One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * * * *

We implore upon Allãh to affect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work, which we have started. May Allãh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

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al-Mīzān

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بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ شَهَٰدَةُ
بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ حِينَ ٱلْوَصِيَّةِ ٱثْنَانِ ذَوَا
عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ أَوْ ءَاخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنتُمْ ضَرَبْتُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ
فَأَصَٰبَتْكُم مُّصِيبَةُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ۚ تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِنۢ بَعْدِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ
فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِٱللَّهِ إِنِ ٱرْتَبْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِى بِهِۦ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۙ
وَلَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَٰدَةَ ٱللَّهِ إِنَّآ إِذًا لَّمِنَ ٱلْـَٔاثِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ فَإِنْ عُثِرَ عَلَىٰٓ
أَنَّهُمَا ٱسْتَحَقَّآ إِثْمًا فَـَٔاخَرَانِ يَقُومَانِ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ
ٱسْتَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْأَوْلَيَٰنِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِٱللَّهِ لَشَهَٰدَتُنَآ أَحَقُّ
مِن شَهَٰدَتِهِمَا وَمَا ٱعْتَدَيْنَآ إِنَّآ إِذًا لَّمِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ذَٰلِكَ
أَدْنَىٰٓ أَن يَأْتُوا۟ بِٱلشَّهَٰدَةِ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهَآ أَوْ يَخَافُوٓا۟ أَن تُرَدَّ أَيْمَٰنٌۢ بَعْدَ
أَيْمَٰنِهِمْ ۗ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱسْمَعُوا۟ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾
۞ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَآ أُجِبْتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا۟ لَا عِلْمَ
لَنَآ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلَّٰمُ ٱلْغُيُوبِ ﴿١٠٩﴾

O you who believe! Call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you, if you are travelling in the land and the calamity of death befalls you; the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer; then if you doubt (them)*, they shall both swear by Allāh,* (saying)*: "We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative, and we will not hide the testimony of Allāh, for then certainly we should be among the sinners"* (106)*. Then if it becomes known that they both have been guilty of a sin, two others shall stand up in their place from among those who have a claim against them, the two nearest in kin; so they two should swear by Allāh: "Certainly our testimony is truer than the testi-mony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then most surely we should be of the unjust"* (107)*. This is more pro-per in order that they should give testimony truly or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths; and fear Allāh, and hear; and Allāh does not guide the transgressing people* (108)*. On the day when Allāh will assemble the messengers, then say: "What answer were you given?" They shall say: "We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things"* (109).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The first three verses deal with affairs of testimony, and the last one is not without some connection with it in meaning.

QUR'ĀN: *O you who believe! Call to witness between you . . . ". . . for then most surely we should be of the unjust"*: The gist of the two verses is as follows: If a Muslim is on journey and wants to make a will, he must call to witness, at the time of will, two just witnesses from among the Muslims; if he does not find them, then he should call two witnesses from among the People of the Book. If the near rela-tives of the deceased feel some doubt about the will, the two witnesses shall be detained after the prayer, they shall swear by Allāh for their truth in witnessing, and the discord will be removed. Then if it be-comes known that the two witnesses have lied in testimony, then two other witnesses shall stand up in the place, and testify against them swearing in the name of Allāh.

This is apparently the connotation of the two verses. The phrases: "'O you who believe'", addresses the believers and the law is reserved to them. "Call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you": It means, witness between you is witness of two just persons from among you; there is an omitted but understood *muḍãf* (first construct of a genitive), i.e. two just persons from among you. It means that the required number of witnesses is two; thus the *maṣdar* here gives meaning of active participle, as they say, a just man, two just men.

The phrase: "when death draws nigh to one of you," is an allu-sion for drawing near to you the cause for making will, because people naturally do not get involved in such things unless there appears some-thing which indicates death's nearness; usually it means serious illness which brings man nearer to death.

The clause: "at the time of making the will," is an adverbial phrase of time, related to "witness", i.e. witness at the time of making the will. The *maṣdar, al-'adl* (اَلْعَدْلُ) means probity, and the context shows that it means probity and rectitude in religious affairs. This, in its turn, ascertains the "from among you" and "from among others than you" means from among the Muslims and the non-Muslims respectively, and not near relatives and clan; Allãh has mentioned "two" parallel to "two others", then has described the former as "just persons" and "from among you", while the latter has only been described as "from among others than you" without the qualification of justice. The qualification of probity or otherwise in religious affairs differs in the Muslim and the non-Muslim; there is no reason why probity in religious affairs should be necessary if the witnesses were from among the relatives or clan of the principal, but unnecessary if the witness were a non-relative.

Accordingly, the phrase: "or two others from among others than you," presents an alternative with sequence. The meaning: If there are Muslims two of them shall be made witnesses; but if there is none other than non-Muslims then two of them will be called to witness; all this is understood from the associations.

This very association makes it understood that the clause: "if you are travelling in the land and the calamity of death befalls you," is a restriction related to the words: "or two others from among others than you"; a Muslim usually lives in a Muslim society, and normally in a Muslim environment there does not arise a need to call two non-Muslims to act as witnesses; contrary to the condition of travelling when such

chances or emergencies may occur and the need may arise to approach non-Muslims for witnessing, etc.

The same association, i.e. affinity between the subject and the order, joined with the taste perceived from the divine speech, proves that the word, non-Muslims, here exclusively points to the People of the Book, because the divine speech does not bestow any nobility to the polytheists.

The clause: "they shall both swear by Allāh," i.e. the two witnesses shall swear; the clause: "then if you doubt," i.e. if you are in doubt about what the executor of the will describes concerning the will, or about the property governed by the will, or about its condition; what they shall swear to, is explained in the next sentence: "We will not take for it a price though there be a relative . . .," i.e. We will not accept any big or small price for testifying for the claim of the execu-tor of the will, even if he be a relative of ours. Selling the testimony for a price indicates that the witness turns aside from the truth in his testimony for a worldly goal, like wealth, prestige or feeling of relation-ship; thus he offers his testimony in exchange of a worldly price, and it is a small price indeed.

An exegetes has said that the pronoun, *it*, [in the phrase: *We will not take for it*] refers to the oath, i.e. We will not take for our oath a price; but it would entail swearing twice by Allāh, and the verse does not give any such hint.

The clause: "and we will not hide the testimony of Allāh", i.e. by testifying against the reality and truth; "for then certainly we should be among the sinners," i.e. carriers of sin. This sentence is in conjunction with, "We will not take for it a price, . . ." as an explicative apposition.

In the possessive case: "the testimony of Allāh", ‘the testimony’ is related to "Allāh", because Allāh testifies for the reality as the two witnesses do it; therefore it is the testimony of Allāh as it is the testimony of the two witnesses; and Allāh has more right to possession; thus it is His testimony by right and primarily, and the testimony of the two witnesses follows it secondarily. Allāh has said: . . . *and Allāh is sufficient as a witness.* (4:79); . . . *and they cannot comprehend any-thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases;* . . . (2:255).

Alternatively, it may be because witnessing it a right of Allāh imposed on His servants and it is incumbent on them to offer it with truth without alteration, without hiding it. It is as we say, religion of Allāh, thus we ascribe the religion to Allāh although it is the servants who are covered by it. Allāh says: . . . *and give upright testimony for Allāh.* . . .

(65:2); . . . *and do not conceal testimony,* . . . (2:283).

The clause: "Then if it becomes known . . ."; *al-'uthūr* (اَلْعُثُور) followed by preposition *'alã* (عَلَى) means to get something, to find something. This verse elaborates the law if it becomes known that the two witnesses have lied and testified wrongly.

The clause: "that they both have been guilty of a sin": *Istiḥqãq* (إِسْتِحْقاق = to be entitled; to deserve); *al-ithm* (الإِثْم = sin); to be entitled to a sin means to commit a sin or crime; it is said: The man deserved a sin, i.e. he committed a sin; Zayd deserved a sin against Bakr, i.e. Zayd committed a crime against Bakr. That is why in the coming sentence it has taken the preposition *'alã* (عَلَى), as it says: two others shall stand up in their place "from among those who have a claim against them," i.e. those against whom the two witnesses have sinned by giving false testimony and perfidy. The basic meaning of *istaḥaqqa 'r-rajul* (إِسْتَحَقَّ الرَجُل) is as follows: The man demanded that the sin or its punishment be established and confirmed against him. Accordingly it is here an extended metaphor in which demand is used for describing the thing demanded, and path is mentioned in place of destination. The word, sin, in the clause: "that they both have been guilty of a sin," is inferred from the preceding clause: "for then certainly we should be among the sinners."

The words: *two others shall stand up in their place*, i.e. if it is found that the two witnesses have committed perjury and perfidy, then two other witnesses shall stand in their place for swearing that the first two have committed perjury and perfidy.

The clause: "from among those who have a claim against them," denotes situation, i.e., while these two new witnesses against whom the first two had committed perfidy, and who are nearest in kin to the deceased according to the will, as ar-Rãzī has stated in his *tafsīr*. In short, it denotes that if it was known that the two witnesses have com-mitted perjury and perfidy against the near relatives of the deceased, then two other witnesses shall stand up in their place from among those against whom the first two have committed that perjury, before their guilt was known.

This interpretation is based on the recital of 'Ãṣim from Ḥafṣ who has recited *ustuḥiqqa* (أُسْتُحِقَّ) in passive voice; then the apparent context would make, "the first two" the subject and its predicate would be, "two others shall stand up in their place". The meaning: If it becomes known that the two witnesses have committed perjury and perfidy against the near relatives of the deceased, then two near rela-tives of the deceased

shall stand up in their place against whom the perfidy was committed.

In the recital of ʻĀṣim through Abū Bakr, Ḥamzah, Khalaf and Yaʻqūb, *al-awlayān* (اَلأَوْلَيَان) is recited *al-awwalīn* (الأَوَّلِيْن= the first ones, opposite to the last ones), and apparently it means the nearest of kin who have first claim [on the deceased's estate]; it is adjective or appositional substantive standing for "those who".

The exegetes have written much numerous modes and aspects so far as the construction of various parts of the verse is concerned; so much so that if some aspects are multiplied by the others in order to infer the full meaning of the verse, it would result in hundreds of aspects. az-Zajjāj has reportedly said that it is the most complicated verse of the Divine Book so far as its construction is concerned.

What we have written in its explanation is manifestly clear from the context, without any aberration or arbitrariness; we have avoided thoroughly looking at all the possibilities, which they have mentioned, because it would only increase the vagueness of the word, leaving a scholar bewildered.[1]

From the clause: "two others shall stand up in their place", sprouts the clause: "so they two should swear by Allāh;" it means the two other witnesses, nearest in kin to the deceased; they should swear by Allāh that certainly our testimony (which unmasks the falsity and perfidy of the first two witnesses) is truer than that of the first two concerning the aspects of the will; and we have not exceeded the limit against them by testifying contrary to what they had testified, other-wise, most surely we should be among the unjust people.

QUR'ĀN: ***This is more proper in order that they should give testi-mony truly or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths; . . .*****:** The verse describes the underlying reason of the preceding rule. It says that this law, with the sequence prescribed by Allāh, is the safest way of arriving at the truth in this place, and is the nearest method of ensuring that the first two witnesses would not commit injustice in their testimony, as they would be afraid that, otherwise their testimony would be refuted and rejected.

Man is entangled in his desire; the desire invites him to enjoy whatever he can, and grasp to whatever he longs for, provided there is

[1] If anybody wants to know those details, he should refer to the *Tafsīr Rūḥu 'l-maʻānī*, vol.7 (by al-Ālūsī), *Majmaʻu 'l-bayān* (by aṭ-Ṭabrisī), *Mafātīḥu 'l-ghayb* (by ar-Rāzī) and other detailed books. (*Author's note*)

nothing to divert him from it; it makes no difference whether he has any right to that desired item or not, whether it is based on justice or injustice even by nullifying someone else's right. The man desists from that transgression and exceeding the limit either because of some ex-terior thing which prevents him from it through punishment or chastise-ment, or because of some inner prohibition from his own soul; and the strongest psychological prohibitive factor is the belief in Allãh to Whom the servants have to return and Who takes reckoning of the deeds, decides with justice and awards full recompense.

If, as is supposed at this juncture, the reality about the deceased's will is unknown and the only way to find it is through the testimony of the two witnesses whom the deceased had appointed, then the strong-est way of keeping their testimony nearer to truth is to compel them to swear by Allãh, and to make the nearest of kin of the deceased swear by Allãh if it transpires that the first two witnesses have committed perjury and perfidy. Thus, these two methods, i.e. their oaths in the beginning and then returning the oath to the nearest of kin, are the most effective ways to keep the first two witnesses on truth, as they would be afraid to be ignominiously exposed and their oaths refuted. These two are the strongest factors to prevent them from deviation from truth.

Then Allãh ended the speech with the admonition and warning: *and fear Allãh, and hear; and Allãh does not guide the transgressing people.*

QUR'ÃN: ***On the day when Allãh will assemble the messenger, then say: "What answer were you given?" They shall say: "We have no knowledge, surely thou art the great Knower of the unseen things."*****:** The verse is not averse to be connected with the previous subject; al-though the end part of the preceding verse: "and fear Allãh, and hear . . .," is general, yet the context denotes that it contains prohibition of deviation, committing injustice in witnessing or disdaining the oath by the name of Allãh. Thus it is appropriate to describe what is to take place between Allãh and His messengers, who shall be witnesses over their nations, and what an excellent witnesses they are! Allãh shall ask them what answer they were given by their people, and although they knew very well what their people had done, and they were appointed by Allãh to be their witnesses, yet they will reply by saying: "'We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.'"

The matters being like this and with Allãh being the Knower of

everything, it is appropriate for the witnesses to be afraid of divine majesty, and not to deviate from the truth which Allāh has given them the knowledge of; they should not conceal the testimony of Allāh, otherwise they would be one of the sinners, unjust and tyrants.

The divine words: "On the day when Allāh will assemble . . .," is an adverb of time, related to the preceding clauses: "and fear Allāh . . ." The verse speaks of assembling of the messengers (instead of saying, when Allāh will say to the messengers), as it has more affinity with gathering of the witnesses for testimony, as shown by the words: *the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer; . . . they shall both swear by Allāh.*

As for the messengers' negating the knowledge from them-selves, when they shall say: "'We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.'" They restrict the knowledge of all unseen things exclusively to Allāh, and it proves that the negated is not the knowledge *per se,* because the clause: "surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things", apparently aims at explaining the reason of negation; and it is understood that confinement of the knowl-edge of all unseen things does not entail removal of all knowledge from other than Allāh, especially so when it is a knowledge of testimony; and what will be asked, i.e. how the people answered their messengers, is related to the testimony not to the unseen.

Their reply: "'We have no knowledge'", does not negate knowl-edge in general; it negates the truly inside knowledge which is not without some relationship with the unseen. It is known that the knowl-edge discloses to the knower the reality as much as it is related to a certain affair concerning its causes and concomitants; and the reality is inter-connected with all parts present externally, whether they precede the reality in external existence or are found simultaneously; knowledge of any external affair, in true sense, does not occur except by compre-hending all parts of its existence and acquiring comprehension of its Maker – far be it from His majesty that anything could ever compre-hend Him, and it is an affair beyond the human power. Thus, man has not been given knowledge in this universe – the universe thinking on whose vast dimension leaves him flabbergasted, looking at the magni-tude of its stars and galaxies makes him scared, if he observes its minute items his reason is bewildered, and if he wants to walk between these two extremes he becomes giddy – except a little that is needed by him in the journey of his life, just as a walker in utterly dark night carries a small candle which

gives him only enough light to see where to put his next step.

What the human knowledge is connected to, adheres with its being, and attaches with its reality to its fringes and then to the fringes of the fringes and so on. All of it is unperceived by human percep-tions. Knowledge, in its true meaning, cannot be attached to anything except when it is connected to all its unseen factors of existence, and this is not possible for any limited creature, be it human or something else, except Allãh, the One, the Subduer, with Him are the keys of the unseen, none but He knows them. Allãh says: . . . *and Allãh knows, while you do not know* (2:216). The verse shows that man's nature is ignorance, and he is not given knowledge except to a limited measured quantity. Allãh says: *There is not a thing but its treasures are with Us, and We do not send it down but according to known measures* (15:21). The same is the connotation of the *ma'ṣūm*'s reply when he was asked, "Why Allãh is concealed from His creatures?" He said: "Because surely He has built their structure on ignorance." Allãh has also said: . . . *and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except that which He pleases;* . . . (2:255). It shows that knowledge, all of it, belongs to Allãh and man comprehends out of it only what Allãh wills. Also He says: . . . *and you have not been given the knowledge but a little* (17:85). This proves that there is a multitude of knowledge, but man has not been given except a little.

So, the reality is this: knowledge, the real one, is not found except with Allãh. When the Day of Resurrection comes, the things will appear in their true forms and shapes, as the related verses show. Thus, there would not be on that day any place except for the true speech, as Allãh says: . . . *they shall not speak except he whom the Beneficent Lord gives leave, and he will speak the truth. That is the certain day*, . . . (78:38-39). That is why when the messengers shall be asked, *"What answer were you given?"* the true reply will be to repudi-ate from themselves all knowledge as it will be a part of the unseen, and to affirm it to their Load, by saying: *"We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things."*

This reply of theirs, emanates from their humility before His Grandeur and Majesty; it is a confession of their personal neediness and essential nullity *vis-à-vis* their True Master; keeping the manner of His audience and displaying the truth of the matter. However, it is not a final answer shutting the door to further replies, because:

First: Because Allãh has made them witnesses for their peoples, as He

says in this Book: *How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness, and We bring you as a witness over those* (witnesses)? (4:41); *. . . and the book* (of deeds) *shall be set up, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be summoned . . .* (39:69). And there is no meaning of making them witnesses except that they should be witnesses over their peoples – as the witnessing should be on that day. Inevitably they will testify on that day as Allãh has ordained it. Thus, their reply, *"We have no knowledge,"* is based on the manner of worshipful homage *vis-à-vis* the True King in whose hand is command and kingdom on that day. It also explains the reality of the affair, i.e. Allãh possesses knowledge by Himself, and others possess it only as much as He makes them have it; and there is no wrong if, after this reply, they disclose what knowledge they had of the conditions of their peoples. This supports what we have previously written in the first volume of this book, under the verse: *And thus we have made you a justly balanced group so that you may be witnesses over mankind, and so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, . . .* (2:143), where we have explained that this knowledge and witnessing are not of the type of knowledge and witnessing as we understand them; rather they are of the knowledge which is particularly reserved to Allãh and which is bestowed to a group of His honoured servants

Second: Because Allãh has confirmed that a group of his nearer servants will possess knowledge on the Day of Resurrection. He says: *And those who have been given knowledge and faith will say: Verily you have tarried according to the decree of Allãh till the Day of Resurrection, . . ."* (30:56); *. . . and on the heights shall be men who know them all by their marks* (7:46); *And those whom they invoke beside Him do not own any power of intercession, save he who bears witness to the truth, and they know the truth* (43:86); and ʻĪsã son of Maryam is included in this verse, and he was a messenger; therefore he is among those who bear witness to the truth and they know the truth; *And the Messenger shall say: "O my Lord! Verily my people took this Qur'ãn as a thing abandoned."* (25:30). The Messenger refers to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and his speech quoted in this verse is exactly the reply to the question contained in the verse under dis-cussion, i.e., the divine words: "*What answer were you given?"* Now, it is clear that the words of the Messengers: "*We have no knowledge, . . ."* is not the final answer, as described above.

Third: Because the Qur'ãn mentions that the questioning will cover

both the Messengers and those to whom they were sent. Allãh says: *Then surely We shall question those to whom* (Our messengers) *were sent, and certainly We will also question the messengers* (7:6). Also, He mentions many replies given by the people to whom the messen-gers were sent of many questions asked of them; and replying entails knowledge and questioning confirms it. Also, Allãh says: *Certainly, you were heedless of this* (day), *now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight is sharp today* (50:22); *And could you but see when the guilty will stand before their Lord, heads hung low,* (and say): *"O our Lord! We have seen and we have heard; now send us back; we will do good; verily now we are convinced."* (32:12). There are many verses of similar theme. Now, when the peoples – and especially the guilty among them – were having knowledge on that day, how could it be imagined that the honoured messengers would be lacking that knowledge. Thus the end result is the same as we have said.

A TALK ON THE MEANING OF TESTIMONY

The society in which we live, and the interaction that takes place between our active powers in general aspects of this worldly life, pushes us willy-nilly to various kinds of discords and disputes. What one of us exclusively enjoys, often another one wants to share it with him, or even acquire it solely for himself, displacing the original owner. This made man realize that jurisprudential judgements and decrees were essential for settling such disputes.

The first requirement for judging a case is that the events and occurances should be preserved exactly as they took place and recorded in a way that no change or alteration sneaks in them, in order that the judge may decide accordingly. No body can doubt its importance.

This can be ensured only through making someone look at the event: He observes the episode and takes upon himself to convey the report truly when need arises, or records it in some other way, like writing or using other instruments which serve the same purpose [like audio or video cassettes, etc.].

There are some important differences between witnessing and other means of preservation and recording: First, The means of preser-vation and recording, other than witnessing, are not available generally; its most common and well known method is writing, but even today it has not

covered the whole mankind, let alone the ancient times; contrary to the witnessing. Second, Rendering testimony, i.e., description with tongue by a witness through his undertaking to convey the fact truly and based on his memory, is less likely to be affected by any defectiveness and more secured against various afflictions in comparison to writing and other means of recording.

That is why we see that no nation shuns giving credence to testimony – it is true in all nations, despite their excessive discord in sociological customs, tribal and religious dispositions and progress or regress in culture and barbarism – in short every group gives some credence to testimonies.

Consideration is given in this respect to someone who is counted as a member of the nation and part of the group. That is why no import-ance is given to the evidence of a child below the age of discretion or to that of an insane who does not know what he speaks. The same is the reason why some barbarous nations did not recognize women's evidence, as they did not accept women as part of the society; and most of the social norms in ancient nations were based on the same thinking, like Rome, Greece and other regions.

Now, Islam is the natural religion, and as such recognizes testimony, and accepts this alone as the definite proof, while all other means of substantiation and corroboration have no value unless and until they create "Knowledge". Allãh says: *. . . and establish the evidence for Allãh; . . .* (65:2); *. . . and do not conceal evidence, and whoever conceals it, then surely his heart is sinful; . . .* (2:283); *And those who stand firm in their testimonies* (70:33).

Islam has fixed the number of two for witnesses regarding all affairs except fornication [where the required number is four] so that each supports the other. Allãh says: *. . . then call to witness two wit-nesses from among your men, and if there are not two men, then one man and two women from among those whom you choose to be wit-nesses, so that should one of the two forgets the* (second) *of the two may remind the other; and the witnesses should not refuse when they are summoned; and be not averse to writing it* (whether it be) *small or large, with the time of its falling due. This* (procedure) *is more equi-table in the sight of Allãh, and assures greater accuracy in testimony, and the nearest* (way) *to not entertaining any doubts* (afterwards)*; . . .* (2:282). It shows that what the verse explains and lays down in respect of the laws of witnessing, including the addition of one witness to the other to make them two, is

more in conformity with justice, rendering of testimony and removal of doubt.

When Islam looks at the individual members of the society – who are the bricks to build the society – it counts woman among them, and bestows on her the right, like the men, to render the witness. At the same time, it has decided that the society created by it should be founded on understanding, rather than emotions. Woman is an emo-tional human being; and therefore it has given her half the right and weight of man; thus two women's testimonies equal to that of a man, as the above-quoted verse points to: *so that should one of the two forgets, the* (second) *of the two may remind the other.* In the fourth volume of this, we have written on the right of woman in Islam, which will be useful here. Witnessing has many detailed laws, which are elaborated in the books of jurisprudence, which is beyond the limit of this discussion here.

A TALK ON JUSTICE

A research scholar in Islamic Laws often comes across the word Justice; and he often finds different definitions and diverse explanations of this word, depending on diversity of the scholars and their ways.

But what is appropriate at this juncture of the Qur'ãnic discourse – in analysis of its meaning and the way of its application to the nature on which Islam is based – is that we should adopt another way of explanation. So we say:

al-'Adãlah (اَلْعَدَالَة) is moderation and middle position between two modes of high and low, and two sides of exaggeration and short-fall. It has a real value and great weight in human societies. The via media, the moderate position, is the substantial ingredient or the core around which the social structure is built. A noble man of high rank who would be dressed in high social virtues, and represent the utmost wish of society, is not born every day; such a person appears on the scene only rarely and it is known that society is not made up of a rare person even if he be looked up as a cardinal organ wherever he be found.

On the other side is a vile and despicable person who does not uphold social rights, and who does not fulfil the average aspirations of the society. He does not have any caller inviting him to observe the general social principles on which depends the life of society; nor does he have any deterrent which would prevent him from committing social sins

which destroy the society and nullify the essential mutual attraction between its ingredients; in short, no trust can be had for his being a part of the body of society, nor can one rely on his good influ-ence and proper advice.

[We find, after leaving these two high and low ranks aside, that] the rule is exercised by the medium rank of the society on whom depends the society's structure, and who fulfil its aims and aspirations; and it is through them that its good effects take place – its ingredients and organs have not come together except for achieving this goal and enjoying it.

A member of the society cannot entertain any doubt about it when he looks at it even once.

It is self-evident to him that he, in his social life, greatly depends on some individual members of the society on whose social deportment he relies – they are covered with moderation in affairs, are cautious against being indifferent to breaking the laws or violation of prevalent customs and manners in various fields like jurisprudence, judgement and testimonies, etc.

This imperative or nearly imperative quality demanded by nature is what Islam looks for in a witness. Allāh says: . . . *and call to witness two just men from among you, and establish the evidence as before Allāh. Thus is admonished he who believes in Allāh and the last day;* . . . (65:2); . . . *when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you,* . . (5:106). Both these verses are addressed to those who believe. Therefore, the condi-tion that the witnesses should be two just men from among them implies that they should have a moderate and medium position *vis-à-vis* their religious society; but as for its position *vis-à-vis* national or political society, Islam does not care for such non-religious relation-ships. Apparently, if the witnesses are on a medium position *vis-à-vis* the religious society, they must be from among those whose religiosity is relied upon and who do not indulge in major sins, which adversely affect the religion. Allāh says: *If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden, We will remit from you your* (minor) *sins and We will make you enter an honourable entering* (4:31). We have described the meaning of major sins under this verse in the fourth volume of this book.

This meaning is evident in the divine words: *Those who accuse chaste women* (and) *then do not bring four witnesses, scourge them with eighty stripes, and do not accept their testimony for ever and they are the*

transgressors. Save those who afterwards repent and make amends. So Allãh is Oft-forgiving, Merciful (24:4-5).

Similar to the previous verse which lays down the condition of justice and probity, is the divine word: . . . *from among those whom you are pleased with to be witnesses,* . . . (2:282), because the pleasure mentioned here means pleasure of a religious society; and it is known that a religious society, *per se*, will not be pleased with anyone unless he behaves in a manner that makes him trustworthy in religious affairs.

It is what we call in *fiqh* the faculty of *'adãlah*. It is other than what is called *'adãlah* in Ethics. The *'adãlah* of *fiqh* is the psycho-logical aspect which in common point of view prevents one from committing major sins; and the *'adãlah* of Ethics is the deep-rooted trait of character in reality.

What we have inferred from the meaning of *'adãlah* is what is understood from the *madhhab* of the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (peace be upon them) as is reported through their chains:

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates in *Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*, through his chains from Ibn Abī Ya'fūr, that he said: "I said to Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.), 'By what is known the *'adãlah* of a man among the Muslims, so that his testimony is accepted for and against them?' He said:

"'(It is) that they recognize him with covering and abstinance, and control of stomach, and genitals, and hand, and tongue; and he is known to avoid major sins for whom Allãh has threatened the Fire, as drinking liquor, fornication, interest, disobedience of parents, fleeing from *jihãd* and so on.

"'And it is known from the fact that he conceals all his defects, in order that the Muslims are forbidden to search for his slips and defects, and are obliged to pronounce his integrity, and declare his *'adãlah* among the people; and he is considered regular in the five prayers when he deligently prays and preserves their times with attending the Muslims' congregational prayers, and does not remain behind from their congregation in their prayer place except because of some (genuine) cause.

"'When he is like that, inseparable from his prayer-place at the advent of the five prayers; when he is asked about in his tribe and quarter, they would say: "We did not see from him except good", (he is) regular in his prayers, waiting for their times in his prayer place, then surely it would make his testimony valid, and (establish) his *'adãlah* among the Muslims. And it is because prayer is a curtain and expiation of sins. And

it is not possible to testify about a man that he prays if he does not come to his prayer place and does not regularly attend the Muslims' congregation.

"'Congregation and gathering for prayer has been prescribed only for this purpose that he who prays may be distinguished from him who does not pray; and he who preserves the times of prayer from him who neglects it. And if it were not so, no one could testify for the goodness of the other, because he who does not pray has no goodness among the Muslims. Verily the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had intended to burn a group in their houses because they avoided attending the Muslims' congregations; and there were among them people who used to pray in their homes, but it was not accepted from them. Therefore, how can evidence or probity of someone be accepted among the Muslims about whom decision of Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, and of His Messenger was taken to burn (him) with fire inside his house? And he (s.a.w.a.) used to say: "There is no prayer for him who does not pray in the mosque with the Muslims except because of some reason (illness)."'" (*Man lã yaḥḍuruh 'l-faqīh*)

The author says: ash-Shaykh has narrated it in *at-Tahdhīb* with some addition, which we have left out. Covering and abstinance both mean avoidance, as [Jawharī] has said in *aṣ-Ṣiḥãḥ.* As you see, the tradition makes basic *'adãlah* a thing which is well-known among the Muslims; and shows that the effect resulting from it and which proves this psychological characteristic is avoidance of the things prohibited by Allãh, and abstention from forbidden desires; and it is recognized through avoidance of major sins; then proof of all this is seen in (his) good appearance among the Muslims, as the Imãm (a.s.) has described it in detail.

ʻAbdullãh ibn al-Mughīrah narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍã (a.s.) that he said: "He who was born on *fiṭrah* (i.e., of Muslim parent) and is known with goodness in himself, his evidence is allowed." (*ibid*.)

Sumãʻah has narrated through Abū Baṣīr from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "There is nothing wrong with evidence of an old (or weak) person when he is righteous and chaste." (*ibid*.)

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from ʻAlī ibn Mahziyãr from Abū ʻAlī ibn Rãshid that he said: "I said to Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.): 'Verily, your followers are of different types; so should I pray with them all?' He said: 'Don't pray except behind him of whose religion you are confident.'"

(*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: The tradition clearly indicates what we have explained above. There are other topics in it, which are beyond our theme here.

A TALK ON OATH

What do you mean when you say: 'By my life, it is so'; or 'By my life, the thing is as I have said?' It means that you somehow attach that statement in its truthfulness to your life – which has a great position and dignity in your eyes – in such a way that they become inseparable in existence and non-existence; if you were wrong in your statement, you would nullify the dignity of your life and its honour in your eyes, and thus would fall down from the level of humanity which demands respect for life's affairs.

When you say, 'I adjure you by Allãh to do (or, not to do) this thing', it means that you have attached your order or prohibition to the dignity and honour which Allãh has in the believers' eyes; in this way if anyone goes against that order or prohibition it would be an insult to the divine position and would negate the sanctity of the belief in Allãh.

Likewise, when you say, 'By Allãh! I'll do such and such', you affect a special connection between your intention to do it and the dignity and honour which Allãh has in your eyes according to your belief in Him, so much so that if you cancel your intention it would entail a negation of the divine dignity in your eyes. Its purpose is to create a deterrent against cancellation of that plan. Thus, oath creates a special connection between a statement and another thing which has a dignity and honour in such a way that if the former is nullified, the latter too would be negated; and because the latter has such a dignity and honour that the person concerned would not be pleased by its loss of dignity or by an insult to it, therefore he is truthful in what he says and is obeyed in what he orders or forbids, or is bound to implement what he plans. So the oath results in intensified emphasis.

In some languages, there is found another kind of connection *vis-à-vis* oath; it connects the statement with something which has no value or importance at all in the eyes of the speaker; it is done to show the contempt or desdain of the information given or received – it is a sort of abuse and it is very rare in Arabic language.

Swearing and oath, as we know, is a prevalent custom on people's tongue, which is inherited generation after generation; and it is not particular to one language beside others. It proves that it is not something related to a language; rather man is led to it by his social life on occasions when he realizes the need to seek refuge in it and get its benefit.

Oath was always prevalent among the nations; they relied on it on various unprecise occasions, which occurred in their societies for various purposes, e.g. removal of blame, lifting a slander, making one-self happy, or supporting information. This continued at random until civil laws took it in their hands and gave it a legal stand on some occa-sions, like swearing in of Presidents and Executives when they assume great responsibilities and are appointed to great and high posts, etc.

Islam gave oath full consideration when it was sworn in the name of Allãh in particular. It is not but because of the high regard that it accords to the Majesty of God, as it aims to protect the divine grandure from unbecoming attachments. That is why it has laid down special expiation for breaking the oath and dislikes frequent swearing in the name of Allãh. He say: *Allãh does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of delib-erate oaths; so its expiation* (for breaking an oath) *is the feeding of ten poor men out of the average* (food) *you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing a neck; . . .* (5:89). *And make not Allãh in your oaths a hindrance against that you may do good and . . .* (2:224).

Islam has recognized oath in those cases of litigation where there is no proof. Allãh says: *. . . so they two should swear by Allãh: "Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, . . ."* (5:107). And the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) has said: "The proof is on the claimant, and oath is on him who denies."

The essence of recognition of oath is that only the oath is a suf-ficient proof in cases where no other proof exists. The religious society is founded on individuals' belief in Allãh, and a believer is a part of this composite whole; he is the fountain-head from which spring forth the customs which are followed and laws which are enforced; in short, all signs which appear in the community and which rise from their relig-ious condition. It is not unlike a secular society that is based on peoples' belief in their national objects, and from which the social laws and cus-toms as well as the manners and culture are born which are found in it.

This being the case, as it is OK to rely in all social affairs, and in general concomitants of life, on individuals' oaths in various ways, then it

should also be OK to rely on their oaths in cases where no other reliable proof exists – and it is the oath in cases where no proof is offered; the denier would attach his denial of the claimant's claim with his belief in such a way that if falsity of his claim becomes apparent, no reliance can be put on his belief in Allãh.

As he ties his belief and faith with that oath, he pawns his faith putting it under the control of the pawn-broker, and its return to the borrower depends on his true promise and repayment of the loan within the agreed period; otherwise the pawned property goes and he remains empty-handed.

Likewise, the one who swears is considered as if he has pawned his faith in exchange of what he has sworn for until its falsity is found out; when its falsity appears, he becomes empty-handed from faith, falls down from the height of reliability, is deprived of enjoying the fruit of belief; in other words, in the religious society he loses all social bene-fits; he is banished from the well-knit society; neither the sky puts him under its shadow nor the earth accepts his burden.

This discourse is supported by what used to happen at the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), when people openly showed their hatred for those who stayed behind from religious assemblies like congregational prayer, *jihãd* and so on; as it was the time when religion had total domination and authority over desires.

But what is the situation nowadays? Religion has lost its hold; base desires have seeped into hearts; we are living in a society com-posed of religious objectives (whose structure is weakened and people have turned away from it) and modern civilization's objectives. It is submerged in material enjoyments whose foundation is strong and general public eagerly proceeds towards it. Then there appeared severe quarrel and dispute between religious factors and modern civilization, in which constantly the latter is winning and the former retreating. The religious system that was supposed to dominate the society lost it coherence, and chaos and confusion appeared in spiritual affairs. In this condition, neither oath nor anything stronger can be of any bene-fit; there remains nothing to protect the people's rights. People have lost confidence not in the religious safeguards found in society, but even in modern laws.

However, the divine rules and *sharī'ah* cannot be abrogated merely by the people's turning away from it or by their being tired of it. Verily the religion with Allãh is Islam, He is not pleased with disbelief for his servant, and if Truth had followed their desires the heavens and the earth

would have perished. Certainly, Islam is a relig-ion which deals with all conditions of human life, it explains them and describes their laws – the laws that consist of parts which are in con-formity with each other, are interlinked and mutually complementary; they are alive with spirit of monotheism. If one part ails the whole becomes sick; if some portions become rotten, it adversely affects the whole – just like a human body.

If a limb of body starts ailing or becomes decayed, it is essential to preserve the healthy parts and treat the ailing one; it is not correct in reason to leave the ailing limb as it is and also neglect the healthy parts.

Islam is the True Religion, of easy laws and forgiving nature; its *sharī'ah* has various vast degrees; its responsibilities are assessed according to what one has the ability to do. Its rope is stretched from secured social condition (where its laws and rules comprehensively cover all situations without exception) to individual conditions of emergency (when prayer is allowed by sign); but coming down from a high step to a lower one is conditional to emergency that removes responsibility and allows respite and extension. Allãh says: *He who disbelieves in Allãh after he has believed – except he who has been forced* (to do so), *while his heart remains firm in faith – and opens* (his) *breast for dis-belief, will suffer the wrath of Allãh. For them there shall be a great torment . . . Then, verily your Lord – to those who migrated after being persecuted, then they strived hard and endured patiently – verily, your Lord, after that, is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful* (16:106, 110).

As for those who base their lives on materialistic enjoyment, then try to justify the rejection of its opposite religious factors by say-ing that it does not agree with prevalent customs of the present world, they merely follow the materialistic logic, and not the religious one.

There is a discourse related to this chapter that emanates from some people's claim that swearing by other than Allãh's name is a sort of polytheism, ascribing a partner to Allãh. It is necessary to ask this speaker what he means by polytheism, which he claims in this context.

Does he mean that: Swearing by other than Allãh (aggrandize-ment of the one sworn by and showing greatness to his affairs, as the meaning of oath is based on it) contains a sort of humbleness and wor-ship to him, and it is polytheism? But not every aggrandizement is polytheism. It can be polytheistic only when grandeur of independent Lordship is ascribed to someone other than Allãh, with the idea that he is self-sufficient and does not require anyone's help.

Allãh has sworn [in His Book] by a lot of His creations, like the

sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, the disappearing orbiting stars, and the star when it goes down; He has sworn by the mountain, the river, the fig, the olive, and the horse. Also, He has taken oath by night and day, by morning, by evening glow, by afternoon and forenoon; by the Day of Resurrection and the soul; He has sworn by the Book and the Great Qur'ãn, by the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the angels, and many such things in numerous verses – while no oath can be valid without some aggrandizement.

So, what is there to prevent us from proceeding on the way Allãh has used in His speech? Why should not we show greatness of some things, which Allãh has bestowed on them, and stop at that? If such expressions were polytheistic, the divine speech should have avoided it in the first place!

Also, Allãh has shown the greatness of many things in His Book, like the Qur'ãn, the Throne, and the manners of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). He has said: . . . *and the mighty Qur'ãn* (15:87); . . . *And He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne* (9:129); . . . *and surely you are on a mighty morality* (68:4). He has prescribed for His prophets and messengers and for the believers rights on Himself, and has shown their greatness and dignity, as He has said: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth about Our servants, the messengers, that verily they shall be helped* (37:171-172); . . . *and it was incumbent on Us to help the believers* (30:47). Why should not we show their grandeur and follow the divine way in swearing in general? What is there to stop us from adjuring Him by something He Himself has sworn by? Or by one of the rights He has prescribed for His friends on Himself?

Of course, the jurisprudential oath that has legal effects in the fields of oath or judgement is not valid by name of other than Allãh, as is explained in *fiqh*, but we are not talking about that.

If the objector means to say that general aggrandizement, in any way, is not allowed for anyone other than Allãh – even if it is done through what Allãh has shown its grandeur with – then it is a claim for which there is no proof at all; rather definite proof is found against it.

Sometimes it is said that swearing by the right of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Allãh's friends, seeking nearness to them and hoping for their intercession in any way, is a worship and bestowal of an unseen authority on them. The same comments as above apply to this claim too: What do they mean by this "unseen authority"? Does it denote the independent authority, which is reserved for Allãh? If so, then no Muslim

(who believes in the Book of Allãh) assigns it to other than Allãh. And if it denotes non-material authority in general (even if it is by permission of Allãh), then where is the proof that it is impossible for some chosen servants of Allãh, like His friends, to have such auth-ority by divine permission? The noble Qur'ãn has clearly mentioned many unseen authorities, as Allãh says: . . . *until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers* (angels) *cause him him to die, . . .* (6:61); *Say: "The angel of death will cause you to die . . ."* (32:11); *By those* (angels) *who drag forth violently, and those who undo* (the bonds) *gently, and those who glide along* (swiftly); *and those who go ahead with foremost speed, and those who manage the affairs* (79:1-5); *Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Jibrīl, verily it is he who has brought it to your heart by Allãh's command . . ."* (2:97); and there are numerous verses of this theme.

And He says about Iblīs and his hosts: *for he and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them. Verily We have made the Satans to be the guardians of those who do not believe* (7:27). Likewise, innumerable verses have been revealed about the prophets' and others' intercession in the next world, and their miraculous signs in this world.

Would that I knew what is the difference between material effects, which these people assert in these subjects without any aversion, and non-material effects, which they call unseen authority. If assertion of effect to other than Allãh were forbidden, then there should not be any difference between a material and a non-material effect, and if it is allowed by permission of Allãh, then all are equal in this respect.

TRADITIONS

'Alī ibn Ibrãhīm narrates through his people a *marfū' ḥadīth*: He says: "Tamīm ad-Dãrī, Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Mãriyah went forth on a journey. Tamīm ad-Dãrī was a Muslim and the other two were Christians. Tamīm ad-Dãrī had a box, which contained his merchan-dise togetherwith a pot with golden design and a necklace; he had taken to sell it in an Arabian market.

"Then Tamīm ad-Dãrī became very sick. With the approach of death he gave all that he had to Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Mãriyah, ordering them to convey it to his heirs. When they returned to Medina, they took out from the merchandise the pot and the necklace, handing over the rest to his heirs. The heirs found the two items missing. So, the family of

Tamīm said to the two, 'Was our man sick for a long time in which he spent a lot of money?' They said, 'No. He was not sick but for a few days.' (The family) said, 'Then was he robbed of something in this journey?' They said, 'No.' (The family) said, 'Then did he do some trade in which he suffered a loss?' They said, 'No.' Then, the family said, 'But (here) we find missing the best things which he had, 'A pot with golden design ornamented with gems and a necklace.' They said, 'Whatever he gave to us we have given to you.'

"The family brought the two to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) asked them to take oath; they swore and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) let them go free. There-after, that pot and necklace appeared with them, so the heirs of Tamīm came to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! Indeed, has appeared with Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Mãriyah what we had claimed against them.' So, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) waited for an order from Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, about it.

"Then Allãh, the Blessed, the Sublime, revealed: *O you who believe! Call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you, if you are travelling in the land* – Thus, Allah, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, allowed witnessing of the People of the Book in will only when one is on journey and does not find Muslims; then He said: – *and the calamity of death befalls you; the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer; then if you doubt* (them), *they shall both swear by Allãh* (saying)*: 'We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative, and we will not hide the testimony of Allãh, for then certainly we should be among the sinners.'* – This is the first witnessing, which the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had administered. – *Then if it becomes known that they both have been guilty of a sin*, – i.e. they have perjured themselves; – *two others shall stand up in their place* (i.e. from among the heirs of the deceased; – *from among those who have a claim against them,* – i.e. against the first two; – *the two nearest in kin; so they two should swear by Allãh*: – i.e. they should swear in the name of Allãh, that they [the two] have more right to this claim than them, and that they have perjured themselves in swearing by Allãh; – '*Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then most surely we should be of the unjust.'*

"So, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) ordered the heirs of Tamīm

ad-Dārī to swear by Allāh as he directed them; they did swear and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) took the necklace and the pot from Ibn Bandī and Ibn Abī Māriyah, and returned them to the heirs of Tamīm ad-Dārī. – *This is more proper in order that they should give testimony truly or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths.*" (*al-Kāfī*)

The author says: al-Qummī has likewise narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr*; but there is in it after the clause: *the two witnesses you should detain after the prayer*, the word, "i.e. the afternoon prayer."

The word of the Imām (a.s.): "*who have a claim against them*, against the first two": Apparently, it is in dual form, and if means the first two witnesses; it explains the Qur'ānic word, "the first two." We have stated in the preceding commentary that it is the clearest of all probable meanings, according to this recital.

at-Tirmidhī (who has said that it was a weak tradition), Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, an-Naḥḥās (in his *Nāsikh*), Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh and Abū Nu'aym (in *al-Ma'rifah*) have narrated, through the chain of Abu 'n-Naḍr (and he is al-Kalbī), from Bādhān (*mawlā* of Umm Hānī), from Ibn 'Abbās, from Tamīm ad-Dārī, that he said about this verse: "The people became clear of the two, except me and 'Udayy ibn Badā'; and they were Christians frequenting to Syria before Islam. So, they came to Syria for their trade, and there came to them for trade *mawlā* of Banū Sahm, Badīl ibn Abī Maryam by name. He had a silver bowl, and it was his main merchandise. Then he became sick, and he appointed them as his executor of the will and enjoined them to convey what he had left to his family."

Tamīm said, "When he died, we took that bowl and sold it at a thousand dirham; then 'Udayy ibn Badā' and I divided it among ourselves. When we came to his family, we gave to them what was with us; but they missed the bowl and they asked us about it; we said: 'He did not leave anything else nor did he give to us any other thing.'"

Tamīm said, "Thereafter, when I accepted Islam after arrival of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) at Medina, I felt guilty about it; so I came to his family, gave them the information and paid to them five hundred dirham, and told them that a similar amount was with my companion. So, they brought him to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.); he asked them for proof which they did not find; then he ordered them to adjure him by what is held sacred by his co-religionists, and he took oath. Then Allāh revealed: *O you who believe! Call to witness between you . . . or fear that*

other oaths be given after their oaths. Then ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ãṣī and another man stood up and swore (to it); so five hundred dirhams were extracted from ‘Udayy ibn Badã’." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: Apart from its weakness, the tradition does not conform fully to the verse, and this non-conformity is clear. as-Suyūṭī has narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs and ‘Ikrimah what is near the preceding tradition of al-Qummī.

al-Fãriyãbī, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, Abū ‘Ubayd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Abū 'sh-Shaykh have narrated from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib that he recited *mina 'l-ladhī staḥaqqa* (with vowel *a* after *t*), [as is the common recitation.]

Ibn Marduwayh and al-Ḥãkim (who has said it is correct) have narrated from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) recited: *al-ladhīna staḥaqqa ‘alayhimu 'l-awlayãn* (with *a* after *t*). (*ibid.*)

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn ‘Abbãs that he said: "This verse is abrogated." (*ibid.*)

The author says: There is no proof of abrogation as claimed here.

Muḥammad ibn Ismã‘īl has narrated from al-Faḍl ibn Shãdhãn, and ‘Alī ibn Ibrãhīm has narrated from his father, from Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, from Hishãm ibn al-Ḥakam, from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said about the word of Allãh: *or two others from among others than you*: If the man is in a town where there is no Muslim, the witness of a non-Muslim is allowed in will. (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: The tradition's meaning is inferred from the verse.

[al-Kulaynī] narrates through his chain from Yaḥyã ibn Muḥam-mad that he said, "I asked Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.), about the word of Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty: *O you who believe! Call to wit-ness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you.* He said, 'The two from among you means two Muslims; and those from among others than you, means (from) the People of the Book; and if they did not get from the People of the Book, then from the Magians, because the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had followed about the Magians the system of the People of the Book regarding *jizyah*.

"'And it is (like this:) When a man dies in a place away from home

and does not find two Muslims, he will call to witnness two men from among the People of the Book; they will be detained after the afternoon prayer, and they both shall swear by Allāh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, (saying:) "*We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative, and we will not hide the testimony of Allāh, for then certainly we should be among the sinners."*' The (Imām) said: 'And it is when the heir of the deceased feels doubt about their [the two's] testimony, then it becomes known that they both have testified falsely, he has no right to refute their testimony until he brings two other witnesses; so they shall stand up in the place of the first two witnesses, *so they two should swear by Allāh: "Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then most surely we should be of the unjust."* If he did so, the testimony of the first two would be set aside and that of these two would be allowed [i.e. accepted]. Allāh says: *This is more proper in order that they should give testimony truly or fear that other oaths be given after their oaths.*'" (*ibid*.)

The author says: As you see, the tradition fits the earlier given explanation of the verse. There are other traditions of the same mean-ing in *al-Kāfī* and *at-Tafsīr* of al-ʻAyyāshī narrated from Abū ʻAbdillāh and Abu 'l-Ḥasan (peace be upon both.)

And in some traditions, the Divine Words: *or two others from among others than you,* have been interpreted as, 'the unbelievers'; and it is more general than 'the People of the Book', as is narrated in *al-Kāfī* from Abu 'ṣ-Ṣabāḥ al-Kinānī, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), and in *at-Tafsīr* of al-ʻAyyāshī from Abū Usāmah from the same Imām (a.s.) about this verse: [I asked him:] "What (means): *or two others from among others than you*?" He said, "They are two unbelievers." "I said, '(What means:) *two just persons from among you*?' He said 'They are two Muslims.'"

Although the preceding tradition which confines it to the People of the Book is not capable of putting any restriction on this generality, according to the rules of generality and restriction because both are in positive case, yet the first tradition's context may explain the general-ity of the second one in a way that conforms with restriction.

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated through his chain to Abū Zayd ʻAyyāsh ibn Yazīd ibn al-Ḥasan from his father, Yazīd ibn al-Ḥasan that he said: "Narrated to me Mūsā ibn Jaʻfar (peace be upon both), he said, 'aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), said about the words of Allāh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty: *On the day when Allāh will assemble the messengers, then say:*

"What answer were you given?" They shall say: "We have no knowledge, . . ."' He said, 'aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.), said, "They shall say, 'We have no knowledge through other than Thee.'"' He also said, 'aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.), said, "The Qur'ãn, all of it, is rebuke, and its interior is approximation."'" (*Tafsīru 'l-Burhãn*)

The author of al-Burhãn says: "Ibn Bãbawayh has said, 'The Imãm (a.s.) means that behind the verses of rebuke and threat there are verses of mercy and forgiveness.'"

The author says: What he has quoted from aṣ-Ṣadūq (may Allãh have mercy upon him) regarding the meaning of the Imãm's saying: 'The Qur'ãn, all of it, is rebuke, and its interior is approxima-tion,' does not fit on it: Neither in view of the beginning of the tradi-tion, because the interpretation of the messengers' word, '*We have no knowledge,'* as, 'We have no knowledge through other than Thee', has no relation with the Qur'ãn containing two types of verses, those of promise and those of threat; nor in view of the context of the sentence itself, i.e. 'The Qur'ãn, all of it, is rebuke, and its interior is approxi-mation;' because this speech apparently means that the whole Qur'ãn is rebuke and the whole of it is approximation, and the matter differs from the point of view of interior and exterior; it does not mean that the Qur'ãn is divided into two categories, one is of the verses of rebuke, and another besides it is the verses of approximation.

Pondering on the Imãm (a.s.)'s talk, we come to understand that 'rebuke', inasmuch as it stands parallel to 'approximation' means its concomitant, i.e., to remove far as opposed to bring near; the Qur'ãn, all of it, is cognizance and reality; its exterior separates realities from one another and categorizes its parts, and its interior brings them nearer to each other, perfects them and unifies them. In short, it means that the Qur'ãn, in its exterior shows various realities of cognizance, which are separate one from the other, yet in spite of its multitudin-ousness and separateness of its components, in its interior its ingradi-ents are quite near to each other, and its various meanings are inter-connected, until it is unified and becomes one single reality, pervading the whole body like spirit – and it is nothing but the reality of oneness, monotheism. Allãh says: *A Book whose verses are firmly arranged then separated, from the All-Wise, All-Aware* (11:1).

At this juncture, it becomes clear how it fits on what the Imãm (a.s.) has said at the beginning of the tradition that the messengers' reply, *'We have no knowledge,'* means: 'We have no knowledge through other

than Thee.' It is because man, or any knower we suppose, knows whatever he knows, he knows it through Allãh; Allãh is known through Himself, and all other things are known through Him. In other words, when knowledge connects with anything, it connects first of all with Allãh, as deserves His sublime status and majesty, and then it connects through Him with that thing; because with Him is the knowledge of everything, He gives out of it to whomsoever He wishes from among His servants, as much as He wishes. Allãh says: . . . *while they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except that which He wills; His throne extends over the heavens and the earth* . . . (2:255). We have quoted earlier the narration of ʻAbdu 'l-Aʻlã *mawlã* Ãl Sãm from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) and some other traditions in this regard.

Accordingly, the messengers' reply: '*We have no knowledge, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things,'* would mean in the light of the Imãm's explanation, as follows: We have no knowledge of anything leaving Thee aside; we know whatever we know because of our knowledge about Thee; it is because all the knowledge belongs to Thee; and as such Thou knowest it better than us; after all, whatever we know comes out of Thine knowledge and Thou hast given us a part of it by Thine will and Thine sustenance.

Accordingly, another meaning is understood of the words: *'surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things'*; and it is more sublime than the previously given explanation: Everything in this creation has an existence separate from the others' being. As such it is 'unseen' *vis-à-vis* the others, because its existence is limited and foreordained, it does not comprehend except what Allãh wills it to comprehend; and Allãh comprehends everything, and knows every unseen; thus nothing knows anything except through Allãh, Sublime and Glorified is He from every short-coming.

Now, we understand that division of the things into unseen and seen, actually means their division into an unseen which Allãh wills that we should comprehend it and an unseen which He has kept hidden from us. Probably, this meaning is supported by the apparent meaning of the divine words: *He is the Knower of the unseen, and He does not reveal His unseen* (secrets) *to any one except to the messenger whom He chooses* (72:26-27), as is implied by relating the 'unseen' to the pronoun. You should deeply ponder on this matter.

Yazīd al-Kanãsī narrates from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.), that he said about the verse: *On the day when Allãh will assemble the messengers* . . . " He

will say, 'What answer were you given about your *awṣiyã'* (successors) whom you left behind in your *ummah*?' They will say: 'We have no knowledge of what they (the *ummah*) did after us.'" (*at-Tafsīr,* al-ʻAyyãshī)

The author says: al-Qummī has narrated it in his *at-Tafsīr*, from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from the same Imãm (a.s.).

[al-Kulaynī] has narrated in *al-Kãfī* a tradition of similar theme, from Yazīd, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), and it is based on the principle of the flow of meaning, or gives its interior explanation.

* * * * *

إِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ
ٱذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدتُّكَ بِرُوحِ
ٱلْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ ٱلنَّاسَ فِي ٱلْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا ۖ وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ
ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ ۖ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ
مِنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيْـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًۢا
بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَتُبْرِئُ ٱلْأَكْمَهَ وَٱلْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ
ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِيٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ عَنكَ إِذْ
جِئْتَهُم بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ فَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُّبِينٌ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى ٱلْحَوَارِيِّـۧنَ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا۟ بِى
وَبِرَسُولِى قَالُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا وَٱشْهَدْ بِأَنَّنَا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

When Allãh shall say: "O ʻĪsã, son of Maryam! Remember My favour on you and on your mother, when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, (so that) *you spoke to the people in the cradle, and when grown up; and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Tawrãt and the Injīl; and when you made out of clay the figure of a*

bird by My leave, you breathed into it and it became a bird by My leave; and you healed those born blind and the lepers by My leave; and when you raised the dead by My leave; and when I held back the Children of Israel from you when you had come to them with clear signs, but then those of them who disbelieved said: 'This is nothing but clear sorcery' (110). *And* (recall) *when I revealed to the disciples: 'Believe in Me and My messenger'; they said: 'We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims'"* (111).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These two and the subsequent verses (which narrate the story of the coming down of the Table and those which describe what Allãh shall ask ʻĪsã, son of Maryam [a.s.] regarding the people's taking them as two gods besides Allãh, and the reply which he will offer), all are related with the theme of the Chapter with which it had begun: It began with the call to fulfil the covenant and give thanks for favours, and cautioning against breaking the contract and being ungrateful to divine bounties. In this way, the end of the chapter fully returns to its beginning, and unity of intended theme are preserved.

QUR'ÃN: ***When Allãh shall say: "O ʻĪsã, son of Maryam! . . . and when you raised the dead by My leave*****:** The verse counts many of the clear signs which had appeared on his hand, but it is counted in a way that shows Allãh's grace on him and his mother together. These favours are mentioned in almost similar words in the chapter of "The House of ʻImrãn", where Allãh narrates the angels' talk with Maryam when they came to give her the good news of ʻĪsã's birth. Allãh says: *When the angels said: "O Maryam! Surely Allãh gives you good tidings of a Word from Him whose name is the Masīḥ, ʻĪsã son of Maryam, . . . And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of mature age, . . . And He will teach him the Book and the Wisdom, and the Tawrãt and the Injīl. And* (make him) *a messenger to the Children of Israel: 'That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of clay the likeness of a bird; then I breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allãh's leave; and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring to life the dead, by*

Allāh's leave . . . (3:45-49).

Meditation on the context of the verses makes it clear why the signs which apparently were exclusively connected with the Christ, have been counted as bounties bestowed on him and on his mother together, as the verses of the third chapter indicate; because good tiding is given concerning a bounty, and here the case is the same. Whatever signs and bounties were connected with Jesus, e.g. being born without a father, being strengthened by the Holy Ghost, creating flying birds, healing the blind and the leper and raising the dead to life by Allāh's permission, were miraculous signs of Maryam to the same degree as they were related to ʻĪsā (peace be upon both). They both together were bestowed the divine favours, as Allāh says: "remember My favour on you and your mother".

Also, the same is indicated by the divine words: . . . *and We made her and her son a sign for all peoples* (21:91), as He has counted both of them together as one sign, not two.

The words: "when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit (so that) you spoke to the people", apparently show that the strengthening with the Holy Spirit was the cause that enabled him to talk to the people. That is why the clause: "you spoke to the people", is attached to the preceding sentence without any intervening conjunction; it indi-cates that the strengthening and the speaking together constitute one action, made up of a cause and its effect. Allāh on occasions has only mentioned one of the two – either cause or its effect as is seen in the preceding verses: . . . *you spoke to the people in the cradle, and when grown up* . . . (5:110); . . . *and We gave to ʻĪsā, son of Maryam, clear evidence, and aided him with the Holy Spirit.* . . . (2:253)

Apart from that, if the strengthening with the Holy Spirit is taken to mean sending revelation through the Spirit, it was not reserved for ʻĪsā, son of Maryam (a.s.) and all the messengers shared it with him; moreover, the verse's context rejects this meaning.

The words: "and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Tawrāt and the Injīl". It may be inferred from it that ʻĪsā (a.s.) received this knowledge at one go, through a single divine command, without any graduality. Also, it may be understood from the facts that all actions have been combine together and are governed by only one adverb of time, 'when'.

The clauses: "and when you made out of clay the figure of a bird by My leave, . . . and you healed those born blind and the lepers by My

leave;" The context, because the word 'when' is not repeated, shows that creating of the bird and healing of the blind and the lepers had happened at the same time; and mention of creation of bird contains the proviso: "by My leave", as the matter of creation is very important because it entails bestowal of life; that is why the Qur'ãn has paid special attention to this clause and mentions its being done by divine leave, although the divine leave is also mentioned at the end of the sentence. But the divine Book did not like keeping the hearers in suspense even for a few moments, lest they think for a few seconds that some one besides Allãh can independently bestow life. And Allãh knows better.

The words: "and when you raised the dead by My leave". Raising the dead alludes to making them alive. It clearly indicates that this miracle that had appeared on his hand, had involved those dead bodies, which were buried in graves, and he (a.s.) has put life into them and brought them out of the graves to this worldly life. The sentence shows that this miracle had taken place many times. Other themes connected with this verse were explained under the verses of the third chapter, and may be referred to if necessary.

QUR'ÃN: ***and when I held back the children of Israel from you . . . 'This is nothing but clear sorcery'*****:** It shows that the Israelites wanted to harm him, but Allãh held them back from it. It tallies with what Allãh has mentioned in the chapter of "The House of 'Imrãn", in his stories: *And they planned and Allãh* (also) *planned, and Allãh is the best of planners* (3:54)

QUR'ÃN: ***And*** **(recall)** ***when I revealed to the disciples: 'Believe in Me and . . . that we are Muslims'"*****:** It agrees with the third chapter's verse 52: *And when 'Īsã perceived their disbelief, he said:"Who will be my helpers unto Allãh?" The disciples said: "We will be Allãh's helpers: We believe in Allãh; and bear witness that we are Muslims."*

It is clear from the above that the belief of the disciples, mentioned in this verse (*And when I revealed to the disciples: "Believe in Me and My messenger", they said: "We believe . . ."*) is other than their first belief in 'Īsã (a.s.); because the above verse 3:52 apparently shows that it had happened in later days of his Call, while the disciples [who answered it] were the foremost and the first in believing in him and had remained adhered to him.

Moreover, the verse 3:52 (. . . *he said: "Who will be my helpers unto Allãh?" The disciples said: "We will be Allãh's helpers: We believe in*

Allãh; and bear witness that we are submitting ones."), apparently shows that this Call was given to obtain their commitment for helping the divine religion, not for initial belief in Allãh. That is why the verse ends on the words: "and bear witness that we are Muslims." The word, "Muslims", here indicates that they were ready to submit to the divine order by establishing Allãh's Call and enduring the affliction in His cause. Obviously, this stage comes after the basic belief in Allãh.

Now, it is clear that this verse relates the story of taking the covenant from the disciples.

There are some other themes related to this verse, which were given in the chapter of "The House of ‘Imrãn".

TRADITIONS

[aṣ-Ṣadūq] narrates through his chain from Abū Ya‘qūb al-Baghdãdī that he said, "Ibn as-Sikkīt said to Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍã (a.s.), 'Why did Allãh send Mūsã ibn ‘Imrãn with his shining hand, staff and magical implements, and ‘Īsã with medical implements, and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), with speech and sermons?'

"Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) said, 'Verily, when Allãh, the Sublime, sent Mūsã (a.s.) magic was prevalent among the people of his time; so Mūsã (a.s.) brought to them from Allãh, the Sublime, what they did not have and was beyond their power to (bring) its like; with it he nullified their witchcraft and established through it the proof against them. And verily Allãh, the Sublime, sent ‘Īsã at a time when chronic deseases had spread and the people were in (dire) need of medicine; so he brought to them from Allãh, the Sublime, like of which they did not have, and with which he gave life to the dead and healed the blind and the lepers by Allãh's permission and established through it the proof against them. And verily Allãh, the Sublime, sent Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) at a time when lectures, talks and poetry were prevalent among the people of his time; so he brought to them the Book of Allãh, sermons and wisdom with which he nullified their talk and established through it the proof against them.'

"Ibnu 's-Sikkīt said, 'I have not ever seen as you (are) today. Now, who is today the proof against the creatures?' He said, '(It is) reason, with it is recognized he who speaks the truth about Allãh and it confirms him, and the lier against Allãh, and it refutes him.' Ibnu 's-Sikkīt said, 'This is, by Allãh, the reply.'" (*Ma‘ãni 'l-akhbãr*)

Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyã narrates from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from Abū Jamīlah, from Abãn ibn Taghlib and others, from Abū ‘Abdillãh (a.s.), that he was asked, "Had ‘Īsã ibn Maryam raised anyone after his death (so that) he ate, got sustenance for a time and begot?" He said, "Yes. Verily, he had a friend, his brother in Allãh, the Blessed, the Sublime; and ‘Īsã (a.s.) used to pass by him and be his guest; and verily ‘Īsã lost contact with him for sometime, then came to him to greet him; so his mother came out and he (‘Īsã) asked her about him; she said, 'He is dead, O Messenger of Allãh!' So he said, 'Do you like to see him?' She said, 'Yes.' And he said, 'Tomor-row I shall come to you so that I raise him to life by the permission of Allãh, the Sublime.'

"When the morning came, he came to her and said, 'Come with me to his grave.' They both proceeded until they reached his grave. So, ‘Īsã (a.s.) stood there, then prayed to Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty. Then the grave opened wide and her son came out alive. When his mother saw him and he saw her, they both wept. ‘Īsã (a.s.) had mercy on them, and told him (the son), 'Do you like to remain with your mother in the world?' He said, 'O Messenger of Allãh! (Will it be) with eating, sustenance and a [fixed] period? Or without eating, sustenance and a period?' ‘Īsã (a.s.) said to him, 'With eating, susten-ance and a period; you will live twenty years, will marry and beget.' He said, 'Then, yes.'"

(The Imãm) said, "So ‘Īsã (a.s.), gave him to his mother; and he lived for twenty years and begot off-spring." (*al-Kãfī*)

Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf aṣ-Ṣan‘ãnī narrates from his father that he said, "I asked Abū Ja‘far (a.s.), about (the verse): *And when I revealed to the disciples.* He said, 'They were inspired.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-‘Ayyãshī)

The author says: The word, revelation, has been used in the meaning of inspiration, in many places in the Qur’ãn. For example: *And We revealed to the mother of Mūsã: "Suckle him* . . . (28:7); *And your Lord revealed to the bee, saying: "Make hives in mountains* . . . (16:68); *that your Lord revealed to her* (i.e. the Earth), (99:5).

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إِذْ قَالَ ٱلْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَن
يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۖ قَالَ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ إِن كُنتُم
مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوا۟ نُرِيدُ أَن نَّأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُنَا
وَنَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ ٱلشَّٰهِدِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾
قَالَ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ٱللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَآ أَنزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ
تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِّأَوَّلِنَا وَءَاخِرِنَا وَءَايَةً مِّنكَ ۖ وَٱرْزُقْنَا وَأَنتَ
خَيْرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ إِنِّى مُنَزِّلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَمَن يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ
مِنكُمْ فَإِنِّىٓ أُعَذِّبُهُۥ عَذَابًا لَّآ أُعَذِّبُهُۥٓ أَحَدًا مِّنَ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

When the disciples said: "O ʻĪsã son of Maryam! Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?" He said: "Fear Allãh if you are believers." (112). *They said: "We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it."* (113). *ʻĪsã the son of Maryam said: "O Allãh, our Lord! Send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and grant us sustenance, and Thou art the best of providers."* (114). *Allãh said: "Surely I will send it down to you,*

but whoever shall dis-believe afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations." (115).

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COMMENTARY

The verses describe the story of coming down of the table on Christ (a.s.) and his companions. Although they do not say clearly that Allãh sent it down to them, yet the last verse contains the uncondi-tional divine promise of sending it down to them; and He has men-tioned His attribute that He does not break His promise.

Some people's opinion, that they saught pardon from ʻĪsã (a.s.) when they heard the threat of unprecedented chastisement for those who would disbelieve after coming of the table, is an opinion without any proof from the Book or trustworthy *ḥadīth*.

This view has been narrated from a group of the exegetes, among them being al-Mujãhid and al-Ḥasan; and their or others' views are no proof at all. Even if their views were supposed to be traditions, they would be of incomplete chains of narrators, and such items are not fit as proof because of their weakness. Moreover, they are opposed by other traditions, which show that the table was sent down. Even if they were correct they would be only 'solitary' traditions, which are not relied upon except in matters of jurisprudence.

Sometimes proof is offered of not coming down of the table by the fact that the Christians do not know about it and their holy books do not mention it; had it been sent down to them there were many reasons to describe it in their books and to keep it alive in their society as they have preserved the memory of the Last Super – the Euchrist.

However, a man who knows the history of Christianity – as how it spread and how the gospels appeared on the scene – would not care about such utterances; because neither their books were written and preserved with *tawãtur* since the time of ʻĪsã (a.s.), nor the present Christianity reaches upto him, so that it might be useful in what they have received generation after generation, or in that which they do not know from what is attributed to the Christ's Call.

Of course, in some Gospels there is the story of his feeding his

disciples and some other people with a little bread and fish. But that story does not agree with the Qur'ānic statement in any of its particulars.

The Gospel According to St. John, chapter 6 says:

1. After these thing Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.
2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.
3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.
4. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.
5. When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?
6. And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.
7. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.
8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him.
9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?
10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.
11. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.
12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
13. Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve buskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.
14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.
15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a moun-tain himself alone. (John, 6:1-15)

Moreover, if we ponder on this story as given in the Divine Book, Qur'ān, we find in it other aspects that require contemplation. The initial question in the beginning of the story totally lacks the manners, which must be maintained *vis-à-vis* Allāh. And it ends at the threat which Allāh

has threatened those who shall disbelieve afterwards that He would chastise them with a chastisement with which He would not chastise anyone among the nations. Its like is not found in any sign given by Allãh to His prophets, nor in any that were suggested by their people, like the suggestions of the nations of Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Shu‘ayb, Mūsã and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).

Was it because the disciples, who had asked it, had shown lack of manners in their questioning, because they had used words, which show their doubt about the divine power? However, we find in the demands of the preceding nations insults to the majesty of their Lord, and mock-ery against their prophets, as well as what we see in the Qur’ãn of the stories of the arrogance of the people of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and of the Jews who lived at that time, is more impertinent and more dis-gusting than it.

Or was it because they, being believers before this question and coming down of the table, became disbelievers after its coming down and observation of clear signs, and therefore invited such severe threat-ening. However, although disbelief after seeing clear signs is a great haughtiness and over-stepping the limits, but it was not confined to them, as such examples are found in every nation and they were not threatened in such a harsh manner – not even those who apostasized after being placed nearer to the divine proximity, like the one whom Allãh mentions in these words: *And recite to them the narrative of him to whom We gave Our signs, but he withdrew himself from them, so the Satan overtook him, so he became of those who go astray* (7:175).

What may be said at this juncture is that this story, which began with a question, is distinguished with a theme that is unique among all miracles of the prophets, which they had brought because of their people's suggestion, or some other necessary requirements.

The miraculous signs narrated by the Divine Book were of vari-ous types: There were the miracles which Allãh gave to the prophets when He sent them to the peoples, in order that it should serve as the proof to support their claims of prophethood or messengership, as Mūsã (a.s.) was given the bright hand and staff; and ‘Īsã (a.s.) was enabled to raise the dead to life, create the bird and heal the blind and the lepers; and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) was given the Qur’ãn. These signs were given, as they were needed for the Call to the true belief and for completing the proof against the disbelievers, so *that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof; . . .* [8:42].

There were the miracles brought by the prophets and the messengers as a result of the disbelievers' suggestions, like the she-camel of Ṣãliḥ; in the same category come the dreadful happenings and tormenting chastisements which appeared in the course of the prophetic Calls, like the signs of Mūsã (a.s.) against the people of Pharash (locust, lice, forgs, etc. totalling seven signs), flood of Nūḥ, earthquake of Thamūd, storm of ‘Ãd and similar things. These too were the signs connected to the disbelieving enemies.

There were the signs shown by Allãh to the believers for fulfil-ling their needs, like gushing forth of streams from rocks, coming down of manna and quails for the Israelites in the wilderness, raising of the mountain over their heads and opening up the river to save them from Pharaoh and his deeds. These were the signs, which appeared either to frighten the sinners and the arrogants or to show the dignity of the believers in order that the word of the Beneficent Lord is completed about them – without any suggestion put by them.

Of the same category are the promises given by Allãh in His Book to the believers for manifesting the honour of His Messenger (s.a.w.a.), e.g. the promise of the conquest of Mecca, and of victory of the Romans in a few years, etc.

These are the categories of the signs narrated in the Qur’ãn and described in divine teachings. But as for suggesting a sign after coming down of a sign, it is a fantasy which the divine teaching counts as nonsense that should not be paid attention to: For example, the proposal of the People of the Book that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) should bring for them a book from the heavens, while the Qur’ãn was present before their eyes. Allãh says: *The People of the Book ask you to bring down to them a book from heaven; so indeed they had demanded of Mūsã a greater thing than that, for they said: "Show us Allãh manifestly"; . . . But Allãh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His knowledge; and the angels bear witness* (also)*; and sufficient is Allãh for a witness* (4:153; 166).

Likewise, the polytheists had asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he should bring down the angels or should show Allãh to them. Allãh says: *And those who do not hope for Our meeting say: "Why not have angels been sent down upon us, or* (why) *do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted in great revolt* (25:21). Also, He says: *And they say: "What is the matter with this Messenger that he eats food and goes about in the markets? Why has not*

an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have been a warner with him? Or (why is not) *a treasure sent down to him, or he is made to have a garden from which he should eat?" And the unjust say: "You do not follow any but a man enchanted." See what likeness do they apply to you, so they have gone astray; therefore they shall not be able to find a way* (25:7-9). There are many verses of the same theme.

It is only because the purpose of coming down of a sign or verse is manifestation of truth and completion of proof; when it came down then indeed the truth became manifest and the proof was com-plete. Now, there is no sense in asking for coming down of a sign as it has already happened and the purpose achieved, and therefore such asking would only mean mockery of divine signs, play with the Lord's majesty and wavering in acceptance of reality; and it is the greatest arrogance and haughtiness.

Such behaviour, if shown by believers, would entail cruder offence and greater sin. Why should a believer ask for coming down of a heavenly sign while he is already a believer, and especially so if he is one of those who have seen the divine signs and believed after that observation? Would it not be similar to the suggestions, which the people of pleasure, surrounded with luxury, in gatherings of entertain-ments and assemblies of amusements, offer to the magicians and prac-titioners of legerdemain, in order that they should show to them the most astonishing jugglery and the most wonderous activity that they can perform?

What appears from the words: *When the disciples said: "O ʻĪsã son of Maryam! Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?"* that they had asked the Christ (a.s.) to show them a sign which would be reserved for them; they were his disciples, attached to him; and they had seen those clear signs and manifest miracles; because he (a.s.) was not sent to his people except with miraculous signs, as is seen from the divine words: *"And a messenger to the Children of Israel: 'That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of clay the likeness of a bird; then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allãh's leave; and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring to life the dead, by Allãh's leave . . .'"* (3:49).

And how can it be imagined about him who believed in Christ (a.s.) that he would not have seen any sign from him, while he (a.s.) in his own existence was a sign: Allãh created him without a father, and strengthened him with the Holy Ghost, and he talked with the people in the cradle as well as in matured age; and he continued to be hon-oured by

one sign after another until Allāh raised him to Himself and ended his affairs with a wonderful sign.

When they asked to be shown a sign which they had chosen for themselves – even after seeing all those numerous sign – it was tanta-mount to suggesting a sign after a sign; thus they committed a great offence, and that is why ʻĪsā (a.s.) admonished them, saying: *"Fear Allāh if you are believers."*

And it was because of the same reason that they reinterpreted their suggestion and explained it again in such a way as to tone down the vehemence of their speech and blunt its edge; so they said: *"We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it."* Thus they added to eating from it other reasons to explain their suggestion. They wanted to show that this suggestion was not like amusement with wonderous activities or playing with divine signs; rather there are some benefits intended, like perfection of their knowledge and removal of wrong ideas from their hearts and their being the witnesses to it.

Yet they did not omit mentioning the intention of eating from it, and that was the main offence. If they had said: 'We desire that we should eat of it so that our hearts should be at rest,' there would not have been any blame on them; but they said: *"... eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest,"* The former sentence cuts at the roots of all fantasy and foolhardiness, but not the latter (i.e. present construction).

When they insisted, ʻĪsā (a.s.) agreed to their demand and asked his Lord to honour them in this way; and it was the only sign sent down to them on their suggestion in an apparently unimperative matter, and that is the believers' partaking of it. That is why he (a.s.) presented it in a manner suitable to be addressed to the Divine Majesty, so he said: *"O Allāh, our Lord! Send down to us food from heaven which should be an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us."* Thus he dressed it in the robe of festivity; feast for a people is the day in which they get a gift or an item of pride, which is exclusively re-served, to them from among the people, and the coming down of the table has this particular attribute.

When ʻĪsā (a.s.) asked of his Lord what he asked – and far be it from him to ask for anything except what he hoped that it would be accepted, and that his Lord would not disgrace him by rejecting it; and far be it from his Lord to turn him away without accepting his invoca-tion –

his Lord accepted his prayer, but with one proviso, that whoever among his people would disbelieve afterwards, Allãh would chastise him with a chastisement that would be exclusively reserved to them, as the sign that would be given to them would be exclusively reserved to them; that is why He said: *"Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations."* Ponder on it.

QUR'ÃN: ***When the disciples said: "O 'Īsã son of Maryam! Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?"*****:** 'When' is an adverb, related to an implied verb, Remember, or some similar word.

Someone has said that it is related to the words in the preceding verse, they said: *"We believe in Allãh; and bear witness that we are submitting ones."* It means: The disciples said: 'We believe and bear witness that we submit,' at the time when they said to 'Īsã: "'Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?'" It shows that they were not truthful in their claim, nor were they serious in asking 'Īsã (a.s.), to bear witness that they were submitters.

COMMENT: This interpretation goes against the context. How could their belief be impure, when Allãh Himself had revealed to them to believe in Him and His Messenger? And when Allãh counts it as His favour to 'Īsã (a.s.). Apart from that, if this verse was joined to the preceding one, it should have brought pronoun and not said: "When the disciples said."

al-Mãidah (اَلْمَائِدَة = plate when it contains food). ar-Rãghib has said: "*al-Mãidah* is the plate that contains food; and both [plate and food] are separately called *mãidah*; and it is said: '*Mãdanī yumīdunī*', i.e. 'He fed me.'"

The wording of their question, i.e., "Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?" according to its apparent meaning that comes to the mind, is such that the reason thinks it difficult that it could have been uttered by the disciples, who were companions of the Christ, and his confidants who adhered to him, were illuminated by the light of his knowledge and cognizance, and followed in his footsteps; and belief and faith – even in its lowest rank, makes man aware that Allãh has power over everything, He cannot be overcome and no disability reaches Him. So, how was it possible for them to ask their messenger whether his Lord was able to send down to them food from heaven?

That is why al-Kasā'ī, one of the seven reciters, has recited this verse as: *hal tastaṭī'u* (second person singular) *rabbaka* (as an object); i.e. 'Are you able [to ask] your Lord?' Thus, implying the verb, which we have put in the brackets.

The exegetes have given different interpretations of this question, while most of them agree that it means other than what comes to the mind – that they entertained doubt about the power of Allāh – because they were far above such absurd ignorance.

The best possible interpretation is to say that ability in this verse is an allusion to demand of the underlying reason and occurance of permission; in the same way as possibility, power and ability are used metaphorically in this very meaning. For example, it is said: 'The King cannot listen to every needy person;' it means that the King's under-lying reason prevents him from it; otherwise, listening to is within his ability. Or as it is said: 'A rich man cannot give to everyone who asks,' i.e. the reason of protecting the wealth does not demand it. Or as it is said: 'A knowledgeable person cannot disseminate all that he knows,' i.e. stops him from it the welfare of religion, or welfare of the people, or the system that is prevalent among them. Or as one says to his com-panion: 'Can you come with me to visit Mr. X?' The question implies: 'Does it agree with your welfare and wisdom?' It does not imply his ability to go there. Think over it.

There are some other explanations given by the exegetes: -

One: The disciples had asked this question in order to acquire tranquillity through the belief resulting from observation; it was not because they were having any doubt regarding Allāh's power. In a way, it is the same mode as Allāh quotes in the story of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) that he said: *"My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He said: "What! And do you not believe?" He said: "Yes, but that my heart may be at ease."* . . . (2:260).

COMMENT: Although there is nothing wrong in asking for a sign for increase in belief and tranquillity of heart, but there is no reason to take their question in this meaning; and their sinlessness is not proved, like Ibrāhīm (a.s.) so that it could be an independent proof for inter-preting their talk in a way free from rancour. Rather the proof is against it, because they had not said: 'We desire that we should eat of it in order that our hearts should be at ease' (as Ibrāhīm [a.s.] had said, *'Yes, but that my heart may be at ease'*). Rather they had said, 'We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts may be at ease;' thus they had counted the

eating, *per se*, a purpose.

Moreover, this interpretation takes it for granted that their hearts were clean of any shade of doubt regarding the divine power. And the ugliness of the apparent meaning of their talk remains in its place.

Apart from that, it had been explained under the verse 2:260: And when Ibrãhīm said: *"My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead."* . . ., that he (a.s.) did not want to see the dead getting life after death. (The interpretation under Comment is based on this idea.) Because that would have meant asking for a sign after clear observa-tion, as he (a.s.) was at that time talking with his Lord "face to face." What he had asked for was to see 'how' the dead would be raised – in the afore-mentioned meaning.

Two: They actually wanted to ask about the action, not about Allãh's power to do so; they expressed the idea metaphorically through its concomitant.

COMMENT: There is no proof for this explanation. Even if we accept it, it would negate the idea that they were ignorant of all-encompass-ing divine power; but the unsuitability of their talk to manners of ser-vitude still remains in place.

Three: There is in this speech an implied word, which is omitted. The complete sentence is as follows: 'Are you able to ask your Lord to send down to us food from heaven?' This meaning is supported by the recital: 'Are you able (to ask) your Lord,' i.e. 'Are you able to ask Him without there being anyone to dissuade you from it.'

COMMENT: This supposed omission and implication cannot turn the word: 'Is your Lord able to . . .' into, 'Are you able to ask your Lord;' because the verbs differ in the two recitals – in the verse it is third per-son singular, while in the implied one it is second person singular; and omission or implication does not change the third person to the second person at all.

However, if such change-over be necessary, then it would be said as follows: It ascribes the action of ‘Īsã (a.s.) to his Lord, because his action is in reality Allãh's action, or because everything attributed to him belongs to Allãh. But to begin with this explanation is wrong be-cause only those actions of prophets and messengers are attributed to Allãh which do not bring any defect or short-coming to His majesty, e.g. guidance, knowledge and things like that. On the other hand, when it comes to the concomitants of their humility and humanity, like lack of power and neediness or eating and drinking, etc., their attribu-tion to Him cannot be

justified at all. Apart from that, the difficulty of the apparent meaning of the words remains in its place.

Four: *al-Istiṭā'ah* (ability) is used here in the meaning of *al-iṭā'ah* (obedience); and the question means: 'Will your Lord obey you and accept your prayer if you asked Him for it.'

COMMENT: It is like jumping out from the frying pan into the fire. Obviously, the question whether Allāh would obey His messenger is more hideous and repulsive than the query about His capability.

Someone has supported this explanation as follows: *al-Istiṭā'ah* (اَلإِسْتِطاعَة) and *al-iṭā'ah* (اَلإِطاعَة) both are derived from the root *ṭ-w-'* (طوع = obedience) which is opposite of *kurh* (كُرْه = dislike); thus obeying an order means doing it with pleasure and free will; the paradigm of *al-istif'āl* (اَلإِسْتِفْعَال) from this stem is like that of this paradigm from the stem (*jawb*). In other words, as *istijābah* (اِسْتِجَابَة) gives the mean-ing of *ijābah* (اِجَابَة = to accept prayer), likewise *istiṭā'ah* indicates *iṭā'ah*; thus *istaṭā'ahu* (اِسْتَطاعَهُ) means *aṭā'ahu* (أَطاعَهُ = 'he obeyed him'). And '*s*' and '*t*' in both verbal nouns denote their most well known theme, and that is 'to want something'; however it is related to an implied verb which is indicated by the described verb that emanates from the omitted one; 'he is capable of doing this thing' means as follows: 'He wanted it and intended that this thing should obey him, and so it obeyed him and followed his order'; likewise he answered Zayd means: 'Zayd asked for something and wanted it to accept his call, so it answered it'.

He further says: With this fine explanation we may understand the correctness of those exegetes' opinion who have said that "Is your Lord able" here means "Will your Lord obey", i.e. Will He do this work by His own free will and pleasure, without any compulsion? In short, it means that: Will your Lord be pleased to send down to us food from heaven, when we ask Him, or when you ask it from Him on our behalf?

COMMENT:

First: All that he has done is to correlate *istaṭā'a* with *istajābah*, and give to the former the later's meaning. But using analogy in langu-age is not allowed.

Second: That both *istiṭā'ah* and *iṭā'ah* are derived from *ṭaw'* which is opposite of *kurh* (dislike), does not necessarily mean that the stem's meaning will be preserved in all conjugational changes; because there are many basic words which have left their original meaning as a result of the changes in conjugation, for example: *dharaba* (he hit) and *adhraba* (he went on strike); *qabila* (he accepted), *aqbala* (he came forward), *qabbala*

(he kissed), *qãbala* (he encountered) *istaqbala* (he welcomed).

When the grammarians look at the basic stem of the verb while seeing its conjugational changes, their only aim is to find out how much of the basic meaning is sustained in all these changes; or does that meaning give way to another new one; they do not think that the original meaning should be preserved, even with all those changes. Understand it.

A word indicates the meaning that is understood from it by the live and prevalent usage, not by the literal connotation of its root-word. The word: *istiṭã'ah* has been used in more than forty places in the Divine Book, and everywhere it gives the meaning of ability. And the word: *aṭã'ah* is used in nearly seventy places, and everywhere it gives the meaning of obedience. Also, wherever the word: *ṭaw'* has been used it denotes 'opposite of dislike'. Now, how can the word: *istiṭã'a* be taken to mean *iṭã'a*, and this in its turn be taken to mean *ṭaw'*? And how can it be then claimed that ability here means pleasure or liking?

As for *ajãba* and *istajãba*, both have been used in the Qur'ãn in the same meaning; and *istajãbah* has been used several times more than *ajãbah* – the former is found in about thirty places while the latter is not seen in more than ten. How can *aṭã'a* and *istaṭã'a* can be analogized with it?

As for the both words having the same meaning, it only means that two aspects of theses words fit on one place: *Ajãba* means that the answer went over from the answerable to the questioner, and *istajãba* means that the one who is answerable asked for the reply from himself and passed it on to the questioner.

It is now clear that what that exegete has explained *istajãbah* with, is not correct; he has said: "*Istajãba* means that he asked for something and wanted it to give him the reply and it replied." But the paradigm of *istif'ãl* indicates demand of *fa'ala*, and not demand of *af'ala*. And it is clear.

Third: The context does not agree with this interpretation. If we accept that their question, "Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?" only meant: 'Will your Lord be pleased that we ask Him (or you ask Him) to send down to us food from heaven?' and that their only aim from this question or from this coming down was that their faith be strengthened and their hearts be at ease, then why 'Īsã (a.s.) should admonish them and say: "Fear Allãh if you are believers?" And why should Allãh threaten him who would disbelieve afterwards from among them with a chastisement with which He would not chas-tise any one in the

worlds? While the fact remains that they had not spoken except truth and had not put except a proper request; and Allāh Himself has said: . . . *and ask Allāh of His grace;* . . . (4:32)

QUR'ĀN: ***He said: "Fear Allāh if you are believers."*:** ʻĪsā (a.s.) admonished them because apparently they had questioned the ability of his (a.s.)'s Lord to send down food from heaven; this speech creates doubt in any case. However, in view of the interpretation given by us, that the actual reason of this censure which ended with the severe threatening, was that they had asked for a sign when there was no need of it, and suggested what was tantamount to playing with divine signs; add to it their ugly style of the question which apparently showed that their hearts had not firmly believed in the power of Allāh; in this back-drop, the reason of ʻĪsā (a.s.)'s admonition becomes more manifest.

QUR'ĀN: ***They said: "We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it."*:** It appears from the context that they offered this excuse in order to save themselves from his censure. This talk apparently is related to their demand for a sign by sending down the food; it does not refer to any imagined doubt that they would have entertained regarding Allāh's unrestricted power. This is another evidence that they were so admonished because they had asked for a sign when it was not needed at all.

As for their words: "We desire that we should eat of it . . . we may be of the witnesses to it." The disciples have given four reasons for demanding this particular sign: -

First: Eating of it: They wanted to point out that they had not intended playing with the signs of Allāh; they wanted to eat of it, and it was a reasonable objective. We have said earlier that this explana-tion of the disciples was tantamount to their acceptance that they deserved the admonition by ʻĪsā (a.s.) and the severe threatening by Allāh to him who would disbelieve in the sign of the food.

Someone has said that they had mentioned eating in order to show their utmost need of food and that they could not find anything to satisfy their hunger.

Yet others have said that they meant to say: that we should be blessed by eating it.

However, you are aware that neither of the above reasons can be

inferred from merely the word, eating. Had they intended either of the two reasons, which would really remove the censure, it was necess-ary for them to mention it clearly. As they did not mention any such thing in spite of its necessity in this context, obviously they had used eating in its general sense, inasmuch as it was a reasonable purpose, and it was one part of their objective in suggesting the coming down of the food.

Second: Tranquillity of hearts, that their hearts should be at rest, by the removal of notions, which were inconsistent with sincerity and presence.

Third: To know that ʻĪsã (a.s.) had indeed spoken the truth in conveying the divine message to them. Knowledge here means that certainty which comes into the heart when devilish notions and insinuations are removed from it.

Or, as someone has said, the knowledge that he (a.s.) had spoken to them the truth in what he (a.s.) had promised them as the fruits of faith, like acceptance of invocations.

However, this interpretation looks unlikely because the disciples had not asked for coming down of the food except through ʻĪsã (a.s.)'s invocation, i.e. as a miracle from him (a.s.), and they had already seen numerous signs and miracles on his (a.s.)'s hand; because he (a.s.) was always accompanied by great divine signs; he was not sent to his community, nor had he (a.s.) put a call to them except with the signs of his Lord; so they were always seeing the fruits of his faith in the form of the acceptance of his invocation – if the fruit means acceptance of his (a.s.)'s invocation. But if the fruit is taken to mean acceptance of their own invocation, then [it would be against the context, because] they had not demanded coming down of the sign through their own invoca-tion, and it did not come down but by ʻĪsã (a.s.)'s invocation.

Fourth: That they might be of the witnesses thereof, wherever witnessing would be needed, like giving witness before the disbelievers and on the Day of Resurrection before Allãh. So, witnessing here is unrestricted. Also, possibly it may refer only to the witnessing before Allãh, as appears in their talk quoted by Allãh, *inter alia*: *"Our Lord! We believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the Messenger, so write us down with those who bear witness."* (3:53)

In short, while pleading in their defence, they added some beautiful and likeable factors to their other objective, i.e. partaking from heavenly food. They did so in order to remove the ugliness from their demanding a sign after already seeing sufficient signs; then ʻĪsã (a.s.)

agreed to their demand after their persistence.

QUR'ĀN: *'Īsā the son of Maryam said: "O Allāh, our Lord! Send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recur-ring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and grant us sustenance, and Thou art the best of providers."*: He (a.s.) joined his own self with them in asking for the food; and began by calling to his Lord with a comprehensive word: "O Allāh, our Lord!" They had said: *"Is your Lord able . . ."*, but he changed it so that the address would agree with the prayer.

This prayer is unique amongst all the prayers and invocations of the prophets (peace be upon them), quoted in the Qur'ān. While all others begin with the word: 'My Lord' or 'Our Lord'; this alone begins with: "O Allāh, our Lord!" It is only because of the delicacy of the situation and the fright of appraisal. On the other hand, similar open-ing addresses are found in the various types of praises quoted in the Qur'ān: *Say: "Praise be to Allāh . . ."* (27:59); *Say: "O Allāh, Master of Kingdom! . . ."* (3:26); *Say: "O Allāh! Originator of the heavens and the earth, . . ."* (39:46).

Then he (a.s.) mentioned a heading for this sent down food, which would serve as a reason for his and his companions' request that it be sent down, and it is that it should be to them an ever-recurring happiness, to him and his people. The disciples had not mentioned in their demand that they wanted it to be an exclusive festival to them. But he (a.s.) asked for it in a general style and moulded it into a good mould, in order that it would not be thought as a demand for a sign while there already were so many great divine signs before their eyes and within their observation. In this way, it would become a demand likeable by Allāh, and not in clash with His majesty and greatness; because a festival by its very nature unites the word, revives the com-munity, enlivens the celebrants and is announced whenever the grandeur of religion returns.

That is why he said: "an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us," i.e. the first group of our nation and the other ones who would join them later – as the context shows. Because *'īd* (عِيْدُ = festival) is derived from *'awd* (عَوْدُ = return); so it would be *'īd* only if it returns time and again, in descendants after ancestors without any limit.

This festival exclusively belonged to the *ummah* of 'Īsā (a.s.), and as explained earlier, this type of sign too was reserved for them.

"and a sign from Thee": First he puts up the question of *'īd*, and it

was a good and beautiful thing free from all blemish; then he fol-lowed it by its being a sign from Allãh. It was an extra benefit added to the main objective; it was not intended to be the only objective. Had it been the only purpose, i.e. its being a sign asking for, it would have led to an unwanted result; because all good advantages which could be intended from it, were easily obtainable through the signs which the disciples and others were seeing from him (a.s.) every day.

"and grant us sustenance, and Thou art the best of providers": It is another benefit which he counted as resulting from that invocation of *ʻīd*, although it is not the intended purpose. The disciples had asked for it as the main intended purpose in itself, as they had said: *"We desire that we should eat of it . . ."* Thus, they had mentioned it as the thing intended for itself, and mentioned it before other items. But ʻĪsã (a.s.) counted it as unintended for itself and put it at the end; also, he changed the word, eating, with that of sustenance, and added after it the phrase: "'and Thou art the best of providers.'"

What they had treated as the main purpose, has been relegated by ʻĪsã (a.s.) as a resulting benefit, only. Its proof may be seen in the fact that he (a.s.) first prayed for himself and his whole *ummah* the granting of *ʻīd*, which he had added to their suggestion. In this way, its becoming a sign of Allãh and a sustenance, became two attributes which were reserved to some of them excluding the others, like a resulting benefit which is not all-encompassing.

When you will look at his (a.s.)'s fine and brilliant good man-ners *vis-à-vis* his Lord, you will be astonished. See how he (a.s.) took the wording of their demand, then added to it, omitted from it, altered the sequence and changed and preserved, until their original talk which was totally unfit to be presented before Allãh, turned into a beautiful speech containing the good manners of servitude. Just meditate on the proviso of his (a.s.)'s speech, you will be amazed.

QUR'ÃN: ***Allãh said: "Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations."*:** The people of Medina and Syria as well as ʻÃṣim have recited it, *munazziluhã* (مُنَزِّلُهَا) with intensified pronunciation, and the others have recited *munziluha* (مُنْزِلُهَا) without intensification – as has been described in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn*. And the latter is more appro-priate, because *inzãl* (إِنْزَال) – from which *munziluhã* (مُنْزِلُهَ) is derived – denotes

being sent down all at once, and the food was sent down in this very manner. As for *tanzīl* (تَنْزِيْل) – from which *munazziluhã* is derived – it is generally used for gradual coming down, as described earlier repeatedly.

The phrase: "Surely I will send it down to you" is an unambigu-ous promise to send the food down, especially when we see its struc-ture: the original phrase literally means: I am its sender down, i.e. it uses the paradigm of nomen agentis, and not of a verb; and it inevi-tably means that the food was indeed sent down to them.

Some exegetes have said that it was not sent down, as is quoted in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* and *Majma'u 'l-bayãn*, from al-Ḥasan and Mujãhid that they said: "It did not come down; because when they heard of the condition they abandoned their request and said: 'We do not want it nor do we need it'; so it did not come down."

But the fact is that the verse clearly shows that it was sent down, as it contains clear promise of its coming down, and far be it from Allãh that He should magnanimously give a clear promise when He knew that they would give up their demand so it would not be sent down; the promise given in the verse is quite clear, and the condition men-tioned in it says that those who would disbelieve after its coming down would be given unparallelled chastisement. In other words, the verse contains unconditional promise of sending the food down, and then it attaches the chastisement to disbelief. It does not say that it would be sent down provided they accepted the chastisement for disbelief, so that the promise would be cancelled if they did not accept the said condition, and then the food would not be sent if they gave up their demand. Understand it.

In any case, the divine promise to send the food conjoined with severe threat of disbelievers' chastisement was not a rejection of ʻĪsã (a.s.)'s prayer, rather it apparently accepts his invocation. However, as this acceptance of the prayer, in this context, would have apparently shown that that sign would be an unrestricted mercy which would be enjoyed by the first of them and the last of them, Allãh restricted it with the attached proviso. In short, it shows that this festival, which is exclusively reserved to them, would not benefit all of them, it would be beneficial only to the believers among them who would continue in their belief, but as for the disbelievers they would be harmed by it, extreme harm.

Thus, these two verses in their style are like the verses 2:124 and 7:155-6. All these verses contain a general and unrestricted prayer and a restricted acceptance. [Those verses are as follows.]

And (remember) *when his Lord tried Ibrãhīm with certain words, and he fulfilled them. He said: "Surely I am going to make you an Imãm for men." He* (Ibrãhīm) *said: "And of my offspring?" He said: "My covenant shall not include the unjust."* (2:124).

". . . Thou art our Guardian, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. And ordain for us good in this world and in the hereafter, for surely we proceed to Thee." He said: "(As for) *My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it for those who fear Allãh and pay the* zakãt*, and those who believe in Our signs."* (7:155-6).

You have understood from the above that the actual reason for this threatened chastisement (which would be restricted to them) is that they had demanded a sign of a type that would be reserved to them and no other nation would share in it with them. So, when that demand was granted they were threatened on disbelieving in it a chastisement that no one else would share with them, just like the distinction granted to them.

It is apparent from it that *al-ʻãlamīn* (**اَلْعَالَمِيْنَ** = worlds, nations) refers to all nations, not only those who were present at that time, because it is related to those whom they distinguished among the people; and it covers all nations, not only those who were in the days of ʻĪsã (a.s.) from among the nations of the earth.

Also, it is clear that although the sentence: "surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations", is a very tough threat of a miserable punishment, yet the talk does not say that the chastisement would be above all punish-ments and retributions in hardship and agony; it rather says that the punishment would be unique which they alone would be afflicted with among the nations.

TRADITIONS

Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) explained the phrase: *"Is your Lord able"* in these words, "Are you able to pray to your Lord?" (*Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated through Sunnī chains from some companions and their followers, like ʻÃishah and Saʻīd ibn Jubayr. It returns to the meaning which we have shown earlier, because the querry about ʻĪsã (a.s.)'s power can only be correct if it refers

to his ability from the view of reason and welfare, not about his actual power.

ʻĪsā al-ʻAlawī narrates from his father from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said, "The table (of food) that was sent to the Children of Israel was suspended by golden chains; there were nine fish and nine loaves of bread on it." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyāshī)

The author says: In another version there is nine *anwān* (أَنْوَان = plural of *nūn* نُون) in place of *aḥwatah* (أَحْوَتَـه = plural of *ḥūt* حُوت); both have the same meaning, fish.

ʻAmmār ibn Yāsir narrates from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said, "The table came (with) bread and meat. It was because they had asked ʻĪsā (a.s.) for an inexhaustible food which they would eat. He (The Prophet) said, 'It was said to them, "Surely it will stay with you as long as you do not act treacherously, do not hide it and do not lift from it; but if you did so you will be punished."' He (The Prophet) said, 'But the day did not come to its end until they hid it, lifted from it and acted treacherously.'" (*Majmaʻu 'l-bayān*)

The author says: [as-Suyūṭī] has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibnu 'l-Anbārī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh, from ʻAmmār ibn Yāsir from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and there is at its end the phrase: "so they were transformed into apes and swine."

Also, he writes in the same *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*: Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated a similar tradition in another way from ʻAmmār ibn Yāsir as a *mawqūf* tradition. at-Tirmidhī has said that the *waqf* is more correct.

What this report says that they had asked for an inexhaustible food which they would eat, does not fully agree with the verse, as appears from their words quoted herein, and that we may be of the witnesses to it, because a food that is never exhausted does not need any witness to testify for it – except if it means testifying before Allāh on the Day of Resurrection.

Also, the report of their transformation into apes and swines, as what is apparent from the context, is the punishment with which they were threatened. But here it leaves open another door of argument. Because the divine words: *"surely I will chastise him with a chastise-ment*

with which I will not chastise any one among the nations", appar-ently show that they would be meted out with an exclusive punishment, not shared by any others; while the Qur'ãn clearly mentions that other people too were transformed into apes. Allãh says: *"Be apes, despised and hated."* (2:65). And it is narrated in this connection through some chains of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.), that they were transformed into swines.

al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasãr narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) that he heard him saying, "Swines were from the people of 'Īsã, they had asked for coming down of the table and then did not believe, so Allãh transformed them into swines." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

'Abdu 'ṣ-Ṣamad ibn Bandãr said, "I heard Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) saying, 'Swines were a community of bleachers, they denied the table, so they were transformed into swines.'" (*ibid.*)

The author says: It is narrated in *al-Kãfī* from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyã, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī from Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍã (a.s.) that he said, "Elephant is transformed, it was a fornicating king; wolf is transformed, it was a cuckold Bedouin; rabbit is transformed, it was a woman who was dis-loyal to her husband and did not take bath after her menstruation; bat is transformed, it used to steal dates of the people; apes and swines are groups of the Children of Israel who had exceeded the limits of the Sabbath; eel and lizard were a group of the Children of Israel who did not believe when the table was sent down to 'Īsã son of Maryam, so they became disoriented, one group fell in the sea and another in the land; mouse is a debaucherer; scorpion was a slanderer; and bear, lizard and wasp were meat-sellers who defrauded in measure."

This tradition does not go against the preceding two traditions, because it is possible that some of them were changed into swines, while some others were changed into eel and lizard. However, it is not free from another difficulty, as it mentions that the people of the Sabbath were changed into apes and swines, while this verse as well as a similar one in the chapter seven, mention, only their transform-ation into apes, and their context rejects their transformation into any other shape.

* * * * *

وَإِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ ٱتَّخِذُونِي
وَأُمِّيَ إِلَٰهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ سُبْحَٰنَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِيٓ أَنْ
أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ ۚ إِن كُنتُ قُلْتُهُۥ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُۥ ۚ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
نَفْسِي وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلَّٰمُ ٱلْغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَا
قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَآ أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِۦٓ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ وَكُنتُ
عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنتَ أَنتَ ٱلرَّقِيبَ
عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ إِن تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۖ
وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ هَٰذَا يَوْمُ
يَنفَعُ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ ۚ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ
خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ۚ رَّضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا۟ عَنْهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١٩﴾
لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

And when Allãh will say: "O ʻĪsã son of Maryam! Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh'?" He will say: "Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say)*; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things* (116)*. I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: 'That worship Allãh, my Lord and your Lord', and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things* (117)*. If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."* (118)*. Allãh will*

say: "This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones; they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever; Allãh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; this is the mighty achievement." (119). *Allãh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them; and He has power over all things* (120).

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COMMENTARY

It is a sort of a dialogue between Allãh and His messenger ‘Īsã son of Maryam, about what the Christians say regarding ‘Īsã (a.s.). It appears that the purpose of these verses is to affirm what he (a.s.) had confessed and described about himself in his life of this world: That he had no right to claim for himself what was not 'his' anyhow; that he indeed was in the sight of Allãh, which does not sleep, nor does it turn aside; that he had never crossed the limits laid down by Allãh. He had not said except that which Allãh had enjoined him to say, and he had remained engaged in the task, which Allãh had given him – it was the subject of 'witnessing'. And Allãh has affirmed his truthfulness in what he said regarding the right of Lordship and servitude.

In this way, the verses fit the aim and objective for which this chapter was revealed; that is the description of the right laid down by Allãh over His servants, that they should fulfil the covenant they have made, and should not break it; it is not proper for them to wander around as they want, and to graze pleasantly wherever they wish. Because they have not been given such right by their Lord, nor do they have such power on their own. Allãh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them; and He has power over all things. And on this note the chapter comes to its end.

QUR’ÃN: ***And when Allãh will say: "O ‘Īsã son of Maryam! Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh'?"*****:** "When" is an adverb of time related to an omitted but implied verb which is understood from the context – and it indicates the Day of Resurrection; as Allãh describes: *Allãh will say: "This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones;"* and ‘Īsã himself shall say: *"and*

I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them".

The verse mentions Maryam with the attribute of motherhood; it says: "Take me and my mother for two gods", instead of saying: 'Take me and Maryam for two gods'. It points to their most important proof for ʻĪsã's divinity, i.e. his being born of her without a father; thus the sonship and motherhood are the basic ingredients in this matter; therefore mentioning him and his mother was more effective than the mention of ʻĪsã and Maryam.

"*Dūn*" (دُوْنْ = low, inadequate) is used ultimately in the sense of 'besides'. ar-Rãghib says: "*Dūn* is used to indicate one who is unable to do something; someone has said that it is the reversed form of *dunuw* (دُنُو = proximity) *adwan* (أَدْوَنْ) means *danīy* (دَنِی = near); Allãh says: *Do not take for intimate friends from among others than your own people; . . .* [3:118], i.e. he who does not attain your position in religosity; or, in kinship; the word of Allãh: *. . . and forgives what is besides that . . .* [4:48], i.e. lesser than that; or apart from that; and the two meanings are concomitant. And the divine words: *'Did you say to the people: "Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh"?'*, i.e. other than Allãh."

The phrase: "besides Allãh", has been used in the Qur'ãn mostly in the sense of partnership, and not for independent divinity. When it condemns taking one, two or more gods besides Allãh, it means taking someone other than Allãh a partner of Allãh in divinity – it does not mean taking someone else for a god and denying the divinity of Allãh: Surely it would be a foolish talk without any sense, because the one taken as god would be the true God and other than Him would be ne-gated. Thus, it would turn into a verbal dispute about some attributes. For example, if someone says that God is the Christ, and negated God for Christ, it would mean that he affirms the existence of God but attaches to Him human characteristics of the Christ. Or, if he said that the idols or lords of the idols are gods and negated the existence of Allãh, then he admits that there is a god for the universe; thus he af-firms the existence of Allãh, but has ascribed to Him the attributes of plurality and multitude; thus he makes partner for Allãh. Or says as the Christians say that Allãh is the third of the three, i.e., one who is three and three who is one.

Likewise, whoever says that the beginning of the world is time or nature and denies that there is a god for it, he indeed affirms that there is a Maker for the world and he is Allãh, but he has ascribed to Him the attributes of defect and transience.

And whoever denies any beginning for this wonderful system and rejects any causality and effectiveness, in spite of the clear decision of his nature, he indeed affirms that there is a world firmly fixed which is not subject of denial or non-existence at all; in other words, the world has an essential existence. Now, the protector of its existence and permanence is either the world itself – which cannot be, because its parts are subject to change and cessation – or another one – and He is Allãh who has His attributes of perfection.

It is thus clear that Allãh does not admit negation in any way, except in apparent wording that is devoid of any understandable meaning.

The basic factor in all this is that man proves the existence of Allãh because of the general need felt in the world for the One who should furnish his existence's requirements and manage the affairs of his system, and then he would affirm the particulars of his existence. Whatever he would affirm for fulfilling this need, he is Allãh. Then if he affirms another god or more gods than one, it will be seen that either he has erred in specification of His attributes and apostatized in His names, or has affirmed for Him a partner or several partners. But to deny His being and affirm someone other than Him, would be a senseless exercise.

Now, it becomes clear that the phrase, two gods besides Allãh, means two partners of Allãh beside Himself. Even if it is accepted that the phrase does not indicate partnership in any way, we shall say that its meaning does not go beyond believing in two gods who in quiddity are other than Allãh; but it is silent about its being joined with denial of Allãh's divinity or its affirmation; no word of the verse speaks about it, it is understood from outside. The Christians do not deny His divinity although they take the Christ and his mother as two gods besides Allãh.

Some people have found it hard to explain the verse because the Christians do not believe in the divinity of the virgin Maryam; and they have mentioned several points for explaining it.

But it should be kept in mind that the verse mentions their taking her as a goddess, and not that they believe in her as a goddess. Taking someone as a god is quite different from believing in his divinity – except as a concomitant. Taking someone as a god is applicable to submitting to him with humility. Allãh says: *Have you then con-sidered him who takes his base desire for his god?* (45:23). And this theme is narrated from the ancients of Christians, and observed in their descendants.

al-Ãlūsī has written in *Rūḥu 'l-ma'ãnī*: Verily Abū Ja'far al-Imãmī has narrated from some Christians that in the past there was a sect called

Maryamiyyah; they believed about Maryam that she was a goddess.

[Rashīd Riḍā] has said in *Tafsīru 'l-Manār*: As for their taking the Christ as a god, it has already been mentioned in several places in explanation of this chapter; and as for his mother, her worship was agreed upon in the Eastern and the Western Churches after Constantine; then the Protestant denomination (which appeared many centuries after the advent of Islam) rejected her worship.[2]

This worship offered to Maryam, mother of Christ, by Christians, is of various modes: There is a *ṣalāt* which contains prayer, praise, call for help and intercession; there is also a fast ascribed to her and named after her; and all this is joined with humility to her remembrance, and to her pictures and images, combined with the belief of her authority emanating from the unseen world. That authority, according to their belief, enables her to bring benefit and harm in this world and the next, either by herself or through her son. They have clearly declared that it is incumbent to worship her. However, we know not of any of their sects which would use the word, goddess, for her; of course they name her, 'Mother of god'; and some sects make it clear that it is used in its real, not metaphorical, sense.

The Qur'ān says here that they had taken 'Īsā and his mother for two gods, and the taking is other than naming; taking them for gods occurs when they worship them, and this certainly happens in their case. Allāh has said in another verse that they say: *Surely Allāh, He is the Masīḥ son of Maryam; . . .* (5:72). But that is something else. And the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has explained the divine words: *They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for Lords besides Allāh, . . .* [9:31], that they followed them in what they allowed or forbade, not that they called them Lords.

The first clear declaration that I saw about the Christians really worshipping Maryam, was in the book, *as-Sawā'ī*, from among the books of the Greek Orthodox, and I had seen this book in a monastry called Dayru 't-Talmīd, when I was first admitted in the educational Institute; and the Catholic declare openly and take pride of it.

al-Jazwīt had decorated in Beirut their magazine, *al-Mashriq* (no.9, year 7) with Maryam's picture and coloured designs, it was done as a souvenir to celebrate the Golden Jubilee at the end of fifty years since the

[2] The belief that the Christ was a messenger and not a god is now spreading among American Christians these days – and it is 1958 C.E. The scholar H.G. Wells has written in his *Short History*: This worship renderred by general Christians to the Christ and his mother does not agree with the teachings of the Christ, because he had forbidden, as quoted in the Gospel according to St. Mark, the worship of any one other than the One Allāh. (Vide pp.526 & 539 of the said book.) (*Author's note*)

announcement of the Pope Pius IX that the virgin Maryam had become pregnant without pollution of sin; and in that very issue they confirmed that the Eastern as well as the Western Churches wor-shipped Maryam.

Of the same theme is the word of father Luis Shaykhū, in an article of his regarding the Eastern Churches: "Verily the worship by Armenian Church of the chaste virgin, the Mother of Allãh, is certainly a well-known affair." He also writes: "The Coptic Church is distinguished by its worship of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Allãh."

Then he quotes a part of an essay by father Inistas al-Karamli published in the Catholic magazine *al-Mashriq* (no.14, year 5) of Beirut. He writes under the heading, "Antiquity of the Virgin's worship", after mentioning the wording of Genesis, regarding the enmity of the serpent with the woman and her offspring, and interpreting the woman as the Virgin: "Don't you see that you do not find in this text anything clearly pointing to the Virgin until there came that great prophet, Elia the living, and he brought forth the worship of the Virgin from the cornor of symbolism and ambiguity to the world of clarity and explanation."

Then he interprets this clarity and explanation by what is written in the Kings III (according to the Catholic arrangement) that when Elia was with his servant at the summit of Karaml, he ordered him seven times to look towards the sea. After the seventh observation, the ser-vant informed him that he saw a cloud about the size of a man's palm rising from the sea.

The essay-writer says: "From that rising (the first rising of the cloud[3]) I say: 'Is it anything except the picture of Maryam, according to what the exegetes have established, rather it is the picture of the foe-tus without the original sin'." Then he says: "This is the origin of the Virgin's worship in the esteemed orient; and it goes back to the tenth century B.C.; and the excellence in this matter goes to this great pro-phet Elia." Again he says: "That is why the ancesters of the Karmalites were the first to believe in the Lord Jesus after the apostles and the deciples, and they were the first to establish a place of worship for the Virgin after her being taken away to the heaven with soul and body."[4]

QUR'ÃN: ***He will say: "Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I***

[3] It points to the cloud which the servant had seen rising from the sea. (*Author's note*)

[4] We have copied it at length, because a meditating scholar may find in it the type of their 'logic' with which they affirm her woship, and he will also see some of their recklessness in religion. (*Author's note*)

***should say what I had no right to* (say)*; . . . Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things*:** This and the next verse contain reply of ʻĪsã son of Maryam (a.s.) of the question he was asked; and he (a.s.) has adopted in it an amazing manner and etiquette:

He began by glorifying God, when he (a.s.) suddenly and unexpectedly was confronted with what was not proper to be ascribed to that Great and Sublime Being – i.e. the people taking them two gods besides Allãh, as His partners. It is a good manner of servitude that the servant should glorify his Lord whenever he hears what is not proper to be ascribed to God or what does not enter into mind in this con-nection. It is this factor that Allãh has trained His servants in the Qur'ãn: *And they say: "The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son." Glory be to Him. . . .* (21:26); *And they ascribe daughters to Allãh, glory be to Him; . . .* (16:57).

Then he turned to refute what was implied in the question that it could be ascribed to him. That he would have told the people to take him and his mother for two gods besides Allãh. He did not only reject it in itself, but refuted its cause to put emphasis on deanthropomorphism. Had he said: 'I did not say (or do) it', it would have implied that although such an action or talk was possible but he did not do it; but when he refuted its cause and said: 'It did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say)', it refuted the basis of such talk; this refutation of such a right also more intensely refutes what depends on it. Let us suppose that a master says to his servant: 'Why did you do what I had not told you to do?' Now, if the servant says: 'I did not do it', it would refute what was expected to happen; but if he said, 'I am rather unable to do it', it would refute it by refuting its cause; it would be rejection of its basic possibility, let alone its actual occurance.

"it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say)": If the verb, *mã yakūn* (**مَا يَكُونُ** = it does not happen) is a defective verb, then its subject is "that I should say", and the predicate is "what I had no right to (say)", and "L" (**لِی**) denotes possession. The meaning then will be: 'I do not possess what I was not given pos-session of, and it does not befit me to speak without any right.' On the other hand, if this verb is 'complete', then the word, 'me', is related to it, and the phrase: "that I should say . . .", is its subject; and then the meaning will be: 'It does not occur to me to speak without any right.' And the former is nearer interpretation. In any case, it negates the action by negating its cause.

"if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it": It is second rejection of the question asked – not on its own but through rejection of

its concomitant; because if such words were uttered, Allãh would certainly know it, because He it is from whom nothing is hid-den, neither in the earth nor in the heavens, and He watches every soul as to what it earns, and He encompasses everything.

This speech of ‘Īsã (a.s.), to begin with, presents the talk with its proof, and does not offer mere claim; and then indicates that in all his talks and actions he always kept regard of Allãh's knowledge, not caring whether other creatures of Him knew it or not, as he had no-thing to do with them.

In other words, asking questions is in order in a matter in which there is a possibility of being ignorant; so it is intended for removal of ignorance and imparting of knowledge – either for the asker himself, if he is ignorant of the reality, or to some other person, if the asker is knowledgeable but he intends that others too should become aware of the reality. It is this latter reason to which the type of the question found in the divine speech is attributed. ‘Īsã (a.s.)'s reply at this junc-ture: "if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it", turns the affair to His knowledge and indicates that he does not refer anything of his words and deeds except to the divine knowledge.

Then he said: "Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind": This indicates the purity of the divine knowledge from mixing with ignorance. Although the sentence, in it-self, denotes praise; but praise is not intended here, because it is not the place of prise; rather it is the place of getting rid of the attributions that were ascribed to Him.

His words: "Thou knowest what is in my mind," elaborates the comprehensiveness of the knowledge mentioned in the phrase: "if I had said it, Thou wouldst have known it." It shows that Allãh's knowl-edge of our deeds – and He is the King, the Truth on that day – is not like the knowledge of our kings about the condition of their subjects; as they receive reports from various parts of their kingdom, and con-sequently they know things in part and remain ignorant of other parts. Allãh is the Knower of subtilities, Aware of all things, including the soul of ‘Īsã son of Maryam in particular.

Even then, he could not fully elaborate the attributes of His knowledge. Allãh knows everything, not as one of us knows about someone else, and someone else knows about one of us. He knows what He knows by encompassing the object; while nothing encompasses Him, and they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge. Thus He, the

Sublime, is God, without any limit, and everyone beside Him is limited, determined, which cannot transcend the boundary of his limited soul. That is why he (a.s.) added to it another sentence: "Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind."

As for his words: "surely Thou art the great Knower of the un-seen things," it gives the reason of his words: "Thou knowest what is in my mind . . ." It removes the possible misunderstanding that the matter of knowledge in the sentence: "Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind," is confined to what is between him and his Lord, and does not encompass all things. So, by saying: "surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things," he made it clear that the complete knowledge of all unseen things is reserved for Allãh. Whatever knowledge is held by anything and is unseen by other things, it is indeed known by Allãh and He encompasses it.

It follows that nothing is aware of the unseen thing of Allãh or of other than Allãh's – which Allãh knows – because everything is created and limited and does not transcend its own phases. Thus, Allãh is the great Knower of all unseen things, and nothing besides Him knows any of the unseen things, neither whole nor in part.

Moreover, if any of the unseen things of Allãh was encompassed by a thing; now if Allãh encompasses it, then that encompassing thing would not be encompassing in reality, but it would be encompassed by Allãh: Allãh in His pleasure has given it the power to encompass some of the things owned by Him, without this latter thing going out of His possession, as Allãh says: *. . . and they cannot comprehend any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases; . . .* (2:255)

If Allãh were not to comprehend what He comprehends, He would become subject to a limit, and thus would become a created thing; far exalted is He from such things!

QUR'ÃN: *"I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: 'That worship Allãh, my Lord and your Lord'*: After first refuting the talk in question by rejecting its cause, he now refutes it by explaining his responsibility which he had not transgressed. So, he said: "I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with . . ." He used restricted mode of speech through negative followed by positive, in order to give reply to the question asked, by rebutting it, i.e. the speech: *'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh.'* Then he elaborated what he was enjoined with by Allãh: "'That worship Allãh'"; than described Allãh

saying: "'my Lord and your Lord'." It was done so that there should not remain any shade of misunder-standing and it should be clearly known that he is a servant and a mess-enger who calls to Allãh, his Lord and the Lord of all the people, alone who has no partner.

In such a clear style ‘Īsã son of Maryam (a.s.) used to call the people to monotheism, as the Qur’ãn quotes him as saying in other places too: *Surely Allãh is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the right path*. (43:64); *And surely Allãh is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the right path.* (19:36).

QUR’ÃN: ***"and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things*****:** Now, he (a.s.) mentioned the second responsibility entrusted to him by Allãh, and that was to be a witness of his people's deeds, as Allãh says: . . . *and on the Day of Resurrection he* (‘Īsã) *shall be a witness over them.* (4:159).

He (a.s.) declares: 'I had only two responsibilities towards them, to convey the message to them and to be a witness of their deeds; as for the messengership, I performed it in clearest possible terms; and as for the witnessing, I did not transgress the task You had enjoined me with; so I am free from the blame that I might have told them to take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh.'

"but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things": *ar-Raqūb* and *ar-riqãbah* (**اَلرَّقُوب ، اَلرقابَة** = protection, preservation); in this context, it denotes preservation of deeds. The word, witness, has been changed to 'watcher', to avoid repetition because the next phrase contains this word: "and Thou art witness of all things," and there was no reason why this word especially should be used second time.

The clause: "Thou wert the watcher over them," denotes restriction. It follows that Allãh was the witness as long as ‘Īsã (a.s.) was the witness, and He continued to be witness after him. So his (a.s.)'s witnessing was a mediation in witnessing, not an independent witnessing; it is like all other divine arrangements by which He has given some servants agency of some functions, while He is the real manager of everything, like sustenance, giving life and death, preservation, call and guidance, etc. There are numerous noble verses showing this aspect, which need not be quoted here.

That is why ‘Īsã (a.s.), after saying: "but when Thou didst cause me

to die, Thou wert the watcher over them," added the next clause: "and Thou art witness of all things." This style was used to denote that his being a witness over his people's deeds, which he continued to per-form as long as he was among them, was a small part of the general, comprehensive witnessing, i.e. the witnessing of Allāh over a thing; because Allāh is the witness over the individual things and their activities, including the deeds of His servants together with the deeds of the people of ʻĪsā (a.s.) as long as he was among them and after his death, and He is the witness together with other witnesses and the witness without other witnesses.

It is clear from the above that the restriction is true concerning Allāh even when other witnesses offer their testimonies, because ʻĪsā (a.s.) has restricted the testimony after his death to Allāh, although Allāh had His other witnesses after ʻĪsā (a.s.)'s death among His servants and messengers, and he (a.s.) was well aware of it.

And its proof may be seen in the good news he (a.s.) gave of the advent of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), as quoted in the Qur'ān: *And when ʻĪsā son of Maryam said: "O Children of Israel! Surely I am the messenger of Allāh to you, verifying that which is before me of the Tawrāt, and giving the good news of a messenger who will come after me, his name being Aḥmad;"* . . . (61:6); and the Qur'ān has clearly mentioned the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) being a witness, as Allāh says: . . . *and bring you as a witness over these?* (4:41).

Moreover, Allāh has quoted him (a.s.) as describing this restriction: "but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them," and has not refuted it. So, Allāh is the witness, and no one else, in spite of there being witnesses. It means that the reality of witnessing belongs to Allāh, in the same way as every perfection and goodness belongs to Allāh; whatever perfection, goodness or beauty He gives to others, it emanates from His bestowal of possession, without this bestowal making Him divested of possession or causing negation of His ownership. You should meditate on various aspects what we have said.

It is clear from ʻĪsā (a.s.)'s condition described in these two verses, that he is innocent of what had been said about him, and that he has no responsibility at all regarding their deeds. That is why he (a.s.) has ended his speech on the words: *"If Thou shouldst chastise them . . . surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."*

QUR'ĀN: ***"If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy***

***servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."*:** When it became clear, through his proofs, that he had no responsibility towards the people except conveyance of the message and delivery of the testimony, and that he did not do except that and did not cross the limit to what he had no right to, and thus he was not liable to what they uttered of the words of disbelief, then it is obvious that he has nothing to do with the divine judgement concerning them and their Lord. That is why he has started this new topic without any conjunctive or any indication that it branches from the preceding speech.

Thus, the verse is almost capable of being put in place of foregoing explanation. Its meaning: 'I am not responsible for the ugly polytheism in which they fell down, and I did not interfere in any of their affairs, so that I should take part with them in the judgement between Thee and them in whatever Thou pleasest, and in Thy decree about them as Thou wishest. They alone should face whatever Thou doest about them. If Thou shouldst chastise them, as Thou hast decided about those who ascribe a partner to Thee, by sending them into the Fire, then surely they are Thy servants, and in Thy hand alone is the manage-ment of their affairs, and Thou hast the right to be angry with them, because Thou art the Master in reality, and to the master belong his servants' affairs. And if Thou shouldst forgive them, by erasing the trace of this great injustice, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise, to Thee belongs the right of power and wisdom, and a mighty one (the one who owns the seriousness and power, not found in others), especially if he is wise (who does not take any step except when it is proper) has the authority to forgive the great injustice; obviously when power and wisdom are joined together in anyone, do not allow any other power to stand against him, nor any obscurity in whatever he decides.'

The foregoing explanation makes it clear that: -

First: the word of ‘Īsã (a.s.): "then surely they are Thy servants," has the force of saying: 'then surely Thou art their true Master', as we see in the Qur’ãnic style that it brings the names of Allãh after describing His actions, as is seen in the end of this verse.

Second: The clause: "then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise," is not meant for restriction; the detached personal pronoun of second person singular, and addition of *al* (ال) to the predicate are brought for emphasis. The meaning then will be as follows: 'Surely Thy Power and Wisdom cannot be doubted about, and nobody has any right to object if Thou wert to forgive them.

Third: The backdrop of this speech, where ʻĪsā son of Maryam (a.s.) was talking with his Lord, let us say, face to face, was the situ-ation where the divine Majesty was manifest, the Majesty that nothing can stand to it; and it demanded that it should be faced with utmost humility of servitude, and the servant must avoid interference in any affair with invocation or question. That is why he (a.s.) said: "and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise." Mark that he did not say: 'Thou art the Forgiving, the Merciful.' It was because the radiance of the overpowering sign of the divine Majesty and authority, which subdues everything, does not leave any way for the servant except to seek refuge in Him with all the humility of his servitude, and misery of total slavery; and to act affably in this situation is a great sin.

As for the words of Ibrāhīm addressed to his Lord: *then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful;* it is an invocation; and a servant has full right to incite the divine mercy in any way possible.

QUR'ĀN: ***Allāh will say: "This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones*****:** This is the confirmation of the truth of ʻĪsā son of Maryam (a.s.) in an illusive way; Allāh has not declared his name, but it is known from the context.

This truth of the truthful ones refers to their truth in this world; because Allāh says after this sentence: *they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever*. Obviously, it elaborates the reward of their truth near Allāh – it is the benefit of the truth which will return to them; while the next world's deeds and conditions – including the truth of the people of the next world – will not bring any benefit as reward. In other words, no reward is given on the deeds and conditions of the next world, as it is given on this world's deeds and conditions, because there is no *taklīf* (تَكْلِيْف = religious responsibility) in the next world, and reward is a branch of the *taklīf*. Obviously, the next world is a house of reckoning, reward and punishment, in the same way as this world is a house of action and responsibility. Allāh says: . . . *on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!* (14:41); . . . *today you shall be rewarded for what you did.* (45:28); . . . *This life of the world is only a* (passing) *enjoyment, and surely the here-after is the abode to settle.* (40:39).

What ʻĪsā (a.s.) spoke about his condition in this world, con-tains of words and deeds, and Allāh has confirmed his truthfulness; thus the

truth mentioned in this verse contains truth in deeds as it includes truth in words. Therefore, those who were truthful in this world in their words and deeds, shall benefit from their truthfulness on the Day of Resurrections, they shall have the promised gardens, and they shall be pleased [with Allãh] and pleasing [to Him], and they shall achieve the great success.

Apart from that, truth in words necessitates truth in deeds – i.e. clarity and purity of deeds from stigma of hypocrisy – and leads it to goodness. It is reported that a Bedouine asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for an advice; so he admonished him not to tell a lie. Thereafter, the man narrated that adherence to what he was advised to, prevented him from all sins; because whenever a sin tempted him, he remembered that if he did it and then was asked about it, he would be obliged to confess its commission and inform the people about it; so he did not do it because of that fear.

QUR'ÃN: ***"they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever; Allãh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allãh; this is the mighty achievement."*****:** Allãh shall be well pleased with them because of the truth which they had sent before them, and they shall be well pleased with Allãh because of the reward which He will bestow on them.

The verse has attached the pleasure with their selves, and not with their deeds, unlike the divine words: . . . *and whose words He is pleased with.* (20:109); . . . *and if you are grateful, He shall be pleased with it in you;* . . . (39:7). There is a difference between these two pleasures: Your pleasure with a thing means that you do not push it away with dislike; it is possible for your enemy to bring up an action which you like, although you are angry with him; and for a friend whom you love to do a deed which you do not like.

Thus, the words: "Allãh is well pleased with them", denote that Allãh likes their selves; and it is known that this pleasure cannot take place unless there appears the purpose for which Allãh has created them; and He has said: *And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should worship Me* (51:56). So, this servitude and worship is the divine object for which man has been created. Allãh shall be pleased with a servant's soul only when he shall become an exemplary worshipper. In other words, when his soul will be the soul of a servant of Allãh Who is the Lord of everything; he does not see his own soul, nor anything else;

but he is only a slave of Allāh who is submissive to His Lordship, who does not turn except to Him and does not return but to Him, as He says about Ayyūb: . . . *most excel-lent the servant! Surely he was frequent in returning* (to Allāh), (38: 44); and this is their being pleased with Him.

This is one of the stations of servitude. Its concomitant is the purity of the soul from disbelief (in all its ranks) and from trans-gression, as Allāh says: . . . *and He does not like ungratefulness in His servants;* . . . (39:7); . . . *yet surely Allāh is not pleased with the trans-gressing people* (9:96).

It is one of the signs of this position that when servitude takes hold of a servant's soul and he sees that all that he perceives with his external eyes and internal insight is owned by Allāh and is submissive to His order, then he will be pleased with Allāh, because he will realize that whatever has Allāh given him, has given it from His Grace, so it is His generosity and bounty, and whatever He has stopped from him, He has done it for some reason.

Moreover, Allāh says about them when they shall be in the Garden: *They shall have in them what they please.* (16:31; 25:16). And it is known that when man gets all that he wishes, and then naturally he will be pleased. This is the utmost human bliss and felicity in his servitude, and that is why the talk ends on the clause: "this is the mighty achievement."

QUR'ĀN: ***Allāh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them; and He has power over all things***: *al-Milk* (اَلْمِلْك = ownership) is a special authority on individual things, and its effect is permeation of the owner's will in the things he has the power to manage; and *al-mulk* (اَلْمُلْك = kingdom) is the special authority over the system prevalent among the things, and its effect is permeation of the owner's will in the things he has the power to manage; in simple words, *al-milk* (ownership) relates to an individual and *al-mulk* (king-dom) to a group.

Inasmuch as the kingdom, in its actions, is restricted with, or formed by, the power, therefore when the power is complete and un-restricted, the kingdom shall be all-comprehensive, not restricted with one thing besides the other, nor confined to one condition, beside the other. To draw attention to this fine point, the sentence: "Allāh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them;" is fol-lowed by the clause: "and He has power over all things."

The chapter ends on this verse, which denotes His all-encom-passing Kingdom. Its correlation is clear: The chapter's objective is to

exhort the servants and attract them to fulfil the covenants and agreements which have been taken from them by their Lord, and He is the absolute ruler. Thus, their only title is that they are absolutely owned servants; they have no power in whatever He orders them or forbids them except to hear and obey; nor about whatever agreement and covenant He takes from them except to fulfil it without breaking it.

TRADITIONS

Tha'labah ibn Maymūn narrates through some of our compan-ions from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allãh, the Blessed, the Sublime, to 'Īsã: *"Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh'?"* "He had not said it, but will soon say so; surely when Allãh knows that a thing is to happen [in future], He speaks about it as a done thing." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: The same book narrates a similar tradition from Sulaymãn ibn Khãlid from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.). Its gist is that information of the future has been given in past tense because it is known to take place certainly; and such usage is common in the language.

Jãbir al-Ju'fī has narrated from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) in explanation of the sentences: *Thou knowest what is in my mind, I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things,* that he said, "Surely the great name of Allãh is seventy three letters; and the Lord, the Blessed, the Sublime, has kept hidden one of the letters; that is why nobody knows what is in His mind, to Whom belong Might and Majesty. Adam was given seventy two letters, so, the prophets inherited it from one another, until it reached 'Īsã (a.s.); that is the (meaning of) the word of 'Īsã: *'Thou knowest what is in my mind'*, i.e. seventy two letters of the great name; he means to say: 'Thou hast taught them to me, so Thou (certainly) knowest them; and I do not know what is in Thy mind'; he wants to say: 'because Thou hast hidden that letter, so nobody knows what is in Thy mind'." (*ibid.*)

The author says: We shall extensively explain about the good names of Allãh and His great name, under the verse: *And Allãh's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby; . . .* (7:180). There it will become clear that the great name or the big name is not made up of alphabets; in such places name actually means the named one, i.e. the

person of Allāh looked at with one of His attributes or one of the aspects; accordingly the name in words would be the name of the name, as will be explained later.

Acordingly, the Imām (a.s.)'s words, that the Great Name is made up of seventy-three letters, and similar expressions which have come in numerous traditions of this topic, that the Great Name is made up of so many letters, and that they are scattered in such and such chap-ter, or such and such verse, all these are talks based on symbolism, they are parables to make the people understand what is feasible to under-stand of the realities; for not every reality can be explained clearly without allusion.

It will explain the meaning of the *ḥadīth* to a certain extent if we say: There is no doubt that Allāh's good names are the mediums for manifestation of the universe in its species and appearance of its innumerable occurances. Also, we have no doubt that Allāh created His creatures, because He is the Creator, Magnanimous, and Originator, for example; not because He is the Avenger and Hard-hitter. He gives sustenance to whom He sustains, because He is the Sustainer and Bestower, for instance, not because He is the Holder and Forbidding. He bestows life to the living, because He is the Living and Life giving, not because He is death giving, and returning. The Qur'ānic verses are the most truthful witnesses of this reality, because we see the realities elaborated in a verse, are justified at the end with the divine name appropriate for that theme. Often the verse ends with one such name, and sometimes it ends with two names, which together illuminate its topic.

It appear from the above that if one of us is given the knowl-edge of the names, and if he knew the connections between those names and the things and understood what the divine names, individ-ually and combined, demanded, he would know the system of the uni-verse, with all the general laws which govern it and which are applied to its individual parts one after another.

The noble Qur'ān, as is understood from its apparent meanings, has described many general laws regarding the genesis and the return, and what Allāh has arranged concerning the felicity and infelicity; and then it has told the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): . . . *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything,* . . . (16:89).

However, all of them are general laws, which are necessary. But they are necessary not in themselves, not by demand of their own selves; but through that necessariliness and inevitability which Allāh has bestowed on it. Now that this intellectual and definite authority comes

from Allãh's side, and by His order and will, it is clear that Allãh's action cannot compel Him at all in this regard, nor would it overpower Him in His person; He, Glorified be He, is the Subduer and Predominant; how can a thing subdue Him which returns to Him from every direction, and depends on Him in its substance and effect. Understand it.

It is therefore impossible that the intellect (which decides whatever it does by Allãh's bestowal on it) or the realities (whose laws and effects do exist by His will) would have any authority over Him or demand something from Him, by the same decision and demand that Allãh Himself keeps them active and subdues them. In other words, whatever demand or decision is found in the things emanates from the transfers of ownership which Allãh has given to it; thus He, the High, is the absolute owner, and He cannot be owned in any way.

If Allãh were to give good reward to a sinner, or to punish a good-doer, or did any type of deed, which He wished, there was no harm in it, and there was nothing to prevent it – neither the reason nor any extraneous matter. But Allãh has promised us and threatened us, the felicity and infelicity, and good reward and tough recompense; and He has informed us that He does not break His promise; and He has informed us about some things by the way of revelation or through our intellect, and He has mentioned that He does not speak except truth. Thus our souls became tranquil with Him, and our hearts were at ease towards Him – without any doubt finding a way to it. Allãh says: . . . *surely Allãh fails not in* (His) *promise.* (3:9; 13:31); . . . *and the truth do I speak.* (38:84).

What Allãh has explained it is the demand of His names, as we have known by His teaching. But beyond that is the fact that He, the Sublime, is the absolute owner, He has the right and power to do what He wishes and decide what He wants. Allãh says: *He is not questioned concerning what He does and they shall be questioned.* (21:23). This meaning itself is one of His names which is of unknown essence; none of His creatures has any way of knowing it. It is because whatever we know of His names is what one or other of the concepts shows, and then we identify by its relationship its effects in existence. As for those effects that there is no way of identifying them, they inviolably are the effects of a name that there is no way to know its meaning. You may say that it is a name that cannot be hunted down by a concept; rather, it somehow is pointed to by the attribute of His absolute ownership.

Thus it is clear that there are some of His names to which no creature has got a way – and it is the name, which He has kept hidden. So

understand it.

A TALK ON THE MEANING OF GOOD MANNERS

We shall talk here in various chapters on the good manners, which Allāh has taught His prophets and messengers, peace be on them all.

1. *al-Adab* (the manners): is the good form on which the lawful action should take place, either in religion or near intellectuals in their society, like the manner of prayer, the etiquette of visiting the friends; or you may say, gracefulness of intellect.

It does not appear except in lawful things, not forbidden ones. There is no manner in injustice, treachery and falsehood; nor is there any manner in ignominious and ugly deeds. Also, it does not take place except in voluntary actions, which may be performed in more than one way, so that some would agree with manners, beside the others. For example, there is the manner of eating in Islam that one begins it in the name of Allāh and ends on the thanks for Allāh and that one should eat less than one's fill. Or there is the manner of sitting in *ṣalāt* that one sits on one side of one's thigh, keeping the palms on thighs above the knees, and looking at the lap.

As the manners are the good form of voluntary actions and good deeds, and according to its original meaning, it denotes agreement with the aim of life. Although there is no dispute among the societies in this basic theme, yet when it comes to indentification of its substance, there appears a lot of discord, among various communities, nations, religions and denominations. It appears even in very small societies like a family, in identification of good and evil, and in manners of deeds.

Often a community observes some manners, which the others do not know about; sometimes an action is considered good by a community while another group thinks it evil. For example, greeting on meeting someone: In Islam it is by saying: *as-Salāmu ʻalaykum*, i.e. blessed, peace and pure safety be to you from Allāh; and in some nations it is by taking off the caps, in others it is by raising the hand in front of the head, in some others it is done by prostration, or bowing down or bending with bowed head; as there are among the westerners the manners of meeting with women which Islam condemns and con-siders

disgusting, and so on.

However, all these differences have cropped up at the stage of identification of manners; as for the basic meaning of the manners, it is unanimously agreed by all sane persons – that it is the good form in which the actions should take place. Also, there is no difference in that it is a good thing.

2. As the goodness and beauty are among the ingredients of the good manners, as described above, and this differs from society to society according to their particular objectives, this inevitably has given rise to differences in man's sociological manners. The manner in every society is like a mirror, which reflects that general society's ethical character-istics – which have been arranged in them by their lives' objectives; and have been concentrated in their souls by their social factors and other natural or chancy agents.

Manners are not ethics, because ethics is the deeply ingrained psychological trait, which are adopted by the souls, while manners are various good forms, which affect the actions, which are done by man because of various psychological attributes – and there is a vast difference between the two.

Thus, manners sprout from the ethics, and ethics is among the demands of society in particular according to its especial objective. The objective, which man desires in his life, identifies his manners in his actions, and draws for him a line which he does not cross, when he performs an action in his life and acquires nearness from his destination.

3. As the manner follows, in its particulars, the desired destination of the life, therefore, the divine manners, which Allah, the Glorified, teaches His prophets and messengers (peace be upon them), and trains them on, is the good form of religious actions which are in harmony with the religion's aims and objectives – and it is the servitude with differences in the true religions, according to abundance or shortage of its substance and depending on its ranks in perfection and sublimity.

As the Islam deals with all the life-affairs of the human beings, in such a way that nothing of it, big or little, great or small, goes out of its fold, therefore it has encompassed the life with manners, and laid down for every deed a good form which is in harmony with its objective.

However, it has no general objective except the belief in one God in both stages of faith and action together. It means that man should

believe that there is a God, from Whom is the genesis of every-thing and to Whom everything is to return; for Him are the good names and sublime parables. Then this monotheism runs throughout the life and lives in the actions, it manifests in itself the servitude of man and all that he has to Allāh, Great is His name! In this way the monotheism permeats in its esoterics and exoterics, and the pure servitude is mani-fested from his words, deeds and all aspects of his existence, a mani-festation where there is no veil over it, nor any cover to hide it.

In short, the divine manner – or prophetic manner – is the form of monotheism in action.

4. The reason shows and definite experience supports that the practi-cal knowledge – i.e. the knowledge that is acquired in order to act upon it – does not fully succeed and does not bring about its good effects if it is not put before a learner in practical way. It is because unless the general academic principles are applied to its individual cases, human soul finds it difficult to accept it and to believe in its correctness, because our soul throughout our life remains engaged with perceivable components, and it feels tired, as its second nature, from observation of intellectual general principles, which are beyond our senses. A man who affirms the goodness of bravery, *per se*, then he faces a dreadful situation in which the hearts tremble; now a dispute starts between his intellect (which affirms the goodness of bravery) and his feeling which pulls him towards caution against facing physical destruction and loss of fine material life; thus the soul remains oscil-lating between this and that, and cannot decide which of the two op-posing sides to support, and strength is found in the side of the feeling because it accompanies senses.

Thus, it is incumbent during teaching that the student is taught intellectual realities accompanied by practice, so that he gets training through action and is drilled on it, and it would erase the opposing ideas which might be hidden in cornors of his soul, and affirmation of what he learns would be firmly rooted in mind, because occurance is the best evidence of possibility.

That is why we see that an action whose real occurance is not experienced by the soul, it becomes difficult for the soul to submit to it. So, when it occurs for the first time it seems as it has turned from impossibility to possibility, and it appears to be a great affair, and creates agitation and perturbation in the mind. Then if it happens more than two or three times, it becomes easier and its severity is broken, joining the

fold of usual things, which become unimportant. Surely the good is a habit as the evil is a habit.

Consideration of this style in religious teachings, and especially in Islamic religious education, is among the clearest affairs. The Law-giver of religion, in teaching the believers, has not adopted to teach intellectual generalities and over-all legislations; rather he has started with deeds and then has gone to words and verbal explanations; when a believer completes learning religious cognition and its laws, he does so and he is equipped with good deeds and furnished with piety.

Likewise, it is incumbent that the teacher and trainer must be acting on his knowledge, because knowledge has no effect if it is not joined by practice; the action shows the way exactly as the words show the way. If the action opposes the words, then it shows that there is an opposite form in the soul that opposes the words; thus it proves that the said word is a trick and a sort of deception, which the speaker uses for cheating the people and preying on them.

That is why we see that the hearts of the people do not incline, and their souls do not lean, towards a sermon and admonition when they find that the preacher or the advisor does not follow his own admonition or advice; and does not have patience and steadfastness in its path. Often they say: If his words were true, he would have acted on them. However they seem confused in drawing this result. The result in the above case is as follows: These words are not true in the eyes of the speaker, because if he believed them to be true he would have acted on them. But it does not give the result that the words are not true at all – as they sometimes draw it.

It is one of the conditions of good bringing up that the teacher and trainer himself should have the attributes which he wants the trainee to acquire; because it is impossible in practice that a coward would train a couragous and brave person, or that a well-balanced scholar should come up from the school of prejudice and stubbornness.

Allãh says: *Is He then Who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you; how do you judge.* (10:35); *What! Do you enjoin men to be good and forget your own selves . . .* (2:44)? And He quotes Shuʿayb telling his people: *. . . and I do not desire that in opposition to you I should betake myself to that which I forbid you; I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able, . . .* (11:88); and there are many similar verses.

Because of all these factors it was incumbent that the teacher and trainer must have full faith in the substance of his teaching and training.

Apart from that, even a man who has no faith in what he says, even a hypocrite who covers himself with good deeds, and pretends to have pure unalloyed faith, does not train on his hand except a one who represents him in his unclean soul; even if it is possible to create separation between tongue and heart by speaking what the soul is not pleased with and the inner idea does not agree with; yet speaking is a sort of action, and action is an effect of the soul, and how can an action go against the nature of its doer?

Thus the speech, apart from its denoting the meaning for which it is made, carries the nature of the speaker's soul, like belief or dis-belief and so on. Its maker, and its conveyer to the simple soul of the student does not differentiate the aspect of its goodness – i.e. the aspect of its laid down meaning – from the aspect of its ugliness – and it is all other aspects – except the one who has the insight of the reality. Allãh says to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) regarding the hypocrites: . . . *and most certainly you may recognize them by the intent of* (their) *speech;* . . . (47:30) So, the training which brings good effect in its wake is that one in which the teacher and trainer has faith in what he presents before his students, accompanied by good deeds that agree with his knowledge, but as for the one who does not believe in what he says, or who does not act according to his knowledge, no good can be expected from such a person.

There are many and innumerable examples for this reality in the conduct of us, the orientals and especially the Islamists, in teaching and training in our official and unofficial institutes, that no effort seems to succeed, and no planning to be of any benefit.

5. To this chapter returns what we see in the divine speech that it contains pieces of divine manners which are reflected in actions of the prophets and the messengers (peace be on them) which are connected with Allãh, Glorified be He – including various facets of their wor-ship, invocations and urgings, also those which are related to the people in their dealings and addresses; it is because bringing in the examples in education are a sort of practical teaching with evidence in practice.

Allãh says, after narrating the story of Ibrãhīm with his people, regarding the Oneness of God: *And this was Our argument that We gave to Ibrãhīm against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing. And We gave to him Isḥãq and Ya'qūb; each*

did We guide, and Nūḥ did We guide before, and of his descendants, Dãwūd and Sulaymãn and Ayyūb and Yūsuf and Hãrūn; and thus do We reward those who do good (to others). *And Zakariyyã and Yaḥyã and 'Īsã and Ilyãs; every one was of the good; and Ismã'īl and al-Yasa' and Yūnus and Lūṭ; and every one We made to excel the worlds: And from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them into the right way. This is Allãh's guidance, He guides thereby whom He pleases of His ser-vants; and if they had set up others* (with Him)*, certainly what they did would have become forfeited for them. These are they to whom We gave the Book and the Wisdom and the Prophecy; therefore if these disbelieve in it We have already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it. These are they whom Allãh guided; therefore follow their guidance. . . .* (6:84-91)

Allãh mentions here His noble prophets (peace be on them) comprehensively, and then says that He exalted them with divine guidance; and it was the guidance to monotheism only; its proof is found in the clause: *and if they had set up others* (with Him)*, certainly what they did would have become forfeited for them*; mark that He in this place contrasts His bounty of guidance which He had bestowed on them with polytheism only; thus He had guided them to the monotheism only.

However, the order of monotheism flowed into their actions, gaining ground in it. Its proof is seen in the clause: *certainly what they did would have been forfieted for them;* if polytheism were not flowing in the actions, infiltrating in them, it would not have caused their for-feiture. The same would apply to its opposite, the monotheism.

What is the meaning of flowing of monotheism in actions? It means that the actions' forms represent monotheism, and reflect them as a mirror reflects the image of the looker in. It is such that if mono-theism were supposed to be imagined, it would be exactly those actions; and if those actions were abstracted into pure beliefs, it would be exactly those.

This meaning has many examples in psychological attributes. For example, you find that the actions of a proud person exemplify the pride and haughtiness that are hidden in his soul. Likewise, all move-ments and stillness of a wretched poor man expose what is hidden in his inner self of humiliation and submissiveness, and so on.

Thereafter, Allãh taught good manners to His Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and commanded him to follow the guidance of the prophets who had preceded him; he was not supposed to follow [their persons, but their

guidance]. One follows someone else in action; and not in belief, because belief is outside one's option, *per se*, i.e. he should choose their good actions, which were based on monotheism, and performed by them through practical divine training.

We mean by this practical training what is pointed out by the divine words: *And We made them Imãms who guided* (people) *by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the* zakãt*, and Us* (alone) *did they wor-ship.* (21:73). The genetive construction using the *maṣdar*s as the first constructs in: *doing of good*, *Keeping up of prayer* and *giving of the* zakãt, denotes that they refer to the actual good they did, prayers they kept up and the *zakãt* they gave, and not only to performing the supposed deeds. Thus this revelation, which was sent to them when they were engaged in this performance, was the revelation to show the right way and to teach the manners; it was not the revelation of prophecy and legislation. Had it meant the revelation of prophecy, the sentence would have been as follows: 'And We revealed to them that you should do good deeds, keep up prayer and give the *zakãt*' – as we see in the verse: *Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Ibrãhīm, . . .* (16:123); *And We revealed to Mūsã and his brother, saying: "Take for your people houses to abide in Egypt and make you houses places of worship and keep up prayer . . ."* (10:87), and many similar verses. The revelation to show the right way means that Allãh bestows on one of His servants a holy spirit which supports and strengthens him in good deeds and in remaining cautious against evil; in the same way as the human spirit supports us in thinking about good and evil, and the ani-malistic spirit in choosing what we desire through wilful attraction and repulsion. A detailed talk on this topic will be given later on, God willing.

In short, the clause: *therefore follow their guidance*, is a general divine ethical teaching to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) with the manner of monotheism, which is spread over the prophets' actions and free from polytheism.

Allãh has likewise mentioned several of His prophets (peace be on them) in the chapter of "Mary", and then said: *These are they on whom Allãh bestowed favours, from among the prophets of the seed of Adam, and of those whom We carried with Nūḥ, and of the seed of Ibrãhīm and Isrã'īl, and of those whom We guided and chose; when the signs of the Beneficent God were recited to them, they fell down making obeisence and weeping. But there came after them an evil generation, who*

neglected prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will meet perdition, except such as repent and believe and do good, these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in any way. (19:58-60).

In this way, Allãh mentioned their general manners in their life, that they live with submission to Allãh in activities and humility towards Him in heart; their prostration and recital of Allãh's sign is the example of submission, and their weeping which emanates from soft-ness of heart and humbleness of soul is the sign of humility; and both together allude to the domination of the attribute of servitude over their souls, inasmuch as whenever they are reminded of a sign of Allãh, its effect appears on their exterior as well as it dominates their inner self. Thus they are on their divine manner, and it is the mark of the servitude when they are alone with their Lord and its mark when they mix with the people. They live on the divine manner with their Lord and with the people.

The proof that it means general manners may be found in the next verse: *But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and followed the sensual desires.* Prayer is paying attention to Allãh and its neglecting shows their condition with their Lord, and following the sensual desires points to their condition with the people. As these people stand parallel to the preceding group, it indicates that the prophets' general manner is that they turn to their Lord with the mark of servitude and deal with the people with the mark of servitude. It means that the structure of their lives is founded on the foundation that they do have a Lord who owns them and manages their affairs, from Him is their genesis and to Him is their return. So this is the basis of all their conditions and actions.

The exception mentioned of those who repented among them is another divine manner. It begins with Adam (a.s.), the first of the prophets, as He says: . . . *and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life be-came evil* (to him). *Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided* (him). (20:121-2). God willing, some talk on it will follow.

Allãh says: *There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allãh has ordained for him; such has been the course of Allãh with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allãh is a decree that is made absolute: Those who deliver the messages of Allãh and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allãh; and Allãh is suffi-cient to take account.* (33:38-39).

It is a general manner which Allãh trained His prophets on (peace

be upon them), and His continuously running course about them: That they should not be distressed by the life destined for them and should not be affected in any affair; they are on the nature, and the nature does not guide except to what Allāh has equipped it to acquire, which agrees to it; it does not affect to dominate what Allāh has not made it easy for it to rise to it. Allāh quotes His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as saying: *"... nor am I of those who affect:"* (38:86); *Allāh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; ...* (2:286); *... Allāh does not lay on any soul a burden except to the extent to which He has granted it; ...* (65:7). As affectation is going beyond nature, it is a kind of following the sensuous desires, and the prophets are protected from it.

Allāh says – and this too is training for comprehensive manner: *O Messengers! Eat of the good things and do good; surely I know what you do. And surely this religion is one religion and I am your Lord, therefore fear Me* (23:51-52). Allāh taught and trained them to eat of the good things. In other words, they should use the good things from the provisions of life, and should not cross the boundary to the repulsive things towards which the healthy nature feels aversion. They should do the good deeds – those which are good for man to perform, to which the nature is inclined according to the powers with which Allāh has equipped him, and through them his life continues to an appointed time and destination. Or they should do the deeds, which may be presented at the divine presence. Both these meanings are nearer to each other. So this is the manner relating to an individual.

Then Allāh has joined it to group manner. He mentioned that the people were but a single nation – those who were sent and those to whom they were sent; they do not have except the one Lord, so they should join together in piety; in this way they should cut off the roots of grouping and divisiveness. When these two types of manners, i.e., of individual and of group, join together, they constitute a human society, protected from discord, which worships one Lord; its individ-uals carry on divine manner, and they refrain from evil deeds and bad actions; thus they are firmly settled on the pedestal of felicity.

This is what is gathered from another verse: *He has laid down for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and ʿĪsā, that keep up the religion and be not divided therein; ...* (42:13).

And Allāh has differentiated between the two types of manners in another place and has said: *And We did not send before you any*

messenger but We revealed to him that there is no god but Me, there-fore worship Me (21:25). In this way, he taught them His monotheism and trained them to base His worship on it. This was their manner *vis-à-vis* the Lord. Also, He has said: *And they say: "What is the matter with this Messenger that he eats food and goes about in the markets; why has not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have been a warner with him? Or* (why is not) *a treasure sent down to him, or he is made to have a garden from which he should eat?. . .* (25:7-8). Then Allãh replies to it: *And We have not sent before you any messen-gers but they most surely ate food and went about in the markets* (25: 20). Thus, Allãh described that it is the conduct of all prophets – and it is their divine manner – to mix with the people, and avoid seclusion, reservation and discrimination between people; because all behaviour is repulsed by the nature. This was their manner with the people.

6. ÃDAM: An example of prophetic manners as they turn their faces to their Lord and pray to Him, is the prayer of Ãdam (a.s.) and his wife quoted by Allãh: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers."* (7:23). This they said after they had eaten from the tree which Allãh had forbidden them not to go near; of course, this prohi-bition was of advisory nature, not an order of a master to his servants; and their disobedience was not of a legislative command, they only went against an advice which was given to them in order to preserve the good-ness of their condition; to maintain the felicity of their lives in the garden, safe from every type of infelicity and trouble. Allãh had told them while cautioning them against following the Iblīs: *. . . therefore let him not drive you both from the garden so that you should be un-happy: Surely it is* (ordained) *for you that you shall not be hungry therein nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun* (20:117-9).

However, when they fell in the tribulation, and were over-whelmed by misfortune and the happiness of life departed from them, they were not occupied with themselves like someone who is des-paired and hopeless, nor did pessimism cut off the rope that tied them to their Lord. Rather, they at once saught refuge with Allãh Who owned all their affairs, and in Whose hand was every good that they hoped for themselves. So, they adhered to the attribute of His Divinity and Lordship – which contains all with which evil is repulsed and good attracted; the Lordship

is the noble attribute, which joins the servant with Allãh, the Glorified.

Then they both mentioned the evil which was threatening them with appearance of its signs, and it was the loss in life – It was as though they had bought the taste of eating for obedience to divine advice, and it became clear to them that their happiness was indeed about to fall down – and they described that they needed what would avert that evil from them. So they said: *"... and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers."* That is: loss in life is threatening us and towers over us, and nothing can avert it except Your forgiving the sin committed by us, and then Your covering us with Your mercy and it is the happiness and felicity; because man, rather every being who is made, perceives by its created nature that the tings which are found in the station of existence and on the path of abiding are bound to seek perfection by removal of any defect or shortcoming attached to it, and the cause to complete that defect is Allãh alone, so it is of the habit of divinity.

And for this reason, it was enough to only describe their condition, and to display the need and poverty that had afflicted the servant; and there was no need to ask for its remedy in words; rather, describ-ing only their need was a most eloquent imploration and most fluent proposition.

And that is why Ãdam (a.s.) and his wife did not say clearly what they wanted; they did not say, 'so forgive us and have mercy on us'. As they had placed themselves in station of abasement and wretchedness because of the disobedience they had done, and now they felt that they had neither face nor any prestige, as a result of which their only course was the total and pure submission to whatever order was issued from the arena of divine power. Therefore, they stopped from all pleading and request – they just said that He was their Lord. In this way they pointed to what they hoped for and [before that, they] confessed to their injustice.

In this backdrop, the words: "*Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers."* mean as follows: 'We did wrong by being unjust to ourselves; thus we were on the brink of the loss which was threatening our general felicity and bliss of life; now abasement and wretchedness have covered us from all sides and we are in intense need of erasing the brand of injustice so that we may be overwhelmed by divine mercy; and this has not left us with any face and dignity with which we could ask You; so here we are submitting to Your decision, O Mighty

King! In Your hand are the command and the judgement; [our only salvation lies in the fact] that You are our Lord and we are under Your lordship, we hope from You what a ward hopes from his Guardian.'

NŪḤ: Another example of their manners is what Allãh quotes Nūḥ (a.s.) concerning his prayer for his son: *And it moved on with them amid waves like mountains; and Nūḥ called out to his son, and he was aloof: "O my son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers." He said: "I will betake myself for refuge to a mountain that shall pro-tect me from the water." . . . And Nūḥ cried out to his Lord and said: "My Lord! Surely my son is of my family, and Thy promise is surely true, and Thou art the justest of the judges." He said: "O Nūḥ! Surely he is not of your family; surely he is* (the doer of) *other than good deeds, therefore ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge; surely I admonish you lest you may be of the ignorant." He said: "My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from asking Thee that of which I have no knowledge; and if Thou shouldst not forgive me and have mercy on me, I should be of the losers."* (11:42-47)

Doubtlessly, it appears from the above talk of Nūḥ (a.s.) that he wanted to pray for his son to be saved; but meditation of the verses of the story removes the curtain from the reality in another way:

On one side, Allãh ordered him to embark on the ark with his family and the believers, saying: . . . *"Carry in it two of every thing, a pair, and your own family – except those against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe."* . . . (11:40). Thus, Allãh promised him to save his family and excepted those against whom the word had already gone forth; and his wife was a disbeliever, as Allãh mentions in the verse 66:10. Allãh sets forth an example of those who disbelieve the wife of Nūḥ and the wife of Lūṭ. But as for his son, there was not any manifestation that he did not believe in the Call of Nūḥ; and the report given by Allãh, of his behaviour with his father when he was aloof, shows only his disobedience to his father, rather than clear disbelief. Therefore, it was possible to think about him that he would be of the saved ones, because he was one of his sons and ap-parently was not a disbeliever; so he would be included in the divine promise of safety.

On the other side, Allãh had revealed to Nūḥ (a.s.) his decreed order about the people, as He says: *And it was revealed to Nūḥ: That none of your people will believe except those who have already be-lieved, therefore do not grieve at what they do; and make the ark before Our eyes and* (according to) *Our revelation, and do not speak to Me in respect of*

those who are unjust; surely they shall be drowned (11:36-37). Does the clause: *those who are unjust* refer to those who disbe-lieved in his Call? Does it include every type of injustice? Or is it vague and ambiguous and needs explanation from the Speaker?

It appears that these were the factors, which put Nūḥ (a.s.) in doubt about his son. Otherwise, he was not among those who would be oblivious of the position of his Lord; and he was one of the five *Ulu 'l-'Azm* messengers who are chiefs of the prophets; he was not the one to forget the divine revelation: "do not speak to Me in respect of those who are unjust; surely they shall be drowned"; nor was he to be pleased with the safety of his son even if he was a disbeliever while he (a.s.) had said clearly in his prayer against his people: . . . *"My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers"* (71:26). If he were to agree to it for his son, he would have agreed to it for his wife too.

That is why he did not dare to beseech Allāh in clear terms; rather he put it forth like an enquiry, because he did not encompass all the factors that were there around his son. Therefore, he began by calling Allāh with name of Lord, as it is the prayer-key of the needy beseecher. Then he said: *"surely my son is of my family"*. He wanted to say that it decides in favour of the safety of my son: *"and Thou art the justest of the judges"*; there is no mistake in Thy command and no ambiguity in Thy order; so I do not know what is to be the end result of his affair.

Thus, Nūḥ (a.s.) spoke with parental sentiment, as the word "cried out" indicates; yet he only mentioned the divine promise and did not add anything to it nor did he put forth any request.

Then the divine protection caught him up and cut short his speech. And Allāh explained to him the true meaning of "your own family" in the promise, that it referred to only the doers of good from among his family, and this son was not good-doer, and Allāh had earlier admon-ished him saying: *and do not speak to Me in respect of those who are unjust; surely they shall be drowned*. Nūḥ (a.s.) had taken the apparent meaning of "family" and thought that the exception was of his unbe-liever wife only. Allāh then stopped him from asking that of which he had no knowledge, i.e., the request of his son's safety – as it appeared that he was about to ask for it.

Now, he refrained from asking because of that divine interven-tion, and started a new talk that appears in the form of repentance but actually it is thank giving for bestowing on him this manner, which is certainly a favour. So he said: *"My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from asking Thee that*

of which I have no knowledge." Thus he saught refuge in his Lord from what he was on verge of speaking, i.e., the prayer for safety of his son when he did not know the reality of his condition.

The proof that till then he had not prayed any such thing, may be found in his words: "*I seek refuge in Thee from asking"*. It should be noted that he had not said: I seek refuge in Thee from the question of what I had no knowledge of; as the *maṣdar* used as the first member of a genitive construction proves that the deed has already been done.

"ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge": Had he already asked for it, the prayer should have been rebutted by clear rejection, or by such admonition as: "Do not do like it again"; as we find similar modes in the Divine Book; for example: . . . *he said: "My Lord! Show me* (Thyself)*, so that I may look upon Thee." He said: "You can never see Me, . . ."* (7:143). *When you received it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, . . . Allãh admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again . . .* (24:15-17).

Another prayer of Nūḥ (a.s.) was the one quoted by Allãh in these words: *"My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and he who enters my house believing, and the believing men and the believing women; and do not increase the unjust in aught but destruction."* (71:28). Allãh quotes this prayer of his after many verses describing his com-plaint in which he explains to his Lord his endeavours in calling his people day and night for nearly a thousand years of his life, what he endured of their hardships and what he suffered of the tribulations in the cause of Allãh; he spent himself to the utmost limit and sacrificed himself in the way of their guidance, but his call to them did not cause them except fleeing, and his admonitions to them did not increase in them except arrogance.

He continued spreading among them his admonition and good sermons, and making them hear the truth and the reality; in the mean time, he was complaining to his Lord of their enmity and persistence with which they confronted him, and of their deception and trickery with which they opposed him. This continued until his feelings of sorrow were excited and the divine rage overwhelmed him, and he prayed against them, saying: *"My Lord! Leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers; for surely if Thou leave them they will lead astray Thy servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful."* (71:26-27)

What he says about their leading astray the servants of Allãh if He left them in the land, is what he had said in the preceding verse: *And*

indeed they have led astray many. They had already led astray many believers; so he was afraid that they would mislead the remaining ones. The words: *and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful*, declare that their loins and wombs have lost the ability to beget any believer. He described this news of the unseen through prophetic fore-sight and divine revelation.

When he cursed the disbelievers because of the divine rage which he felt, and he was the noble prophet, the first to bring a book and a *sharī'ah*, and he had stood up to rescue the world from inundation of idolatry, but did not respond to him from the human society save a few – about eighty persons, according to traditions – thus it was a manner of this situation that he should not forget those who believed in his Lord and should pray for them of good upto the Day of Resurrection.

So he said: *"My Lord! Forgive me"*: He began with his own self, because the talk was of seeking forgiveness for those who tread on His path, so he is in the forefront of them and is their Leader. *"and my parents"*: This is the proof that they were believers. *"and him who enters my house believing"*: They were those of his contemporaries who had believed in him. *"and the believing men and the believing women"*: It refers to all believers, the people of monotheism, because all of them were his people, and were obliged to him upto the Day of Resurrection; he was the first who raised the call of religion in the world with the book and the *sharī'ah*, and kept the standard of mono-theism aloft among the people. That is why Allãh has greeted him with his best greeting when He says: *Peace be upon Nūḥ among the nations* (37:79). So peace and greetings be on him, the noble prophet, whenever believed in Allãh any believer or performed any good deed for Him, and whenever any name was mentioned for Allãh, honoured be His name! and whenever there was any trace of good and felicity among the people; because all this is from the blessings of his call and the appendant of his rising. May Allãh bless him and all the prophets and messengers together!

IBRĀHĪM: Another example was shown by Ibrāhīm (a.s.) as quoted by Allãh describing his argumentation with his community: *He said: "Have you then considered what you have been worshipping, you and your ancient sires? Surely they are enemies to me, but not* (so) *the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, then He has shown me the way, and He Who gives me to eat and gives me to drink, and when I am sick, then He restores me to health, and He Who will cause me to die, then give me life,*

and Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the Day of Judgement. My Lord! Grant me wisdom, and join me with the good, and ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity, and make me of the heirs of the garden of bliss, and forgive my father, for surely he is of those who have gone astray, and disgrace me not on the day when they are raised." (26:75-87)

It was an invocation, which he (a.s.) began by praying for him-self and for his father because of a promise that he had given him. It was in the beginning of his mission when he had not lost the hope that his father would become a believer; but when it became clear that he was an enemy of Allãh, he washed his hand of him.

He began this prayer with praising his Lord beautifully, as the manner of servitude demands. This is the first detailed praise that Allãh has quoted from him (a.s.). What has been quoted before is not of this kind, like his words: "*O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up* (with Allãh). *Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, . . .* (6:79-80). *" . . . I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me."* (19:47).

Ibrãhīm (a.s.) has used best manner in Allãh's praise, in that he has put forward a comprehensive praise, which describes his Lord's care and attention to him from beginning of his creation until he shall return to Him; and has set himself in the station of total neediness and poverty; and has not mentioned for his Lord except absolute Self-sufficiency and pure magnanimity. He has represented himself as an abased servant, who has no power over anything, and the divine power turns him over from one condition to another; creation, then giving food and drink, then restoration of health, then causing to die, then giving life, then leading to the recompense of the Day of Judgement; while he has nothing except simple obedience and hoping for forgiveness of mistakes.

And look at the manner, which he has maintained in the above speech. He ascribes sickness to himself in the sentence: *"and when I am sick, then He restores me to health"*; he did so because its ascrip-tion to Allãh in this place – and it is the place of praise – would not be free from incongruity. Although sickness is an event, a happening, and as such it is not devoid of its ascription to Allãh; but the talk here is not about its happening (so that it would be ascribed to Allãh), but it aims at declaring that restoration to health after sickness is from His mercy and care. That is why he (a.s.) attributed sickness to himself and restoration of health to his Lord, claiming that nothing proceeds from Him except what is

beautiful.

Then he used the same fine manner in the prayer, which he began with the name: *Lord!* and he confined his request to the real and abiding blessings, without looking at the adornments of this transient world; and selected from within that field what was the biggest and greatest. So, he asked for wisdom [regulation] and it is *sharī'ah*, and for being joined with the good people, then asked that Allãh should ordain for him a goodly mention among posterity. It means that Allãh should send and raise after him time after time some prophets or messengers who will hold up his call and propagate his *sharī'ah*. Actually, it is a request that Allãh should distinguish him with a *sharī'ah* that would abide upto the Day of Resurrection; thereafter he asked for inheritance of the paradise, forgiveness for his father and not to disgrace him on the Day of Resurrection.

Allãh positively answered all his requests, as His speech shows, except his prayer for his father [about which the divine speech is silent]. But far be it from the Lord of the worlds to mention a prayer of one of His honoured servants which would have gone in vain and remained unanswered. Allãh says: . . . *the faith of your father Ibrãhīm;* . . . (22: 78); *And he made it a word to continue in his posterity* . . . (43:28); . . . *and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter, he is most surely among the righteous.* (2:130); and He greeted him with a comprehensive greeting: *Peace be on Ibrãhīm.* (37:109).

Study of history after Ibrãhīm (a.s.) confirms all that the glorious Qur'ãn has mentioned of his commendable acts and praised him for them. He (a.s.) was the noble prephet who stood alone with the religion of monotheism to revive the natural religion and rose for demolition of the pillars of idolatry and breaking of the idols; and this was at a time when the signs of monotheism were obliterated, and the passage of time had effaced the sketches of prophethood; the world had forgotten the names of Nūḥ and other honoured prophets. So, he made the natural religion stand up, and spread the religion of monotheism among the people. The monotheistic religion uptil now – and about four thousand years have gone by since his time – is enduring in his progeny. What the world knows of the religion of monotheism is the religion of the Jews and their prophet is Mūsã, and the religion of the Christians and their prophet is 'Īsã, and they both were from the progeny of Isrã'īl Ya'qūb, son of Isḥãq, son of Ibrãhīm (peace be upon them); and the religion of Islam which was brought by Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and he was from the progeny of Ismã'īl

son of Ibrãhīm (peace be upon both).

And among his prayer mentioned by Allãh is his speech: *"My Lord! Grant me of the doers of good deeds."* (37:100). He asks Allãh for a good offspring; in this affair he adheres to his Lord, and regular-izes his request (which is in a way of this world's benefit) by attaching to it the attribute of good-doing, in order that it turns towards Allãh and His pleasure.

Also, among his beseechings was what he prayed when he arrived at the land of Mecca and had settled Ismã'īl and his mother therein. Allãh says: *And when Ibrãhīm said: "My Lord! Make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allãh and the Last Day." He said: "And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the Fire; and it is an evil destination."* (2:126).

He asks his Lord to make the land of Mecca – and at that time it was a desolate tract, a valley without any agriculture – a sanctuary for himself, in order to preserve through it the religion, and it may be a sort of earthly and bodily connection between the people and their Lord, to which they would proceed for worshipping their Lord, and turn towards it in their rituals; and would maintain its sanctity among themselves. So it would be an enduring sign of Allãh on the earth, whoever remem-bers it will remember Allãh, whoever proceeds to it, will proceed to Him; with it direction will be pinpointed, and the word united.

The proof that he (a.s.) intends with "security", a legislative security (which is the meaning of making it a secure town), and not the physical peace and safety from the battles, wars and many other events which disturb the peace and order, and destroy the people's well-being, may be found in the divine words: . . . *What! Have We not settled them in a safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind are drawn?* . . . (28:57). In this verse, Allãh shows His great favour to them that He has made the sacred territory a place of safety for them; it is a place which Allãh has attached to Himself; and it is described as a safe place because the people pay respect to it, not because of any creative factor which would protect it from disturbance and murder. The verse was revealed and before that Mecca had witnessed annihilative wars be-tween the Quraysh and the Jurhum; and likewise it had seen innu-merable murders, tyranny and depravity. The same is the connotation of the divine word: *Do they not see that We have made a sacred territory secure, while men are carried off by force from around them?* . . . (29:67). That is, these people are not

carried off from this sacred territory as the people respect it because of the sanctity We gave to it.

In short, his (a.s.) aim was that there should be for Allāh a sanctuary in the land, which his offspring were to settle in; and this could not be achieved except by building a town which the people would pro-ceed to from every direction; so it would be a religious gathering place where they would arrive for settlement, refuge and pilgrimage upto the Day of Resurrection. That is why he prayed that Allāh should make it a secure town; and it was without any greenery, so he prayed that Allāh should give them sustenance from the fruits, in order that it should become inhabited by its residents and they should not go away from it.

Then, when he felt that his prayer for such honour includes believers and unbelievers both, he attached to it the proviso of belief in Allāh and the hereafter, and said: *"... such of them as believe in Allāh and the Last Day."* As for that: how will it be possible in a town inhabited by believers and unbelievers together, and they are at vari-ance; or if it is inhabited by unbelievers only; or how will they be sustained with fruits while the land is plain and uncultivated, such questions did not occur to his mind.

In fact, it was a good manner of Ibrāhīm (a.s.) in his position of a beseecher. It would be a waste of word for a beseecher to teach his Lord as to how his request be fulfilled; or, what is the way to comply with his request; while He is the Lord, All-Knowing, Wise, All-Powerful; His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, 'Be', so it is.

However, Allāh wanted to fulfil his need according to the usual system of normal causality, and in this there is no differentiation between a believer and an unbeliever. Therefore, Allāh completed his prayer by adding a restriction in His speech: *"And whoever disbe-lieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the Fire; and it is an evil destination."*

This prayer which led to the legislation of the divine sanctuary; also the construction of the holy Ka'bah, which was the first house appointed for men, the one at Bakkah, blessed and a guidance for the nations, was one of the fruits of his holy sublime endeavour, with which he has put all the Muslims under his obligation upto the Day of Resurrection.

Another of his invocations was the one he prayed in the later part of his life and which Allāh describes in the following words: *And when Ibrāhīm said: "My Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons*

from worshipping idols: My Lord! Surely they have led many people astray; then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and who-ever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful: O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley devoid of agri-culture, near Thy Sacred House, our Lord! That they may keep up prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful: O our Lord! Surely Thou knowest what we hide and what we make public, and nothing in the earth nor anything in heaven is hidden from Allãh; Praise be to Allãh, Who has given me in old age Ismã'īl and Isḥãq; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer; My Lord! Make me keep up prayer and from my offspring (too)*, O our Lord! Grant me forgive-ness and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!"* (14:35-41).

This he had prayed in his later days when the town of Mecca was already built. See for proof, his words: *"Praise be to Allãh, Who has given me in old age Ismã'īl and Isḥãq"*; and the word: *"make this city secure"*. (Note that he did not say as before: *"make it a secure town"* – 2:126)

His decency is noticed by his adhering to the Divinity through-out his prayers. Whenever he asks for something as reserved to his own self, he says: "My Lord!" and whenever he mentions a thing which he shares with others, he says: "Our Lord!"

Another etiquette is reflected in these prayers, in that whenever he asks for something which could be used for lawful as well as un-lawful purpose, he clearly mentions his correct and lawful purpose; this gives rise to the divine mercy, as is very clear. When he said: *"save me and my sons . . ."*, he followed it by saying: "*Surely they have led many people astray"*; and when he said: *"O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring . . .,"* he said: "*our Lord! That they may keep up prayer"*; and when he prayed: *". . . make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits;* he ended it with the hope: *haply they may be grateful."*

Also, it was an example of his manner that he mentioned, at the end of every need, an appropriate good name of Allãh, like: the Forgiving, the Merciful, the Hearer of prayer; and repeated the name: 'Lord', whenever he mentioned any of his needs, because the Lordship is the rope which links the servant and the Lord, and it is the key of the door of every prayer.

His manner is also seen in his speech: *"and whoever disobeys me,*

Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful", inasmuch as he did not curse them with any untoward thing; rather he mentioned when speaking about them two of the divine names which are the means of conveying happiness to every man, i.e. Forgiving, Merciful, in his desire for rescuing his people and spreading the magnanimity of his Lord.

IBRÃHĪM & ISMÃ'ĪL: Another example is found in what Allãh has quoted from him and his son Ismã'īl – and they had jointly said it: *And when Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl raised the foundations of the House: "Our Lord! Accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing; Our Lord! And make us both submissive to Thee and* (raise) *from our offspring a nation submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us* (mercifully)*, surely Thou art the Oft-returning* (to mercy)*, the Merciful. Our Lord! And raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy signs and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."* (2:127-129)

It was their prayer when they were building the Ka'bah, and this too, like the preceding prayers, contains beautiful manners.

Similar manners are seen in Ismã'īl (a.s.)'s talk during the story of the slaughter, which Allãh describes as follows: *So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance. And when he attained to working with him, he said: "O my son! Surely I see in dream that I am sacrificing you; consider then what you see." He said: "O my father! Do what you are commanded; if Allãh please, you will find me of the patient ones."* (37:101-102)

At the beginning of this talk, shows Ismã'īl (a.s.)'s manner with his father, but later parts show his attitude between him and his Lord. Moreover, showing respect to a messenger like Ibrãhīm, 'The Friend of Allãh" (a.s.), is showing respect to Allãh Himself, the Sublime.

In short, when his father told him of what he had seen in the dream (and it was a divine command as is proved by Ismã'īl's words: *"do what your are commanded"*), he ordered him to consider what was his opinion. This was his (a.s.)'s manner with his son. Ismã'īl said to him: *"O my father! Do what you are commanded; if Allãh please, you will find me of the patient ones."* He did not say that it was his opinion, in order to show his humility *vis-à-vis* his father, as though he has no opinion of his own in presence of his father's. That is why he began the talk addressing him with the attribute of fatherhood; he did not say. Do it if you want it; he

did so to please his father; and he said during it that it was a divine command given to Ibrãhīm, and it is un-imaginable for the one like him to hesitate or think twice about such a command without complying with it.

Also, his words: *"if Allãh please, you will find me of the patient ones."* is another endeavour to please his father. All this shows his good manners with his father.

And with his Lord he showed his manners, when he did not present his opinion or decision in a definite way; rather he attached it to the pleasure of Allãh; it is because definitely expressing a view without attaching it to the pleasure of Allãh indicates a claim of inde-pendent causality, and far removed from it is the arena of prophet-hood. And Allãh has condemned a group who decided an affair with-out attaching it to the pleasure of Allãh, as He has said in the story of the owners of the garden: *Surely We tried them as We had tried the owners of the garden, when they swore that they would certainly cut off the produce in the morning, and they did not say, God willing* (68: 17-18). Also, Allãh had taught His prophet (s.a.w.a.) in His Book to say: 'God willing', with an amazing allusion, when He said: *And do not say of anything: 'Surely I will do it tomorrow,' unless Allãh pleases; . . .* (18:23-24)

YA'QŪB: Another example of this manner is seen in the narrative given by Allãh of Ya'qūb's expression when his sons had returned from Egypt leaving there Benjamin and Yahuda. Allãh says: *And he turned away from them, and said: "O my sorrow for Yūsuf!" And his eyes became white on account of grief, and he was a represser* (of grief). *They said: "By Allãh! You will not cease to remember Yūsuf until you are a prey to constant disease or* (until) *you are of those who perish." He said: "I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allãh, and I know from Allãh what you do not know."* (12:84-86)

He says to his sons that my constant remembering of Yūsuf means that I complain my wretched condition to Allãh; and I have not despaired of the mercy of my Lord that He will return him to me un-expectedly; he said it because it is a manner of the prophets *vis-à-vis* their Lord that they turn to Him in all their conditions, and direct all their movements and their stillness into His way, for Allãh has clearly said that He has guided them to it on a straight path. He says: *These are they whom Allãh guided, . . .* (6:90); and He says especially about Ya'qūb: *And We gave to him* (Ibrãhīm) *Isḥãq and Ya'qūb; each did we guide, . . .* (6:84). Then He

has said that following desire is going astray from the way of Allāh: *. . . and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the way of Allāh; . . .* (38:26).

Thus, the prophets – who are rightly guided by the guidance of Allāh – do not follow desire at all. Their psychological feelings and inner inclinations – desire or anger, love or hate, happiness or sorrow for what is related to appearances of life, such as wealth, sons, marri-age, food, dress, abode and so on – all this occurs in the way of Allāh; they do not intend from these except Allāh, Great is His Majesty! There are two ways, which are trodden, a way in which truth is followed, and another in which desire is followed. Or you may say: The way of Allāh's remembrance, and the way of forgetting Him.

As the prophets (peace be upon them) were guided to Allāh and did not follow desire, they constantly remembrered Allāh, they did not intend with movement or stillness other than Allāh, the High; nor did they knock for any need of their life any door of any cause other than His door. We mean to say that when they attached themselves to a cause, it did not make them forget their Lord, nor were they oblivious of the fact that all affairs are in His hand. It does not mean that they absolutely rebut the cause in such a way that it loses its existence in mind also, because this cannot be done. Nor is it that they look at the things and remove from them their attribute of causality, because it would cause going against the human nature. Rather it means that man does not see any independence in anything other than Allāh, and puts everything in its place where Allāh has placed it.

When the condition of the prophets was as we have described above that they totally adhere to Him, then this divine manner enabled them to watch the position of their Lord and properly attach them-selves to His divinity; thus they aim at nothing except Allāh, and do not leave anything except for pleasure of Allāh; they do not adhere with any cause without adhering with their Lord before it and with it and after it; so He is their destination in all conditions.

Ya‘qūb (a.s.)'s speech: *"I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allāh"*, aims at explaining that 'my constantly remembring Yūsuf and my sorrow for him is not like you people that when one of you is inflicted by a misfortune and loses one of the favours of Allāh, he begins talking about it before someone who owns neither benefit nor harm, all this because of his ignorance; rather I address my complaint to Allāh because of the grief I feel for disappearance of Yūsuf; and it is not a request from

me for something which is not to be, for *I know from Allãh what you do not know*.'

YŪSUF: Another example is that which Allãh quotes Yūsuf, The Truth-ful, as saying when the wife of ʻAzīz threatened him with imprison-ment if he did not do what she was telling him to do: *He said: "My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me; and if Thou turn not away their device from me, I will yearn towards them and become* (one) *of the ignorant."* (12:33).

He (a.s.) describes to his Lord that he now has only two alter-natives in facing these women, prison or accepting what they were asking him to do; and he because of his knowledge which Allãh has honoured him with – and it is mentioned in the divine words: *And when he had attained maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge; . . .* (12:22) – chooses prison in preference to accepting their demand; but the causes are pressing in favour of their desire and are threatening him to ignore the position of his Lord and nullify the knowledge he has got from Allãh; and there is no decision in all this except for Allãh; as he said to his fellow-prisoner: *". . . judgement is only Allãh's; . . ."* (12:40). That is why he (a.s.) maintained good manners and did not mention any need of himself, because that is a sort of judgement. He rather alluded to the threat of ignorance by nullification of the favour of knowledge with which his Lord had honoured him. He (a.s.), also mentioned that his safety from the danger of ignorance and repulsion of their devices depended on its averting by Allãh; thus he surrendered the whole affair to Allãh and became silent.

Then his Lord accepted his [unspoken] prayer, and removed their device from him – and it was either sensual passion or prison, and Allãh protected him from both. It is understood from it that their device refers to the desire and the prison together. As for his word: *"My Lord! The prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me;"* it shows his inclination in case the matter remained suspended between the two; it is an allusion to his hate and hatred of indecency; it was not a prayer for imprisonment, as [Imãm Ḥusayn, a.s.] had said:

Death is better than boarding a disgrace,
And disgrace is better than entering the Fire.

It was not as some people think that Yūsuf (a.s.) had prayed for imprisonment, so it was decided accordingly. The proof of what we have said is found in the following divine words: *Then it occurred to them*

after they had seen the signs that they should imprison him till a time (12:35). This verse clearly says that his imprisonment happened because of an opinion which occurred to them afterwards, and Allāh had already averted from him their device i.e., their temptation to themselves and the threat of imprisonment.

One more example of Yūsuf (a.s.)'s manner is seen in his praise of, and prayer from, Allāh, as He says: *Then when they came in to Yūsuf, he took his parents to lodge with him and said: "Enter safe into Egypt, if Allāh please." And he raised his parents upon the throne and they fell down in prostration before him, and he said: "O my father! This is the interpretation of my vision of old; my Lord has indeed made it to be true; and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me forth from the prison and brought you from the desert after that the Satan had sown dissensions between me and my brothers, surely my Lord is benignant to whom He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise. My Lord! Thou hast given me of the kingdom and taught me of the interpretation of sayings: Originator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my guardian in this world and the hereafter, make me die a Muslim and join me with the good."* (12:99-101).

A scholar should contemplate on the prophetic manner appearing from these verses. Just imagine the kingdom and absolute authority which Yūsuf was enjoying and how eagerly his parents yearned to visit him, and how much humility his brothers felt towards him, and all of the parties fully remembered his life history since they had lost him till they found him while he was the overlord of Egypt, settled on the throne of power and authority.

And then see that he never opened his month for a talk but there was a part of it, or the full talk, reserved for his Lord, except the open-ing clause when he told them to: *"Enter safe into Egypt, if Allāh please."* So he asked them to enter and declared their safety, but at once attached it to the pleasure of Allāh, lest somebody think that he was independent in this judgement, besides Allāh; while it was he who had earlier said: *"judgement is only Allāh's"*.

Then he began praising his Lord for all that had passed on him since he had separated from them until he was gathered together with them. He started with the story of his vision and realization of its inter-pretation; and he affirmed in it the truthfulness of his father, not in his interpretation only, but even in what he had mentioned in the end of his talk regarding Allāh's knowledge and wisdom, penetrating deeply in the

praise of his Lord, as his father had told him [in the beginning]. *And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings and . . . surely your Lord is Knowing, Wise.* (12:6), and Yūsuf now tells his father: *"O my father! This is the interpretation of my vision of old; . . . surely my Lord is benignant to whom He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise."* (12:100)

Then he pointed briefly to what had passed over him between his vision and appearance of its interpretation, and ascribed it to his Lord describing it as good – and it was beneficence from Allãh. It was a very fine manner that he indicated to all that he suffered from his brothers from the time they threw him in the pit till they sold him for a very low price of a few dirhams and accused him of theft, in a short sentence: *the Satan had sown dissensions between me and my brothers* [12:100]. And he continued mentioning the bounties of his Lord and praising Him, saying: "My Lord! My Lord!" until he was over-whelmed by the love and overcome by the divine attraction, and he became totally occupied with his Lord and left them as if he did not recognize them; and said: *"My Lord! Thou has given me of the king-dom and taught me of the interpretation of sayings."* In this way, he praised his Lord for His bounties, which were with him, i.e., kingdom and knowledge of the interpretation of sayings. Then his noble self moved from the remembrance of the bounties to the fact that his Lord who bestowed on him what He bestowed did it all because He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth who has brought forth all things from total non-existence to existence, without their being any novelty for anything on its own with which it could possess any harm or benefit, felicity or infelicity or any ability to manage any affair of itself in this world or in the hereafter.

And because He is the Originator of everything, He is the Guardian of everything. That is why he (a.s.) said after the clause: *"Originator of the heavens and the earth!"* that he is a humble servant, he does not own management of his self in the world or in the here-after; rather he is under the guardianship and control of Allãh, Who chooses for him of the good what He pleases and places him in any position He wishes. So he said: *"Thou art my guardian in this world and the hereafter,"* at this juncture he mentioned what he needed from his Lord, i.e., he should go from this world to the hereafter while he is in the state of submission to his Lord to the extent that Allãh had bestowed it on his fathers, Ibrãhīm, Ismã'īl, Isḥãq and Ya'qūb. Allãh says: . . . *and most certainly We chose him in*

this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. When his Lord said to him: "Submit (yourself)*," he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds." And the same did Ibrãhīm enjoin on his sons and so* (did) *Ya'qūb. "O my sons! Surely Allãh has chosen for you* (this) *faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims."* (2:130-2).

To this refers Yūsuf (a.s.) in his prayer: . . . *make me die a Muslim and join me with the good* (12:101). He prays for death on Islam and then to be joined with good servants. It was the same, which his great-grandfather Ibrãhīm (a.s.) had asked for when he said: *"My Lord! Grant me wisdom, and join me with the good."* (26:83). So, it was positively answered as seen in the previously mentioned verses. And on this note Allãh has ended his story; *and most surely to your Lord is the destination* [53:42]. This is an extremely delicate grace of the Qur'ãnic contexts.

MŪSÃ: Among the prophetic manners is what Allãh describes about His prophet Mūsã (a.s.) during his early days in Egypt, when he struck a Coptic and killed him. *He said: "My Lord! Surely I have done harm to myself, so do forgive me." So He forgave him; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.* (28:16).

Another example is his prayer when he fled from Egypt, reached Madyan and watered the sheep of the daughters of Shu'ayb and retired to the shade: Then he said: *"My Lord! Surely I stand in need of what-ever good Thou mayest send down to me."* (28:24).

Mūsã (a.s.) in both his prayers has observed the manner, after taking refuge with Allãh and adherence to His divinity, in that he, in the first prayer, clearly mentioned what he needed, because it was con-cerned with forgiveness, and Allãh loves to be asked for forgiveness, as He has said: . . . *and ask the forgiveness of Allãh; surely Allãh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (2:199); and it was the factor to which Nūḥ and the prophets coming after him had been calling the people. But he did not pinpoint his need in the second prayer by which, as the context apparently shows, he wanted to fulfil his needs of life like food, accom-modation, for example; he showed his neediness and then was silent; after all what respect has got this world in the eyes of Allãh?

You should know that Mūsã's words: *"My Lord! Surely I have done injustice to myself, so do Thou forgive me"*, runs in confessing to have committed injustice and asking for forgiveness, parallel to the prayer of Adam and his wife, when they said: *"Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on*

us, we shall certainly be of the losers." (7:23). The injustice here means injustice against his own self, because he had done a deed that was against the welfare of his life, in the same way as it was in case of Adam and his wife.

Certainly, Mūsã (a.s.) did what he did before Allãh had sent him with His *sharī'ah* which forbade slaying a man; moreover, he had slain only an unbeliever whose life was not respectable; and there is no proof that such a killing was forbidden before his *sharī'ah*. And the same was the situation regarding the disobedience of Adam and his wife; they had indeed done harm to their own selves by eating from the tree, before Allãh had laid down any *sharī'ah* for human beings – Allãh had established *sharī'ah* – whatever it might be – after they had come down from the garden to the earth.

Mere prohibition of going near the tree does not prove that it was an authoritative order whose disobedience entails sin (in terms of *fiqh*); rather there are associations to show that the prohibition was of advisory nature, as appears from the verses of the chapter "Ṭã Hã", and we have explained in the explanation of the story of Adam's garden, in the first volume of the book.

As for Mūsã (a.s.), the Divine Book clearly says that he was a purified servant; and that Iblīs cannot seduce the purified servants of Allãh, the High; and it is evidently known that sin cannot occur with-out misleading of Iblīs. Allãh says: *And mention Mūsã in the Book; surely he was one purified, and he was a messenger, a prophet*. (19:51); *He said: "Then by Thy might I will surely seduce them all, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones."* (38:82-83).

It appears from the above that the forgiveness, for which he had prayed, like the prayer of Adam and his wife, does not mean wiping off the chastisement which Allãh writes for the sinners – as is the case with disobedience of authoritative commands; rather it means erasure of evil consequences which come in the wake of doing harm to one-self in the course of life. In fact, Mūsã (a.s.) was afraid lest his affair be known to them and they recognize what they would consider as his sin. So, he asked his Lord that He should cover for him and forgive him; and "forgiveness" in the Qur'ãnic language is more general than wiping off the chastisement, it is rather wiping off the evil conse-quences whatever they might be. And there is no doubt that the authority of this all is in the hand of Allãh.

In a way, similar to it is the earlier-mentioned prayer of Nūḥ (a.s.):

". . . and if Thou shouldst not forgive me and have mercy on me, I should be of the losers." (11:47), i.e. if Thou didst not teach me Thy manners, and didst not protect me by Thy protection and safety, and didst not have mercy on me in this way, I should be of the losers. Understand it.

Another example is Mūsã (a.s.)'s prayer when revelation was sent to him for the first time and he was given the message to convey to his people as Allãh has quoted: *He said: "O my Lord! Expand my breast for me; and make my affair easy for me; and loose the knot from my tongue;* (that) *they may understand my word; and give to me an aider from my family; Hãrūn, my brother; strengthen my back by him; and associate him* (with me) *in my affair; so that we should glorify Thee much; and remember Thee oft; surely, Thou art seeing us."* (20:25-35).

He seriously thinks over the religious mission of which he has been given responsibility, and says to his Lord – as is inferred from the words with help of the context – "that surely Thou art seeing my and my brother's condition; that we, since our early life, love Thy glorification; tonight Thou hast burdened me with the load of messen-gership, and I feel that I am hot-tempered and that there is knot in my tongue – the factors which Thou knowest better; and I fear that they would accuse me of falsehood if I called them to Thee and conveyed Thy message to them; then I shall be angry and my tongue will not work; therefore *expand my breast for me and make my affairs easy for me*." This is the removal of harm which Allãh mentions in His speech: *There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allãh has ordained for him;* (such has been) *the course of Allãh with respect of those who have gone before; . . .* (33:38); *"and loose the knot from my tongue* (that) *they may understand my word*; and my brother Hãrūn's tongue is more eloquent than mine, and he is *from my family*, so associate him with me in this affair and make him my helper, *so that we should glorify Thee much*, as we loved to do so, and should *remember Thee often* before the gatherings of the people helping each other." This is the gist of what he (a.s.) asked his Lord for, from among the equip-ments of the mission and conveying. The manner which he has used here is that he clearly mentioned the aim and objective of his askings, lest it might be thought that he was asking all this for his own self; so he said: *"so that we should glorify Thee much, and remember Thee oft."* And he offered in proof of his claim's truth, the knowledge of Allãh Himself, by throwing their selves before Him and submitting themselves to Him; so he said: *"surely, Thou art seeing us."* And when the needy beseecher throws himself in his need before the wealthy and

magnanimous beseeched one, it becomes the mightiest factor in inciting the feeling of mercy, because it displays the need more clearly than its verbal description could do – after all, it is not impossible for the tongue to tell lie.

Another example is when Mūsã (a.s.) prayed against Pharaoh and his chiefs, as he said: *And Mūsã said: "Our Lord! Surely Thou hast given to Pharaoh and his chiefs finery and riches in this world's life, to this end, our Lord, that they lead* (people) *astray from Thy way: Our Lord! Destroy their riches and harden their hearts so that they believe not until they see the painful punishment." He said: "The prayer of you both has indeed been accepted, therefore continue in the right way and do not follow the path of those who do not know."* (10:88-89).

The prayer was jointly of Mūsã and Hãrūn; that is why it began with the word: *"Our Lord!"* and it is proved by the next verse, He said: *"The prayer of you both has indeed been accepted."* They first cursed their riches that it should be destroyed; then they invoked Allãh against them that He should harden their hearts so that they would not believe until they saw the painful chastisement, in order that their faith would not be accepted, as Allãh says: *On the day when some of the signs of your Lord shall come, its faith shall not profit a soul which did not believe before, or earn good through its faith. . . .* (6:158).

That is, take revenge from them by forbidding the faith to them through suddenly inflicting punishment on them as they had deprived Thy servants of it by leading them astray. This was the hardest possible curse, which could be inflicted on anyone, because it is the curse for ever-lasting infelicity, and nothing is more evil than that for a man.

Curse, or prayer for evil, is different from prayer for good, because the divine mercy is ahead of His wrath; Allãh had revealed to Mūsã (a.s.): *"*(As for) *My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; . . ."* (7:156). Thus, the all-encompassiveness of the divine mercy dislikes inflicting harm or loss to any of His servants even if he is unjust. Its proof is seen in the divine bounties on them, in His covering them with His magnanimity; and in His ordering His servants for forbearance, and in His patience on their ignorance and stupidity – except in establishing an important right or in emergency in inequity when they are fully aware that a necessary underlying reason, like that of religion or people of religion demands it.

Apart from that, the more delicate and subtle the aspects of good and bliss; the more adhering it would be to the souls, by the nature on which

Allāh has created people – contrary to the aspects of evil and infelicity; because man by his nature flees from knowing it, and tries not to pay attention to its root, let alone its particulars. This factor causes difference in manner between the two types of prayers, i.e. of good and of evil.

Thus, it is among the manners of prayer for evil that affairs leading to that prayer should be mentioned obliquely, and particularly about the ugly and detestable matters, contrary to the prayer for the good, because clearly mentioning such prayer factors is desirable. Mūsā (a.s.) has kept it in mind when he said: *"that they lead* (people) *astray from Thy way,"* and did not give the details of the oppressions being inflicted by the people of Pharaoh.

Among its manners is augmentation of entreaty and supplication; and he (a.s.) did so by saying: *"Our Lord!"* and repeating it several times in such a short prayer.

Another manner is that a man should not pray for evil about someone except when he knows that it is in the interest of truth for religion or its people – without basing it on imagination or accusation. And Mūsā (a.s.) had full knowledge of it, and Allāh has said about Pharaoh: *And truly We showed him Our signs, all of them, but he rejected and refused.* (20:56). Probably, it is for this reason that Allāh ordered Mūsā and his brother when He informed them of the acceptance of their prayer: *"therefore continue in the right way and do not follow the path of those who do not know."* [10:89]. And Allāh knows better.

Another prayer of Mūsā was the one quoted by Allāh in the following verses: *And Mūsā chose out of his people seventy men for Our appointment; so when the earthquake overtook them, he said: "My Lord! If Thou hadst pleased, Thou hadst destroyed them before and myself* (too)*; wilt Thou destroy us for what the fools among us have done? It is not but Thy trial, Thou makest err with it whom Thou pleasest and guidest whom Thou pleasest; Thou art our Guardian, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. And ordain for us good in this world's life and in the hereafter, for surely we turn to Thee."* (7:155-6).

The actual prayer begins with the words: *"therefore forgive us"*; however it was an extremely hard situation, as they were inflicted by divine wrath and violant attack which nothing can stand against; and asking for forgiveness and mercy from an angry master whose master-ship has been debased and insulted, is not like asking for it from a master who is in normal condition. That is why Mūsā (a.s.) offered before that

what would calm down the flare up of the divine wrath, in order that he could then proceed to the asking for forgiveness and mercy.

Thus he said: *"My Lord! If Thou hadst pleased, Thou hadst destroyed them before and myself* (too)*."* He wants to say, as the con-text shows: 'My Lord! Surely my soul and their souls all together are in Thy hand, and submissive to Thy pleasure; if Thou hast pleased, Thou wouldst have destroyed them and myself too before today, as Thou hast destroyed them and kept me alive today. Now, what shall I say to my people when I shall go back to them and they would accuse me of murdering all of them, and Thou knowest the condition of my people better than I do; this would nullify my mission and all my endeavours would be forfeited.'

Then he (a.s.) counted the destruction of the seventy as the destruction of himself and his people; and mentioned that those were the fools of his community and no importance should be attached to their deeds. Thus, he incited his Lord's mercy, as it was not His custom to destroy a community because of the deeds of some fools among them. It was but an example of the general test and trial which is always prevalent in human beings, and are led astray by it many, and are guided aright by it many, and Thou hast not dealt with them except by forgiveness and covering.

As in Thy hand is the authority of my soul and our souls, Thou canst destroy us whenever Thou pleasest; and this event is not some-thing unique in the way of Thy general trial which results in going astray of one group and being guided aright of another, and all this does not end except at Thy pleasure; therefore Thou art our Guardian, by thine order and pleasure stands management of our affairs, and we have nothing to do with it; so judge Thou about us with forgiveness and mercy; among Thy attributes is that Thou art the best of forgivers; ordain for us in this world a life secure from punishment, and it is the one that is liked by him who is overwhelmed by the divine wrath, and in the life hereafter the good by forgiveness and the garden.

This was the style used by him (a.s.) in his prayer, when had taken up his people the eathquake and covered them the misfortune. See how did he use the beautiful homage of servitude, and sought, through it, his Lord's mercy. He continued beseeching the mercy and calming down with his praises the out-burst of divine wrath until he got the response which he had not mentioned in words, at all, and it was their renaissance after the destruction, and the revelation came to him as Allãh says: *He*

said: "(As for) *My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it for those who guard* (against evil) *and pay the* zakāt*, and those who believe in Our signs."* (7:156). Now, what do you think about Him after He said to Mūsā (a.s.) in answer to his prayer: *and My mercy encompasses all things*?

Allāh mentions that He had clearly forgiven them and accepted the prayer of Mūsā (a.s.) by returning them to life when they had been destroyed; and bringing them back to this world, as He says: *And when you said: "O Mūsā! We will not believe in you until we see Allāh manifestly," so the punishment overtook you while you looked on. Then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks* (2:55-56). The report in the chapter of "Women" [4:153] is nearer to it.

Mūsā (a.s.) had maintained manners in his talk when he said: *"Thou makest err with it whom Thou pleasest"*; he did not mention that it occurred because of evil choice of those who went astray, in order to show verbally God's deanthropomorphism – as he did so in heart; thus it will be like the divine words: *He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it; but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26). He used this style because the place prevented him from paying attention except to the fact of Allāh being the absolute Guardian to Whom only ends every management.

And in all this talk he did not mention the main issue which was in his heart, i.e., the prayer that Allāh should give them back their lives after destroying them, because the situation with all its fright and danger prevented him from elaboration; he merely pointed to it briefly by saying: *"My Lord! If Thou hadst pleased, Thou hadst destroyed them before and myself* (too) . . ."

Also, among his invocations is that which he prayed when he returned to his people from the meeting point and found that they had begun calf-worship after him; and Allāh had informed him of that misdeed, as He says: *And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by the head, dragging him towards him. He said: "Son of my mother! Surely the people reckoned me weak and had well-nigh slain me, therefore make not the enemies to rejoice over me and count me not among the unjust people."* (7:150). Then Mūsā (a.s.) became soft towards him and prayed for him and for himself, so they should be distinguished from the unjust people. *He said: "My Lord! Forgive me and my brother, cause us to enter into Thy mercy, and Thou art the most Merciful of the merciful ones."* (7:151).

Why did he want to be distinguished from the other people, and that Allãh should enter both of them in His mercy? It was only because he knew that the divine wrath was surely to overtake them because of their injustice, as Allãh describes it after the above verse: (As for) *those who took the calf* (for a god), *surely wrath from their Lord and disgrace in this world's life shall overtake them, . . .* (7:52). The preced-ing explanation will show the way of good manners in his talk.

Another of his (a.s.)'s prayers – and it is in effect a curse against his people who had said when he ordered them to enter the holy land: *They said: "O Mūsã! We shall never enter it at all so long as they remain therein; go therefore you and your Lord then fight you both, surely we will here sit down."* (5:24); – is that which Allãh narrates in his words: *He said: "My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors."* (5:25).

He (a.s.) used fine manners when he alluded to his intention of stopping to tell them and to convey to them the commands of their Lord again – after they rejected his first command in such an ugly and rude way – by his saying: *"My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and my brother;"* i.e.: 'no one obeys my orders except I and my brother; these people have rebutted my order in such a way that now there is no hope about them; so now I desist from telling them Thy commands and guiding them to what contains their community's welfare.'

The verb translated here: *"I have no control"*, actually means, 'I do not possess'. But the context shows that here it means 'possession of obedience'. Had it meant creative possession, he (a.s.) would not have attributed it to himself without making it clear that real pos-session belongs to Allãh only, and whatever he owns is only that which Allãh has given into his possession; and when he explained to his Lord his desistance and despair of their positive response to his call, he left the judgement in Allãh's hand and said: *"therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors."*

SHUʿAYB: Of the same style is the curse, which Shuʿayb (a.s.) did against his people, when he said: *"Our Lord! Decide between us and our people with truth; and Thou art the best of deciders."* (7:89).

Thus, he asks for fulfilment of the divine promise after he lost all hope of his call being effective among them; and requests Him to decide between him and them with truth, as Allãh has said: *And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided*

between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly (10:47).

He used the pronoun: *us*, because he joined the believers to himself; and the unbelievers had threatened him and the believers all together when they had said: *"We will most certainly turn you out, O Shu'ayb! And* (also) *those who believe with you, from our town, or you shall come back to our faith."* . . . (7:88). So, he joined them to himself and abandoned his people in their misdeeds, and proceeded with the believers to his Lord, and said: *"Our Lord! Decide between us . . ."*

He adhered in his prayer to the noble divine name: *"the best of the deciders,"* because, as mentioned earlier adherence to the attribute, which agrees with the text of the prayer, is an intense support tanta-mount to adjuration. It is contrary to the talk of Mūsã (a.s.) quoted earlier: *"My Lord! Surely I have no control* (upon any) *but my own self and my brother; therefore make a separation between us and the nation of transgressors;"* because, as we had explained, his (a.s.)'s words were not really a prayer; rather they were an allusion that he would desist from his call and return all the matters to God. So there was no reason for adjuration, contrary to the talk of Shu'ayb.

DÃWŪD & SULAYMÃN: Another example is what Allãh has quoted of the praise of Dãwūd and Sulaymãn (peace be upon them). Allãh says: *And certainly We gave knowledge to Dãwūd and Sulaymãn, and they both said: "Praise be to Allãh, Who has made us to excel many of His believing servants."* (27:15)

The aspects of manner in their praise and thank, and their attribution of their knowledge to Allãh, are clear. They did not say like what is quoted from some others, as Qãrūn said to his people when they admonished him not to show arrogance in the land because of his wealth: *He says: "I have been given this only on account of the knowl-edge I have."* . . . (28:78); or as Allãh describes about some others: *Then when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they exulted in what they had with them of knowledge, and there beset them that which they used to mock* (40:83).

There is no harm in the two prophets' praising Allãh for making them excel many of the believers, because it manifests a particular blessing and describes a fact; it is not something like showing arro-gance against the servants of Allãh, which would invite condemnation. Allãh has mentioned that a group of believers had asked for excellence and has

praised them for their sublime nature and high ambitions, as He says: *And they who say: "O our Lord! . . . and make us leaders for those who are pious."* (25:74).

SULAYMÃN: Another example is what has been reported from Sulaymãn in the story of the ant, as He says: *Until when they came to the valley of the ants, an ant said: "O ants! Enter your abodes,* (so that) *Sulaymãn and his hosts may not crush you while they do not know." So he smiled, wondering at her word, and said: "My Lord! Grant me that I should be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as Thou art pleased with, and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones."* (27:18-19).

The ant by its talk reminded him of his great kingdom which was strengthened by subduing the wind as it flew by his order, and the jinns made for him what he wanted, and the knowledge of the birds' speech, etc. But this kingdom did not come to his (a.s.)'s mind as the brightest wish to which man arrives, as it happens in us; it did not make him forget his servitude and his poverty. It rather came to his mind as a favour that his Lord had bestowed on him. So, he remembered his Lord and His blessings, which He had bestowed especially on him and on his parents. And this remembrance from a servant like him, and in such a condition, was the most excellent of manners *vis-à-vis* his Lord.

He remembered favours of his Lord; although a multitude of favours and blessings were bestowed upon him, yet what he was thinking about at that time and place was the great kingdom and the over-powering authority; and that is why he mentioned good deed and asked his Lord to grant him that he should do good deed; because good deed and good character are desirable from him who sits on the throne of kingdom.

In view of all the above factors, he first asked his Lord to grant him that he should be grateful for His favour; then that he should do good; and he was not content to ask merely for good deed, but added the proviso: *"as thou art pleased with"*; it was because he was a servant who was not concerned with other than his Lord, and he wanted to do good deed only to please his Lord; then he completed the prayer of *tawfīq* for goodness of deed by the prayer for goodness of self, so he said: *"and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones."*

YŪNUS: Another example is in what Allāh has reported from Yūnus (a.s.). He had prayed in these words when he was in the stomach of the fish that had swallowed him. Allāh says: *And Yūnus, when he went away in wrath, so he thought that We would not straiten him, so he called out among afflictions: "There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee; surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss."* (21:87).

Yūnus (a.s.) had asked his Lord, as the Qur'ān narrates, to send chastisement on his people, and Allāh had accepted it; then he informed his people of that. When the divine chastisement reached almost over them, they repented to their Lord, and it was averted from them. When Yūnus saw it, he left his people and went away wandering, until he boarded a boat, and a fish blocked its way. They decided to throw to it one of them, so that it might swallow him and leaves the others alone; for this purpose they cast lot, and Yūnus's name came out. He was thrown into the river and the fish swallowed him. He was constantly glorifying his Lord in its belly until Allāh ordered it to throw him up on the bank of the river. However, it was only a divine disciplining, through which He disciplines His prophets as required by their various situations. Allāh says: *But had it not been that he was of those who glorify* (Us)*, he would certainly have tarried in its belly to the Day when they will be raised* (37:143-4). His turning away from his people and wandering along present the picture of a servant who was not pleased with a certain action of his master, so becoming angry he fled away and left his service and neglected his own responsibilities. Obviously, Allāh did not like this behaviour and disciplined him. He put him in an incapacious prison in which he could not move even about a finger, in utter darkness, and in that darkness he cried out: "*There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee, surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss."* (21:87).

All of this had one aim only: To make him realize, contrary to what his condition showed, that Allāh has the power to catch and hold him wherever He wishes, and to do with him whatever He pleases, there is no escape from Him except to Him. That is why he learned in that condition in the belly of the fish to acknowledge that only Allāh is worthy of worship, there is no other like Him and nothing can escape from His servitude; so he said: *"There is no god but Thou"*. It should be noted that he did not call Allāh by attribute of Lordship; and it is the only prayer from among the prophets' prayers, which has not begun with the name, 'Lord'.

Then he mentioned what had passed on him that he left his people

when Allãh did not destroy them even after sending the punish-ment to them, and he affirmed injustice for himself and glorified Allãh from all that had any shade of injustice and defect, and said: *". . . glory be to Thee, surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss."*

But he did not mention his [actual] need – i.e. reinstatement to his previous position of servitude – counting himself as undeserving to have any right of asking for any favour, because of intense shame and remorse. The proof that he had in mind an unspoken of request is found in the divine word coming after it: *So We responded to him and delivered him from the grief, . . .* (21:88)

And the proof that his request consisted of his reinstatement to his previous position, is found in the verses: *Then We cast him on to the vacant surface of the earth while he was sick; and We caused to grow up for him a gourd-plant; and We sent him to a hundred thou-sand, rather they exceeded; and they believed, so We gave them pro-vision till a time* (37:145-8).

Another example is found in the story of Ayyūb (a.s.) when he said after he became chronically ill and lost all his properties and sons: *And Ayyūb, when he cried to his Lord,* (saying)*: "Harm has afflicted me, and Thou art the most Merciful of the merciful."* (21:83).

The aspects of good manners are evident here as explained in earlier cases. Ayyūb (a.s.) did not clearly mention his need as was seen in the prayers of Adam, Nūḥ, Mūsã, and Yūnus (peace be upon them), thinking himself unworthy of attention and considering his affairs too trivial to be mentioned. The prophets' prayers, as described earlier and as will be seen afterwards, had never mentioned the requirements clearly, when they were related to worldly affairs, although they did not want any such thing because of any base desires.

From another angle: His mentioning the reason which led him to beseech, like affliction of harm, and describing the attribute found in Him Who is asked from, which incites the beseecher to ask, like His being *most Merciful of the merciful*, and remaining silent about the actual need, present the most eloquent allusion that it was not necess-ary to mention the need, because it would suggest that the above factors were not sufficient to induce the mercy of *the most Merciful of the merciful*, rather there was need to describe it in so many words!

Another example is of Zakariyyã (a.s.) as Allãh says: *A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant, Zakariyyã, when he called upon his Lord in a low voice. He said: "My Lord! Surely my bones are*

weakened and my head has flared with hoariness, and, my Lord! I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee; and surely I fear my relatives after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant me from Thyself an heir, who should inherit me and inherit from the progeny of Ya'qūb, and make him, my Lord! One in whom Thou art well-pleased." (19:2-6).

What prompted him to offer this prayer and encouraged him to ask His Lord for a son was what he had observed Maryam, daughter of 'Imrān, in her abstinence and worship, and how Allāh had honoured her with the manners of servitude and distinguished her with sustenance directly from Himself, as Allāh describes in the chapter of "The House of 'Imrān": *. . . and gave her into the charge of Zakariyyā; whenever Zakariyyā entered the sanctuary to* (see) *her, he found with her food. He said: "O Maryam! Whence comes this to you?" She said: "It is from Allāh." Surely Allāh gives sustenance to whom He pleases, with-out measure. There did Zakariyyā pray to his Lord; he said: "My Lord! Grant me from Thee good offspring; surely Thou art the Hearer of the prayer."* (3:37-38)

At that juncture, he was overwhelmed by intense longing for a good and pious offspring who would inherit him and worship his Lord in a way that would please Him, in the same way as Maryam inherited 'Imrān and exerted herself to the utmost in worshipping her Lord, and thus got honour from Him. At the same time, he looked at himself that old age had taken his hold and his strength had gone down, and like-wise his wife was old and weak, and to top all this, she was barren even in her child-bearing age; so he was afflicted with grief of depri-vation of a good and pleasing child which only Allāh could know. Yet he could not control himself and was overwhelmed by divinely zeal and reliance on his Lord; he turned to his Lord and described his con-dition in a way that would incite the divine mercy and affection on his situation that he had remained uninterruptedly adhered to the door of servitude and beseechment since his early age until now that his bones had weakened and his head had flared with hoariness; and he had never been unsuccessful in his prayers; and has found the Lord the Hearer of the prayer; therefore He should hear his prayer and grant him a pleasing heir.

The proof of what we have said that he had asked what he had done, under the influence of intense emotion and sorrow, is seen in his response when Allāh revealed to him that his prayer was granted: *He said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son, and my wife is barren, and I*

myself have reached indeed the extreme degree of old age?" He said: "So shall it be; your Lord says: 'It is easy to me, and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing.'" (19:8-9). It clearly shows that when he heard about granting of his prayer, he recovered from his condition, and began wondering because of the strangeness of the prayer and its acceptance, until he asked his Lord about it in the form of a farfetched proposition and asked for a sign for himself which he was given.

In any case, the manner which he (a.s.) has used in his prayer, was that to which he was led by the feeling and sorrow which had over-powered him. That is why he preceded his prayer by describing his extreme condition in the way of his Lord, for he had spent his life in treading on the way of repentance and beseeching, until he stood at a situation in which every merciful onlooker's heart would melt for him, then he prayed for a son and supported it with the reason that He is the Hearer of the prayer.

This is the meaning of what he said as preamble of his prayer; it was not that he was trying to put his Lord under his obligation by show-ing his extended servitude – far be it from the status of prophethood. Therefore, the meaning of his prayer: *"My Lord! Grant me from Thee good offspring; surely Thou art the Hearer of prayer."* [3:38], is as follows: 'Surely I ask Thee what I have asked, not because there is any importance of my extended servitude and lengthy prayers to Thee; or because it has put Thee under any obligation to me; rather, I asked Thee because Thou art the Hearer of the prayer of Thy servants, and Thou acceptest the call of Thy destitute beseechers; and the fear of my relatives after me has compelled me to put this request before Thee and has strongly exhorted me to ask for a good offspring.'

It has been described earlier that as part of the good manner used in his prayer, he said after this fear of the relatives: *". . . and make him, my Lord! One in whom Thou art well-pleased."* [19:6]. Pleasant-ness, although by nature it denotes being pleasing to its subject, and being unrestricted it contains pleasure of Allãh and pleasure of Zakariyyã, and pleasure of Yaḥyã; but his words: *good offspring* [3:37], show that it denotes his being good and pleasing to Zakariyyã, because an off-spring is good to its progenitor, not to others.

Another example of the good manners is seen from the Christ when he asked for the table, as Allãh quotes him: *'Īsã the son of Maryam said: "O Allãh, our Lord! Send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the*

last of us, and a sign from Thee, and grant us sustenance, and Thou art the best of providers." (5:114).

The story described in the Divine Book about the question of the disciples to ʻĪsā (a.s.) for sending down food from heaven, shows by its context that it was one of the hardest requests for ʻĪsā (a.s.); because their quoted wordings: *"Is your Lord able to send down to us food from heaven?"* [5:112], first, put under question the power of Allāh, and it does not agree with the manner of servitude; even if they intended to ask about the underlying reason, not the power itself, the ugliness of the wording remains in its place.

Second, it contained suggestion of a new sign, although his (a.s.)'s signs were covering them from all sides – his noble personality was a sign in itself; his speaking in the cradle was another sign, and so were his reviving dead body, his creating a bird, his restoring the blind and lepers to health, his giving information of the unseen, as well as his knowledge of the Tawrāt, the Injīl, the Book and the Wisdom were divine signs, which did not leave any room for any doubt and suspi-cion to anyone. In this background, their choosing a sign for themselves and asking for it was manifestly tantamount to playing with divine signs. That was why he admonished them by saying: *"Fear Allāh if you are believers."* [5:112]. But they insisted on it and explained their sugges-tion in these words: *"We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it."* [5:113]. So, they compelled him to ask for it, which he finally did.

ʻĪsā (a.s.) mended by his divinely-gifted manner the demand which they had put forth, and rephrased it in a way that it could be addressed to the arena of divine power and greatness. Firstly, he gave it the title of *ʻīd* which would be reserved for him and his people, because it would be a sign proposed by them and would be unique among the prophets' signs, as all their signs were sent down for com-pleting the proof against them or because the *ummah* needed them, and this sign had neither attribute. Secondly, he summarized what the disciples had elaborated regarding the benefits of its coming down, that their hearts should be at ease, and they might know that he had indeed spoken the truth to them and they might be among the wit-nesses to it; all this was included in a single phrase, and a sign from Thee. Then, thirdly, he mentioned what they had said about eating of it; he described it at the end, although they had mentioned it before all other purposes, and he put another garb on it which was more

appro-priate for the divine audience and said, and grant us means of subsis-tence, then added to it: *"and Thou art the best of providers"*, in order that it would support the suggestion, on one hand, and be a praise for the Sublime Authority on the other hand.

He began his prayer by calling on Allãh with the phrase: "O Allãh, our Lord!" Thus, he added on what is generally found in the prophets' prayers, as they used to say: "My Lord" or "Our Lord"; he did so because the situation was very tough, as explained earlier.

Another example of this manner will be seen in his (a.s.)'s direct talk with his Lord which is quoted in the Qur'ãn: *And when Allãh will say: "O ʿĪsã son of Maryam! Did you say to the people: 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allãh'?" He will say: "Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to* (say)*; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of unseen things. I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: 'That worship Allãh, my Lord and your Lord', and I was a witness of them as long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things. If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."* (5:116-8)

He (a.s.) observed the manner in his speech, first by beginning his speech with declaring His purity from what does not fit with the glory of His arena, following the style of His speech, as He says: *And they say: "The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him."* (21:26)

Second, he took his own self too humble to be imagined that he would say such a thing for himself, so that it would need rebuttal. That is why he did not say in this speech from the beginning to the end, "I did not say it" or "I did not do it." He only refuted it time and again by way of allusion and under cover; and said: *"It did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to* (say)*."* Thus he negated it through negation of its cause; i.e. 'I did not have any such right so that I could utter such an untoward word.' Then he said: *"If I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; . . ."* So, he refuted it through refutation of its concomitant, i.e. 'if I had said it, Thou must surely hadst known it, because Thy knowledge encompasses me and all unseen things.'

Then he will say: *"I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst*

enjoin me with: 'That worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord.'" He refuted it by bringing forth its opposite, and restricting it with "not" and "save". He says: 'I had told them something, but it was the same which Thou hadst enjoined me to say,' i.e., *'worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord;'* then how was it possible that I should say to them, 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allāh.'

Then he will say: *"and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them"*. It is further refutation of the above-mentioned idea; in a way it further completes the above speech: *"I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with."* Its meaning is as follows: 'I did not say to them anything that is attributed to me; what I had told them was only by your order, and it was: *"Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord;"* no other commandment was ever sent to me, and I had no relation with them except witnessing of and watching over them, so long as I was among them; and when Thou didst cause me to die, my connection with them was cut off and Thou wert the watcher over them by Thy everlasting and general witnessing, before Thou didst cause me to die and after that, over them and over every other thing.'

Now, that the talk will reach thus stage, he (a.s.) will decide to repudiate this idea from himself through another reason which would complement the above-mentioned cause, and which would absolutely deny the idea. So, he will say: *"If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise."* He will want to say in this con-text as follows: 'If they had gone astray as Thou hast said, then I am cut off from them and they are cut off from me. Now Thou art to deal with Thy servants alone; *if Thou shouldst chastise them*, *they are Thy servants*; and the Master, the Lord, has the authority to chastise his servants if they disobey him and associate others with him, and they deserve to be punished; *and if Thou shouldst forgive them,* there is no reproof against Thee, because *Thou art the Mighty,* unsubdued, *the Wise*, who does not do any unwise and vain deed, and who always does what is more suitable.'

What we have explained, shows fine aspects of the manners of servitude in his (a.s.)'s speech. Also, ponder on the fact that whenever he uttered a sentence, he mixed it with the finest praise, in the most eloquent description and in the truest tongue.

Another example of the divine manner is seen in the words of His

Prophet (s.a.w.a.) which has been quoted by Allah, and He has joined the believers of his *ummah* in it: *The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and* (so do) *the believers; they all believe in Allãh and His angels and His books and His messen-gers: "We make no difference between any of His messengers;" and they say: "We hear and obey; our Lord! Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)*, and to Thee is the eventual course." Allãh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it is* (the evil of) *what it has wrought: "Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; Our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! Do not impose upon us that which we have no strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us; Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people."* (2:285-6).

As you see, the divine words describe the Prophet's belief in the noble Qur'ãn in all that it contains of fundamental beliefs and divine commandments; then it joins with him (s.a.w.a.) the believers among his *ummah*, not only those who were present near him (s.a.w.a.), but also those were to come later, as is manifest from the context.

It then follows that what the verses contain of acknowledge-ment, praise of prayer, related to some of them would be the narration of the tongue of their condition although possibly their tongues; or the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself could have said it directly talking with his Lord on his own behalf and on behalf of the believers, because they by their faith were the branches of the tree of his blessed soul.

The two verses contain a sort of comparison and equilibrium between the People of the Book and the believers of this *ummah* in the manner of their acceptance of what was revealed to them in the Book of Allãh; or, in other words, with respect to their courteousness of ser-vitude *vis-à-vis* the Book sent to them. Apparently, Allãh has praised these believers in these two verses and has eased their burden exactly in those aspects in which He has admonished the People of the Book and put them to shame in the verses of the chapter "The Cow". He has indeed criticised them because they differentiated between the angels of Allãh, as they hated Gabriel and loved the others; and between the revealed Divine Books, as they disbelieved in the Qur'ãn and believed in previous ones; and between the messengers of Allãh, as they be-lieved in Mūsã (or in Mūsã and 'Īsã) and disbelieved in Muḥammad (may Allãh's blessings and peace be on him and them), and between His commands, as they believed

in some commands of the Book of Allãh and disbelieved in some others; but the believers of this *ummah*: *believe in Allãh, and His angels, and His Books, and His messengers: "We make no difference between any of His messengers"*.

They indeed observed proper manners *vis-à-vis* their Lord by submitting to the cognizence sent to them by Allãh. Then they showed the manners by positively responding to the divine commandments, when they said: *"We hear and obey";* unlike the Jews who had said: *"We hear and we disobey."* After that they showed proper manner when they counted their own selves, the slaves possessed by their Lord, who do not own anything, and they do not try to put Allãh under their obligation because of their faith and obedience; so they said: *"Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)*"*; they were not like the Jews who had said: *"He soon will forgive us"*; and said: *"Surely Allãh is needy and we are self sufficient"*; and said: *"The Fire will not touch us except for counted days"*, and other similar erroneous utterances.

Then Allãh said: *Allãh does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability, for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it is* (the evil of) *what it has wrought*. It is because the divinely laid responsibility, by its disposition, follows the nature on which He has created the people; and it is known that the nature, being a sort of creation, does not invite except to what it has been equipped with; and certainly in it is found the felicity of life.

However, if the topic would be of importance which would demand more attention to itself, or if the servant who was ordered went out of the fold of nature, beyond the appearance of servitude, then it would be Ok as a secondary natural command for the master of the one having authority in his hand to give him an order beyond the usual extent of its ability; for example, he may tell him to observe precaution on mere doubt, or to avoid forgetfulness and mistake when utmost attention is given to the topic, e.g. indispensability of precaution in con-nection with blood, genital and property in Islamic; or to increase the inconvenience and tighten the screw the more one increases in dispu-tation and insists in questioning, as Allãh has given us many such an information concerning the Children of Israel.

In any case, the Qur'ãnic phrase: *Allãh does not impose upon any soul* . . ., is either continuation of the speech of the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) and the believers: If so, then they must have said it as a preamble to their prayer: *"Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake;"* in

order that it may serve as His praise, to remove a possible misunderstanding that Allãh might impose a burden in the excess of one's ability, and might lay down a disconcerting order – such ideas would be removed by asserting that Allãh does not impose a respon-sibility upon a soul except to the extent of its ability; and what they have asked by saying: *"Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake;"* refers to divine commands in their secondary aspects, resulting from the order or from the side of the servants because of their enmity, not from the side of Allãh, the High.

Or, it is the divine speech, inserted between two phrases of their prayer, which are reported here, i.e., *"Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)*,"* and: *"Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget . . .,"* in order to give the above-mentioned connotation, in addition to teaching and training them under divine guidance; this too will be a sort of their speech, because they are the believers in what Allãh has sent down, and this too is from Him. In any case, this is what their speech relies on and their prayer depends upon.

Then Allãh mentions the remainder of their prayer; or you may say, the other group of their problems: *"Our Lord! Do not punish us . . ."*, *"Our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us"*; *"Our Lord! Do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us"*, it is as though they want pardon for what they might have committed in forgetfulness or by mistake and all such reasons; *"and grant us protection and have mercy on us"* for all our sins and mistakes. Forgiveness here does not entail repetition al-though they had earlier said: "*Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)*"*, because it quotes their speech in order to compare their condition and their man-ner with their Lord with the People of the Book in their dealing with their Lord and regarding their Book that was sent to them; moreover, the context of prayer does not reject repetition unlike other situations.

It is not necessary to explain how this prayer contains the man-ner of servitude, by adhering to the attribute of Lordship time and again, and confessing to one's being possessed and under guardianship of the owner, standing at the station of humbleness and wretchedness of servi-tude *vis-à-vis* the Mighty Lord.

The noble Qur'ãn contains divine trainings and sublime teach-ings to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) by various types of praise he uses for his Lord, or the beseechings he offers before Him. For example: *Say: "O Allãh, Master of the kingdom! Thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever Thou*

pleasest, . . ." (3:26); *Say: "O Allāh! Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen! Thou judgest be-tween Thy servants . . ."* (39:46); *Say: "Praise be to Allāh and peace on His servants whom He has chosen: . . ."* (27:59); *Say: "Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allāh, . . ."* (6:162); *". . . and say: "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge"* (20:114); *And say: "O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil sug-gestions of the Satans, and I seek refuge in Thee! O my Lord! From their presence."* (23:97-98), in addition to numerous such verses.

All these collectively contain the fine manners, which Allāh trained His messenger (s.a.w.a.) with, and he in his turn exhorted his *ummah* to observe it.

7. Now, we should see how they preserved the manners towards their Lord while they talked with their people: This too is a vast chapter and it is attached to the manners of praising Allāh, the glorified. From an-other angle, it is a sort of practical *tablīgh*, which is not less, or rather is more, effective than the verbal *tablīgh*.

There are many such examples in the Qur'ān. Allāh quotes a talk between Nūḥ and his *ummah*: *They said: "O Nūḥ! Indeed you have disputed with us and lengthened dispute with us, therefore bring to us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful ones." He said: "Allāh only will bring it to you if He please, and you will not make* (Him) *incapable. And if I intend to give you good advice, my advice will not profit you if Allāh intended that He should leave you to go astray; He is your Lord, and to Him shall you be returned."* (11:32-34). He (a.s.) refuted from himself what they were attributing to him, in order to show his inability in this way; he attributes it to his Lord, and shows finest manner by adding the phrase: *"if He please"*, and then saying: *"and you will not make* (Him) *incapable"*, i.e. will not make Allāh incapable. That is why he had used the word: *Allāh*, instead of saying, 'My Lord', because Allāh is He to Whom is the end goal of every beauty and grandeur. Also, he did not consider this much refuta-tion and affirmation enough until he supported it by saying that his advice would not profit them if Allāh did not intend them to get its benefit. Thus he completed the refutation of power from himself and its affirmation for his Lord, and showed its reason by saying: *"He is your Lord, and to Him you will be returned."*

This is a dialogue steeped in beautiful manners *vis-à-vis* Allāh; Nūḥ (a.s.) used this speech to address the transgressors of his *ummah*,

disputing with them. And he was the first prophet who opened the door of argumentation in calling to the monotheism, and stood up against the idol-worship, as the noble Qur'ãn describes.

This is the greatest of the doors which lets the researcher's eyes free to look at the prophets' manners; one sees in them the finest of their characteristics which are steeped in good manner and perfection. It is because all their talks and deeds, movements and stillness, are based on contemplation and servitudal presence, although, in form, it looks like the deed of him who is absent from his Lord, and his Lord is absent from him. Allãh says: . . . *and those who are with Him are not proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary. They glorify* (Him) *by night and day; they are never languid* (21:19-20).

Allãh has quoted in His Book many dialogues of Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrãhīm, Mūsã, Shu'ayb, Yūsuf, Sulaymãn, 'Īsã and Muḥammad, etc. (peace be upon them), in different conditions of theirs, like hardship and ease, war and peace, disclosure and secrecy, good omens and warn-ing and so on.

Contemplate on the divine speech: *So Mūsã returned to his people wrathful, sorrowing. Said he: "O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a goodly promise: did then the time seem long to you, or did you wish that displeasure from your Lord should be due to you, so that you broke* (your) *promise to me?"* (20:86). He mentions Mūsã when he returned to his people while he was filled with wrath and rage, but it did not turn him away from observation of manner while mentioning his Lord.

Also, look at the divine words: *And she in whose house he was sought to make himself yield* (to her)*, and she made fast the doors and said: "Come forward." He said: "I seek Allãh's refuge, surely my Lord made good my abode: Surely the unjust do not prosper."* (12:23).

And the divine words: *They said: "By Allãh! Now has Allãh certainly chosen you over us, and we were certainly sinners." He said: "*(There shall be) *no reproof against you this day; Allãh may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful."* (12:91-92). He men-tions Yūsuf in privacy wherein the woman of 'Azīz tried to make Yūsuf yield to her; it was a situation where man forgets all understanding; yet it did not turn him away from piety, and did not distract him from observation of manners when mentioning his Lord and with others.

Also, the divine words: . . . *Then when he saw it settled beside him, he said: This is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grate-ful only for his*

own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured (27:40). So, this is Sulaymān (a.s.), and he was given of the great kingdom, effective order and amazing power, that he ordered to bring the throne of the queen of Sheba from Sheba to Palestine, and it was brought down in less than a twinkling of an eye, yet he was not taken over by pride and pompousness and did not forget his Lord, and at once offered praise to his Lord in the presence of his courtiers with best praise.

Compare it with the story of Nimrod with Ibrāhīm (a.s.), as Allāh says: *Have you not considered him who disputed with Ibrāhīm about his Lord, because Allāh had given him the kingdom? When Ibrāhīm said: "My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die," he said: "I give life and cause death."* . . . (2:258). He said it when he ordered two prisoners to be brought before and ordered one of them to be killed and the other to be freed.

Or, it may be compared with what Pharaoh said, as Allāh has quoted him: *"O my people! Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And these rivers flow beneath me; do you not then see? Nay! I am better than this fellow who is contemptible, and who can hardly speak dis-tinctly: But why have not bracelets of gold been put upon him, or why have there not come with him angels as companions?"* (43:51-53)

He shows his pride in the kingdom of Egypt and its rivers and a quantity of gold which was in his possession and that of his nobles; and it did not take him long to announce: 'I am your sublime lord,' and this was the same fellow who was being humiliated by Mūsā (a.s.)'s signs day after day, like flood, locust, lice and frogs, etc.

Other examples of manner: Allāh says: . . . *when they were both in the cave, when he was saying to his companion: "Grieve not, surely Allāh is with us."* . . . (9:40); *And when the Prophet secretly communi-cated a piece of information to one of his wives . . . so when he informed her of it, she said: "Who informed you this?" He said: "The Knowing, the One Aware, informed me."* (66:3). So, the hard situation, terror and anxiety on the day of fear did not upset him to forget his Lord who was with him, and his noble self was not affected by the threatening situ-ation; and likewise the information which he secretly communicated to one of his wives, all this contains the good manners in referring to his Lord.

These are a few examples, and in the same style we find the finest manner and noble characteristics, which appear in their stories in the noble Qur'ān. We have already gone beyond our self-imposed limit in this topic, otherwise we would have narrated their stories at length and

described them fully.

8. Prophets' manners with the people in their dealings and talks: Samples of this manner are found in their arguments with the unbe-lievers which are quoted in the Qur'ãn, and in their talks with the be-lievers; also some aspects of their life histories which are narrated.

As for the manners in talk, you will not find them in their talks with those arrogant and ignorant people ever using any word that would annoy them or any abusing, insulting or debasing remark; while their adversaries went to the extreme in abusing and taunting them and in attacking and mocking them, but they never replied to them except with best of the words and most sincere admonition; they turned away from them in peace, and when the ignorant ones talked to them they said: "Peace!"

Allãh says: *But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his* [Nūḥ's] *people said: "We do not consider you but a human being like ourselves, and we do not see any have followed you but those who are meanest of us at first thought and we do not see in you any excel-lence over us; nay, we deem you liars." He said: "O my people! Tell me if I have with me clear proof from my Lord, and He has granted me mercy from Himself and it has been made obscure to you; shall we constrain you to* (accept) *it while you are averse from it?"* (11:27-28).

Also, He quotes the tribe of ʿÃd, the people of Hūd, as saying: "*We do not say aught but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil." He said: "Surely I call Allãh to witness, and do you bear witness too, that I am clear of what you associate* (with Allãh)*, besides Him, . . ."* (11:54-55).

They meant that some of their gods had smitten Hūd with evil, i.e., madness or idiocy, etc.

Also, Allãh quotes Ãzar as saying: *"Do you dislike my gods, O Ibrãhīm? If you do not desist I will certainly revile you* [or, stone you to death] *and leave me for a time." He said: "Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me."* (19:46-47)

Also, He quotes the people of Shuʿayb (a.s.) as saying: *The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: "Most surely we see you in folly, and most surely we think you to be of the liars." He said: "O my people! There is no folly in me, but I am a messenger of the Lord of the worlds; I deliver to you the message of my Lord and I am a faithful adviser to you."* (7:66-68).

Also, Allāh says: *Pharaoh said: "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" He said: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, if you understand." . . . Said he: "Most surely your Messenger who is sent to you is mad." He said: "The Lord of the east and the west and what is between them, if you understand."* (26:23-28)

Also, He says quoting the people of Maryam: *They said: "O Maryam! Surely you have done a strange thing. O sister of Hārūn! Your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman." But she pointed to him. They said: "How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?" He said: "Surely I am a servant of Allāh; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. . . ."* (19:27-30)

And Allāh has said consoling His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when they accused him of soothsaying, madness and of being a poet: *Therefore, continue to remind, for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer, or a madman. Or do they say: "A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time." Say: "Wait, for surely I too with you am of those who wait."* (52:29-31)

Also, He says: *And the unjust say: "You do not follow any but a man bewitched." See what likeness do they apply to you, so they have gone astray; therefore they shall not be able to find a way*. (25:8-9)

Add to it many other types of abuse, accusation and insult which have been quoted in the Qur'ān; yet it has not been narrated from the prophets (a.s.) that they ever faced them with rudeness or obscenity; they rather replied to them with correct speech and good and gentle logic, in obedience to the divine instruction which had taught them good speech and beautiful manners. Allāh says addressing Mūsā and Hārūn: *Go both of you to Pharaoh; surely he has become inordinate. Then speak to him a gentle word, haply he may mind or fear* (20:43-44). And He said addressing His Prophet (s.a.w.a.): *And if you turn away from them to seek mercy from your Lord, which you hope for, speak to them a gentle word* (17:28).

It was an aspect of their manner in talks and discussions that they took themselves to be equal in position to general people; thus they talked with every stratum of society according to the level of its under-standing. It becomes manifest if you ponder on their talks with the people with all their differences beginning from Nūḥ onwards. Both sects have narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said: "Surely, we the group of the prophets have been ordered to talk with the people to the degree of their understanding."

It must be known that the sending of prophets was only based on the foundation of guidance and its explanation and support. So, it was incumbent on them to equip themselves with truth in their mission, be devoid of falsity, and remain on guard against traps of error what-ever they might be, whether it agreed with the people's pleasure or went against their liking, whether it resulted in their willingness or unwilling-ness. Allãh has ordained very strict prohibition and extreme caution in this matter for His prophets, the falsity cannot be followed in words or deeds even for helping the truth, for the falsity is falsity no matter it falls in the path of truth or not; and the call to truth does not combine with sanction of falsity even in the path of truth; a truth which is led to by falsehood and which results from untruth is not a total truth.

That is why Allãh has said: . . . *nor could I take those who lead* (others) *astray for aiders.* (18:51); *And had it not been that We had already made you firm, you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little; in that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double* (punishment) *in this life and a double* (punishment) *after death, then you would not have found any helper against Us* (17:74-75). For there is no indulgence, no close association, and no adulation in truth, and no respect for falsity.

And that is why Allãh equipped the people of His mission and guardians of His religion, i.e. the prophets (peace be upon them), with what would pave for them the path for following and helping the truth. Allãh says: *There is no harm in the Prophet doing that which Allãh has ordained for him: such has been the course of Allãh with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allãh is a decree that is made absolute: Those who deliver the messages of Allãh and fear Him, and do not fear any one but Allãh; and Allãh is sufficient to take account* (33:38-39). Allãh says that the prophets do not feel any difficulty in doing what Allãh has ordained for them; they fear only Him, and do not fear any one other than Him; there is no snag in their declaring the truth, come what may.

Then He promised them help in what they stood up to do for Him. He says: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the messengers: Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones.* (38:171-3). *Most surely We help Our messengers, . . .* (40:51).

That is why we find in their narrated stories that they do not care for anything in declaration of truth and the word of vericity, even if the

people did not like it and found its taste bitter. Allāh quotes Nūḥ addressing his people: . . . *but I consider you a people who are ignor-ant* (11:29). And Hūd said: . . . *you are nothing but forgers* (of lies), (11:50). Also, he told them: *Indeed uncleanness and wrath from your Lord have lighted upon you; what! Do you dispute with me about names, which you and your fathers have given? Allāh has not sent any authority for them;* . . . (7:71). And He quotes Lūṭ as saying: . . . *nay, you are an extravagant people* (7:81). Also, He quotes word of Ibrāhīm addressed to his people: *"Fie on you and on what you worship besides Allāh; what! Do you not then understand?"* (21:67); again He quotes Mūsā as he replied to Pharaoh's claim: *"Most surely I deem you, O Mūsā! To be a man bewitched." He said: "Truly you know that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these as clear proofs, and most surely I believe you, O Pharaoh! To be given over to perdition."* (17:101-2), i.e., prevented from believing in truth, turned out, steeped in perdition. There are many other such examples.

All of this shows observation of manners about truth and its following; and there is no desired thing more honourable than this, nor is there any sought after item more noble and more valuable. Yet some-times it contains what goes against the prevalent manners among the people because their lives are based on following the side of desires and proceeding to the life's pleasure, by indulging the people of false-hood, and submitting to those who create disturbance in society and exceed the limit in practical policy.

In short, manner, as earlier explained, appears in palatable words and good deeds. Thus it differs with changed ways of life in societies, and the opinions and beliefs, which are settled in it and shape it. As for the divine mission, upon which the religious society depends, it only follows the truth in belief and action. The truth does not mix with falsity or depend on or get supported by it. So, there is no escape from declaring and following it. The manner that springs from it is that one should proceed on the best path of truth and dress in it with the finest robe, like opting for soft words when one has the option of speaking softly or harshly, and to choose hastening in doing good when both hastening and delaying are permissible.

It is this aspect which Allāh has ordered in His Book: *And We ordained for him* [Mūsā] *in the tablets admonition of every kind and clear explanation of all things: so take hold of them with firmness and enjoin your people to take hold of what is best thereof;* . . . (7:145). Then He

gave good news to His servants who adhered to it: . . . *there-fore give good news to My servants, those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allãh has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding* (39:17-18). So there is no man-ner found in falsity, nor any manner in a mixture of truth and false-hood; whatever is out of the fold of pure truth is error which the Guardian of truth is not pleased with, and He has said: . . . *and what is there after the truth but error;* . . . (10:32)

It is this factor that led the prophets of truth to clear declaration and true language, even if on occasions it was against the demands of sycophancy and false manners that are prevalent in non-religious societies.

It was a part of their manners in their dealings and characteris-tics with the people that they accorded respect to the weak and to the powerful in equal degree; if there was increase and augmentation, it was for the people of knowledge and piety. For, when they built on the foundation of servitude and upbringing of human soul, it resulted in equality of judgement between rich and poor, big and small, man and woman, master and slave, ruler and ruled, leader and follower, king and subject. At this juncture, the distinction of attributes becomes ineffectual, exclusive possession of social distinctions by powerful people is negated; and division of gain and loss, deprivation and enjoy-ment, felicity and infelicity between the attributes of wealth and poverty, and power and weakness, becomes inoperative; the system is nullified in which the powerful and wealthy are placed at the topmost stratum, enjoy the most tender life, are given in every endeavour the easiest and most comfortable and in every responsibility the lightest; rather all people are treated equally. Allãh says: *O you men! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allãh is the one among you most pious;* . . . (49:13). In this way, the arrogance of the powerful because of their power, and pride of the rich because of their wealth, turns into humility for the truth, and hastening to forgiveness and mercy, racing to the good deeds, endeavouring in the way of Allãh for the purpose of Allãh's pleasure.

Thus, they accorded respect to the poor just as they did to the wealthy, and observed good manners with the weak as they did with the rich. Rather the weaker section was reserved for more magnanimity, mercy and graciousness. Allãh says teaching His Prophet (s.a.w.a.): *And*

withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His good will, and let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life; and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded. (18:28); *And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His favour; neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours, so that you should drive them away and thus be of the unjust.* (6:52); *Do not strain your eyes after what We have given certain classes of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and make yourself gentle to the believers; and say: "Surely I am the plain warner."* (15:88-89).

This fine manner is seen in the dialogue between Nūḥ and his people as Allāh narrates: *But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: "We do not consider you but a man like ourselves, and we do not see any have followed you but those who are the meanest of us at first thought, and we do not see in you any excellence over us; nay, we deem you liars." He said: "O my people! Tell me if I have with me clear proof from my Lord, and He has granted me mercy from Himself and it has been made obscure to you; shall we constrain you to* (accept) *it while you are averse from it? And O my people! I ask you not for wealth in return for it; my reward is only with Allāh and I am not going to drive away those who believe; surely they shall meet their Lord, but I consider you a people who are ignorant* [because of your disdaining the poor and weak servants of Allāh]*: And O my people! Who will help me against Allāh if I drive them away? Will you not then mind? And I do not say to you that I have the treasures of Allāh; and I do not know the unseen, nor do I say that I am an angel* [i.e. I do not claim for myself any distinction against you except that I have been sent as a messenger to you]*: nor do I say about those whom your eyes hold in mean estimation* (that) *Allāh will never grant them* (any) *good – Allāh knows best what is in their souls* [of the good and felicity expected from them]*: – for then most surely I should be of the unjust."* (11:27-31).

A similar negation of distinction is seen in the words Shuʿayb addressed to his people, as Allāh narrates: *". . . and I do not desire that in opposition to you I should betake myself to that which I forbid you: I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able to, and with none but Allāh is the direction of my affair to a right course; on Him do I rely and to Him do I turn."* (11:88). And Allāh says introducing His Mess-enger to

the people: *Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves, grievous to him is your falling into distress, excessively sol-icitous respecting you, to the believers* (he is) *compassionate, merciful.* (9:128); And there are some of them who hurt the Prophet and say: *"He is an ear;" say: "A hearer of good for you* (who) *believes in Allãh and believes in the faithful and a mercy for those of you who believe;"* . . . (9:61); *And most surely you conform* (yourself) *to sublime morality* (68:4). Also, He says and it gathers all preceding attributes: *And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds* (21:107).

Although apparently these verses describe his good characteris-tics, and not his manners which are something beyond that; yet a sort of manners, as described earlier, is inferred from a sort of characteris-tics; moreover, manner itself is a branch of characteristics.

OTHER TRADITIONS

Most of the Qur'ãnic verses, from which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)'s noble characteristics and beautiful manners inferred are revealed in the forms of imperative and prohibitive orders. Therefore, we thought it advisable to write here some traditions about his (s.a.w.a.)'s custom-ary usage, which contain collections of his characteristics which point to his beautiful divine manners; and they are also supported by the noble Qur'ãnic verses.

1. *Ma'ãni 'l-Akhbãr*: (aṣ-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain, from Abū Hãlã at-Tamīmī, from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (peace be upon both); and through another chain from ar-Riḍã (a.s.), through his forefathers, from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (peace be upon all of them); also through a third chain, from a man from the progeny of Abū Hãlã, from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (peace be upon both), that he said:

"I asked my maternal uncle Hind ibn Abī Hãlã, who was a describer of (the attributes of) the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); and I was desirous that he should describe to me something of it in order that I should hold fast to it. So he said:

"'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was magnificent and hon-oured, his face radiated like the full moon on moonlit night; taller than *al-marbū'* (of medium height), and shorter than *al-mushadhdhab* (tall and excellent); (he had) big skull and long, straight hair; if his hair was parted it separated in the middle, otherwise his hair did not reach beyond his

earlobes; of bright colour, wide forehead; his eyebrows were thin and long, lengthy from one end to the other without joining in the middle; between them was a vein; he had a light over-whelming him, if one did not ponder over him, would deem him having high nasal wind pipe, of thick beard, soft checks and wide mouth; had white teeth not tightly joined; had a thin line of hair from middle of the chest to the stomach; it seemed as his neck was like that of a deer in clarity of silver; of medium stature, plump and holding himself properly; his stomach and chest were in one level; his shoulders were wide; his bone-joints were thick; his chest was broad; when he disrobed, his body was brilliant; a thin line of hair joined his neck to the navel-pit; apart from that, his breasts and belly were without hair; there was hair on his arms, shoulders and upper chest; his wrists were long, his palms wide; his palms and soles were thick; his sides flowed, his joints were soft; hol-lows of his soles were deep, the feet were wide, water did not adhere to them; he proceeded ahead well-balanced, and walked in humbleness, fast-paced, when he walked it seemed as if he was going down a slope; when he turned (towards someone), turned with his whole body; kept his eyes down, he looked to the earth much longer than he looked at the heaven; most of his look was observation; he hastened to say *salām* to whomever he met.'"

He said: "Then I said to him, 'Describe to me (the way of) his speaking.' He said, 'He (s.a.w.a.), was constantly in grief, always contemplating, he never spoke unnecessarily; he began his talk and ended it very eloquently; he spoke short sentences, pithy and expressive, in which there was neither any superfluous word nor any shortcoming; mild-tempered, neither vain nor insulting; exalted a bounty (gifted to him) however small it might be; he never criticized any of it; however, he never derogated nor praised any taste. When he stood for the truth nobody recognized him; nothing could stand against his anger until he obtained its right for it. When he pointed, he did so with his whole palm, and when he was astonished he turned [the palm]; when he talked he joined it and touched his right palm with inside of his left thumb. When he was angry he turned away and cast down his eyes; mostly his laugh was a smile; when he laughed his teeth appeared like hail-stone.'"

aṣ-Ṣadūq says: Upto here was the narration of al-Qãsim ibn al-Manī‘ from Ismã‘īl ibn Muḥammad ibn Isḥãq ibn Ja‘far ibn Muḥam-mad; and the rest is the narrative of ‘Abdu 'r-Raḥmãn upto the end.

"al-Ḥasan (a.s.), said, 'I did not mention the [above tradition] for a while to al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), then I narrated it to him, but I found that he

already knew it. So, I asked him about it and found that he had asked his father (a.s.) about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) – his entry and exit, his sitting and his features – not leaving anything out.'

"al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), said, 'I did ask my father (a.s.), about the entrance of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.). He said, "His entrance in itself was allowed to him; so when he went to his house, he divided his entry in three parts: one part for Allãh, one for his family and one for himself; then he divided his own part between himself and the people and dealt with general public through his especial people and did not keep away anything from them.

"'"And it was part of his (s.a.w.a.)'s characteristics in the part of the *ummah* to give preference to the people of excellence in his man-ners, and apportion it on them according to their superiority in relig-ion; so among them was one with one need, another with two needs, and a third with many needs; so he remained engaged with them and kept them busy in that which was good for them, and constantly asked about the *ummah* and informed them of that which should be done; and he used to say: 'The one who is present must convey [the mess-age] to him who is absent;' [and he admonished]: 'Convey to me the need of him who is unable to convey it (to me); because anyone who conveys to an authority the need of him who is unable to convey it himself, Allãh will make his feet firm on the Day of Resurrection.' Nothing else was mentioned in his presence, and he did not accept from anyone any other thing; people came to him in groups and did not go out except after tasting (food), and went away as guides (to the other)."

"'And I asked him about the going out of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) how did he do it? He said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to preserve his tongue except from that which concerned him; he kept them united, and not to alienate them; he honoured the noble man of every community and made him their governor; he remained on watch about the people and kept guards against them, without turning his face away from anyone or showing any change in his manners; he checked conditions of his companions, and asked the people about the people. He praised the good, strengthened it, showed the ugliness of the evil, and weakened it; he was moderate in his affairs, not contra-dictory. He was never oblivious lest they become oblivious and incline (to one side); was never short from truth and never allowed it; those who were close to him were best of the people; the one having excel-lence near him was the one who was most sincere to the Muslims, and the one having greatest rank

near him was the one who was best of all in beneficence and assistance."'

"He (a.s.), said, 'Then I asked him about his (s.a.w.a.)'s sitting. He said, "He never sat down or stood up except with remembrance (of Allãh); he did not reserve any seat for himself; when he reached a group, he sat down where he had arrived, and he ordered (others) to do the same. He gave each of the group his due share (of attention); and no co-participant in the gathering thought that any other person was more honoured than him (in the Prophet's eyes). Whoever sat with him, (the Prophet), patiently remained with him until he took his leave. Whoever asked him for a need, did not return except either with that thing or with sweet words. His good manners overwhelmed the people until he was (like) a father to them; and all of them were equal in his eyes in their rights. His gathering was one of forbearance, modesty, truth and trust, voices were not raised therein, nor were people's honours disgraced there. If one of them committed a mistake, it was (gracefully) amended so that no one repeated it; they dealt with each other with justice, joining together with piety, humble with each other; they respected the elder and had mercy on the younger; they gave preference to a needy person over themselves and provided safety to a stranger."'

"Then I said, 'How was his dealing with those who sat with him?' He (a.s.) said, 'He (s.a.w.a.) had always a smiling face; he was of agree-able manner and gentle hearted; he was neither rude nor rash, neither loud voiced nor obscene; neither exposer of defects nor eulogist, he ignored what he did not desire, so neither they despaired of him nor those who had hoped of him were disappointed. He freed himself from three (things): dispute, increase and what did not concern him; and freed the people from three (things): He never condemned anyone or put him to shame; never did he look for any one's slips or defects; he did not speak except about what he hoped (divine) reward; when he talked his companions bowed their heads in silence, as though there were birds on their heads; so when he became silent, they spoke; they did not dispute near him in a talk, whoever spoke they listened to him until he finished; their talk near him was one after another; he laughed at what they laughed at, and wondered at what they wondered at. He remained patient when a stranger was rude in his talk and demands until his companions fulfilled his requirements, and used to say: "When you see a needy person seeking his needs, fulfil it." He did not accept praise except for a favour he had done to him. He did not interrupt anyone's talk until he exceeded the limit, then he stopped it by forbidding it or standing up.'

He said: "Then I asked him about the silence of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) so he (a.s.) said, 'His (s.a.w.a.)'s silence was based on four (factors): forbearance, caution, estimation and meditation; as for the estimation, it was in equally looking at the people and listening to them; and as for his meditation, it was on what would abide and what would perish. Forbearance and patience were united in him; there-fore nothing would enrage or agitate him. His caution had gathered in four things: his holding fast to good in order to follow it, his abstaining from evil in order to desist from it, his deep thinking regarding the welfare of his *ummah*, and standing up for what is gathered for him of the good of this world and the next.'"

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadūq has also narrated it in *Makãrimu 'l-akhlãq*, copying it from the book of Muḥammad ibn Isḥãq ibn Ibrãhīm aṭ-Ṭãliqãnī who has narrated it through his trusted narrators from al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon both). al-Majlisī has said in *Biḥãru 'l-anwãr*: "This is a famous tradition and the Sunnīs have nar-rated it in most of their books."

And numerous traditions on this theme or on some of its parts have been narrated from the Companions.

[Note: From here about two pages of Arabic book contain meanings and explanations of the difficult words and phrases of this tradition. We are omitting it here, because our English version has incorporated them fully. *tr.*]

2. *Iḥyãu 'l-'Ulūm* writes: He (s.a.w.a.) was the most eloquent in speech and the sweetest . . . He spoke comprehensive sentences, there was neither any superfluous word in them nor any shortcoming; it was as though his words followed one another; he paused between his speech in order that the hearer could memorize and preserve it; he was loud-voiced with most beautiful melody. (al-Ghazãlī)

3. *at-Tahdhīb*: (aṣ-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from Isḥãq ibn Ja'far, from his brother Mūsã, through his forefathers from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: "I heard the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), saying, 'I have been sent with noble ethics and the best manners.'"

4. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), was more modest than a virgin girl in her private room; and when he disliked a thing, we knew it from his face." (aṭ-Ṭabrisī)

5. *al-Kãfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chains, from Muḥammad

ibn Muslim that he said: "I heard Abū Ja'far (a.s.) saying that an angel came to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and said, 'Surely Allāh has given you option to choose that you become a servant, Messenger (and) humble or a messenger angel.' (Abū Ja'far) said, 'So the Prophet looked at Gabriel (who) pointed with his hand that be a humble (Messenger); so he said, "(I shall be) a servant, Messenger (and) humble." The mess-enger (angel) said, "With (condition that) it would not decrease any-thing that you have got with your Lord." (He said), "And with it are the keys of the treasures of the earth."'"

6. *Nahju 'l-Balāghah*: 'Alī (a.s.) said: "So you follow your pure cheerful Prophet . . . He gnawed at the world and did not lend any glance at it. He was most suffering of all in side and most empty of stomach. The world was offered to him but he refused to accept it. He knew that Allāh disliked a thing, so he disliked it, and He degraded a thing, so he degraded it. If we did not have except our love to what Allāh disliked, and our honouring what Allāh degraded, it was enough for discord with Allāh and deviation from Allāh's command.

"And the Messenger of Allāh used to eat sitting on the earth, and sat like a slave; he mended his shoes by his hand, rode an unsad-dled donkey, and allowed someone to ride behind him. (Sometimes) there would be a curtain on his door with pictures on it, so he would say, 'O so-and-so! (Addressing a wife of his): Remove it from me, because whenever I look at it, I am reminded of this world and its adornments.' Thus he turned away from the world by his heart, and let its remembrance die from his soul; he liked that its adornment be wiped away from his eyes, lest he takes some equipment from it. He did not believe that it was something to abide, and did not expect to remain therein; so he turned it out of his soul, and dispatched it from his heart and removed it from his sight. In this way, whoever hates a thing, he hates to look at it and does not like it to be mentioned before him."

7. *al-Iḥtijāj*: Mūsā ibn Ja'far has narrated from his father, from his forefathers, from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, from his father, 'Alī (peace be upon them), *inter alia*, in a lengthy *ḥadīth*: "He (s.a.w.a.) used to weep for fear of Allāh, the Mighty, the Great, until his place of prayer became wet – without any sin . . ." (aṭ-Ṭabrisī)

8. *al-Manāqib*: "He (s.a.w.a.) used to weep until he fainted. Some-body told him, 'Has not Allāh forgiven you your past faults and those to follow?' He said, 'Well, should I not be a grateful servant?' And exactly like that were the faintings of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, his successor in his

positions." (Ibn Shahrãshūb)

The author says: That question was based on the idea that the purpose of divine worship is safety from chastisement; and it has been said in traditions that it is the worship of slaves; and his (s.a.w.a.)'s reply is based on the idea that the reason is to show one's gratitude to Allãh, it is the worship of noble people, and it is another of the types of worship. It has been narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (a.s.): "Surely among the worship is the one that is done for fear of punish-ment, and it is the worship of slaves; and there is the one that is done for desire of reward, and it is the worship of traders; and among them is the one that is done to show one's gratitude to Allãh." (Some traditions say: 'for love of Allãh'; some others say: 'because He deserves it'.)

We have discussed the meaning of these traditions in detail in vol.4 of the book under the "Commentary" of the verse: . . . *and Allãh will reward the grateful.* (3:144)[5]. We have explained there that grate-fulness to Allãh in His worship means being sincere to Him, and that the grateful are the purified ones who are described in such wordings of Allãh as: *Glory be to Allãh* (for freedom) *from what they describe, but not so the servants of Allãh, the purified ones* (37:159-60).

9. *al-Irshãd*, ad-Daylamī: "Surely during the prayer of Ibrãhīm (a.s.) the wheezing sound of fear was heard from him because of fear of Allãh; and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) too was like that."

10. *Tafsīr* of Abu 'l-Futūḥ: It is narrated from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī that he said, "When the verse: . . . *remember Allãh, remembering fre-quently* [33:41] was revealed, the Messenger of Allãh became engaged in the remembrance of Allãh until the unbelievers said that he had become insane."

11. *al-Kãfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Zayd ash-Shaḥḥãm from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to repent to Allãh every day seventy times." "I [Zayd] said, 'Was he saying: "I seek pardon of Allãh and return (repent) to Him?"' He said, 'No; but he used to say, "I return to Allãh."' I said, '(How is it that) the Messennger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to repent and did not return (to that fault) and we repent and then return?' He said, 'Allãh's help is saught.'"

12. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: (aṭ-Ṭabrisī) narrates from 'Alī (a.s.) copying from *Kitãbu 'n-Nubuwwah* that he (a.s.) used to say when he described the

[5] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.7, pp.53-58. (*tr.*)

attributes of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.): "He was the most generous of hand, the bravest of the chest, the most truthful in speech, the most fulfilling of obligations, of the mildest nature, from the noblest family; whoever saw him all of a sudden, was afraid of him, and who-ever mingled with him knowing him, loved him; I did not see like him (s.a.w.a.) neither before him nor after him."

13. *al-Kãfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī from his father (a.s.) that he said: "It was (the style) of the swear-ing of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) that he said, 'No, and I seek pardon of Allãh'."

14. *Iḥyãu 'l-‘Ulūm*: "When he (s.a.w.) was very upset, he touched his noble beard frequently."

15. *Ibid*: "And he (s.a.w.) was the most generous of all people; dīnãr or dirham did not remain with him; if something was left with him and he did not find one to give it to him and the night came, he did not go to his house until he found someone who needed it. He did not take from what Allãh had given to him except the food sufficient for the year from easily available dates and barley; and he put all of it in the way of Allãh.

"He was not asked for a thing except he gave it out; then he returned to the nourishment of the year – so much so that he often was empty-handed before the expiry of the year if nothing new came to him." He said, "And he enforced the truth even if it resulted in a harm to himself or his companions." He said, "And he used to proceed alone between his enemies without a guard." He said, "Nothing from world-ly affairs ever intimidated him."

He said: "He sat with poor, took food with needy; he used to respect the people of excellence in their ethics, and was on intimate terms with the people of dignity by doing good to them. He did good to his relatives, without giving them preference over one who was superior to them; he was not harsh to anyone, he accepted the apology from one who offered it."

He said: "He had some slaves and slave girls but did not rise over them in meals or dress. He never passed a time without some work for Allãh or for something, which was necessary for his welfare. He used to go forth to the orchards of his companions. He never looked down any poor with disdain because of his poverty or chronic illness. He was not awed by any king because of his kingdom; he called this and that towards Allãh in equal way."

16. *Ibid*: "And he (s.a.w.) was furthest from anger and nearest in pleas-

antness; he was most gracious of all people towards the people, the best of all for all people, and the most beneficial of all for the people."

17. *Ibid*: "When he (s.a.w.) was happy and pleased, he was the best of the people in pleasantness; when he admonished, he admonished seriously, and when he was angry – and he was never angry except for Allãh – nothing could stand against his anger. And he was like that in all his affairs; and when any affair occured to him, he entrusted that to Allãh, freed himself from power and strength, and invoked the guidance."

The author says: Reliance on Allãh, entrusting the affairs to Him, freeing oneself from power and strength and invocation of guid-ance from Him, all of it returns one to another, and all of it sprouts from one root, and it is this: All affairs are based on the Divine Will which is the conqueror, unconquered, and His power which is the sub-duer, unlimited. The Book and the *Sunnah* with one voice call to it. Allãh says: . . . *and on Allãh should the reliant rely.* (14:12); . . . *and I entrust my affair to Allãh,* . . . (40:44); . . . *and whoever trusts in Allãh, He is sufficient for him;* . . . (65:3); . . . *surely His is the creation and the command;* . . . (7:54); *And that to your Lord is the goal,* (53:42) apart from other such verses. As for the traditions they are beyond counting.

Acquiring these ethics and learning these manners is based on the fact that they apply the human activities on the proper realities, which establish them on the natural religion. It is because in reality all affairs return to Allãh, as He says: . . . *now surely to Allãh do all affairs eventually come* (42:53). It has a magnificent benefit: When man relies and depends on Allãh – and he recognizes His unlimited power and subduer Will – this factor strengthens man's will and builds the pillars of his determination; as such he is not affected by any hindrance which appears in the way, nor is he constrained by any difficulty or tiredness that faces him; his firm intention is not shaken by any seduction or Satanic whispering which may appear in his inner self in the form of imaginary significances.

SOME OF HIS CUSTOMS AND MANNERS IN HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS

18. *Irshãdu 'l-Qulūb*, ad-Daylamī: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to patch his clothes, mend his shoes and milk his goat; he ate with slaves, sat on the earth and rode a donkey and allowed someone to sit behind him; he was not ashamed to carry his provisions from market to his family; he

shook hands with rich and poor, and did not remove his hand from any one's hand until it was the opposite party who removed it; he greeted anyone who came before him, be he rich or poor, senior or junior; he never degraded what he was invited to even if it was date of inferior quality.

"And he (s.a.w.a.) was light of provision, noble of nature, of beautiful social relation and cheerful face; smiling without laughter, sorrowful without scowling; humble without humiliation, magnani-mous without extravagance, soft-hearted, merciful to every Muslim; he never filled his stomach so that it would result in belching, and did not extend his hand to anything because of covetousness."

19. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: It is narrated about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he looked into mirror, let his hair grow long and combed it; some-times he looked into water and managed his hair in this way. He used to adorn himself for his companions more than he did for his family. And he (s.a.w.a.) said: "Surely Allāh likes from His servant when he goes out for his brethren that he should prepare and beautify himself for them."

20. *'Ilalu 'sh-Sharāi'*, *'Uyūn Akhbāri 'r-Riḍā*, and *al-Majālis*: aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates through his chain, from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) from his forefathers that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said, '(There are) five (things) that I shall not leave them till I die: To eat (sitting) on the earth with slaves, my riding with someone, milking my goat by my hand, wearing wool(len dress), and greeting the children in order that it may be a custom after me.'"

21. *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: It is narrated from ʻAlī (a.s.) that he said to a man from Banū Saʻd: "Should not I tell you about Fāṭimah and myself? . . . So came to us the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) early in the morning, and we were under our blanket; and he said: 'Peace be on you!' But we remained silent and felt shy because of our position.

"Then he (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Peace be on you!' And we remained silent. Then he (s.a.w.a.) said: 'Peace be on you!' So we feared that if we did not respond (this time) he would go back. (And it was his custom that he would say *salām* three times, and if he was given per-mission, well and good; otherwise he would go away.) So we said: 'And on you be *salām*, O Messenger of Allāh! Come in.' so he entered . . ."

22. *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Ribʻī ibn ʻAbdillāh, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to greet (say *salām* to) the women and they gave him the reply of the *salām*, and the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) used to

greet the women; and he disliked to greet the young ones from among them, and used to say: 'I fear that her voice would give me pleasure and thus I would become liable to more (responsibility) than the reward I seek.'"

The author says: And aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated it as a *mursal* tradition; and so has done Sibṭ aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *al-Mishkāt* copying from *Kitābu 'l-Maḥāsin*.

23. *Ibid*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʻAbdu 'l-ʻAẓīm ibn ʻAbdīllāh al-Ḥasanī, as a *marfūʻ* tradition. He said: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to sit in one of the three styles: *al-Qurfuṣā'*, i.e. he raised his legs and encircled them with his hands, holding fast to the arms with the hands; and he rested on his knees; and he doubled one leg, putting the other over it; and he was never seen cross-legged."

24. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*, copying from *Kitābu 'n-Nubuwwah*: It is narrated from ʻAlī (a.s.) that he said: "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), shook hand with someone, he did not remove his hand from that one's hand until it was the other man who pulled his hand away; and no one talked with him about some need of his or for some other purpose and the Prophet went away, until that man himself was the one who went away; and no one cut his talk until that man became silent; and he was never seen extending his leg before a companion.

"And he was never given an option between two courses of action but he opted for the harder one; and he did not avenge himself for any injustice, until someone disgraced a sanctuary of Allāh, then he shall be angry for Allāh; he never took meal reclining (on pillow) until he departed from this world; and he was never asked for a thing and he replied in negative; no petitioner ever asked for his need, but he (s.a.w.a.) accepted it or (alternatively) talked to him in easy lan-guage; he was lightest of all in prayer, shortest of them in lecture and least of all in useless talk. When he came he was known by the good scent; when he ate with the people, he was the first to begin and last to stop his hand; when he ate, he ate from the side that was near him; however if it was dates, his hand roamed all over it; when he drank he divided it in three breaths; he used to sip the water, not flooding it. His right hand was for his food and drink, for his taking and giving, he did not take but by his right hand and did not give but by his right hand; and his left hand was for other functions of his body; he liked to begin with the right side in all his affairs – in wearing dress, shoes, and dismounting.

"When he called, he called three times, when he spoke, he spoke

once, and when he sought permission, he did so thrice. His speech was in sections; whoever heard him clearly, understood him; when he spoke, it seemed as if a light went forth from between his teeth. When you saw him you would say (his teeth were) separated, but they were not.

"His observation was glancing with his eyes; he did not tell anyone anything, which he disliked; when he walked it was as though he was going down a slope. He used to say: 'Surely the best of you is the best of you in ethics (manners);' he never condemned any taste nor did he praise it; and never did the speakers dispute before him. The one describing him used to say: 'I did not see with my eye anyone like him, neither before him nor after him (s.a.w.a.)."

25. *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain, from Jamīl ibn Darrāj, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) divided his glance between his companions, he looked to this and to that equally." (Also he said:) "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) never spread his legs between his companions; if someone shook his hand, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) did not remove his own hand from that man's hand until it was he who removed his hand; so when they became aware of it, the man on shaking his hand (soon) moved his hand and removed it from the Prophet's hand."

26. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said a thing, he smiled in his speech."

27. *Ibid*: Yūnus ash-Shaybānī said: "Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) said to me, 'How is your joking (and jesting) with each other?' I said, 'Very little.' He said, 'Why don't you do it?' Because joking (and jesting) is a part of good manners; and surely you introduce through it joy to your brother; and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to jest with a man intending to make him happy.'"

28. *Ibid*: Abu 'l-Qāsim al-Kūfī narrates in *Kitābu 'l-Akhlāq* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: "There is no believer but there is jesting in him; and the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to joke, yet he never spoke other than the truth."

29. *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Muʻammar ibn Khallād that he said: "I asked Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) and said: 'May I be made your ransom! A man (mingles) with the people and talk among them continues, they joke and laugh?' He said, 'There is no harm (in it) as long as there is no.' (So I thought that he meant 'obscenity'.)

"Then (the Imām) said, 'Surely, a Bedouin used to come to (the Messenger of Allāh) and bring to him (some) gift; then he used to say:

"Give us the price of our gift." So the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to laugh. And when he was distressed, he used say: "What happened to the Bedouin, would that he came to us."'"

30. *Ibid*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Ṭalḥah ibn Zayd, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) used to sit mostly facing *qiblah*."

31. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: "The people used to bring a small child to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), so that he should pray for blessings to him; so he used to keep him in his lap in order to honour his family members; and sometimes the child urinated on him, and if someone who saw it shouted at the child, he (s.a.w.a.) would say: 'Don't disturb the child until he finishes urinating;' thereafter, he would complete pray-ing for him or naming him, thus heightening the joy of his family, and they never felt that he was disturbed because of their child's urine; then when they had gone back, he would wash his clothes afterwards."

32. *Ibid*: It is narrated that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) never allowed anyone to walk on foot with him when he himself was riding until he made him sit with him; if the man refused, then he told him: "Proceed before me and meet me at the place you intend."

33. *Ibid*: Abu 'l-Qãsim al-Kūfī writes in *Kitãbu 'l-Akhlãq*: "It has come in traditions that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) never took his revenge from anyone; rather he used to forgive and pardon."

34. *Ibid*: "If a man from among his brethren remained absent for three days, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to enquire about him; if he was out of town, he prayed for him; if he was present therein, he visited him; and if he was sick, he went to see him."

35. *Ibid*: Anas said: "I served the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for nine years. I have no knowledge that he ever said to me: 'Did you do such and such (thing)?' Nor did he ever criticize me for anything."

36. *Iḥyãu 'l-ʻUlūm*: Anas said: "By Him Who sent him with truth! He never said to me about a thing, which he disliked: 'Why did you do it?' And his women never blamed me but he said: 'Leave him alone, it was only by a Book and destiny.'"

37. *Ibid*: It is narrated from Anas that no one from his companions or others called him but he said: "*Labbayk*."

38. *Ibid*: Anas said: "He (s.a.w.) used to call his companions with their agnomen, in order to honour them and to win their affection; and he gave agnomen to the one who did not have any, so he was called by that agnomen. He also allotted agnomen to the ladies who had children and

even those who had not borne yet; and he also gave agnomen to the children thus softening their hearts."

39. *Ibid*: "He (s.a.w.) made a visitor sit on the cushion on which he sat; if the visitor refused to do so, he (s.a.w.) adjured him until he accepted."

40. *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʻAjlān that he said: "I was with Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.); a beggar came, so he (a.s.) went to a container of dates, and taking out a handful gave it to him; then came another, so he stood up and gave him a handful; then came a third one, he asked and the Imām stood up and taking a handful gave it to him. Thereafter came another man, and the Imām (a.s.), said, 'Allāh is our Sustainer and yours.'

"Then he said, 'Surely nobody asked anything of this world from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) but he gave it to him. A woman said to her son, "Go to him (the Prophet) and ask from him; if he says: 'We do not have anything', then say: 'Give me your shirt'." So, the Prophet took his shirt and threw it to him. (Another version: "gave it".) There-upon, Allāh taught him moderation and said: *And do not make your hand to be shackled to your neck nor stretch it forth to the utmost* (limit) *of its stretching forth, lest you should* (afterwards) *sit down blamed, stripped off* [17:29].'"

41. *Ibid*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Jābir, from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to eat gift and did not eat *ṣadaqah*.

42. *Ibid*: It is narrated from Mūsā ibn ʻImrān ibn Bazīʻ that he said: "I said to ar-Riḍā (a.s.), 'May I be made your ransom! The people narrate that when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) went forth by a way, he used to return by another way. Was it so?' He said, 'Yes; I do it most of the times; so you too do it.' Then he said to me, 'Well, it expands more sustenance for you."

43. *al-Iqbāl*: Narrates from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), used to come out after sunrise." (Ibn Tāwūs)

44. *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʻAbdullāh ibn al-Mughīrah, from his narrator that he said: "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) entered a house, he sat in the nearest place to him on entering."

The author says: Sibṭ aṭ-Ṭabrisī has narrated it in *al-Mishkāt*, copying from *al-Maḥāsin* and other books.

45. And among his (s.a.w.a.)'s customs and manners regarding cleanliness and adornments is what has been said in *al-Makārim* that when the

Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) washed his head and beard, he did so with [leaves of] lotus tree.

46. *al-Ja'fariyyãt*: It is narrated through his chain from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his forefathers from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to comb his hair and often he combed it with water, and used to say, 'Sufficient is water as perfume for a believer.'"

47. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: (aṣ-Ṣadūq) says: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Surely the Majūs cut off their beards and increased their mustaches; and surely we trim the mustaches and let the beards grow.'"

48. *al-Kãfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Abū 'Abdil-lãh (a.s.) that he said: "From among the *sunnah* is to clip the nails."

49. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: It is narrated that to bury hair, nail and blood is from *sunnah*.

50. *Ibid*: (aṣ-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he asked Abū Ja'far (a.s.) about hair-dye. He said: 'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to use hair-dye, and this is his hair with us.'"

51. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to coat (medicine); the coater overlayed (his upper part) until when he reached below waistband, he did it himself."

52. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: "'Alī (a.s.) said, 'Plucking out the armpit removes bad smell, and it is cleansing and *sunnah* ordered by the Agreeable (a.s.).'"

53. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: "He (s.a.w.a.) had a kohl-container, which he used every night; and his kohl was antimony."

54. *al-Kãfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Abū Usãmah, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "From among the customs of the messengers is the toothbrush."

55. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: (aṣ-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from 'Alī (a.s.) in the *ḥadīth* of four hundred, that he said: "And tooth-brush is pleasure of Allãh, and *sunnah* of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and cleansing of mouth."

The author says: There are very many traditions from both sects' ways about his (s.a.w.a.)'s, cleansing the teeth with toothbrush.

56. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) said: "Four (things) are from among the ethics of the prophets: To use scents, to cleanse [pubic hair] with razor, to shave the body with depilatory agent and going to

women very often."

57. *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from ʻAbdullāh ibn Sinān, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had a holding (handle); when he performed the ritual ablution, he caught it with his wet hand; so when he came out they knew that it was the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)."

58. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: "Never was a scent presented to him but he used it, and he used to say, 'Its air is agreeable and its load light;' and if he did not use that scent, he put his finger in it, then licked it."

59. *Ibid*: "He (s.a.w.a.) used to burn incense with *qamarī* sticks."

60. *Dhakhīratu 'l-Maʻād*: "Any (type of) musk was the most agree-able scent to him (s.a.w.a.)."

61. *al-Kāfī*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Isḥāq aṭ-Ṭawīl al-ʻAṭṭār, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messen-ger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to spend on scent more than he spent on food."

62. *Ibid*: (al-Kulaynī) narrates through his chain from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) said, '(Applying) scent to mustache is among the prophets' ethics and is honour to the two writer angels.'"

63. *Ibid*: Through his chains from as-Sakan al-Khazzāz that he said: "I heard Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) as saying, 'It is the right on every pubes-cent person on every Friday to trim his mustache and nails, and rub a little scent; and when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) did not have any scent on a Friday, he called for a veil of one of his wives, then wetting it with water put it on his face."

64. *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: (aṣ-Ṣadūq) narrates through his chain from Isḥāq ibn ʻAmmār, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was brought a scent on the day of ʻĪdu 'l-Fiṭr, he began with his women."

65. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: "And he used various types of oil," (he said), "and he generally used the oil of violet and used to say: 'It is the best of oils.'"

66. Among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners in travelling were what are nar-rated in *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*, through his chain from ʻAbdullāh ibn Sinān, from Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to travel on Thursday."

The author says: There are many *aḥādīth* of this meaning.

67. *Amānu 'l-Akhṭār* and *Miṣbāḥu 'z-Zāir*: The author of *ʻAwārifu 'l-Maʻārif* has written: "Surely when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) travelled, he

took with him five things: Mirror, kohl-container, winnowing fork, and toothbrush." (He said: "Another tradition says:) 'and scissors'."

The author says: It has also been narrated in *Makãrimu 'l-akhlãq* and *al-Ja'fariyyãt*.

68. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbãs that he said: "When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) walked, he did so in a man-ner which showed that he was neither weak nor tired."

69. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Mu'ãwiyah ibn 'Ammãr, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "When during journey, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) proceeded down a slope, he said: '*Lã ilãha illa 'llãh*'; and when he ascended, he said: '*Allãhu Akbar*'."

70. *Lubbu 'l-Lubãb,* (by ar-Rãwandī): It is narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), that he did not depart from a station but prayed therein two *rak'ah*s; and said: "So that it will testify for me of prayer."

71. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: He says: "When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) bid farewell to the believers, he used to say: 'May Allãh give you sustenance of piety, and direct you to every good, and fulfil every need of yours, and keep safe your religion and your world for you, and bring you back safely to those who are successful.'"

The author says: There are different traditions about his (s.a. w.a.)'s prayer at the time of bidding farewell, yet despite their differences, all contain the prayer of safety and success.

72. *al-Ja'fariyyãt*: It narrates through his chain from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his forefathers, from 'Alī (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to say to the one arriving from Mecca: "May Allãh accept your rituals, and forgive your sin, and replenish your expenses to you."

73. Among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners regarding dresses and what per-tains to them, is what is written in *Iḥyãu 'l-'ulūm*: "He (s.a.w.a.) used to wear the dress that was available, be it loin-cloth or cloak, shirt or *jubbah*, etc. He liked green dresses, yet most of his dresses were white, and he used to say: 'Dress it to your living and shroud in it your dead.'

"He used to wear stuffed *qabã'* (outer-garment) for war and at other times; he had a *qabã'* of silk brocade, when he wore it, its green colour contrasted beautifully with his white colour; all his dresses were turned up above the ankles, and the loin-cloak reached above it upto middle of the leg; his shirt was buttoned up, and sometime he opened the buttons in prayer.

"He had a wrapper dyed in saffron; sometimes he prayed with the

people wearing that alone; at other times he wore only the cloak without adding any other thing; he had a felt cloak which he wore and said: 'I am but a slave, I wear like slaves.' He had two dresses reserved for Fridays, separate from his dresses of the other days. Sometimes he wore one cloak alone, and tied its two corners between his shoulders; often he prayed in it with the people in funeral prayer; sometimes he prayed in his house in the one cloak wrapping it around keeping its sides crossed; and it could be the cloak which he had used during sexual intercourse; he often prayed at night in the cloak only and put on part of the dress that adjoined his fringe, and left the other portion on one of his wives and prayed.

"And he had a black cloak, then he gave it (to someone); so Umm Salamah said to him, 'May my father and mother be made your ransom! What happened to that black cloak?' He said, 'I put it on (someone).' So she said, 'I had never seen anything more beautiful than your whiteness on its blackness.' Anas said, 'And often I saw him praying with us the *ẓuhr* prayer, wearing a cloak, tying its two sides; and he used to wear ring, and sometimes he came out having tied a thread on his ring for remembering something; and he used to seal the letters with it and said, "Seal on the letter is better than insinuation."'

"And he used to wear a skull-cap under his turban, or without turban; and often he removed his skull-cap from his head and used it as a cover before him and prayed towards it. Sometimes he did not have a turban, so he tied head-band on his head and forehead; and he had a turban named *saḥãb* (cloud), then he gifted it to ʻAlī. Sometimes ʻAlī appeared in it, then he (s.a.w.) used to say: 'ʻAlī is coming to you in the cloud.'

"And when he put on a dress, he began from its right side, and said: 'All praise is due to Allãh Who clothed me with what I cover my shame, and beautify myself among the people;' and when he un-dressed, he removed it from his left side; When he wore a new dress, he gave the old one to a needy person and then said: 'There is no Muslim who covers a Muslim with his worn out dress – not doing it except for Allãh – but he will be in Allãh's security, guaranty and good as long as it would cover him, dead or alive.'

"And he had a ground-spread of leather stuffed with palm-frond, its length was two arms or so, and breadth one and a half arms or so; and he had a cloak spread for him, wherever he moved, it was folded twice under him; and he slept on mat, there was nothing else under him.

"And it was among his manners to give name to his riding ani-

mals, arms and provisions. The name of his standard was *'uqãb* (eagle), and his sword, which he took with him in wars, was named Dhu 'l-Fiqãr; he had a third sword called al-Mukhdhim, and yet anothers, called ar-Rasūb and al-Qaḍīb; the grip of his sword was gilded with silver. He wore a leather-belt which had three silver rings; his bow was named al-Katūm, and the quiver al-Kãfūr; his she-camel's name was al-'Aḍbã', his mule was al-Duldul, his donkey was Ya'fūr; and his milking goat, whose milk he drank was called 'Aynah.

"He had a cleansing pot of clay, which he used for performing ritual ablution and drinking. People used to send their small children (who had reached the age of understanding) to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.), and they were not prevented from approaching him; so if they found in that pot some water, they drank from it and wiped it on their faces and bodies, seeking blessings with it."

74. *al-Ja'fariyyãt*: It is narrated from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his forefathers from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) wore quilted caps . . . He had a sheild called Dhãtu 'l-Fuḍūl, it had three silver links, one in front and two at the back . . ."

75. *al-'Awãlī*: It is narrated that he (s.a.w.a.) had a black turban, in which he used to pray.

The author says: It is narrated that his (s.a.w.a.)'s turban had three, or five, coils.

76. *al-Khiṣãl*: Narrates through his chain from 'Alī in the *ḥadīth* of four hundred that he said: "Wear cotton dresses, because it is the dress of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), and he did not wear hair or wool except during sickness."

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadūq has also narrated it as a *mursal ḥadīth*; aṣ-Ṣafwãnī has narrated it in *Kitãbu 't-Ta'rīf*; it clarifies the meaning of what was earlier said about his (s.a.w.a.)'s wearing wool, and that there is no contradiction.

77. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Ismã'īl ibn Muslim, from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.) from his father (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had a short spear with a crutch at its end; he leaned on it, and took it out on the two *'īd* days and (fixing it before him) he prayed towards it."

The author says: It has also been narrated in *al-Ja'fariyyãt*.

78. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Hishãm ibn Sãlim from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The ring of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was from silver."

79. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Abū Khadījah that he said: "He (the Imām) said, 'The stone of the ring is round.' Then he said, 'Like this was the ring of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).'"

80. *al-Khiṣāl*: Narrates through his chain from ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥīm ibn Abi 'l-Bilād, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had two rings (seals), on one of them was written: *Lā ilāha illa 'llāh, Muḥammadun Rasūlu 'llāh*; and on the other (was): *Ṣadaqa 'llāh*."

81. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Ḥusayn ibn Khālid, from Abu 'l-Ḥasan II (a.s.) *inter alia* in a *ḥadīth*: "Surely the Prophet (s.a. w.a.) and the Leader of the Faithful, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and the Imāms (peace be upon them) wore the rings in the right hand."

82. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: It is narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq from ʻAlī (peace be upon both) that he said: "The Prophets used to wear shirt before trouser."

The author says: It is also narrated in *al-Jaʻfariyyāt*; there are other traditions on the above themes.

83. Among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners regarding his residence and its related things are what is written in *Kitābu 't-Taḥṣīn* (by Ibn Fahd) that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.), left this world and never put a brick over a brick."

84. *Lubbu 'l-Lubāb*: "He (a.s.), said, 'Mosques are the sitting places of the prophets.'"

85. *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from as-Sakūnī, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) came out from the house in the summer, he did so on a Thursday; and when he wanted to enter because of cold in the winter, he entered on a Friday."

The author says: It has also been narrated in *al-Khiṣāl* as a *mursal* one.

86. *al-ʻUdadu 'l-Qawiyyah* (by ash-Shaykh ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Muṭahhar, brother of al-ʻAllāmah, may Allāh have mercy on both): Narrates from Khadījah, may Allāh be pleased with her, that she said: "When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) entered the house, he used to call for a receptacle, and cleansed for prayer, then he stood up and prayed two short *rakʻah*s; then he came to his bed."

87. *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from ʻAbbād ibn Ṣuhayb, that he said: "I heard Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) as saying, 'The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) never hatched any plan against an enemy.'"

88. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: "The bedding of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was a cloak, and his pillow was of leather stuffed with palm-

fronds; one night it was folded double, when morning came, he said: 'This bedding prevented me last night from prayer;' so he ordered that it should be kept unfolded; and he had a bedding of leather stuffed with palm-fronds. Also, he had a cloak which was spread for him wherever he went and it was folded double."

89. *Ibid*: Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: "Never did the Messenger of Allãh wake up from sleep but prostrated in *sajdah* of Allãh."

90. Among his (s.a.w.a.) manners regarding matrimony and children was what is narrated in the tract of *al-Muḥkam wa 'l-mutashãbih* of al-Murtaḍã, through his chain upto *at-Tafsīr* of an-Nu'mānī, from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: "A group of the Companions had forbidden to themselves women, eating during the day and sleeping at night. Umm Salamah gave this news to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), so he went out to his Companions and said, 'Do you feel aversion from women? But surely I go to the women, and eat during the day and sleep at night; so whoever dislikes my *sunnah* is not from me . . .'"

The author says: This meaning is narrated in the books of both sects through many ways.

91. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Isḥãq ibn 'Ammãr, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "Among the ethics of the Prophets is the love of women."

92. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Bakãr ibn Kardam and sev-eral (others), from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'The delight of my eyes is made in prayer and my enjoyment in women.'"

The author says: Nearer to it is what has been narrated through other ways.

93. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: "When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) wanted to marry a woman he used to send to her someone who looked at her. . . ."

94. *at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī: It is narrated from al-Ḥusayn, son of the daughter of Ilyãs, that he said: "I heard Abu 'l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍã (a.s.) saying, 'Surely Allãh has made the night time for rest, and He has made the women means for rest; and it is a part of *sunnah* to perform marriage at night and give food (to people).'"

95. *al-Khiṣãl*: Narrates through his chain from 'Alī (a.s.), *inter alia*, in the *ḥadīth* of four hundred, that he said: "Shave the heads of your children on the seventh day, and give, equal in weight to their hair, silver as *ṣadaqah* to a Muslim; and likewise had done the Messenger of Allãh

(s.a.w.a.) with al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and all his children."

96. Among his manners regarding food and drink and related to the table, is what has been narrated in *al-Kãfī*, through his chain from Hishãm ibn Sãlim and another one, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "There was nothing more liked by the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), than that he should remain hungry (and) afraid regarding Allãh."

97. *al-Iḥtijãj*: Narrates through his chain from Mūsã ibn Jaʻfar, from his forefathers, from al-Ḥusayn ibn ʻAlī (peace be upon them), *inter alia*, in a lengthy *ḥadīth*, concerning the questions of a Syrian Jew from the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.): ". . . The Jew said to him, 'They believe about ʻĪsã that he was ascetic.' ʻAlī (a.s.) said to him, 'He was like that, and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) was the most ascetic of all prophets; he had thirteen wives, apart from the slave-girls who were under his pos-session; and yet no table-cloth was raised for him that had a food on it; and he never ate wheat bread, nor did he eat his full three nights consequently from barley bread.' . . ."

98. *al-Amãlī*, aṣ-Ṣadūq: Narrates from al-ʻĪṣ ibn al-Qãsim that he said: "I said to aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.), 'A *ḥadīth* is narrated from your father that he said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) never ate his full from wheat bread." Is it correct?' He said, 'No, the Messenger of Allãh never ate wheat bread, and never ate his full from barley bread.'"

99. *ad-Daʻawãt* (by ar-Rãwandī): He said, "It is narrated that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) never ate (while) reclining except once, then he sat down (straight) and said, 'O Allãh! I am your servant and your Messenger.'"

The author says: This meaning has been narrated by al-Kulaynī, ash-Shaykh (through many chains), aṣ-Ṣadūq, al-Barqī and al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʻīd (in *Kitãbu 'z-Zuhd*).

100. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Zayd ash-Shaḥḥãm, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) never ate reclining since Allãh raised him (as Prophet) until he expired; he used to eat like a slave and sit like a slave." "I said, 'Why?' He said, 'In humility to Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty.'"

101. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Abū Khadījah who said: "Bashīr ad-Dahhãn asked Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) and I was present (there), 'Did the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to eat reclining upon his right or left side?' He (a.s.) said, 'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) never used to eat reclining upon his right or left side, but he used to sit like a slave.' I said, 'For what [he did so]?' He (a.s.) said, 'In humility to Allãh, to Whom

belong Might and Majesty.'"

102. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Jãbir, from Abū Ja'far (a.s.), that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to eat like a slave and sit like a slave; and he used to eat on the ground and sleep on the ground."

103. *Iḥyãu 'l-'Ulūm*: "When he (s.a.w.) sat for eating, he gathered his knees and legs as one does in prayer, except that a knee was over the other and a foot was over the other; and he used to say, 'I am but a slave, I eat as a slave eats and sit as a slave sits.'"

104. *Kitãbu 't-Ta'rīf* (by aṣ-Ṣafwãnī): Narrates from 'Alī (a.s.): "When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) sat on a table, he sat like a slave and he reclined upon his left thigh."

105. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbãs that he said: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to sit on the earth, tether the goat and accept the invitation of a slave."

106. *al-Maḥãsin*: Through his chain from Ḥammãd ibn 'Uthmãn, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to lick his fingers when he ate."

107. *al-Iḥtijãj*: Copying from the book, *Mawãlīdu 'ṣ-Ṣãdiqīn* that he said: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to eat all types of food; and he ate what Allãh had made lawful for him with his family and servants when they ate; and with whoever invited him from among the Muslims for eating; and on whatever they partook of [i.e. table or plate] and when-ever they ate, except when a guest came to them, then he ate with his guest. . . . And the most agreeable food to him was that which was (taken) with a lot of dependents."

108. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Ibnu l-Qadãḥ from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) took any meal with the people, he was the first to put his hand (in the food) and the last to remove it, in order that the people should eat (their full)."

109. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain to Muḥammad ibn Muslim, from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "The Leader of the Faithful (peace be upon him) has said, 'The prophets' evening meal is after *'ishã'* prayer; therefore you should not leave (neglect) evening meal, because surely leaving the evening meal ruins the body.'"

110. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from 'Anbasah ibn Najãd, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "No food, in which contained dates, was presented to the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) but he began with dates."

111. *al-Kãfī* and *Ṣaḥīfatu 'r-Riḍã* (a.s.): Narrate through their chains from

his forefathers (peace be upon them) that he said: "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) ate dates, he put the stone on the back of his palm, and than threw it away."

112. *al-Iqbāl* (Ibn Ṭāwūs): Copying from the second part of *Tārīkh an-Nāysābūrī* (in the biography of al-Ḥasan ibn Bashar), through his chain, that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to thank Allāh between every two morsels."

113. *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain, from Wahb ibn ʻAbd Rabbih, that he said: "I saw Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) using tooth-pick. I looked at him; so he said, 'Surely the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used tooth-pick; and it makes mouth pleasant.'"

114. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: It is narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that when he drank, began and said *tasmiyah*[6]. . . and he sipped the water slowly without swallowing the lot; and he used to say, "Liver ailment is from swallowing."

115. *al-Jaʻfariyyāt*: Narrates from Jaʻfar ibn Muḥammad, from his fore-fathers, from ʻAlī (a.s.) that he said: "I checked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) several times and (found that) when he drank he breathed three times, with every breath he recited: *Bismi 'llāh* . . . to begin with, and: *al-ḥamdu li 'llāh* at the end; so I asked him about it, and he said, 'O ʻAlī! (It is) to thank Allāh with: *al-ḥamdu li 'llāh*, and *tasmiyah* is for (pro-tection from) sickness.'"

116. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: "He (s.a.w.a.) did not breathe into the pot when he drank; and if he wanted to breathe, he kept the pot away from his mouth until he breathed."

117. *Iḥyāu 'l-ʻUlūm*: "And when he (s.a.w.a.) ate meat, he did not lower his head to it; he used to raise it to his mouth properly then tore it to pieces." Then he said, "And when he ate meat especially, he washed both his hands thoroughly then wiped his face with the water left over-hand."

118. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: It is narrated about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he used to eat various kinds of food.

The author says: Thereafter aṭ-Ṭabrisī has described several types of food which he (s.a.w.a.) used to eat, like, bread, meat (of vari-ous types), melon, water-melon, sugar, grapes, pomegranate, date, milk, *harīsah*[7], ghee, vinegar, wild chicory and cabbage. It is narrated that he liked dates; also that he loved honey; another narration says that the most loved fruit for him was pomegranate.

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[6] To say: *Bismi 'llāhi 'r-Raḥmāni 'r-Raḥīm*.

[7] A sweet pastry made of flour, melted butter and suger. (*tr.*)

119. *al-Amãlī*, aṭ-Ṭūsī: Narrates through his chain, from Abū Usãmah, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The [staple] food of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was barley when he found it, and his sweet-meat was dates, and his firewood was palm-leaves."

120. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: It is narrated about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he did not eat hot (food) until it became cold, and he used to say: "Surely Allãh has not fed us fire, certainly hot food does not have *barakah*."

And when he ate, he said: "*Bismi 'llãh* . . ."; and he used to eat with three fingers, and from the side that was close to him, and he did not take from that (side) which was adjacent to another person. When food was brought before him, he began before the others, and then they began. He used to eat with three fingers – the thumb, the one adjacent to it and the middle finger, and sometimes took help from the fourth. He used to eat with his entire palm, and he never ate with two fingers. And he used to say: "Eating with two fingers is the Satan's eating." And one day his companions brought *fãlūdhaj* and he ate (it) with them, and then said, "From what is it made?" They said, "We mix ghee and honey and it comes to this as you see." He said, "It is a good food."

And he used to eat bread made of unsieved barley floor; and he never ate wheat bread, nor did he eat his full with barley bread; and he never ate on a table-cloth until he died. And, he used to eat water-melon and grapes; and he ate dates and fed its stone to the goat; and he never ate garlic, onion, leek or the honey which had *maghãfīr*; and *maghãfīr* is a residue of the tree that remains in the bee's stomach, and it throws it into the honey; so its smell remains in the mouth.

And he never criticized any food – if he liked it, he ate it; and if he disliked it, he left it, but did not make it unlawful to others; and he used to lick out the bowl and said, "The last part of the plate is the greatest food in *barakah*." When he finished, he used to lick his three fingers (with which he ate) one by one; and he used to wash his hand from the food until it became clean; and he never took food alone.

The author says: The expression, the thumb, the one adjacent to it and the middle finger, shows the beautiful manner of the narrator, because he did not say, the thumb and the *sabbãbah* . . .[8] avoiding to call a finger of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) reviler or rebuker.

What is narrated here that he (s.a.w.a.) ate from the *fãlūdhaj*, goes against what has been narrated in *al-Maḥãsin*, with its chain, from Yaʻqūb

[8] *Sabbãbah* = Index finger. Literally it means, the (finger) used in reviling, rebuking. It was not a good manner to call a finger of the Prophet the reviler/ rebuker. (*tr*.)

ibn Shu'ayb, from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "While the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) was in ar-Raḥbah with a group of his com-panions, a dish of *fālūdhaj* was presented to him as gift. He said to his companions, 'Extend your hands;' so they extended their hands and he too extended his, then he withdrew it and said, 'I (just) remembered that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had never eaten it, so I did not like to eat it.'"

121. *Makārimu 'l-Akhlāq*: He said: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to drink from the bowls of glass, which were brought from Syria; and he drank from bowls, which were made from wood, hides and earthen ware."

The author says: Near to its earlier part is narrated in *al-Kāfī* and *al-Maḥāsin*, and there is in it: «and he liked to drink from Syrian bowl, and he used to say: "It is the cleanest of your vessels."»

122. *Ibid*: It is narrated about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he used to drink from his palm (and water was poured in it), and he used to say: "There is no vessel cleaner than hand."

123. *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from 'Abdullāh ibn Sinān that he said: "The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to slaughter two rams on the day of al-Aḍḥā, one for himself and the other on behalf of those who did not have means from his *ummah*."

124. And among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners regarding toilet is what is written in *Sharḥu 'n-Nafliyyah* (of the Second Martyr) about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he was never seen [engaged in] urinating or relieving bowel.

125. *al-Ja'fariyyāt*: Narrates through his chain from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his forefathers, from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: "Verily, when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) wanted to discard mucous he covered his head, then buried that, and when he wanted to spit, he did like that, and when he wanted to relieve bowel, he covered his head."

The author says: Constructing the toilet appeared in Arabia after Islam; before that they used to go forth to open spaces, as is inferred from some traditions.

126. *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from al-Ḥusayn ibn Khālid, from Abu 'l-Ḥasan II, that he said: "I said to him, 'A *ḥadīth* has been narrated to us that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to do *istinjā'*[9] and his ring was in his finger, and so was done by the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.); and the engraving on the seal of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was: "Muḥammad the Messenger of Allāh".' The Imām (a.s.) said, 'They speak truth.' I said, 'So we too should do (like that)?' He said, 'Surely they

[9] Cleansing after discharge of urine and/or relieve of bowel. (*tr.*)

wore the ring (seal) in the right hand and you wear it in the left.' . . ."

The author says: Near to it is narrated in *al-Ja'fariyyãt*, and in *al-Makãrim* copying from *Kitãbu 'l-Libãs* (of al-'Ayyãshī) from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (a.s.).

127. And among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners at the time of calamities and trials and regarding dead bodies and related matters are what are nar-rated in *al-Makãrim*: "Whenever the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) saw a pimple in his body, he saught refuge with Allãh and showed humility and fervently prayed to Him. They used to say to him: 'O Messenger of Allãh! There is no problem in it;' and he used to say: 'Surely, when Allãh wants to magnify a small thing, it becomes great, and when He wants to reduce a great thing, it becomes small.'"

128. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Jãbir, from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "The *sunnah* is to carry the bier on its four sides; and whatever carrying is done in addition to it, is voluntary."

129. *Qurbu 'l-Asnãd*: It is narrated from al-Ḥusayn ibn Ṭurayf, from al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alwãn from Ja'far, from his father, that al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (peace be upon both) was sitting and there were some of his com-panions with him; then a funeral procession passed from there; some of the people stood up and al-Ḥasan (a.s.) did not stand. When they went away, some people said to him, "Why did you not stand up? May Allãh preserve your health! Because the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to stand up for a bier when they passed with it." So, al-Ḥasan (a.s.) said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had stood up only once; it happened that a Jew's bier was proceeding and the place was con-fined, so the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) stood up and he did not like that that bier should rise above his head."

130. *ad-Da'awãt*, al-Quṭb: He said that when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) followed a bier, he was overcome by grief, did much talking to him-self, and did not talk much.

131. *al-Ja'fariyyãt*: Narrates through his chain from Ja'far ibn Muḥam-mad, from his forefathers from 'Alī (peace be upon them) that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to scatter three handfuls of earth on a grave.

132. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Zurãrah, from Abū Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to do especially with someone dying from among the Hãshimites a thing which he did not do with any of the (other) Muslims; when he prayed (funeral) prayer of the Hãshimite and his grave was sprinkled with water, the

Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) put his palm on the grave until (the marks of) his fingers could be seen on the wet earth; so if a stranger or a traveller from the people of Medina arrived and saw a new grave with marks of the palm of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) he would ask, 'Who has died from the progeny of Muḥammad?'"

133. *Musakkinu 'l-Fuād* (of the Second Martyr): Narrates from ʻAlī (a.s.) that when the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) condoled, he said: "May Allāh give you (its) reward and have mercy on you"; and when he congratulated, he said: "May Allāh bless you and send His bless-ings to you."

134. And among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners concerning *wuḍū'* and bath is what is narrated in *Ãyãtu 'l-aḥkām* (of al-Quṭb) from Sulaymān ibn Buraydah, from his father, that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to perform *wuḍū'* for each prayer; when it was the year of victory he prayed his prayers with one *wuḍū'*, ʻUmar said, "O Messenger of Allāh! You have done something, which you had not done (before)." He said, "Intentionally have I done it."

135. *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Zurārah, that he said: "Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, 'Should not I relate to you the *wuḍū'* of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.)?' We said, 'Certainly.' So, he called for a basin with some water and put it in front of him; then he uncovered his arms; then he dipped his right palm in it and said, 'Like this (will be done) when the palm is clean'; he then scooped up a handful of water and put it on his forehead, and said, 'In the name of Allāh'; and let it fall down to the sides of his beard, then he passed his hand once on his face and forehead; then he dipped his left palm and scooped up a hand-ful and put it on his right arm, then passed his hand on his forearm until the water flowed to his fingertips; then he dipped his right palm and scooped up a handful and put it on his left arm, and passed his hand on his (left) forearm until the water flowed to his fingertips; then he wiped the front part of his head and backs of his feet with the wetness of his left hand and the residue of the wetness of the right hand."

He said: "And Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, 'Surely Allāh is odd and likes odd (number); sufficient then for you in *wuḍū'* is three dippings: one for the face and two for the two forearms, and you will wipe the forepart of your head with the wetness of your right hand, and with the residue of that wetness the back of your right foot, and will wipe with the wetness of your left hand the back of your left foot.'"

Zurārah said: "Abū Jaʻfar (a.s.) said, 'A man had asked the Leader of

the Faithful (a.s.) about the *wuḍu'* of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) so he demonstrated to him like this.'"

The author says: This theme is narrated from Zurãrah, Bukayr and others through numerous ways; have narrated it al-Kulaynī, aṣ-Ṣadūq, ash-Shaykh, al-'Ayyãshī, al-Mufīd, al-Karãjikī and others; and traditions of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (peace be upon them) for this matter are *mustafiḍah*, nearly *mutawãtir*.

136. *al-Amãlī* (by Mufīdu 'd-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī): Narrates through his chain from Abū Hurayrah that when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) performed *wuḍū'*, he began with his right side.

137. *at-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chains from Abū Baṣīr that he said, "I asked Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) about *wuḍū'*. He said, 'The Messen-ger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to perform *wuḍū'* with a *mudd*[10] of water, and take bath with a *ṣã'*[11]'"

The author says: A similar tradition is narrated through another way from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).

138. *al-'Uyūn*: Narrates through his chains from ar-Riḍã (a.s.), from his forefathers (peace be upon them), *inter alia* in a lengthy *ḥadīth*: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) said, 'Surely, we *Ahlu 'l-Bayt*, *ṣadaqah* is not allowed to us, and we have been ordered to perform *wuḍū'* pro-perly, and we do not make an ass jump on a she-ass.'"

139. *at-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chains from 'Abdullãh ibn Sinãn, from Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "Gargling and rinsing the nose is among what the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) has made *sunnah*."

140. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Mu'ãwiyah ibn 'Ammãr that he said: "I heard Abū 'Abdillãh (a.s.) saying, 'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to do *ghusl* (bath) with one *ṣã'* (of water); and if one of his women was with him, he did *ghusl* with a *ṣã'* and a *mudd*.'"

The author says: al-Kulaynī has narrated this meaning in *al-Kãfī*, through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from the Imãm (a.s.), and there it elaborates that both did *ghusl* from one vessel; and likewise is narrated by ash-Shaykh through another chain.

141. *al-Ja'fariyyãt*: Narrates through his chain from Ja'far ibn Muḥam-mad from his father (peace be upon both) that he said: "al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad asked Jãbir ibn 'Abdillãh about the bath of the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), Jãbir said, 'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), used to scoop water [with his hand] on his head three times.' al-Ḥasan ibn

[10] *Mudd*: A measure of varying quantity in various countries, in *fiqh* it denotes 3/4 kg.
[11] *Ṣã':* Nearly 3 kg.

Muḥammad said, 'I have a lot of hair (on my head), as you see.' Jābir said, 'O noble man! Do not say so, because the hair of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was thicker and more fragrant.'"

142. *al-Hidāyah* (by aṣ-Ṣadūq): "aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, 'The *ghusl* of Friday is *sunnah wājibah* for men and women in journey and in presence . . .' And aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said, '*Ghusl* of Friday is purity and atonement of sins from Friday to Friday.' He (also) said, 'The reason of (laying down of) Friday bath was this: That the Helpers (*Anṣār*) used to work for their camels and properties; when Friday came, they came (direct) to the mosque and the people got annoyed with smell of their armpits. So, Allāh ordered the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to take bath, and thus the *sunnah* was established.'"

The author says: Concerning his (s.a.w.a.)'s customs regarding *ghusl*, traditions have been narrated for the *ghusl* of the day of Fiṭr and similar baths in all the *'īd*s and numerous other baths; probably some of them will be mentioned later on, God willing.

143. And among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners and *sunnah*s concerning prayer and related matters is what is narrated in *al-Kāfī*, through his chain from al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār, ʻAbdu 'l-Malik and Bukayr, that they said: "We heard Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) saying, 'The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to perform supererogatory prayers double of the obligatory, and keep supererogatory fast double of the obligatory.'"

The author says: ash-Shaykh too has narrated it.

144. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Ḥanān that he said: "ʻAmr ibn Ḥurayth asked Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), and I was sitting there, he said, 'May I be made your ransom! Please tell me about the prayer of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.).' He said, 'The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to pray eight *rakʻah*s of noon, and four of the first (i.e. *ẓuhr*), and eight after it and four of *'aṣr*, and three of *maghrib* and four after *maghrib*, and *'ishā'* the last four, and eight *tahajjud* and three (*shafaʻ* and) *witr*, and two *rakʻah*s (*nāfilah*) of *fajr* and dawn prayer two *rakʻah*s.'

"I said, 'May I be made your ransom! If I have strength to pray more than that, will Allāh punish me for excess of prayer?' He said, 'No; but He will punish you for leaving the *sunnah*.'"

The author says: This tradition shows that the two *rakʻah*s in sitting position prayed after *'ishā'* prayer are not part of fifty (*rakʻah*s), but with them the number, fifty-one, is completed, counting them as equal to one *rakʻah* in standing position. Rather it was laid down as a substitute of the *witr*, in case the death came before he could stand up for *witr*; as al-Kulaynī (may Allāh have mercy on him), has narrated in *al-Kāfī*, through

his chain, from Abū Baṣīr from Abū ʿAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day, should not sleep (at night) without (praying) *witr*." "I said, 'You mean the two *rakʿah*s after the *ʿishā'*?' He said, 'Yes; they are counted as one *rakʿah*; whoever prayed them, then something happened to him (i.e. he died), he would die on *witr*; and if death did not happen to him, he would pray *witr* in the last period of the night.'

"I said, 'Did the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) prayed these two *rakʿah*s?' He said, 'No.' I said, 'Why?' He said, 'Because the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to receive revelation, and he knew whether he would die in that night or not, while others do not know it. That was why he did not pray them, and ordered (the people) to pray them.' . . ."

Probably the statement that he did not pray them, means that he did not pray them regularly, rather on some nights he prayed and on others he left them, as is inferred from some other traditions. In this way, it would not go against what has been narrated that he used to pray them.

145. *at-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chain from Zurārah that he said: "I heard Abū Jaʿfar (a.s.) saying, 'The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was not praying in day time until the noon; when the shadow reached (towards the east) about half a finger, he prayed eight *rakʿah*s; then when the shadow reached an arm's length, he prayed *ẓuhr*; then after *ẓuhr* he prayed two *rakʿah*s, and he used to pray two *rakʿah*s before the time of *ʿaṣr*; when the shadow extended to two arm-lengths, he prayed *ʿaṣr*; and he prayed *maghrib* after sunset; when the reddish colour (in the sky) vanished the time of *ʿishā'* came; the last time of *maghrib* is the end of the reddish colour; when the reddish colour vanished the time of *ʿishā'* came, and the end of the *ʿishā'* time is one third of the night.

"'And he did not pray after *ʿishā'* until midnight, thereafter he prayed thirteen *rakʿahs* including the *witr* and two *rakʿah*s of *nāfilah* of *fajr*; then at dawn-break he prayed the morning prayer.'"

The author says: This tradition does not describe fully the *nāfilah* of *ʿaṣr*; and it is known from other traditions.

146. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Muʿāwiyah ibn Wahb that he said: "I heard Abū ʿAbdillāh (a.s.) saying, and he was describing the prayer of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.); he said, 'The cleansing (water) was brought to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and covered (and put) near his head, and his teeth-cleansing small stick was put under his bed; then he slept as long as Allāh wished; when he awoke, he sat up, then turned his eyes in the sky, then recited some verses from [ch. of] "The House of ʿImrān": *Most surely*

in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand [3:190]. Then he cleansed his teeth and performed cleansing, then proceeded to the mosque and prayed four *rak'ah*s, equal to his recitation was his *rukū'*, and equal to his *rukū'* was his *sajdah*; he remained in *rukū'* until it was said: "When will he raise his head?" and he remained in *sajdah* until it was said: "When will he raise his head?"

"'Then he returned to his bed and slept as long as Allāh wished; then he woke up, and sat up; then he recited the verses from "The House of 'Imrān", and turned his eyes in the sky, then cleansing the teeth, he performed (ritual) ablution, then proceeded to the mosque and prayed four *rak'ah*s like he did before.

"'Then he returned to his bed and slept as long as Allāh wished; then he woke up and sat up; then he recited verses from "The House of 'Imrān", and turned his eyes in the sky; then cleansing his teeth, he performed (ritual) ablution, then proceeded to the mosque and prayed two *rak'ah*s, then went forth for prayer.'"

The author says: This meaning has also been narrated in *al-Kāfī* from two chains.

147. It is narrated that he (s.a.w.a.) used to make the *nāfilah* of the dawn prayer short, he used to pray it in the beginning of the *fajr* and then proceeded to the (*wajib*) prayer.

148. *al-Maḥāsin*: Narrates through his chain from 'Umar ibn Yazīd, from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "Whoever, while praying *witr*, said in it seventy times: 'I seek parden of Allāh, my Lord, and repent to Him', and keeps doing it diligently, until he completes a year, Allāh writes him among those who seek pardon in early dawn.

"And the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to seek Allāh's pardon in the *witr* seventy times, and used to say seven times: 'This is the stand of him who seeks Your refuge from the Fire.' . . ."

149. *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to say in the *qunūt* of *witr*: 'O Allāh! Guide me among those whom You guided, and give me remission among those whom You remitted, and take care of me among those You cared for, and give me *barakah* in what You have given me, and protect me from the evil of what You have decreed; surely You do decide and no one decides against You; Glory be to Thee, O Lord of the House! I seek Your pardon and return to You, and I believe in You and rely on You; and there is no strength or power except with You. O Merciful!'"

150. *at-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chain from Abū Khadījah from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "When the month of Ramaḍān came, the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to increase in prayer, and I too increase; therefore, you too should increase."

The author says: The Imām (a.s.) means by this increase, the thousand *rakʻah*s of *tarāwīḥ*, the *nāfilah* of the month of Ramaḍān, which the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to pray in addition to the fifty *rakʻah*s of daily *nawāfil*; many traditions have been narrated as to how to pray it and how to divide it on the Ramaḍān nights; and it has come through the chains of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (peace be upon them) that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to pray it without congregation, and prohibited praying it with congregation. He used to say: "There is no congrega-tion in *nāfilah*."

And there are other especial prayers reserved for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), narrated in the books of invocations; we have not copied them here because they are beyond our purpose here. Likewise, there are many prophetic *sunnah*s about prayers, invocations and *awrād*[12], whoever wants to know about them should look in the relevant books.

151. *al-Kāfī*: Narrates through his chain from Yazīd ibn Khalīfah that he said: "I said to Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.), 'Surely ʻUmar ibn Ḥanẓalah has brought to us from you the time [of prayer].' He said, 'Then he will not tell lie about us.' . . . And I said, 'He said that the time of *maghrib* (prayer) is when the disc [of the sun] disappears; but when the Messen-ger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was on a journey, he delayed the *maghrib* and combined *maghrib* with *ʻishā'*.' He said, 'He said right.'"

152. *at-Tahdhīb*: Narrates through his chain from Ṭalḥah ibn Zayd from Jaʻfar from his father (peace be upon them) that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), in rainy nights, used to shorten the *maghrib* and hasten the *ʻishā'*, praying both together, and used to say: "He who does not have mercy will not be dealt with mercy."

153. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from Ibn Abī ʻUmayr, from Ḥammād, from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was on a journey, or had an urgent work, he used to combine *ẓuhr* with *ʻaṣr* and *maghrib* with *ʻishā'*, . . ." This meaning is narrated by al-Kulaynī, ash-Shaykh, Ibnu 'sh-Shaykh and the First Martyr, may Allāh have mercy on them.

154. *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Muʻāwiyah ibn Wahb from Abū ʻAbdillāh (a.s.) that he said: "The

[12] Short invocations, (pl. of *wird*).

muadhdhin used to come to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) during hot season (calling him) for the prayer of *ẓuhr*, so the Messenger of Allāh (s.a. w.a.) used to tell him: "*Abrid, abrid*."

The author says: aṣ-Ṣadūq interpreted the last two words as, "make haste, make haste", taking it from "*al-barīd*" [post]; but apparently it indicates delay, so that intense heat might go away, as points to it what is narrated in the Book of *al-'Ulā'*, from Muḥammad ibn Muslim that he said, "Passed from near me Abū Ja'far (a.s.) in the mosque of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and I was praying. Then he met me after that and said, 'Take care not to pray *wājib* at that time; do you perform it in the intense heat?' I said, 'I was praying *nāfilah*.'"

155. *Iḥyāu 'l-'Ulūm*: He said: "Never sat anyone near him when he was praying, but he shortened his prayer and turned to him and said, 'Do you need something?' Then after accomplishing his work, he returned to his prayer."

156. *Kitāb Zuhdu 'n-Nabī* (by Ja'far ibn Aḥmad al-Qummī): He said: "Whenever the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stood up for prayer, his face turned ashen, and there was whizzing sound coming from his chest or belly because of the (Divine) fear."

The author says: This meaning has also been narrated by Ibn al-Faḥd and others.

157. *Ibid*: He said: "And another tradition says that when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stood in prayer (it looked) as if he was a flung away cloth."

158. *Biḥāru 'l-Anwār*: He said: "'Āishah said, 'The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) talked with us and we talked with him, but when the (time of) prayer came then it was as if he did not know us nor we did know him.'"

159. *al-Majālis* (by Mufīdu 'd-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī): Narrates through his chain to 'Alī (a.s.) that he wrote to Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, when he made him the governor of Egypt: ". . . Then look at your *rukū'* and *sujūd*, because surely the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was most perfect of the people in prayer, and shortest of them in its activities."

160. *al-Ja'fariyyāt*: Narrates through his chain from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his forefathers from 'Alī (a.s.) that he said: "When the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) yawned during the prayer, he stopped it with his right hand."

The author says: A similar tradition is narrated in *ad-Da'āim*.

161. *'Ilalu 'sh-Sharāi'*: Narrates through his chain from Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam from Abu 'l-Ḥasan Mūsā (a.s.), *inter alia*, in a *ḥadīth* that he said: "I said to him, 'For what reason it is said in the *rukū'*: *Subḥāna rabbiya 'l-*

ʻaẓīmi wa bi-ḥamdih, and it is said in *sajdah*: *Subḥãna rabbiya 'l-aʻlã wa bi-ḥamdih*?' He said, 'O Hishãm! Surely when the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) was taken up in *miʻrãj*, and he per-formed prayer, and remembered what he had seen of the grandeur of Allãh, his limbs trembled and he sat down on his knees and he began saying: *Subḥãna rabbiya 'l-ʻaẓīmi wa bi-ḥamdih*; then when he stood up from the *rukūʻ* and looked at a place still higher, he fell down on his face, saying: *Subḥãna rabbiya 'l-aʻlã wa bi-ḥamdih*; when he said it seven times, that fear went away; therefore this began as a *sunnah*.'"

162. *Tanbīhu 'l-Khawãṭir*: (of ash-Shaykh Warrãm ibn Abī Firãs) from an-Nuʻmãn that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to level our lines, as if he equalizes the arrow-shafts, until he saw that we were heedless of it. Then one day he came out and stood up until he was about to say *takbīr*, and he saw a man whose chest was shown ahead, so he said, 'Servants of Allãh! You should level your lines or your faces will be turned aside.'"

163. *Ibid*: It is narrated from Ibn Masʻūd that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to touch our shoulders in prayer and say, 'Be straight and be not uneven, otherwise your hearts will differ from one another.' . . ."

164. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: Narrates through his chain from Dãwūd ibn al-Ḥaṣīn, from Abu 'l-ʻAbbãs, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) remained in seclusion (*iʻtikãf*) in the first ten days of the month of Ramaḍãn, then remained in seclusion in the middle (second) ten days of Ramḍãn, thereafter he continued to remain in seclusion in the last ten days."

165. *Ibid*: He said: "Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) said, 'The (battle of) Badr was in the month of Ramaḍãn, and the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) did not remain in seclusion; so when the next year came, he remained in seclu-sion for twenty days: ten days for that (current) year and ten as repay-ment of what he had missed [of the last year].'"

The author says: al-Kulaynī has narrated this and the preced-ing tradition in *al-Kãfī*.

166. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that he said: "When the last ten days came [i.e. of the month of Ramaḍãn), the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to remain in *iʻtikãf* (seclusion) in the mosque, and a cupola of hair was erected for him, and he tucked up his apron, and his bed was rolled up." (Someone added): "and was detached from the women." (The Imãm) said, "As for

detachment from the women, No."

The author says: This theme is narrated in many traditions; the negation of detachment from the women – as they have explained and what the traditions say – means permission of mixing with and living with them, not cohabitation.

167. And among his manners and *sunnah*s regarding fast, is what is narrated in *Man lã yaḥḍuruhu 'l-faqīh*, through his chain from Muḥam-mad ibn Marwãn that he said: "I heard Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) saying, 'The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to fast until it was said, "He would not break the fast", and used to break the fast until it was said: "He would not fast"; then he fasted one day and broke the fast the next day; then he fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. Then he returned from it to the fast of three days in a month: Thursday at the beginning of the month, Wednesday in the middle of the month, and Thursday at the end of the month; and he (s.a.w.a.) used to say: "That is the fast of the life-time."

"'And my father (a.s.) used to say: "No one is more hated by Allãh than the man who, when it is said to him that the Messenger of Allãh used to do such and such, says: 'Allãh will not punish me for my striving in prayer and fast'; it is as if he thinks that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had left out some good work being unable to do it."'"

168. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Muḥammad ibn Muslim, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.), in the beginning of his prophethood, used to fast [continuously] until it was said: "He will not leave fasting"; and left fasting until it was said: "He will not fast (again)"; then he left this and began fasting one day and breaking the fast the next day (and it is the fast of Dãwūd); then he left it and fasted three bright days; then he left it and divided them – one day in every ten days – two Thursdays with a Wednesday in the middle, and he (s.a.w.a.) expired and he followed the same.

The author says: There are numerous nearly *mutawãtir* tradi-tions of this theme.

169. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from ʻAnbasah al-ʻÃbid that he said: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) kept up fast on Shaʻbãn, Ramaḍãn and of three days in every month.

170. *an-Nawãdir* (of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʻĪsã): Narrates from ʻAlī ibn Nuʻmãn, from Zarʻah, from Sumãʻah, that he said: "I asked Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.) about the fast of Shaʻbãn, whether the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) did fast it. He said, 'Yes, and he did not fast its whole month.' I said, 'How many days he broke the fast?' He said, 'He broke it.'

So I repeated (the question) and he repeated it three times, without adding to the word, 'he broke it'. The next year I asked him the same question, and he replied to me in the same way. . . ."

171. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: It is narrated from Anas that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) had a drink with which he broke the fast, and another drink for the *suḥūr*;[13] and often both were the same, and often it was milk, and sometime the drink was a bread liquified. . . ."

172. *al-Kãfī*: Narrates through his chain from Ibnu 'l-Qaddãḥ, from Abū ʻAbdillãh (a.s.), that he said: "The first thing with which the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) broke his fast in the season of fresh ripe dates with those fresh dates, and in the season of dried dates with dried dates."

173. *Ibid*: Narrates through his chain from as-Sakūnī, from Jaʻfar, from his father (peace be upon both), that he said: "When the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) fasted and did not get anything sweet, he broke his fast with water; and it is written in some traditions that sometimes he broke his fast with dried grapes."

174. *al-Muqniʻah*: It is narrated from the progeny of Muḥammad (peace be upon them) that they said: "It is *mustaḥab* to take something before the dawn, even a sip of water. And it is narrated that the best of it is date and a mush made of wheat or barley, because the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) used to take it."

The author says: And it is among his continued *sunnah*s. One of the things reserved to him was the fast of *wiṣãl*, i.e. fasting con-tinuously for more than one day without any intervening *iftãr*. And he expressly prohibited it to his *ummah* and said: "Surely you are not strong enough to do it and surely for me there is near my Lord what feeds me and gives drink to me."

175. *Makãrimu 'l-Akhlãq*: It is narrated about the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he used to eat *harīsah* most of the times and used it for *suḥūr* too.

176. *Man lã Yaḥḍuruhu 'l-Faqīh*: He said: "When the month of Rama-ḍãn came, the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) freed every prisoner, and gave to every begger."

177. *Daʻãimu 'l-Islãm*: ʻAlī (a.s.) said, "The Messenger of Allãh (s.a. w.a.) used to roll up his bed and became very active during the last ten days of Ramaḍãn; and he used to keep his family awake in the twenty-third night, and sprinkled water on the faces of the sleepy ones in the night; and Fãṭimah (peace be upon her) did not let anyone to sleep from

[13] *Suḥūr*: The last meal before dawn (in fasting). (*tr*.)

her family in that night, and prepared them for it by reducing their meal during the day; and she used to say: 'Deprived is he who is deprived of its [i.e. this night's] good.'"

178. *al-Muqni'*: It is *sunnah* that the man should break his fast in *al-Aḍḥã* after the (*'īd*) prayer, and in *al-Fiṭr* before the prayer.

179. And among his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners regarding recitation of the Qur'ãn and invocation are what is narrated in *al-Majãlis* (of ash-Shaykh) through his chain from Abu 'd-Dunyã, from the Leader of the Faithful (a.s.) that he said, "Nothing prevented the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) from recitation of the Qur'ãn except *janãbah* [major ritual impurity]."

180. *Majma'u 'l-Bayãn*: It is narrated from Umm Salamah that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to disconnect his recitation verse to verse.

181. *Tafsīr* (of Abu 'l-Futūḥ): "He (s.a.w.a.) used not to sleep until he recited *al-musabbiḥãt*, and he used to say: 'There is, in these chapters, a verse that is better than a thousand verses.' They said, 'And what is *al-musabbiḥãt*?' He said, 'Chapters of "Iron", "The Mustering", "The Ranks", "Congregation" and "Mutual Fraud"'".

The author says: This meaning has been narrated in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn*, from al-'Irbãṣ ibn Sãriyah.

182. *Duraru 'l-La'ãlī* (of Ibn Abī Jamhūr): Narrates from Jãbir that he said: "The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used not to sleep until he recited *Tabãraka* and *Alif-Lãm-Mmīm at-Tanzīl*."[14]

183. *Majma'u 'l-Bayãn*: "'Alī ibn Abī Ṭãlib (a.s.) has narrated that the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) loved this chapter: *Sabbiḥ isma rabbika 'l-A'lã*[15]; and the first to say: *Subḥãna Rabbiya 'l-A'lã*, was Mīkã'īl."

The author says: The first part of this *ḥadīth* is narrated in *Biḥãru 'l-anwãr* from *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*. There are other traditions about what he (s.a.w.a.) used to say at the time of reciting the Qur'ãn, or reciting (various) chapters, or especial verses. Whoever wants to know it should refer to the relevant books.

There are lectures and statements issued by him (s.a.w.a.) in which he awakens the awareness of, and prompts, the people to hold fast to the Qur'ãn and meditate on it, to be led by its guidance and be illuminated by its light. And he (s.a.w.a.) had more right than anyone else to reach, for the perfection he called the people to, and the first and quickest to reach to every good; and, according to the well-known narration, he had said:

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[14] ch.67 and 32. (*tr.*)
[15] ch.87 (*tr.*)

"Turned my hair white the chapter of 'Hūd'."[16] And it has been narrated[17] from Ibn Mas'ūd that he said: "Ordered me the Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) that I should recite for him some parts of the Qur'ãn; so I recited for him the chapter of Yūnus; until when I reached the divine words: *and they shall be brought back to Allãh, their true Master* [10:30], I saw him and tear was trembling in his noble eyes."

These are some small bits[18] from his (s.a.w.a.)'s manners and *sunnah*s; there are nearly *mutawãtir* traditions, which have been repeatedly narrated in a lot of books of both sects, and Divine Speech supports it and does not refute any of it; and Allãh is the Guide.

SLAVERY AND ENSLAVEMENT

The Divine Words: *If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy slaves* [5:118] explain the meaning of slavery and servitude. Although there are many verses in the Qur'ãn that have this theme, but this verse contains the rational argumentation which shows that if there were a slave it would conform with reason that his master had the right to punish him as he wished, because he was his master and owner.

The reason does not accept the permission of giving punishment, and does not allow the management that would be very hard, except after establishing that the master is allowed to have all managerial dis-posals. So, the master has the right to deal with his slave anyhow he wishes and with whatever he wishes; the reason has made exception of only those disposals which it disapproves because they are disgust-ing and ignoble, not because the slave is slave.

As its concomitant, the slave is bound to obey his master in all that he is told to do, and to follow him in his wishes. He has no auth-ority to engage in any activity if his master does not approve of it. It is somehow pointed at by the Divine Words: *Nay! They are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His command do they act* (21:26-27). See also the verse: *Allãh sets forth a parable* – (consider) *a slave, the property of another,* (who) *has no power over*

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[16] He (s.a.w.a.) points to the Divine Words in it: *Continue then in the right way as you are commanded*, . . . [11:112] (*Author's note*)

[17] The tradition is narrated by its meaning. (*Author's note*)

[18] We have taken it from a booklet that we had written earlier on the *sunnah* of the Prophet (may Allãh's blessings be upon him and his progeny). (*Author's note*)

anything, and one whom We have granted from Ourselves a goodly sustenance so he spends from it secretly and openly; are the two alike? (16:75).

A full discussion of various aspects of what the noble Qur'ān sees on the question of servitude and slavery depends on the following chapters:

1. Consideration of Servitude to Allāh (s.w.t.):

There are numerous verses in the noble Qur'ān which count the people slaves of Allāh (s.w.t.), and builds on it the root of the religious call: The people are slaves and Allāh is their true Master. Rather it crosses this limit and takes all those who are in the heavens and the earth stamped with the brand of servitude; like the reality which is called angel in their multitude, and another reality which the Qur'ān has named jinn. The Sublime, to Whom belong Might and Majesty says: *There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent God as a slave* (20:93).

There is no doubt that the consideration of the servitude to Allāh (s.w.t.) is an aspect arrived at through analysis. First, we analyse the meaning of servitude to its basic components, then we decide that its reality is established after removal of its extra characteristics, which attach themselves to the basic meaning in the rational creatures. There are some people one of whom is called slave. Why? Because his person is owned by another, an ownership which allows that another person (who is his owner and master) to manage him in any way he wishes and with whatever he desires, and removes from the slave the inde-pendence of will altogether.

Meditation in this meaning leads one to decide that a human being – and if you wish, you may extend it and say, everyone who has cognizance and will – is slave of Allāh in the true meaning of servi-tude. The fact is that Allāh is the Owner of all that is called "thing" in the real meaning of ownership. Nothing owns – neither by itself nor through something else – any harm or benefit, nor death, life or resur-rection; and nothing becomes independent in existence by its person, attribute or action except what Allāh has made it its owner – an owner-ship which does not negate Allāh's ownership, nor does it transfer the ownership from Him to someone else; rather He is the Owner of what He has made them the owner of, and has power over what He has given them the power on, and He has power over everything, and He encompasses everything.

This real authority and actual ownership is what makes it obligatory to them to obey what Allãh wants from them by His legislative will, and the religious laws and regulations which He lays down, through which their affairs are mended and their bliss and happiness in both worlds is achieved.

In short, Allãh, the Sublime, is their owner in the creative ownership, which makes them His slaves, submissive to His decree, no matter whether they knew Him or not, obeyed His commands or disobeyed. He is, also, their owner in the legislative ownership, which obligates them to listen and obey, and commands them to observe piety and worship.

This ownership and mastership in its effect is distinguished from the ownership and mastership which is prevalent among the people – and likewise its opposite, the servitude – as follows: As Allãh is the creative Owner unrestrictedly, and there is no owner other than Him, it is not permissible, in the stage of legislative servitude, to take any other master, nor to worship any other. Allãh says: *And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship* (any) *but Him* (17:23). It is contrary to the mastership prevalent among the people, because here he who overcomes others through any means of domination enjoys ownership.

Also, as among His slaves who are owned by Him, there is nothing which is not owned by Him, and they are not divided in their existence between owned and not owned, and as they are in their per-sons and attributes as well as in their conditions and deeds, creatively owned by Him, which is followed by legislative ownership. So, this ownership decrees that the servitude will be everlasting and will cover all that returns to them in any way. They have no latitude to worship Allãh partially, for example, that they worship Him with tongue, but not with hand. Also, they are not allowed to reserve some parts of their worship to Allãh and the other parts to someone else. It is con-trary to the mastership prevalent among the people, in which the master has no rational authority to do whatever he wishes. Ponder on it.

It is this theme which leads to the unrestrictedness of the like of Divine Words: . . . *you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor; . . .* (32:4). *And He is Allãh, there is no god but He! All praise is due to Him in this* (life) *and the hereafter, and His is the judgement, . . .* (28:70). *Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allãh; to Him belongs the kingdom, and to Him is due* (all) *praise, and He has power over all things* (64:1).

In any case, the servitude considered in regards to Allãh is an

analytical meaning inferred from the servitude, which rational people see in their societies, so it has a basis in human society. Now, Let us see what is its basis:

2. Enslaving Human Beings and Its Causes:

Enslavement and holding people in bondage was prevalent in human society upto about seventy years before today.[19] And probably it is still found in some primitive tribes in Asia and Africa. Keeping slave-boys and slave-maids was an established system among ancient nations for which no historical beginning can be fixed. It had its special system and rules and regulations, which were commonly followed, in all nations, and some special rules were found in different nations.

Its basic meaning: A human individual, in presence of some special conditions, becomes merchandise, owned like other owned items of trade, e.g. animals, vegetables, and stones, etc. When the per-son is owned, he is deprived of all options; someone else owns his actions and his effects that manages them as he wishes.

This was their custom concerning enslavement. However it was not based on an at random will, nor was it unrestricted or unbased on any condition. It was not possible for someone to enslave whomsoever one wished, nor could he own whomsoever he wished through trade or gift and so on. In short, the basic meaning was not based on any reck-lessness or foolhardiness, although contained within the laws related to it there could have been numerous foolish items, according to varying opinions and customs of the nations.

Enslavement was based on a sort of victory and domination, for example, victory in war, which gives the victor power to do with his vanquished enemy whatever he wishes e.g., killing, imprisoning and so on; and the domination of presidency which makes a tyrant president do whatever he wants in his jurisdiction; and the mutual relationship of procreation and breeding which puts the mastership of the affairs of a weakling infant in the hands of his strong father who could do with him whatever he thought fit, even selling him, gifting him, exchanging him or lending him and so on.

We have repeatedly mentioned earlier that the ownership in the human society is based on the power ingrained in human nature to utilize and take benefit from everything it is possible to utilize in any way. And

[19] i.e. at the time of this writing, probably in 1960's. (*tr.*)

man, by nature, employs other things; he employs, for con-tinuing his life, everything he has in power, and gets benefit from his existence's beneficial things, beginning from his basic matter, then elements, then various components of solid matters, then animal king-dom until another human being who is his like in humanity.

However, as he found that he is in dire need of society and social cooperation, he felt himself obliged to accept partnership with all indi-viduals of his species in utilization of the benefits, which are obtained from the things through their joint activities. In this way, he and all individuals of the human species together will form a society, in which every part will be reserved for one or more deeds, and the whole society will benefit from the whole benefits. You may say it in other words that the results of those activities will be divided among them, and every one of them will enjoy those benefits according to his status in social order. That is why we see that as much as a social individual gets strength and power, he negates natural sociology and begins em-ploying people, dominating and enslaving them, and decides about their persons, honour and properties in whatever way he wishes.

Consequently, if you ponder freely on their system of enslaving people, you will find that they do not consider owning a man if he is a member of their society; rather an owned man is considered outside of society, like a fighting enemy whose only aim is to destroy the tilth and offspring; and man erases his name and trace as he is out of his enemy's society, and he has a right to destroy him through annihilation and to enslave him as he wishes, because there is no sanctity attached to him; or like a father *vis-à-vis* his minor children and his other depend-ents as he believes that being his dependents in the society they cannot be his equal, of the same status or similar, and he has the right to do whatever he likes with them, not excluding killing or selling, etc.

Possibly, the owner has some special characteristics because of which he believes that he is above the society, he is above the others in importance, and he does not share with them a benefit; rather he has the final say and definite decision; and has the right to enjoy the best of what he chooses, and to manage their persons even through owner-ship and enslavement.

It is now clear that the basic root on which man has built the custom of enslavement is the right of special domain and uncondi-tional ownership which man believes he has, and that he does not ex-clude from it anyone except his partners in human society, those who are equal to

him in social weight, and with whom he secures himself in the citadel of cooperation and mutual help. As for others, he does not see any hindrance in owning or enslaving them.

The main candidates for this enslavement are three groups: (i) A fighting enemy, (ii) weak children and women *vis-à-vis* their fathers and guardians, respectively, (iii) a vanquished demeaned person *vis-à-vis* the victor and dominant person.

3. Origin of Enslavement in History:

Although it is not known when the system of slavery began in the society, yet most probably slaves were taken in the beginning as a result of war and domination, and then their children and women were included in it. That is why we find in the history of strong warrior nations stories and tales as well as the laws and regulations related to enslave-ment through imprisonment, and which is not found in other nations.

Slavery was prevalent in ancient civilized nations, like India, Greece, Rome and Iran, and among religious communities like the Jews and the Christians, as is seen in the Tawrāt and the Injīl. This was the case until the advent of Islam. Islam affirmed the basic idea but restricted its circle and ameliorated its laws; finally came the Brussels Convention some seventy[20] years ago, which resolved to abolish the slavery.

Ferdinand Total says in his Dictionary of Eminent Persons of East and West:

> Slavery was widespread among the ancients and slave was taken from war-prisoners and captives and from defeated tribes. Slavery had a system well known among the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans and the Arabs in the days of ignorance and in Islam.
>
> The system of slavery was abolished gradually: In India (1843), in French colonies (1848), in the U.S.A. after the Civil War (1865), and in Barazil (1888) until the Brussels Convention resolved to abolish enslavement; but it is still found in some tribes in Africa and Asia.
>
> The basis of the abolition of slavery is equality of human beings in rights and responsibilities.

4. Islamic View About It:

Islam divided the slavery according to its causes: It has been explained earlier that its main causes were three: War, domination and

[20] In 1890. (*tr.*)

guardianship like parentage, etc; and it abolished two of them alto-gether, i.e., domination and guardianship.

According to Islam all people are equally honourable, be they king or subject, ruler or ruled, commander or soldier, master or servant; it abolished all distinctions and life characteristics, and established equal-ity amongst individuals in the respect which it accorded to their persons, honour and properties; and gave weight to their perceptions and wills – and it means full authority within the circle of respected rights – and to their actions and what they acquired, and it is their authority and control on their properties and benefit of their existence in activities. A master of affairs in Islam has authority over the people only in imple-mentation of penal code and other laws and regarding the general wel-fare, which returns to the religious society. But as to what his heart desires and what he likes for his individual life, he is just like any other person, he has no special privilege among them, and his order is not implemented in what he desires, be it great or small. This abolishes the slavery based on domination, as a negative with absence of the subject.

It also regulated the guardianship of fathers over their sons; they do have the rights of nursing and protection, and they are duty bound to bringing them up and educating them, and looking after their properties as long as they are prevented from managing it because of their minor-ity; and when they reach the age of maturity, then they are equal to their fathers in social religious rights; they are independent in their lives, and they have the option for what they do like for their own selves.

Of course, it has emphasized the enjoinment of doing good to their parents and consideration of the rights of upbringing. Allãh says: *And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents – his mother bears him with fainting upon fainting and his weaning takes two years – saying: "Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual coming. And if they contend with you that you should asso-ciate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns to Me, . . ."* (31:14-15); *And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship* (any) *but Him, and goodness to your par-ents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: "O my Lord! Have mercy on them, as they brought me up* (when I was) *little."* (17:23-24).

And the Islamic *sharī'ah* has counted disobedience of parents

among major sins that lead to perdition.

As for the women, it gave them a position in society and accorded them a social weight from which the healthy reason cannot deviate a single step. In this way they became one half of the human society while hitherto they were deprived of it; they were given independent authority in matters of matrimony and property when uptil now they had no such power, or were not independent.

They participated with men in many affairs, while some affairs were exclusively reserved to them and some others were reserved to men. All this was decided considering their being's sustenance and their physiological composition; then she was given latitude in some matters while men were put under hard pressure, like providing sustenance of the family, participating in battlefields, and so on.

We have talked on this subject in detail at the end of the chapter of "The Cow" in the second[21] volume of the book and in the begin-ning of the chapter of "Women" in the fourth[22] volume; and it was made clear there that the women enjoy in Islam more leniency *vis-à-vis* the men which cannot be found in any sociological system, ancient or modern.

Allãh says: . . . *for men is the benefit of what they earn and for women is the benefit of what they earn;* . . . (4:32); . . . *there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a proper manner;* . . . (2:234); . . . *and they have rights similar to those against them in a just manner;* . . . (2:228); *"That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; . . ."* (3:195). Then He has declared for the whole species joined together: . . . *for it is* (the benefit of) *what it has earned, and upon it is* (the evil of) *what it has wrought;* . . . (2:286); . . . *and no soul earns* (evil) *but against itself, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another;* . . . (6:165). Of the same import are many other unrestricted verses which treat an individual man a complete and perfect part of the society and gives him an independence with which he becomes separate from any other person in the result of his actions, be it good or evil, beneficial or harmful, without making exception of big or small, male or female.

Then He equalized them all in honour and dignity, and then He abolished all honour and dignity except the religious dignity, which is acquired by piety and deeds. Allãh says: . . . *and to Allãh belongs the honour and to His Messenger and to the believers,* . . . (63:8); *O you*

[21] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.4, pp.61-83 (*tr*.)
[22] *ibid.,* vol.7, pp.275-306 (*tr*.)

people! Surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and clans that you may recognize each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allãh is the one among you most pious; (49:13).

However, Islam affirmed the third cause of enslavement, i.e. war. It means that an unbeliever who fights Allãh, His Messenger, and the believers will be arrested and enslaved. But in case the believers fight amongst themselves there is no imprisonment nor enslaving; rather that party which has crossed the limit will be fought against until it submits to the rule of Allãh. Allãh says: *And if two parties of the believers fight, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allãh's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allãh loves those who act equitably. The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and . . .* (49:9-10).

It is because a fighting enemy whose only aim is to annihilate humanity and destroy tilth and offspring, the human nature does not entertain least doubt that he should not be treated as a part of the human society who should be allowed to enjoy the fruits of life and the societal rights; and that it is incumbent to remove him even by annihilation, if necessary. On this runs the system of human beings since they came on this earth uptil this day, and it will continue in the same manner.

Islam has laid the foundation of the society – the religious society – on the basis of monotheism and the government of Islamic religion; it has kept away a man who spurns monotheism and religious govern-ment, from being a part of human society, except as a *dhimmi* or under agreement. He who is outside the religion and its government or agree-ment is outside the human society. Islam deals with him as a non-human, whom a human being may deprive from any blessing which man enjoys in his life; it pushes him to the fringe, thus cleansing the earth from the impurity of his arrogance and corruption. In short, he is deprived of any respect in his person, his action and the results of any of his endeavours; therefore, the Islamic army may arrest him and enslave him when he is vanquished.

5. What is the Way of Enslaving in Islam?

The Muslims prepare to deal with neighbouring unbelievers. They complete the proof against them and invite them to the word of truth with wisdom, admonition and argumentation in a beautiful manner. If the unbelievers respond to it positively, then they become brethren in religion,

sharing in all what is for or against the Muslims. But if they reject it, and they are from the People of the Book, and accept to pay *jizyah*, then they are left alone to enjoy their *dhimmah*. Or, if they entered into agreement, no matter they were the People of the Book or not, their agreement would be honoured and fulfilled. But if there was nothing of the above, then they are given ultimatum and fought.

In such encounter, whoever among them raises a sword and enters the battle, will be killed; but will not be killed from them the weakened men, women and children; they will not be attacked at night or ambushed; water will not be cut off from them, they will not be tortured nor their organs cut off; they shall be fought against until there is no *fitnah* and religion becomes of Allāh; then if they desisted then there is no hostility except against the unjust.

When the Muslims vanquished them and the fighting came to its end, then whatever the Muslims brought under their control – be it their persons or properties – will become their property. The history of the wars of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his expeditions con-tains bright shining pages, that is full of his comportment brimming over with beautiful justice, full of chivalry and generosity, magna-nimity and kindness.

6. What is the Behaviour of Islam Concerning Slave-Men and Women?

When one gets enslaved, he becomes his master's property; bene-fits of his work are for another person [i.e. his master] and his expenses are on his master.

Islam has enjoined that the master should treat his slave as he treats his family members, and he is one of the family [members]; he/ she equally shares with them in requirements of life and its needs. The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to eat with his slaves and servants and sit with them; he did not give preference to himself over them in food, cloth, etc.

Islam also laid down that the slaves should not be burdened with hard labour; they should not be tortured, abused or oppressed. They were allowed to marry among themselves with permission of their masters, also free men could marry slave girls; they could give evi-dence like free people and could be their partners in work during slavery and after that.

Islam showed so much compassion towards them that they par-ticipated with free men in all public affairs. We find many slaves who

were given governorship and military command, etc., as the history of the early days of Islam shows; among the very respected companions of the Prophet, there were some slaves or freed slaves, like Salmãn, Bilãl and others.

The Messenger of Allãh (s.a.w.a.) emancipated his slave-girl Ṣafiyyah, daughter of Ḥuyayy ibn Akhṭab and married her; and he married Juwayriyyah daughter of Ḥãrith after the battle of Banu 'l-Muṣṭaliq, and she was among the captives, and they were two hundred houses with their women and children, and this marriage became the cause of the emancipation of all the captives; and this story, in short, was written in the fourth volume of this book.[23]

It is evident from the behaviour of Islam that it gives preced-ence to a pious slave over a dissolute free man; and it allows a slave to own property and enjoy general privileges of life with permission of his master. This is in short what Islam has done for them.

Then it puts utmost emphasis on recommendation to emancipate them, and called in attractive way to remove them from the environ-ment of slavery to the open field of freedom; and in this way their number was continuously decreasing and their group was turning free for the sake of Allãh. Not only that: It made emancipation of slave a part of atonements, like atonement of murder, atonement of missing a fast, etc. Then it allowed them to make condition with their masters, or enter into agreement of *kitãbah*[24] and *tadbīr*.[25] All this meticulous-ness of giving them freedom and joining them with healthy human society, in a definite way, was rendered with the aim of removing from them all manners of humiliation.

7. Gist of the Above Discussions:

The above discussion leads us to three results.

First: Islam spared no effort to abolish the causes of enslavement, to reduce the number of and to weaken, those causes, until it stopped at the one cause which was inevitable by nature's decision, that is, allowing the enslavement of every person who fights against the relig-ion, who opposes the human society and does not submit to the truth in any

[23] See Eng. transl., vol.7, pp.296-300.

[24] *Kitãbah*: An agreement between a slave and his master that the slave will become free after payment of a stipulated amount. (*tr*.)

[25] *Tadbīr*: When a master declares that his slave will become free after the master's death. (*tr*.)

possible way.

Second: Islam used all possible means to accord respect to slaves – male and female – and in bringing their life affairs nearer to the life of the members of the free society, until they became like one of them – even if not one of them; and there did not remain on them except a thin curtain, that is, whatever they earn in excess of what is needed for their necessities of an average life, belongs to their masters, not to them. You may also say: There is no difference between a free man and a slave in Islam except permission of the master about the slave.

Third: Islam used every effective device to join the group of slaves to the society of free men: in some cases by exhortations, and in others by compulsion, like atonements, and through permission and enforce-ment, like *tadbīr* and *kitãbah*.

8. Progress of Enslavement in History:

Scholars have said[26] that enslavement appeared, when it appeared, through capture and imprisonment. Before that, when tribes overcame in their wars and battles and captured some enemies, they killed all of them. Then they thought that it was better to leave them alive and keep them under their ownership like other war booties. It was done not for benefitting from their work, but as a good deed towards them, and for preservation of mankind and for respect of moral laws which gradual-ly had appeared among them on the path of civilization.

This system appeared among the tribes only after they had left getting their sustenance through hunting; because upto that point they did not enjoy enough affluence which could allow them to spend on slave boys and girls; until they changed to the life of settlement and emigration, and then they could do so.

With the spread of slavery among tribes and nations – by which-ever way it was – man's social life was transformed, as first some system and decipline appeared in the societies, and second, there appeared division of labour.

Slavery, when it was prevalent in the world, was not of one manner throughout; it was not found in some regions altogether, like Australia, Central Asia, Siberia, North America, Skimos and some regions in Africa in north of Nile and south of Rambis.

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[26] It has been taken from: 1. *Encyclopaedea of Religion and Ethics*, by John Hisinik [?] British ed., 2. *Short History*, by H.G. Wells, British ed., 3. *Spirit of the Laws*, by Monisque, Tehran ed. (*Author's note*)

Conversely, it was wide spread in Arabia, primitive Africa, Europe and South America. Also, it was prevalent among the Jews; the Torah calls the slaves to obey the masters; and the same was the case with Christianity; St. Paul in his epistle to Philemon writes that Onesimus was a defector slave whom Paul caused to return to his master, Philemon.

The Jews were most gentle with their slaves; its evidence may be seen in the fact that we have not found any towering building built by them, unlike the pyramids of Egypt and historical Assyrian build-ings, which were built by back breaking labour of slaves; the Romans and the Greeks were the harshest nations to slaves.

The idea of emancipation of slaves spread in the Eastern Rome after Constantine, until slavery was abolished there in the 13th century C.E.; but it continued in Eastern Rome in another form, that is, they sold and bought farms together with the farm workers – Farming was among slaves' activity – but forced labour was abolished among them.

Slavery was widely prevalent in most of the European countries upto 1772 C.E. Shortly before that an agreement was made between England and Spain that the English would fetch to them every year four thousand eight hundred African slaves upto thirty years in ex-change of a huge amount that they would pay.

Public opinion was raised among them against slavery and en-slavement in 1761 C.E. The earliest group, which rose against it, was the religious sect, the Quakers. This continued until a law was passed that whoever entered the British isle would become free.

However, it appeared after deep investigation in 1788 C.E. that England dealt every year in two hundred thousand slaves; and those slaves who were taken from Africa to America alone were one hundred thousand.

This continued until keeping of slaves was abolished in Britain in 1833; and the government paid slave-trading companies twenty million pounds as price of the slave boys and girls who were thus emancipated. At this time 770,380 persons became free.

Slavery was abolished in America in 1862, after tough struggles by American people. The northern and the southern states of the U.S.A. had different views on slavery. The northern states kept slave boys and girls for 'adornment', for status purpose only; not so the southern states – their main occupation was farming and agriculture, and they were in dire need of a great number of working hands; they kept the slaves for getting the benefits of their labour. That was the reason they felt restrained from

accepting the general emancipation.

Slavery continued to be abolished in one kingdom after the other until the Brussels Convention of 1890 C.E. decided to abolish it completely, and the governments enforced it and it was abolished in the whole world, and in this manner millions of people were emancipated. (End of their statement, abridged)

If you look minutely you will see that this long struggle and this argumentation, then the laws of emancipation that were laid down and enforced, all of this was related to the slavery through guardianship or domination, as may be witnessed from the fact that most or all of the slaves were brought from around Africa where such slavery was practised. As for the enslavement through captivity in war (which Islam had confirmed), it was never discussed about.

9. A Glance on Their Structure:

This natural independence, which we call God-gifted independence of man, (and we do not know what is the reason of depriving all other animal species of this freedom while they too are similar to man in psychological cognizance and motivating will; except that we say that it is man himself who snatches it away in order to benefit from them), does not branch out from any root except on this: that man is equiped with inner cognizance which differentiates between what he enjoys and what gives it pain, and then with a will which incites it to pull towards him what gives him enjoyment and to push away what gives it pain; thus he has the ability to choose for himself what he pleases.

Human cognizance is not restricted – that it attaches to one thing and does not attach with another in that a weak and humble man does not know what a strong and powerful man does; nor is the human will limited with a circle which prevents it from attaching to some of what it likes, or compels it to be attached with what someone else's will is attached, in order to proceed in a way that some other person benefits from it and he forgets himself. A weak and vanquished man wants for himself things similar to all that strong and victorious man wants; and there is no physical connection between the will of a weak and that of a strong person which could compel the will of the weak not to be attached with what the will of the strong one is attached; or which might make the will of the weak dissolve in that of the strong man, so that the two together would become one will acting for the benefit of the strong one; or the weak's will would follow the strong's will in a way that it loses its freedom.

In such a case, as is necessary for the laws of life to be based on the foundation of physical body, it was incumbent for man to live independent in his person and in his deeds; and from this breast has suckled the abolition of slavery.

But we should think over this God-gifted freedom to man: Whether it is prevalent in the human society in general since it began and remained in human body.

Human species – according to our knowledge – since its beginning lives in sociological condition; and it cannot do otherwise, accord-ing to its system of being, and it is impossible for a society to continue as a society even for a short period without a common system shared by all its members, no matter whether it is a national and just system, or is based on tyranny, fool-hardiness or whatsoever; this system, what-ever it is, limits the individual's freedom.

Moreover, man cannot live without some interference in the matter that ensures his continuity. This is not possible except if he attaches to himself the thing in which he interferes – the attachment which we call ownership – which is more general than the terminology of right and ownership – whatever this man wears, that one cannot wear it; what-ever this individual eates, buys or engages in, another individual can-not hold it under his control. It is nothing but putting a limit to the non-interfering person in generality of his will, a restriction to his freedom.

The humanity has always been subject to discord and dispute since it has come on the earth. Not a single day passes over these per-sons who are spread over the earth, except that the sun rises over them with their discords and sets over them with their disputes. These con-troversies push them to the loss of lives, despoiling of honour and plundering of properties. Had the man believed in unrestricted free-dom for himself – i.e. for humanity – there would not have been any trace of these discords.

Also, the system of censure and punishment was always preva-lent in various types of societies, civilized or barbaric. What is the implication of this censure? It only means that the society takes away from the guilty person somes blessings, which the creation had given him, and deprives him of some of the freedom. Now, if the society or the one who has some authority in society did not own the life of a guilty person who is punished for murder, it could not take it away from him; and if a sinner, indicted for his sin and punished for it by various kinds of chastisement and offence, like amputation, stroke and imprisonment, etc., did not know that the society owned the judge-ment and its implimentation, which

affects his life affairs and deprives him of ease and comfort, and takes away his financial authority, he would not have submitted to it. How can a tyrant transgressor be admonished not to indulge in tyranny and transgression; how can he be prevented from aggression against a person or his honour or pro-perty without depriving him of some of his freedom?

In short, what no reasonable man can have a doubt about is the fact that if the human freedom unrestrictedly remains in human society, even for a single moment, it would create disturbance in the social system at that moment. So, this get together, which also is natural for man and without which it cannot live, puts restriction on the natural freedom which is gifted to man by his natural will and cognizance. Thus, no human society can live except with some restriction to its freedom, in the same way as it cannot live with negation of freedom altogether. And the human society has always been preserving between these two boundaries this freedom which the western propaganda makes us think that it is they who have laid down its name after they had invented its meaning, and have protected it without restriction.

So, it is this natural sociology, which restricts that natural free-dom, and demarcates it as all physical and non-physical powers demar-cate one another. Thus, a power stops from working in consideration of some other power with which it works; like the sight, which is the basis of seeing power, goes on doing its work until the eye becomes tired, or the thinking faculty becomes wearied, and then the sight stops its work in consideration of its colleague's work; likewise the perception of taste enjoys devouring tasty meal and chewing it and swallowing it, until the jaws' muscles become tired and restrain the power of taste, thus it stops from its desired food.

So, the natural sociological demands are not completed for man except when he abandons some of his freedom in action and forgoes his enjoyment.

10. What is the Amount of Limitation?

As for the amount by which this freedom, gifted by the natural get together, is limited, and by which its natural releasing is restricted, it differs with difference of human societies looking at the multitude of the laws which are prevalent in the society, and their smallness because, the restricter of freedom, after the basic get together, is the law which prevails among the people; the more the laws increase and looked minutely at their actions, the more deprivation from freedom will take

place; and vice versa.

But what no sociological get together can avoid in whatever society we look at, and what is incumbent, which no social man can ignore it, is the preservation of the society's existence, because man cannot live without it, and protection of the systems, that are found therein, from any defect and breakdown. That is why you will not find any human society but there is in it a defence system which averts dangers from people and their offspring, and protects them from annihilation; and there is a guardian and overseer, who oversees their affairs, and protects from breakdown the prevalent customs and the established precedents which are respected among them, by spreading the social peace and punishing the tyrant aggressor. And the history, as we know, supports it.

This being the case, the first right laid down for the society in the natural *sharī'ah* is that it should take away the freedom from the enemy of the society in the basic get together. You may say in other words: That the society should own the person and action of its enemy, who intends to annihilate its life and destroy his tilth and offspring, and do away with the freedom of his will in any way he wishes – right through killing downwards, deprive the enemy of custom and law of freedom of action, and own from him what he loses through retribu-tion of person or property, etc.

How can a man – even an individual – believe in the freedom of an enemy who does not respect his society, (so that he might treat him as a brother and join and mingle with him) nor does he desist from destruction of his society (so that he might leave him alone)? How can the natural consideration of society be joined with leaving this enemy free to do whatever he likes? Is it anything but clearly joining two mutually contradictory things? It is only idiocy or insanity.

The above discourse clearly shows that: -

First: To base one's ideal on generalization of human freedom is contrary to the clear natural truth laid down for man, which is among the first natural rights that are laid down.

Second: The right of enslavement recognized by Islam fully conforms to natural *sharī'ah*: That the enemies of the true religion who fight the Islamic society should be enslaved. They should be deprived of the freedom of action and be taken inside the religious society and made to live as slaves, so that they should be trained with good train-ing, and proceed gradually to emancipation; in this way they will join the free

society with safety and benefit. Also, the master of the affairs has the option to purchase them and emancipate them altogether if he sees in it the good of the religious society, or to use in this respect some other way which does not lead to abrogation of divine commands.

11. The End Result of the Abolition:

The big powers enforced the Brussels Convention, strictly banned slave trade, and the slave girls and boys were emancipated. Now, they are not lined up in slave-traders' shops, nor are they pulled ahead like sheep and goats; consequently keeping of eunuchs too was abolished. Today it is impossible to find slaves or eunuchs – even in small num-ber, except what sometimes is reported about primitive nations.

However, will this much – i.e. removal of the name of enslave-ment from tongues, and absence of those called slaves from our sights – convince a critical scholar on this topic? Will not he ask whether it is a verbal problem in which it is enough to ban the use of the name and to call the slave a free man, even if he is deprived of the benefits of his work, and is bound to follow his master's will. Or, if the prob-lem is related to its meaning, in which consideration is to be given to its meaning according to its reality and external effects.

Now, look at the Second World War, has not passed more than a few decades since its end; the victor nations imposed on the defeated enemy unconditional surrender, then they settled in their countries, took millions of their property and ruled over them and their children; not only that, they transferred millions of their captives to their (victors') country and they used them in whatever work they wished and in any way they desired. And the situation continues uptil now.

Would that I knew does enslavement mean something, which is not found here, even if its name is not used in it? Does enslavement mean anything except deprivation of freedom, control of (the slave's) will and work, and enforcement by the powerful dominating party of its command on the weak and humiliated party in whatever way it wished, be it justice or injustice?

By God, is it not astonishing that the Islam's judgement in the best possible way is called enslavement, and their order is not called so, while Islam uses the easiest and lightest aspect and they use the hardest and harshest one? We have experienced their love and friend-ship when they entered our country under the banner of love, help and protection. What would be the condition of those whom they domi-nated over by enmity

and chicanery?

It is now clear that the Convention of abolition (of slavery) was nothing but a political ploy. In reality it took what it rejected.

As for enslavement as a result of war and fighting, Islam en-forced it and they too enforced it in practice, although they avoided uttering its name. As for enslavement based on sale by fathers of their sons, which they banned, Islam banned it long ago. And enslavement through domination and command, Islam had banned it too 1400 years before; but these people unanimously banned it, yet we have to see whether this ban too stopped at the words like other aspects or really reached to its meaning and was supported in practice?

You may find answer to this question by looking at the history of European colonialism in Asia, Africa and America. Look at the calamities they brought there, the blood they shed, the honour they despoiled, the properties they plundered, and arbitrary decisions they took – and not by one, one hundred and one thousand.

You do not have to go far for this observation – if it be far – it is enough to think over the reports of what the people of Algeria are suffering since many years at the hand of France, how the lives are destroyed, towns wrecked and people overburdened under pressure. Also, see what the Arab countries had to bear from the English, and what the blacks and Red-Indians are suffering in America. Again look at Eastern Europe *vis-à-vis* the Socialist Republics. What we are suf-fering at the hands of these and those; all this in its words is sincerity and compassion, but in its meaning is enslavement.

It is clear from the above that when they came to the stage of practice, they took what Islam has legislated, i.e., abolition of freedom when its natural cause is found, and that is war and fighting with the one who wants demolition of society and annihilation of humanity. It is a lawful decision based on a factual basis, which never changes. That basis is that humanity for its continuation needs removal of what op-poses it in existence and continuity. Then comes another reasonable sociological basis which does not change and branches out from its real root, i.e. it is incumbent to protect the human society from anni-hilation and demolition.

This is what they aimed at in their action; they took it in reality and rejected it in words. However, they did not stop at the lawful type, and crossed the boundary into unlawful one. That is, they adopted en-slavement through domination and control. Thus they continue to enslave

thousands, nay, millions, before the talk of abolition and after it. They still sell and purchase, give in gift and lend; but they do not name it enslavement, they call it colonialism or acquisition, protection or guardianship, consideration or help; or similar other words whose only pur-pose is to put a veil on the meaning of enslavement; and whenever a veil becomes worn out or torn, it is discarded and another is put in its place.

Now, nothing remains from what had been abolished by the Brussels Convention – which is continuously announced to the world and its people, and of which the civilized nations are so proud – those who are the pioneers of the developed civilization and in whose hand is the banner of human freedom – except the enslavement through the sale of sons and daughters and castration. And there is not any import-ant benefit, which returns to the slaves; more over this much, is more of a personal aspect than a sociological problem. As such, its abolition is merely a verbal argument, which serves as propaganda matter in their hands, like their all other arguments, which do not go beyond words, and do not affect any meaning.

Of course, there remains here another debatable issue and it is as follows. Islam begins in its war booties, from slave or other pro-perties (other than the land conquered by force) with individuals from its society, and divides those booties amongst them; then it ends at the government, as was done in early days of Islam, and they reserve the right of their use for the government. But it is another topic apart from the original topic of enslavement; probably we shall be helped by Allãh to fully discuss it later, God willing, under the verses of *zakãt* and *khums*; and the help is saught from Allãh.

After all this, we return to the words of the author of *Mu'jamu 'l-a'lãm* copied earlier: "The basis of abolition of slavery is equality of men in rights and duties." What is the meaning of: 'equality of men in rights and duties'?

Does it mean that they equally have rights whose consideration is necessary, even if those right are different and not equal, like the difference between the president and the subordinate, the ruler and the ruled, the commander and the subaltern, a law abiding citizen and the law-breaker, the just and the unjust, because they differ in their sociological weight?

If yes, then it is correct. But it does not mean that there is equal-ity between a beneficial part of the society and the one who is unable to attach to the society and has no honour; he is rather like a lethal poison

wherever it reaches destroys the life; it is the clear natural order that there should be difference between the two, and full freedom should be accorded to the former while the latter should be deprived of it; an enemy has no right on his enemy in his enmity, the wolf has no right over his victim, nor the lion over his prey.

Or, does it mean that because humanity is shared by all human individuals, and any individual, whoever he may be, has power to rise above in civilization, and receive happiness as others have done; so it is a right of humanity on the developing society that it should give freedom to every human being and to train and bring him up until it joins the good society?

This too is right. But sometimes training demands that the trainer should take away from the trainee the freedom of will and action for sometime until he is fully trained, and acquires expertize and the use of his will; then he will truly enjoy the bliss of his freedom; just as a sick person is treated and given unpalatable medicines for his cure; and as a child is trained in a manner which he dislikes. Exactly in the same way Islam takes away the freedom of will and action from the unbelieving people who fight against Islam; it brings them inside the religious society, trains them and gradually brings them in the arena of freedom. The preceeding statement shows that it is a sociological progress; we should look at it and its result and effect in a general and comprehensive manner; it is not an individual's matter, which may be seen individually and partially. Again, it is astonishing that they too affect an action which is followed in Islam, although they differ from it in name and the good intention, as explained earlier.

Or, does it mean that it is the right of the human freedom that it should be applied to all men, and every man should be left free to implement his unrestricted will?

But, it is clear without any doubt that it is not acceptable, nor is it feasible to do in its generality, especially about a fighting enemy – and it is the only aspect, which Islam considers for taking away the general freedom.

Apart from that, if it was true then there should be no difference between one or two and a group: Then why do they accord legal free-dom to one (even in suicide) and two (in duel), yet they do not accept the right for a poor group from the humans that they should remain aloof in caves or such shelters and remain concerned with their own selves, eating the sustenance of their Lord and proceeding on the paths of their lives.

Now, remains one thing: Some one may say: Why did not Islam allow the slaves to own property, so that he could use it on necessities of his life without being a burden on his master? And why did it not put a limit on slavery by Islam, in order that the slave would become automatically free if he accepted Islam? This would remove from him the stigma of depravity, which stained him and his offspring, upto the Day of Resurrection.

But it should be realized that the order for establishment of slavery and depravity from owning a property, appears and is enforced, according to the Islamic *sharī'ah*, at the first moment of his capture; and the natural order against them, the fighting enemies, allowing their depravity of freedom aims at negating their plans and taking away their power of fighting (with which they could destroy the good religious society); and there is no strength or power except through ownership; so when they would not own any work or its result, they would not get power for disputation or fighting. Of course, Islam has allowed them ownership in general by their masters' bestowing owner-ship on them; and it is an ownership under an ownership, and it does not carry the risk of the slaves' independent manipulation.

As for the suggestion that slaves should have become automatically free if they accepted Islam, it is a proposal that would negate the religious policy regarding the defence of Islamic territory, establish-ment of religious society on its feet, and religiously training these fighting groups (who have come under Muslims' control). Otherwise, they would have pretended to enter into Islam soon at coming under its authority, and just on being enslaved; in this way they would have preserved their power and armaments and then returned to their previous behaviour.

We may go looking back at the custom prevalent among nations and groups from today to the earliest era in human history that we can get any information about. We shall see that when two nations or tribes fought and one of them vanquished and subjugated the other, then it considered it as its lawful right to go on killing the enemies until they totally submitted to its rule unconditionally.

This submission did not mean that the defeated party should put its arms on the earth, and then they would be left free to do, as they liked. Nay, they must accept the control of the victorious group, and must totally submit to what they decide about them and how they manage their persons and properties.

It would be foolish to restrict this control with a condition which

would destroy the effect of this open submission; and which would negate its order, pave the way for the enemy to return to his planning and deception and give him a chance to hope to return to the original point. How can the victorious group tolerate this, while it had sacri-ficed the souls and properties for the independence of the blessed society? Will it be anything except injustice to its own self and insult to the most precious item, which it has, and wastage of the blood, properties and endeavours?

No one can raise objection against the victors (who sacrificed their lives and properties to overcome their enemies and thus reduced them to slavery) and say: Well, their men had fought and killed and perverted, so they were arrested and deprived of their freedom; but what is the fault of the children who were born after it, who had not taken arms, drawn a sword, or entered into battlefield? But it is be-cause they are their fathers' sacrifice.

After all this, it should not be forgotten that the Islamic government has the right to seek ways to emancipate the slaves through purchase or freeing, etc. when it finds that it is in the interest of Islamic society. And Allãh knows better.

A TALK ON PUNISHMENT AND FORGIVENESS

1. What is the Meaning of Requital?

No society is devoid of sociological responsibilities, which its members are required to respect. The only aim of the society is to maintain conformance between the members' activities, bring them nearer to one another and join one side of it to the other, in order that it all unites and combines and with its effects and results fulfils the members' needs to the extent everyone is entitled to according to his deeds and endeavours.

These responsibilities, inasmuch as they are related to voluntary affairs, a man may undertake them or leave them; and this in itself would not happen without some negation of the man's freedom of his will and action; it is not impossible for him to stay away from it wholly or partially because man by his nature inclines to freedom without restriction.

Attention to this defect in the laws, and this weakness in its structure, called the sociological man forth to complete this defect and

strengthen its weakness by another means: That he should join its dis-obedience or neglect with some things which an adult and sane man dislikes. This exhorts him to obey the imposed law lest he is faced by consequences, which he dislikes and is hurt with.

This is the requital of the evil; and it is the right of the society or of the ruler against the disobedient ones. Parallel to it run the aspects of obedience. It is possible to keep for the obedient one something which he prefers and like as a recompense of his fulfilment of respon-sibilities, in order that it would induce him to perform an incumbent, or likeable deed; and it, in its turn, is the right of the obedient and submissive member of the society or the ruler; and it is the requital of the good deeds. Often the recompense of the evil is called punishment, and that of good is named reward.

On this very mode, the laws of Islamic *sharī'ah* are laid down. Allãh says: *For those who do good is good* (reward) . . . (10:26); *And* (as for) *those who have earned evil, the punishment of an evil is the like of it,* . . . (10:27); *And the recompense of evil is punishment like it,* . . . (42:40).

Punishment and reward run to a broad spectrum, beginning from dislike and like, censure and praise, reaching to the ultimate point of good and evil. They are related to various factors: especial-ities of the deeds and the doers, the controller of affairs, and the extent of the benefit or harm that would accrue to the society. Probably, all this may be summarized in this way that the more consideration is given to an affair, the greater the punishment or reward for disobedi-ence or obedience, respectively.

Between a deed and its recompense, a sort of similarity and resemblence is kept in mind, even if approximately. And the speech of Allãh runs on the same pattern. Allãh says: . . . *that He may reward those who do evil according to what they do, and* (that) *He may reward those who do good with goodness* (53:31). Even more clear are the divine words quoting the scriptures of Ibrãhīm and Mūsã (peace be upon both): *And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; and that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward* (53:39-41). And it is even more manifest in the laws of retribution. Allãh says: . . . *retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain: the free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female;* . . . (2:178); *The sacred month for the sacred month and all sacred things are* (under the law of) *retaliation; so whoever then*

acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you, and fear Allãh . . . (2:194).

Consequently, it means that the punishment or reward returns to the doer's person with something similar to what he has done. For example, when he disobeys a sociological law, and enjoys himself with what inflicts harm to the society, then he will be deprived of equal amount of the enjoyments in his self, or body, or property, or prestige, etc. which somehow returns to him.

This is to which we pointed under discussion of the meaning of enslavement, that the society or the ruler owns from the culprit his person or some of his personal affairs, which is equal to the crime he has committed, or the defects of the harms, which he has inflicted on the society. Thus, he is punished, i.e., the society, or the ruler, manipu-lates in relation to this ownership – i.e. the right – in the life of the culprit or in some affair of his life, and takes away his freedom to that extent.

If he killed a person – when that person had not killed anyone nor had he done any mischief in the land – in the Islamic society, the ruler would own the person of the culprit because he had brought to the society loss of a respectful life; and its penalty, i.e., killing, ma-nipulates his life in exchange of the ownership he enjoyed. If he stole what amounts to a quarter dīnãr from a secure place, he had brought harm to the society by tearing away a general peace and security's curtain laid down by the hand of *sharī'ah* and protected by the hand of trust. Its penalty is amputation[27] of the hand. What is the reality of this penalty? It means that the ruler has owned from the thief, in exchange of his felony, an affair of his life, which includes his hand and does in it what he decides by taking away his freedom and its means from this aspect. You may judge by analogy various punishments in different *sharī'ah*s and customs.

It is clear from above that the sociological crime and disobedi-ence attract to themselves a sort of slavery and enslavement, for this reason a slave is the clearest example of punishment. Allãh says: *If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy slaves; . . .* (5:118).

This theme has different expositions in different customs and *sharī'ah*s. Allãh mentions in the story of Yūsuf when he had put the drinking cup in the bag of his brother so that he could take him to him-self: *They said: "But what shall be the requital of this, if you are liars?"* i.e., in your denial of the theft of the king's drinking cup: *They said: "The*

[27] In Shī'ah *sharī'ah* only four fingers are cut off. (*tr*.)

requital of this is the person in whose bag it is found; thus do we punish the wrongdoers," i.e., we punish the thief by enslaving him: *So he began with their sacks before the sack of his brother, then he brought it out from his brother's sack. Thus did We plan for the sake of Yūsuf . . . They said: "O Chief! He has a father, a very old man, there-fore retain one of us in his stead; surely we see you to be of the doers of good."* This was the exchange and a sort of ransom: *He said: "Allāh protect us that we should seize other than him with whom we found our property, for then most surely we would be unjust."* (12:74-79)

Often the killer was taken as a prisoner enslaved; sometimes he offered in ransom one of his women like his daughter or sister, etc. Ransoming through giving in marriage was prevalant upto these days among the tribes and clans in our areas, because they treat marriage as a sort of enslavement for women.

2. Is An Obedient Person Counted as Slave of the Obeyed?

Based on this idea, sometimes an obedient one is counted as a slave of the obeyed one; because by this obedience his will follows the will of the obeyed one, thus he is his slave deprived of the freedom of will. Allāh says: *Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! That you should not serve the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should serve Me; . . .* (36:60-61). *Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his god, . . .?* (45:23).

So, the society or ruler owns the guilty one who is punished. Conversely, the obedient one who is rewarded owns from the society or the ruler the reward that is equal to his obedience, because the society or the ruler has decreased through this responsibility some of the God-gifted freedom of the obedient one.

What we have explained just now, is the secret of what is generally accepted that fulfilling the promise is incumbent, but not that of the threat. It is because the theme of promise in the arena of master-ship and slavery is the reward for obedience, while the theme of threat is punishment for disobedience. The reward, inasmuch as it is the right of the obedient on the ruler and is his responsibility, its fulfilment is incumbent on him, so that he may discharge his responsibility; contrary to the punishment, because it is the right of the ruler over the guilty person, and it is not necessary that man must manage his property and get the benefit of his right – it is left to his option. This topic needs further elaboration.

3. Forgiveness and Pardon:

We have reached in the preceding discussion to the conclusion that it is OK to leave the punishment of disobedience, contrary to the reward of obedience. It is a natural dictate to a certain extent, and is based on the fact that meting out the punishment is the right of the ruler over the disobedient one, and it is not always necessary that one should use his right without fail.

However, as it is not always necessary to use one's right of punishment, likewise, it is not allowed to neglect this right altogether. Otherwise the natural decision of establishing the right would become null and void; there will be no sense in establishing a thing, which will have no effect at any time. Moreover, negating the right of punish-ment altogether would demolish the laws, which are made to protect the structure of society; if they are demolished the society would be demolished without doubt.

The decision – allowability of pardoning a sin – is established to a certain extent; but it is an unclear proposition. If there is a reason supporting the pardon, pardoning will be allowed; otherwise retribu-tion is compulsory to maintain the respect of the law, which would protect the society and man's bliss. To this reality point the words of ʻĪsã (a.s.): *. . . and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise* (5:118).

There are found in the noble Qur'ãn two general causes of par-don which the divine wisdom endorses:

One: Repentance of the servant to Allãh, the Glorified – whether it is a return from disbelief to belief, or from disobedience to obedience, as was explained under "Repentance" in the volume four of the book.[28] Allãh says: *Say: "O My servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allãh; surely Allãh forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord time after time and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment, then you shall not be helped.* [This indicates the repentance from disbelief, to which applies the threat of punishment where no helper or intercessor can avail.] *And follow the best that has been revealed to you from your Lord before there comes to you the punishment all of a sudden while you do not even perceive"* (39:53-55).

[28] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng.), vol.8, pp.64-74. (*tr.*)

[This indicates the repentance from disobedience to obedi-ence, and here the benefit of intercession is not negated.]

Allāh also says: *Repentance with Allāh is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn* (to Allāh) *soon, so these it is to whom Allāh turns* (mercifully)*, and Allāh is ever-Knowing, Wise. And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: "Surely now I repent"; nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement.* (4:17-18)

Two: Intercession on the Day of Resurrection. Allāh says: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for inter-cession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (him) (43:86). There are many such verses, which deal with the topic of intercession; and we have fully discussed this topic in the volume one of the book.[29] There are found in the noble Qur'ān different occasions wherein forgiveness is mentioned without giving its cause, although by meditation, one may understand the general reason, which has been kept in sight, and it is the well-being of the religion. For example, see the divine words: . . . *and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allāh is Gracious to the believers* (3:152); *Are you afraid to give in charity before your secret conversation? So when you did not do it and Allāh has turned to you* (mercifully)*, then keep up prayer and pay the* zakāt *and obey Allāh and His Messenger; . . .* (58:13). *Certainly, Allāh has turned* (mercifully) *to the Prophet and the immigrants and the helpers who followed him in the hour of straitness after the hearts of a part of them were about to deviate, then He turned to them (mercifully); surely to them He is Compassionate, Merciful* (9:117). *And they thought that there would be no affliction, so they became blind and deaf, then Allāh turned to them* (mercifully)*, then many of them became blind and deaf; . . .* (5:71). (As for) *those who put away their wives by likening their backs to the backs of their mothers, they are not their mothers; their mothers are no others than those who gave them birth; and most surely they utter a hateful word and a falsehood; and most surely Allāh is Par-doning, Forgiving.* (58:2). *O you who believe! Do not kill game while you are in the robe of* iḥrām*, . . . Allāh has pardoned what is gone by; and whoever returns* (to it) *Allāh will inflict retribution on him; and Allāh is Mighty, Lord of Retribution* (5:95).

These are various occasions of the divine pardoning, and we have

[29] *al-Mīzān* (Eng.), vol.1, pp.221-61. (*tr.*)

explained the particular especiality of each of them under each verse in the book, which may be consulted.

Of a totally different genre is the word of Allãh: *Allãh pardon you! Why did you give them leave . . .?* (9:43). It is a *du'ã'*, like our saying: 'May Allãh pardon you! Why did you do this and this?' Similar is the case of the verses 74:18-19, although in an opposite way: *Surely he reflected and guessed, but may he be cursed how he plotted.* Also of a different genre are the words: *Surely We have given to you a clear victory, that Allãh may forgive you your past faults and those to follow . . .* (48:1-2). It is understood from the fact that the forgiveness is taken to result from the conquest of Mecca, which Allãh had bestowed on His Prophet, but there is no relationship between the forgiveness of fault (i.e. sin) and the conquest. It will be fully explained, God willing, under the exegesis of that verse.

4. Forgiveness has Grades:

Forgiveness and pardon relates to sin; and sin generally attracts a sort of retribution and punishment. As you have seen, retribution has a very wide spectrum and covers various ranks; consequently pardon too has various ranks and grades. This difference does not appear in the sin itself, i.e. in the evil consequence that follows the deed (because no one can deny such difference), and the requital, whether it is punish-ment or reward, is weighed in that scale.

We cannot avoid here the discussion about the sin and its vari-ous grades, and the meditation into what the natural reason leads to. Although the discussion is Qur'ãnic and its aim is to arrive at what the Divine Book leads to concerning these realities, yet as the Sublime God has declared in His speech, He speaks to us according to our under-standing and the natural balance with which the things are weighed in the stages of theory and practice; and we have pointed to this fact in various topics of this book; and Allah has taken the support of human understanding and thought in various places, and has strengthened with it the aims of His speech; as He has variously said: 'then do not you understand', 'then do not you contemplate', and so on.

It is inferred from correct consideration that the first factor with which human society is attached and which it respects is the practical laws and esteemed customs by which the society preserves – through its implementation – the objects of humanity, and leads it to its felicity in life; then it lays down the laws by which the one who goes against it is

punished, and the obedient one is rewarded.

At this stage the name, sin, is not used except for going back on the text of the practical laws, and inevitably it stands parallel to a number of sociological rules; and this meaning is settled in our – the Muslims' – minds, and so is the import of similar words like evil, fault, wrong, misdeed, error, outrage, transgression and so on.

Not only this practical laws, when they are acted upon, guarded and preserved, pull the society to suitable characteristics and attributes conforming with the societal aims which are the ultimate destination of human togetherness. It is these characteristics that the society calls human nobilities and exhorts to it. Opposite to them are evil traits.

Although these factors differ one from another based on the difference in societies' customs and objects, yet the principle that they are the products of sociological laws cannot be ignored or refuted.

Although these good characteristics are spiritual attributes, and there is no guarantee to enforce it practically in the societies, and they are non-voluntary because they are traits; yet because their appearance follows repetition of enforcement of laid down rules in the society, or repeated neglect of those rules, the putting in practice those laws ensure their enforcement; and they are counted voluntary inasmuch as their preliminaries are voluntary, i.e. repeated actions. Among its occasions may include rational commands related to noble characteristics like bravery, chastity and justice; and likewise prevents the evil traits like cowardice, rashness, degeneration, covetousness and injustice; in the same manner may be imagined for them rational punishment and reward like praise and censure.

In short, in this way takes place a stage of the sin above the preceding one, and it is the stage of negligence of creational laws and related rational commandments.

These rational commands are not counted as command except because of mutual attachment between them and the *wãjib* actions, which lead to them. So, there is a judge, which establishes its incum-bency and orders it, and that is the human intellect. Parallel to it the naming of rational prohibition as prohibition. And this is our way in all occasions of mutual attachment. So, whenever we enforce one side of the mutual attachments we at once order to enforce the other part and declare it as incumbent. And we consider neglecting it as dis-obedience to that rational command, and a sin that entails some sort of retribution.

This also makes clear another matter: As these virtues contain

incumbent factors which one has to attach himself to – and likewise the evil traits contain forbidden items – and also cover recommended factors which serve as adornments and beauties in characterstics – and they are good manners with which are attached recommended rational commands. Yet when we look at it *vis-à-vis* ourselves, the attached manners (which are recommended in themselves) will inevitably be-come recommended rationally, following that inter-relation. For example, the environment of a Bedouin to life (who lives a bedouistic life) is removed from the average standard of the civilized life; so he is not held responsible except for the elementary laws of society and general customs which his understanding power may grasp; sometimes he commits reprehensible deeds or utters ugly words, but a civilized man ignores it putting its blame on his misapprehension and his living far away from civil environment – where repeated observation of customs and manners is the best teacher for its residents.

Again an average civilian is not held responsible for those things for which people of exceptional qualities are deemed responsible – the people of fine understanding and lofty manners. When an average man does not observe fine maaners and neglects attractive words and deeds, the only excuse offered on his behalf is that it is the limit of his under-standing; he does not understand the concomitants of manner more than he performs, because of his environment.

And what he does (which he should not) is what the unique people are held responsible for. Often they are blamed for an under-tone in speech, or a slight delay in movement, or missing an impercep-tible moment in stillness, or turning or closing the eyes and so on – all this is counted as a fault or sin from them. But it is not a sin in the meaning of going against legislative articles, be it related to religion or to worldly affairs. It is well known that the good deeds of righteous people are the sins for the near ones.

The more the path becomes intricate and the position delicate, the more hidden sins become apparent which hitherto were unnoticed and the man had not perceived them, nor any ruler or controller was deemed responsible for them.

This, according to deep consideration, leads us to the commands, which develop in the framework of love and hate. An eye of hate – particularly in the condition of rage – sees all good deeds as condemnable sins. Conversely, a lover, when he wanders in love and is submerged in affection, deems slightest inattention towards his beloved a great sin,

even if he performs all actions by limbs with all its pillars. It is only because he evaluates his deeds in the way of love according to his mind's attention and attraction of his heart towards his beloved. If it is discontinued because of heart's inattention then he has turned away from his beloved, cut himself from his remembrance, and thus negated the purity of his heart.

Until a time comes that he counts as crime and disobedience even engagement with necessities of life like eating, drinking, etc. He realizes that although the said action is a necessity which man is com-pelled to do, yet each one of these compulsory actions in its root is voluntary; and engagement in it is engagement with other than the beloved and turning away from him by one's own will – and it is a sin. That is why we see that one who is overwhelmed with love and affec-tion, and likewise a grieving and depressed person and others like these neglect food and drink, etc.

On this style should be explained what has been narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.): Surely desire covers my heart, so I seek pardon from Allãh every day seventy Aims. And the same may be taken to mean in a way the divine words: . . . *and ask pardon for your fault and celebrate the praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning* (40:55). *Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness; surely He is oft-returning* (to mercy), (110:3).

The same will be the bearing of what Allãh has quoted from various noble prophets; like the words of Nūḥ (a.s.): *"My Lord! For-give me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, . . ."* (71:28); and the words of Ibrãhīm: *"O our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!"* (14:41); and the words of Mūsã for himself and his brother: *"My Lord! Forgive me and my brother and cause us to enter into Thy mercy, . . ."* (7:151); and what has been quoted from the Prophet (s.a. w.a.): *"We hear and obey; our Lord! Thy forgiveness* (do we crave)*, and to Thee is the eventual course."* (2:285).

So, the prophets (peace be upon them!), inasmuch as they were *ma'ṣūmīn* (infallibles), could not have committed any disobedience, nor could they perpetrate any sin in the meaning of contradicting any article of religion which they were sent to invite to, and which they were engaged in conveying by words and deeds; as their obedience was obligated from Allãh, and there was no sense in obligating the obedience of one who was not assured of abstaining from disobedi-ence, Sublime is Allãh from it.

The same will be the bearing of the confession of injustice and so on, as quoted from some of them (peace be upon them), like the words of Dha 'n-Nūn: *"There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee; surely I was of the unjust ones!"* (21:87); because as it is possible that they should count some lawful deeds done by them as sin for them-selves and should ask forgiveness from Allãh, likewise it is possible to count it as their injustice, because every sin is injustice.

It had been said earlier that there might be another explanation: That injustice might indicate injustice against one's soul, as was seen in the words of Adam and his wife: *"Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers."* (7:23).

Beware! You should not think that when we say for a verse: It has this or that bearing, we admit that it is against its apparent meaning and then we strive to invent a meaning which could be applied to it; in other words, the Qur'ãnic verses should be reinterpreted with the aim of protecting the sectarian views. A free discussion was given in the volume two of this book[30] on the subject of the prophets' sinlessness, without relying on strange and extraneous premises.

We have explained there that the apparent speech is not restricted in its identification on common understanding confined to the sentence concerned; rather it also seeks help from associations of context and wordings, joined to it and separate from it, like a verse which throws light on another verse. These associations have definite effects on ap-parent meanings, especially in the divine speech, one part of which interpretes another, some portions of which testify for and affirm the other portions.

Inattention to this point has given rise among many exegetes and theologians to the idea of reinterpretation, in the meaning of turning the speech away from its apparent import, and striving to do so in the verses, which go against their particular belief. You see, they cut up the Qur'ãn into fragments, and then hold each piece to mean what a vulgar plebian understands from the talk of another vulgar person like himself. Thus, when they hear Allãh (s.w.t.) saying [about Yūnus, a.s.]: . . . *so he thought that We would not straiten him,* . . . [21:87], they take it to mean that, God forbid, he (a.s.) thought or believed that Allãh was unable to catch him; in spite of the fact that the next verse: . . . *and thus do We deliver the believers* [21:88]; counts him among the believers, and he who

[30] *al-Mīzãn* (Eng), vol.3, pp.195-204. (*tr.*)

enntertains slightest doubt about Allāh's power is devoid of faith and belief, let alone the one who gives more weight to Allāh's [supposed] feebleness or believes Him to have no power.

And when they hear Him saying: . . . *that Allāh may forgive you your past faults and those to follow* . . . [48:2], they think that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had committed a sin and Allāh forgave it, just as one of us commits sin by going against a divine order or prohibition given by masterly authority, from which springs a law of *fiqh*.

They were not led by meditation even to the extent of looking at the preceding verse: *Surely We have given you a clear victory* [48:1]; otherwise it would have been clear to them that if this fault and the related forgiveness were like the sins committed by us, and the subsequent forgiveness, there was no reason to attach the forgiveness to the conquest of Mecca (as an objective is attached to its controller). Also, there was no reason to join with conjunction what follows, i.e. the words: . . . *and complete His favour to you and keep you on a right way, and that Allāh might help you with a mighty help.* [48:2-3]

Likewise, when they hear all those verses which, according to their view, contain the "slips" of the prophets, like those in the stories of Adam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ, Yaʿqūb, Yūsuf, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Ayyūb and Muḥammad (blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny and these prophets), they hasten to attack their esteemed status, and they do not refrain from speaking ill-manneredly about them, although they themselves deserve those insulting remarks; what defect surpasses ill manners?

Their wrong thinking and rotten outlook misled them until they exchanged their Lord, the Lord of the universe, with the Lord, which is, portrayed in the corrupted Old and New Testaments. They think that the Lord is an unseen power who has a solid body, and who turns around the mill of existence, as an arrogant person manages his king-dom, who has no aim except to satiate his desire and anger. First, they were ignorant of the status of their Lord, and then they forgot the position of the prophets effacing their noble and spiritual high grades, and actual sublime positions. This made those purified sacrosanct souls resemble the rotten contemptible souls whose only share in human nobility is its name; it destroys soul of this,[31] deceives honour of that, and looks coveteously at property of that other. And with all their ignorance, they are not ready to

[31] Refer to what they have narrated about Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ and others, peace be upon them. (*Author's note*)

accept that a person who manages any of their worldly affairs, or the one who is given responsibility to look after their home and family, should be afflicted by such scandals. Then how do they agree to ascribe such disgraceful things to Allãh, the Glorified? And He is the Knowing, the Wise, Who sent His mess-engers to His servants, so that they should not have any proof after their advent. Would that I knew, what proof would be established against an unbeliever or a transgressor if it were possible for a mess-enger to disbelieve or transgress or invite to polytheism and idolatory, then he washes his hand of it and ascribes it to the Satan.

And when they are reminded of the divine protection enjoyed by divine prophets (peace be upon them) and shown their God-gifted positions and spiritual status, they count it as polytheism, and inordination regarding the servants of Allãh, and start repeating the verse: *Say: "I am but a mortal like you!"*

They, to a certain extent, are right in refuting it; because what they think about the Lord, and what attributes they ascribe to Him, is much lower than what they mention of the positions of the prophets (peace be upon them) and much below their status and honour. It is all an example of the afflictions, which Islam and Muslims had to suffer because of what the People of the Book, and especially the Jews, have inserted, in Muslim traditions. Thus they turned the hand mill of Islam around an strange pivot, and they believed about the Glorified God (like Whom there is nothing) that He is like an arrogant man who thinks that he is totally free, he is not asked about his actions while the others have to answer about their activities. According to them, when effects follow their causes, when results appear after premises, and when the existing particulars (in the form or substance) demand appearance of their effects, it all happens at random, without any real connection. And when Allãh ended the prophethood on Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) and revealed the Qur'ãn to him, then He reserved Mūsã for talking and ʻĪsã for support through the Spirit, it all was not because of any par-ticular especiallity in their noble souls, but just because He wanted to bestow on them this and that. And when Mūsã hit his staff on a rock and there appeared water streams in it, it was exactly as one of us hits his staff on a rock, but the difference is that Allãh made that to flow and does not make this to do so. And when ʻĪsã said to the dead bodies: "Stand up by the permission of Allãh", it was just as if we might an-nounce in graveyard: "Stand up by the permission of Allãh", but Allãh gave them new life and does not give life to these. And so on.

It is not but an analogy of the creative system with the legislative

system; but the latter has no natural structure except that people make it, give it a terminological name and preserve it, so it does not go be-yond the area of society and does not cross the world of the societal man.

If they had used a little intelligence and meditated on the verses dealing with the affairs of fault and forgiveness (in its terminological meaning, i.e. going against the master's command and prohibition) they would have realized that there is a forgiveness that is above the well-known forgiveness.

Thus, Allãh, the Glorified, repeatedly says in His speech that there are some of His servants whom He calls 'sincere' ones [or 'purified' ones] who are protected from sin (in its usual meaning). So they do not have any sin in their account, and consequently they do not need for-giveness related to that sin. He has clearly said about several of His prophets, like Ibrãhīm, Isḥãq, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf and Mūsã that they were purified, sincere. For example, He says about Ibrãhīm, Isḥãq and Ya'qūb: *Surely We purified them by a pure quality, the keeping in mind of the* (final) *abode* (38:46); and about Yūsuf: . . . *surely he was one of Our sincere servants.* (12:24); and about Mūsã: . . . *surely he was one purified,* . . . (19:51). And Allãh has quoted their asking for forgive-ness, as the words of Ibrãhīm: *"Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents . . ."* (14:41); and the words of Mūsã: *"My Lord! Forgive me and my brother and cause us to enter into Thy mercy, . . ."* (7:151). If forgive-ness were not ascribeable except to sin (in the common meaning), this invocation would not be understandable.

Of course, one may say: They (peace be upon them) count themselves as sinners in humility before Allãh, although they had not sinned. But such a man should realize that they (peace be upon them) were not wrong in this view of theirs and there was no recklessness in their talk, because forgiveness covers them in a correct meaning and this is a serious matter.

Moreover, see that Ibrãhīm (a.s.) offers his *du'ã'* for forgive-ness for all the believers: *"O our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass!"* [14:41], which includes the sincere ones. Likewise, Nūḥ (a.s.) prays: *"My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, . . ."* [71:28], and it by its generality includes the sincere ones. And there is no meaning in asking forgiveness for him who has not committed any sin, which would need forgiveness.

All this makes us realize that some sins with which forgiveness is attached are other than the sin (in its common meaning), and also some

forgiveness is other than the forgiveness of common meaning. Allãh has quoted Ibrãhīm as saying: *"And Who, I hope, will forgive me my mistakes on the Day of Judgement."* (26:82). Probably, that is the reason that we find in the divine speech that when Allãh mentions mercy or the mercy of the next world which is the Garden, He men-tions forgiveness before it. Like the Divine Words: *And say: "O my Lord! Forgive and have mercy, . . ."* (23:118); ". . . *and forgive us and have mercy on us; . . ."* (2:286); and He quotes Adam and his wife: *". . . and if Thou forgive us not, and have* (not) *mercy on us, . . ."* (7:23); and quotes Nūḥ: *". . . and if Thou shouldst not forgive me and have mercy on me, . . ."* (11:47).

The above statement proves that sin has different grades one above another and likewise forgiveness has grades parallel to the sin; each grade of forgiveness is attached to its parallel grade of the sin. Also, it is clear that it is not necessary that every sin and fault should be attached to a masterly command or prohibition, which average, man's mind would recognize; nor that every forgiveness should be attached to this type of sin.

Thus, the preceding discussion makes it clear that sin and for-giveness have four grades:

First: The sin related to masterly command and prohibition, i.e. going against a rule of *sharī'ah* whether connected with its root or branch. You may also say: 'going against a legal article, whether relig-ious or non-religious'. And forgiveness is attached to it, which stands parallel to it in rank.

Second: The sin, which is related to a creative rational command, and the forgiveness attached to it.

Third: The sin related to a mannered command (done by the one whose way of life is way of mannerism), and the forgiveness attached to it. Probably the above-mentioned two grades are not counted by com-mon understanding among the sins and the forgiveness; an average man might treat that as a metaphorical use. But it has no relation with meta-phor at all, because you have seen that real effects take place on them.

Fourth: The sin, which is pointed at by the taste of love, and the forgiveness attached to it. And the opposite is the case with hate in all grades. Average men do not count it as a grade of love; but they have erred in it; not intentionally, but because their rationality does not reach to the level of its understanding, and they do not clearly grasp its meaning.

Some one might say: It is merely the lovers' delusion or poetic

imagination, which is not based on any rational reality. But they do not realize that these imaginations, although they are delusions and notions in the path of sociological life, they exactly turn into realities – and what realities – in the path of servitude, emanating from the divine love which melts the heart and distracts the reason; and it does not leave any perception to the man to perceive any other than his Lord, nor any will to wish except what He wishes.

At this stage, he realizes that even a slight attention to his self or to his desires is a great sin and a thick curtain, which cannot be raised except by the divine forgiveness. Allāh has counted sin as a curtain for the heart, which prevents man from total attention to his Lord, as He has said: *Nay! Rather, what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts. Nay! Most surely they shall on that day be debarred from their Lord* (83:14-15).

This is what is understood by the serious discussion in which one does not play with the realities. Possibly, there may appear, to the friends of Allāh who in their servitude proceed on the way of His love, fine points of sin and subtle aspects of forgiveness, which cannot be reached through general discussions.

5. Does Censure or Forgiveness Necessarily Mean a Preceding Sin?

If one observes the practice of society's same persons, he finds that their censure or punishment is based on voluntary responsibilities; and one of the conditions of its correctness is rationality; and there are other conditions about whose identity, quiddity and limits various so-cieties differ among themselves, and we are not concerned here with their details.

Our concern here is only with the understanding that differenti-ates between beauty and ugliness, beneficial and harmful, good and evil, according to the average condition of the people in their society. The people, with their sociological outlook, think that there is an active starting point in man which has this quality; although academic dis-cussion sometimes makes it clear that it is not one of the natural powers consigned in man, like imagination and memory; rather it is but a trait which is acquired through conformance of several powers in action, like justice.

The societies, with all their differences, think that responsibility depends on this factor, which is called understanding; and reward and punishment branch out from it, as the responsibility springs from it; so a sane person is rewarded for his obedience and punished for his crime.

However, others who lack this understanding, for example, a child, a mad person, an idiot and other weakened people, they do not deserve any reward or punishment – in their true sense – on what they do of obedience or disobedience. Yet sometimes they are awarded rewards for their acts of obedience to awaken their longing, or are held responsible and given disciplinary punishment *vis-à-vis* their dis-obedience. And it is commonly found in all societies, including the Muslim society.

Actually the above group, seen in the background of the felicity and infelicity, which are earned through obedience and obedience of the laid down responsibilities in this worldly life, are neither felicitous nor infelicitous, because no responsibility has been loaded on them; thus they have no reward (so they should be called felicitous) nor any punishment (so they should be called infelicitous), although some-times they are exhorted by good reward or disciplined by evil result.

As for the life of the next world, which the divine religion affirms and then divides the people into two groups (without their being any third): felicitous and infelicitious, or rewarded and punished. What the Qur'ãn describes about it is a vague statement whose details are not explained, because there is no rational way of identifying their detailed condition after leaving this world. Allãh says: *And others are made to await Allãh's command, whether He chastise them or whether He turn to them* (mercifully)*; and Allãh is Knowing, Wise* (9:106). Also, He says: *Surely* (as for) *those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say: "In what state were you?" They shall say: "We were weak in the earth." They shall say: "Was not Allãh's earth spacious, so that you should have emigrated therein?" So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort; except the weak ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way* (to escape)*; so these, it may be, Allãh will pardon them, and Allãh is Pardoning, Forgiving* (4:97-99).

These verses – as you see – contain the news of pardoning them and returning to them (mercifully) and there is no forgiveness where there is no sin, and it talks about their punishment, and there is no punishment on him who is not given any responsibility. However, you have known that sin, and likewise forgiveness as well as reward and punishment, have many grades: some of them are related to violation of masterly or rational responsibility; while others are related to rotten psychological forms and filth of heart which prevent man from his Lord. And these people, although they are apart from attachment of responsibility (which depends

on reason), yet they are not protected from dirts of the souls and curtains of the hearts, which need enjoying the bliss of divine nearness and presence in the arena of sanctity in order to remove that dirt, and for forgiving it, covering it and pardoning it.

Probably, this is the meaning of what has been narrated in some traditions: "Surely Allāh will gather them, then He will create a fire and order them to enter it; so whoever enters it enters the Garden, and whoever refuses to enter it, enters the Fire." We shall speak about these traditions in the exegesis of the chapter of "Repentance", God willing; and some details were given in the chapter of "Women".

Of the use of pardon and forgiveness on occasions other than sin in the divine speech is what has repeatedly come on the occasion of abolishing an order, as Allāh says: *. . . but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (5:3). A similar verse is in the chapter six, "Cattle". Also, Allāh says while abolishing *wuḍū'* when water is not available: and if you are sick, or on a journey: *. . . betake yourselves to pure earth, then wipe your faces and your hands; surely Allāh is Pardoning, Forgiving* (4:43). Also, He says in connection with the mischief makers in the earth: *Except those who repent before you have them in your power; so know that Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (5:34). Likewise, He says relating to the abolition of the order of *jihād* from excused persons: *. . . there is no way* (to blame) *against the doers of good; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful* (9:91). There are many other such verses.

And Allāh says regarding travails and afflictions falling the people: *And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults) (42:30).

It is now clear that the attribute of pardoning and forgiving belong to Him, the Sublime, like the attributes of mercy and guidance, which are related to the affairs of creation and legislation both. Thus, Allāh, the Sublime, pardons sins and disobediences and erases them from the scroll of deeds; and He pardons the order, which reason demands its enforcement and erases it by not legislating it. And He pardons travails and afflictions, whose causes are existent; and erases them so that they do not afflict the man.

6. Relationship Between Action and Recompense:

We have understood from the preceding discussion that the orders and prohibitions, i.e. the rules and laws prevalent among the sane persons

give rise to fine beautiful effects on its implementation – which is called reward; and evil effects on its disobedience – which is called punishment. And that it is like a device which they use for its implementation; so their arrangement to make good recompense for obedience, is only for encouragement to the implementer, and the evil recompense on disobedience is only to put the defaulter in fear and make him cautious against transgression.

It appears from it that the relationship between deed and recompense is a relationship made and laid down by the society or the ruler; called them to it their pressing need to the action, in order that they get its benefit and fulfil with it their need. That is why you see them that when they do not have its need and their requirement of it is fulfilled, they become careless in fulfilling the promised or threatened reward or punishment.

And that is the reason that you see that the recompense differs in magnitude and paucity, and emolument changes in power and feeble-ness, depending on the difference of need to that action. The more the need to it the more the wages, and the less the need the less the wages. Thus, the instructor and the instructed, and the commander and the commanded are like the seller and the buyer both of them give some-thing and take something.

The wage and reward is like the price; and punishment is like the fine imposed on the one who ruins something and is held respon-sible for its price, which he has to pay.

In short, it is a matter laid down and considered like all sociological titles, orders and weights, on which the handmill of human society revolves like chiefship and subordination; order and prohibition; obedience and disobedience; obligatoriness and prohibition; possession and property; and sale and purchase, etc. The realities are the existing things found outside imagination, and the conditions covering them, whose situation does not change with richness and poverty, honour and humiliation, praise and condemnation like the earth and that which grows from it, and death and life, health and illness, hunger and satiation, thirst and its quenching.

This is how the sociological sane people behave. Allãh treats us in His speech as one of us treats others. He has moulded our bliss, to which He guides us through His religion, in the mould of sociological customs. Thus He ordered and prohibited, exhorted and cautioned, gave good news and warned, promised reward and threatened punish-ment; in this way we

went on receiving religion in the easiest manner with which we receive the sociological laws and customs. Allāh says: . . . *and were it not for Allāh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure,* . . . (24:21).

And Allāh has not neglected the matter of educating the soul, which are ready to comprehend the realities. Accordingly, He has pointed in several verses of His Book that, beyond these religious cognizance, which the apparent meanings of the Book and the *Sunnah* contain, there is a factor, which is greater, and a secret that is more precious and valuable. He says: *And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play; and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life,* . . . (29:64).

Thus He has counted the life of the world a play, which has no basis except imagination, and whose only function is to prevent man from what is important for him, and it is the next abode and eternal felicity of man which is the reality of life. If the life of the world is exactly what we call life other than the life affairs which are attached to it of property, status, kingdom, honour, nobility and so on, then its being sport and play with what we see of the realities further necessi-tates the life affairs to be sport and play. And if it means the life of the world with all its attachment, then the matter is clearer.

So, these sociological customs and the objects which are saught with them as honour, status, property, etc.; then those factors and aims and objects (which are contained in religious education) to which Allāh has guided us through nature, then through messengership, all these things are like a toy which a reasonable guardian, who brings up a child, puts before the small child (who does not know his good from his evil), then keeps playing it with him, in order to exercise his body and refresh his mind, so that he may prepare the child for practical pur-poses to make him succeed in it. Thus, the sporting event is for the child a beautiful play, which leads him to action, and for the guardian it is a serious work full of wisdom, which has nothing to do with play.

Allāh says: *And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know* (44:38-39).

Then Allāh explains how this formal upbringing leads to its spiritual aims, in a general similituate which He has given to the people: *He sends down water from the cloud, then water-courses flow* (with water) *according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of making*

ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allãh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it tarries in the earth; . . . (13:17).

The divine speech makes it clear that there is a real relationship between deed and recompense beyond the laid down and considered relationship which the social people see between them; and the divine teaching proceeds on the same line.

7. The Deed takes Relationship to the Soul:

Then Allãh explained that deed takes this relationship to the soul from the side of the psychological form, which it acquires through action and the condition, that it leads to. Allãh says: *. . . but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned, . . .* (2:225); *. . . and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allãh will call you to account according to it, . . .* (2:284). And there are other verses of the same meaning.

It becomes clear from it that all the effects which emanate from deeds, whether reward or punishment, they in reality emanate from what the souls earn by the way of deeds; and that the actions have no function except mediation.

Then Allãh made it clear that what will face them of the recom-pense of the deeds, it will be the deeds themselves as a matter of reality; it is not as man puts a deed in his society then follows it with recom-pense; rather the deed is preserved near Allãh with preservation of the acting soul, then Allãh will manifest it (deed) before it (soul) on the day when hidden things will be made manifest. Allãh says: *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil; it shall wish that between it and that* (evil) *there were a long duration of time;* (3:30). Also He says: *Do not urge excuses today; you shall be rewarded only according to what you did* (66:7). The verses are clear and many other verses join them in this meaning.

The best of the verses in indication is the word of Allãh: *Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp* (50:22). This points to the station of present recompense, and it counts him heedless of it in the world (because of the association of the word "today"; and heedlessness does not happen except of a present thing). Then He mentions removal of the veil from him; and veil necessarily demands something to be covered. It means that what he

faces and sees of the recompense on the Day of Resur-rection was present in the world but it was not manifested.

These verses explain other verses, which are clear about recompense and manifestation of deed and recompense, because the verses of recompense look at the stage of the laid down sociological relation-ship, while these verses look at the stage of the real relationship, as we have explained. We had touched in short this topic under the exegesis of the divine words: *Allãh has set a seal on their hearts* . . . (2:7), in the first volume of this book and whoever wants may refer to it. And Allãh is the Guide.

(Finish; and thanks are due to Allãh!)

* * * * *

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AL-MĪZĀN

An Exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān

By:
al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad
Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

Volume 13

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هَٰذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ

وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

(آل عمران : ١٣٨)

*****

This is a clear statement for men, and a guidance and an admonition for the pious ones .

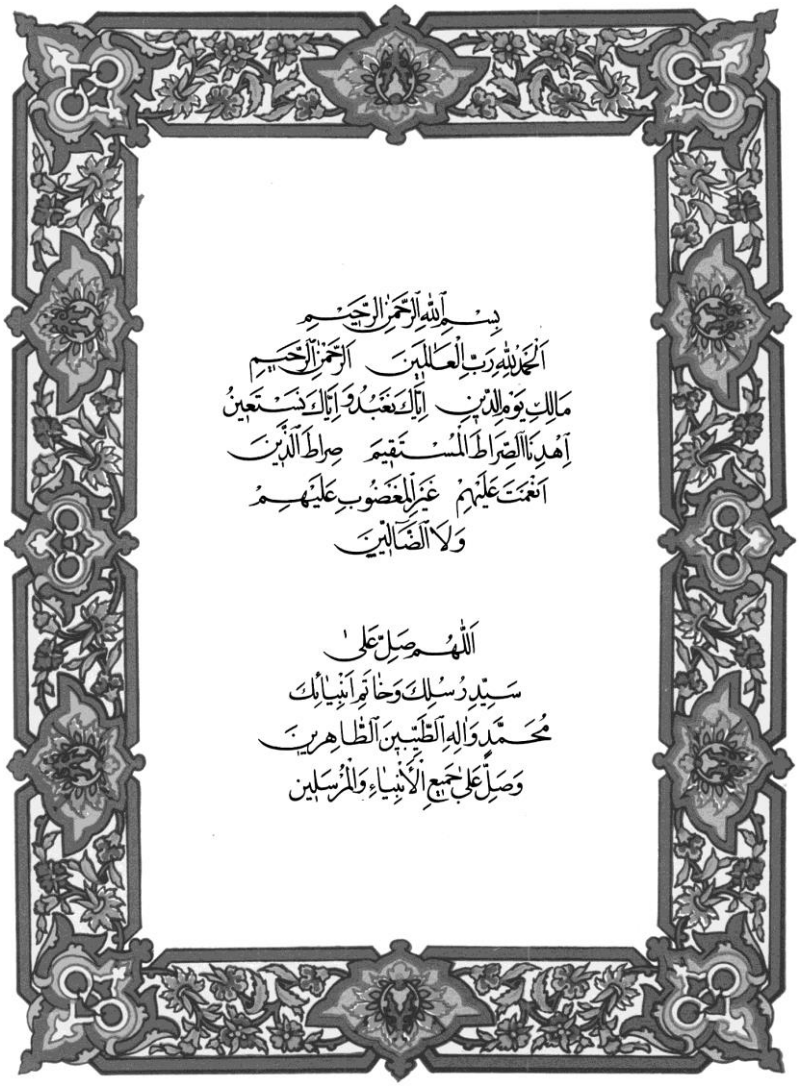
(Qur'ãn , 3:138)

In the Name of Allãh,
The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful

Praise belongs to Allãh, the Lord of all Being;
the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement.
Thee only we serve; and to Thee alone we pray
for succour.
Guide us in the straight path,
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

*** * * * ***

O' Allãh! Send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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TRANSLITERATION

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ء	’
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f

Ar. Letters	Transliteration
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ي	y
ة	ah

Short Vowel

ـَ	a
ـِ (or ـٍ)	i
ـُ	u

Long Vowels

آ	ā
ـِي	ī
ـُو	ū

FOREWORD

1. The late al-ʻAllãmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabã'ī (1321/1904 – 1402/1981) – may Allãh have mercy upon him – was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the translation of *al-Mīzãn*.

2. al-ʻAllãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabã'ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzãn fī tafsīri 'l-Qur'ãn* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ʻAllãmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur'ãn in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzãn* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur'ãn and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to the late great scholar al-ʻAllãmah as-Sayyid Saʻīd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī (may Allãh cover him with His mercy) to undertake this task, because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So, we relied on him for this work and considered him responsible for the English translation as al-ʻAllãmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabã'ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzãn* and its discussions.

4. Most regretfully, the esteemed translator al-ʻAllãmah as-Sayyid Saʻīd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī passed away on the morning of 20th June 2002 when he was busy with the translation of volume thirteen of *al-Mīzãn* (may Allãh have mercy on him). It has come in a *ḥadīth*: "When a

religious scholar dies a void is created in Islam that nothing can ever fill it." The demise of al-ʻAllãmah ar-Raḍawī was indeed a great loss for the Shīʻah world. It became very difficult for this Organization to find a deserving translator capable to finish the English translation of the 13th volume of *al-Mīzãn*.

Finally, a decade after the death of the esteemed translator, his son, the venerated ʻAllãmah, as-Sayyid Muḥammad ar-Raḍawī, may Allãh bless him, came forward to complete the remainder of this volume with the proposal and persuation of this Organization. The late ʻAllãmah had completed the first draft of the translation of just over one-third of the 13th volume, from the beginning of chapter six of the Holy Qur'ãn till verse 41. Then his son worked on finalizing the first draft of the late scholar, editing the text and completing the missing parts, and then he continued the translation of the rest volume for which we thank Allãh that he had completed it.

We pray for the continued success of as-Sayyid Muḥammad ar-Raḍawī, who, in spite of his busy religious activities in Canada and elsewhere, has completed this volume, and we hope that he will continue the journey that his late father had started.

5. We have now undertaken the publication of the 13th volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzãn*. This English volume corresponds with the first half of the 7th volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allãh, the Exalted, we hope to provide the complete translation and publication of this voluminous work.

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendices included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of *al-Mīzãn*: One for the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work.

* * *

We implore upon Allãh to affect our work purely for His pleasure and to help us to complete this work, which we have started. May Allãh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

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al-Mīzān

Volume Thirteen

ch.6, vrs.1 – 83

Chapter Six

al-An‘ãm
(The Cattle)
165 verses – Mecca


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
وَالنُّورَ ۖ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي
خَلَقَكُم مِّن طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا ۖ وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِندَهُ ۖ ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ
تَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ
وَجَهْرَكُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣﴾

In the Name of Allãh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise is due to Allãh, Who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light; yet those who disbelieve set up equals with their Lord (1). *He it is Who created you from clay, then He decreed a term; and there is a term named with Him; still you doubt* (2). *And He is Allãh in the heavens and in the earth; He knows your secret and your open, and He knows what you earn* (3).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the Unity of the Almighty Allãh in its general meaning: that the human being has a Lord Who is the Lord of the whole universe; every thing originates from Him and to Him returns every thing; He sent the messengers as bearers of good tidings, and warners [of chastisement], and through them He guides His servants to His true religion. And that is why the majority of its verses came in form of arguments against the polytheists

about monotheism, prophethood and resurrection. Of course, it also contains brief description of religious (*shar'ī*) obligations and prohibitions of the faith.

Its context – as inferred by meditation – is one and synchronized, with no indication in it of any division which could have shown that it was revealed in piecemeal form. This proves that this chapter was revealed all together; and that it is a Meccan chapter as it appears from its context in which most of the talk, rather the whole talk, is addressed to the polytheists [of Mecca].The exegetes [of the Qur'ãn] and the narrators [of *ḥadīth*] agree that this chapter was revealed at Mecca, except for six verses which some of them say were of Medina period, and they are: *And they do not assign to Allãh the attributes due to Him…* [6:91-93] and, *Say: "Come I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you…"* [6:151-3].

Some have said that the entire chapter is of Meccan period except for two verses 6:151-2. Others have said that it is wholly of Meccan period except two verses which were revealed at Medina about a Jew, who had said: *Allãh has not revealed any thing to a mortal…* (6:91). Someone said that the whole chapter is of Meccan period except one verse which was revealed at Medina, and that is: *And even if We had sent down to them the angels…* (6:111).

There is, however, no contextual proof for any of the above views as we have explained earlier that this chapter has a single theme and its verses are all well-connected; and we shall further elaborate upon it according to our ability. It has been narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*'a.s.*) as well as [some companions like] Ubay, 'Ikrimah and Qatãdah that it was revealed all together at Mecca.

QUR'ÃN [6:1]: *All praise is due to Allãh, Who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light*: The chapter begins with Allãh's praise and it is like an introduction to the main theme of explaining the meaning of monotheism – the praise contains the gist of the chapter and from it stems the detailed arguments; it further shows astonishment [regarding the polytheists] and blames them for setting up equals with their Lord and doubting His Unity. This all serves as an introduction to what follows of general admonition and threat.

In these three verses of praise, Allãh points to the true knowledge on which the religious call rests – which is like the substance of the *sharī'ah* – and it is divided into three systems: i.) The universal system of existence (in the first verse); ii.) The system of man as far as his

existence is concerned (in the second verse); and iii.) The system of human behaviour (in the third verse).

The sum total of the three verses taken together is to praise the Sublime God for having created the macrocosm in which the man lives; and for having created the microcosm (i.e., the existence of man himself who is limited in the sense that he begins with the clay and ends with the decreed term); and for having knowledge of man's inner [thoughts] as well as his spoken words, and whatever he earns [by his deeds].

The third verse: *And He is Allãh in the heavens and in the earth*, aims at elaborating the theme of the preceding two verses, and paves the way to explain that He knows man's inner [thoughts] and spoken words, and whatever the soul earns.

The phrase: "…Who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light", points to the universal system of creation on the basis of which things, with their multitude and numerousness, are managed. Our world with its firm operating system is confined to the earth which is encompassed by the firmament with its spaciousness, then He manages it through light and darkness; and on these two revolves the hand mill of this manifest world in its evolvement and perfection. Here always one thing is born from another thing, one thing changes into another thing, one thing appears while the other disappears, a new thing is made and the old one decays; and with conjunction of all these multifarious movements comes into being the universal great movement which bears the load of the things and proceeds with it to its destination.

The term: *al-ja'l* (اَلْجَعْل = to make) in: *made the darkness and the light* means: *al-khalq* = to create. However, *al-khalq* (اَلْخَلْق) is derived from *khalaq ath-thawb* (sewing the dress) in which composition of an item from various components is part of its meaning, as opposed to the term *al-ja'l* = to make [something without using components]. Perhaps for this reason "to create" has been reserved for the heavens and the earth since they consist of a multitude of components as opposed to the darkness and the light, and hence the use of "to make" for them. And Allãh knows better.

[Keeping the English idiom in mind, we have translated *aẓ-ẓulumãt* (اَلظُّلُمَات) as 'darkness' in singular even though the word: *aẓ-ẓulumãt* itself is plural.] The Qur'ãn has used the term *aẓ-ẓulumãt* in plural form while it has used the term *an-nūr* (اَلنُّور = the light) as singular. Perhaps it is so because darkness appears only in comparison to light, as it is the absence of light in a thing that should be illuminated.

As such it has varying degrees depending on the changing grades of proximity and distance from the light. Not so the light, because it is an existential phenomenon and does not appear in comparison to the darkness which is non-existence. Even if one imagines its multiplication in relation to the darkness, in reality, it does not augment or multiply.

QUR'ĀN: ***yet those who disbelieve set up equals with their Lord*****:** It expresses astonishment mingled with blame. Surely Allāh, the Glorified, by the creation of the heavens and the earth, and by making of the darkness and the light, is solitary in divinity and alone in god-ship, nothing is like Him, nor is anything His partner. It is really strange that the disbelievers in spite of their confession that creation and management belong to Allāh in the real sense of ownership, and not to the idols that they have taken as gods, they have set up equals with Him from their idols and images which they think are equal to their Lord; thus they think that they are His equals; so they have to be blamed for it.

The above statement makes clear the reason of using *thumma* (ثُمَّ = then, yet) which indicates delay. It is as though the speaker, when he described that Allāh is alone in creation and invention, and is solitary in divinity and god-ship, then stated the claim of the polytheists that these stones and wood used for carving idols were equals to the Lord of the universe. So, astonishment overwhelmed him for a moment and prevented him from speaking, then he again proceeded in his talk and pointed to the cause of his momentary silence – that astonishment had stopped him from continuing in his speech, so He said: "Yet those who disbelieve set up equals with their Lord."

QUR'ĀN [6:2]: ***He it is Who created you from clay, then He decreed a term*****:** After describing the creation of the macrocosm in the previous verse, this verse points to the creation of the human microcosm. It explains that Allāh created the man and manages his affairs by decreeing a term for his physical abode in this world; and, therefore, his existence is limited between the clay and between the decreed terms which accompany death as Allāh says: *Every soul must taste of death, then to Us you shall be brought back* (29:57). (Human species indeed begun from the clay but continued through marriage and sexual intercourse as Allah says: *and He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an extract, of water held in light estimation* [32:7-8].)

Possibly the 'term' may be taken to mean the return to Almighty Allãh through resurrection since it looks like the Qur'ãn mostly counts the life of purgatory (*barzakh*) as part of the worldly life, as is inferred from the apparent meaning of the verse: *He will say: "How many years did you tarry in the earth?" They will say: "We tarried a day or part of a day, but ask those who keep account." He will say: "You did tarry but a little – had you but known* (it)*,"* (23:112-4). Also, He says: *And at the time when the Hour shall come, the guilty shall swear* (that) *they did not tarry but an hour; thus are they ever turned away. And those who are given knowledge and faith will say: "Certainly you tarried according to the ordinance of Allãh, till the Day of Resurrection, so this is the Day of Resurrection, but you did not know*,(30:55-56).

The meaning of 'term' has been kept vague by using it as a common noun in the phrase: *then He decreed a term*; it indicates that it is unknown to man, and there is no way to know it through normal way.

QUR'ÃN: *and the named term is with Him*: To name a term means to specify it. Indeed it is an established custom to mention the term in agreements and loans and so on. It means the agreed upon time or the end of the time; and it is [the same meaning of] the named term. Allãh says: *when you deal with each other in contracting a debt for a fixed time, then write it down*, (2:282); it means the end of the agreed upon time. Likewise, Allãh says: *Whoever hopes to meet Allãh, the term appointed by Allãh will then most surely come* (29:5). Also, He says in the story of Mūsã and Shu'ayb: *He said: "I desire to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you should serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will…" He said: "This shall be* (an agreement) *between me and you; whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there shall be no wrong-doing to me…"* (28:27-28). Here 'term' means the completion of the agreed upon term.

Apparently the expression *'Ajal* (اَجَل) = term' [by itself] in the sense of the end of an agreed upon time (sprouting from the word in the meaning of the completion of the term) is a common usage [of that term]: i.e., they often said, 'the settled term', then they deleted the qualifying word and only mentioned 'term' in the sense of 'the settled term'. In his *al-Mufradãt*, ar-Rãghib says: "The term fixed for man's life is called *al-ajal*; they say: 'his *ajal* came near', i.e. his death was near; its real sense is completion of the term."

In any case, it appears from the Divine Speech that "the term" and "the named term" mean the end of the life's span, not the whole life term, as is indicated by the Divine Word: *...the term appointed by Allãh will then most surely come;...* [29:5].

It is clear from the above that there are two terms: "the vague term", and "the named term" that is with Allãh. The latter never changes because of the phrase, *with Him*, and Allãh has said: *...and what is with Allãh is enduring...* (16:96); and it is the same determined term which does never change as Almighty Allãh says: [Say:] *"... when their term comes, they shall not then remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before* (their time)*;"* (10:49).

The relationship of the named term to the unnamed term is that of unconditional and determined to the conditional and undetermined. The latter may possibly fail to materialize (if its conditions are unfulfilled), contrary to the unconditional and determined which can never fail to occur.

Meditating on the preceding verses together with the verse: *...for every term there is a book; Allãh erases and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book* (13:38-39), shows that the named term is that which is written in: *the basis of the Book*; and the unnamed term is written in what we call "the tablet of erasure and affirmation." It shall be explained later that: *the basis of the Book* may be applied to the events which are established, i.e., the events that depend on the perfect causes which do not fail to produce their effects, and "the tablet of erasure and affirmation" is applicable to the events that depend on incomplete causes which we often describe as "requirements" which may be overcome by some snags, preventing them from bringing about their effects.

The perfect and imperfect causes may be likened to the sun's degrees of illumination. We know that this night will certainly end after a few hours and that the sun will rise, and the face of the earth will brighten up. Yet it is possible that the sunrise will be simultaneously veiled by cloud or lunar eclipse or some other snag will appear to prevent the illumination; however if the sun shines over the earth and there is no hindrance between the two then the face of the earth is bound to illuminate.

Now, the illuminating effect of the sun is like "the tablet of erasure and affirmation" while it's rising on its time (with absence of any

barrier between it and the earth) is like: *the basis of the Book* which is known as the Preserved Tablet.[1]

The special composition of the human body with the limited requirements of its limbs, demands that man should live his normal lifespan which is variably fixed at a hundred or a hundred-and-twenty years. For instance, this is what is written in the tablet of erasure and affirmation, yet, all the components of the universe are connected to and also influence the human existence; and sometimes the causes and the barriers that we cannot compute, interact with one another in a way that we do not comprehend, leading to the arrival of his death before the end of his natural lifespan; and this is what is called sudden death.

This makes it easy to imagine the need, according to the divine order, of both the 'named' as well as the 'unnamed' terms; and that the ambiguity of the unnamed term does not go contrary to the fixed point of the named term; and that the unnamed and named terms sometimes correspond, and sometimes are at variance, and that which takes place is the named term.

This is what is inferred from meditation on the verse: *then He decreed a term; and there is a term named with Him.*

* * *

The exegetes have written strange explanations for the two terms mentioned in the verse. For example:

- First term refers to the period between creation and death, and the second one to the period between death and resurrection. This has been mentioned by several ancient exegetes, and perhaps it is narrated from Ibn ʿAbbãs.
- First term is the term of the people of the world until they die, and the second is the term of the next world which has no end. This opinion is ascribed to Mujãhid, Jubbã'ī and others.
- First term is the time of those who have passed away, and the second is the time of those who have remained or will come later. This is attributed to Abū Muslim.
- First term refers to the sleep and the second refers to the death.
- Both terms refer to the same thing; and the noble verse should be read as: then He decreed a term and this is the named term with Him.

---

[1] Editor's Note: For further elaboration on: *Lawḥu 'l-Maḥw wa 'l-Ithbãt* = 'The Tablet of Erasure and Affirmation', and: *Lawḥu 'l-Maḥfūẓ* = 'The Preserved Tablet', in English, see the translator's book *Justice of God*, chap.4.

But I do not think that the paucity of time and brevity of life allow us to engage in discussing the validity or otherwise of these views.

QUR'ÃN: *still you doubt*: *al-Miryah* (اَلْمِريَة = doubt). In these two verses, the pronoun turns from third person to the second person. The first verse mentions creation and its management in the general sense, and it concludes that the disbelievers should not have set up equals with Allãh; for this purpose it was appropriate to mention them in the third person. The next verse, however, deals with the creation and management specifically in case of man, and so it was proper for the speaker – the astonished and the censurer – to confront them in second person, and censure them by defying them directly. It is as though He says: You were oblivious of the creation and purpose of the heavens and the earth, and making of the darkness and the light, therefore We excused you for it since it was a general matter and it was possible to be oblivious of what it demands; but what is your excuse in doubting about Him Who created you, decreed a term for you and with Whom is the named term?

QUR'ÃN [6:3]: *And He is Allãh in the heavens and in the earth*: The preceding two verses describe creation and management of the universe in general and of the man specifically. Hence it is enough to realize that Allãh is the God alone who has no partner in His creation and management. But these disbelievers have affirmed other gods and different intercessors for various aspects of management; for example, god of life, god of sustenance, god of terra firma, god of sea and so on. Likewise, for various species, nations and different groups like god of skies, god of this nation and god of that group. So, He negated all this by His Word: "He is Allãh in the heavens and in the earth."

So, this verse is similar to the Divine Word: *And He it is Who is God in the heavens and God in the earth; and He is the Wise, the Knowing* (43:84). It proves that His divinity overwhelms the heavens and the earth without any difference or limitation. This sentence elaborates what has been said earlier and also it paves the way for what is to follow below.

QUR'ÃN: *He knows your secret and your open and He knows what you earn*: Secret and open are two opposites and they are the adjectives for our actions; their 'secret' is what they did secretly, and their 'open' means what they did openly without concealing it.

"What they earn" refers to the psychological dimension of what a man earns through his secret and open activities, be they good or evil. As you know, the secret and open which are mentioned here are two formal attributes of the external actions; and what they earn is a psychological and inner condition which is found with souls; so they are different in aspects of their appearance as well as substance. Probably the difference of the things known has caused the repetition of the word 'knowing' in these two phrases.

This verse paves the way for the theme of messengership and resurrection that is to come soon. As Allãh knows whatever man does secretly or openly, and as He knows what he earns for his soul be it good or bad, and as He brings up and manages the man's affairs, it was for Him to send a messenger with a religion which He would legislate for guidance of the people contrary to what the idolaters say that there was no need of prophethood, as Allãh says: *Surely on Us is to show the way* (92:12).

Likewise, as Allãh knows all the actions and their consequences in the soul of the man, it was for Him to take their accounts on the day that will not spare any one among them, as Allãh says: *Or shall We treat those who believe and do good like the mischief makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who are pious like the wicked?* (38:28).

TRADITIONS

1. al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain from al-Ḥasan ibn ʻAlī ibn Abī Ḥamzah who said that Abū ʻAbdillãh aṣ-Ṣãdiq, peace be upon him, said: "Surely the chapter of "al-Anʻãm" was revealed all together, escorted by seventy thousand angels until it was revealed to Muḥammad (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*); so glorify it and respect it, because therein is the Name of Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, in seventy places[2]; and if the people knew what (reward) was there in reciting it, they would not leave it." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: al-ʻAyyãshī has narrated it as a *mursal ḥadīth* from the same Imãm (*ʻa.s.*).

2. al-Qummī narrated through his father from al-Ḥusayn ibn Khãlid from ar-Riḍã (*ʻa.s.*) who said: "'al-Anʻãm' was revealed all together, escorted by seventy thousand angels, they had soft humming

[2] It is an approximation. To be exact, the name has come in eighty-seven places. (*tr.*)

sound of *at-tasbīḥ*, *at-tahlīl* and *at-takbīr;*[3] so whoever recites it, they shall seek pardon for him till the Day of Resurrection." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: It has also been narrated in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn*, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Khãlid from the Imãm (*ʻa.s.*); but the phrase: 'shall seek pardon for him' is changed to: 'shall recite *tasbīḥ* for him'.

3. Abū Baṣīr said: "I heard Abū ʻAbdillãh (*ʻa.s.*) saying: 'Surely the chapter of "*al-Anʻãm*" (ch.6) was revealed all together, escorted by seventy thousand angels when it was revealed to the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*); so glorify it and revere it, because in it there is the Name of Allãh, to Whom belong Might, and Majesty, in seventy places; and if people knew the merit in its recital they would not leave it.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʻAyyãshī,)

4. aṭ-Ṭabrisī says that Ubayy ibn Kaʻb narrates a *ḥadīth* from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) who said: "[The chapter of] '*al-Anʻãm*' was revealed to me all together, seventy thousand angels were escorting it; they had soft humming sound of *tasbīḥ* and *taḥmīd*; so whoever recites it, those seventy thousand angels will pray for him for one day and night for each verse of '*al-Anʻãm*'." (*Jawãmiʻu 'j-jãmiʻ*)

The author says: It has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) through various chains of narrators. [as-Suyūṭī]

5. al-Kulaynī narrates through his chain from Ibn Maḥbūb, from Abū Jaʻfar al-Aḥwal, from Salãm ibn al-Mustanīr, from Abū Jaʻfar (*ʻa.s.*) that he said: "Surely Allãh created the Garden before creating the Fire, and created obedience before creating disobedience, and created mercy before wrath, and created good before evil, and created the earth before the sky, and created life before death, and created the sun before the moon, and created the light before the darkness." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: That the light was created before darkness is clear in meaning, inasmuch as the darkness is a non-existent entity [and exists only] in relation to the light. [In other words, darkness is nothing but absence of light itself.]

As for ascribing the process of creation to obedience and disobedience, it does not necessary negate free will; because negation of free will would mean negation of obedience and disobedience themselves, and then there would be no correct reason of ascribing them to creation. Rather it means that Allãh owns obedience and disobedience

[3] *at-Tasbīḥ, at-tahlīl* and *at-takbīr* refer to phrases used to sing the praise of Allãh by reciting *subhãn Allãh, lã ilãha illa Allãh, Allãhu akbar*. (*tr.*)

as He owns all those things which come under His ownership. How is it possible that a thing falls within His ownership and then be beyond His encompassment and authority, and isolated from His will and permission?

Moreover, there is no proof that 'creation' is confined to original invention and manufacturing in the sense that God directly invents all things whose creation is ascribed to Him; so that when it is said that Allãh has created justice or murder, it means that the will power of man is negated and He becomes directly responsible for justice or murder by removing any intermediate factor in between. [No, there is no proof for such a notion.] Understand it; and a detailed discussion on this subject was given in the first volume of this book.[4]

By a similar explanation, the meaning of ascribing creation to good and evil, whether in universal matters or in human actions, will also be clear.

As for obedience being created before disobedience and good being created before evil, this too may be explained the way creation of light before darkness has been explained, because the relation between them is that of negation and potentiality, and the negative depends in its happening on the potentiality. The creation of life before death also becomes clear in the same way. It also proves that the mercy was created before the wrath, because mercy is related to obedience and good, and wrath is related to disobedience and evil, and obedience and good happen before disobedience and evil.

As for the creation of the earth before the skies, the following verses prove it: [Say] "*...Who created the earth in two days..." Then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth: "Come both willingly or unwillingly." They both said: "We come willingly." So He ordained them seven heavens in two days...* (41:9-12).

As for the creation of the sun being prior to that of the moon, that can be easily inferred from the verses: (I swear) *by the sun and its heat, and the moon when it follows it* (91:1-2). The modern natural sciences lean towards the view that the earth was split from the sun, and the moon was split from the earth.

6. al-ʻAyyãshī narrates from Jaʻfar ibn Aḥmad, from al-ʻAmrakī ibn ʻAlī, from al-ʻUbaydī, from Yūnus ibn ʻAbdi 'r-Raḥmãn, from ʻAlī ibn Jaʻfar that Abū Ibrahim (*ʻa.s.*) said: "Every prayer has two times,

[4] See *al-Mīzãn.* (Eng. transl.), vol.1, p.131-5. (*tr.*)

and the time of the Friday is the midday." Then he recited the verse: *All praise is due to Allãh, Who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light; yet those who disbelieve set up equals with their Lord.* (He said): "They consider the darkness and the light, and the injustice and the justice to be equal to one another respectively." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: This is another meaning of the verse; and it is based on making the phrase, *with their Lord*, related to the word, *disbelieve*, instead of, *set up equals*.

7. al-Kulaynī narrates from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyã from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad from Ibn Faḍḍãl from Ibn Bakīr from Zurãrah from Ḥumrãn from Abū Ja'far (*'a.s.*). Ḥumrãn said: "I asked about the Word of Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty: *then He decreed a term; and there is a named term with Him.*" He [*'a.s.*] said: "They both are two terms: the determined term and the deferred term." (*al-Kãfī*)

8. al-'Ayyãshī narrates from Ḥumrãn, he said: "I asked Abū 'Abdillãh (*'a.s.*) about the Word of Allãh: *then He decreed a term; and there is a named term with Him.* He [*'a.s.*] said: "They both are two terms: the deferred term (in which) Allãh does what He pleases and the determined term." (*at-Tafsīr*)

9. al-'Ayyãshī narrates from Mas'adah ibn Ṣadaqah, from Abū 'Abdillãh (*'a.s.*) about His Word: *then He decreed a term; and there is a named term with Him.* He [*'a.s.*] said: "The unnamed term is the deferred term, He advances it whenever He pleases; and the named term is the one which comes down from what He wishes from the Night of Destiny to the similar night (next year)." Then he [*'a.s.*] said: "So this is the Word of Allãh: *When their term comes, they shall not then remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before* (their time)." (*ibid.*)

10. al-'Ayyãshī narrates from Ḥumrãn who narrates from Abū 'Abdillãh (*'a.s.*). Ḥumrãn said: "I asked him about the Word of Allãh: *a term; and there is a named term with Him.*" He [*'a.s.*] said: "The named (term) is what has been mentioned to the angel of death in that night [i.e. the Night of Destiny]; and it is that (about which) Allãh has said: *so when their term comes, they shall not then remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before* (their time); and it is that which is mentioned to the angel of death in the Night of Destiny; and the other [term], He has (His) will in it, if He wishes He advances it, and if He wishes He defers it." (*ibid.*)

The author says: Other traditions narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*'a.s.*) convey the same meaning; and what they explain of the meaning of named and unnamed terms is the same which has been inferred earlier from the noble verses.

11. There is in *at-Tafsīr* that ʻAlī ibn Ibrãhīm said: "My father narrated to me from an-Naḍr ibn Suwayd from al-Ḥalabī from ʻAbdullãh ibn Muskãn that Abū ʻAbdillãh (*'a.s.*) said: 'The decreed term is the determined one which Allãh has decreed and fixed, and the named one is the one in which is *al-badã'*, He advances what He wishes and defers what He wishes; and there is no advancing nor deferring in the fixed one.'" (al-ʻAyyãshī)

The author says: One of the narrators has made a mistake, and has reversed the meaning by explaining the named and unnamed terms with the meaning of the other; moreover, the tradition does not aim to explain the verse; therefore [with this explanation] there is not much difficulty in accepting it.

12. al-ʻAyyãshī narrates from al-Ḥuṣayn from Abū ʻAbdillãh (*'a.s.*) about His Word: *He decreed a term; and there is a named term with Him.* He said that Abū ʻAbdillãh (*'a.s.*) said: "The first term is that which He conveys to the angels, messengers and prophets, and the named term is that which Allãh has kept hidden from the creatures." (*ibid.*)

The author says: The meaning of the tradition is apparently against that of the preceding traditions. However, it is possible to infer from his [*'a.s.*] word: *He conveyed it*, that Allãh has given them the basis from which unnamed terms can be discovered; but when it comes to the named term, He has not given preponderance to any one over His knowledge in the sense that He might have conveyed to him a light with which every named term is discovered whenever he wants it. Of course, if the Sublime describes it to the angel of death or to His prophets and messengers when He wishes; so that is like the unseen whose knowledge is reserved for the Sublime, yet He reveals some of it to whom He chooses from the messengers when He so wishes.

13. It is narrated from Ibn Bãbawayh through his chain, from Muthannã al-Ḥannãṭ from Abū Jaʻfar (I think it refers to Muḥammad ibn an-Nuʻmãn) that he said: "I asked Abū ʻAbdillãh (*'a.s.*) about the Word of Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty: *And He is Allãh in the heavens and in the earth.* He [*'a.s.*] said: "Likewise He is in every place." I said: "By Himself?" He said: "Woe unto you! Surely the places are measures; so when you say: In a place by Himself, it

will be necessary for you to say in the measures and other than that. But He is different from His creation, He comprehends what He has created, in knowledge and power, comprehension and authority; His knowledge of what is in the earth is not less than His knowledge on what is in the heavens. Nothing is far from Him, and the things are equal for Him in knowledge and power, in authority, possession and will." (*Tafsīru 'l-burhãn*)

* * * * *

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِم مِّنْ ءَايَةٍ مِّنْ
ءَايَٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا۟ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِٱلْحَقِّ
لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ۖ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنۢبَٰٓؤُا۟ مَا كَانُوا۟ بِهِۦ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٥﴾ أَلَمْ
يَرَوْا۟ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّن قَرْنٍ مَّكَّنَّٰهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ
نُمَكِّن لَّكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا ٱلسَّمَآءَ عَلَيْهِم مِّدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرَ
تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَٰهُم بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنشَأْنَا مِنۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا
ءَاخَرِينَ ﴿٦﴾ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَٰبًا فِى قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ
لَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَقَالُوا۟ لَوْلَآ أُنزِلَ
عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَّقُضِىَ ٱلْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨﴾
وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَٰهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنَٰهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا
يَلْبِسُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَقَدِ ٱسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ
بِٱلَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا۟ مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا۟ بِهِۦ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾
قُلْ سِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ ٱنظُرُوا۟ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ
ٱلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

And there does not come to them any sign of the signs of their Lord but they turn aside from it (4). *So they have indeed rejected the truth when it came to them; therefore the truth of*

what they mocked at will come to them (5). *Do they not consider how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established in the earth as We have not established you, and We sent the clouds pouring rain on them in abundance, and We made the rivers to flow beneath them, then We destroyed them on account of their faults and raised up after them another generation* (6). *And if We sent to you a writing on a paper, then they had touched it with their hands, certainly those who disbelieve would have said: "This is nothing but clear enchantment."* (7). *And they say: "Why has not an angel been sent down to him?" And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been respited* (8). *And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused* (9). *And certainly messengers before you were mocked at, but that which they mocked at encompassed the scoffers among them* (10). *Say: "Travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters."* (11).

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COMMENTARY

This passage points to the disbelievers' rejection of the truth with which the Messenger was sent, and shows their continued refutation of truth and mockery of the divine signs; then it admonishes them and warns them [of its consequences]; finally it responds to some of their imprudent talks in which they have rejected the clear truth.

QUR'ĀN [6:4]: *And there does not come to them any sign of the signs of their Lord but they turn aside from it*: It points to the characteristic of arrogance which is deeply rooted in their souls, and has produced in them the aversion for the signs which lead to the truth. Thus, they do not look at any sign and are indiscriminately heedless of all. This is because they have rejected the ultimate goal, i.e. the truth, as Allãh says: *So they have indeed rejected the truth when it came to them…* [6:5]

QUR'ĀN [6:5]: *therefore the truth of what they mocked at will come to them*: This is a warning and threat [to those who reject the signs of Allãh] because what they mock at is the truth; and the truth refuses

until to appear one day and emerge from the realm of news to the realm of reality. Allãh says: *...and Allãh blots out the falsehood and confirms the truth with His words…* (42:24). *They desire to put out the light of Allãh with their mouths, but Allãh will perfect His light, though the unbelievers may be averse. He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion, that He may make it overcome the religions, all of them, though the polytheists may be averse,* (61:8-9). Also, He said in a parable: *...thus does Allãh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it tarries in the earth…* (13:17).

It is known that when the truth will appear the believer and the unbeliever will not be equal in its handling, nor the one who was humble to it and the one who mocked at it. Allãh says: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the messengers, most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones. Therefore turn away from them till a time, and* (then) *see them, so they too shall see. What! Would they then hasten on Our chastisement? But when it shall descend in their court, evil shall then be the morning of the warned ones* (37:171-7).

QUR'ÃN [6:6]: ***Do they not consider how many a generation We have destroyed before them…and raised up after them another generation*****:** ar-Rãghib says: "*al-Qarn* (اَلقَرْن = translated here as 'generation') means a people who are together in the same era, and its plural is قُرُوْن *qurūn*." Also, he said: "Allãh said: 'And We sent the clouds pouring rain on them in abundance' [6:6]. *...He will send on you clouds pouring down abundance of rain…* [11:52]. [The term '*midrãra* = abundance of rain'] comes from اَلدَّرُّ *ad-darr* and اَلدِّرَّه *ad-dirrah* which literally means milk; and it is symbolically used for rain just as the names of the camel and its qualities are used in metaphorical meanings. So, it is said: '*Li 'llãhi durrahu – lit*: 'his achievement is due to Allãh'; your udder flowed copiously;' from it is borrowed the usage: dark pass."

The Divine Word: "whom We had established in the earth as We have not established you": Here the talk turns from third person to the second; apparently its reason is avoidance of confusion regarding the reference point of the pronoun. Had there been no change in the phrase: "as We have not established you", the context would have

given the idea that the pronoun refers to those mentioned as 'whom' in "whom We had established in the earth"; otherwise the real context in the opening of the chapter is of the third person. We have explained earlier the change which is found in the phrase: *He it is Who created you from clay* [6:2].

The Divine Word: "then We destroyed them on account of their faults"**,** prove that evil deeds and sins have some bearing on afflictions and general calamities. There are many verses conveying this meaning as there are verses which prove that good deeds and obedience have an impact on bestowal of bliss and showering of blessings.

QUR'ĀN [6:7]: ***And if We had sent to you a writing on a paper, then they had touched it with their hands, certainly those who disbelieve would have said: "This is nothing but clear enchantment."*****:**

It shows that the arrogance of the polytheists has reached a stage where nothing would help them to come to the right path; even if We sent to them a message written on a paper which they could touch with their hands and perceive it with their sight and hearing, and their sensory perceptions supported one another yet they would only say that it is nothing but a clear enchantment. Therefore one should not care about their senseless talk: *...and we will not believe in your ascending until you bring down to us a book which we may read*, (17:93).

'Writing' is used as a common noun in the phrase: "a writing on a paper," because this writing or book has been revealed in a piecemeal and gradual manner, and it is qualified with "on a paper" in order that it may be nearer to what they had demanded; also then it would be further from their thought that the verses revealed to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) are his own composition written by him, and not something that was revealed upon him through the Faithful Spirit, as Allāh says: *The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your heart that you may be of the warners in plain Arabic language*, (26:193-5).

QUR'ĀN [6:8]: ***And they say: "Why has not an angel been sent down to him?" And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been respited*****:** Their talk: "Why has not an angel been sent down to him?" is an incitement to show his inability. The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) had informed them that the verses which he recited to them were brought to him by a noble angel who comes down from Allāh; as Allāh says: *Most surely it is the word of an honoured messenger, the possessor of strength, having an honourable place with the Lord of the*

Throne, one (to be) *obeyed, and faithful in trust*, (81:19-21). There are many similar verses.

* * *

Their demand for an angel to be sent to them could be for one of the two reasons as Allãh describes in His speech:

One: That the Holy Prophet should bring to them the chastisement which he had threatened them with; as Allãh says: *But if they turn aside, then say: "I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of ʻÃd and Thamūd."* (41:13). Also, He says: *Say: "It is a message of importance …Naught is revealed to me save that I am a plain warner;* (38:67-70).

And since the coming of the angel would mean changing the realm of the unseen into the realm of the seen, then there would be no escape if they had not yet believed – and they would never believe because of their disposition towards arrogance – but to judge them justly and that would necessitate their death as He said: *And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been respited.*

Moreover, the humans who are tied to the material world and are settled in the earthly abode are unable to see the angels if they were to be sent down to them and to mingle with them, because their environment is different from that of the angels. So, if humans were to verge into the angels' environment, it will not be possible except by them transferring from the low physical level to the metaphysical level, and that simply means death. As Allãh says: *And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say: "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or* (why) *do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted in great revolt. On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say: "It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited."* (25:21-22). This refers to the day of death or even later aspects, as is seen in the next Divine Word: *The dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in a better abiding-place and a better resting-place* (25:24).

The Almighty Allãh says after it (and the context apparently shows that it is the last day): *And on the day when the heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds, and the angels shall be sent down a sending. The Kingdom on that day shall rightly belong to the Beneficent God, and a hard day shall it be for the unbelievers* (25:25-26). Perhaps they meant the same when they said: *…or bring Allãh and the angels face to face* (with us); (17:92).

In short, the words: *And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided…*, is the reply to their demand that an angel should be sent down to punish them. As such, there should be added to it what Allāh has promised this *ummah* that punishment would be deferred from them, as the verses of the Chapter Yūnus point to it: *And every nation had a messenger; so when their messenger came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And they say: "When will this threat come about, if you are truthful?" Say: "I do not control for myself any harm, or any benefit except what Allāh pleases; every nation has a term…" And they ask you: "Is that true?" Say: "Yea! By my Lord! It is most certainly the truth, and you will not escape.*" (10:47-53). There are many verses of this meaning; we shall thoroughly describe them in another chapter, Allāh willing. And Allāh says: *And Allāh was not going to chastise them, while you were among them, nor is Allāh going to chastise them while yet they ask for forgiveness;* (8:33).

The verse, in short, indicates that they are demanding descent of an angel but We shall not respond to it because if an angel came down the matter will be decided and they will not be given a respite. Allāh, however, has willed to give them some respite to a certain time, so that they should plunge in what they are doing until they meet this day of theirs and Allāh will certainly give them in full what they are asking for, then Allāh will decide between them.

The verse may possibly be interpreted in another way: They ask for descending of an angel in order that it should be a sign, not that he should bring chastisement. Then the reply would mean: Even if an angel came down to them, they will not believe because of the arrogance and hatred of truth which are deeply rooted in them, and then it will be decided between them and they will not be given respite – and this is not what they want.

Two: That an angel should be sent down to them in order to carry out all the burdens of the mission of inviting them to Allāh instead of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*); or he should be accompanied by a messenger like him confirming his call and to be a witness for his truth, as is seen in their talk as quoted by Allāh: *And they say: "What is the matter with this messenger that he eats food and goes about in the marts; why has not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have been a warner with him?*" (25:7). They meant that the person who has been sent as a messenger by Allāh, it is beneath his dignity that he should be like the people in their habits, e.g., eating of

food, and going to and fro in markets to earn his livelihood; rather it is necessary that he should have a heavenly life and angelic living which is devoid of hardships and discomforts of material life. Thus he should either have visible sign of his call or an angel should come down to him from the heaven to become a warner with him. In this way, there would be no doubt in truthfulness of his call and reality of his mission.

It is this idea which is replied to in the next verse: *And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man…*

QUR'ÃN [6:9]: ***And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused:*** *al-Labs* (اَلْلَبْسُ) = to hide with a cover what must be kept hidden because of its ugliness or because it needs hiding; *al-lubs* (اَلْلُبْسُ) = covering of the truth; and it seems that the meaning is metaphorical, and the root is the same.

ar-Rãghib says in his *al-Mufradãt*: "He wore the cloth, i.e., he hid himself with it, and dressed someone else… The root meaning of *al-lubs* is to hide a thing, and it is used in various meanings: it is said, 'I confused his affair on him.' (Allãh) says: "We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused." Also, He said: *And do not confuse the truth with the falsehood,* [2:42]. *Why do you confound the truth with the falsehood…?* [3:70]. *Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity…* [6:82]; and it is said: 'There is confusion in this matter, i.e. dubiousness.'"

"…what they make confused": its object is deleted; probably it denotes generality; its full meaning will be as follows: That which the disbelievers confuse themselves about; it may mean, confusion of someone over his own self, and confusion of the one over another person.

As for their confusing others, then it is like the corrupt scholars who mingle the truth with the falsehood because of the ignorance of their followers; and like corrupt leaders who mingle the truth with the falsehood because of the weakness of their followers just as Pharaoh had said to his people (as Allãh quotes him): *"O my people! Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And these rivers flow beneath me; do you not then see? Nay! I am better than this fellow, who is contemptible, and who can hardly speak distinctly: But why have not bracelets of gold been put upon him, or why have not come with him angels as companions?" So he incited his people to levity and they obeyed him…* (43:51-54).

Also, he said: *"I do not show you aught but that which I see* (myself), *and I do not make you follow any but the right way."* (40:29).

And as for their confusing their own selves, it was by their imagination that the truth was falsehood and falsehood was truth. Then they continued on their falsehood, for, although man by nature distinguishes truth from falsity – the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men; and his soul is inspired to what is right and what is wrong – yet he prefers the side of base desire, and supports the spirit of desire and anger in his soul; This creates in his soul the trend of arrogance against truth and superiority over reality; thus his soul is attracted to it. It is dazzled of its misdeed, and it does not leave him free to turn towards truth and to heed its call; at this juncture he embellishes his misdeed and knowingly confuses truth with falsehood. As Allãh says: *Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his god, and Allãh has made him err having knowledge and has set a seal upon his ear and his heart and put a covering upon his eye,* (45:23). Also, He has said: *Say: "Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in* (their) *deeds?* (These are) *they whose labour is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well-versed in skill of the work of hands."* (18:103-4).

This explains how man goes astray in an issue even though he knows it; and, therefore, it cannot be said that man's confusing the truth with falsehood means that he proceeds to a necessary harm [rather he thinks it is good for him] – since that won't be [rationally] unacceptable.

Moreover, if we deeply look at our own condition and do justice with it, we shall find in ourselves many bad habits of whose evil we are sure, yet we do not leave them just because they have become deep-rooted in us. This is nothing except becoming astray with knowledge and confusing the truth with falsity in the soul; taking delight in imaginary pleasures and infatuation with it forgetting the firmness on truth and practicing it; may Allãh help us to seek His pleasures.

In any case, the Divine Word: "And if We had made him an angel, We would certainly have made him a man…" answers their demand that an angel should be sent down to them as a warner, so that they may believe in him.

In short, it means that this place is the abode of choice; man does not acquire his real blessing and happiness except through proceeding on the path of choice and earning for or against himself what benefits him or harms him; and proceeding on either path (which he selects for himself) is affirmed by Allãh.

Allãh says: *Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful* (76:3). So, it is guidance and showing of the way, so that man may choose what he chooses for himself, either going onto the right path or deviating from it, without being compelled to take this or that path. In fact, he sows for himself and then reaps what he had sowed. Allãh says: *And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; and that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward,* (53:39-41). So, man does not get except what he strives for; if it is good Allãh shows it to him, and if it is evil, He affirms it to him. He says: *Whoever desires the gain of the hereafter, We will give him more of that again; and whoever desires the gain of this world, We give him of it, and in the hereafter he has no portion,* (42:20).

In short, this Divine Call would not be meaningful except when it is based on human choice without compulsion and coercion. There is no escape therefore from the fact that the messenger who was to bring the divine message must be one of the people who speaks their language; so that they would choose for themselves happiness by obedience, and misfortune by disobedience, without putting any compulsion on them to accept the call through a heavenly sign which would force them to it – although He has power to do so, as He says: *Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe. If We please, We should send down upon them a sign from the heavens so that their necks should stoop to it,* (26:3-4).

So, if Allãh was to send down to them an angel messenger, it was rationally incumbent to make him a man like them, in order that the righteous should profit from their good deeds, and the evildoers should lose, since they would confuse truth with falsehood for themselves and for their followers just as they are confused with a human messenger; and Allãh will affirm it and confuse for them what they have confused. Allãh says: *…but when they turned aside, Allãh made their hearts turn aside…* (61:5).

So, by sending down an angel messenger there would be no [added] benefit or effect more than that which was to accrue by sending down a human messenger, and so that would be futile. Thus the saying of the unbelievers: *Why has not an angel been sent down to him?* is a demand for a useless thing from which no special or new effect would result based on their expectation. This is the meaning of the Divine Word: "And if We had made him an angel, We would

certainly have made him a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused."

The above explanation makes it clear that:

First: The issue of making the messenger an angel and making him a man depends on intellectual necessity of preserving the human will and choice in divine religious call, because if the angel was to be sent down in his heavenly form and the unseen was changed to the seen, it would have meant compulsion which is not appropriate with the call of choice.

Second: The verse only talks about the angel becoming a man; it does not elaborate whether it would happen by changing his essence of angelhood to that of humanness – which, various scholars say, is impossible – or by the angel's only taking on a human form, as the Spirit appeared before Maryam as a full-grown human being, or as they appeared to Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) and Lūṭ (*'a.s.*) in the form of human guests.

Most of the verses speaking about the angels support the second alternative; yet the Divine Word: *And if We please, We could make among you angels to be successors in the land* (43:60), somewhat points to the first alternative. This topic has further details which should be looked for in another place.

Third: The Divine Word: "and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused", is of the genre of the words, *but when they turned aside, Allãh made their hearts turn aside* (61:5). So, this divine misguidance for them took place after they preferred misguidance for themselves; it cannot be the initial misguidance which is not appropriate for God's holy divinity.

Fourth: "what they make confused" is of general sense; it covers their act of confusion for their own selves and also their act of confusion for others.

Fifth: The verse offers argument against them that even if an angel was sent down to them with the message, it would not help them in removing their bewilderment. It is because Allãh would make that angel a man similar to the human messenger, and they will confuse themselves and indulge in doubt. The fact is that they are making this demand only to get rid of the human messenger (in the form of a man) for changing their doubt into certainty [that he was not a true messenger]; and when the angel will inevitably appear in the same form, they would not benefit from it at all.

Sixth: Allãh has said: "We would certainly have made him a man," and did not say, 'have made him a human,' (a term that includes

man and woman both): it is said that this expression shows that a messenger cannot be but a man; it is also indicates that this "making" would be by the angel taking on the human form, not that his essence would change into that of a man, as has been said.

Most of the exegetes have explained the verse in this way: The human being who demanded that an angel be send down did not have power to look at the angel in his true form because they are fully bound by the material world. Therefore, if an angel was sent down to them, he would have appeared to them as a fully developed human being. Consequently, the same confusion and doubt would have occurred to them as it appeared in case of the human messenger, and they would have not benefited from it at all.

This explanation does not answer the objection, even if we were to admit that an ordinary human being does not see the angels in their true forms, by relying on such verses as: *On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty…* (25:22).

And we say that because if it were impossible for a human being to see the angel in his original form, then the condition of various individuals would not have differed in being possible or impossible; whereas it has been narrated in the Sunnī and the Shīʿī traditions that the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) had seen Gabriel in his original form twice, and Allãh has power to enable all human beings (as He had enabled His Holy Prophet) so that all people could see the angels and believe in them. Thus, there is no problem in it from rational point of view, except the problem of compulsion; so this is the difficulty which should be resolved through this verse, as described earlier.

Likewise, seeing the angels in human shape is not concomitant with possibility of doubt and confusion. Allãh tells us about Ibrãhīm and Lūṭ (*ʿa.s.*) that they saw the angels in human forms, and then they recognized them and had no doubt about them. Likewise, He informed about Maryam that she looked at the Spirit, and then knew him and had no doubt about him, nor was his affair confused to her. So, why it is not possible that all people should enjoy similar condition like the above-mentioned friends of Allãh so that they could see the angels in human shape, then recognize them and be certain of them? But there remains a difficulty: Making the souls of all people similar to the souls of Ibrãhīm, Lūṭ and Maryam makes it necessary to erase their natural tenets and to change their souls into purified and holy souls, and this leads us to the problem of compulsion; so compulsion is the problem

that makes the question of test and trial redundant; that's the problem which should be removed with the help of this verse, as described earlier.

QUR'ÃN [6:10-11]: ***And certainly messengers before you were mocked at, but that which they mocked at encompassed the scoffers among them. Say: "Travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters."*** *al-Ḥayq* (اَلْحَيْق = staying, descending). ar-Rãghib says in *al-Mufradãt*: "It is said that its root is *ḥaqq* (حَقّ), then it was changed as in *zalla* (زَلَّ) and *zãla*; and [the phrase] *fa-azallahuma 'sh-shayṭãn* (فَأَزَلَّهُمَاٱلشَّيْطَانُ), is recited, *fa-azãlahuma* (فَأَزَالَهُمَا); and similarly, *dhammahu* and *dhãmahu*."

Their act of mocking the messengers was actually aimed at mocking the divine punishment which the messengers were warning them that it would come down and encompass them, and so the exact punishment that they had mocked at came down upon them. The first verse aims at pleasing the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) and warning the polytheists; and the second verse is an admonition and advice.

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قُل لِّمَن مَّا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ قُل لِّلَّهِ ۚ
كَتَبَ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ٱلرَّحْمَةَ ۚ لَيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ
لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۚ ٱلَّذِينَ خَسِرُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
﴿١٢﴾ ۞ وَلَهُۥ مَا سَكَنَ فِي ٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ
﴿١٣﴾ قُلْ أَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ أَتَّخِذُ وَلِيًّا فَاطِرِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُ
وَلَا يُطْعَمُ ۗ قُلْ إِنِّيٓ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ ۖ وَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ إِنِّيٓ أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ
رَبِّى عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾ مَّن يُصْرَفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ
رَحِمَهُۥ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾ وَإِن يَمْسَسْكَ ٱللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ
فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُۥٓ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ وَإِن يَمْسَسْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَهُوَ ٱلْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِۦ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ٱلْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾

Say: "To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?" Say: "To Allãh; He has ordained mercy on Himself; most certainly He will gather you on the Day of Resurrection – there is no doubt about it. (As for) *those who have lost their souls, they will not believe."* (12). *And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing*

(13). *Say: "Shall I take a guardian besides Allāh, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds* (others) *and is not* (Himself) *fed." Say: "I am commanded to be the first who submits himself, and you should not be of the polytheists."* (14). *Say: "Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day"* (15). *He from whom it is averted on that day, Allāh indeed has shown mercy to him; and this is a manifest achievement* (16). *And if Allāh touch you with affliction, there is none to take it off but He; and if He visit you with good, then He has power over all things* (17). *And He is the Supreme, above His servants; and He is the Wise, the Aware* (18).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These verses argue against the polytheists regarding Unity of God (*at-tawḥīd*) and Resurrection (*al-ma'ād*); the first two verses contain proof of resurrection, and the remaining five discuss the issue of *at-tawḥīd* based on two types of arguments as will be explained shortly.

QUR'ĀN [6:12]: *Say: "To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?" Say: "To Allāh…*: Thus begins the proof of resurrection. It says in short that certainly Allāh is the Owner of all that is in the heavens and in the earth; He has the authority to manage it in any way He wishes and wills. He is characterised with the attribute of mercy, and it means fulfilling the need of every needy and conveying every thing to what it deserves and bestowing it on him; and many of His servants including human beings are qualified for an eternal life, and deserve to get happiness in it; so He, according to His ownership and mercy, will soon manage their affairs by resurrecting them and bestowing on them what they truly deserve.

So, His Word, the Sublime: "To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?" contains one premise of the proof; and the phrase: *He has ordained mercy on Himself*, contains another premise, and the phrase: *And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and day*, is the third premise forming a part of the proof.

And His Word, the Sublime: "Say: 'To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?'…", direct the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) to ask them about him who owns the heavens and the earth, and who manages them as he wishes and no one can oppose him; and that is

none but Allãh without doubt, because all others, even the idols and the lords of idols (whom polytheists call [for help]) are like all other creatures, their creation and affairs [by hand of their builders eventually] end at Allãh, and so He is the Owner of all that is in the heavens and the earth.

And since the subject of the question was clearly known to the questioner and the questioned both, and the opponents acknowledge that reality, so there was no need for a reply or verbal confession from the opposite party. Therefore, Allãh directed the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) to mention the reply which constitutes the completion of the proof without waiting for their reply.

Putting forth a question to the opponent and then also answering it are among the subtle styles which are used in argumentations. A benefactor admonishes the ungrateful beneficiary by asking: "Who fed you, gave you water and clothed you?" And then he himself answers: "It was I who did all this and was gracious to you, and yet you repay me with ingratitude?"

In short, this question and answer has affirmed that Allãh is the absolute owner; He may manage the creatures in any way He wishes: by giving them life and sustenance, giving death and resurrecting; nothing can prevent Him from it, like the complexity of task, death, absence or disturbance, etc. With this, one premise of the proof is completed. And then another premise is attached to it: *He has ordained mercy on Himself.*

QUR'ÃN: *"He has ordained mercy on Himself…"*: *al-Kitãbah* (اَلْكِتَابَةُ = literally writing); here it means affirmation and a firm decree.

Since mercy – i.e. bestowal of blessing on one who deserves it, and conveying a thing to its due blessing and happiness – is among the Divine Attributes of action, it is appropriate to ascribe it to His affirmation. The meaning will be as follows: He has affirmed for Himself the mercy, bestowal of blessings and sending down the good to one who deserves it. There are other divine verses wherein writing has been described as an action of affirming: *Allãh has written down: I will most certainly prevail, I and My messengers* (58:21). *And by the Lord of the heavens and the earth! It is most surely the truth…* (51:23).

And as for the divine attributes of person, like life, knowledge and power, their attribution to affirmation is not correct at all [since those attributes were never separate from His person]; and therefore it is not said: He has affirmed for himself life, knowledge and power.

The necessary consequence of His affirming mercy upon Himself – as explained earlier – is that He should complete His blessings on them by gathering them on the Day of Resurrection in order that He should recompense them for their words and deeds, and so that the believers should succeed and the others should suffer loss.

That is why He has added at the end – as the conclusion of the proof – "most certainly He will gather you on the Day of Resurrection – there is no doubt about it". Look how He has emphasized the theme by using *lãm* (ل) of oath and *nūn* (ن) of emphasis [in *la-yajma'anna,* most certainly He will gather"], and the ending phrase: "there is no doubt about it". Then He pointed out that the profit on that day was reserved for the believers and the loss for the non-believers; and so He said: "(As for) those who have lost their souls, they will not believe".

The proof offered in this verse for resurrection is quite separate from the two proofs offered in the following verses: *And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire. Shall we treat those who believe and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who are pious like the wicked?* (38:27-28). These two verses present proofs of resurrection from the angle that the divine actions are not in vain; on the contrary, they have some purpose behind them; and from the angle that considering the believer and the unbeliever, and the pious and the impious as equals would be an injustice not worthy of the divine status. And since these two groups are not distinguishable in this world, there is need of another life in which the two sides are made distinct from one another through blessings and unhappiness. This line of argument is other than the one used in the present verse which leads to the conclusion through the path of mercy.

QUR'ÃN [6:13]: *And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing*: Dwelling in the night and the day denotes being in the condition of this natural world whose affairs are managed in the night and the day; and its system is run by coverage of light reflected from the brilliant sun, and the light's transmutation through proximity and distance, power and weakness, presence and absence and direction, etc.

So, the night and the day are the general environment in which main elements and their by-products are brought up based on a system

in which every part and each entity is led to its final destination determined for it, and completes it in spirit and body.

As the living space, in general and in particular, has full effect on the life of the living being, for example a human being, who lives in a land, moves around in search of sustenance, and obtains his sustenance from what grows from it like grains and fruits, and what is raised in it like the animals, and drinks from its water, breathes its air, and he influences the conditions of its regions and is affected by them, and all parts of his body grow according to its measures – similarly, the night and the day have full impact in creation of what is created in them.

Man, among the things living in the night and the day, has been shaped by the divine will from compounding the elementary and composite parts in a particular shape whose existence is distinguished, in its creation as well as its survival, by a life based on a thoughtful cognizance and a will. These two factors prepare for him his inner emotional powers which compel him to attract the beneficial things and avert the harmful ones; and invite him to create a society in which are fashioned the details [of phenomenon] that we see – mutual understanding through languages, following of traditions, laws and habits in social and business dealings, and respecting general opinions and beliefs regarding good and evil, justice and injustice, obedience and disobedience, reward and punishment, and recompense and pardon.

As Allãh, Glory be to Him, is the Creator of the night, the day and all that lives in them, and He is alone in their invention, therefore He owns whatever lives in the night and the day; and He is the true owner of all the night and day, and their inhabitants, including whatever follows their existence, e.g., various events, actions and words. He also owns the system that flows in the whole universe with its wonderful spaciousness. So, He very well hears our words, voices and signs; and very well knows our actions and deeds whether they are good or bad, just or unjust, helpful to others or hurtful, and whatever the soul earns of the happiness and misfortune.

How can He be ignorant of it when everything has appeared in His domain of ownership and by His permission? The existences of such types of issues like good and evil, justice and injustice, and obedience and disobedience; and also the languages that indicate the intended meanings – all these are matters of knowledge that cannot take place except on basis of knowledge. It is for this reason that none of our actions can be called good or bad, obedience or disobedience except when we are aware of those deeds and understand their meanings. In

the same way, a combined voice is not called 'speech' unless we know it and relate to its meaning.

Thus, how is it possible that a human being as a created being possesses knowledge of his own person while his ultimate owner (i.e., Allãh) to be ignorant and unaware of it? (Ponder on it thoughtfully).

It is Allãh, Glory be Him, Who invented this universe, with its wonderful spaciousness, in its simple and elemental ingredients which are compounded with a system that astonishes the intellect. Then, He created us and made us inhabit the night and day, then He increased us and established among us the system of human society; then He guided us to invention of languages, and consideration of customs; and He is always with us and with all the causes, step by step, and proceeds with us, minute by minute; and controls the events which we cannot count, one after another.

When a man utters a speech, Allãh put its meaning in his heart by inspiration, made the word flow on his tongue through His specification; conveyed his voice to the listener's ears by making him hear it, and it went with its meaning to his intellect through His preservation, and the meaning was understood by his cogitation through His education. Then He raised the thinker to agree with what the speaker has conveyed to him or to prevent him from it by creating a will to do it or an aversion to repulse him from it. And He, in all these stages which cannot be counted by fingers, is the leader, the motivator, the guide, the guard and the watcher. So, how can a man avoid believing that He, the Sublime, is the Hearing and the Knowing: *Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth of them nor* (between) *five but He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more but He is with them wherever they are; then He will inform of what they did on the Day of Resurrection; surely Allãh is Cognizant of all things* [58:7].

Likewise, [Allãh is fully aware] when one of us does an action, whether good or bad; [He is cognizant of every stage of our creation:] a man is born from a father and a mother, they give birth to him under the watch of free choice and will; and he has reached them after treading on a distant path and unmeasured span of time, through the loins of active factors and the wombs of passive factors, until he ends in a situation that Allãh knows better; and the Glorified Allãh, in whose grasp is the earth and in whose hand is the heavens, was transferring him by His will from one lap to another until the person reached this world, the place of free will. Then He remained with him

in one station after another by divine permission, until he came up to the real world and took his place in the abode of the day and night; after that he continues to flow in the chain [of cause and effect] that impact various parts of the universe like one of the flowing causes while all along, the Glorified Allãh, was a witness on him and encompassed him. So, how is it possible that He, the Glorified, should be oblivious of a thing of this type? *Will He not know Who has created? And He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware* (67:14).

It is clear from the above that the phrase: "and He is the Hearing, the Knowing", is like the result of the phrase: "And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day".

Although the Hearing and the Knowing are counted among the personal attributes of the Sublime which are not separate from His Sublime person and which do not depend on anything else, yet there is a type of knowledge (as well as the hearing and the seeing) that is an attribute of action separate from the person. It is an attribute whose existence depends on the occurrence of a related issue other than His person, like creation, sustenance, giving life and death, all of which depend on the existence of a created, sustained, living and dead being.

Everything, in their essence and reality, are owned and encompassed by God. So, if they are sounds, they are heard by Him and made to hear by Him; if they are lights and colours, they are seen by Him and made to be seen by Him, and everything, whatever it may be, is known by Him and made to be known by Him. This type of knowledge is among His attributes of action, which take place when the action is done by Allãh, not before it. The fact that this attribute took place after it was not there, does not mean that any change appears in His divine person, because it does not go beyond the station of action, and does not enter the station of person. So, when the verse draws result of knowledge from ownership it intends establishment of practical knowledge. (So think over it.)

The verse, i.e.: "And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing", is like one of the premise of the proof which is explained in the preceding verse; because although the proof of the resurrection was completed by the words: "Say: 'To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?' Say: 'To Allãh; He has ordained mercy on Himself…'," yet the initial simple glance at it might be oblivious of the fact that Allãh's ownership of the things is concomitant to His knowledge of it and to His hearing of what is heard of it like sounds and speech.

That is why Allãh highlights it by repeating the ownership of the heavens and the earth, and links the hearing and knowledge to it. So, He said: "And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day" – it is synonymous with the words: "Say 'To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?' Say: 'To Allãh'." So this verse is like a premise which completes the proof given in the preceding verse.

This verse – even though we have not been able to do full justice to its explanation, and it can never be done – is among the finest Qur'ãnic verses in meaning, the most delicate in demonstration and argumentation, and the most eloquent in speech.

QUR'ÃN [6:14]: ***Say: "Shall I take a guardian besides Allãh, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds*** **(others)** ***and is not*** **(Himself)** ***fed."*****:** Now begins the argument for His Unity and that He has no partner.

By studying the history of idolatry and how the idols and false deities were adopted, one can gather that people submitted to it and bowed before the idols for one of the two reasons: Either they found themselves in need of a multitude of factors for preserving their lives, like partaking of food, clothes, dwellings, spouses, children, clan and so on; the most important being the food which according to simple view man needs it more than any other thing. Also, they thought that each kind of these needs is attached to a specific cause that arranges to magnanimously fulfil that particular need, like the cause which produces rain which helps the earth in growing pasture and greenery for their cattle and produces good grain for themselves; and there is the cause which manages the affairs of mountains and valleys; or the one which produces love and affection; or the factor which controls affairs of sea and the ships that traverse it. So, they realized that they don't possess sufficient power to gain control over that need or other necessities and they were forced to humble themselves to the cause relevant to their need and took it as a god and started worshipping it.

Or, alternatively, they found the defenceless man target of the arrows of accidents, surrounded by great and general evils and calamities which he cannot stop, like flood, earthquake, deluge, famine and epidemic; and besieged by other small tests and trials, like illness, pains, stumbling, wretchedness and barrenness; enemy, envier and opponent, etc. Then they fabricated for them dominating causes that inflict calamities upon men in order to break their back and pollute their good life. They believed that such factors were sublime

creatures like gods of each species, the spirits of the stars, and celestial bodies. Thus, they took them as gods, fearing their wrath and anger, and worshipped them in order to keep them on their side with their worship and to please them by humbling themselves to them in order to free themselves from calamities and misfortunes, and to be safe from their evil and harms that would have descended on them.

The verse, i.e.: "Say: 'Shall I take a guardian besides Allãh…'" and the following verses, argue against the polytheists by reversing their two proofs against themselves; that is, it accepts the basic argument and considers it as correct, but it clarifies that its inevitable conclusion is that they should worship the Glorified Allãh alone, and it negates every supposed partner.

So, His Word, the Sublime: "Say: 'Shall I take a guardian besides Allãh, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds (others) and is not (Himself) fed;'" point to the proof from the first basis [of idolatry], and it is the way of hope, that He should be worshipped because He is the Benefactor, and thus His worship will be the gratitude for His blessings and also bring forth more blessings.

He, Glory be to Him ordered His Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) to explain to them in the style of questioning that the Glorified Allãh alone is the guardian of all blessings that man and others enjoy, since He is the Sustainer Who does not need anyone to sustain Him, He feeds and is not fed. Its proof is that it is He Who has originated the heavens and the earth, and brought them forth from the darkness of non-existence to the light of existence; and bestowed on them the bounty of reality and existence. Thereafter, He poured over them the bounties which no one can count except Him – all this to continue its existence; among them is the feeding of man and the others. All these bounties are prepared to preserve the existence of man and others, and the causes that lead these bounties to their due places, this entire end at His origination and invention of the things and the causes and their effects are all among His makings.

So to Him, the Glorified, returns sustenance whose most important manifestation for man is feeding; so it is incumbent on all to worship Allãh alone, because He is the One who feeds us without any need of anybody feeding Him.

The above description makes it clear that:

First: The expression of worship and divinity by using the word: '*walīy* = guardian' in the verse: "Shall I take a guardian beside Allãh", is only because of the proof based on God's bounty of providing food.

Second: Its connection with the phrase: "the Originator of the heavens and the earth", aims at explaining the reason why provision of food is confined to the Almighty as was elaborated earlier. Perhaps that may be inferred from the allusion of the word: *and* [He] *is not fed,* since it eludes to the fact that all those who are taken for gods, like 'Īsã and others[5] are in need of food, etc.

It is possible to infer from this phrase in the proof that it points to yet another way of establishing His Unity which is better than the two ways [mentioned above]. It means, in short, that Allãh is the Originator of the universe and everything eventually leads to His creation; hence it is incumbent to surrender and submit to Him.

Why is this way of argument better? Although the first two ways lead to the result of monotheism inasmuch as He deserves worship; yet there remains one thing: the two paths lead to the incumbency of His worship either on basis of need of the bounties or on basis of fear of the punishment. So, the actual purpose is either seeking of the blessing or protecting from the wrath – not the Almighty's own person. But this path leads to the incumbency of Allãh's worship because He is Allãh, the Sublime.

Third: Although there are a multitude of Divine blessings, yet from all those Allãh has especially mentioned the provision of food because feeding is simply the most obvious need of living creatures including the man.

Then, the Sublime ordered, after the completion of the argument of His Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*), to mention to them what would support this intellectual proof: That Allãh has ordered him, through revelation, to proceed in believing in Allãh on the path which is led by the intellect, and it is monotheism; and has clearly forbidden him to cross on to the path that leads to the polytheists. So, He said: *Say: "I am commanded to be the first who submits himself,"* and then He said: *"and you should not be of the polytheists;"* [6:14].

Now, two things remain here:

One: That His Word: *the first who submits himself,* if it means the first who submitted from amongst you, then the meaning is clear since he (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) had submitted before his *ummah*; and if it means "the

[5] The Hindus regularly offer milk and food to the idols in the temples; they bath them with water and milk, and offer flowers and garlands at their feet. (*tr.*)

first" to submit without any condition, then this priority will be in rank, not in time.[6]

Two: Since the result of the proof was servitude, and that is a sort of submission and humility, it was better to use the word, *Islam*, in this place, instead of *īmãn*, because Islam points to the purpose of worship, i.e., submission.

QUR'ÃN [6:15]: ***Say: "Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day."*** This is the second of the two paths which the polytheists had adopted for believing in gods: worshiping the gods protects them from their wrath and from descending of their chastisement.

Thus, Allãh has taken in this argument the most fearful aspect of what one must fear of the kinds of punishment, and that is the punishment of the Hour of resurrection which is the heaviest in the heavens and the earth. This is similar to what He had taken in the first argument regarding the greatest need of man and that is, by first glance of the bounties, the provision of food.

The phrase: "if I disobey my Lord", has been used instead of, "if I ascribed anyone with my Lord", it points to the phrase in the preceding verse: *and you should not be of the polytheists*, which forbids the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) from polytheism. The verse thus says: It is rationally incumbent upon me to worship Allãh alone so that I may be safe from what I fear of the punishment of the grievous day. It is not only based on the guidance given to me from my Lord's revelation; this is the conclusion to which reason has guided me.

In this way, this verse runs parallel to the preceding one, inasmuch as both establish rational proof first and then support it by the divine revelation. So, understand it. This is among the finest abbreviations of the noble Qur'ãn as it explained this comprehensive meaning merely by using the word 'disobey' in place of 'Ascribed anyone'.

QUR'ÃN [6:16]: ***He from whom it is averted on that day, Allãh indeed has shown mercy to him; and this is a manifest achievement*****:** The meaning is clear. The verse completes the proof given in the preceding verse. At the simple glance, that verse apparently shows that the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) established the argument regarding

[6] If we look at the Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*)'s spiritual creation, then he was the first not only in the rank but in the time too. He himself has said: "The first thing that Allãh created was my light." See 'Abdu 'l-Ḥaqq Dehlawi, *Madãriju 'n-nubuwwah,* p.3; *as-Sīrah al-Ḥalabiyyah,* vol.1, p.159. (*tr.*)

incumbency of monotheism upon himself by saying that Allāh has forbidden polytheism to him, so it is incumbent on him to believe in Allāh's Unity in order to be safe from the next world's chastisement.

It will appear to a negligent unmindful person that the argument may be turned against the Holy Prophet [*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*] by saying that the prohibition was confined to you, as you claim, so the fear and incumbency of monotheism also should be reserved for you. Therefore, the argument does not mean that the belief of monotheism and rejection of any partner was incumbent on anybody other than yourself, and it will be a proof against you, not against anyone else.

So, the Divine Word: "He from whom it is averted on that day, Allāh indeed has shown mercy to him"; show that the Divine chastisement covers and encompasses all; there is no escape from it except through His mercy. Therefore, it is incumbent on every person to fear the chastisement of that day for himself as the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) fears it for himself; so the proof is general and is established against all the people, and not confined to him only.

QUR'ĀN [6:17]: *And if Allāh touch you with affliction, there is none to take it off but He; and if He visit you with good, then He has power over all things*: The two proofs described in the preceding verses were taken as example of what man hopes for (and that was provision of food) and as example of what he fears (and that is the punishment of the Day of Resurrection). Therefore, the explanation was completed with two examples; and the two verses, however, did not mention other kinds of harms and benefits that Allāh sends down to His servants. All these are from Allāh, glorified is His name.

The verse clearly describes that there are harms other than the punishment of the Day of Resurrection that Allāh afflicts upon man, and it is necessary for him to approach Allāh for its removal. Likewise there are blessings that Allāh bestows upon man, and there is no one to avert His grace or a snag to prevent His bestowal as He has power over every thing; and the hope of blessings makes it incumbent upon man to take Him as God, deserving of worship.

It is possible to imagine that since Allāh touches man with harm or good, therefore He deserves to be worshipped (and the opponent does not deny it[7]); yet it does not prove that divinity and being worshipped

[7] Although the elites among the idolaters allowed His worship but relying on the fact that He is of unlimited existence, they believed that devotional worship is irrelevant to Him. The general public among them, however, often worshipped Him in line

is reserved for the Almighty. Because what the idolaters have taken as gods are intermediary causes and powerful intercessors that can affect the world positively or negatively, and that makes it incumbent upon man to seek proximity to them out of fear of their evil or in hope of their good.

This argument is rejected on the basis that Allãh, Glory be to Him is *Omnipotent over His servants* ("then He has power over all things"); none of them is above or equal to Him. They themselves as well as their actions and effects are under His domination. They do not do any good or bad action except by His [creative] permission and will. They are not at all independent in any affair, nor do they possess for themselves any harm, benefit or anything else. Whatever good or bad effect rises from the horizon of their persons ends at His command, will and permission, and is attributed to Him as it may be appropriate to attribute based on His glory and power.

The two verses together complete one meaning: that whatever good or bad touches the man is from Allãh according to what can be appropriately attributed to His divine person; so the glorified Allãh is alone in divinity, alone as deserving to be worshipped, there is no god other than Him, and none is to be worshipped except Him.

Allãh has expressed the affliction of harm and good with the word, 'touching', as an indication of insignificance in His speech: "if He touches you" and "and if He visit [i.e., touches] you". It shows that whatever harm or good afflicts man is an easy task from His unlimited power against which nothing can stand; a limited creature cannot master it or bear it.

Probably the words that speak about visiting with good, "then He has power over all things", serve to show what we had mentioned earlier that there is no one to avert His grace so that it proves that Almighty Allãh has power over every supposed good, just as He has power over every supposed harm; and it manifests the reason of His Word: "there is none to take it off but He"; because if anyone else were to take off the affliction which Allãh inflicts upon a person, then it would push aside Allãh's power over it; and likewise, "He has power over all things" demands that nothing should be capable of averting the good that He bestows upon a person.

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with other gods, as is shown by the Meccan polytheists' *talbiyah* in pre-Islamic *ḥajj*: *Labbayk lã sharīka laka illa sharikan huwa laka, tamlikuhu wa mã malak*, i.e., Here I come [O my Lord], there is no partner to You, except a partner whom You dominate and whatever he owns. (*Author's note*)

The verse specifically links the touching of harm or good to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*). It is similar to the confinement seen in the verse: *Say: "Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day;"* while the verse: *And He is the Supreme, above His servant,* is of the general nature like that found in the words, *He from whom it is averted on that day, Allãh indeed has shown mercy to him.*

QUR'ÃN [18]: *And He is the Supreme, above His servants; and He is the Wise, the Aware*: *al-Qahr* (اَلْقَهْرُ) is a sort of domination; it means that a thing overcomes another thing and compels it to follow an effect of the dominant thing (which goes against the effect of the dominated thing in nature or so on); for example, water overcomes fire and forces it to extinguishment, and fire overcomes water and turns it into steam or makes it dry. Since Allãh has manifested the creative causes to serve as intermediaries in appearance of the events – so that they may exercise their impact on their effects; and these causes, whatever they may be, are compelled to obey what Allãh wants in them and with them – its correct to say that these causes are dominated by Allãh, and so Allãh is the Supreme Dominator over them.

al-Qãhir is among the names which may be used for Allãh as well as for others; yet there is a difference between His domination and that of others. Other things dominate one another while they co-exist on an equal level of being and existence; for example, fire dominates wood by burning and inflaming it, both are physical beings with different demands of nature from one another, but the fire is more powerful in imposing its effect on the wood and so it overcomes the wood by stamping its effect on it.

However, Allãh, Glory be to Him is dominant not like the domination of fire over wood; rather His dominance is thoroughly overwhelming and comprehensive. In the sense that when we ascribe burning and inflaming a body, e.g., firewood, to Allãh, then He, the Glorified, dominates it through the limited existence which He has bestowed upon it. He dominates it through the characteristics and conditions which He has given it and put in it with His power. He dominates it through the fire which He kindles to burn and inflame it; and He owns all that is found in the fire of its essence and effect. He dominates it by disconnecting the gift of resistance from the firewood, and putting the burning and inflaming in its place so that there is no resistance, no defiance, no rebellion or any such thing *vis-à-vis* His will and intention, because it comes from a sublime horizon.

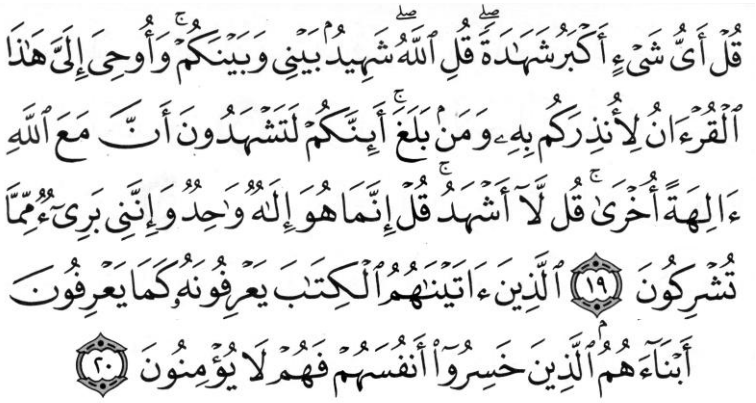
So, He, the Sublime, is Omnipotent over His servants while He is above them, and not like domination of one thing over the other that are equals. The noble Qur'ãn has confirmed this discussion by giving its result when it mentioned "*al-Qãhir*" as one of His names in two places in this chapter: this verse and the verse 61.

Thus, it has qualified this name in both places by the phrase: *above His servants.* The word, *al-qahr,* is mostly used where the dominated being is a rational being, contrary to the term *al-ghalabah;* and that is why ar-Rãghib has explained it as degradation/demeaning; and degradation in rational ones is more apparent; but this does not prevent its application to non-rational beings in usage or with special consideration.

The Glorified Allãh, Who is Omnipotent over His servants, touches them with harm and good, and degrades them for His obedience; He is Supreme above His servants in whatever they do and whatever effect they leave behind, because He is the Owner of what He has given in their ownership, and has power on whatever power that He has given them over others.

Since in the two verses under discussion He has ascribed the touching with harm and good to Himself, and sometimes they are ascribed to other than Him, He distinguished His own stand from that of others by the following phrase at the end of the verse: *and He is the Wise, the Aware.* 'He is the Wise' who does not do whatever He does haphazardly and ignorantly; and 'He is the Aware' who makes no mistakes nor does He err like others.

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قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَٰدَةً ۖ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ ۖ شَهِيدٌۢ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۚ وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَٰذَا
ٱلْقُرْءَانُ لِأُنذِرَكُم بِهِۦ وَمَنۢ بَلَغَ ۚ أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ
ءَالِهَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۚ قُل لَّآ أَشْهَدُ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ وَإِنَّنِي بَرِيٓءٌ مِّمَّا
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ يَعْرِفُونَهُۥ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
أَبْنَآءَهُمُ ۘ ٱلَّذِينَ خَسِرُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Say: "What thing is the greatest in testimony?" Say: "Allãh is witness between me and you; and this Qur'ãn has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches. Do you really bear witness that there are other gods with Allãh?" Say: "I do not bear witness." Say: "He is only one God, and surely I am clear of that which you set up (with Him),*"* (19). *Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons;* (as for) *those who have lost their souls, they will not believe* (20).

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COMMENTARY

This is an argument on monotheism based on the path of revelation. Although Unity of Allãh and rejection of a partner from Him can be proved rationally in several ways, there is nothing to prevent its establishment from the way of clear revelation in which there is no doubt. The aim is to achieve certainty that Allãh is One God; there is no partner with Him; and if this objective can be achieved through revelation that there is no doubt in it being a divine revelation, like the

Qur'ãn which relies on challenges, and then there is nothing to prevent in relying on this method.

QUR'ÃN [6:19]: ***Say: "What thing is the greatest in testimony?" Say: "Allãh is witness between me and you…*:** Allãh orders His Prophet to ask them about the greatest thing in testimony.

Testimony means bearing the news with a kind of clarity like eye-witnessing, etc. and conveying such news by informing and announcing. This bearing and conveying of news – especially the bearing – greatly differs according to the perception of the bearers and according to the manifestation of the news borne by the bearer and according to the strength and weakness of the bearer in conveying the news.

So, a bearer of testimony afflicted by negligence, forgetfulness or absent-mindedness cannot be like the one who properly remembers what his ears hear and his eyes see; similarly, a vigilant person cannot be like a drunk, nor is a learned specialist in his field like an unaware layman.

With this difference in levels of the bearing and conveying of news, there is no doubt that the Glorified Allãh is greatest of all in testimony because it is He who has created every small and great thing, and to Him returns every *amr*[8] and *khalq*[9]. He encompasses everything and is with everything, even [an entity as small as] an atom's weight in the heavens and the earth does not escape from His knowledge, nor anything smaller than that nor bigger; neither does He go astray nor does He forget.

Since this matter was clear and there was no doubt about it, there was no need to bring forth its reply in words by saying: "Say: 'Allãh is the greatest in testimony,'" as Allãh has said: *Say: "To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth?" Say: "To Allãh…"* (6:12); or by saying: "They will surely say: 'Allãh', as He has said: *Say:"Whose is the earth, and whoever is therein, if you know?" They will say: "Allãh's."* (23:84-85).

Moreover, the Divine Word: "Say: 'Allãh is witness between me and you,'" lead to that reality and takes the place of a reply. It is not unlikely that the word 'witness' be a predicate to a deleted subject, i.e. the pronoun, 'He', pointing to Allãh; and in that case, the whole sentence will be: "Say: 'Allãh is witness between me and you;'" it will thus contain the reply of the question and the beginning of a new sentence.

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[8] *Amr*: To create without matter. (*tr.*)
[9] *Khalq*: To create with matter. (*tr.*)

Bear in mind that the sentence: "Say: 'Allāh is witness between me and you,'" containing the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*)'s statement about Allāh's testimony, is in itself a testimony, as it begins with the word, 'Say' since Allāh's order to him, to inform them of Allāh's testimony for his prophethood, is not separate from this witnessing [of prophethood]. Therefore, there is no need to hold to various types of witnessing that is found in the Noble Qur'ān for his prophethood and for the coming of the Qur'ān from Him as seen in: *...and Allāh knows that you are most surely His messenger* (63:1). *But Allāh bears witness by what He has revealed to you that He has revealed it with His knowledge...* (4:166); and there are other verses that prove the point explicitly or implicitly by using the term 'testimony' or other words.

Qualifying His testimony with the phrase: "between me and you," shows that Allāh comes in the middle of the two opposite parties: the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) and his people. The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) was not separate from them and was not distinguished from them except in the claim of prophethood and messengership, and the claim of revelation of the Qur'ān; but descending of the Qur'ān through revelation is mentioned in the next sentence: *and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me.* So, Allāh's testimony between the Holy Prophet and his people is actually His testimony for prophethood. This is also supported by His Word in the next verse: *Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons*, as will be explained, if Allāh will.

QUR'ĀN: ***"and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me that I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches*****:** It is connected to the previous order, *Say:* and is in conjunction with: *Allāh is witness between me and you.*

Presenting the process of 'warning' as the aim of revealing the Noble Qur'ān is based on the path of fear in the prophetic call and it is more effective in minds of the general public. On the other hand, the path of hope and promise of reward (which is one of the two paths in the prophetic call, and the mighty Book has used it to some extent) does not raise in one the compulsion to seek it, it merely creates longing and desire; contrary to the path of fear in which averting the possible harm is rationally incumbent.

Moreover, Islam calls to the religion of nature which is endowed and placed in people's nature, but they are concealed from it because of their involvement in polytheism and sins which bring upon them misfortune and Divine wrath. In such a situation, it was nearer to

reason and prudence to begin their call with warning; and probably it's for all this that the character of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) has been confined [in this verse] to one of a warner, as we see in the Qur'ãnic words: *You are naught but a warner* (35:23). *…and I am only a plain warner* (29:50).

This concerns the common people, but as for the particular servants of Allãh, who worship Him out of love for Him, not out of fear of the Fire or greed for a garden, since they perceive the call with fear and hope from a different angle. They perceive the Fire as a symbol of distance [from God] and His wrath, so they are afraid of it for that reason; and they perceive the garden as the arena of proximity and pleasure [of God], and therefore they aspire to it.

Apparently, the sentence: "and this Qur'ãn has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches", seems that it is addressed to the polytheists of Mecca or to the Quraysh and to the Arabs in general. But the contrast between the second person pronoun 'you' and 'whomsoever it reaches' – and this phrase refers to him whom the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) did not call face to face during his lifetime or after it – shows that the call was addressed to all those whom the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) called, no matter whether the call preceded the revelation of the verse, happened simultaneously with it or followed it.

So, His Word: "and this Qur'ãn has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches", show that the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) was sent with the Qur'ãn generally to all those who heard it from him or [who will hear it] from someone else till the Day of Resurrection. You may also say: The verse shows that the Noble Qur'ãn is a proof from Allãh and His Book which speaks with truth to the people of this world from the time of its revelation till the Day of Resurrection.

The verse uses the phrase: "with it I may warn you", and does not say, 'with its recital I may warn you; because the Qur'ãn is a proof against him who hears its words, knows its meaning and is guided to its purposes; or interpreted for him its words and made its content reach his ear. It is not necessary that a written message, to a community, to be in their language, but to raise its proof against them and make them comprehend the object of the message. The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) had indeed invited the people of Egypt, Ethiopia, Byzantines and Iran by his letters while their languages were not of the Qur'ãn; and among those who believed in the Holy Prophet in his lifetime and whose

belief was accepted were Salmān of Persia, Bilāl of Ethiopia, Ṣuhayb of Byzantine and several Jews whose language was Hebrew – these are the facts in which there is no doubt.

QUR'ĀN: "*Do you really bear witness that there are other gods with Allāh?" Say: "I do not bear witness." Say: "He is only one God, and surely I am clear of that which you set up* (with Him)."

When Allāh mentioned His testimony [for the Holy Prophet], and it is the greatest testimony for his messengership, and he was not sent except for inviting them to the religion of monotheism. Once Allāh has testified that He has no partner in His divinity, then no one has the right to bear witness that there are other gods besides Him. Now, He orders His Prophet to ask them a question like someone who is surprised and shocked: Do they bear witness for multiple gods? This emphasis is seen by the usage of *an* and *lām*; as if the soul does not accept that they would testify to it after hearing the testimony of Allāh, the Sublime.

Then He ordered the Holy Prophet to oppose them in the testimony and to negate from himself the testimony given by them. So the verse says: "Say: 'I do not bear witness.'" – i.e. as you have testified. Then it says: "Say: 'He is only One God, and surely I am clear of that which you set up (with Him);'" and this is bearing witness for His oneness, and disassociating from partners that they set up besides Him.

QUR'ĀN [6:20]: *Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons*; (as for) *those who have lost their souls, they will not believe*:

It gives information of what Allāh has testified in the Books which were sent to the People of the Book, and what their scholars knew from the Books of the prophets in their possession – the books that contained good news after good news of the Holy Prophet of Islam (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) and his attributes in which there was no doubt at all.

Once the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*)'s attributes were brought to their attention; they recognized him exactly as they knew their own sons. Allāh says: *Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the Ummī, whom they find, written down with them in the Torah and in the Gospel…* (7:157); *Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allāh and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in*

the Torah and their description in the Gospel (48:29). *Is it not a sign to them that the learned men of the Israelites know it?* (26:197).

Since some of their scholars used to hide what was with them (in their books) about his (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*)'s good news and his attributes, they disdained to believe in him. So, Allãh, the Sublime, clarified their loss in their affairs by saying: "(As for) those who have lost their souls, they will not believe".

Some discussion in the explanation of a similar verse in the *sūrah* of "*al-Baqarah*" (2:146) has passed earlier; and we have explained there the reason of change from second person pronoun to the third person, and, God willing, full explanation of that will be given in the *sūrah* of "*al-Aʿrãf*" (7:156).

TRADITIONS

##1. Ibn Bãbawayh narrates through his chain from Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsã ibn ʿUbayd who said: "Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ʿa.s.*) said to me: 'What would you say if it is said to you: "Inform me about Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, whether He is a thing or not a thing."'" He said: "I said: 'Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, has identified Himself as a thing, when He says: *Say: "What thing is the greatest in testimony?" Say: "Allãh is witness between me and you."* And I say: 'Surely He is a thing not like (other) things; because rejection of His being a thing entails His rejection and nullity.' He [*ʿa.s.*] said to me: 'You spoke the truth, and well done.'" (*Tafsīru 'l-burhãn*)

2. ar-Riḍã, peace be upon him, said: "In *tawḥīd* people are of three faiths: Negation, anthropomorphism, and affirmation without anthropomorphism. As for the faith in negation, is not acceptable; and the faith in anthropomorphism is not acceptable because nothing resembles Allãh, the Blessed, the Sublime; and the correct faith is the third one: affirmation without anthropomorphism. (*ibid*.)

The author says: The view of negation means repudiation of the meanings of the attributes from Him, as the Muʿtazilites believe; and it means to reduce the positive attributes to the negation of their opposite, for example, the meaning of 'the Powerful' is that He is 'not powerless,' the meaning of 'the Knowing' is that He is 'not ignorant.' This is not valid unless it can be traced to the third view as explained by the Imãm (*ʿa.s.*).

The view of anthropomorphism means comparing Allãh to something else – and there is nothing like Him – i.e. affirming for Him an attribute in its limited sense which is found within us and which is distinguished from other attributes. So, His power becomes like our power, His knowledge becomes like our knowledge, and so on. But if He had attributes like ours, then He would be in need like us, and consequently He would not be the Essential/Eternal Being – He is well above this.

The view of affirmation without anthropomorphism means that to affirm for Allãh the basic meaning of an attribute, and to remove from Him the characteristics of the attribute which are found in the created beings; in other words, to affirm the attribute and to reject its limitation.

3. Abu 'l-Jārūd narrates from Abū Ja'far (*'a.s.*) that he said about the Divine Word: *Say: "What thing is the greatest in testimony?" Say: "Allãh is witness between me and you."*: That was [revealed] because the Meccan polytheists had said: 'O Muḥammad! Didn't Allãh find any messenger to send other than you? We do not see anyone who would confirm what you say.' (This was in the beginning of his call to them when they were at Mecca.) They (also) said: 'And we have indeed asked the Jews and the Christians about you, and they believe that there is no mention of you [in the books] with them; so bring to us someone who would bear witness that you are indeed the messenger of Allãh.' The Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) said: *'Allãh is witness between me and you.'"* (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

4. Bakīr narrates from Muḥammad who narrates from Abū Ja'far, peace be upon him, about the Word of Allãh: *that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches*, that he said: "'Alī, peace be upon him, is among those whom it has reached." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-'Ayyãshī)

The author says: Apparently, *whomsoever it reaches* is in conjunction with the second person pronoun, *you*. It has been narrated in some traditions that *whomsoever it reaches* means the Imãm; and then *whomsoever reaches* is a conjunction of the omitted subject: *I may warn you*. But the first meaning is clearer.

5. Ibn Bãbawayh narrates from Yaḥyã ibn 'Imrãn al-Ḥalabī from his father from Abū 'Abdillãh, peace be upon him, that he was asked about the Word of Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty: *"...and this Qur'ãn has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches."* He [*'a.s.*] said: "In every language." (*Tafsīru 'l-burhãn*)

The author says: We have seen how this may be inferred from this verse.

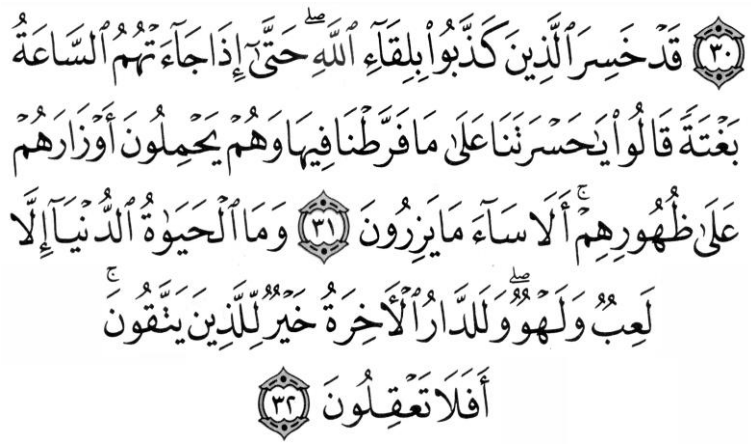
6. Abu 'sh-Shaykh has narrated from Ubayy ibn Kaʿb that he said: "Some captives were brought before the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*), so he said to them: 'Were you invited to Islam?' They said: 'No.' So, he set them free and then he recited: *"…and this Qur'ãn has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches."* Then he (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) said: 'Set them free until they reach their place of safety because they were not invited (to Islam).'" (*Tafsīru 'l-manãr*)

7. Verily ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭãb said to ʿAbdullãh ibn Salãm: "Do you recognize Muḥammad in your books?" He said: "Yes, by Allãh! We recognize him with the attributes by which Allãh has described him to us when we see him among you just as one of us recognizes his own son when he sees him with the other children."

As for what Ibn Salãm swears by, is that: "Certainly, I have greater knowledge of this Muḥammad than my knowledge of my son." (*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī)

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مِمَّنِ ٱفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِـَٔايَٰتِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفْلِحُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ
(٢١) وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوٓا۟ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآؤُكُمُ
ٱلَّذِينَ كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ (٢٢) ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُن فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوا۟ وَٱللَّهِ
رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ (٢٣) ٱنظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَضَلَّ
عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَفْتَرُونَ (٢٤) وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ
قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَن يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۚ وَإِن يَرَوْا۟ كُلَّ ءَايَةٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِهَا ۚ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءُوكَ يُجَٰدِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ إِنْ هَٰذَآ
إِلَّآ أَسَٰطِيرُ ٱلْأَوَّلِينَ (٢٥) وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْـَٔوْنَ عَنْهُ ۖ وَإِن
يُهْلِكُونَ إِلَّآ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ (٢٦) وَلَوْ تَرَىٰٓ إِذْ وُقِفُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلنَّارِ
فَقَالُوا۟ يَٰلَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبَ بِـَٔايَٰتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٢٧)
بَلْ بَدَا لَهُم مَّا كَانُوا۟ يُخْفُونَ مِن قَبْلُ ۖ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا۟ لَعَادُوا۟ لِمَا نُهُوا۟ عَنْهُ
وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَٰذِبُونَ (٢٨) وَقَالُوٓا۟ إِنْ هِىَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا ٱلدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمَبْعُوثِينَ (٢٩) وَلَوْ تَرَىٰٓ إِذْ وُقِفُوا۟ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَٰذَا
بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ قَالُوا۟ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا ۚ قَالَ فَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ


قَدْ خَسِرَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِلِقَآءِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلسَّاعَةُ
بَغْتَةً قَالُوا۟ يَٰحَسْرَتَنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ
عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِمْ ۚ أَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا
لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ ۖ وَلَلدَّارُ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allãh or (he who) *gives the lie to His communications; surely the unjust will not be successful* (21). *And on the day when We shall gather them all together, then shall We say to those who associated others* (with Allãh): *"Where are your associates whom you asserted?"* (22). *Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say: "By Allãh, our Lord, we were not polytheists,"* (23). *See how they lie against their own souls, and that which they forged has passed away from them* (24). *And of them is he who hearkens to you, and We have cast veils over their hearts lest they understand it and a heaviness into their ears; and even if they see every sign they will not believe in it; so much so that when they come to you they only dispute with you; those who disbelieve say: "This is naught but the stories of the ancients,"* (25). *And they prohibit* (others) *from it and go far away from it, and they only bring destruction upon their own souls while they do not perceive* (26). *And could you see when they are made to stand before the Fire, then they shall say: "Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord and we would be of the believers."* (27). *Nay, what they concealed before shall become manifest to them; and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden, and most surely they are liars* (28). *And they say: "There is nothing but our life of this world, and we shall not be raised,"* (29). *And could you see when they*

are made to stand before their Lord. He will say: "Is not this the truth?" They will say: "Yea, by our Lord!" He will say: "Taste then the chastisement because you disbelieved." (30). *They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allāh; until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden they shall say: "Alas for us, that we neglected it!" And they shall bear their burdens on their backs; now surely evil is that which they bear* (31). *And this world's life is naught but a play and an idle sport; and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are pious*; *do you not then understand?* (32).

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COMMENTARY

The verses turn to the original style, and that is addressing a present audience; so it addresses the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) and describes to him the injustices of polytheists in pure fundamental beliefs, and that is monotheism, belief in propethood and resurrection. This is reflected in the Divine Word: *And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allāh …; And of them is he who hearkens to you… And they say: "There is nothing but our life of this world …"*

Then these verses describe that in this was the greatest injustice from them, and a way of putting themselves to perdition and loss. Also, it became clear how these acts of injustice reflect on them and they will be fully recompensed on the Day of Resurrection; so they shall forge a lie against their souls by denying what they had said in this world, and they will desire to return to this world in order to do good deeds, and they will show their regret for what they had neglected *vis-à-vis* Allāh.

QUR'ĀN [6:21]: *And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allāh or* (he who) *gives the lie to His communications…*:

Injustice is one of the most ignominious sins; rather meticulous analysis shows that all sins are horrible and condemnable to the extent of the injustice found in them – and it means deviation and diversion from the middle course, and that is justice.

The way injustice is considered great or small based on the characteristics of the perpetrator of injustice, similarly, its greatness or smallness depends on the victim on whom injustice was done or its intended target. Whenever his status becomes greater and his rank

becomes higher, the injustice becomes greater and mightier. There is no one more honourable and more respectable than Allãh, Glory be to Him, or His signs which lead to Him; therefore, there is no one more unjust than he who is unjust to this sacred arena or to what is related to it in any way. In reality, of course, he is not being unjust but to his own soul.

Allãh, Glory be Him, has indeed confirmed this rational theory by His Word: "And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allãh or (he who) gives the lie to His communications".

As for forging a lie against Allãh, the Sublime: that happens when one asserts a partner to Him, while He has no partner; or claims prophethood falsely, or ascribes an order to Him falsely and wrongly. As for the denial of His communications: that happens when one denies a true prophet in his call which is based on the divine signs, or rejects the true religion; and rejecting the creator is a part of it.

The verse applies to the polytheists, that is, the idol worshippers to whom this argument is addressed, inasmuch as they established for Allãh, Glory be to Him, partners, claiming that they were intercessors, with whom began the affairs in the world, and on them revolves the management of the universe independently; on the other hand, they denied the divine signs which prove prophethood and resurrection.

* * *

Sometimes some [scholars] join to this mix the people who believe in the intercession of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*), the Purified Ones from his progeny, or Spiritual Masters from his *ummah*. They think that to seek their intercession in any need of this world or the next is polytheism which comes under this and other similar verses.

It seems that they are oblivious of the fact that Allãh, the Sublime has confirmed intercession when it is joined with permission, in His Speech, without qualifying it with this world or the next. He has said – and Powerful is the Speaker: *Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?* (2:255).

Moreover, He has said: *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know* (him), (43:86). So, He confirmed intercession as a right of the scholars who are witnesses of the truth; and prophets are certainly among them, including our Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*). Allãh, Glory be to Him, has confirmed him as a witness in His Word: *...and bring you as a witness against these?* (4:41); and He has clearly

described his knowledge: *and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly every thing…* (16:89). *The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your heart* (26:193-4). Can it be imagined that the Book which clearly explains every thing will be sent to a heart which has no knowledge of it? Or, Allãh has sent him as a witness and he is not a witness with truth? Allãh, the Sublime, has further said: *…that you may be the bearers of witness to the people…* (2:143) *… and take witnesses from among you…* (3:140). *And* (as for) *these examples, We set them forth for men, and none understand them but the learned;* (29:43). So, He has confirmed that there are in this *ummah* witnesses who are knowledgeable, and He does not confirm except the truth.

Allãh, the Sublime, also said about His (Prophet's) Household, peace be on them: *Allãh only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, O people of the House! And to purify you a* (thorough) *purifying* (33:33). So, He made it clear that they are purified by divine purification; then He said: *Most surely it is an honoured Qur'ãn, in a Book that is protected; none shall touch it save the purified ones* (56:77-79). He counts them the scholars of the Qur'ãn (which is a clarification for everything), and the purified ones are the certified group in this *ummah* for witnessing with truth to which no vain talks and falsity find its way. We have fully described the subject of intercession in the first volume of this book, so refer to it.[10]

QUR'ÃN: ***surely the unjust will not be successful:*** *al-Falãḥ* (اَلفَلَاح = success), *al-fawz* (اَلفَوْز = success), *an-najãḥ* (اَلنَّجَاح = success), *aẕ-ẕafar* (اَلظَّفَر = victory), and *as-sa'ãdah* (اَلسَّعَادَة = bliss, felicity) are all similar in meaning. That is why ar-Rãghib has explained *al-falãḥ* as achievement of desire, which is nearly synonymous with *as-sa'ãdah*.

He said in *al-Mufradãt*: *"al-falaḥ* (اَلفَلَح) means to cleave; it is said: 'Iron is cleft with iron,' and that is why *al-fallãḥ* is used in meaning of a farmer [who tills the land]. *al-Falãḥ* is victory and achievement of desire and it is of two kinds – of this world and of the next:

i.) The achievement of this world is attainment of the blessings with which the life of the world becomes good, and they are: abiding, affluence and honour; and that were what the poet meant when he said:

Achieve what you want, as sometimes it is achieved
with weakness while the wise man is at times deceived.

[10] See *al-Mīzãn* (Eng. transl.), vol.1, p.226-5. (*tr.*)

ii.) And the success of the next world and that involves four things: abiding without perdition, affluence without need, honour without humiliation and knowledge without ignorance."

So, it can be said that *al-falāḥ* is felicity and happiness; it is described in this way because therein is victory and attainment of desire by cleaving the snags which obstruct the way to the goal.

And this is a comprehensive meaning which is applicable to cases where it is used; like the Divine Word: *Successful indeed are the believers* (23:1); *He will indeed be successful who purifies it* (91:9); *surely the unbelievers shall not be successful* (23:117). There are other such verses.

The words "surely the unjust will not be successful" – and injustice is taken here as an attribute – mean that the unjust ones will not get their desire that they wished to attain by clinging to whatever they hold on to because injustice does not lead the unjust to the victory and happiness which he wants to attain through his injustice.

This is so because happiness cannot be happiness unless it is desired and wanted in reality and in external existence. Thus, the thing that desires this goal and happiness in its existence will be equipped with causes and instruments which agree with this required happiness. For instance, there is a man, his required happiness demands that he should abide by replacing in his body what is dissolved in his body. Then he is equipped with the intricate nourishment system which agrees with it, including the related limbs and causes; then there is in external materials that which agrees with his body's composition, and he takes it through the causes and instruments provided for; then he refines it and changes its shape to what resembles the dissolved parts of his body, then attaches it to his body, and thus the body becomes complete after its incompleteness. This is a general order which covers all external species which we perceive through our perceptions and which we explore, without any difference and without fail.

On this runs the system of the universe in its progress. For every intended destination and desired happiness there is a special path; no one proceeds to it except by that path. If attempt is made to reach it through a path other than the one with which the system agrees, it would cause suspension of the cause and negation of the path. This suspension and negation cause decomposition of all the causes and relationships that are related to it. For instance, let us say, there is a man who has found a way to continue his existence through a way other than taking food, swallowing and digesting. This will lead to the

suspension of his nutritional power, and in its turn would create deviation in all his powers of growth and reproduction.

The divine providence demands in these species which live with perception and will that they should live by conforming their actions to the knowledge they have acquired in external world. So, if it deviates from external world it would face what would negate its action; and if this was done repeatedly, the personality would perish, like a man who wants to take food, and mistakenly takes poison as food, or clay as bread and so on.

Man has general beliefs and opinions born of the external universal system, which he treats as the basis and makes his action, conform with them, like the beliefs related to the genesis and resurrection as well as the practical laws which he treats as the standards for his actions like worship and trade deals.

These are the natural paths to the human felicities; there is no path to them other than these. If man proceeded on it he would get his desire and achieve his felicity; but if he deviated to some other path – and that is injustice – it would not lead him to his desire, and even if it led to it, it would not be lasting; because all paths and ways are related to it. So, they would fight against it, and oppose it with their full power and ability. Also, the parts of the external world, which are the cause of the genesis of these opinions and orders, would not conform to it in practice; and would continue on this condition until the affair is changed, his felicity is destroyed and his life becomes loathsome.

Often an unjust man in his greed uses his power with sin to acquire his desire and felicity through unlawful means. Thus, he opposes correct belief relating to the monotheism; or disputes legal rights of the others and transgresses the limit to unjustly usurp the people's property; or to disgrace their honour by violently tearing their curtains; or to meddle with their lives without any right; or to disregard the sanctities of divine worship like prayer, fast, *ḥajj*, etc.; or to commit sins related to them, like falsehood, wrong accusation, cheating and so on.

He commits the above-mentioned sins, and sometimes gets what he intended to, i.e. happiness with achieving his goal as he had wanted, but he is oblivious of his great loss in this world and the next.

As for the worldly loss, the path he has trodden on is the path of turmoil, confusion and chaotic system; had it been the right path it would have been used in general, and if it had been used in general, then the system would have been destroyed; and with destruction of the system, the life of human society would have been nullified. Any

system, which guarantees the continuity of the human species, whatever it may be, would dispute with him about what he has acquired through his illegal activities; and it would continue in this dispute until it nullifies for him the demand of his action and result of his disgraced endeavours, be it immediate or deferred; and certainly his injustice will not continue.

And as for the next world, it is because his injustice is written in the book of his deeds, and it is engraved in the tablet of his soul through the marks he brings over it; then he is requited for it and lives in its style; *and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allãh will call you to account for it* [2:284].

Allãh says: *Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement, and Allãh is not at all heedless of what you do* (2:85). *Those before them rejected* (prophets), *therefore there came to them the chastisement from whence they perceived not. So Allãh made them taste the disgrace in this world's life, and certainly the punishment of the hereafter is greater; did they but know!* (39:25-26). *And among men there is he who disputes about Allãh without knowledge and without guidance and without an illuminating book, turning away haughtily that he may lead* (others) *astray from the way of Allãh; for him is disgrace in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection We will make him taste the punishment of burning. This is due to what your two hands have sent before, and because Allãh is not in the least unjust to the servants* (22:8-10). There are numerous verses in this meaning.

The verses – as you see – cover the injustices affecting the society and the individual; so they confirm the topic described above; and the most comprehensive of all is the verse under discussion, "surely the unjust will not be successful."

QUR'ÃN [6:22-23]: ***And on the day when we shall gather them all together, then shall We say to those who associated others* (with Allãh):** ***"Where are your associates whom you asserted?" Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say: "By Allãh, our Lord, we were not polytheists."***

The adverb, "the day", is related to a deleted verb, and its full form is: And remember the day… The word: "all together", asserts that the divine knowledge and power do not miss any one among them; so

Allāh encompasses all of them with knowledge and power, He certainly will enumerate and gather them all together, and will not leave any one out.

This sentence aims at explaining the preceding phrase: *surely the unjust will not be successful.* It is as though when it was said, *surely the unjust will not be successful;* it was asked: How would it be? The reply was given: Because Allāh will soon gather them together and will ask them about their associates, then they will be lost to them and will not find them; so they will deny their polytheism and will swear falsely by Allāh. If these unjust people would have been successful in ascribing partners to Allāh, their associates would not have been lost and they would not have told lies against themselves. They would have rather found them with the claimed partnership and intercession, and enjoyed their intercession.

The words, "Then their excuse": It is said that the word, *al-fitnah* (اَلفِتْنَة = translated here as excuse) means reply, i.e., their reply was only that they swore falsely by Allāh that they were not polytheists. Another explanation: It means the end result of their involvement with idols would be nothing but that they would say… Also, it is said that the word, *al-fitnah*, means excuse. And each interpretation has a justification.

QUR'ĀN [6:24]: *See how they lie against their own souls, and that which they forged has passed away from them*: It points to the important feature of their story on the Day of Resurrection. It means that they will soon reject themselves and will not find what they had forged [in this world]; if they were successful in their injustice and succeeded in their desire, their end would not lead to its loss and to this lying against their own selves.

As for them rejecting themselves: It is because when they would swear by Allāh that they were not polytheists, they would deny what they had claimed in this world that Allāh had partners; they were insisting on it and had turned away from every clear proof and manifest sign, all because of their injustice and arrogance. So, this would be their lie against their own selves.

And as for the passing away of that which they had forged, it is because that will be the day when it will be manifestly clear that the rule, the kingdom and the power all belong to Allāh, and nothing belongs to any one else except the vileness of servitude, and the inherent readiness without any independence. Allāh says: *and O that*

those who are unjust could see, when they see the chastisement, that the power is wholly Allãh's and that Allãh is severe in chastisement (2:165). *To whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allãh, the One, the Subduer* (of all), (40:16). *The day on which no soul shall control anything for* (another) *soul; and the command on that day shall be entirely Allãh's* (82:19).

At this time they will see with their eyes that the divinity is reserved for Allãh Who is alone and has no partner; and their idols and associates will be exposed before them, that they own neither any harm nor any benefit for themselves or for others. Then they will realise that all the attributes of divinity and intercession etc, which they had ascribed to them, belong to Allãh only. They had fallen in confusion and had imagined it for others, and what they had forged had passed away from them.

Now, if they would ask them for help, they would be replied in a way that would cut every hope off. Allãh says: *And when those who associate* (others with Allãh) *shall see their associate-gods, they shall say: "Our Lord! These are our associate-gods on whom we called besides Thee." But they will give them back the reply: "Most surely you are liars." And they shall tender submission to Allãh on that day; and what they used to forge shall deport from them* (16:86-87). *This is Allãh, your Lord, His is the Kingdom; and those whom you call upon besides Him do not control a straw. If you call on them they shall not hear your call, and even if they could hear they shall not answer you; and on the Resurrection Day they will deny your associating them* (with Allãh), (35:13-14). *And on the day when We will gather them all together, then We will say to those who associated others* (with Allãh): *"Keep where you are, you and your associates." Then We shall separate them widely one from another and their associates will say: "It was not us that you worshipped. Therefore Allãh is sufficient as a witness between us and you that we were quite unaware of your worshipping* (us)*." There shall every soul become acquainted with what it sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allãh, their true Patron, and what they devised shall escape from them* (10:28-30).

It appears from meditation on these verses that the departure of what they had forged means exposure of the reality of their associates who do not have the attributes of association and intercession; and their realization that what had appeared to them of these things in the world was nothing but an optical allusion, a mirage. Allãh says: *And* (as for) *those who disbelieve, their deeds are like the mirage in a*

desert, which the thirsty man deems to be water; until when he comes to it he finds it to be naught, and there he finds Allãh, so He pays back to him his reckoning in full (24:39).

Question: The verses dealing with the description of the Day of Resurrection – as given above – show that on that day the realities will appear and come out of the hiding and confusion which are inseparable attributes of this worldly life; as Allãh says: *The day when they shall come forth; nothing concerning them remains hidden to Allãh* (40:16). So, what benefit can they get from their lie? And how will they tell lie when they see with their eyes opposite of what they spoke of lie? Allãh says: *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil* (3:30).

Answer: The information that they will tell lie and swear falsely on the Resurrection of Day, has come in the Divine Speech time and again. See for example the verse: *On the day that Allãh will raise them up all, then they will swear to Him as they swear to you…* (58:18). That lie of theirs and their swearing on it will not be with the aim of achieving wrong purposes or to hide the truth, as it is done with lie in this world; and the next world is the place of recompense, not that of action and earning. However, as they had become habituated to come out of dangerous and perilous situations, and to gain benefits with false swearing and forged information, all this for deceiving and diverting [from the truth], the trait of lie has become deeply-rooted into their souls [or into their psyche]. And when the trait is deeply rooted in the soul, the soul is compelled to response to its calls. For instance, look at a ribald obscene person, when the trait of abuse settles in his soul, he is unable to refrain from it, even if he so decides. Likewise, an arrogant person cannot bring himself to show humility to others – even if on a dangerous occasion he shows humility it is only in appearance, but in his heart he is as he was, he will not change, will not show remorse.

This is the secret of their speaking lie on the Resurrection Day, because it is the day when hidden things will be made manifest; and the heart bonded with lie, there is nothing in it except lie; so it will become then manifest, as Allãh has said: *…and they shall not hide any word from Allãh* (4:42).

Similar to it is the dispute found among the people of the world, and it will appear exactly among them on the Resurrection Day, and Allãh has mentioned it in several places in His Speech; and more beautiful is the expression: *That most surely is the truth: the contend-*

ing one with another of the inmates of the Fire (38:64). This is about the inhabitants of the Fire. As for the inhabitants of Paradise and forgiveness, there will appear what was in their souls here of the purity and safety. Allãh says: *They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse, except the word peace, peace* (56:25-26). Understand it.

QUR'ÃN [6:25]: ***And of them is he who hearkens to you, and We have cast veils over their hearts lest they understand it and a heaviness into their ears; and even if they see every sign they will not believe in it; so much so that when they come to you they only dispute with you; those who disbelieve say: "This is naught but the stories of the ancients."*****:**

al-Akinnah (اَلْأَكِنَّة = pl. *kinn* كِنّ**)** means the cover in which a thing is hidden; *al-waqr* (اَلوَقر) means heaviness in ear; *al-asãṭīr* (اَلْأَسَاطِير = pl. *usṭūrah* أُسْطُورَة) means lie and falsehood as is narrated from al-Mubarrad; its basis is *as-saṭr* (اَلسَطْر) which means a line of writing, a line of trees or men, and it is mostly used for false stories that has been collected, organized and arranged [in a systemic style].

The apparent context demands that the statement [of disbelievers] should have been: "They say: 'This is naught but the stories of the ancients;'" however, the verse says, *those who disbelieve say: ...* Probably this style was used to point to the reason of this statement, i.e. disbelief.

QUR'ÃN [6:26]: ***And they prohibit*** **(others)** ***from it and go far away from it, and they only bring destruction upon their own souls while they do not perceive.*** "Prohibit others" i.e. from following it; *an-na'y* (اَلنَّأي = to be far away). The restriction in, "and they only bring destruction upon their own souls", is that of reversal in the sense that they thought by prohibiting others from it and going far away from it, they would destroy the Holy Prophet and frustrate his divine mission, but Allãh willed to complete His light; so they shall be destroyed in a way that they do not perceive.

QUR'ÃN [6:27-28]: ***And could you see when they are made to stand before the Fire, then they shall say: "Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord and we would be of the believers." Nay, what they concealed before shall become manifest to them; and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden, and most surely they are liars*****:**

This describes what will be the result of their denial and of their insistence on disbelief and discarding the divine communications.

The words: "Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord …" – with the final consonants of نُكَذِّبَ, *nukadhdhiba* (we would not reject) and نَكُوْنَ, *nakūna* (we would be) pronounced with *a* – show their desire to return to the world and to be enrolled in the list of the believers, so that they may be rescued from the punishment of Fire on the Day of Resurrection. This speech of theirs is similar to their denying polytheism and their falsely swearing by Allãh for it; it would be manifestation of their psychic traits on the Day of Resurrection. It is because they were habituated to express their desire of those things which they had no way to attain it, from the good and benefits which they had missed, especially when that missing was caused by their wrong option and their defective actions. Also, it is similar to what will soon come regarding their regret about their negligence of the Hour.

Expression of desire is correct in impossible matters as it is allowed in difficult possible things. For instance, the desire that the past could come back, etc. The poet says:

Would that, and if 'would that' was of any benefit,
would that youth were sold, I would have bought it.

As for the words: "Nay, what they concealed before shall become manifest to them", apparently the point of reference of all the pronouns – they, concealed, them – is the same, i.e. the polytheists who were discussed earlier; 'before' refers to this world. So, the meaning would be: When these polytheists will be made to stand before the fire, what they were concealing in this world shall become manifest to them; and its manifestation will make them to desire to be sent back to the world, to believe in Allãh's communications and to enter into the fold of the believers.

[So, what did appear to them?] Nothing except the Fire before which they stood on the Day of Resurrection; they had hidden it in this world by disbelieving, hiding the truth and concealing it after its manifestation, as the following Divine Word point to it: *Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp* (50:22).

As for the truth itself which they rejected in the world in spite of its manifestation to them, it was manifest to them from before; and the context rejects the idea that merely the manifestation of the truth to

them (regardless of the appearance of the fire and the terror of the Day of Resurrection) would cause them to express this desire.

And some similar verses about this situation point towards it. For instance: *And when it is said: "Surely the promise of Allãh is true and as for the Hour, there is no doubt about it," you said: "We do not know what the Hour is; we do not think* (that it will come to pass) *save a passing thought, and we are not at all sure." And the evil* (consequences) *of what they did shall become manifest to them and that which they mocked shall encompass them* (45:32-33). *And had those who are unjust all that is in the earth and the like of it with it, they would certainly offer it as ransom* (to be saved) *from the evil of the punishment on the Day of Resurrection; and what they never thought of shall become plain to them from Allãh. And the evil* (consequences) *of what they wrought shall become plain to them, and the very thing they mocked at shall beset them* (39:47-48).

The exegetes have explained the verse: "Nay, what they concealed before…" in various ways; and the author of *al-Manãr* has described nine such explanations. He says:

"There are many views about it:

"First: It is their evil deeds and ugly abominations which appeared to them in their scrolls of deeds, and their limbs and organs testified for it.

"Second: It is their deeds which they used to forge and thought that they contain their felicity; however, Allãh will make them null and void.

"Third: It is their disbelief and their rejection which they had hidden in the next world before they were made to stand by the fire; as Allãh has quoted them as saying: *Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say: "By Allãh, our Lord, we were not polytheists."*

"Forth: It is the truth or the belief which they were hiding and concealing by showing the disbelief and denial in enmity of the Messenger and because of arrogance. This is applicable to the most extreme of those who disbelieved from amongst the arrogant enemies about some of whom Allãh has said: *And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their souls had been convinced of them* [27:14].

"Fifth: It is the truth which the leaders were hiding from their followers – the truth brought by the Messengers finally was manifest to the followers who imitated them; and of this was what some people of the Book concealed of our Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*)'s messengership, and his attributes and his good news given by their prophets.

"Sixth: It is what the hypocrites were hiding in this world – they concealed disbelief and showed faith and Islam.

"Seventh: It means the resurrection and the recompense, and included in it is the punishment of the fire; and their concealing it means rejecting it; and this is the basic meaning of the root, *k, f, r*.

"Eighth: The speech contains an omitted construct state, i.e. appeared to them the evil consequence of what they used to hide of disbelief and sins, and descended to them its punishment. So, they showed their discomfort and vexation, and wished to get free from it by returning to the world in order that they would leave what lack of faith and denial of divine communications have led them to; just as a man whom an incurable disease has put in agony wishes for death so that it would free him from agony, not that it is desirable in itself."

"We do not prefer any of these opinions; rather the opinion preferable in our views is the last one and that is: Ninth. On that day, all those disbelievers and their ilk will find manifest what they used to hide in the world – that which was repugnant in his eyes or in the eyes of those from whom he was hiding it."[11]

Then [the author of *al-Manãr*] has expanded the talk in details to include the leaders of disbelievers and their followers as well as the hypocrites and profligates, from among those who indulge in abomination and hide it from the people, or neglect the obligatory duties and put forward false excuses and hide the reality.

By looking at the precepts we have put forward and meditating on them, you will clearly see the defects of all these opinions, so we shall not discuss them needlessly.

The Divine Word: "and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden", is a reminder that they would do what was settled in their souls of the contemptible traits in this life. What would incite them to desire to return to this world, and to believe in the communications of Allãh and to enter into the fold of the believers? It would be the appearance of the truth which they had neglected including all that it entails of the chastisement on the Day of Resurrection; and it is what is demanded by the next world which entails the clear appearance of the unseen reality. And if they were to return to this world, they would be governed by the rules of this life, and the curtains of unseen would be let down on them. They would return to their free will, accompanied by the desire of the soul,

[11] See *al-Manãr*, vol.7, p.353. (*ed.*)

whispering of the Satan, natural disposition of the humans, and the arrogance and the oppression; thus they would return to their original polytheism and enmity of truth. It will be so because what had urged them to the opposition of truth and the denial of the divine communications when they were in the world, is now as it was then, if we suppose that they are returned to this world after being raised up; so the same rule will apply without any difference.

And His Word: "and most surely they are liars," i.e. in their wish that: *"Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord and we would be of the believers."* Although expression of a wish is not an information which could be classified as true or false, but when they said, "would that we were sent back and we would not reject…", it was as though they said, 'Allãh return us to the world and if He returned us we would not reject' – mark that they did not say, we return and we will not reject – their talk contained a request and a promise: request to be returned and promise of belief and good deeds, as He has clearly mentioned it in His Word: *And could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord: "Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard, therefore send us back, we will do good; surely* (now) *we are certain* (32:12)*." and they shall cry therein for succour: "O our Lord! Take us out; we will do good deeds other than those which we used to do* (35:37)*."*

In short, their word: "Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject…", is tantamount to saying: 'O our Lord! Return us to the world, we will not reject Your communications, and we will be of the believers.' From this angle, it is subject to truth and falsehood, and so it is okay to count them as liars.

Also, probably they have been called liars in relation to their wish, i.e., their hope and wish proved false, as it did not take place in reality, as they say; your hope proved false, for a man who wishes what is not attained.

Some people have said that it means their falsity in all that they speak about themselves that they would find the reality and believe in truth – but it is as you see [not worthy of consideration].

QUR'ÃN [6:29-30]: ***And they say: "There is nothing but our life of this world, and we shall not be raised." And could you see when they are made to stand before their Lord. He will say: "Is not this the***

truth?" They will say: "Yea, by our Lord!" He will say: "Taste then the chastisement because you disbelieved."

These verses describe their open denial of resurrection and what it entails of offering the testimony on Day of Resurrection and their acknowledgement of what they were rejecting. The idolaters used to deny resurrection, as Allãh has quoted them several times in His speech; and their belief in intercession of the partners was related to the worldly affairs only – that they brought benefits to them and averted harmful and perilous things from them.

So, His Word: "And they say: 'There is nothing but our life of this world…'," quote their denial, that there is no life except our life of this world, there is no life after that, and we will not be raised after death. And the words: "And could you see when they are made to stand before their Lord," is like its reply. It explains to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*), the result of their words: "There is nothing but our life of this world, and we shall not be raised," in the style of wish (as is clear from: "And could you see…"). They will certainly verify what they were denying, and acknowledge what they were rejecting by saying: "and we shall not be raised." This is to happen when they shall be made to stand before their Lord, and they shall clearly see the meeting, about which they were told in the world, i.e., they were to be raised after death. So, they acknowledge it after they had denied it in the world.

It appears from above that Allãh has explained the 'raising up' in the verse: "and could you see when they are made to stand before their Lord," with 'meeting of Allãh'; and it is supported by the expression in the next verse: *They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allãh, until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden…*, where He has changed the gathering, raising up and resurrection mentioned earlier with meeting and then mentioned the Hour, i.e., the Hour of meeting.

Also, His Word: "Is not this the truth?" i.e. 'Is not the raising up, (which you rejected in the world, and it is meeting of Allãh) the truth?' "They will say: 'Yea, by our Lord!' He will say: 'Taste then the chastisement because you disbelieved'," and hid it.

QUR'ĀN [6:31]: *They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allãh; until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden they shall say: "O our grief for our neglecting it!" And they shall bear their burdens on their backs; now surely evil is that which they bear*:

The author of *al-Majma‘* says: "Everything which comes suddenly is *baghtah* (بَغْتَ); it is said: The affair came suddenly, comes suddenly, coming suddenly." ar-Rãghib said in *al-Mufradãt*: "*al-Ḥasr* (اَلحَسْر) means removing the cloth from what it covers; it is said: 'I removed (cloth) from arm,'; *al-ḥãsir* (اَلحَاسِر) means the one who does not wear coat of mail, nor helmet; *al-miḥsarah* (اَلمِحْسَرَة) means a broom; *...al-ḥãsir* means fatigued (because his powers are exposed) *...al-ḥasrah* (اَلحَسْرَة) means grief on what is lost, remorse on it; it is as though the ignorance was removed from him which had led him to commit that mistake; or weakened his powers by excessive grief; or he was too fatigued to make up his deficiency."

And he said: "*al-Wazar* (اَلوَزَر) means place of refuge in a mountain; Allãh says: *By no means! There shall be no place of refuge! With your Lord alone shall on that day be the place of rest* [75:11-12]. And *al-wizr* (اَلوِزْر) means heavy load, likening it to the load of mountain; and it is used to denote sin just as it is also described as *ath-thiql* (اَلثِّقْل) means heavy load; Allãh has said: *That they may bear their burdens entirely...* (16:25); and also He has said: *And most certainly they shall carry their own burdens, and other burdens with their own burdens* (29:13)."

The verse shows another consequence of their denial of being raised up, and it is that the Hour will take them all of a sudden. So, they shall cry out with grief on their negligence of it, and their loads will appear before them and sins which they will carry on their backs; and it will be the most difficult and most perilous condition of man. Well, how evil is what they shall be bearing and carrying – a heavy load or a sin, or the consequences of the sin.

The verse: "They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allãh;" is as the result emanating from the Divine Word: *And they say: "There is nothing but our life of the world, and we shall not be raised." And could you see when they are made to stand before their Lord. He will say: "Is not this the truth?" They will say: "Yea, by our Lord!" He will say: "Taste then the chastisement because you disbelieved."* It is because they exchanged comfort of the next world and happiness of the meeting of Allãh with denial of resurrection and the resulting painful chastisement, and clearly it was a losing deal.

QUR'ÃN [6:32]: *And this world's life is naught but a play and an idle sport; and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are pious; do you not then understand?*:

This is the conclusion of the discussion. Allāh describes in it the condition of the two lives of this world and the next, and compares between them. This world's life is a play and idle sport and nothing else, because it revolves around a chain of reflective beliefs and imaginative aims, as a play revolves around them – so it is a play. Hence it deflects man's attention from the important life of the next world which is the real and enduring life – so it is an idle sport. Since the next world's life is real and enduring, it is good, and none shall get it except the pious ones – so it is better for them.

TRADITIONS

1. Hishām ibn Sālim narrates from Abū ʿAbdillāh [aṣ-Ṣādiq] (*ʿa.s.*) that he said: "Surely Allāh will go on forgiving on the Day of Resurrection to such an extent which will not come into any one's mind, until the polytheists will say: 'By Allāh, our Lord! We were not polytheists.'" (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʿAyyāshī)

[The author of] *Majmaʿu 'l-bayān* writes about the verse: *Then their* 'fitnah' *would be nothing…*, that it means: their 'excuse'. He writes that this has been narrated from Abū ʿAbdillāh (*ʿa.s.*).

[On Faith (*īmān*) of Abū Ṭālib (*ʿa.s.*)]

2. al-Qummī writes about the Divine Word: *And they prohibit* (others) *from it and go far away from it*, that 'they prohibit' refers to the Hāshimites who helped the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) and prevented the Quraysh (from harming him), and who went far away from him and did not believe in him. (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: This tradition is near to what has been narrated from ʿAṭāʾ and Muqātil that it refers to Abū Ṭālib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) as he used to hold back the Quraysh from the Holy Prophet, and to keep himself away from the Holy Prophet while he did not believe in him.

But the context does not agree with it since apparently the pronoun [*from it*] in the verse refers to the Qurʾān, not to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*). Moreover, the traditions quoted through the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*ʿa.s.*) about Abū Ṭālib's faith *(īmān)* are too numerous.

3. It is quoted in *al-Majmaʿ*: "The consensus *(ijmāʿ)* of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*ʿa.s.*) for *īmān* (faith) of Abū Ṭālib is a fact, and their consensus

is sufficient proof (*ḥujjah)* because they are one of the two weighty things the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) ordered to hold fast to them in his words: 'So long as you shall hold fast to them you will never go astray.'"(aṭ-Ṭabrisī)

This is also proven from what [ʻAbdullãh] Ibn ʻUmar has narrated that Abū Bakr brought his father, on the day of the conquest (of Mecca), to the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*), so he (the Holy Prophet) said: "Why didn't you leave the old man so that I should have come to him?" – and he was blind. Abū Bakr said: "I wished that Allãh, the Sublime, should give him reward. I swear by Him who has sent you with truth that certainly I was happier with Abū Ṭãlib's Islam than with my father's Islam, as I sought with it delight of your eyes [i.e. your pleasure]." The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) said: "You are right."

Also, aṭ-Ṭabarī narrates through his chain that when the chiefs of the Quraysh saw how Abū Ṭãlib defended the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*), they came to him in a group and said: "We have brought to you the hero of Quraysh in beauty, magnanimity and gallantry, ʻAmmãrah ibn al-Walīd; we will give him to you and you give us your nephew who has divided our community and made a fool of our understanding so that we may kill him." Abū Ṭãlib said: "You have not been just to me. You are giving me your son so that I should feed him, and I give you my son so that you should kill him; rather every one of you should bring his son so that I should kill him." And he said:

"We defended the Messenger, the Messenger of the King [God],
with bright [swords] *which radiate like lightening.*
I defend and protect the Messenger of the King,
protection of a guardian who is affectionate to him."

And his sayings and poems declaring his Islam are numerous and well-known beyond enumeration. Among that is his saying:

Didn't you know that we have found Muḥammad,
a prophet like Mūsã, it is written in earlier books?
Is not our father Hãshim who was courageous,
and enjoined his sons to fight and wage war?

And his saying in a *qaṣīdah*:

And they said to Aḥmad, you are a man,
of contrary language (and) *weak cause.*
Well, certainly Aḥmad has brought to them,
truth, and has not brought to them a lie.

And his statement regarding the matter of the 'document'[12] and it is among the miracles of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*):

Certainly there was a lesson in the affair of the document,
when a man who was not there will be told he will be astonished.
Allãh erased from it their disbelief and refractoriness
and what enmity they had shown against the speaking truth.
And the son of ʿAbdullãh became confirmed among us,
at the wrath of our people, he is blameless.

And his saying in a *qaṣīdah* to his brother, Ḥamzah, exhorting him to follow the Holy Prophet and to be patient in his obedience:

Be steadfast, O Abū Yaʿlã, in the faith of Aḥmad;
show forth your faith; may you be strengthened in your resolve!
It made me glad when you said that you are a man of faith!
Be then a true supporter of the Messenger of Allãh in Allãh's cause.

And his saying in a *qaṣīdah*:

I shall be steadfast in the help of the Prophet, Muḥammad,
I shall fight in his defence with spear and the troops.

Also, his saying urging Negus to support the Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*):

Know, O King of Abyssinia, that Muḥammad
is a prophet like Mūsã and Masīḥ son of Maryam.
He brought guidance similar to what they brought,
and all (of them) *by order of Allãh guide and protect.*
Concerning him, you recite it in your own scriptures,
a true account it is, not a fantastic tale.
So do not set up equals with Allãh and accept Islam,
for the way of truth is not obscured in darkness.

"And his saying in his will, when death had reached him:

I enjoin to help the Prophet whose presence is good.
My son ʿAlī, and elder of the group ʿAbbãs;
and Ḥamzah the lion who defends his reality;

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[12] Editor's Note: As the final strategy, the Quraysh put imposed a socio-economic boycott against the clans of Hãshim and Muṭṭalib. The document of boycott was written and hung in the Kaʿbah. Abū Ṭãlib took the two clans to the mountain trail known as Shiʿb Abū Ṭãlib and spent three years. This happened in the 7th year of the Prophetic mission. Only twice a year, in months of Rajab and Dhu 'l-ḥijjah (when violence was a taboo), did they dare to come out from the Shiʿb. Then one day, the Prophet of Islam said to Abū Ṭãlib, "I have been informed by Allãh that the agreement of the Quryash has been eaten up by insects, and no writing has been left except the name of Allãh." Abū Ṭãlib believed in his nephew and came to the Quraysh and challenged them to check the document. When they looked into it, they found the words of the Holy Prophet to be true. This is how the socio-economic boycott came to its end.

and Ja'far, that they should repulse the people from him.
May my mother, and what she gave birth to, be made your ransom
in helping Aḥmad as shields against the people.

And similar to these poems are what is found in his well-known *qaṣīdah*s, and enjoinments and lectures quoting which will make the book too lengthy.

And the main proofs of those who say that Abū Ṭãlib had not accepted Islam are some traditions narrated through the Sunnī chains. On the opposite side are the consensus (*ijmã'*) of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*'a.s.*) and some traditions narrated through the Sunnī chains and his poems narrated from him. And every person may choose what he likes.

* * *

4. Khãlid has narrated from Abū 'Abdillãh (*'a.s.*) that he said: *and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden,* surely they are cursed in origin. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī)

5. 'Uthmãn ibn 'Īsã narrates from some of his companions from the (same) Imãm (*'a.s.*) that he said: "Surely Allãh said to water: 'Be sweet and delicious, I shall create from you My garden and people of My obedience;' and He said to (another) water: 'Be salty and bitter, I shall create from you My fire and people of My disobedience.' Then He made both waters flow on the earth, then He took a handful in His hand and it was the right hand, then He created them a creation like tiny particles, then He made them witnesses on their own selves: 'Am I not your Lord, and is not My obedience incumbent upon you?' They said: 'Certainly.' Then He said to the fire: 'Be fire', and lo! It became flaming fire; and He said to them: 'Fall down in it'; so some rushed to it, some delayed in rushing to it and some did not leave their place, but then when they felt its heat, they returned, and none of them entered it.

Then He [again] took a handful [the earth] in His hand, and created them a creation like tiny particles like those, then made them witnesses on their own selves as He had done with those others; then He said to them: Fall down into this fire; some of them delayed, some others ran fast and some passed on like twinkling of an eye; so they all fell in it. Then He said: Come out of it safe, so they came out and nothing had afflicted them.

"Then the others said: 'O our Lord! Forgive us; we shall do as they have done.' He said: 'I forgive you.' So some of them ran fast and others did not leave their places, as they had done the first time. So this is the Word of Allãh: *and if they were sent back, they would*

certainly go back to that which they are forbidden, and most surely they are liars." (*at-Tafsīr*, al-ʿAyyãshī)

The author says: This and the preceding narration are among the traditions of the tiny particles.[13] Its full discussion will come in *Sūratu 'l-Aʿrãf* (The Elevated Places), under the verse: *And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We bear witness."* [7:172]

The gist of it is that as the system of reward and punishment in the next world has full connection with the life before it, i.e., with the life of this world from the perspective of obedience and disobedience, in the same way the obedience and disobedience of this world has full connection with another earlier life, relatively speaking, and that is the world of tiny particles.

So, the Imãm's word in the tradition, "So this is the word of Allãh: *And if they were sent back, they would certainly go back...*" means that if they were sent back from the courtyard of the gathering place to the world, they would certainly go back to what they had been forbidden, and most surely they are liars right from the world of tiny particles because they spoke lie before Allãh in that world. This is exactly what the Imãm (*ʿa.s.*)'s word in the first tradition means: *and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden*, surely they are cursed in origin, i.e., in the world of tiny particles, because they spoke lie in it.

Accordingly, these two traditions contain a fourth way of the verse's explanation, other than the three explanations given earlier.

6. Aʿmash narrates from Abū Ṣãliḥ, from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) that he said about the Divine Word: *O our grief for our neglecting it...* The people of the Fire will see their places in the garden, then they will say: "O our grief for our neglecting it." (*Majmaʿu 'l-bayãn*)

* * * * *

[13] Editor's note: *ʿĀlamu 'dh-dharr*, translated here as 'the tiny particles', refers to the primordial form of existence which was purely spiritual.


قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُۥ لَيَحْزُنُكَ ٱلَّذِى يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ
وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ
رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا۟ وَأُوذُوا۟ حَتَّىٰٓ أَتَىٰهُمْ نَصْرُنَا ۚ
وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكَ مِن نَّبَإِى۟ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ
﴿٣٤﴾ وَإِن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنِ ٱسْتَطَعْتَ أَن تَبْتَغِىَ
نَفَقًا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُم بِـَٔايَةٍ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ
ٱللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى ٱلْهُدَىٰ ۚ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾
۞ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ ۘ وَٱلْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ
يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

We know indeed that what they say certainly grieves you, but surely they do not call you a liar; but the unjust deny the communications of Allãh (33). *And certainly messengers before you were rejected, but they were patient on being rejected and persecuted until our help came to them; and there is none to change the words of Allãh, and certainly there has come to you some information about the messengers* (34). *And if their turning away is hard on you, then if you can seek an opening* (to go down) *into the earth or a ladder* (to ascent up) *to heaven so that you should bring them a sign and if Allãh had pleased He would certainly have gathered them all on guidance, therefore be not of the ignorant* (35). *Only those accept who listen;*

and (as to) *the dead, Allãh will raise them, then to him they shall be returned* (36).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These verses intend to console the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) against the offensive accusations of the polytheists regarding his mission, and to placate his soul with the promise of definite victory, and to explain that the religious call is based on human free will: whoever wants, he would believe and whoever wants, he would disbelieve; because definite divine power and will do not interfere in it to compel them to accept it; and if Allãh had pleased, He would certainly have gathered them all on guidance.

QUR'ĀN [6:33]: ***We know indeed that what they say certainly grieves you, but surely they do not call you a liar; but the unjust deny the communications of Allãh:*** *Qad* (قَدْ), in its past tense, denotes determination; and, in future tense, denotes diminution, and sometimes it denotes determination also, and this is the meaning intended in this verse. *Ḥazana* and *aḥzana* (حَزَنَ ، أَحْزَنَ) both have same meaning: to grieve; and it has been recited in both ways.

His Word: *lã yukadhdhibūnaka* (لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ = 'they do not call you a liar'), with a doubling sign, is also recited with it as *lã yukdhibūnaka* (لَا يُكْذِبُونَكَ); apparently *fa* (فَ) in "فَإِنَّهُمْ = *but surely they…*" is for separating it from the previous sentence. Apparently, the meaning is: 'We know indeed that their talk certainly grieves you, but it should not grieve you, because their denial does not return to you since you do not invite except towards Us, and you have no role in it except to convey the message; rather they are being unjust to Our verses and reject them.'

The content of those four verses gives the meaning of the divine words: *And whoever disbelieves let not his disbelief grieve you; to Us is their return, then will We inform them of what they did; surely Allãh is the Knower of what is in the breasts* (31:23). *Therefore let not their speech grieve you; surely We know what they do in secret and what they do openly* (36:76); and other such verses which were revealed for the consolation of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*). This explanation is based on the recital of the term with (nunnation) the doubling sign.

But based on the recital without the doubling sign, it would mean: Don't be grieved because they don't defeat you by proving your lie in

what you call them to, and they don't refute your proof with a counter proof. They, in fact, are being unjust to the divine communication by rejecting it, and to Allãh is their return.

Also, His Word: "but the unjust deny the communications of Allãh". The apparent style of speech demanded that it were said: 'but they…' [instead of 'but the unjust…']. Yet the use of the noun in place of pronoun aims at showing that their denial emanates from their injustice, not from ignorance or other shortcomings; it is only based on transgression, rebellion and haughtiness, and Allãh will soon raise them, then they will return to Him [and He will deal with them accordingly]. It is for this reason that the style has changed from first person to the third, and it says, 'the communications of Allãh', instead of 'Our communications', in order to show that this behaviour of theirs is in opposition of the position of divinity, and it is a position that nothing can stand to it.

* * *

The verse has been explained in other ways too:

One: The majority have said that it means: They do not call you a liar as a belief in their hearts; rather they display that denial by their mouths out of obstinacy only.

Two: They do not call you a liar, rather they call Me a liar, because denying you actually return to Me, and you are not an exclusive target for it. This explanation is other than what we have described earlier, although it is near to it. These two interpretations are based on the recital with doubling sign.

Three: They did not find you a liar. [It's like] the Arabs' saying: We fought them and we did not find them cowards.

The true interpretation is what was said earlier.

QUR'ÃN [6:34]: ***And certainly messengers before you were rejected, but certainly they were patient on being rejected and persecuted until Our help came to them; and there is none to change the words of Allãh, and there has come to you some information about the messengers*****:**

It guides the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) to the way of the past prophets, and it is the way of exercising patience in the cause of Allãh; and Allãh, the Sublime, has said: *These are they whom Allãh guided, therefore follow their guidance* (6:90).

And His Word: "until Our help came to them", describe the good result of their patience, and point to the Divine promise of the help. Also, in His Saying: "and there is none to change the Word of Allãh", emphasize the promise mentioned in the preceding speech and solidify

it. It also points to what has been described in 58:21: *Allãh has written down: "I will most certainly prevail, I and My messengers;"* and in 37: 171-2: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the messengers: Most surely they shall be the assisted ones.*

The phrase: "none to change" in "and there is none to change the Word of Allãh" negates any supposed element of change whether it be from Allãh's side (in the sense that His will changes about a decision by erasing it after having willed it or cancels it after confirming it) or from someone else's side (in the sense that the other overcomes Him and subdues Him to do contrary to what He had wished so that He were to change what He had confirmed and to alter it in one way or another).

It appears from it that these words about which Allãh has said that they are unchangeable things beyond 'the tablet of eraser and affirmation'.[14] So, the word of Allãh, the speech of Allãh and the promise of Allãh in the Qur'ãnic usage mean the definite conclusion which does not accept any change. Allãh says: *He said: "The truth then is and the truth do I speak..."* (38:84). *...and Allãh speaks the truth*; (33:4). *Now surely Allãh's promise is true* (10:55). *Allãh will not fail in* (His promise), (39:20). A detailed discussion about the meaning of "Word of Allãh" and similar phrases was given under the verse: *...among them are they to whom Allãh spoke...* (2:253).

The words at the end of the verse, "and certainly there has come to you some information about the messengers", affirm and offer the witness for the words, "And certainly messengers before you were rejected." It is possible to infer from it that this chapter was revealed after some Meccan chapters which narrate the stories of the prophets, like the chapters: "*ash-Shu'arã'*", "*Maryam*", etc. And definitely these chapters were revealed after the chapters like: "*al-'Alaq*" and "*al-Muddaththir*". Therefore, this chapter, "*al-An'ãm*", falls in the third stratum of the chapters revealed at Mecca before *hijrah*. And Allãh knows better.

QUR'ÃN [6:35]: *And if their turning away is hard on you, then if you can seek an opening* (to go down) *into the earth or a ladder* (to ascend up) *to heaven so that you should bring them a sign…*:

ar-Rãghib said: "*an-Nafaq* (اَلنَّفَق = the penetrating path; the tunnel in the earth); Allãh says: 'then if you can seek an opening (to go down)

[14] Editor's Note: The table of eraser and affirmation (*lawḥu 'l-maḥwi wa 'l-ithbãt*) refers to the partial knowledge that Allãh exposes to His angels and selected humans who assume the consequences which are not definitive, and hence the use of terms 'erase' and 'Affirm'. Of course, Allãh knows the final outcome of all issues.

into the earth'; and from it comes the expression 'jerboa's tunnel (*nãfiqã'*),' and 'the jerboa dug the tunnel.' And from it is the term *an-nifãq*, and it means entering the religion from one door and going out of it from another door; and accordingly (He) has drawn attention to it with His Word: *surely the hypocrites are the transgressors* [9:67], i.e. out of the religion; and Allãh has made the hypocrites worse than the disbelievers, when He said: *Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the Fire* [4:145]; and *nayfaq* (the two string holes) of trousers is well-known."

And He said: "*as-Sullam* (اَلسُّلَّم = ladder) that which is used to ascend high places and it gives hope of safety; then it was made the name of everything which is used to ascend to a high thing like a cause; Allãh says: *Or have they the means by which they listen?* [52:38]; "…or a ladder (to ascend up) to heaven," [6:35]; and a poet says: "Even if he got the means to ascend to heaven with a ladder".

The reply of the conditional clause in the verse is deleted because it is understood; the implied sentence (as has been said) would be: If you can obtain this and that, then do it.

The 'sign' in the phrase: "so that you should bring them a sign", means a sign that would compel them to believe. The statement: "And if their turning away is hard on you…", is addressed to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) through the way of the Qur'ãn, which is the best divine sign that proves the truthfulness of his mission, and whose miraculous dimension is nearer to their understanding since they [the Arabs] were eloquent and wise. The verse thus means that their turning away should not grieve you and you should not take it hard, because this world is place of free will. Also, the invitation to the truth and its acceptance are based on the path of free will; and that you cannot obtain a sign which would compel them to believe. It is so because Allãh does not want from them a faith except through free will; that is why He has not created a sign which would compel the people to believe and obey. If Allãh had so wished, all the people would have entered into the true faith; and so all these disbelievers would have joined the group which believes in you. So, you should not be worried or concerned at their turning away, lest you be among those who are ignorant of the divine cognition.

Someone has suggested that: "you should bring them a sign" means a sign better than the one We have sent you with, i.e. the Qur'ãn. But it does not agree with the context, and especially the

words: *and if Allāh had pleased He would certainly have gathered them all on guidance* [6:35], as it clearly points to compulsion.

It appears from this that the pleasure here means that Allāh would will for them to be guided to faith in a way that they would be forced to accept it, and this would negate their free will. This is what the apparent context of the noble verse demands.

But Allāh, the Blessed, in other similar verses in His Book has not based negation of His will on necessity of compulsion. As He says: *And if We had pleased we would certainly have given to every soul its guidance, but the word* (which had gone forth) *from Me was just: "I will certainly fill hell with jinn and men together."* (32:13). He points with it to His similar statement: *He said: "The truth then is and the truth do I speak: That I will most certainly fill hell with you and with those among them who fallow you, all;"* (38:84-85). Thus, the Almighty has clarified that the negation of His will about guiding them all is actually based on His will which He decreed when the Satan swore against Him that he will misguide all of them except those of His servants who are purified ones.

And the firm decision has been ascribed in another place to their going astray. Allāh says in the story of Adam and the Satan: *He said: "My Lord! Because Thou hast made me stray from the right way, I will certainly make* (evil) *fair-seeming to them on earth, and I will cause them all to deviate, except Thy servants among them, the devoted ones." He said: "This is a right way with Me. Surely as regards My servants, you have no authority over them except those who follow you of the deviators. And surely hell is the promised place of them all;"* (15:39-43). And Satan too does ascribe it to them as Allāh has quoted his talk to them on the Day of Resurrection: *And the Satan shall say after the affair is decided: "Surely Allāh promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promise then failed to keep them to you, and I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you obeyed me, therefore do not blame me but blame yourselves: I cannot be your aider* (now) *nor can you be my aiders; surely I disbelieved in your associating me* (with Allāh) *before;"* (14:22).

The verses show that sins, including polytheism, lead to man's deviation, and the deviation in its turn ends at the man himself. It is not against what appears from other verses that the man has no will except when Allāh pleases for him to have a will, as He says: *Surely this is a reminder, so whoever pleases takes to his Lord a way. And you do not please except that Allāh please* (76:29-30). *It is naught but*

a reminder for the worlds, for him among you who pleases to go straight. And you do not please except that Allãh please, the Lord of the worlds (81:27-29).

So, although the will of the man depends on the will of Allãh, the Blessed, in its materialization, yet Allãh, the Blessed, does not affirm any will for the man, except when he becomes ready for it through the goodness of his inner self and is exposed to the divine mercy. Allãh says: *"...and guides to Himself those who turn;"* (13:27), i.e. to Him. And as for a transgressor, whose heart is deviated, who clings to the earth and is inclined to deviation, Allãh does not wish his guidance nor does He engulf him with His mercy, as He says: *He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it, but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26). *...but when they turned aside, Allãh made their hearts turn aside...* (61:5). *And if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby; but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire* (7:176).

In short, the religious call does not proceed except on the way of free choice; and divine communications do not descend except with consideration of free choice; and Allãh does not guide towards Himself except him who is exposed to His mercy and is ready for His guidance through the path of free will.

With this explanation another difficult problem is solved: We agree that if Allãh were to send a sign which would force them to believe and compel them to accept the religious call, it would be contrary to the basis of the free will on which the structure of religious call stands. However, why it is not possible for Allãh that He should wish belief for all the people, in the same way as He wishes the belief of those who have accepted the faith, so that a sign should come down to lead them to the guidance and cover them in faith, without negating with it their free will and their independence in action.

By looking at the issue *per se*, although it is possible but it is contrary to the general system in the world of cause and effect, and the system of ability and munificence. Guidance is extended to him, who fears Allãh and purifies his soul, and: *he will indeed be successful who purifies it* [91:9]; and misguidance is not inflicted upon anyone except on him who turns away from the remembrance of his Lord and corrupts the soul: *and he indeed will fail who corrupts it* [ibid:10]. Infliction of misguidance means that man is prevented from guidance. Allãh says: *Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the*

hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away. And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he aught to strive and he is a believer; (as for) *these, their striving shall surely be accepted. All do We aid – these as well as those – out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:18-20). So, Allāh aids every soul from His bounty according to what he deserves; if he wants good he is given, and if he wants evil he is given, i.e. he is prevented from good. If Allāh were to wish for every man, be he good or bad, that he should wish good and dedicate himself to faith and piety through free choice, it would have negated the general system and destroyed the issue of the cause and effect.

It is supported by the next verse, i.e., the Word of the Sublime: *Only those accept who listen…*, which will be explained as follows:

QUR'ĀN [6:36]: *Only those accept who listen; and* (as to) *the dead, Allāh will raise them, then to Him they shall be returned*: The verse elaborates what was described in the preceding one: *And if their turning away is hard on you, then if you can seek an opening… therefore be not of the ignorant:* In short, you have no ability to dissuade them from this turning away, nor can you get for them a sign which would lead them to the faith. So, this verse explains that they are like the dead, they have no perception nor do they hear, so they cannot perceive the meaning of the religious call nor can they hear the invitation of the caller, i.e. the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*).

This huge multitude of the people which we see is of two kinds: One group is alive and they hear, and only those respond positively who do hear. The other group is of the dead ones who do not hear although they appear in the form of the alive ones. These will hear the speech only when Allāh will raise them [in the Hereafter]; and He will certainly raise them and then they will hear what they could not hear in this world, as Allāh describes their condition: *And could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord: "Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard, therefore send us back, we will do good; surely* (now) *we are certain;"* (32:12).

This talk is put forward as an allusion: 'Those who listen' refers to the believers and 'the dead' means those who turn away from accepting the call, be they polytheists or others. In the Divine Speech, believers have been portrayed as enjoying life and hearing, and disbelievers have been described as afflicted with death and deafness, as Allāh says: *Is he who was dead, then We raised him to life and made for him*

a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth? (6:122). *Surely you do not make the dead to hear, and you do not make the deaf to hear the call when they go back retreating. Nor can you be a guide to the blind out of their error; you cannot make to hear* (any one) *except those who believe in Our communications, so they submit* (27:80-81). There are many such verses in the Qur'ãn.

In some previous discourses another meaning for these attributes has been repeatedly given, which the majority of the exegetes have explained as allusion and simile, and that they may be interpreted in their real meaning. So, refer to it.

The verse proves that Allãh will certainly make the unbelievers and the polytheists understand the truth and make them hear His call also in the Hereafter as He made the believers understand and hear His call in this world. So, the man be he a believer or an unbeliever cannot escape from understanding the truth, sooner or later.

TRADITIONS

1. Abu 'l-Jãrūd narrates from Abū Ja'far (*'a.s.*) that he said: "The Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) earnestly liked that al-Ḥãrith ibn 'Ãmir ibn Nawfal ibn 'Abd Manãf to accept Islam. He invited him and tried hard to make him a Muslim. But Nawfal was overcome by wretchedness. The Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) felt very much bad about it and so Allãh sent the revelation: *And if their turning away is hard on you, then if you can seek an opening into the earth*; means a tunnel. (*at-Tafsīr*, al-Qummī)

The author says: This tradition is weak and suffers from missing links in the chain of narration. Moreover, it does not agree with the apparent meaning of a multitude of traditions which show that this chapter was revealed all together. Although it may be interpreted in this way that the above-mentioned cause had appeared before the chapter was revealed, and then this verse pointed to the established cause by the way of application.

* * * * *

وَقَالُوا۟ لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰٓ أَن يُنَزِّلَ ءَايَةً وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَمَا
مِن دَآبَّةٍ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَٰٓئِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّآ أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُم ۚ
مَّا فَرَّطْنَا فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ مِن شَىْءٍ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾
وَٱلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا صُمٌّ وَبُكْمٌ فِى ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ ۗ مَن يَشَإِ ٱللَّهُ
يُضْلِلْهُ ۖ وَمَن يَشَأْ يَجْعَلْهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾ قُلْ
أَرَءَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَىٰكُمْ عَذَابُ ٱللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ ٱلسَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ
تَدْعُونَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا
تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِن شَآءَ وَتَنسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَآ
إِلَىٰٓ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَٰهُم بِٱلْبَأْسَآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ
﴿٤٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ إِذْ جَآءَهُم بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا۟ وَلَٰكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ
وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَلَمَّا
نَسُوا۟ مَا ذُكِّرُوا۟ بِهِۦ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَٰبَ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ
حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فَرِحُوا۟ بِمَآ أُوتُوٓا۟ أَخَذْنَٰهُم بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فَرِحُوا۟ بِمَآ أُوتُوٓا۟ أَخَذْنَٰهُم بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُم مُّبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
فَقُطِعَ دَابِرُ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ ۚ وَٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾
قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ ٱللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَٰرَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُم
مَّنْ إِلَٰهٌ غَيْرُ ٱللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُم بِهِۦ ۗ ٱنظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ
ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَىٰكُمْ عَذَابُ ٱللَّهِ
بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا ٱلْقَوْمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا
نُرْسِلُ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۖ فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ
فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا
يَمَسُّهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُل لَّآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ
عِندِى خَزَآئِنُ ٱللَّهِ وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ ٱلْغَيْبَ وَلَآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّى مَلَكٌ ۖ
إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ ۚ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِى ٱلْأَعْمَىٰ وَٱلْبَصِيرُ ۚ
أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَأَنذِرْ بِهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَن يُحْشَرُوٓا۟
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ وَلِىٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ
﴿٥١﴾ وَلَا تَطْرُدِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلْغَدَوٰةِ وَٱلْعَشِىِّ يُرِيدُونَ
وَجْهَهُۥ ۖ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِم مِّن شَىْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ
عَلَيْهِم مِّن شَىْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَكَذَٰلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِّيَقُولُوٓا۟ أَهَٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَنَّ ٱللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِم مِّنۢ بَيْنِنَآ ۗ أَلَيْسَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِٱلشَّٰكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذَا
جَآءَكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ
رَبُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ٱلرَّحْمَةَ ۖ أَنَّهُۥ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنكُمْ سُوٓءًۢا
بِجَهَٰلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُۥ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾
وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ ٱلْـَٔايَٰتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ ٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And they say: "Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Surely Allãh is able to send down a sign," but most of them do not know (37). *And there is no animal that walks upon the earth or a bird that flies with its two wings but* (they are) *genera like yourselves; We have not neglected anything in the Book, then to their Lord shall they be gathered* (38). *And they who reject Our communications are deaf and dumb, in utter darkness; whom Allãh pleases He causes to err, and whom He pleases He puts on the right way* (39). *Say: "Tell me if the chastisement of Allãh should overtake you or the hour should come upon you, will you call* (on others) *besides Allãh, if you are truthful?* (40). *Nay, Him you call upon, so He clears away that for which you pray if He pleases and you forget what you set up* (with Him)*;"* (41). *And certainly We sent* (messengers) *to nations before you, then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves* (42). *Yet why did they not, when Our punishment came to them, humble themselves? But their hearts hardened and the Satan made what they did fair-seeming to them* (43). *But when they neglected that with which they had been admonished, We opened for them the doors of all things, until when they rejoiced in what they were given We seized them suddenly; then lo! They were in utter despair* (44). *So the roots of the people who were unjust were*

cut off; and all praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds; (45). *Say: "Have you considered that if Allãh takes away your hearing and your sight and sets a seal on your hearts, who is the god besides Allãh that can bring it to you?" See how We repeat the communications, yet they turn away* (46). *Say: "Have you considered if the chastisement of Allãh should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the unjust people?* (47). *And We send not messengers but as announcers of good news and givers of warning; then whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve* (48). *And* (as for) *those who reject Our communications, chastisement shall afflict them because they transgressed;* (49). *Say: "I do not say to you, I have with me the treasures of Allãh, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me." Say: "Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you not then reflect?"* (50). *And warn with it those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord – there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him – that they may guard* (against evil), (51). *And do not drive away those who call their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His favour; neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours, so that you should drive them away and thus be of the unjust* (52). *And thus do we try some of them by others so that they say: "Are these they upon whom Allãh has conferred benefit from among us?" Does not Allãh best know the grateful?* (53). *And when those who believe in Our communications come to you, say: "Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself,* (so) *that if any one of you does evil in ignorance, then turns after that and acts aright, then He is Forgiving, Merciful;"* (54). *And thus do We make distinct the communications and so that the way of the guilty may become clear* (55).

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COMMENTARY

The verses offer multifarious arguments against polytheists regarding monotheism and the sign of prophethood.

QUR'ĀN [6:37]: ***And they say: "Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Surely Allāh is able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know."***

It describes how they prodded for a sign to be sent down with the purpose of showing the inability of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*). When they uttered these words there already was before them the best of signs, i.e., the noble Qur'ān which used to come down to them chapter by chapter and verse after verse and was recited before them from time to time. Thus, it was understood that the sign which they demanded was a sign other than the Qur'ān, and that they did not count it as a satisfactory sign with which their souls would be pleased because of their foolishness and frenzy.

The bias for their deities prompted them to cut themselves off from Almighty Allāh as though He were not their Lord; so they said: "Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord?" They did not say, from our Lord, or, from Allāh or some words like that, so that they may belittle the Holy Prophet's cause and highlight his inability. They meant to say: If what he claims and to what he calls to be truth, then let his Lord, to Whom he calls, stand for him and help him, by sending down on him a sign which would prove the truthfulness of his claim.

Such a demand emanates from them because of their ignorance of two things:

One: The idolaters believed that their deities were independent in those affairs of the world which were ascribed to them even though they claimed that they enjoyed the position of intercession. Thus, the god of war or peace had authority on the affair they managed without being disturbed by another factor. Likewise, there were god of land, god of sea, god of love, god of hate and so on; so nothing remained for Allāh to manage because He has divided all affairs between His helpers, although they were His intercessors and He is the Lord of lords; so Allāh is unable to negate the affair of their deities by sending down a sign which would lead to negation of their divinity.

This assumption of theirs and support for it in their heart was prompted by what they had heard from the Jews of Ḥijāz that the hand of Allāh was fettered, in no way can He alter the existing system, nor can He disturb the common norm of the world of the causes [and effects].

Two: The signs sent down from Allāh, Glory be to Him, if they are among the things which Allāh particularly reserved to one of His

messengers (without the people demanding them), then they are the proofs which prove the truthfulness of the messenger's claim (without their being any immediate danger to the people who have been invited [if they don't accept it]); like the staff and the bright hand for Moses, and raising the dead to life, healing the blind and leper and creating the bird for ʻĪsã, and the Noble Qur'ãn for Muḥammad (may Allãh's blessings be on him and his progeny and on the Prophets).

But if the sign was sent on demand of the people, then it is the established system of Allãh to pass judgement about them upon its coming down – if they believed, well and good, but if they persisted in their rejection, chastisement was sent on them and they were given no respite, as was the case with the signs of Nūḥ, Hūd and Ṣãliḥ and others; and there are numerous verses in the Qur'ãn which prove it, as Allãh says: *And they say: "Why has not an angel been sent down to him?" And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been respited* (6:8). *And nothing could have hindered Us that We should send signs except that the ancients rejected them; and We gave to Thamūd the she-camel – a manifest sign – but on her account they did injustice…* (17:59).

And the noble verse, i.e.: *And they say: "Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Surely Allãh is able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know",* points to both aspects together.

So, He described that certainly Allãh is able to send down any sign He wished. How was it possible to suppose that the one having the name of Allãh would not have comprehensive power? The name used in the question, "*Rabb* = Lord" has been changed in this reply to "*Allãh*" in order that it may indicate the proof of the decision; unrestricted divinity combines all perfection without there being any limit or condition to limit or fetter it; so it has unrestricted power. It was their ignorance of the divine position which exhorted them to demand a sign with intention of showing disability of the Holy Prophet.

Moreover, they did not know that the coming down of a sign that they had demanded was not in favour of their well-being, and their venture to demand it exposed them to the destruction of the whole group and to being completely rooted out. The proof that this meaning was somewhat intended in this speech is found in the Divine Word at the end of these argumentations, *Say: "If that which you desire to hasten were with me, the matter would have certainly been decided between you and me; and Allãh best knows the unjust;"* (6:58).

The Divine Speech [6:37] contains the words: *nazzala* (نَـزَّلَ) and *yunazzilu* (يُـنَـزِّلُ) with intensified pronunciation; it shows that they had demanded a gradual sign, or several signs which would be sent down one after the other; as is seen in other places in the Divine Book where their demand is quoted. For example: *And they say: "We will by no means believe in you until you cause a fountain to gush forth from the earth for us, or you should have a garden of palms and grapes…or you should ascend into heaven, and we will not believe in your ascending until you bring down to us a book which we may read;"* (17:90-93). *And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say: "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or* (why) *do we not see our Lord?"* (25:21). *And those who disbelieve say: "Why has not the Qur'ãn been revealed to him all at once?"* (25:32).

Ibn Kathīr is reported to have recited the above-mentioned two verbs without intensified pronunciation.

QUR'ÃN [6:38]: *And there is no animal that walks upon the earth or a bird that flies with its two wings but* (they are) *genera like yourselves; We have not neglected anything in the Book, then to their Lord shall they be gathered*:

ad-Dãbbah (اَلدَّابَّة) is every animal which creeps or moves on the earth; it is mostly used for the horse; *ad-dabb* (الدَّب) and *ad-dabīb* (الدَّبِيْب) mean soft crawling.

aṭ-Ṭã'ir (اَلطَّائِر) is that which glides in the air with its two wings; its plural is *aṭ-ṭayr* (اَلطَّيْر) like *ar-rãkib* (الرَّاكِب) and *ar-rakb* (اَلرَّكْب). *al-ummah* (اَلأُمَّـة) is a group of people whom a single purpose unites, like a single religion, one culture, one time or one place; its basic meaning is to intend; they say *amma, yaummu* (أَمَّ ، يَـؤُمُّ) when he intends something; *al-ḥashr* (اَلحَشْر) = to gather the people by force for battle, evacuation or other such social matters.

Apparently, description of the bird with the phrase that flies with its two wings stands parallel to the phrase: "that walks upon the earth", describing the animal. In short it means: And there is no earth-bound or aerial animal... Apart from that, this elaborates description and negates suspicion of metaphorical use since 'flying' is mostly used for fast movement, in the same way as 'crawling' is used for light movement; and so it was possible to imagine that flying indicated fast movement as it was put side by side with crawling; this idea was removed by the clause, "that flies with its two wings."

* * *

A TALK ON ANIMAL SOCIETIES

The verse is addressed to the people; and it says that animals, be they earth-bound or aerial, are genera like men. It does not mean that they are groups having a multitude of numbers, because *ummah* is not used for merely great numbers, rather it is used to describe a multitude that is joined by a single comprehensive goal, be it involuntary or voluntary, which its individuals seek to achieve. Nor does *ummah* here mean that animals of different species are each joined together in a special type of life, sustenance and cohabitation: in procreation, shelter and all affairs of life, because although this amount of commonality is correct to declare that their society resembles that of man, but, the words at the end of the verse, *then to their Lord shall they be gathered*, show that the resemblance does not mean merely similarity in food, cohabitation and shelter; rather there is another aspect of similarity which makes them similar to man and that is: *al-ḥashr,* their being gathered to Allãh. And being gathered to Allãh is naught but a type of conscious life, which pushes the man to his felicity and infelicity; it is possible for a man to get in this world delicious food, agreeable marriage tie and flourishing habitation and yet he is not happy in his life because he is afflicted with injustice and iniquity. Or, on the other hand, he is overwhelmed by hardships, distress and afflictions and yet he is happy in his life, delighted with the perfection of humanity and light of servitude.

Rather, the conscious human life, or you may say, the human nature, and what supports it from the prophetic call, has established for man a custom combined of belief and action; if he adopts and follows it and the society agreed with him on it, then he would be happy in both lives: here as well as the Hereafter; and if he adopts it alone, he will be happy with it in the Hereafter or in the world and the Hereafter together. But if he did not act on it and failed to take it wholly or partially then it will result in his wretchedness in this world and the Hereafter.

This system laid down for man is combined in two words: to push for goodness and obedience and to restrain from evil and disobedience; or you may say: to call towards justice and steadfastness, and to forbid injustice and deviation from truth. It is so because man, by his sound nature, likes certain things such as justice for his self or for others, and

dislikes certain things such as injustice to himself or to others; then the divine religion supports it and further elaborates its details for him.

This is the gist of what has become clear to us in many preceding discussions, and many Qur'ãnic verses affirm and support it. Like the divine words: *And* [I swear by] *the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is wrong for it and right for it: He will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it* (91-7-10). *Mankind was but one people; so Allãh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves; whereupon Allãh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed. And Allãh guides whom He pleases to the right path* (2:213).

In depth consideration of the behaviour of those dumb animals that interact with man in many affairs of life, and pondering on conditions of a species among them in the progress of its life and living, prove to us that they do have, like man, individual and collective beliefs and opinions on which they base their movements and stillness in endeavouring to continue, similar to a series of beliefs and opinions on which man bases his fluctuations in stages of this world's life.

Thus, an individual among us desires food, marriage, child or other such things, or dislikes injustice, poverty or such other things. So, it appears to him that it is incumbent on him to search for food, or to eat it, or to store it; likewise, to marry, procreate and similar things. Also, he understands that it is forbidden and unlawful to him to tolerate injustice or endure the affliction of poverty, etc. So, he moves or remains still according to the ways these opinions prepare for him.

Likewise, an individual animal, as we observe him, in search of the necessities of its life resorts to systematic movements through which it manoeuvres to fulfil its needs about food, cohabitation and shelter, which leaves no room for doubt that it perceives its needs and understands how it would be fulfilled. Thus, it has opinions and beliefs with which it rises to catch beneficial items and repulse harmful things. Often we find in it various kinds of tricks and devices to get its prey and to be secure from enemy, using individual or collective ways which man has not understood except after spending centuries and eons of his species' life.

The scholars who have researched about animals, have found in many of their species like ant, bee and termite, wonderful traces of civilization and sociology, fine points of manufacturing and subtle aspects of norms and policies which are generally not found except among civilized and developed human groups.

Verily, the noble Qur'ãn has exhorted man to understand the animal world and to ponder on their creation and actions in general, as Allãh says: *And in your creation and in what He spreads abroad of animals there are signs for a people that are sure* (45:4). It has invited us to minutely observe the affairs of many among them, like the cattle, the bird, the bee and the ant.

These opinions and beliefs on which we find the animals basing their activities, in spite of their differences in the life affairs and goals, are not devoid of the inciting and repelling forces; at the same time they do not lack in appreciation of something and disapproval of some others; nor are they free from the sense of justice or injustice.

This is supported by what we see of the difference among the individuals of any species of animals in its behaviour. How clear difference is found in one horse and another, in one ram and another and in one cock and another, one is hot-tempered while the other is tame and of mild disposition.

It is likewise supported by other minor aspects like love and hate, magnanimity and mercy or hard-heartedness and transgression, etc. which we find between individuals of a species. Indeed we have found its parallels among human individuals, and we have seen it affecting the belief in the goodness and evilness of actions, and justice and injustice in deeds. It also affects man's life in the next world and is the basis of his being gathered and reckoning of his deeds as well as their recompense in form of reward or chastisement in the next life.

Now that our discussion has reached this stage, it might appear to us that the animals too are subject to gathering (*al-ḥashr*) like that of the human beings. Allãh counts application of justice and injustice, and piety and debauchery on man's deeds as the basis of the gathering and proves it with it, as Allãh says: *Shall We treat those who believe and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who are pious like the wicked?* (38:28). Rather He counts negation of gathering in what He has created of the heaven, the earth and what is between them, negation of His deed and its turning into play or recklessness, as is seen in the preceding verse: *And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain;*

that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the Fire (ibid.:27).

Will an animal – other than man – be gathered to Allāh like a man will be? If yes, then is its gathering similar to that of man, that there will be weighing and reckoning of its deeds, after which he will enjoy blessings of the Garden or suffer in the Fire, according to how it discharged its responsibility in the world? Does the establishment of the worldly responsibilities depend on the raising of the messengers and sending down of the law? Is the messenger who is sent to the animal from its own species or from men?

These are the questions coming to the mind at this juncture.

As for the first question: (Is there gathering for an animal other than man?), the end phrase in this verse, *then to their Lord shall they be gathered,* adequately answers it; and nearer to it is the verse: *And when the wild animals are gathered* (81:5).

In fact, there are very numerous verses which show that the heavens and the earth will be brought back, as will be the sun, the moon and the stars, also the *jinn*, stones, idols and all those who were worshipped as partners of Allāh. Add to it the gold and the silver, as they will be heated in the Fire of the hell and will be used to brand the foreheads and sides of those who neglect paying *zakāt*. There are many verses of this theme, which need not be quoted here; as for the traditions of this theme, they are beyond counting.

As for the second question (Will the animals' gathering be similar to that of man? Will their deeds be brought forth and reckoned, resulting in the blessings or punishment?)

Reply: [The reckoning of deeds and judgement] is the concomitant of the gathering. It means that the individuals will be brought together and driven by force. As for the likes of the heaven and the earth and similar things like the sun, the moon, the stone, etc., the word, gathering (*al-ḥashr*), has not been used for them. For instance: *On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heavens* (as well), *and they shall come forth before Allāh, the One, the Supreme* (14:48). *…and the whole earth shall be in His grip on the Day of Resurrection and the heavens rolled up in His right hand…* (39:67). *And the sun and the moon are brought together* (75:9). *Surely you and what you worship besides Allāh are the firewood of hell; to it you shall come. Had these been gods, they would not have come to it…* (21:98-99)

Moreover, the reason given in the Divine Speech for gathering of the people is to deliver final judgement between them regarding the truth in which they had differed. Allãh says: *Surely your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differ;* (32:25). *"…then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed…* (3:55). There are many such verses.

All of this is based on rewarding the good-doer and taking revenge from the unjust for his injustice, as Allãh says: *Surely We will give punishment to the guilty* (32:22). *Therefore do not think Allãh failing in His promise to His messengers; surely Allãh is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution. On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heavens* (as well), *and they shall come forth before Allãh, the One, the Supreme* (14:47-48). These two attributes, i.e., good-doing and injustice are present in the animals' activities to some extent.

This is [also] supported by the apparent meaning of the divine words: *And were Allãh to punish men for what they earn, He would not leave on the back of it any creature, but He respites them till an appointed term…* (35:45). It evidently means that if injustice of the people caused divine censure it would be because it is injustice; and injustice is widespread among all that is called creature – man and all animals; thus it would mean that Allãh would destroy every creature on the earth – although some have said that 'creature' in this verse particularly means man.

The fact that censure and revenge will cover all animals on the Day of Resurrection, does not mean that animals will be equal to man in perception and will, or that dumb animal will rise up to the rank of man in its psychology and spirituality. Such supposition is rejected evidently, and the effects appearing in animals and man refute it.

And that is because mere commonalty in censure and revenge, or reckoning and recompense between man and animal does not prove that they are equal in all aspects, as it does not prove in even closer commonly between individual men themselves that reckoning of their deeds should be done in the same way as far as its diligence and questioning is concerned: [it cannot be that] a wise man and an idiot or a person of sound mind and a weakened one should be on the same level.

This is in spite the fact that Allãh has described about some animals such fine understanding and sensitive intelligence which is

not very far from the level of a man of average knowledge and understanding. Look for example at the ant of Sulaymãn which is quoted as saying: *Until when they came to the valley of the ants, an ant said: "O ants! Enter your houses* (that) *Sulaymãn and his hosts may not crush you while they do not know* (27:18), and what He has quoted of the talk of hoopoe to him explaining his absence: *"I comprehend that which you do not comprehend and I have brought to you a sure information from Sheba. Surely I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given abundance and she has a mighty throne. I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allãh, and the Satan has made their deeds fair seeming to them, and thus turned them from the way, so they do not go aright* (27:22-24)*..."* (to the end of the story). When an intelligent scholar meditates on these verses which demonstrate the understanding and perception from those animals and weighs its importance, he would certainly know that that amount of understanding and awareness depends on a lot of cognition and multifarious perceptions related to simple as well as complicated ideas.

This may be supported by conclusions that the zoologists have reached at based on their extensive studies, including raising different kinds of animals, and they observed their amazing conditions which cannot normally appear except from a being which enjoys sublime will, deep understanding and sharp perception.

Coming to the third and fourth questions: Do animals receive their commandments in the world through a messenger who is sent to them and a revelation which is sent upon him? And is this messenger sent to a species of animals exactly an individual of that species? The fact is that the animal world until now is unknown to us and a curtain is let down before our eyes. Therefore, there is no benefit in getting into such discussions, and there is no outcome except conjecture and guesswork. The Divine Speech apparently does not undertake to explain any aspect of it; and there is nothing in the traditions narrated from the Holy Prophet and the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt*, blessing and peace of Allãh be upon them, which could be relied upon regarding this subject.

So, the conclusion is that the animal societies, like the human society, contain the element of divine religion that is nourished from its nature in the same way as the religion gets nourishment from the human nature and prepares it to be gathered towards Allãh, as the natural religion prepares the man for gathering and recompense even though the observation of the animal's condition, compared to that of the man's (and it is supported by the Qur'ãnic verses which describe

subjugation of the things to man, and his superiority over animals in general), shows that animals have not been given details of human cognition nor are they subjected to duties of intricate burdens placed upon the man.

* * *

Now, we return to the text of the verse regarding the Sublime's Word: *And there is no animal that walks upon the earth nor a bird that flies with its two wings but* (they are) *genera like yourselves*, prove that the animal societies which are found in every species of animals, are indeed based on perceptible common goals to which every species of animals proceed, in spite of their difference in perception and will, just like the man.

This is not confined to the physical goals such as nutrition, growth and procreation which are limited to this world's life, but its jurisdiction continues to the affairs after death and prepares it for another life which is connected to felicity and infelicity nourished from perception and will.

Objection: An objection may be raised here that people generally believe that other than man all kinds of animals are deprived of the gift of free choice and that is why an animal's actions are counted, like that of vegetables, natural and involuntary, since it is observed in its conditions that it cannot resist from doing an action which contains its desired benefit (like cat when it sees a rat or a lion when it sees its prey), and from fleeing when it sees an enemy that it fears (like a rat when it sees a cat and a deer when it sees a lion). Thus there is no meaning of voluntary felicity and infelicity in an animal, other than human beings.

Reply: However, meditation on the meaning of free choice and on psychological conditions the man goes through in doing his voluntary actions removes this objection. The perception and will through which man's voluntary actions are done have been actually bestowed upon man, for example, because he is a conscious species and manages the external elements for utilizing them in continuation of his existence by distinguishing what harms it from what benefits it. That is why the divine grace has equipped it with perception and will; so he distinguishes through his conscious perception between what harms it from what benefits it. When a benefit is established, he wills and does it; so whatever is from the issues that are of clear benefit (and in establishing that it is beneficial, he does not need more than its existence and knowledge about it), he wills to do it at once and manages it without

hesitation, as is the case mostly with inborn potentials like the act of breathing.

But those issues whose benefit are not obvious, either because they are marked with defective causes or surrounded by some external or dogmatic snags, then mere knowledge of its existence is not enough for willing to do it since there is no surety of benefiting from it. Pursuing such things depends on contemplation on them, for example, on what their defects, snags are and on meditation so that it may be known whether it is beneficial or harmful. If meditation shows that it is beneficial, the will related to it takes shape and it is done, in the same way as if it were of clear benefit which does not require any meditation.

Let us say, a hungry man finds a food with which he can satisfy his hunger: he may be doubtful about it, whether it is a good food, right for nourishment, or it is bad, putrid, poisoned or containing harmful ingredients? Also, whether it is his own property and [if it is his property], is there a problem in using it (e.g., it has been kept for a future emergency or he may be fasting, etc), or is it someone else's property which he cannot use? Then he will stop from hastening towards it, and will continue contemplating until he becomes sure of one alternative. So, if he decided that it is allowed, it will be counted as beneficial; he will not wait for anything, if he wills he will use and manage it. Also, if he had no doubt about it, and he knew from the beginning that the food was good and right for nourishment, he will proceed to it without contemplation or meditation; the knowledge of its existence will not be separate from the will of using it at all.

In short, the topic of free choice means that when man cannot decide between some things whether they are beneficial or harmful, he distinguishes it through contemplation and meditation, and chooses one of the alternatives. On the other hand, if he is able to distinguish them from the beginning, then he wills it and does it without delay and does not require any contemplation. So, man chooses what he thinks is beneficial to him either with contemplation or without it; and no contemplation is required except for removal of snags in making the decision.

If you look minutely at the condition of the humans who have free will in their actions, you will find a major difference among them on the basis of their choice, i.e., in their spiritual states and psychological conditions such as bravery and cowardice, continence and greed, briskness and laziness, and dignity and brazenness; also in strength of

discernment and its weakness, and correctness of thought and its incorrectness. Many are the times a greedy person finds himself under compulsion and deprived of free will in places where he desires whole-hearted involvement in it, while a righteous moral person would not care about. Perhaps a coward would think a slight harm he receives in a great task or fight to be a sufficient excuse for himself to negate his free choice, while a brave self-respecting man does not think of death or any bodily discomfort anything beyond strength, and he will not give any importance to a great calamity in the way of his causes. Sometimes an idiot chooses an alternative based on a simple groundless imagination while a wise man would think of such option as a sport and play. Likewise, actions of indiscriminating children are product of free choice accompanied by some meditation but a sane adult would not care for it even a little. Often in our normal conversations we consider some of our actions based on compulsion or coercion when it is accompanied with some social justifications which, in fact, are not based on reality, for example, a cigarette smoker justifies it as addiction, a sleepy man brings excuse of laziness, and a thief or an embezzler offer excuse of poverty.

It is this obvious difference in elements and causes of free choice and the vast latitude in the level of voluntary actions that has led the religion and all other social customs to define the voluntary action as what the average members of human society consider to be voluntary; and they have based on it the validity of applying the command and the prohibition, the punishment and the reward, and the right of utilization, etc.; and they excuse one who lacks the average ability and understanding through which an average man does voluntary action.

So, this average which is counted as voluntary and negates voluntarism of other actions beyond it, is so according to religious or social decision in which welfare of religion or society is preserved, although from the perspective of nature the boundary of voluntariness is greater than that.

Contemplation on the above discourse makes us sure that the animal, other than man, is not totally deprived of the gift of free choice, although it is weaker than what we find in average humans. And this is based on what we observe in many animals, especially the domesticated ones, the effects of hesitation in some situations which are coupled with some impediments; likewise when they desist from action because of rebuke, threat or training. All this proves that there is in their 'souls' (*nafs*) the ability to decide to do or not to do an action; and

that is the basis of free choice in reality, although contemplation is very weak in them and does not reach the level of what we find in an average human.

And since it is correct that the animal, other than humans, is not totally devoid of free choice even if a weak one, then it will be okay if Almighty Allãh makes the average level of free choice among them as the basis of duties relevant to them that we do not comprehend; or He may deal with them based on the gift of free choice in a different way which we do not understand except that this gift is found in them in a way that it would justify to reward them in case of obedience and to censure and punish them in case of disobedience as Allãh knows it better.

Thus, His, the Sublime's Word: *...We have not neglected anything in the Book...*, is a parenthetical clause. Obviously, the item which is the object of neglect is the Book; and the word, *anything*, refers to the exaggeration with which negligence occurs. The verse means: There is no such thing whose consideration was required, the fulfilment of whose right was obligatory and the description of whose attributes was necessary in the Book but that it has been done without any negligence. And so the Book is perfect and complete.

Now, if 'the Book' refers to the Preserved Tablet – which Allãh has described in several places in His speech as a book which contains the past, the future and the present – then the meaning will be as follows: these generic systems (similar to the humanity's system) are systems upon which divine grace is incumbent; [and it is this grace which makes it incumbent upon Him] to create animals' species so that their creation may not go in vain nor its existence be aimless; and so that these species would not be deprived of the gift of perfection according to their ability of acceptance.

So, the verse, based on this meaning, indicates in particular what the following verses show in general: *...and the bounty of your Lord is not confined* (17:20). *...there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock...* (11:56).

But if 'the Book' means the Noble Qur'ãn – and Allãh has named it the book in various places in His speech – the meaning will be as follows: As the Noble Qur'ãn is a book of guidance which guides to the straight path (on the basis of describing the realities of cognizance which had to be explained when leading to the clear truth and pure reality), nothing has been neglected in it in description of all issues on whose knowledge the people's success and happiness depend in their

world and the next world, as Allãh says: *…and We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything…* (16:89).

In order to understand the reality of the Hereafter, it is incumbent upon the people to clearly know the connection between the gathering (to be raised on the Day of Resurrection as a group) and the shaping of nations in this world that they find among themselves and among all animal species. Moreover, many other benefits spring from it, like perspicacity of Allãh's monotheism and His delicate power and His care related to the affairs of the creatures, and the general system prevalent in the universe. Its most important benefit is the cognizance that the existing things hold fast to its chain from defect to perfection; and some links in that chain contain the circles of animals (including man) and below it with different gradual ranks beginning from the lowest grade in vegetable world to the ranks proximate to man and finally the man.

Verily, Allãh, Glory be to Him, has very forcefully invited the people to understand the animals and to look in the signs consigned in their existence; and has counted it as a way of reaching to the best scientific results that are inseparable with the human happiness, and that is certainty of Allãh, the Blessed, as He says: *And in your* (own) *creation and in what He spreads abroad of animals there are signs for a people that are sure;* (45:4). There are very many verses in the noble Qur’ãn that exhort on looking into the affairs of animals.

Possibly the verse may point to both meanings: The word "the Book" [in 16:89] may mean book in general; and the meaning will be: Surely Allãh, the Blessed, does not neglect any thing in what He writes: Neither in the Book of creation, as He decides and decrees for every species what it deserves to get of the perfection of existence, like the animals species, for each of which He has prepared the blessings of social groupings, as He has done for man, because He found it capable of it; so He did not neglect anything in its affairs. Nor in His Book which is His speech revealed to the people, because He describes in it in cognizance of which is the good of the people and happiness of their present world and the next, and He does not neglect anything in it; as a result He has not neglected anything in the affairs of the animals' genera. Allãh has described in this verse the reality of what He has gifted to them kind of an existential happiness, which has made them conscious genera which proceeds with its existence to Allãh, gathered towards Him, like the man.

Also, His, the Sublime's Saying: *...then to their Lord shall they be gathered*. This verse describes that all of the animals shall be gathered and the life gifted to them is a kind of life which would follow the gathering to Allãh, just as the human life is like that. That is also the reason why He has used the pronouns which are used for those having perception and intelligence; and so He said: *then to their Lord shall they be gathered*; it indicates that the actual basis [of gathering], i.e., the matter on which pleasure and displeasure, and reward and punishment revolve, is found in them also.

In this verse the pronouns have changed from the third person to the first person plural then again to the third person relating to Allãh. Meditation on it shows that the basic context is of the third person; and the context changed to the first person plural (*We have not neglected anything in the Book*) because it is a parenthetical clause particularly addressed to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*); and when He finished that statement, the talk returned to the original context.

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A very strange explanation has been given by someone who has tried to prove transmigration of souls from this verse. He claims that the soul of man, when it separates from his body at death, is attached to the body of an animal that is appropriate to it in contemptible characteristics which was deep rooted in his psyche, for example, the soul of a crafty person attaches to a fox's body; and the soul of a mischief-monger spiteful person attaches to the body of a wolf; and the soul of the one who hunts follies of the people and their shameful secrets, attaches to the body of a swine; and the soul of a greedy gluttonous man attaches to a cow's body, and so on; and in this way it goes on changing from one body to another, and being punished in this manner, if it was a wretched one having ugly characteristics. And if it was a blessed soul, it would attach after death to a blessed body that enjoys the bounties of blessings, from better human individuals. According to him the meaning of the verse would be: There are no animals out of these animals but are human nations like you who have changed after death to the forms of animals.

But the explanations given earlier make it clear that the verse is far removed from this interpretation. Besides this, the last clause, *then to their Lord shall they be gathered,* does not agree with this meaning. Moreover, such utterances are so evidently invalid that there is no

benefit in analysing them or discussing about their correctness or incorrectness.

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Similarly, strange is what someone else has said about this verse: That the gathering of animals means their death, so there is no question of they being raised after that; or it may mean combined death and rising up.

But, as for the first meaning, it is negated by the apparent meaning of "to their Lord", because there is no sense in death "to Allãh"; and as for the second meaning, it leads to commitment of what is not necessary, because there is no basis of adding death to raising up in the meaning, nor is there anything in the verse that demands it.

QUR'ÃN [6:39]: ***And they who reject Our communications are deaf and dumb, in utter darkness; whom Allãh pleases He causes to err, and whom He pleases He puts on the right way*****:**

The Almighty wants to say that those who reject His communications are deprived of the bounties of hearing, sight and speech, since they are in utter darkness in which eyes do not work, and because of their deafness, they are unable to hear the true word and to respond to it. Also, because of their dumbness, they cannot speak a true word or testify for monotheism and prophethood, and since they are overwhelmed by darkness, they cannot see the way of truth to take it as a path.

As regards His Word, the Sublime: "whom Allãh pleases He causes to err, and whom He pleases He puts on the right way", prove that this deafness, dumbness and falling into utter darkness is the punishment meted out to them as a recompense for their rejecting the communications of Allãh; for Allãh has made the causing of err (attributed to Him) as a sort of a recompense as seen in His Word: *but He does not cause to err by it* (any) *except the transgressors* (2:26).

So, their rejection of the divine communications is not the result of their being deaf, dumb, in utter darkness; rather the opposite is true. Accordingly, 'causing them to err', as used in this place, means making them deaf, dumb, in utter darkness; and 'those whom Allãh pleases them to err', points to those who had rejected His communications.

Conversely, it appears that putting someone on the right way means that Allãh gives him hearing with which he hears, then he responds positively to the Caller to Allãh with his tongue and observes the truth with his sight; and that this is the recompense of him who does not reject the divine communications. So, whomsoever Allãh

pleases He causes him to err, and He does not wish to cause anyone to err except he who deserves it; and whomsoever He pleases He puts on the right way, and He does not wish that except for one who exposes himself to His mercy.

We have already discussed the actual meaning of their attributes that Allah has mentioned: deafness, dumbness, blindness and similar adjectives. The verse, however, indicates another fine point which is inferred from joining and separating in the Divine Speech: "deaf and dumb, in utter darkness". Note that 'deafness' (which is one of their attributes) has been mentioned first followed by 'dumbness' (which is the second adjective) with a conjunction 'And' in between them; then it mentions their being 'in utter darkness' (that is the third adjective) without conjunction. In short, it has conjoined some attributes and separated some others; and He has written in a similar verse the meaning separately, i.e. His speech about the hypocrites: *Deaf, dumb, blind* (2:18); and in another similar verse with conjunction, as He says about disbelievers: *Allãh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes…* (2:7).

Probably, the fine point indicated in the clause, "deaf and dumb, in utter darkness", is that the deaf ones are other than the dumb ones; the deaf are the ignorant followers who go along with their leaders and that does not leave them with an ear with which they would hear the call of truth; and dumb are the leaders who very well know the correctness of the call to monotheism and negation of polytheism, but they, because of their enmity and transgression, are dumb – their tongues do not move to acknowledge the word of truth or to testify for it. Both groups together are partners in the fact that they both fall in the darkness in which the truth is not seen, nor can a third person show them anything by pointing [out the truth] because they happen to be in utter darkness where pointing [out the truth] is useless.

This idea is supported by the fact that the speech contained in the verses covers both groups as pointed by the Divine Word in the preceding verses: *And they prohibit* (others) *from it and go far away from it…* (6:26); and likewise: *but most of them do not know* (6:37). This concerns the verse under discussion.

As for the verse of the hypocrites, *deaf, dumb, blind*, the idea is to show that all these attributes are gathered in them at the same time because they are cut off from the mercy of Allãh from all sides. And as for the verse of disbelievers: *Allãh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes*, the

idea behind it is to show that setting a seal upon hearing is separate from setting a seal upon their hearts; as Allãh has quoted them in His Book: *And they say: "Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us, and there is a heaviness in our ears, and a veil hangs between us and you…* (41:5). Sometimes the verse is interpreted in different ways.

QUR'ÃN [6:40-41]: ***Say: "Tell me if the chastisement of Allãh should overtake you or the hour should come upon you, will you call*** **(on others)** ***besides Allãh, if you are truthful? Nay! Him you call upon, so He clears away that for which you pray if He pleases and you forget what you set up*** **(with Him)."**

The word, *ara'aytakum* (أَرَءَيْتَكُم = tell me), with *hamzah* of question, and the form of singular masculine past tense from *ar-ru'yah* (اَلرُّؤيَة = to see), followed by second person plural pronoun – is taken by the people of literature in the meaning of: "Tell me". ar-Rãghib says in *al-Mufradãt*: "*Ara'ayta* (أَرَأَيْتَ) runs like, tell me; *kãf* is added to it and <u>*ta*</u> is left unchanged in dual, plural and in feminine forms; changes occur on <u>*kãf*</u>, not <u>*ta*</u>; Allãh says: *'Tell me, is this he whom…*' (17:62); *Say: 'Tell me if the chastisement of Allãh…*' (6:40)."

This verse in a way renews the argumentation against polytheists, and establishes a proof of invalidity of their polytheism. The argument supposes a premise of a punishment coming from Allãh or coming of the Hour to them, and then it supposes that they will call one who would remove that punishment from them – as has been endowed in the nature of humans, when faced with the hardship, to seek help from one who has power to relieve him of it. Then, [O Prophet!] You should ask them: Who is the one whom you would call upon and whom you would approach with your plea, if you are truthful? Would you call besides Allãh your idols and images whom you have given the names of deities yourselves or would you call Him? Far be it that you would call other than Allãh while you observe that they are governed by creative orders like yourselves, and your calling them would not benefit you at all.

But rather you would forget those partners whom you have named deities; because when calamities surround a man and tremors shake him, then he forgets everything except his own self. However, there is in his soul a hope that the calamity will be removed from him, and the one whom he hopes to remove it is his Lord; so you forget your partners and call upon Him Who will remove it (besides them) and He

is Allāh, Great is His name. So, it is Allāh Who removes what you pray for its removal, if He wishes to remove it, and He is not bound to accept the prayer nor is He compelled, rather He has power over everything in all situations.

Now, when Allāh, Glory be to Him, is the powerful Lord Whom man never forgets, even when he forgets everything except his own self, and he is compelled to approach Him, by his natural urge whenever he faces back-breaking hardship, forgetting other partners whom they call gods, then He alone is the Lord of the people, and not the idols.

So, the verse's meaning is as follows: *Say:* O Muḥammad! *Tell me*, i.e., inform me *if the chastisement of Allāh should overtake you or the Hour should come upon you*, in case of coming of the divine chastisement (and the disbelievers do not deny it), and in case of coming of the Hour (and it does not matter if they deny it because it will come), *will you* then *call* (on others) *besides Allah* for its removal – and Allāh has quoted in His speech their plea for removal of chastisement in this world and on the Day of Resurrection all together because it is part of human nature, *if you are truthful?* And deal with justice. *Nay, Him* i.e. Allāh and not other than Him of your idols, *you call upon, so He clears away that for which you pray*, of the chastisement, *if He pleases* to clear it as He did for the people of Yūnus; and He is not compelled or bound to accept the prayer because of His personal power, *and you forget what you set up* (with Him), from among idols and images; apart from what is ingrained in the human nature that when tragedies overwhelm him he remains focused with his own self forgetting everything, and he does not think except of his own self because there is not enough space to be involved in what does not benefit him. Thus, his involvement, in this situation, in praying to Allāh and forgetting the idols is clearest proof that He, the Sublime, is the God, there is none to be worshipped other than Him, and there is none to be adored except Him.

It is clear from the above discourse that:

First: Coming of chastisement or of the Hour, and likewise the prayer to remove it are suppositions in the proof of the verse. The idea is to describe that He Who is then called upon is Allāh alone, and not the idols. The prayer itself during hardship and afflictions, and the fact that man by nature approaches Him, Who clears the difficulties when hope of all other helps is cut off, is another proof separate from this one. The aim of this proof mentioned in this verse is monotheism, and

that of the other proof is to prove that there is a Maker, without looking at His Unity, although both ideas are concomitants.

Second: The clause, "so he clears away that for which you pray", is qualified with "if He pleases", intends to show the absolute power: The Almighty Allãh has the power to clear away all hardships even the Hour in which there is no doubt. So, although His definite decision for any affair makes it certain to appear, yet it does not nullify His power to leave it; He has unfettered power to do what He has decided upon and what He has not decided; and similar to issue of the Hour, in this respect, is every unpardoned punishment and every definite affair. If He pleases He shall bring it about, and if He does not please He shall not bring it, although He always is pleased with what He has definitely decided and has firmly promised, and Allãh does not break His promise. So understand it.

Thus, He, the Sublime, has power not to respond to the prayer of any one who prays; even though He has mentioned Himself that He is the Responder. He says: *And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then verily I am near, I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me,* (2:186); and He has given definite promise to respond to His suppliant, and has said: *Call upon Me, I will answer you…* (40:60). It is so because the promise of responding does not deprive Him of the power of not responding, although He always answers the prayer of every one who prays to Him with real prayer; and His custom flows on it – a straight path, in which there is no going back.

From all this appears the incorrectness of the objection raised about this verse that its theme goes against the declarations of the Book and *sunnah* – the Hour is bound to happen and it will definitely happen, and there is no turning back to the punishment of extermination; as Allãh says: *…and the call of the unbelievers is only in error,* (40:50).

The basis of its incorrectness is that the verse does not show more than the fact that Allãh does whatever He wishes and He has power over every thing. But whether He actually does wish everything and actually does do everything, the verse does not prove it at all; and there is no doubt that His final decision to bring about the Hour, or to mete to a nation the punishment of termination, does not nullify His power to do its opposite. So, He has power to go against it if He wishes so, although He does not go against the promise and does not break what He wills.

As for the Divine Word: *and the call of the unbelievers is only in error,* it refers to their prayer in the Hell for removal of its punish-

ment, and easing it from them.[15] It is obvious that such a prayer, with the firm ruling and final judgement, loses its reality since asking that Allãh may not resurrect people or He may not punish the inhabitants of Hell is like asking Him not to be the Almighty God for one of the demands of divinity is that people return back to Him according to their deeds. Such prayers only have the appearance of prayer but are devoid of its true meaning.

If the prayer materializes in its real form in the sense that the person pleas truly and sincerely addressing the prayer to Allãh, such a prayer is indeed not rejected as is obvious from His statement: *...I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me...* [2:186]; and a prayer in such a form does not leave an unbeliever as an unbeliever, at the least when he does such a prayer, as the Almighty has said: *So when they ride in the ships, they call upon Allãh, being sincerely obedient to Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, lo! They associate others* (with Him), (29:65).

And so His statement that: *...and the call of the unbelievers is only in error,* [40:50], refers to their plea while they were unbelievers; and it is known that the characteristic of disbelief will not separate from them in the abode of recompense [i.e., in the Hereafter] even though it is possible that it may separate from them in the abode of action [i.e., in this world] by repentance and belief.

So, the unbelievers' prayer to relieve them of the chastisement on the Day of Resurrection or in the Hell is like their lie against Allãh on the Day of Resurrection when they say: *By Allãh, our Lord, we were not polytheists,* [6:23]. No lie will be of any use on that day but since they were used to it in the world and its vice had taken roots in their characters, its effect will manifest on the day when the hidden secrets will come out. Similarly, their food, drink and mutual arguments in the Hell [are manifestations of their character]; they will have no escape from any of it as the Almighty has said: [They] *shall be made to drink from a boiling spring. They shall have no food but of thorns, which will neither fatten nor avail against hunger,* (88:5-7). *Then shall you, O you who err and call it a lie! Most surely eat of a tree of zaqqūm and fill* (your) *bellies with it; then drink over it of boiling water; and drink as drinks the thirsty camel,* (56:51-55). *That most*

[15] Editor's Note: The respected translator, al-'Allãmah as-Sayyid Sa'īd al-Akhtar ar-Raḍawī, stopped his pen here on the morning of 20th June 2002, and soon after that he suffered a massive stroke and breathed his last on that Thursday night. May Almighty Allãh elevate his status and bless his soul. Amin!

surely is the truth: the contending one with another of the Inmates of the Fire, (38:64). These are all examples of the manifestation of their inner character [in the Hereafter].

The previous verse supports what we have said above that the unbelievers' prayer was not based on reality. [This is also confirmed by] the Almighty's statement: *And those who are in the Fire shall say to the keepers of Hell: "Call upon your Lord that He may lighten to us one day of the punishment." They shall say: "Did not your messengers come to you with clear arguments?" They shall say: "Yea." They shall say: "Then call." And the call of the unbelievers is only in error,* (40:49-50). Indeed, their plea to the wardens of the Hell to ask Allãh on their behalf to lessen the chastisement is an indication that they had no hope in acceptance of their prayer for themselves; and a prayer without any hope of acceptance is not a true prayer and invocation since a prayer cannot be linked to something that is not going to happen at all.

Third: The real meaning of forgetfulness in His statement: "and you forget what you set up (with Him)" is seen in the human condition when he is engulfed with difficulties and mishaps since he focuses on himself and forgets everything else except the Glorified Allãh.

And so there is no need to pay heed to what some [commentators] have said that the meaning of "and you forget what you set up (with Him)", means they turn away from the idols like one who has forgotten them. [There is no need to heed to this interpretation] even though it is plausible since it is a common figurative usage of the term 'forgetfulness' and the Qur'ãn has used 'forgetfulness' in the meaning of turning away from something and not being overtly attentive to it just as He has said: *And today, it will be announced: We shall forget you just as you forgot the meeting of this day of yours…* (45:34), and other similar verses.

QUR'ÃN [6:42]: *And certainly We sent* (messengers) *to nations before you, then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves*:

"*al-ba'sã'*" (اَلْبَأسَاءُ), "*al-ba's* (اَلْبَأسُ)" and "*al-bu's* (اَلْبُؤس)" means distress and misery; however, *al-bu's* is mostly used for war and the like, while *al-ba's* and *al-ba'sã'* is used for other situations like poverty, drought, famine, etc. "*aḍ-Ḍurr* (اَلْضُرُّ)" and "*aḍ-ḍarrã'* (اَلْضَرَّاءُ)" refer to a negative psychological condition such as sadness and ignorance or a negative physical condition such as sickness and loss of

limb or some other negative condition such as loss of prestige or wealth. Probably the purpose of combining *al-ba'sã'* and *aḍ-ḍarr'* as to prove the materialization of difficulties in the real world like drought, flood and earthquake, and its resulting negative consequences for men such as fear, poverty and shabby condition. And "*aḍ-ḍarã'ah* (اَلضَرَاعَة)" means depravity and "*at-taḍarru'* (التَّضَرُّعْ)" means self-abasement and it refers to humility expressed towards Almighty Allãh so that He may relieve them of what has befallen upon them from the afflictions of difficulty and calamity.

In this verse and four verses that follow it, Almighty Allãh describes to His Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) the norm that He uses in dealing with the nations that came before him among whom the messengers came with clear signs. He used to send them, the messengers who would remind them of Allãh's unity and [guide them to] humility and sincerity in returning towards Him; then He would afflict them with a variety of difficulties and misfortune, and seize them with distress and misery only to the extent that it would not force them to implore and not compel them to pray humbly and appease; hopefully they may pray to Him with their own right choice and their hearts may become soft so that they may turn away from satanic temptations and reliance on material causes. But they did not turn in humility towards Him, rather indulgence in worldly matters turned their hearts hard, and the Satan made their evil deeds seem fair to them and made them forget the remembrance of Allãh.

When they forgot the remembrance of Allãh, Glory be to Him, He opened for them the doors of all things and bestowed upon them variety of blessings until they were pleased with what they had of the blessings, and became proud and considered themselves to be entirely self-reliant without Allãh. Thus, Allãh seized them all of a sudden and in a way that they were not aware of it, when they were hopeless of salvation, witnessing the decline of what was with them of the means. *So the roots of the people who were unjust were cut off; and all praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds,* [6:45].

This [Divine] norm [of dealing with nations] is known as *al-istidrãj* (letting the evil doers feel secure with themselves and gradually leading them closer to severe punishment) and disguise which Allãh has summarized in His Word: *And* (as to) *those who reject Our Communications, We draw them near* (to destruction) *by degrees from whence they know not; and I grant them respite; surely My scheme is effective,* (7:182-3).

By contemplating on the explanation of the above-mentioned verse and reflecting on its context, it becomes clear that the verse does not contradict the other verses that say that the human being is naturally disposed to belief in One God based on the demands of his nature and instinct of accepting and heeding to God at the time when he loses hope in the causes of nature as He has said: *And when a wave like mountains covers them, they call upon Allãh, being sincere to Him in obedience, but when He brings them safe to the land, some of them follow the middle course; and none denies Our signs but every perfidious, ungrateful one,* (31:32).

This is so because the words *"al-ba'sã'"* and *"aḍ-ḍarrã'"* in the verse under discussion refers to distress and affliction only to the extent of being distracted from all causes of nature and forget all normal causes; and the proof for this interpretation is His Word: "in order that they might humble themselves", the term "might" is a word of hope, and there can be no hope in case of force and coercion. Similarly, the Word: *and the* Satan *made what they did fair-seeming to them* [6:43], prove the same since its apparent meaning is that they were deceived by their evil deeds and sought relief from the distress and affliction through their own actions that they had done and managed by their hands to seek control over the obstacles of life and whatever stands against their way of life. So, they were occupied with the natural causes which kept them away from showing humility towards Allãh and relying upon Him; just as He said: *Then when their messengers came to them with clear arguments, they exulted in what they had with them of knowledge, and there beset them that which they used to mock. But when they saw Our punishment, they said: "We believe in Allãh alone and we deny what used to associate with Him."* (40:83-84). So, the first verse [of these two verses], as you see, talks about them in the same way as the verse which is under discussion: it talks about abstaining from expressing humility [towards Allãh] and being deceived by their evil deeds. And the second verse talks about the same subject that was discussed in other verses about monotheism in state of distress.

This disproves what one commentator has said that the verse says that the past nations were averse to monotheism and avoided humility [to Allãh] even in hardships that compels [one to turn to seek in distress]. He says: "The Almighty Allãh has sworn to His Messenger (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) that He has indeed sent messengers before him to nations before his community, and that they were more stronger than his

community in polytheism and more severe in insisting on injustice while his community used to plea to Allãh alone at times of severe hardship and used to forget the masters and partners [of Allãh] that they had adopted. As for the previous nations, the afflictions did not soften their hearts and did not reform the corruption that Satan had brought about in their nature."

The implication of this interpretation is that monotheism is not a natural phenomenon which manifests when overwhelming whims disappear and natural causes evaporate or it could even negate the basis of nature [for monotheism] all together. Whereas the Almighty has indeed said: *Then set your face upright for religion in natural devotion* (to truth) *the nature made by Allãh in which He has made men…* (30:30). So, He has thereby explained that the religion of monotheism is based on nature; and that the nature does not accept any change by a changing element. This is supported by other verses which affirm that when a human being loses hope in material causes, he indeed focuses his attention to his Lord by praying to Him with sincerity in faith. Moreover, acknowledging the One God at time of distress and after disillusion [from all material causes] is a fact found within us as a natural instinct and there is no difference in this matter between the past and present man in anyway.

QUR'ĀN [6:43]: ***Yet why did they not, when Our punishment came to them, humble themselves? But their hearts hardened and the Satan made what they did fair-seeming to them*****:**

"Yet why did they not," is used for exclusivity or for negation; in any case, its context conveys the meaning of negation by the virtue of His Word: "But their hearts hardened". Hardening of the heart is opposite of its becoming soft, and it means that the person is no more influenced by witnessing a scene or listening to a statement that normally impacts upon a human.

The meaning of the verse is that they neither humbled themselves when punishment came upon them nor turned to their Lord to express humility; instead their hearts refused to be influenced by it, and they were engaged with their satanic deeds which prevented them from remembering Allãh; they focused on the natural causes that they considered sufficient for improving their situation.

QUR'ĀN [6:44]: ***But when they neglected that with which they had been admonished, We opened for them the doors of all things, until***

***when they rejoiced in what they were given We seized them suddenly; then lo! They were in utter despair*:**

"We opened for them the doors of all things," means giving them all blessings from the worldly riches for which people compete in order to enjoy the preferred life such as wealth, children, physical health, comfort, abundance, security, prestige and power – all this is given in abundance without any restrain or prohibition. This is unlike the situation when a person is given from the treasure of goods with a measure and a limit, then its door is open and he is just given accordingly and therefore it is closed. But when the intent is to give without any restrain, then its door is opened and is not closed at all. The sentence, as seen by its context, conveys the meaning of giving them variety of blessings without any measure.

This is the meaning even though the concept of "opening the door" would be naturally more appropriate for good deeds and blessings whereas evil deeds and misfortunes are entitled to deprival and so "closing of the door" would be more appropriate in that case as can be alluded from His Word: *Whatever Allãh grants to men of* (His) *mercy, there is none to withhold it, and what He withholds there is none to send it forth after that…* (35:2).

[The verse under discussion ends with the sentence: ″then lo! They were in utter despair."] And the term "*mublisūn*:مُبْلِسُون (= those were in utter despair)" is from "*ablasa, iblãsan*:أَبْلَسَ إبْلاَساً)". ar-Rãghib said: *"al-Iblãs* means the sadness that manifests out of extreme hopelessness... Since the one in utter despair often adopts silence and forgets what is in his mind, it is said: 'So-and-so was in utter despair [*ablasa*],' when he is silent and his argument has been exhausted." Based on this, the appropriate meaning of His Word: "then lo! They were in utter despair," would be as follows: 'then lo! They were quite, having exhausted the argument.'

The meaning of the verse would be that when they forgot what they were reminded of or turned away from it, We gave to them every kind of blessing to allure them until when the blessings were completed for them and they became happy with what was given to them, We seized them all of a sudden and smothered their souls – and they didn't have any argument in their support – since they deserved it.

QUR'ÃN [6:45]: ***So the roots of the people who were unjust were cut off; and all praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds*:** [*"Dãbiru 'l-qawm*: دَابِرُ الْقَوْم" (= the roots of the people) is from *"dubru 'sh-shay*:

دُبْرالشَئ" (the back of something).] The "*dubr/dubur*: دُبْر/دُبُر" of something is opposite of its "*qubl/qubul*:قُبْل/قُبُل" and both are the rear and front parts of a thing and therefore they are also used to describe the two private organs. Sometimes their usage is expanded and applied to describe the first part or the last part of a thing, separate from its main body. This in turn has brought forth relevant verbs from these two words such as *aqbal*: أَقْبَل (to move forward) and *adbara*: أَدْبَرَ (to move backward), *qabbala*: قَبَّلَ (to kiss) and *dabbara*: دَبَّرَ (to manage), *taqabbala*: تَقَبَّلَ (to accept) and *tadabbara*: تَدَبَّرَ (to reflect), and *istaqbala*: اِسْتَقْبَلَ (to receive or welcome) and *istadbara*: اِسْتَدْبَرَ (to turn one's back).

And from this derivation comes the term "*dãbir*:دَآبِر" (the end, the root) in the meaning of what happens at the end of a thing and follows it; for example, it is said *amsu 'd-dãbir*: أَمْسُ الدَّابِر (tomorrow that follows), *'ãm qãbil*: عَام قَابِل (the year that comes). The word "*dãbir*" in this meaning is used for what is left behind like "*dãbiru 'l-insãn*: دَآبِرُ الإِنسَان" referring to one's descendants and other legacies. So, the Almighty's Word: "So the roots of the people who were unjust were cut off," means that total destruction covered them in a way that no trace, whatsoever, of them was left or that they were all destroyed and no one was spared as He has said: *Do you then see of them one remaining?* (69:8).

Verbalizing the noun (i.e., the roots of the people…were cut off) in place of the pronoun (i.e., they were cut off) was done to highlight the basis of the judgement and that was injustice which ruined them all and cut of their roots. This also paves the way for Allãh's following statement: "and all praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds!"

The description in this verse of their characteristic of injustice and the Almighty's praise for His Lordship proves that the blame and the calamity of what came upon them in form of devastating punishment stems from themselves since they were the people who committed injustice, and that nothing can be attributable to the Almighty except the good praise since He did not do anything in handling their affair except based on the demands of profound wisdom. Nothing led them to the path of their eventual end except what they themselves liked by their wrong choice, and it was proven that disgrace and evil is for the unbelievers, and truly all praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds.

QUR'ÃN [6:46]: ***Say: "Have you considered that if Allãh takes away your hearing and your sight and sets a seal on your hearts, who is***

***the god besides Allãh that can bring it to you?" See how We repeat the communications, yet they turn away*:**

Taking away the hearing and the sight means taking away the power of the ears and the eyes, making someone deaf and blind. Setting a seal on the hearts means closing its 'door' in such a way that nothing from outside can enter so that one can reflect upon its affair and distinguish the obligatory deeds from non-obligatory ones or the good and beneficial ones from the evil and harmful ones – in spite of retaining its original characteristic and that is the ability of understanding; otherwise, he will become a lunatic and insane.

Since these polytheists were not giving ear to the true words about Allãh, Glory be to Him, and were not seeing His signs that prove that He is One Who has no partner, hence their hearts become such that nothing from the imports of ears and eyes could enter them so that they may distinguish truth from the falsehood. This is an argument to invalidate the belief of the polytheists regarding Allãh, the Sublime and His Unity.

This argument can be summarized as follows: the belief in partners of Allãh carries within itself its falsity. The belief in partners of God is based on believing in them as intercessors in the sense that they intercede and mediate [between humans and God] to procure benefits and avert harms. If the partners are just intercessors based on this supposition, then Allãh [being the Supreme God] has the ability to do whatever He wants in His Kingdom without anyone preventing or opposing Him. So, if Allãh takes away the power of your hearing and sight, and seals your hearts, He can do that, and no one from the partners ascribed to Him can oppose Him since they are intercessors and intermediaries only, not opponents [of God]. So, if Allãh does so and deprives you of what He takes away from you, then no one can give that back to you because the partners [believed by you] are intercessors and intermediaries only, not the source of creation and invention.

If those partners cannot give you any benefit or avert any harm, then what does it mean to ascribe divinity to them? After all, God is none but One Who can create, destroy and do whatever He likes in the universe. Human nature is compelled to acknowledge that this world has a God by searching for the origin of the occurrences of the good and the evil that it witnesses in the existing world. If something neither harms nor benefits, alongside the occurrences [of the world], then calling it 'God' is nothing but a nonsensical statement.

It does not behove a man with sound mind and discerning ability to accept an image of stone or a wood or a metal (carved by human hands based on his own ideas) as the creator of the world or having ability to create and destroy. Neither can he accept the notion that a god of a species (i.e., an idol) is the God worthy of being worshipped who originated the world without a prior model while he himself is a servant of God nurtured by Him.

This argument can also be presented in a different way: the concept of divinity cannot be applied to a partner of God who is merely an intercessor and an intermediary since being original in creation and invention [which is an essential quality of God] demands freedom in whatever He wants to do and deserves expression of humility from the created and sustained beings. Now, if the supposed intermediary of God has freedom in whatever he wants to do, and then he will be the origin and beginning point of creation and not an intermediary and intercessor. But if he has no freedom in whatever he wants to, then he is just an instrument and a tool, and not an originator and God – this also applies to the material phenomenon wherever they are found since they are nothing more than a tool and an instrument such as eating fulfils the appetite, drinking quenches the thirst, parents bring forth a child, pen creates the images of writing, walking covers the distance, etc.

"See how We repeat the communications, yet they turn away": *at-Taṣrīf* (اَلتَّصْرِيف) Repeating' means changing them [in different forms] in order to explain them [more easily]; and *'aṣ-ṣudūf* (اَلصُدُوف) turn away' means ignoring or discarding. The term *ṣadafa, yaṣdafu, ṣadufan,* are used when a person turns away from something.

QUR'ÃN [6:47]: ***Say: "Have you considered if the chastisement of Allãh should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the unjust people?"***

al-Jahrah (اَلْجَهْرَة = openly) means a full exposure [of something] that leaves no room for doubt and therefore it has been used here as a contrast to *al-baghtah* (اَلْبَغْتَة = suddenly) which means coming of something suddenly in a way that it does not appear upon whom it ascends except after it has come and engulfed him, leaving him no chance of escape.

This verse is a general argument stating that the unjust people are in danger of Allãh's chastisement, a chastisement that will neither miss them nor mistake its intended target; then it clarifies that they are

classified as 'unjust' because they deviated from the Islamic call and rejected the communications of Allãh, the Sublime. This is so because chastisement actually means conveying the guilty to what harms and destroys him as a recompense of his crime, and there is no crime without injustice. So, if a chastisement comes to them from Allãh, Glory be to Him, it will not destroy anyone but the unjust. This is the meaning of this verse, and the next two verses specify that unbelievers are the unjust ones.

QUR'ÃN [6:48-49]: ***And We send not messengers but as announcers of good news and givers of warning; then whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. And*** **(as for)** ***those who reject Our communications, chastisement shall afflict them because they transgressed*****:**

These verses state that the unbelievers are the unjust ones and that when Allãh's chastisement comes to them, it harms them only because of their injustice. And that is why Allãh changes the thread of the conversation by addressing the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) directly so that he will be the one who informs them about the chastisement and so that it would be more decisive in cutting off the excuse. The first person pronoun has been used to emphasize that this statement comes from the divine arena of glory and greatness.

The summary of this section is that the Almighty has commanded His Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) to present the argument to the unbelievers that if Allãh's chastisement comes to them, it will not destroy anyone but the unjust ones among them. Then He says to His Messenger: We are giving you the argument about coming chastisement; We are informing you that Our plan to send the Messengers is for the purpose of giving good tidings and warning: so whoever believes and does good, there will be no [chastisement] upon him but one, whoever rejects Our verses, he will be touched by Our chastisement because of his deviation and straying away from the path of submission. Therefore, they should reflect about themselves to see among which of the two groups they belong to.

In previous discourses, we have fully explained the meaning of belief (*īmãn*), doing good (*iṣlãḥ*), and deviation and sins (*fisq*), and also the meaning of negating fear and sadness from the believers.

QUR'ÃN [6:50]: ***Say: "I do not say to you, I have with me the treasures of Allãh, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an***

angel; I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me." Say: "Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you not then reflect?"

Perhaps the meaning of "the treasures of Allāh" is ["the treasures of mercy"] as He has mentioned: *Say: "If you control the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, then you would withhold* (them) *from fear of spending…"* (17:100). The impact of the "treasures of mercy" has been disclosed in His Word: *Whatever Allāh grants to men of* (His) *mercy, there is none to withhold it…* (35:2). So, the mercy of Allāh exists in abundance in the sense that it emanates from Him upon things bestowing them their existence and the effects of their existence. Thus, He, the Sublime, has clarified this by His Word: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is,* (36:82). The source of this abundant mercy is His Word: "Be" which emanates from the divine arena of glory and greatness. This is also reflected by what He has said in another verse: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure,* (15:21).

So, the meaning of "the treasures of Allāh" is the station from which He bestows from it whatever He wishes without anything diminishing [in the treasures] by bestowing of neither existence nor anything making Him incapable by weakness or greatness [of task]. This is reserved for Allāh, Glory be to Him; whereas anyone else, whatever and whoever he may be, is limited and whatever is with him is fixed so that when he gives something from it, it will diminish to that extent; and a person with such limitations cannot make a poor free from need or fulfil the request of a petitioner or answer the plea of a supplicant.

As His Word: "nor do I know the unseen" [uttered by the Holy Prophet] refers to the knowledge of the unseen which is independent of Divine revelation. Whereas his knowledge [of the unseen] based on revelation is confirmed in the following sentence in this same verse: "I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me." So, He has clarified in various place that some of the revelation sent to the messengers consist of the knowledge of the unseen as seen in the following verses: *The Knower of the unseen! So He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses of an apostle…* (72:26-27); and His Word in the story of Yūsuf: *This is of the tidings of the unseen* (which) *We reveal to you, and you were not with them when they resolved upon their affair, and they were devising plans,* (12:102); and His Word in the story of Maryam: *This is of the tidings*

of the unseen which We reveal to you; and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) *which of them should have Maryam in his charge, and you were not with them when they contended one with another,* (3:44); and His Word after the story of Nūḥ: *These are of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you, you did not know them* – (neither) *you nor your people – before this…* (11:49).

So, the purpose of denying the knowledge of the unseen refers to denial of the state in which he is naturally equipped in his existence with an ability that does not conceal for him things that humans cannot normally know from the secret matters whatever it may be.

As for His Word: "nor do I say to you that I am an angel" intend to deny the angelic nature [of the Holy Prophet] since the angels are devoid of the needs of physical life such as food, drink, marriage and its attachments. This has been mentioned in other places also such as: *Say: "I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me…"* (18:110). The sentence under discussion here consisting of denial of the angelic nature [of the Holy Prophet] without proving his humanity is in response to the unbelievers' bewilderment about the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) in their saying like: *"What sort of Apostle is this that he eats food and goes about in the marts…?"* (25:7).

It appears that this verse (that contains denial after denial) is a response to what the unbelievers were suggesting to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) in demanding miraculous signs and objecting to his activities which were similar to those of normal humans as can be seen in their statement quoted by the Almighty: *And they say:" What sort of Apostle is this that he eats food and goes about in the marts; why has not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have been a warner with him?" Or,* (Why is not) *a treasure be thrown down to him, or he should have a garden from which he may eat?"* (25:7-8). Similarly: *And they say: "We will by no means believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us. Or you should have a garden of palms and grapes in the midst of which you should cause rivers to flow forth, gushing out. Or you should cause the heaven to come down upon us in pieces as you think, or bring Allãh and the angels face to face* (with us). *Or you should have a house of gold, or you should ascend into heaven, and we will never believe in your ascending until you bring down to us a book which we may read." Say: "Glory be to my Lord; am I aught but a human messenger?"* (17:90-93); *…Still they will shake their heads at you and*

say: "When will it be?" (17:51); *They ask you about the hour, when will be it taking place?* (7:187).

So, the meaning of this verse: "Say: 'I do not say to you…'" is that in my call to you and in conveying the message to you, I have not claimed anything more than what I am – a mortal human being – so why are you blaming me and forcing me to accept your suggestions? I didn't claim that I have the divine treasures so that you may demand of me to bring forth rivers or create gardens or a house made of ornaments! I didn't claim that I know the unseen so that I may answer to you everything that is hidden under the veils of unseen such as the time of the Hour! I didn't claim that I am an angel so that you may defame me and reject my statements by my eating food and walking in the market to buy things!

The Sublime's Word: "'I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me,'" clarifies the truth of the Holy Prophet's claim after rejecting what they had expected from his claim of messengership of Allãh to them. So, the claim that "I am the Messenger of Allãh to you" does not mean that 'I have with me the treasures of Allãh, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel; rather the reality is that Allãh reveals unto me whatever He wants to reveal.'

This statement is not presented in form of a claim; rather it says: 'I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me' in order to prove that he is commanded to convey what is revealed unto him; in other words, conveying the revelation means following it. It is as if when he said: 'I do not say this or that,' it was asked: 'If this is the case and you are a human like us and weak like one of us without any superiority over us, then what do you want from us?' And so he responds: 'I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me: to give you good tidings [if you follow] and warn you [of chastisement if you disobey], and to call you to the religion of monotheism.'

The proof of this explanation is in the next sentence of the verse: *Say: "Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you not then reflect?*" The context of this sentence explains to us the following: 'Even though I am same as you in humanity and dependency, that does not prevent me from calling you to follow me since my Lord has blessed me with the insight by means of what He reveals to me and not to you; and so you and me are like the blind and the seeing who are not alike in this matter even if they are same in humanity.' Reflection in this difference between the two guides a person to the conclusion that the blind must follow the seeing and the ignorant must follow the learned.

QUR'ÃN [6:51]: ***And warn with it those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord – there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him – that they may guard*** **(against evil):**

The pronoun "with it" in "warn with it those" refers to the Qur'ãn as seen in the previous sentence: *"I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me."* And the statement: "there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him" indicates their circumstances which are the outcome of their fear or they being gathered on the Day of Resurrection.

"Fear" here refers to its common meaning and not to knowledge or realization since there is no such indication in the context. And the command to especially warn those who fear that they will be gathered to their Lord on the judgement day does not negate the general warning covering them and others as indicated in an earlier verse: *"... and this Qur'ãn has been revealed to me that I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches..."* (6:19). Since 'the fear of being gathered to their Lord' helps their souls in accepting [the message] and brings their minds closer to the call, the command of warning has been specified for them; and they have been described in this way in order to emphasize the call for them and to urge the Holy Prophet that he should not neglect their issue and not consider them like others, instead he should pay more attention in the call to them because their position [based on the fear] is closer to the truth and there is hope in their belief. So, this verse, along with other verses related to the general warning, conveys the following meaning: Warn the people in general and especially those who fear of being gathered to their Lord.

And His Word: "there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him" is total negation of the power of other than Allãh as well as the authority of intercession. However, the general import of this verse is qualified by other verses such as: *...who is he that can intercede with Him but by His Permission?* (2:255); *...and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves...* (21:28); *And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession but he who bears witness of the truth and they know,* (43:86).

This specific verse, however, has not been qualified because it addresses the idolaters who believed in the power of the idols and their intercession, and they didn't believe that their power was dependent upon the permission or approval of Allãh. Whereas the belief in the power and the intercession based on Allãh's permission, depends on its knowledge and that knowledge depends on revelation and prophet-

hood, but they did not believe in prophethood. On the contrary, the power and the intercession that they ascribed to their idols was believed by them to be part of their essential nature which did not depend on Allãh's permission; as if they were powerful in their existence which had the inherit ability to do whatever they wished regarding the weak ones without any permission from Allãh, Glory be to Him! In other words, creation of powerful beings inherently carries the 'Authorization' to exercise power over those who are under them.

In short, the verse says: "there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him," and does not include 'except by His permission' because the idolaters indeed believed that the idols were absolute guardians and intercessors – so the unconditional rejection of any guardian and intercessor besides Allãh stands parallel to their belief of affirming [guardianship and intercession] for them. As for adding the exception to this general statement, although it is conceptually valid (as it has occurred in various places in His Speech), it is not appropriate in this place.

So, it is clear from the above discussion that the verse, in its unconditional form, commands [the Holy Prophet] to warn everyone who has the fear in his heart of being gathered to Lord when they are reminded of Allãh's verses, no matter whether he is from those who believe in being gathered (like the believers from among the People of the Book) or from those who don't believe in it (like the idolaters and others) who doubt its occurrence but its fear engulfs their souls with its possibility – for the fear of something whose occurrence is possible can indeed materialize even if one is not sure about it.

There is a difference in opinion among the commentators about this verse: One says that the verse was revealed regarding the believers in being gathered and those are the ones addressed in the following verse: *And do not drive away those who call their Lord in the morning and the evening…* Another says that it was revealed regarding a group of polytheists' idolaters who believed in being resurrected after death. This is so even though there is no proof that any of the Meccans or Arab polytheists of the era of revelation held this view and in spite of the fact that verses of this chapter address the polytheists of Quraysh or Arab! Yet another commentator says that it is addressed to everyone who believes in being gathered in the hereafter no matter whether he is a Muslim or from the People of the Book, and that the command of warning is related to the believers in specific (even though the

obligation of warning is for all people) because the argument is more compelling upon them since they confess to the resurrection.

This verse, however, has only described them in context of the fear of being gathered; and the fear of a thing does not depend on absolute knowledge of its occurrence or on belief in its occurrence, rather it depends on doubt (i.e., the probability of equal proportions with varying degrees of preference) just like fear that is based on knowledge. This is obvious.

So, the verse, indeed, urges the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) to warn anyone in whom he finds the signs of fear, from whatever group he may be, because the foundation of the religious call is based on being gathered to the Lord and being held accountable for the bad and good deeds, and be recompensed accordingly. And the minimum impact of the religious call would be on a person who considers the gathering [of judgement day] a possibility and so fears it; and the higher the possibility of its occurrence, the higher would be the level of fear and stronger the impact [of accepting] the call – until he acquires conviction about it and totally negates it opposite, and thereafter emerges the total acceptance.

QUR'ÃN [6:52]: ***And do not drive away those who call their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His favour; neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours, so that you should drive them away and thus be of the unjust*:**

The context of this verse is that the polytheists from the Holy Prophet's tribe proposed to him that he should push away the [socially] weak believers and so, Allãh, Glory be to Him, forbade him from it in this verse. This is supported by the next verse: *And thus do We try some of them by others…*

This proposal of theirs is similar to what was proposed by the aristocrats of the past nations to their prophets that they should push away from themselves the weak and poor believers out of arrogance and haughtiness. While describing the people of Nūḥ and his arguments, Allãh, the Sublime, narrates the proposal of his people similar to the verses under discussion: *And the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: "We do not consider you but a mortal like ourselves and we do not see any have followed you but those who are the meanest of us at first thought and we do not see in you any excellence over us; nay, we deem you liars." He said: "O my people!*

Tell me if I have with me clear proof from my Lord, and He has granted me mercy from Himself and it has been made obscure to you; shall we constrain you to (accept) *it while you are averse from it… I am not going to drive away those who believe; surely they shall meet their Lord… and I do not say to you that I have treasures of Allãh; and I do not know the unseen, nor do I say that I am an angel; nor do I say about those whom your eyes hold in mean estimation* (that) *Allãh will never grant them* (any) *good – Allãh knows best what is in their souls – for then most surely I should be of the unjust."* (11:27-31).

Comparing these verses with the verse under discussion shows that those who call their Lord in the morning and the evening and desire His favour are the believers; and their call in the morning and the evening – and that is their ritual prayer or their general plea to their Lord – has been mentioned as a proof of their unadulterated link to their Lord, and as a way of explaining the statement in the next verse: *Does not Allãh best know the grateful?*

The word '*wajh* (pl. *wujūh*)' in "they desire only His *wajh*" means Allãh's face. [It has been translated here as "His *favour*".] ar-Rãghib in his *Mufradãt* says: "The *wajh* in reality is a bodily part as He says: *And wash your faces* (wujūh) *and hands,* [5:6]. *And the fire shall cover their faces,* [13:50]. And since the *wajh* is the first part that faces you and the most noble part of the visible body, it is used to describe the front, the most noble and the first part of everything; and therefore it is said: '*wajh* of so-and-so' and '*wajh* of the day' [in the meaning of beginning of the day].

"Sometimes it is used to indicate the person himself as it can be seen in the Divine Word: [Everyone on it must perish] *but the face of your Lord* (the Master of glory and honour) *will endure forever* [55:26-27]. It is said that 'the face' means His Person; it is also said that it means paying attention to Allãh through good deeds.

"He has said: *Wherever you turn there shall be Allãh's face* [2:115]; *Everything will perish except His face* [28:88]; *they desire only Allãh's face* [30:38]; *Verily we feed you for Allãh's face* [76:9]. It is said that in all these cases, the *wajh* is superfluous [and it means His Person] and so the verse means *everything will perish except Him,* and similarly in other examples. It has been narrated that this meaning was mentioned to Abū ʿAbdillãh ibn ar-Riḍã who responded by saying: 'Glorified be Allãh! They have uttered a gruesome statement. *Wajh* actually means the one who is approached in that direction and so the verse means: everything from the deeds of the people will perish [i.e.,

be null and void] except what was done for the sake of Allãh; and this is the meaning of other verses also.' And so the meaning of '*they desire only His wajh'* is that they desire only Allãh's pleasure or favour."

I say that the transformation in usage of '*wajh*' from its literal meaning of a bodily part to a wider meaning of whatever one faces of a thing is no doubt a common transformation of words in their meanings. However, a serious consideration in this does not allow the word '*wajh*' to be used in the meaning of 'person'. So, a thing, whatever it may be, indeed faces something else with what is apparent of its qualities and names, and it's the attributes and names that are perceived by an individual [and not the person itself which is an inner reality]. We come to know something through one of its attributes or its names, and then through them we reach to its person without actually perceiving its person directly.

Indeed, we gain knowledge of things first through the means of senses which perceive only the visible qualities (of shapes, lines and forms, etc.) and not their actual essence. From the result of this perception of the senses, we are lead [through the intellect] to the realization of the actual essences which are foundation of the non-essential attributes and related qualities which depend on the essences that protect them. So, when we say, "The person of Zayd," it means the person to whom the visible qualities and attributes of Zayd are referred to in the way we relate our qualities and attributes to ourselves. So, knowing the actual persons is an intellectual perception which always takes place through a kind of deduction by analogy and process of linkage.

If knowing the essential person or essence through a complete intellectual perception is not possible except by help of its attributes and effects using deduction by analogy, then the issue of [knowing] Allãh, Glory be to Him – whose essence has no limit nor is His existence finite – is most clearly and obviously beyond our full comprehension. Perception of a thing does not occur except if it has a limit and so there can be no hope in comprehensive knowledge of the Almighty as He has said: *And the faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God…* (20:111); and *He knows what is before them and what is behind them, while they do not comprehend Him in knowledge,* (ibid:110).

So, the *wajh* of a thing is what is faced by others; and its direction, i.e., the point of reference, is also the *wajh* just like the face is to human when faced by others. With this consideration, the good deeds

become *wajh* of Allãh just as the evil deeds become *wajh* of the Satan. This meaning of *wajh* can be applied in verses like: *...who seek Allãh's pleasure...* [30:38]; *"We feed you only for the sake of Allãh..."* [76:9], etc. Similarly, the attributes through which Allãh, Glory be to Him, 'faces' the creatures [are His *wajh*] like mercy, creation, sustenance, guidance and other similar ones from the attributes of action as well as some of the attributes of His Person through which we know Him – to the extent that we can know Him – like life, knowledge and power. All these are the Almighty's *wajh* by which He 'faces' His creation and through which they turn to Him as can be seen in an implied or explicit form in the verse: *But the face of your Lord* (the master of glory and honour) *will endure forever*, (55:27). From the looks of it, the word: *the master of glory and honour* is an attribute of 'face' and not 'your Lord.' Reflect and ponder on this.

Since it is correct to say that 'the direction of Almighty Allãh' is His *wajh*, then it is generally correct to say that whatever is linked to the Almighty in the way of proximity – like His names, attributes and religion; and like the good deeds – as well as whoever is found in the precinct of His proximity – like the prophets, angels, martyrs and all the forgiven believers – are all the Almighty's *wajh*.

This clarifies, firstly, the meaning of His Word, Glory be to Him: *...and what is with Allãh is enduring...* (16:96); *and those who are with Him are not too proud to serve Him...* (21:19); *those who are with your Lord are not too proud to serve Him and they glorify Him...* (7:206); and His Word about one who was killed in Allãh's way: *...nay, they are alive* (and) *are provided sustenance from their Lord.* (3:169); *And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures...* (15:21). Along with the first verse in this paragraph, these verses prove that all these entities are everlasting by the Almighty's ever-lasting nature; destruction and perdition cannot touch them. He also says: *...everything is perishable but His* wajh... (28:88). This verse proves that those issues are the *wajh* of Allãh, Glory be to Him; in other words, all those issues happen to be in the direction of the Almighty, they are comfortably established by His side and in His direction.

Secondly, the point of reference for mans intention towards His Lord is His *wajh* as He says: *...seeking the grace and pleasure from their Lord...* (5:2); *...to seek mercy from your Lord...* (17:28); *...and seek means of nearness to Him...* (5:35) – these are all *wajh* of Allãh because the attributes of His Action such as mercy, pleasure, grace and etc. are from His *wajh*. Similarly, the 'way' of the Almighty is

from His *wajh* as mentioned earlier: *...except to seek Allãh's pleasure* ... (2:272).

Also, His Word: "neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours." *al-Ḥisãb* (اَلْحِسَاب = reckoning) means using the numbers to add or subtract, etc. Since examining the deeds and evaluating them to fulfil the recompense or to get result and etc. cannot normally be done without using numbers to add or subtract, this is known as reckoning of the deeds.

If the reckoning of the deeds is to fulfil the recompense, and the recompense is indeed from Allãh, Glory be to Him, so the reckoning is upon Allãh, the Sublime, i.e., in His jurisdiction and ability as He has said: *Their account is only with my Lord*... (26:113); *Then surely upon Us is the taking of their account* (88:26); and then He reverses the focus by saying that: *...surely Allãh takes account of all things* (4:86), to prove that His, the Sublime's power and control over everything.

Based on this, the statement that 'the Prophet is neither answerable for their reckoning nor are they answerable for his reckoning' means: it is not upon him to take account of their deeds in order to recompense them so that he may drive them away from himself if he is not pleased with their behaviour and dislikes their company. On the other hand, it is not upon them to take account of his deeds so that he may drive them away out of fear of scrutiny by them or their punishment or their dislike of him out of arrogance and haughtiness. Consequently, the two sentences: "neither are you answerable…" and "nor are they answerable…" are independent statements.

It could also be said that the verse: "neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs…" means that he will not carry the burden of their reckoned deeds that may be overbearing for him; and this is based on the thought that a deed becomes a burden on its doer or on one who becomes responsible for it. So, it would mean that nothing of the weight of their deeds is upon you. Consequently, the statement "nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours" – it is superfluous since the statement is complete without it – is actually just to complete the other side of the equation and emphasize the implication of the speech.

It can also be said that both sentences "neither are you answerable for any reckoning of theirs" and "nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours" indicate the lack of any connection between the Holy Prophet and them as far as the reckoning of deeds is concerned.

It is also said that the reckoning in this verse refers to the reckoning of the sustenance and not the deeds, and so the meaning will be: you are not answerable for reckoning of their sustenance; it is Allãh who sustains them and upon Him is the reckoning of their sustenance. And the statement "nor are they answerable for any reckoning of yours" [is superfluous and] has just come to emphasize the implication of the speech as mentioned earlier.

Although it is possible to explain the last two interpretations, but the preferred view is the first one mentioned earlier.

Also, His word: "so that you should drive them away and thus be of the unjust." Being included in the group of the unjust people is dependent upon driving them away that is, driving away those who call their Lord.

The sequence of the speech, in its normal form, demands that the sentence: "and thus be of the unjust" should have followed the first sentence: "And do not drive away those who call their Lord in the morning and the evening, they desire only His favour." But since the speech became prolonged because of interjection of sentences between the first and the last, the phrase: 'drive away' was repeated again as a predicate for the sentence: "and thus be of the unjust" in order to establish the connection and remove any ambiguity. So, no objection can be raised that the speech: "and thus be of the unjust" is predicated upon itself (i.e., 'And do not drive away those who call their Lord so that you should drive them away') since repeating the phrase 'drive away' again has been done to link the statement: "and thus be of the unjust" to the first sentence as you already know.

QUR'ÃN [6:53]: ***And thus do We try some of them by others so that they say: "Are these they upon whom Allãh has conferred benefit from among us?" Does not Allãh best know the grateful?***

[*Fatannã* = 'We try' is from] *al-fitnah* (اَلفِتْنَة) which means test and trial. The context proves that the question: "Are these they upon whom Allãh has conferred benefit from among us?" is for mocking and ridiculing since it is known that the polytheists used to deride only those whom they regarded as contemptible and underrated their status in society; and this was done only because of their poverty, humbleness and low esteem in eyes of the aristocracy of Mecca.

So, Allãh, Glory be to Him, informs His Messenger that this variance and difference [between the people] was actually a divine test by which the people are tested so that the ungrateful ones can be

distinguished from the grateful ones. So, the ungrateful and arrogant people say about the poor believers: "Are these they upon whom Allãh has conferred benefit from among us?" Verily the social norms of the people are based on the standards of nobility and baseness that they have established themselves; similarly, a deed is evaluated according to the social standing of its doer. Therefore, the norm adopted by the poor, the humble and the slave is underrated by the rich and the powerful; and so a deed accomplished by a poor or a speech uttered by a slave or a prisoner is not worth of any attention by those who own wealth and power.

So, the act of embracing the faith by the poor, the labourers, and the slaves [on the one hand], and the Prophet's consideration for them and association with them [on the other hand] by itself became kind of a proof, in the eyes of the arrogant and tyrant class of the society, of the insignificance of the faith and that it is unworthy of any attention by the notable and powerful ones.

His Word: "Does not Allãh best know the grateful?" is a response to the polytheists' ridicule based on what they considered to be unlikely: "Are these they upon whom Allãh has conferred benefit from among us?" It means that the believers were grateful to Allãh and not the polytheists, and therefore He preferred the former for His favour [of Islam] and kept the latter back. The Almighty has implied that verily Allãh best knows those who are grateful for His favour; and it is obvious that the Benefactor indeed favours and blesses one who is thankful for His blessing. And Allãh has named confirmation of His Unity and negation of a partner from Him as gratefulness while describing the statement of Yūsuf (*'a.s.*): *...it beseems us not that we should associate aught with Allãh; this is by Allãh's grace upon us and on mankind, but most people do not give thanks*, (12:38).

The verse clarifies that the polytheists, out of their ignorance, based honour and power on being advanced in the vanities of this world – wealth, children and status – while these have no value in Allãh's eyes and no honour. The reality [of honour] revolves around the quality of gratefulness and true benefit, and that is the Divine Authority.

QUR'ÃN [6:54]: ***And when those who believe in Our communications come to you, say: "Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself,*** **(so)** ***that if any one of you does evil in ignorance, then turns after that and acts aright, then He is Forgiving, Merciful."*****:**

The meaning of "*as-salām* = peace" has already been explained earlier. The meaning of "*kataba* = writing" mercy on Himself is that He has ordained mercy upon Himself in the sense that it is impossible to separate the description of mercy from His actions. "*Aṣlaḥa* = acts aright" is from *al-iṣlāḥ* which means to be covered with goodness; grammatically it is an intransitive verb even if in reality it may be transitive. Its meaning is reforming the self or amending the deed.

Its connection to the previous verse is clear. Here Allāh, Glory be to Him commands His Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) – after forbidding him from driving the believers away from himself – to be kind to them, to greet them, and to give good tidings of Allāh's forgiveness and mercy to those among them who had repented a sincere repentance for a sin, so that their souls may be delighted and the inconsistency of their heart beats may calm down.

The verse clarifies the followings:

Firstly, the verse – and it is from the verses of repentance – is related to repentance from sins and misdeeds, and not from unbelief and polytheism. This is based on His Word: "if any one of you does evil," i.e., from those who believe in Allāh's verses.

Secondly, the ignorance in "if any one of you does evil in ignorance" means the opposite of disbelief and obstinacy which are done on purpose and not out of ignorance. Verily one who calls his Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His favour, and is believer in Allāh's verses does not disobey the Sublime out of arrogance and pride, rather out of ignorance which overcomes him as a result of following his desire or anger.

Thirdly, linking "turns [in repentance]" with "acts aright" is to prove that 'turning in repentance' can only happen with 'Acting aright' since the reality of returning to Allāh and seeking refuge in His proximity, with its pure status, does not combine with filth of sins from which the repenting person cleanses himself. Repentance is not just saying: 'I return [in repentance] to Allāh,' which does not move from the tongue to the heart as High be He Exalted has said: *...and whether you manifest what is in your souls or hide it, Allāh will call you to account for it...* (2:284).

Fourthly, Allāh's attributes of actions like All-Forgiving and All-Merciful can be rightly tied to a time. Even though Allāh, Glory be to Him has ordained mercy upon Himself but He does not manifest it nor implements its impact except when a servant of His commits a sin out of ignorance and then after repents and acts aright.

A relevant discussion on this theme has already passed under the commentary of: *Repentance with Allãh is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn* (to Allãh) *soon, so these it is to whom Allãh turns* (mercifully), *and Allãh is All-knowing, Wise. And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says, "Surely, now I repent"; nor* (for) *those who die while they are unbelievers…* (4:17-18) in volume four of this book.[16]

QUR'ÃN [6:55]: *And thus do We make distinct the communications and so that the way of the guilty may become clear*: By looking at the context: "We make distinct the communications" means explaining the Divine Knowledge, and purifying it from ambiguity and fusion.

And the "*la* = so that" in "so that the way of the guilty may become clear" indicates the purpose; and it is connected to an implied statement which has not been written out of deference and greatness of its meaning – and this is common in the Allãh's speech such as: *…and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allãh may know those who believe…* (3:140), and: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure,* (6:76).

So, the meaning of the verse is that: This is how We explain and clarify the various sections of the Divine Knowledge, and remove whatever ambiguity has come upon it for important objectives; and one of those objectives is to identify the path of the guilty ones so that those who believe in Our verses may avoid it. Based on this: "the way of the guilty" means the path that the guilty ones traverse upon – against the verses that talk about Allãh's Unity and its related true knowledge – and it is the path of disbelief, obstinacy, turning away from divine verses, and ungratefulness.

It has been said that the meaning of "the way of the guilty" means the path that has been adapted regarding the guilty ones; that is, Allãh's attitude towards them of cursing them in this world, and implementing an evil reckoning and painful chastisement upon them in the hereafter.

However, the first meaning is more preferable by looking at the context of the verses of this chapter.

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[16] See *al-Mīzãn* [Eng. transl.], vol.8, p.54 (*tr.*).

TRADITIONS

1. al-Kulaynī, based on the unconnected chain of narration, quotes al-Imãm ar-Riḍã (*ʻa.s.*) who said: "Verily, Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, did not make our Holy Prophet die until He had completed for him the religion. He sent down upon him the Qur'ãn in which is clarification for everything, in it He clarified what is permissible as well as forbidden, and the penal code as well as the rules, and all that is required for the people. Allãh, the Glorified, said: *We have not neglected anything in the Book*." (*al-Kãfī*)

2. ʻAlī ibn Ibrãhīm al-Qummī narrates from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad who narrated from Jaʻfar ibn Muḥammad who narrates from Kathīr ibn ʻAyyãsh who narrates from Abu 'l-Jārūd from Abū Jaʻfar [al-Bãqir] (*ʻa.s.*) about the verse: *And they who reject Our communications are deaf and dumb,* he (*ʻa.s.*) said: "*Deaf* from the guidance; *dumb* who cannot speak anything good; *in utter darkness* means in the darkness of unbelief; *whom Allãh pleases He causes to err, and whom He pleases He puts on the right way* – this is the rejection of the Qadariyyah of this *ummah* whom Allãh will raise on the Day of Resurrection with the Sabaens, the Christians and the Magians, and thereupon they will say: *'Our Lord, we were not polytheists,'* Allãh shall say: *See how they lied against their own souls, and that which they forged did pass away from them*."

The he [*ʻa.s.*] further said: "The Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.aʻa.w.a.*) said: 'Verily, every *ummah* has [a group like] Magians; and the Magians of this *ummah* are those who say: "There is no Divine Decree (*al-qadr*);" and they assume that the will and power is related to them and for them.'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

While quoting this *ḥadīth*, the author of *al-Burhãn* says: "In another copy of the *tafsīr* of ʻAlī ibn Ibrãhīm, this *ḥadīth* says: 'He [i.e., the Holy Prophet] said: "Verily, every *ummah* has [a group like] Magians; and the Magians of this *ummah* are those who say: 'There is no Divine Decree;' and they assume that the will and power is neither for them nor against them." And in a third copy, it says that: 'They said: "There is no Divine Decree;" and they assume that the will and power is neither towards them nor for them.'" (*Tafsīru 'l-burhãn*)

The author says: The issue of Divine Decree is from the issues that was discussed during the early era [of Islam]; a group rejected *al-qadr* – which means the Will of Allãh, Glory be to Him, has a partial connection to the actions of humans – and they proved independent

will and power for humans in their actions and that they are the independent creators of their actions. They have been named as al-Qadariyyah, the theologians who discuss the Divine Decree (*al-qadr*). Both sects, [the Shī'ahs and the Sunnīs] have narrated from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) that he said: "The Qadariyyah are the Magians of this *ummah*." The application of the term "Magians" on them is obvious since they believe that the human actions has a creator, i.e., the human being, and there is a creator for all other things, i.e., Allãh, Glory be to Him; and this is the belief of the Dualists, (the Magians,) in two gods: the creator of the good and the creator of the evil.

There are other narrations from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) and the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*'a.s.*) which explain the narration as above, and prove that there is Divine Decree and Allãh's Will has an impact in the actions of His servants as the Qur'ãn has proved.

The Mu'tazilah theological sect – and they deny the Divine Decree – has interpreted the narration by saying that the Qadariyyah relate the good and the evil all to a non-human creator. Some discussion on this subject has already occurred and its full discussion, God willing, will come in the future.

It is clear from what we have discussed that reconciling between the view that there is no Divine Decree [in human actions] and the view that humans don't have any will or power [of their own] in reconciling mutually incompatible views since the former proves total independence of humans in their actions while the latter negates their will and power.

So, what exists in the two versions of the narration as a reconciliation of the view (that there is no Divine Decree) and the view (that humans have no will and power) is indeed the result of distortion done by a scribe for whom the meaning was confusing and so he retained the words "no Divine Decree" but changed the rest of the narration.

3. as-Suyūṭī has quoted from Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, aṭ-Ṭabrãnī in *al-Kabīr,* Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh, and al-Bayhaqī in *ash-Shu'ab* from 'Uqbah ibn 'Ãmir from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) who said: "If you see Allãh giving [material blessings] to a servant in this world while he is still engrossed in his sins, that he loves, then that is indeed *istidrãj* (luring someone into destruction)." Then the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) recited the verse: *But when they neglected that which they had been admonished, We opened for them the doors of all things, until when they rejoiced in*

what they were given We seized them suddenly; then lo! They were in utter despair [6:44] and the verse after it. (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

4. as-Suyūṭī has quoted from Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh from ʻIbãdah ibn aṣ-Ṣãmit who said that the Allãh's Messenger (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) said: "Verily when Allãh, the Blessed, the Sublime, intends continuation and growth of a community, He blesses them with abstinence and thrift; and when He intends a community to perish, He opens for them or opens upon them the door of deceit *until when they rejoiced in what they were given We seized them suddenly; then lo! They were in utter despair. So the roots of the people who were unjust were cut off; and all praise is due to Allãh, the Lord of the worlds*." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

5. as-Suyūṭī has quoted Ibnu 'l-Mundhir from Jaʻfar who said: "Allãh revealed to Dãwūd: 'Fear me in all situations; and you should be most worried when blessings accumulate on you so that I shouldn't throw you down at that moment, then I will not look at you.'" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: His Word: "I shouldn't throw you down" is a negative form intending to warn; and His Word: "and then I will not look at you" is connected to the earlier negative verb.

6. In the commentary of the verse: *Say: "Have you considered if the chastisement of Allãh should overtake you…"* ʻAlī ibn Ibrãhīm al-Qummī says: "This was revealed when the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) immigrated to Medina and his companions were afflicted with hardship, illness and sickness. So, they complained about it to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) and Allãh then revealed: *Say* [to them, 'O Muḥammad!] *Have you considered if the chastisement of Allãh should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the unjust people?'* It means that you will not be afflicted with anything but hardship and loss in this world whereas the painful punishment in which is perdition shall be inflicted only on the unjust people." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: This narration, besides its weakness [in chain of narrators], contradicts what has been copiously described that this *sūrah* of "*al-Anʻãm*" was revealed in Mecca all together and the content of the verse [under discussion] does not fit with the story [narrated above], and the context provided for its interpretation seems far from the style of the Qur'ãn.

7. aṭ-Ṭabrisī under the verse: *And warn with it those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord – there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him – that they may guard* (against evil),

says that aṣ-Ṣãdiq (*ʻa.s.*) said: "Warn through the Qur'ãn those who fear meeting their Lord [on the Day of Judgement] so that you may entice them for what is with Him; for verily the Qur'ãn is an intercessor whose intercession will be accepted for them." (*Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: The *ḥadīth* apparently is linking the pronoun in "دُوْنِهٖ = *besides Him*" to the Qur'ãn [and so it would be *"...besides it"*], and that is a correct meaning even though the Qur'ãn has not been described as "a guardian" in the Qur'ãn itself just as it has been named as "an Imãm".

8. as-Suyūṭī quotes from Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh, and Abū Nuʻaym in *al-Ḥilyah* from ʻAbdullãh ibn Masʻūd who said: "Some prominent Qurayshī individuals passed by the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) while Ṣuhayb, ʻAmmãr, Bilãl, Khabbãb, and other poor Muslims like them were with him. So, they said: 'O Muḥammad, are you satisfied with these people from your community? *Are these they upon whom Allãh has conferred benefit from among us?* Are we supposed to be followers of these people? Drive them away from yourself, and once you have driven them away, we may follow you.' So, Allãh revealed about them: *And warn with it those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord…*" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: aṭ-Ṭabrisī has also narrated this in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn* from ath-Thaʻlabī through his chain of narrators from ʻAbdullãh ibn Masʻūd in a shorter form.

9. **a**s-Suyūṭī quotes from Ibn Jarīr and Ibnu 'l-Mundhir from ʻIkrimah who said that ʻUtba ibn Rabīʻah, Shaybah ibn Rabīʻah, Qarẓah ibn ʻAbd ʻAmr ibn Nawfal, al-Ḥãrith ibn ʻÃmir ibn Nawfal and Mutʻim ibn ʻUdayy ibn al-Khiyãr ibn Nawfal from among the nobles of the unbelievers from [descendants of] ʻAbd Manãf went to Abū Ṭãlib and said: "If your nephew drives away from us those low ones – and they indeed are our slaves and servants – that will create a great [respect] for him in our hearts, make us more amenable to him, and bring us closer to accept him and follow him."

Abū Ṭãlib mentioned that to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*). ʻUmar [ibn al-Khaṭṭãb who was in that gathering] said: "I wish you, O Allãh's Messenger, would do that, so that we can see whether they really intend to do what they are saying, and what way do they go." So, Allãh revealed: *And warn with it those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord* – to His Word – *Does not Allãh best know the grateful?*

ʻIkrimah continues: "And those [slaves who had accepted Islam] were Bilãl, ʻAmmãr ibn Yãsir, Sãlim (slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah) and Subḥ (slave of Usayd); and from among the *ḥulafã'*[17] were Ibn Masʻūd, al-Miqdãd ibn ʻAmr, Wãqid ibn ʻAbdullãh al-Ḥanẓalī, ʻAmr ibn ʻAbd ʻUmar, Dhu 'sh-Shimãlayn, Murthid ibn Abī Murthid and others like them.

"The verse: *And thus do We try some of them by others* was about the Qurayshī leaders of the unbelief, the slaves and those allied to the Quraysh. When this verse was revealed, 'Umar came forward and apologized for his earlier statement; and so Allãh revealed *and when those who believe in Our communications come to you…*" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

10. as-Suyūṭī quotes from Abū Shaybah, Ibn Mãjah, Abū Yaʻlã, Abū Nuʻaym in *al-Ḥilyah*; and Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh, al-Bayhaqī in *ad-Dalã'il* from Khabbãb who said:

"al-Aqra' ibn Ḥãbis at-Tamīmī and ʻUyaynah ibn Ḥaṣīn al-Fazãrī found the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) with Bilãl, Ṣuhayb, ʻAmmãr, and Khabbãb among the people who were socially weak believers. When they saw them around him, they derided them. Then they came to the Holy Prophet alone and said: 'We want you to appoint a [distinct] place for us with you so that the Arab may know our superiority since delegations of the Arab will soon come to you and we will be embarrassed if they see us sitting with those low status people. So, when we come to you, remove them from your gathering, and once we have left, you may sit with them if you wish.' He said, 'Okay.' They said, 'Then write for us a document binding you to it.' He asked for a paper and called ʻAlī to write the document while we were sitting in one corner.

"That is when Jibrīl came down with this verse: *And do not drive away those who call their Lord in the morning and the evening* – to His Word – *say: 'Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself…'* The Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) threw away the paper from his hand and he called us; so we came to him while he was saying: '*Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself.*' So, we used to sit with him, and whenever he wanted to stand up to go, he would stand up and leave us. Then Allãh revealed: *And with-*

[17] *Ḥulafã'*: is plural of *ḥalīf*, i.e., those foreigners who were allied to one or the other tribe of Mecca. (*tr.*)

hold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill…" Khabbãb continues: "So, the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) would sit with us thereafter and when the time came for him to get up, we would leave him so that he may go." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: aṭ-Ṭabrisī has narrated this in *Majmaʿu 'l-bayãn* from Salmãn [al-Fãrisī] and Khabbãb; and there are other narrations similar to the last three narrations. However, by looking back at the numerous narrations at the beginning of this *sūrah* which prove that this *sūrah* was revealed all together and also by contemplating on the context of the verses, there is no doubt that these narrations are surely like what we have termed as 'Application' [of verses to events] in the sense that the companions found the content of some verses applicable to some events which took place during the Holy Prophet's time and so considered those events as occasions of revelation of the verse; and not in the sense that the verse was revealed all by itself because of that event in order to clarify matters about it. It is applied to the event in the sense that the doubts about that event were removed in light of that verse just as doubts in other similar circumstances were also clarified in its light as we see in the three narrations about the revelation of the verse: *And do not drive away those who call their Lord.* The purpose of the verse is same but the stories are different even though they are similar: it seems that the elite of Mecca came to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) and proposed time and again that he push the socially weak Muslims away from himself and that at each time some of the socially weak Muslims were present. The content of the verse has affinity with these or some of the suggestions of the Meccans.

This is how the companions used to describe the reasons for revelation of the verses in form of stories or events that had occurred during the Holy Prophet's time which have kind of a relevance to the contents of the holy verses without the verse actually having any connection to the particular story or event that was narrated. Then with the spread of the trend of quoting *aḥãdīth* based on meaning [rather than verbatim] and wide circulation of this trend created a delusion that the verses were revealed for those specific events to the extent of becoming the exclusive reasons [for their revelation].

So, there is no reliance on such kinds of *aḥãdīth* narrated on the occasion of revelation, especially in the examples of this *sūrah* which is among those revealed all together. The most that these *aḥãdīth* can do is to show a kind of connection of [the theme of] the verses to the

events which occurred during the time of the Holy Prophet in particular with the spread of fabrication and interpolation in these narrations as well as their weakness, and leniency of the early scholars in accepting and quoting them.

11. as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* quotes from az-Zubayr ibn Bakãr in *Akhbãru 'l-Madīnah* from ʻUmar ibn ʻAbudillãh Ibnu 'l-Muhãjir that the verse [6:52] was revealed when some people proposed to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) to drive away the weak ones from Aṣḥãbu 'ṣ-Ṣuffah[18] from himself, similar to the story [mentioned earlier]. This narration is considered weak based on the fact that the *sūrah* was revealed all together and that also in Mecca before the immigration.

12. al-ʻAyyãshī quotes from Abū ʻAmr az-Zubayrī from Abū ʻAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*ʻa.s.*) who said: "Allãh showers mercy upon someone who repented to Allãh before death. Verily repentance purifies the abomination of the sin and prevents from misery of perdition. Allãh has made the mercy a duty upon Himself for His righteous servants as He has said: *'...your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself,* (so) *that if any one of you does evil in ignorance, then turns after that and acts aright, then He is Forgiving, Merciful.'* " (*at-Tafsīr*)

13. as-Sayyid Hãshim al-Baḥrãnī, in *al-Burhãn,* quotes from ʻAbdullãh ibn al-ʻAbbãs that the verse: *And when those who believe in Our communications come to you ...* was revealed about ʻAlī, Ḥamzah and Zayd [ibn Ḥãrithah]. (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: There are many narrations which say that the verses previous to it were revealed about the enemies of the *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*ʻa.s.*). Apparently, all these narrations are based on flow and application [of a verse on its best examples] or based on the esoteric meaning since the revelation of the *sūrah* in Mecca all together prevents one from considering these narrations as the occasions of revelation (*asbãbu 'n-nuzūl*); and, therefore, we refrained from quoting them. And Allãh knows the best.

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[18] Aṣḥãbu 'ṣ-Ṣuffah were the homeless Muslims in Medina who lived under a shade besides the Prophet's Mosque. (*tr.*)

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ ٱلَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ قُل لَّآ أَتَّبِعُ
أَهْوَآءَكُمْ ۙ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذًا وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾
قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُم بِهِۦ ۚ مَا عِندِي مَا
تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنِ ٱلْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ ۖ يَقُصُّ ٱلْحَقَّ ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
ٱلْفَٰصِلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُل لَّوْ أَنَّ عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِۦ لَقُضِيَ
ٱلْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾
۞ وَعِندَهُۥ مَفَاتِحُ ٱلْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَآ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
ٱلْبَرِّ وَٱلْبَحْرِ ۚ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِن وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ
فِي ظُلُمَٰتِ ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَٰبٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾
وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِي يَتَوَفَّىٰكُم بِٱلَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِٱلنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ
يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰٓ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ۖ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَهُوَ ٱلْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِۦ ۖ

وَيُرۡسِلُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلۡمَوۡتُ تَوَفَّتۡهُ
رُسُلُنَا وَهُمۡ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ ثُمَّ رُدُّوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ مَوۡلَىٰهُمُ ٱلۡحَقِّۚ
أَلَا لَهُ ٱلۡحُكۡمُ وَهُوَ أَسۡرَعُ ٱلۡحَٰسِبِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قُلۡ مَن يُنَجِّيكُم مِّن
ظُلُمَٰتِ ٱلۡبَرِّ وَٱلۡبَحۡرِ تَدۡعُونَهُۥ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفۡيَةً لَّئِنۡ أَنجَىٰنَا مِنۡ هَٰذِهِۦ
لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلشَّٰكِرِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُم مِّنۡهَا وَمِن كُلِّ كَرۡبٍ
ثُمَّ أَنتُمۡ تُشۡرِكُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ قُلۡ هُوَ ٱلۡقَادِرُ عَلَىٰٓ أَن يَبۡعَثَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ عَذَابًا
مِّن فَوۡقِكُمۡ أَوۡ مِن تَحۡتِ أَرۡجُلِكُمۡ أَوۡ يَلۡبِسَكُمۡ شِيَعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعۡضَكُم
بَأۡسَ بَعۡضٍۗ ٱنظُرۡ كَيۡفَ نُصَرِّفُ ٱلۡأٓيَٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَفۡقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
وَكَذَّبَ بِهِۦ قَوۡمُكَ وَهُوَ ٱلۡحَقُّۚ قُل لَّسۡتُ عَلَيۡكُم بِوَكِيلٖ ﴿٦٦﴾ لِّكُلِّ
نَبَإٖ مُّسۡتَقَرّٞۚ وَسَوۡفَ تَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَيۡتَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِيٓ
ءَايَٰتِنَا فَأَعۡرِضۡ عَنۡهُمۡ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُواْ فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيۡرِهِۦۚ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ
ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ فَلَا تَقۡعُدۡ بَعۡدَ ٱلذِّكۡرَىٰ مَعَ ٱلۡقَوۡمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾
وَمَا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنۡ حِسَابِهِم مِّن شَيۡءٖ وَلَٰكِن
ذِكۡرَىٰ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَذَرِ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُواْ
دِينَهُمۡ لَعِبٗا وَلَهۡوٗا وَغَرَّتۡهُمُ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَاۚ وَذَكِّرۡ بِهِۦٓ
أَن تُبۡسَلَ نَفۡسُۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتۡ لَيۡسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلِيّٞ

وَلَا شَفِيعٌ وَإِن تَعۡدِلۡ كُلَّ عَدۡلٖ لَّا يُؤۡخَذۡ مِنۡهَآۗ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ
ٱلَّذِينَ أُبۡسِلُواْ بِمَا كَسَبُواْۖ لَهُمۡ شَرَابٞ مِّنۡ حَمِيمٖ وَعَذَابٌ
أَلِيمُۢ بِمَا كَانُواْ يَكۡفُرُونَ ٧٠ قُلۡ أَنَدۡعُواْ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
مَا لَا يَنفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَىٰٓ أَعۡقَٰبِنَا بَعۡدَ إِذۡ هَدَىٰنَا ٱللَّهُ
كَٱلَّذِي ٱسۡتَهۡوَتۡهُ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينُ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ حَيۡرَانَ لَهُۥٓ أَصۡحَٰبٞ
يَدۡعُونَهُۥٓ إِلَى ٱلۡهُدَى ٱئۡتِنَاۗ قُلۡ إِنَّ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ هُوَ ٱلۡهُدَىٰۖ
وَأُمِرۡنَا لِنُسۡلِمَ لِرَبِّ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٧١ وَأَنۡ أَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ
وَٱتَّقُوهُۚ وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِيٓ إِلَيۡهِ تُحۡشَرُونَ ٧٢ وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِي
خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضَ بِٱلۡحَقِّۖ وَيَوۡمَ يَقُولُ كُن
فَيَكُونُۖ قَوۡلُهُ ٱلۡحَقُّۚ وَلَهُ ٱلۡمُلۡكُ يَوۡمَ يُنفَخُ فِي ٱلصُّورِۚ
عَٰلِمُ ٱلۡغَيۡبِ وَٱلشَّهَٰدَةِۚ وَهُوَ ٱلۡحَكِيمُ ٱلۡخَبِيرُ ٧٣

Say: "I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allãh." Say: "I do not follow your low desires, for then indeed I should have gone astray and I should not be of those who go aright." (56). *Say: "Surely I have manifest proof from my Lord and you call it a lie; I have not with me that which you would hasten; the judgment is only Allãh's; He separates the truth and He is the best of separators* (between truth and falsehood)*."* (57). *Say: "If that which you desire to hasten were with me, the matter would*

have certainly been decided between you and me; and Allãh best knows the unjust (58). *And with Him are the keys of the unseen – none knows them but He; and He knows what is in the land and the sea; and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but* (it is all) *in a clear book* (59). *And He it is Who takes your souls at night* (in sleep), *and He knows what you acquire in the day, then He raises you up therein that an appointed term may be fulfilled; then to Him is your return, then He will inform you of what you were doing* (60). *And He is the Supreme, above His servants, and He sends keepers over you; until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him completely, and they are not remiss* (61). *Then are they sent back to Allãh, their Master, the True One; now surely His is the judgment and He is swiftest in taking account* (62). *Say: "Who is it that delivers you from* (the dread of) *darkness of the land and the sea* (when) *you pray to Him (openly) humiliating yourselves, and in secret: 'If He delivers us from this, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones.'"* (63). *Say: "Allãh delivers you from them and from every distress, yet again you associate* (others) *with Him."* (64). *Say: "He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of others." See how repeatedly We display the signs that they may understand* (65). *And your people call it a lie and it is the very truth. Say: "I am not placed in charge of you."* (66). *For every prophecy is a term, and you will come to know* (it), (67). *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse, and if the Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people* (68). *And nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), *but* (theirs) *is only to remind; haply they may guard* (69). *And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has deceived, and remind* (them) *thereby lest a soul should be fettered with what it has earned; it shall not have besides Allãh any guardian nor an intercessor, and if it should seek to give every compensation, it shall not be accepted from it; these are they who shall be fettered with what they earned; they shall have a drink of boiling water and a painful chastisement because they disbelieved* (70). *Say: "Shall we call on that besides Allãh,*

which does not benefit us nor harm us, and shall we be returned back on our heels after Allãh has guided us, like him whom the Satans have made to fall down perplexed in the earth? He has companions who call him to the right way, (saying)*: 'Come to us.'" Say: "Surely the Guidance of Allãh, that is the (true) guidance, and we are commanded that we should submit to the Lord of the worlds* (71). *And that you should keep up prayer and be careful of* (your duty to) *Him; and He it is to Whom you shall be gathered.'"* (72). *And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth with truth; and on the day He says: "Be", it is. His word is the truth, and His is the Kingdom on the day when the trumpet shall be blown; the Knower of the unseen and the seen; and He is the Wise, the Aware* (73).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These verses are the closing arguments against the polytheists in favour of monotheism and other related themes of prophethood and resurrection; and they form a single well-connected narrative.

QUR'ÃN [6:56]: ***Say: "I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allah." Say: "I do not follow your low desires, for then indeed I should have gone astray and I should not be of those who go aright."***

It is a command to the Holy Prophet that he should inform the polytheists about the prohibition that has come upon him regarding worshipping their gods. It is an implied way of conveying the prohibition about worshipping them.

The next sentence: "Say: 'I do not follow your low desires,'" explains the basis of prohibition since worshipping the idols would be following the low desires, and he has been forbidden from doing so. Then the verse: "'for then indeed I should have gone astray and I should not be of those who go aright,'" indicates the reason for not following the low desires: doing so would be misguidance and separation from the group of rightly-guided ones, those who are known by the quality of accepting Allãh's guidance and are recognized by it. Following the low desires negates the continuity of guidance in the person's soul and prevents the light of monotheism from illuminating his heart, an illumination that is constant and beneficial.

These words form a summary of a complete and rationalized statement for prohibition or avoidance of worshipping their idols. It means that worshipping them would be following the low desires, and following low desires is misguidance and separation from the ranks of those guided aright by Divine guidance.

QUR'ĀN [6:57]: ***Say: "Surely I have manifest proof from my Lord and you call it a lie; I have not with me that which you would hasten; the judgment is only Allāh's; He relates the truth and He is the best of separators*** **(between truth and falsehood).***"*

al-Bayyinah (اَلْبَيِّنَة) means 'the manifest proof' and it is from *al-bayān* (اَلْبَيَان) which means 'clarity'. The original meaning of this word is separation of a thing from another in such a way that they do not join or mix. From *al-bayān* is derived *al-bayn, al-bawn, al-baynūnah*, etc. *al-Bayyinah* (the manifest proof) is known as *bayyinah* because the truth is separated from the falsehood; and so it becomes clear and it becomes easy to identify it without any difficulty and effort.

The pronoun 'it' in "and you call it a lie" refers to the Qur'ān; and the apparent context demands that the lie be related to the manifest proof that is with the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*), and this is supported by next sentence: "I have not with me that which you would hasten…" By considering this latter sentence, the meaning of the verse is as follows: One of the manifest proofs by which Allāh has supported my messengership is the Qur'ān that you have rejected; and what you are demanding from me and asking to hasten one of the signs [i.e., the punishment] is not in my control nor is its decision delegated to me. Consequently, there is no point of agreement between us since I have been given [the Qur'ān as a sign] that you do not want and you demand that what I have not been given.

It is clear from the above that the pronoun in "and you call it a lie" refers to the manifest proof which is contained in the Qur'ān. And verily the statement: "I have not with me that which you would hasten …" means implicitly denying any control over what they would like to hasten. What a human mostly controls (especially in case of giving and bestowing) are things that are with him or at least stored with him and under his control, and then he gives out from it whatever he wishes. Therefore, the meaning of *"I have not with me"* is denial of control and power in the style of denying the consequence by denying the cause.

His statement "the judgment is only Allāh's…" explains the reason for denial and that is why it has occurred in negative form. [Its literal

translation would be: "the judgement is not but of Allãh".] Moreover, the exceptional clause ['only'] denotes the exclusivity of the matter to prove that the negation is universal in the sense that no one but the Almighty Allãh has the judgment and it depends on Him only.

A TALK ON THE MEANING OF JUDGEMENT AND THAT IT BELONGS TO ALLÃH ONLY

al-Ḥukm (اَلْحُكْم) denotes kind of formation by which various elements [of an entity] are smoothly joined, and its gaps and cracks filled so that it does not break up into sections and does not scatter into parts in a way that its impact is weakened and its perimeters are diminished. That basic meaning connects its various derivatives such as *al-iḥkãm* (to solidify s.t.), *at-taḥkīm* (to strengthen s.t.), *al-ḥikmah* (wisdom), *al-ḥukūmah* (governance), etc.

Man has realized the materialization of this meaning in civic duties and rights that exist in society; so when the rulers and leaders command an issue, they are actually imposing the duty upon the subordinates and tying it to them in a knot that cannot be undone, a binding from which they cannot free themselves. Similarly between the owner of a property and the property itself, and between someone who has a right in a matter and the matter itself there is a kind of connection that prevents others from interfering between the person and his property or his right, and consequently prevents their encroach-ment. So, when a person disputes with the owner of a property about its ownership by claiming it for himself or with a person who has a right by denying his right, he has actually sought to loosen the con-nection and weaken the link between the two. And when the arbiter or the judge to whom the case was presented gives the property or the right to one of two claimants, he makes a judgement (*ḥukm*), in other words he actually creates a firm link after its weakness and a strong connection after its feebleness. When the judge says, "The ownership of the property is for so-and-so or the right is of so-and-so," this becomes the judgement that ends the basis of dispute and disagreement; and no one can interfere between the owner and the property or between the person and his right. In short, the ruler in his command and the judge in his judgement create the connection between the two sides and remove any weakness and barrier in between – and this is known as *al-ḥukm*.

This is how the people came to perceive the meaning of *al-ḥukm* in conventional man-made issues; then they realized that its meaning could also be applied to issues pertaining to the actual creation when related to the fate and Divine Decree. For example, the seed will develop in the earth and then flourishes as a trunk and branches with leaves and fruits; or, for example, the sperm-drop changes into a body with life and feelings, etc. This all happens because of Allãh's *ḥukm* and decree. This is what we derive from the meaning of *al-ḥukm:* establishing [a link or a right] of one thing to another or establishing a co-relation of one thing with something else.

The concept of monotheism (*tawḥīd*), which is the foundation of the teachings of the Noble Qur'ãn, proves that the actual impact in the universe emanates solely from Almighty Allãh who has no partner. Of course, the Qur'ãn relates this relationship of the Divine to the process of creation of the universe in different ways depending on the variety of situations, and not in one single style: you will notice that sometimes He links issue of creation to Himself and at other times He links it to other things differently. [This is not only in the matter of creation,] similarly, when it comes to other attributes like knowledge, power, life, will, sustenance, and beauty, the Qur'ãn sometimes relates these qualities to the Divine exclusively and sometimes to others.

Since the actual impact emanates from Allãh, the Divine *ḥukm* – which is kind of an impact and creation of the Almighty – is also the same, whether it pertains to the actual world of creation or to conventional realm of laws. The Qur'ãn confirms this meaning [of *ḥukm*] in the following verses: *...the judgement is only Allãh's...* (6:57; 12:67); *...now surely His is the judgement...* (6:62); *...All praise is due to Him in this* (life) *and the hereafter, and His is the judgement...* (28:70); *...And Allãh pronounces a judgement – there is no repeller of His decree...* (13:41). If anyone else than Almighty Allãh had a *ḥukm,* it was necessary for him to demonstrate it and contradict the Divine Will. He also says: *...so judgement belongs to Allãh, the High, the Great;* (40:12). These verses, specifically or generally, prove the creative will (*al-ḥukmu 't-takwīnī*) exclusively for the Almighty. [This was about the realm of existence and creation.]

When it comes to the legislative will (*al-ḥukmu 't-tashrī'ī*) and its exclusively for the Almighty, it can be proven by the following verse: *...judgement is only Allãh's; He has commanded that you shall not worship aught but Him; this is the right religion...* (12:40). The earlier verses also apparently prove that the *ḥukm*, will, is exclusively for the

Almighty and no one is part of it. However, Allãh sometimes relates the *ḥukm,* especially the legislative will, to others in His words such as: *...as two just persons among you shall judge...* (5:95); and in His statement to Dãwūd (*'a.s.*): *"O Dãwūd! Surely We have made you a vicegerent in the land; so judge between men with justice..."* (38:26); and in His statement to the Holy (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*): *And that you should judge between them by what Allãh has revealed...* (5:49); *...therefore judge between by what Allãh has revealed...* (5:48); *...with it the prophets... judged...* (5:44), and other similar verses. Placing these verses alongside the first group of verses shows that the *ḥukm,* will, originally and primarily belongs to Almighty Allãh; and that others are not independent in this matter and if any will exists for them, it is by His permission and on a secondary basis. Therefore, Allãh considers Himself as the best and the most excellent of judges since originally, independently and primarily judgement belongs to Him. He said: *Is not Allãh the best of the Judges?* (95:8) and …and *He is the best of the Judges;* (7:87).

As you can observe from the above, the verses that link the *ḥukm* to other than Allãh (of course, with His permission and consent) are confined to the conventional matters; but when it comes to the command of creation, as far as I can recall, there is no such attribution to other than Him. Nonetheless, the attribution of the meanings of the general qualities and actions of God to other than Him (with His will and consent) – such as knowledge, power, life, creation, sustenance, giving-life, will, etc. – can be seen in many verses which we don't need to quote here.[19]

This difference in attribution perhaps was in deference to the sanctity of Almighty Allãh by portraying His qualities with independence that cannot be attributed to the secondary causes. Divine will and decree in matters of actual creation is such; and its examples can be seen in the terms like *al-Badī'* (اَلْبَدِيْع = the originator) and *al-Fãṭir* (اَلْفَاطِر = the creator), and other words that follow their pattern in portraying kind of an exclusivity in their meanings; and their attribution to other than Allãh is avoided out of deference to the sanctity of Divinity.

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[19] For example, where qualities and actions of Allãh have been attributed, with His will, to others, the reader may refer to the following verses: 32:11 (act of giving death is attributed to the angel); 3:49 (act of creation and knowledge of the unseen is attributed to Prophet 'Īsã); 2:255 (a general statement about access to the knowledge of the unseen with Allãh's permission); 2:260 (act of creation attributed to Prophet Ibrãhīm, *'A.s.*). (*tr.*)

Let us return to where we were about the commentary of the verse: "…the judgment is only Allãh's…" The meaning of *al-ḥukm* (command, judgement) here is the Divine Decree in the matters of creation. This sentence explains the negative statement that has occurred before it: "I have not with me that which you would hasten". And so the meaning within its proper context is that creative command belongs to Allãh only and it is not for me to judge between you and I – that is what you are seeking to be hastened by asking of me to bring upon a sign (i.e., the punishment).

Based on this, the sentence: "I have not with me that which you would hasten" has been used as an indirect expression; it is as if by asking him to bring a sign other than the Qur'ãn, they were asking him to judge between them and himself. Perhaps this is the purpose behind repeating the relative pronoun [*mã* = that which] and the relative clause [*tasta'jilūna* = you desire to hasten] in the following verse: *Say: "If that which you desire to hasten were with me…"* The apparent context demanded that it should have been said, "If that was with me…"

The meaning of the verse: *"that which you desire to hasten"* refers to the first verse and entails that the judgement be finalized between them and him, as is the Divine Tradition. This has been repeated in the second verse. It is also possible to reverse the indirect expression and so the meaning of "that which you desire to hasten" would be the final judgement as an obvious meaning in the first verse and in the second verse it would be as an indirect expression.

Also, His Word: "…He separates the truth and He is the best of separators (between truth and falsehood)." [This term *yaquṣṣu* (يَـقُصُّ = relate) has been recited differently by the reciters.] 'Ãṣim, Nãfi' and Ibn Kathīr from the seven [famous reciters] have recited it as it occurs now with *qãf* and *ṣãd* without a dot, and it means to cut off a things and to separate it from something else as it has occurred in: *And he said to his sister, "separate him;"* (28:11). However, the rest of reciters have recited it with *qãf* and *ḍãd* (i.e., *ṣãd* with a dot) from the root *qaḍã'* [and so it is recited *yaqaḍḍu*] and the *yã'* [in the end of that word] has been omitted as it has happened in: *consummate wisdom – but warnings do not* (تُـغْنِ) *avail;* (54:5). Both recitations have merits but as far as the meaning is concerned, both are the same: to relate the truth and to separate it from the falsehood is a sure result of judgement and decree on basis of the truth. Nonetheless, the words: "He is the best of separators" is more appropriate with the term *yaquṣṣu* in the meaning of separating.

Some of the commentators of the Qur'ãn have taken the word *yaquṣṣu* in the meaning of relating something or in the meaning of following the footsteps. However, the context does not support these meanings.

As for the first meaning [of these two interpretations]: although Almighty Allãh has narrated in His Book many stories of the prophets and their nations but there is no such narration in the context of the present passages, and so there is no basis to take the word as His narration.

As for the second meaning: it would mean that it is Allãh's tradition to follow the truth and its implications in managing His Kingdom and organizing the affairs of His creation. Although Allãh does not decide but on basis of the truth; and does not judge but on basis of the truth, nonetheless the decorum of the Noble Qur'ãn wouldn't accept the style of describing the act of following to the Almighty. Among other things, Allãh has said: *The truth is from your Lord.* (3:60); and did not say: "The truth is with Allãh" since there is an indication of weakness and dependency in the term 'with'.

A TALK ON THE MEANING OF THE REALITY OF ALLÃH'S ACTION AND JUDGEMENT

The action and judgement of the Almighty Allãh is the actual truth, not just *according* to the truth or *conforming* to it. The following is its discussion:

An entity can only be true if it actually exists in the real world and not just be a figment of one's imagination or creation of a mind. For example, the human being is one of the true existing entities as well as the earth on which he resides, also the vegetation and animals upon which he feeds.

A report or news can only be true if it is according to the proven reality, independent of our perception.

A decree or judgement can only be true if it is according to the norm that prevails in the world. When a ruler gives a command or a judge passes a verdict, that command or verdict will be 'the absolute truth' if it is according to the general good based on the prevailing norm in the world; and it would be 'the relative truth' if it is according to the relative good based on the norm of the world in a partial manner without considering the overall global system.

So, when someone commands us to maintain justice or refrain from injustice that command is considered a truth. How? The system of the world [devised by the Almighty] leads things to their fortune and good end; and it has decreed upon the humans to live as social beings and it demands upon all segments of the society to harmonize their various sections and not to disrupt or destroy one another so that it can attain the portion of its success in this world. The general good of a society is the basis of this success in this life, and the command to maintain justice and refrain from injustice is in accordance with that objective. So, both these commands are the truth. Whereas the command to inflict injustice or withhold justice is not in accordance with that success and so they are the falsehood.

at-Tawḥīd (monotheism) is the truth since it leads the human being to success in his true life whereas *ash-shirk* (polytheism) is falsehood since it leads to a devastating suffering and perpetual chastisement.

Similarly, a judgement between the two litigants will only be the truth if it is in accordance with the legal opinion that takes into account the general good of all people or of a particular group or a specific community. And the real good or welfare, as you already know, is based on the prevailing norm in the world whether it be absolute or relative.

Thus, it becomes clear that the truth, whatever it may be, is based on the real world and the system that governs it and the norm prevailing within it. Moreover, there is no doubt that the world and the existence – with all its system, norms and intricacies – is the act of the Almighty: it starts from Him; it is sustained by Him, and eventually returns to Him. So, the truth (whatever it may be) and the general good (however it may be) follow His action and trail His direction, and they exist only by being attributed to Him; and it is not that God follows the truth in His action or follows its direction. The Almighty is the True by Himself, and whatever is other than Him is true because of Him.

We, the humans in our free actions, whenever we wish to supplement the deficiencies in our existence and fulfill the needs of our lives – our actions that are sometimes in accordance with our desired success and sometimes are in divergence to it – we are forced in this process to take into consideration the side of general good that we deem to be good; in other words, in which lies the good of our situation and success of our endeavour. This leads us to obey the prevailing laws and general rules, to consider the laws and social

norms worthy of being fulfilled and followed since it entails the good of humanity and contains the desired success.

This leads us to believe that good (*al-maṣlaḥa*) and evil (*al-mafsadah*) exist in the real sense, independent of the realms of mind and outside it, and separate from the domains of knowledge and sight; and they show their effect in the external world, positively and negatively. So, when our actions or laws are in accordance with the real good, *per se*, it will result in good and attain success; but when they oppose the real good and follow the real existing evil, it will result in every harm and evil. [This leads us to believe that] this kind of existence [of good and evil] is a real existence that cannot be destroyed or changed; and that the good and evil, in the real sense, as well as the qualities related to them (that compel people to act or to refrain) such as good action and evil action, and the laws derived from them (like the obligation of doing or refraining from something) – all these have real existence that refuse to disappear or change; and they govern us and push us to do certain things and refrain from some other. [We are also led to believe that] the intellect is able to perceive these realities just as it perceives other existing entities.

When some [theologians] realized that the Divine rules and laws were not different in purpose from the [manmade] rules and laws found in human societies, and that Allãh's actions also do not differ from our actions in that perspective, they concluded that the Divine laws and actions are like our actions – that is, they are based on real good and are characterized by goodness; in conclusion, they believed that the real good influences the Almighty's actions and governs His laws, more so because He knows the reality of issues and is aware of His servants' good.

This is entirely the result of leaning to one extreme of spectrum. From what we have discussed above, you know that laws and regulations are relative entities and not real: natural desires and needs of social life have compelled us to consider them and legislate them; they do not exist outside the realm of the society and they don't have any [intrinsic] value; they are only realities that exist in the realm of consideration and legislation that are used by humans to distinguish the actions that are beneficial from those that are harmful, the good from the evil, and the fortunate from the hardship.

The biases of the two theological groups during the early days of Islam led them to surprising extreme spectrums in this topic. The

mufawwiḍah,[20] on the one hand, believed that the benefit and harm or the goodness and evil were actual realities, eternal and everlasting, never changing or altering; and that these realities govern Allãh's commands and prohibitions, and have impact on His actions, both in the realm of creation as well as legislation, thus forbidding certain things and allowing some other. In conclusion, they removed the Almighty from His authority and negated His absolute power.

The *mujabbirah*,[21] on the other hand, denied all this, and insisted that the characteristic of 'good' in anything comes to exist only when Allãh commands it and the characteristic of 'evil' in anything comes to exist only when Allãh forbids it; and there is no reason or purpose in creation or legislation; and that the human being is not responsible in any way for his actions and has no power on them. This is in contrast to the view of the first group who believed that actions are purely creation of humans and that Allãh, Glory be to Him has no power at all over their actions. These two views, as you can see, are on two extremes; neither of the two is correct.

The truth is that all these are relative, conventional issues but they have a real basis: that the human (and other social animals like him) who seeks eternity and success in life, is imperfect and in need. He seeks to remove the imperfections and to fulfill the needs through social activities that emanate from consciousness and determination. This forces him to characterize his actions (and matters related to his actions in seeking to reach the success and avoid the pain) with external qualities such as good, evil, obligatory, prohibition, permissible, ownership, right, etc. He then applies on them the spectrum of cause and effect [that is observed in and derived from the real world], and as a result lays down general and specific laws. He also believes that these laws have kind of a reality like the actual entities and he does this so that he can achieve his social life.

This is how we come to believe that justice is good just as the rose is good and beautiful or that injustice is evil just as the dead body is abhorrent [as a food item]; and that the property belongs to us just as our own limbs belong to us; and that the certain act is obligatory as the

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[20] The *mufawwiḍah* refers to those who believed in 'delegation of absolute power to the humans' and this view was represented by the Mu‘tazilah school of theology. (*tr.*)

[21] The *mujabbirah* refers to those who believed in compulsion of Divine Will in human actions and this view was represented, among others, by the Ashã‘irah school of theology. (*tr.*)

effect of a perfect cause would be obligatory, etc. That is why you will see variance in the views among nations when the goal of life changes: some will consider an act acceptable while other will consider it reprehensible, some will abrogate laws that others legislate; some are oblivious of something that others value or they appreciate it while others shun it; sometimes in a same nation you will see that a prevailing tradition is abandoned, then readopted, and then shunned again based on where the pendulum of its social compass turns. This is observed in case of variance in the purposes in societies. But when it comes to the general goals in which no two persons differ (such as the need for a society, or positive value of justice or negative value of injustice, etc.), then there is no need for characterizing them as good, evil, obligatory, prohibited, etc., since there is no difference of opinion in them. All this is about the human dimension.

When the Almighty Allãh moulded His religion in the mould of general social norms, He considered (while describing the true teachings moulded in the social norms) what we take into consideration in our lives: He wants us to reflect about His teachings and whatever realities that we receive from Him just as we reflect about the norms of life. He has considered Himself as the Lord who is worshipped and has considered us as the servants who are nurtured. Also, He has reminded us that He has a religion that consists of fundamental beliefs and practical laws which entails rewards and punishments, and that in obeying Him lies our benefit, our eventual good and success of our endeavours based on the path that we follow in our social views. So there are true beliefs that we must believe in and be committed to, and there are duties and religious laws (in rituals, commercial and social matters) that we must adhere to and consider – all human societies are based on this reality.

This allows us to seek religious knowledge (beliefs or laws) just as we seek social knowledge (concepts or rules), and to base the religious knowledge on intellectual views and practical wisdom just as we base the social knowledge on them. So, [we come to believe that] Almighty Allãh does not choose for His servants the duties and obligations but that there is goodness in them that improves their state in this world and the hereafter, He does not command anything but what is good and beautiful, and He does not forbid anything but that which is evil and disgusting in which is corruption of the faith or the world; and He does not do anything but that the reason also approves it; and He does not avoid anything expect that the reason wants us to avoid.

However, Allãh has also reminded us of two things:

Firstly, the reality in its essence is greater than this and ever mightier [i.e. beyond the comprehension of our intellect]. Verily all this knowledge has been derived from social views and these in reality do not extend beyond social norms and do not reach the heights of heavens [like the Qur'ãn] as He says: *Surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'ãn so that you may understand. And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom;* (43:3-4). And He also said in the parable that He made: *He sends down water from the cloud, then the valleys flow* (with water) *according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allãh compare truth and falsehood...* (13:17). The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) said: "Verily, we the assembly of the prophets, have been commanded to speak with the people according to the level of their intelligence." And the like what has come in the Book [of Allãh] and *aḥãdīth*.

This does not mean that we should deny the concept of good and benefit, for example, in relation to the acts of the Almighty by proving its opposite that would end in believing in evilness in His actions or consider them purposeless like a child's actions – exalted is He from such thoughts. Similarly, denying a physical eye for intelligence does not mean attributing blindness to it or denying its ability to perceive, rather it means to separate it from deficiency.

Secondly, although the dimensions of good and advantages of benefits are used as justification for Divine actions and His commandments, and also used to explain the duties of servitude just as they are used to justify our rational rules and actions – nonetheless there is a difference between the two spheres. The dimensions of good and advantages of benefits lead our intentions and are influential in our choices; therefore, as rational beings, whenever we see an act of good quality with a benefit, without any impediment, we are compelled to do the action; and when we see a law with that quality, we don't hesitate in legislating it in our society.

These dimensions of good and welfare are nothing but meanings that we have derived from the system of the creation in the real world that is independent of our minds and separated from us; and therefore we decided to choose the good and beneficial actions so that we do not deviate from our path and so that we base our actions on the system prevailing in the universe and be on the path of reality. So,

these dimensions of good are concepts derived from the real world and our actions branching out from them are result of that and affected by them. This is same for our actions as well as the commandments legislated by us. [This is the human dimension of things.]

The action of the Almighty, on the other hand, is the actual world and the real existence from which we derive the dimensions of good and welfare, and they are based on it since we have derived them from it. So, how can Allãh's action be considered as having branched out from them and be affected by them? Similarly, His legislated commandments generate the reality and not that they follow the reality. Understand and ponder [the difference between the two spheres].

[Conclusion:] It is now clear that the dimensions of good and welfare, even though they exists in Allãh's actions and commandments as well as in our actions and laws (since we are intelligent beings), they are different: in relation to our actions and laws, those dimensions lead and affect them – or you may say, they are the compelling causes and reasons for them; but in relation to Allãh's actions and commandments, they are intrinsic and inseparable – or you may say, they have beneficial consequences. Since we are rational beings, we do whatever we do and we legislate whatever we legislate in order to seek goodness and success, and to acquire what we do not possess yet. However, the Almighty Allãh does whatever He does and commands whatever He commands because He is God. Even though the result of His action is same as the result of our action as far as goodness and welfare is concerned, we are accountable for our actions which are tied to their compelling causes and purposes; but He is not accountable [to anyone] for His actions and they are not tied to compelling causes for acquiring what He might not already possess, rather its goodness and purposes are already integral part of the actions. He is not questioned about what He does while they [the people] will be questioned. Think and ponder on this.

This can be seen in the Almighty's statement: *He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and they shall be questioned.* (21:23); *...All praise is due to Him in this* (life) *and the hereafter, and His is the judgement...* (28:70); *...And Allãh does what He pleases,* (14:27); *...And Allãh pronounces a judgement – there is no repeller of His decree...* (13:41)

If the action of the Almighty were similar to our rational actions then His judgement would have a repeller unless it is supported by a

praise-worthy benefit, and consequently He will not be able to do whatever He pleases, rather He will be compelled by that benefit.

[The fact that benefits are linked to the actions but they don't compel the Almighty in what He pleases to do, as it can also be seen in the following verses:] *Say: "Surely Allāh does not enjoin indecency ..."* (7:28); *O you who believe! Answer* (the call of) *Allāh and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life...* (8:24); and other similar verses that justify the Divine Commandments as dimensions of goodness and benefit.

QUR'ĀN [6:58]: ***Say: "If that which you desire to hasten were with me, the matter would have certainly been decided between you and me; and Allāh best knows the unjust."***

It means that if I was capable of doing what you want from me – and if the sign [i.e., punishment] comes down to a messenger, it shall be a decisive judgement between him and his people – the matter will be finally decided between me and you, and one of the two groups will be saved while the other will be punished and destroyed; and it will punish or destroy only you because you are the unjust, and the Divine punishment seizes only the unjust ones for their injustice. The Almighty is above the level of those who get confused in the judgement and who are unable to distinguish the unjust from the innocent, and thus end up punishing me instead.

The words: "and Allāh best knows the unjust" is kind of an indication and justification [for the decisive judgement]; in other words, it is surely you who will be punished because you are indeed the unjust ones and the Divine chastisement does not pass from the unjust to the others. This sentence reaffirms the message of a previous verse: *Say: "Have you considered if the chastisement of Allāh should overtake you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the unjust people?"* (6:47)

QUR'ĀN [6:59]: ***And with Him are the keys of the unseen – none knows them but He; and He knows what is in the land and the sea; and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor any thing green nor dry but*** **(it is all)** ***in a clear book*****:**

In explaining the connection of this verse to the previous one, some commentators say that since the previous verse ended with the words: *and Allāh best knows the unjust,* the Almighty Allāh added the statement that the treasures of the unseen or the keys of those treasures are with Him, none knows them but He and He knows every sublime and subtle matter.

This explanation does not clarify the exclusivity seen in the verse: "none knows them but He." It is better to link this verse with the theme of both previous verses (from *Say: "Surely I have manifest proof from my Lord…* to *…and Allãh best knows the unjust."*), since they together state that the sign and its inevitable outcome that they were asking from the Holy Prophet is, indeed, in full control of Allãh and no one else has any say in it; and that He knows the judgement and He is not confused in judging and punishing the unjust people since He is Aware of them; and that He exclusively knows the unseen, He knows the sublime as well as the subtle issues, and neither does He miss something nor forget. He further elaborates this by His Word: "And with Him are the keys of the unseen," thereby He clarifies His exclusive control on the knowledge of the unseen and that His knowledge encompasses everything. Then He completes His statement by the next three verses.

In this way, the context of the verses become like some other similar verses such as those in the story of Prophet Hūd and his people: *They said: "Have you come to us to turn us away from our gods; then bring us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful ones." He said: "The knowledge is only with Allãh, and I deliver to you the message with which I am sent…"* (46:22-23).

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen." *al-Mafãtiḥ* (اَلْمَفَاتِحُ = the keys) is plural of *maftaḥ* (مَفْتَح) in the meaning of a treasure; it could also be plural of *miftaḥ* (مِفْتَح) in the meaning of a key. This latter rendering is supported by the non-canonical recitation: "وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِيْحُ الْغَيْبِ" [*wa ‘indahu mafãtīḥu 'l-ghayb* = 'And with Him are the keys of the unseen']. The conclusions of both meanings are the same: whosoever has the keys of the treasures is aware of what is in them and has power to use them as he pleases just as the one who has the treasures themselves. However, other similar verses in the Qur’ãn support the first meaning since the Almighty has repeatedly talked about His treasures and the treasures of His mercy (and that is in seven instances) and in none of those cases has the word "مَفَاتِيْحُ = keys" occurred: *Or have they the treasures of your Lord with them?* (52:37); *Say: "I do not say to you, 'I have with me the treasures of Allãh…'"* (6:50); *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it…* (15:21); *And Allãh's are the treasures of the heavens and the earth…* (63:7); *Or is it that they have the treasures of the mercy of your Lord…?* (38:9). Therefore, the most appropriate meaning of "*mafãtīḥ*" is the treasures of the unseen.

In any case, the verse: "And with Him are the keys of the unseen" intends to state the exclusivity of the knowledge of the unseen to the Almighty either by saying that the treasures of the unseen are not known to anyone but Allãh or by saying that the keys of the unseen are not known by other than Allãh. So, no one else has access to those treasures since he does not have knowledge of their keys by which he can open them and use what is therein.

Although the beginning of the verse talks about the exclusivity of the knowledge of the unseen to Almighty, its latter part is not restricted to the knowledge of the unseen; rather it mentions that His knowledge encompasses everything no matter whether it is unseen or seen – after all not everything 'wet or dry' can be classified as unseen. This is clear enough. So, the verse in general clarifies the encompassing nature of Almighty's knowledge covering every unseen and seen item; even though it's beginning part talks about the unseen and its latter part talks about both the unseen and the seen.

From another perspective, the beginning of the verse deals with the unseen that is in the treasures of the unseen under the covers of secrecy and the locks of obscurity. The Almighty Allãh says: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure*, (15:21). Verily the things that are in 'the treasures of the unseen with Him' are not entities that can be comprehended by visible boundaries nor can they be quantified by known measures. Moreover, there is no doubt that they are 'unseen treasures' because they are beyond the determination of boundary and measure; and we cannot comprehend any information unless it is limited and measured. Furthermore, the things in the treasures of the unseen are – before descending to the level of visibility and declining to the stage of limit and measure; and, in short, before they come to exist in a measured form – without any boundary and measure even though they exist in a kind of [abstract] existence with the Almighty as mentioned in the verse.

The entities that exist in this visible world, bound by time, existed before their [material] existence with Allãh in His treasures in a kind of existence that is abstract and without measure even if we are unable to comprehend their form of existence; they existed within the keys of the unseen and its treasures before their [material] existence and their settling down at the stage of measure and time.

Perhaps there are other things preserved within these treasures that are not comparable to the things that are time-bound, and known and

familiar to us. This kind of the unseen that has not yet emerged on the scene of visibility is known as "*al-ghaybu 'l-muṭlaq* – the absolute unseen."

[Then there is "*al-ghaybu 'n-nisbi* – the relative unseen"]. The things that are wrapped in the cover of [physical] reality and descend to the level of limits and measures were [previously] in the treasures of the unseen, that is, in the category of the absolute unseen. However, these same entities – with their limits and measures – can still be comprehended by our eyes and intelligence: So, when we come to know about them, they are considered as 'seen'; and when we don't know about them, then they are considered as 'unseen'. When such things are unknown to us, it is appropriate to name them as "the relative unseen". For example, something that is inside a house, it is 'seen' in relation to those who are inside it; and it is 'unseen' in relation to those who are outside it. These descriptions are relative to those inside or outside the house. This relativity can also be seen in lights and colours: they are discernible by the vision and so are 'seen' in relation to the eyes but 'unseen' in relation to the ears. Similarly, the sounds that are discernible by the ears are 'seen' in relation to the ears but 'unseen' in relation to the eyes; and both are 'seen' in relation to a human being who has eyes and ears but 'unseen' to those who are blind and deaf.

What Allãh has mentioned in [the latter part of] the verse: "and He knows what is in the land and the sea; and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book", refers to the relative unseen since all these items are limited and measured that can be either comprehended by us or they could be hidden from us.

Then the verse says that these things are: "in a clear book": So, what is the status of these things that are in the clear book? Are these things in it in form of "the unseen" as well as "the seen" or only in form of "the unseen"? In other words, does the term "a clear book" refer to the world that consists of things that are never hidden from it (even though they be unseen to one another)? Or does it refer to a reality beyond this world in which these things have been recorded and preserved in it in a peculiar way that that they are unseen to the people of this world and so whatever is in the book is the absolute unseen?

In still other words, the things that exist in the limited existence that have been mentioned in this verse, do they <u>themselves</u> exist in the clear book just as the letters exist in the books that are with us? Or do they exist in form of their <u>names</u> in it just as the physical items exist in

meaning only when we write about them in the papers and the books, and the these words mirror the outside reality according to the absolute knowledge?

[The answer is the second of the two alternatives.] The Word of the Almighty: *No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own selves, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence…* (57:22), proves that the relationship of this book to the real events is like that of a book in which the program of the event is written down to the actual event. Closer to this are the following verses: *…and there does not lie concealed from your Lord the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heaven, nor anything less than that nor greater, but it is in a clear book,* (10:61); *…not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him, in the heavens or in the earth, and neither less than that nor greater, but it is in a clear book,* (34:3); *He said: "Then what is the state of the former generations?" He said: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a book: errs not my Lord, nor does He forget,"* (20:51-52); and other verses like it.

So: "a clear book", whatever may it be, is an entity different from the real things; it existed before the things and will remain after they perish just like the programs written for activities before their occurrence that remain recorded even after their occurrence.

Nonetheless, these entities and events in our world are variable and changing under the general law of movement whereas the verses state that there is no possibility of change or error in the contents of the Book. The Almighty says: *Allãh erases what He pleases and establishes* (likewise)*, and with Him is the basis of the Book,* (13:39). *In a guarded tablet,* (85:22). *…and with Us is a writing that preserves* (50:4). As you can see, the verses prove that this book, while containing all details of events and persons that are variable and changing, does not itself change nor does any variation and error reach it.

Thus, it becomes clear from this that "the Book" that is with the Almighty Allãh is separate from "the keys of the unseen" and the treasures of things. Allãh has described the keys and the treasures as being beyond measure and limit, and that the limits and measures come upon those things when they descend from the treasures of the unseen to this world that is the level of visibility. Also, He has described that this book contains the details of the perimeters of these things and events. So, from that perspective: "a clear book" would be different from "the treasures of the unseen" that are with Allãh and, in reality, it is creation of Allãh that precisely records the other creations

and preserves them after their descent from the treasures of the unseen and before they reach to the stage of [physical] materialization and also after their materialization and demise.

It also proves that the Almighty Allãh mentioned this book in this verse to describe the encompassing nature of His knowledge about the items and events that occur in the world no matter whether they were unseen for us or visible. As for "the absolute unseen" that no one but the Almighty can know, that has been described by Him as being in "His treasures"; and "the keys of the unseen" that He possesses, no one knows that except Him. However, some verses indicate that while it is possible for others to know what is in "the book", no one can know what is in "the treasures". For example: *In a book that is hidden; none do touch it save the purified ones,* (56:78-79).

So, there is nothing in the creation of Allãh but that it has its origin in "the treasures of the unseen" from which it is sustained; and there is nothing in what Allãh has created but that "the clear book" contains it before its [physical] existence, at the time of its existence, and after it perishes. However, "the clear book" is a degree lower in status than "the treasures". An intelligent observer can discern that "the clear book", even though it is simply a book, is not like the parchments and material papers; the material scrolls – whatever their size and their quality – are incapable of recording its own history let alone the perpetual history of other items.

From this discussion, two points become clear:

Firstly, the meaning of "the keys of unseen" is the Divine treasures that contains things before it branches out into mould of measures, and it contains the unseen status of everything as declared in the following verse: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure,* (15:21).

Secondly, the term "a clear book" refers to its relationship to all things like the relationship of a book that contains program of action to the action itself; therein is a kind of measure for things except that the Book exists before the things, with them and after them; and it contains the knowledge of the Almighty about things, a knowledge which has no room for error or omission. That is why it is sometimes surmised that "a clear book" refers to the real status of things and their physical materialization (which is immune to any change) since nothing is subject to change except after its existence; and that is the meaning of the idiom: "verily once an entity is created it does not change."

In short, this book contains everything that happens in the world of creation and invention – whatever happened in the past, whatever is happening now, and whatever will happen in the future without any doubt. However, it also contains things that are in the realm of limits and measures, and scrolls and books that allow change and alteration, and accept the process of erasing and reinstating as stated in Allãh's words: *Allãh erases what He pleases and establishes* (likewise), *and with Him is the basis of the Book;* [13:39]. The erasing and confirming – especially when it is contrasted with the basis of the Book – happens in the Book.[22]

Thus, the connection of the verse: "And with Him are the keys of the unseen" with the previous verses becomes clear. The conclusion of the two previous verses was that: 'what you are demanding of me for the decisive sign between us is not within my power, neither is the final judgement with me, instead it is in the knowledge and power of my Lord; if it were in my power, the matter would have been decisively settled between us, and the chastisement would have seized you, that it does not seize anyone but the unjust ones since Allãh knows that you are, indeed, the unjust ones; because He is the Knowledgeable Who is not ignorant of anything. Hence, there is no way to know and

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[22] The discussion on the Knowledge of Allãh in this verse may be summarized as follows:

First, we have "*Mafãtīḥu 'l-ghayb* – The Treasures of the Unseen or the Keys of the Unseen".

i.) This refers to the exclusive Knowledge of Allãh that is not accessible to anyone but Him.

ii.) Things in The Treasures of the Unseen have an abstract existence and are beyond the realm of limits and measures.

1. Since these things are beyond the realm of limits and measures, they are unseen in relation to the human beings.
2. *Ghayb* or unseen can be absolute (*muṭlaq*) or relative (*nisbī*).

Then at a slightly lower level, we have "*al-Kitãbu 'l-Mubīn* – The Clear Book".

i.) It contains the records of every person, thing and event from the time they existed in "The Treasures of the Unseen" to the time they emerge onto the physical realm and until they perish.

ii.) *al-Kitãbu 'l-Mubīn* contains what is known as "*Ummu 'l-Kitãb* – The Basis of the Book" that is also known as "*Lawḥ Maḥfūz* – The Guarded Tablet" and its contents are immune from any change or alteration.

iii.) It also contains "*Lawḥ Maḥw wa Ithbãt* – The Tablet of Erasure and Reaffirmation". This refers to the partial knowledge that Allãh gives to some angels and prophets which is changeable from their perspective.

iv.) While "The Treasures of the Unseen" is exclusively for Allãh, "The Clear Book" is accessible to chosen humans depending on the will and permission of Allãh. (*tr.*)

control what He intends and decides eventually because the keys of the unseen are with Him, none knows them but He; and He best knows the unjust ones and does not confuse them with others since He knows what is in the land and the sea, and knows every minute and grand thing, and everything is in the clear book.'

So, His Word: "and with Him are the keys of the unseen" refers to the absolute unseen to which none other than Him has access. The statement "no one knows them" is a circumstantial phrase and it proves that the keys of the unseen is from category of knowledge, however it is unlike the knowledge with which we are familiar. What naturally comes to our minds about the meaning of 'knowledge' refers to the images that have been derived from things after they come to exist and can be measured by their perimeters while "the keys of unseen" – as mentioned earlier – refers to knowledge of things [in their abstract form] that have not yet come to [physical] materialization and cannot be measured by their physical perimeters. In other words, the unlimited knowledge not influenced by anything.

And His Word: "and He knows what is in the land and the sea" show the expansive bounds of His knowledge that can be comprehended by others, both those items that are sometimes visible to some people as well as those that are invisible to some others. 'the land' has been mentioned first because it is more known to the people who are being addressed.

And His Word: "and there falls not a leaf but He knows it" specifically talks about leaves since it is difficult for a human being to know about them because of the excessively great quantity of the leaves on the trees and that makes it impossible for a person to distinguish them one from the other or to monitor them all together with the variance in their state ending in falling off and decaying.

Also, His Word: "nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book" is contextually connected to the term "a leaf". The expression "the darkness of the earth" refers to its dark depths that contain the grains, some of which grow while others perish. So, the meaning of the verse would be: 'no grain falls in the dark depths of the earth nor do anything green nor dry – whatever it may be – falls on it but Allãh knows it.' Based on this, the words "but (it is all) in a clear book" replaces the expression "but that He knows it"; and implication of its missing syntactical part is the following: "but that it is found written in the clear book."

The adjective of the book as "*al-mubīn* = clear" could have two meanings: If it is in the meaning of 'the clarifying book', then it is so because it clarifies for its reader everything in its true form without allowing any shadow of change, alteration, and concealment in its description. If it is in the meaning of 'the clear book', then it is so because the book is in essence of a written entity and the written entity is recited, and if it is clear without any concealment or ambiguity, then the Book is also the same.

QUR'ÃN [6:60]: ***And He it is Who takes your souls at night* (in sleep)*, and He knows what you acquire in the day…*:** *at-Tawaffã* (اَلتَوَفِّي) means to take something in full; and Allãh uses it in His statements in the meaning of taking the living soul the way it happens at time of death as He has said in the next verse: *…until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers* (i.e., angels) *cause him to die…* [6:61]

at-Tawaffã is also used in meaning of putting one to sleep just as it is used in meaning of causing death as seen in: *Allãh takes completely the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep…* [39:42], since both actions are similar in preventing the soul from its function on the body [partially in case of sleep and fully in case of death].

Similarly, the term 'a*l-ba'th*' is used in meaning of awaking someone from sleep as it is used in meaning of raising someone after death – both reconnect the soul's function on the body [partially in the former and fully in the latter].

And qualifying *at-tawaffã* with 'At night' and *al-ba'th* with "during the day" is based on what happens normally since people are asleep at night and awake during the day.

So, the word "*yatawaffãkum* (يَتَوَفَّكُمْ) – He takes your souls in full" proves that the soul is the complete essence of a human being which is reflected by the term 'I' and not like what we sometimes are made to think that the soul is one of the two parts of a human being and not its complete being or that it is a form or a quality accidental to him. A clearer verse in this matter is 32:10-11: *And they say: "What! When we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new creation?" Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say: "The angel of death who is given charge of you shall take you completely, then to your Lord you shall be brought back."* The astonishment of the unbelievers was based on their assumption that the essence of a human being is the body which perishes and decays

when its limbs disintegrate because of death and so it is 'lost' in the earth. Hence the answer is based on the view that a human's essence is the soul (the spirit), and when the angel of death takes the soul in full and secures it, nothing of it is lost.

And His Word: "and He knows what you acquire in the day" ["*Jaraḥtum* = you acquire" is from] *al-jarḥ* (اَلْجَرْح) that refers to the action done by the limb, and it means whatever a person acquires. The sentence means that Allãh knows what you have acquired [of deeds] in the day. It is better to consider "*wa* = and" and the sentence following it as a circumstantial phrase [and not a conjunction] of the earlier active verb. [So, the sentence should then start with: "while He knows what you acquire in the day."] Consequently, the sentence "then He raises you up therein" connects with "He it is Who takes your souls" without any interruption of an irrelevant statement in between since the two verses intend to explain the Divine design about human life in this world, at time of death and after it until he is returned to his Lord.

The main purpose of the two narrative sentences is to explain the meaning of the Almighty's Word: "And He it is Who takes your souls at night (in sleep) while He knows what you acquire in the day, then He raises you up therein – in the day – in order to fulfill an appointed term… and He sends keepers over you until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him completely, and they are not remiss. And then they are returned to Allãh, their True Master." This is the actual intent of this statement, and everything else is of secondary status. In short, the meaning is that He it is Who takes your souls at night (in sleep) while He knows what you acquire in the day, then He raises you again up in the day.

QUR'ÃN: ***then He raises you up therein that an appointed term may be fulfilled; then to Him is your return, then He will inform you of what you were doing*****:**

Awakening someone or making someone alert has been described by the word "*ba'th*" in order to contrast it with the word "*tawaffã*" used for putting someone to sleep. The purpose of *ba'th/*awakening is to complete the appointed term [of death], a time known to Allãh that cannot be missed by the worldly life of a human, as He has said: *…so when their term comes they shall not remain behind* (even) *an hour, nor shall they go before* (7:34).

Fulfillment of the appointed term is justification [for awakening] because the Almighty is Swift in reckoning, and had it not been for the previously determined term, He would have surely seized them for their deeds and evil consequences of their sins. He said: *And they did not become divided until after the knowledge had come to them out of rivalry among themselves; and had not a word gone forth from your Lord till an appointed time, certainly judgment would have been decided between them…* (42:14); the previous determined term can be seen in Allãh's Word in the story of Adam (*'a.s.*)'s descent: *"…and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time."* (7:24).

So, the meaning of the verse is that verily Allãh takes your souls at the night and although He knows what you have earned of evil deeds during the day, He does not hold back your souls (to finalize your death) rather He awakens you during the day after taking your souls so that your determined time [of death] be fulfilled; and with death and resurrection, you shall return to Him who will inform you of what you were doing.

QUR'ÃN [6:61]: *And He is the Supreme, above His servants…*: Some discussion on this sentence has passed in the commentary of the 17th verse of this chapter.

QUR'ÃN: *and He sends keepers over you; until when death comes to one of you, Our Messengers take him completely, and they are not remiss*:

Expressing the process of sending the keepers without any qualifying term and linking it to the time of death is not without indication that the role of these keepers is to protect the human from every calamity that he faces, every misery that follows him, and every tribulation that approaches him. After all, our life in this world is a life of interaction and competition in which everything is affected by rivalry with others from all directions because every part of this physical world is occupied with seeking perfection and increasing its share of existence. Moreover, nothing can increase in its share except that it diminishes an equal share from something else; so things are constantly in state of struggle and domination. Thus, part of this world is the human being whose physical constitution is the most delicate of existing constitutions and the most elegant of what we know; and his rivals in nature are numerous and his enemies in life are more dangerous. Therefore, Allãh has sent to him the angels as protectors

from a variety of calamities, impacts of disasters and misfortunes; and they constantly protect him from death until when his determined term [of death] comes, they leave him to his tribulations which will eventually cause his death as it has been mentioned in the *aḥãdīth*.

As for the verse where the Almighty says: *And most surely there are keepers over you, honourable recorders, they know what you do,* (82:10-12). The word 'keepers' refers to those angels who record the deeds. However, some exegetes have taken the verses under discussion as a commentary of this verse. Even though this verse does not totally discount that interpretation but the words: "until when death comes to one of you" support the earlier interpretation.

And His Word: "Our messengers take him completely, and they are not remiss**.**" Apparently, the meaning of 'remiss' is negligence and carelessness in implementing the Divine Command of causing death. Almighty Allãh, however, has declared the angels as those who do what they are commanded to do. And He has also said that every nation is tied to its [determined] term, and when their term comes, they will not remain behind even for a moment nor shall they die before it. The angels assigned to the task of taking the soul fully do not fall short of the necessary limit that are clearly delineated for them about the death of a given person at a given time in such-and-such conditions; and so they do not neglect, even for a moment, in taking the soul of a person whose death has been assigned to them and so they do not remiss.

Are these angels (assigned to cause death) the same as those who were mentioned earlier as keepers? The verse is silent on this matter although there is a remote indication about their being the same. However, these angels assigned to cause death (to whatever category they may belong) are indeed helpers of the Angel of Death as the Almighty has said: *Say: "The angel of death who is given charge of you shall take you completely, then to your Lord you shall be brought back."* (32:11).

Relating the action of taking the soul to these angels and then to the Angel of Death in the verse mentioned above and further more to the Almighty Allãh as in the verse: *Allãh takes completely the souls at the time of death…* (39:42) – is kind of a variety in the levels of reference. To Allãh ends everything and He is the Master Who is absolutely free in whatever He does; and the Angel of Death is connected [to the Almighty] in his function of taking the souls with his helpers who are functionaries of the task and his means and tools.

This is just like the line that is drawn by a pen behind which is a hand [which holds and moves it] and behind them both is the person who is writing.

QUR'ÃN [6:62]: ***Then are they sent back to Allãh, their Master, the True One…*****:** The verse refers to their return to the Almighty Allãh through resurrection after death. His description as: "their Master, the True One" indicates that He is the cause of all the functions mentioned earlier such as putting to sleep awakening, maintaining [their lives], causing death, and bringing about resurrection. It also has analysis of the concept of mastership and then proof of the right of mastership for Him: the master is one who owns the slave, and among his rights is to act about him as he wills. Since the Almighty has the real ownership and He is the One who brought about creation, management, and resurrection, then He is the True Master for Whom is established the meaning of mastership in a way that it can never be diminished ever.

QUR'ÃN: ***now surely His is the judgment and He is swiftest in taking*** **account:** Since the Almighty has explained the exclusivity of the treasures of the unseen to Himself, His knowledge about the clear book that contains everything, and His management of the affairs of His creatures from the time they came to exist until their return to Him, He now explains that the judgement belongs to Him and not to anyone else. As He has mentioned earlier: *the judgment is only Allãh's*, He now announces the conclusion of His statement by saying: "now surely His is the judgment" in order to draw their attention to what they have ignored.

That is His Word: "and He is swiftest in taking account" is another conclusion of the previous statement. He clarifies that He does not delay the reckoning of people's deeds from its appropriate time; rather He delays whenever He delays in order to fulfill the term that has been determined for it.

QUR'ÃN [6:63]: ***Say: "Who is it that delivers you from*** **(the dread of)** ***darkness of the land and the sea*** **(when)** ***you pray to Him*** **(openly)** ***humiliating yourselves, and secretly: 'If He delivers us from this, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones.'*** **"**

"Deliverance from the dread of darkness of the land and the sea" means to rescue from the difficulties that a person faces while travelling on the land or in the sea such as severe cold, rain, snow, storm, robbers, etc. This becomes more difficult for a person in darkness of the night or the clouds or the winds that cause swirling dust – all this

elevates a person's anxiety, hopelessness, and disorientation in finding ways to prevent it. That is why deliverance has been linked to [levels of] darkness.

The actual question was about who delivers the human from the difficulties that he faces in his travels in the land and the sea. Then the difficulties were linked to the land and the sea since they denote the space; and then the darkness was linked to the land and the sea because darkness has a definite impact in intensifying these difficulties. Finally, 'the difficulties' was replaced by 'the [levels of] darkness' and deliverance was linked to it: "delivers you from darkness of the land and the sea". Even though the Almighty Allãh delivers people from all distress and sadness as He has mentioned in the next verse, the term darkness has been specifically mentioned because hardship, discomfort and calamity are normally associated, in human's mind, with the journey on the land and in the sea.

"*at-Taḍarru'* (**(**اَلتَّضَرُّع" means openly expressing humiliation (i.e., humbleness and submission) as mentioned by ar-Rãghib [in his *al-Mufradãt*]; and therefore it has been contrasted with "*al-khufyah* (اَلخُفْيَة) = secretly" (i.e., privately and covertly). Openly expressing humiliation and secrecy in prayer refers to asking openly and secretly respectively. When someone faces a calamity, he begins praying secretly and in whispers; but when the calamity becomes severe, and signs of hopelessness and being cut off from the safety appear, then he does not care whether the people around him will see his humility and imploring gesture – he prays openly in as well as in whispers.

Mentioning 'openly' and 'secretly' is an indication that the Almighty delivers people from the calamities of the land and the sea, the severe ones as well as the lighter ones.

And in His Word: "If He delivers us from this, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones" indicates that when a person prays under such a situation to be relieved from it, he adds a pledge and a promise to His Lord that if Allãh relieves him from that situation he will surely be among the grateful ones and will abandon his previous ungrateful state.

The origin of this promise is based on the norm prevailing among the people in their interaction with one another. When one of us becomes helpless and surrounded with a trial from a severe calamity or poverty or an enemy, he will seek help from someone whom he considers to be capable to remove that problem and promises him something that will please him and strengthen his determination and manliness. And that could be in form of a good praise or wealth or

work or loyalty. This is based on the social interaction between us that all exist as interchange is done between two parties in which one gives something and takes something in return, since need is essential to a human in the sense that he does nothing but for sake of a benefit which will come in his way. Other creatures are also the same.

The Almighty Allãh's status, however, is nobler than any need or any loss, and He does not do anything but that its benefit is for His creatures. That is why the concept of monotheism has been placed in contrast to the human being's promise of gratitude and obedience in his natural prayer. [In other words,] whenever a disaster falls upon a human being, and he is cut off from elements of safety and the means of rescue disappear, he comes to realize that indeed Allãh, Glory be to Him, is the only entity capable of removing grief from him, and that He is the one who manages his affairs from the time He created him and He also manages every means [in the system of universe]. It is then that he finds himself as unjust and transgressor in relation to Allãh, Glory be to Him, not deserving the removal of grief and fulfillment of need by the Almighty because of the sins that he has accumulated and the consequences of evil deeds that he has earned. So, he promises his Lord to be grateful and obedient in order to improve his eligibility for acceptance of his prayer and deliverance from his calamity.

Thus, we see that when he is delivered from the calamity, he goes away forgetting the pledge he made with his Lord and the promise of being grateful, as Allãh has said at the conclusion of the next verse: *yet again you associate* (others) *with Him*.

QUR'ÃN [6:64]: ***Say: "Allãh delivers you from them and from every distress, yet again you associate*** **(others)** ***with Him*****:**

ar-Rãghib in his *al-Mufradãt* said: "*al-Karb* (الكَرْب) means severe distress as the Almighty says: *And We delivered him and his family from a mighty distress.* [37:76]. 'a*l-Kurbah* (الكُربَة)' is similar [in meaning]. Its origin is from [the idiom], '*karbu 'l-arḍ* (كَرْبُ الْأَرْض)' in the meaning of digging the earth inside out so distress also arouses the anxiety inside a person. It is said that it could be from [the idiom]: 'a*l-kirãb ʻala 'l-baqar* (اَلكِرَابْ عَلَى الْبَقَرْ) = ploughing is upon the cow.' And it is surely not from the saying, 'a*l-kilãb ʻala 'l-baqar* = [sending] the dogs upon the cattle' [an idiom that means creating chaos among people]. It is also possible that *al-karb* is from [the idiom], '*karabati 'sh-shams* (كَرَبَتِ الشَّمْس)' in the sense that the sun is about to set. The saying, '*inãu*

kurbãn (إِنَاءُ كُرْبَان) = the container is about to fill up' [*kurbãn*] means nearness like *qurbãn* (قُرْبَان). It could be from 'a*l-karab* (اَلْكَرَبْ)' and that means a strong knot in the rope of the bucket; it is said, '*Akrabtu 'd-dalw* (أَكْرَبْتُ الْدَلْوُ) = I put a knot on the bucket.' Sometimes '*al-gham* (اَلْغَمْ) = anxiety' is described as a knot on the heart."

The expression 'every distress' has been linked in this verse to: *the darkness of the land and the sea*, in order to encompass all humans since there is not a single human being who has not faced in his lifetime one or another kind of distress and anxiety; consequently, pleading and praying [for relief] is common among them whether they express it openly or secretly.

In short, the meaning of this verse is that when you are faced with difficulties in the darkness of the land and the sea, and are cut off from the normal means [of rescue] and are at the end of your wits, you come to realize, by reverting to your human nature, that the Almighty Allãh is your Lord besides Whom there is no lord and you become absolutely certain that worshipping other than Him is unjust and sinful. The proof of this is that you pray to Him at that time openly with humiliation as well as secretly, and you promise Him to be grateful to Him thereafter and not to disbelieve in Him if He delivers you. But after being delivered, you break your pledge that you made with Him and you continue on your previous disbelief.

These two verses are arguments against the polytheists and rebuke for them on breaking the oath and not fulfilling the pledge.

QUR'ÃN [6:65]: ***Say: "He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion,*** **(making you)** ***of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of others." See how repeatedly We display the signs that they may understand…*****:**

ar-Rãghib in his *al-Mufradãt* says: "The origin of *'al-ba'th* (اَلبَعْث) = to send' is raising up something and giving it a direction. It is said: '*ba'athtuhu fã'nba'atha* (بَعَثْتُهُ فَانْبَعَثَ) = I sent him and he was dispatched.' *al-Ba'th* differs in meaning depending on the difference in its point of reference. So '*ba'athtu 'l-ba'īr* (بَعَثْتُ الْبَعِيْر) = I sent the camel' means I caused it to rise and move; whereas the Almighty's Word: *and* (as to) *the dead, Allãh will* **(يَبْعَثُهُمْ)** *raise them* [6:36], that is, He will raise them from death and make them move to the judgement… So, *al-ba'th* is of two kinds: i.) Human, such as in causing the camel to rise and move and to send a person for a task. ii.) Divine, which is of

two types: a) to create items, things and entities from nothing; and this is exclusively for the Almighty Creator and no one can do that. b) To raise the dead back to life, and this power has been bestowed to some of His chosen ones such as Jesus (*'a.s.*) and others like him."

In short, in the term *al-ba'th*, there is kind of an indication of raising and lifting up someone or something. And with consideration, it is used for giving direction to and sending someone since giving direction towards a task and sending someone towards a nation normally only happens after calmness and immobility. Therefore, '*ba'th* = sending' of a chastisement has within itself an indication that the nature of chastisement is that it be directed towards the people and come upon them, and this necessary consequence is only prevented by a barrier such as belief and obedience to Allãh. This discussion has a concluding part that will come later on.

[On the term "*yalbisakum* (يَلْبِسَكُم) = throw you into confusion", aṭ-Ṭabrisī] says in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn:* "[The expression:] 'I made the matter confused for them,' means when I did not clarify it and mixed some issues with the other… *al-Labs/al-lubs* (اللبس) means confusing the issue and confusing the statement… *ash-Shiya'* (اَلشِّيَعُ) means the sects; each group is a sect by itself; *shī'ah* of so-and-so means his followers. *at-Tashayyu'* means following [someone] on basis of faith and love."

Based on this, the verse "or that He should throw you into confusion (making you) of different parties," means that to mix one with another and confuse them while they were groups and sects.

So, His Word: "Say: 'He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet,'" apparently means to prove Allãh's ability for sending on them a chastisement from above or beneath them. To prove the capability to do something does not necessarily mean actually doing it; proving His capability of sending chastisement is sufficient to frighten and warn them. The context, however, indicates that the verse does not only want to prove the capability; rather it shows that they deserve this kind of chastisement; and that the chastisement itself demands that it be send upon them if they don't agree on faith in Allãh and His revelation as we saw in the implication of the meaning of *al-ba'th*. This understanding is supported by the latter verse: *For every prophecy is a term and you will come to know* (it). This is a clear threat.

The Almighty Allãh clearly threatens this nation with chastisement in other similar verses in the Qur'ãn such as: *And every nation had a*

messenger, so when their messenger came, the matter was decided between them with justice… till: *And they ask you: "Is that true?" Say: "Aye! By my Lord! It is most surely the truth, and you will not escape;"* (10:47-53). *Surely this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord so worship Me. And they broke their religion* (into sects) *between them…* (21:92-97). *Then set your face upright for religion in natural devotion* (to truth)*… and be not of the polytheists, of those who divided their religion and became sects…* (30:30-45).

It has been said that the chastisement: "from above them" refers to the forms of chastisement like the cry, the stone, the flood and the wind as it was done to the people of ʿÃd, Thamūd, Shuʿ*a*yb and Lūṭ; and: "from beneath their feet" refers to sinking into the ground as it was done to Qãrūn.

It has also been said that the chastisement: "from above them" refers to the chastisement that will come to them from their elders and their tyrant rulers; and: "from beneath their feet" refers to the chastisement that will come to them from the lowly people and their evil slaves.

It has been further said that the chastisement "from above them" and "from beneath them" refers to the deadly weapons and firearms that humans have lately invented such as the fighter-planes and tanks that discharge explosive and destructive bombs, etc., and underwater submarines that drown the ships and boats. So, the warning has occurred in this verse while He very well knows what will happen in His Kingdom.

The truth is that the expression used in the verse can be applied to all these explanations mentioned above, and some similar chastisements that have been sent down after the revelation of this verse can be applied to the verse. The common cause for these events that has facilitated its path is the differences of opinion and divisions that appeared in the *ummah* and went contrary to the call of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.)* who used to call them to unity of the word of truth: *This indeed is my straight path, so follow it, and do not follow* [other] *ways, for they will separate you from His way…* [6:154].

QUR'ÃN: *or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of others…*: Apparently, it refers to the groupings that emerged after the Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) and that led to appearance of various schools of thought that had acquired the flavour of partisanship and the fervour of *jãhiliyyah;* and this was followed by wars and battles in which each

group allowed violation of all that was sacrosanct to the other and dismiss them, in their views, from the sanctity of the faith and the territory of Islam.

Therefore, the words: "or that He should throw you into confusion, (making you) of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of others" refer to one chastisement, not two chastisements even though it is possible, in a way, to consider the act of throwing them into confusion and the act of making them taste the infightings as separate chastisements. Division between the *ummah* has another evil consequence and that is creeping weakness, depleted power, and divided resources. However, if the expression, "make some of you taste…" is taken as an indication of separate chastisement then it would be considered as a qualifying phrase to the general statement ("throw you into confusion"). However, placing a qualifying statement alongside a general statement is not appropriate except by extra emphasis in the speech. [Such an emphasis does not exist here] and the conjecture 'And' support what we have said.

In conclusion, the verse means: Tell them, O the Messenger of Allãh, and warn them about the consequence of their refusal to join together under the banner of Islam and to heed to the true call; and that for their attitude, there is an evil consequence within the power of the Almighty Allãh by which He can seize them by sending upon them a chastisement from which there will be no escape or refuge, and that is the chastisement from above them or from beneath their feet, or He can make some of them taste the fighting of others by which they will end up becoming groups and sects, differing from one another in dispute with one another and at war against one another – thus they will taste the fighting of one another. Then Allãh ends the statement by addressing the Holy Prophet: *See how repeatedly We display the signs that they may understand.* Its meaning is clear.

QUR'ÃN [6:66]: *And your people call it a lie and it is the very truth. Say: "I am not placed in charge of you*." The people of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) are the Quraysh or the tribe of Muḍar or the Arabs in general. The purport of some verses in other places is that the Holy Prophet's people are the Arabs: *And if We had revealed it to any of the non-Arabs so that he should have recited it to them, they would not have believed therein. Thus have We caused it to enter into the hearts of the guilty. They will not believe in it until they see the painful punishment. And it shall come to them all of a sudden, while they shall not perceive,* (26:198-202). *And We did not send any messenger but*

with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly… (14:4).

Anyway, Allah's statement: "And your people call it a lie and it is the very truth," serves as a justification for materialization of the news that was contained in the previous warning. As if it was said: O the *ummah,* get together in the monotheism of your Lord and get united in following the true word; otherwise there is no protector who can protect you from the chastisement that will come from above or from beneath or from the division and groupings that is followed by armed fight of one against the other. Then the Holy Prophet was addressed and it was said to him: Verily your people rejected that and so they deserve the evil chastisement or severe pain that they will taste.

It is clear, firstly, from this that the pronoun in "call it a lie" refers to the chastisement as al-Ãlūsī has attributed this view to the majority of commentators. Sometimes it is said that it refers to the "repeatedly displaying of the signs" or to the Qur'ãn. However, this is far-fetched. It is not far-fetched to link the pronoun to the news that is contained in the previous verse.

Secondly, based on the context, this news: "And your people call it a lie and it is the very truth" is the first news that prepares the ground for the threat of chastisement. It is as if someone says: It is necessary for your people to unite on believing in Allãh and His signs and to be vigilant and watchful against getting into rejection of Allãh and His signs; and against creating differences among themselves so that the chastisement of Allãh, Glory be to Him, does not come upon them. Then it is said: Your people – among your entire *ummah* and those who are of your contemporary or from the people who came after you – quickly moved to violate what they were obliged to confirm and they belied the news [of chastisement] so they were discredited because of this and they shall soon know. Moreover, that those who rejected the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) or the Qur'ãn or this chastisement are not only the Arabs who are his people, rather he was rejected also by the Jews and other communities of his era as well as those who came after him. Their rejection and their division altogether had a positive impact in the warning given about the chastisement. So, specifically relating the rejection to his people even though others were part of this rejection proves what we have said earlier.

An analytical discussion on the psyche of the Islamic society supports the conclusion that we have derived from the verse: The decaying psyche of the present Muslim *ummah,* the lack in its strength

and its dissolving unity can be traced upon analysis to the differences and disputes of the early days after the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*)'s demise; and that can be linked to the events of the early days of the *hijrah* and [even] before it to what the Prophet faced from his own tribe and how they boldly defied him by rejecting and ridiculing his thoughts.

Even though these people gathered around the banner of Islam and sought the protection under its shadow after the faith prevailed [in the society] and its lamp was illuminated, the noble religious society was not free from the ill of hypocrisy as many verses of the Qur'ãn have confirmed it. The number of the hypocrites was not insignificant and it was impossible for the society to be safe from their evil impact on its psyche, and it could not absorb them fully in order to transform them into good members of the society during the Holy Prophet's lifetime, and their embers did not take long to be reignited and increase its inflammation as it continues even now. After all, everything returns back to its origin and there are all kinds of game in the belly of the wild ass.

Thirdly, Allãh's statement: "Say: 'I am not placed in charge of you'," is an indirect statement which says to ignore them and say to them: 'I am not responsible for your actions nor am I liable [for them] so that I should prevent you from rejecting [the message] out of concern for you. The only duty that I have as a Messenger is to warn you about a severe punishment which is hidden from you.' This also clarifies that His statement: *For every prophecy is a term, and you will come to know* (it), is part of the Holy Prophet's speech to his people as the words "you will come to know (it)" supports this interpretation. The people are addressed by the Holy Prophet's speech and not by the Almighty Allãh.

QUR'ÃN [6:67]: *For every prophecy is a term and you will come to know* (it): This is a clear threat and warning of an event that will imminently occur. The correctness of referring the warning to the polytheists [of Mecca] is obvious by the previous discussion since the roots of divisions and problems that the Muslim *ummah* is to face can be traced back to them. After all, people are one community; its latter generations are affected by what happens to the earlier ones, the defects that appear in the latter ones can be connected to the first ones, no matter whether they realize that or not or they see that or not. The Almighty Allãh says: *Nay, they are in doubt, the sport. Therefore keep*

waiting for the day when the heaven shall bring a clear drought that shall overtake men; this is a painful punishment. Our Lord! Remove from us the punishment; surely we are believers. How shall they be reminded, and there came to them an Apostle making clear (the truth)*, yet they turned their backs on him and said: "One taught* (by others)*, a madman." Surely We will remove the punishment a little,* (but) *you will surely return* (to evil), (44:9-15).

Reflect on the verses how Allãh seized the latter communities because of the crimes of their predecessors. Are not they in the same category as verses quoted earlier from the chapters: "*Yūnus*" [10:47-56], "*al-Anbiyã'*" [21:92-97], "*ar-Rūm*" [30:30-45]? There are many verses in the Noble Qur'ãn that talk about the evil consequences and ill fortunes that will overtake the *ummah* followed by the Divine Favour [of forgiveness and blessings]. The worst negligence committed by our commentators [of the Qur'ãn] is in matter of reflection on these blessed verses in spite of their numerousness, importance and strong connection to the status and good fortune of the *ummah* in this world and the hereafter.

QUR'ÃN [6:68]: *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse, and if the Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people…*:

ar-Rãghib, in his *al-Mufradãt*, says: "*al-Khawḍ* (اَلخَوْض) means to enter the water and pass through it; then it was borrowed for other actions. It has mostly occurred in the Qur'ãn in meaning of entering into something blameworthy." It means entering into vain talks and engaging deeply into it; for example, quoting the true Qur'ãnic verses, and then ridiculing them and being insolent about them.

"Withdraw from them" means not to participate with them in what they are engaged in by standing up and moving away from them or something like it that will demonstrate non-participation. The phrase: "until they enter into some other discourse" is a conditional clause which proves that the prohibition of being in their company and sitting with them is not general, covering even a right purpose; the prohibition is only for sitting with them while they are deeply engrossed in the Divine verses [for the purpose of ridiculing them].

It is clear, therefore, that there is kind of an ellipsis. So in the statement: "and when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs, withdraw from them until they enter into some other

discourse," there is an implied sentence which is omitted because it is not required. And so the meaning – and Allãh knows better – is as follows: 'And when you see the people who engage in and ridicule Allãh's verses continue in their engagement of and ridiculing the Divine verses, withdraw from them and do not sit in their circle until they engage in other discourse. So, when they enter into other discourse, then nothing prevents you from sitting with them.' Although the verse came in the context of the argument against the polytheists, but the criterion mentioned therein is of a general nature and so it covers others equally.

At the end of the verse, Allãh says: "…then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people." Engaging negatively in Allãh's verses is injustice; and the verse prohibits from participating with the unjust people in their injustice. In a similar verse, the Almighty says: *…surely then you would be like them…* (4:140)

So, it becomes clear that the verse does not command to withdraw from those who engage negatively in Almighty Allãh's verses; rather it commands to withdraw from them as long as they are engaged negatively in Divine verses.

The pronoun: "*hu* – in غَيْرُهُ" refers to the discourse in which they engage negatively in Divine verses since it is a negative engagement that has been forbidden.

QUR'ÃN: ***and if the Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people*****:** The letter "مَا = *mã* in (*wa imma yunsiyannaka*) وَإِمَّا يُنْسِيَنَّكَ " is superfluous and denotes a kind of emphasis or reduction; and the letter "ن – *nūn*" [in يُنْسِيَنَّكَ] is for emphasis and its origin form was " وَإِنْ يُنْسِكَ(*wa-in yunsīka*)". The statement consists of emphasis and intensified pronunciation for prohibition; in other words, 'even if you forgot Our prohibition because the Satan made you to forget it and then you remembered it, so do not be neglectful of it and don't lose time in withdrawing from them since those who fear displeasing Allãh should in no way participate with those who negatively engage in the Divine verses, ridiculing them.'

Although the verse addresses the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*), the intended addressee is the *ummah.* In the discussion on infallibility of the Prophets (*'a.s.*) we had negated occurrence of such kind of forgetfulness, the forgetfulness of the Divine Law [by the prophets would

amount to] neglecting it and that in turn could be used as an argument against them and a justification for the opponents.

This is supported by the statement after the verse addressing the pious among the *ummah: And nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), *but* (theirs) *is only to remind, haply they may guard.*

More clearer proof for this is in Allãh's statement in "*Sūratu 'n-Nisã'*": *And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; surely Allãh will gather together the hypocrites and the unbelievers all in Hell;* (4:140). The reference in this Medinan verse about what: *He has revealed to you in the Book* is to the verse of "*Sūratu 'l-An'ãm*" under discussion and not any other verse. And the command revealed previously was addressed to the believers; and so it follows that although the verse: *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses…* is addressed to the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*), it actually is intended for someone else – as the saying goes: "Although I address you but I would like the neighbour to hear me."

QUR'ÃN [6:69]: *And nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), *but* (theirs) *is only to remind, haply they may guard*:

It means that the sin of those who engage negatively [in Divine verses] will not be carried by anyone but themselves and it will not affect others unless the others also act like them and participate with them in the sin or be pleased with their sin. Indeed, no one will be held accountable for an act except the doer. But we remind them haply they may guard themselves against evil. [Why?] Because a person may attend their gathering and even though it is possible for him not to indulge in their negative engagement [with Divine verses] nor is he pleased in his heart with their act and it is also possible for him that he does not consider his participation in their gathering as a way of support for their sin or their statement but just the fact of witnessing a transgression and seeing a sin desensitizes his heart about the sinful act and minimizes the mistakes in his views – and when the seriousness of a sin is minimized, it is likely that he will fall for it because the hearts are inclined to sins. Thus, it is incumbent upon a righteous person (who possesses piety and exercises precaution in prohibited things by Allãh) to refrain from mixing with those who ridicule and show inso-

lence towards Allãh just as it is incumbent upon those who are in company of the ones who engage negatively in Allãh's verses to do the same so that he is not desensitized to insolence towards Allãh and His verses, and ends up committing that sin and putting himself on the verge of perdition. Whoever hovers around the fire is likely to fall into it.

From this explanation, it becomes clear, first of all, that it is only the pious who have been separated from the accountability of those who engage negatively [in Divine verses] – even though others [in principle] do not share the punishment of the sinners' deeds – in order to emphasize the point that one who participates in their gatherings and sits with them is not immune from sharing in the punishment of their sins. So, the implied missing part in the statement would be as follows: Those who don't engage negatively will not be responsible in any way as long as they safeguard themselves from such engagement with them; but yet We prohibit them from sitting with them so that they may continue their refrain from such engagement or so that they may enhance their piety and sensitivity regarding prohibitions given by Allãh, Glory be to Him.

Secondly, the meaning of "*taqwã* (تَقْوَى)" in the verse: "and nothing of the reckoning of their (deeds) shall be upon those who guard (against evil)" is the general *taqwã*, that is, refraining and staying away from whatever displeases Allãh, the Sublime. And in the verse: "haply they may guard" the *taqwã* refers to the specific sin of engaging negatively in the verses of Allãh. It could also be that the *taqwã* in the first verse refers to the basic level of *taqwã* but in the second it refers to its perfect form; or the first one could be the general *taqwã* while the second could be its expanded form which is applied to a given situation such as the act of engaging negatively in Allãh's verses. Yet there is another explanation also: the first one could be the *taqwã* addressed to the believers and the second one could be the *taqwã* addressed to those who are engaging negatively; and in this case the implied statement would be: 'give an advice to those who engage negatively so that they may refrain from such engagement.'

Thirdly, the term "*dhikrã* (ذِكْرَى) = to remind" is an unconditional object for an implied verb. The implied [verb] is: 'but We counsel them by that reminder' or 'counsel them of the reminder'. Or "*dhikrã*" could be a predicate of an omitted subject and so the implied subject would be: 'but this command is a reminder'. Or it could be a subject for an omitted predicate and so the implied meaning would be: 'it is

your duty to counsel them'. The second of these variations seems closer to the mind.

QUR'ÃN [6:70]: L*eave those who have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has deceived, and remind* (them) *thereby lest a soul should be fettered with what it has earned; it shall not have besides Allãh any guardian nor an intercessor, and if it should seek to give every compensation, it shall not be accepted from it; these are they who shall be fettered with what they earned; they shall have a drink of boiling water and a painful chastisement because they disbelieved*:

ar-Rãghib says: *"al-Baṣl* (اَلْبَصْل) means contracting something or separating it. Because of its meaning of contraction, it has been borrowed for 'scowling face;' and so it is said: 'He is *bãṣil*, fearless' and *'mubtaṣilu 'l-wajh*, courageous face'. And because of its meaning of separating, '*baṣl*' is used to describe something forbidden or mortgaged such as in Allãh Word: "and remind (them) thereby lest a soul should be fettered with what it has earned;" which means it will be deprived from the reward. The difference between *al-ḥarãm* and *al-baṣl* is that the former is general in the sense something that is forbidden by law and by force whereas the latter refers to something forbidden by force only such as in His Word: "these are they who shall be fettered with what they earned;" which means they are deprived of the reward.

[aṭ-Ṭabarsī] in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn* says: "It is said: '*Abṣaltuhu bi jarīratihi* = I surrendered him [to you].' *al-Mustabṣil* means the one who surrenders himself since he knows that he has no way to escape. al-Akhfash said: 'The word *tublaṣa* [in the verse under discussion] means you will be punished. And it is said that *tublaṣa* means to be mortgaged. These meanings are close [in their import].'"

"And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport…" Adhering to their evil desires has been described [in this verse] as a play and a sport with their religion. This sentence presupposes a true faith for them, a faith towards which their pure nature calls them; and it was incumbent upon them to adhere to it seriously and to protect it from confusion and change, but they took it as a play and a sport, altering it from one state to another and changing it from one form to another according to the dictates of their evil desires.

The above sentence was followed by the words: "and whom this world's life has deceived," because of the close connection between the two, since settling down comfortably in earnestly acquiring and

indulging in the enjoyments of this materialistic life compels one to abandon the true faith and to consider it as a play and a sport.

Then Allãh said: "and remind (them) thereby"**,** i.e., counsel them "by the Qur'ãn" so that a person would not be fettered to the transgressions that he has committed, or so that a person is not surrendered for accountability and punishment on account of what he had committed. Hence, such a person has no master and no intercessor other than Allãh; and no weight [of gold] nor any kind of redemption will be accepted on that day, because that day is the day of compensation for the deeds, not the day of buying and selling. These are the ones who shall be fettered to what they had earned or will be prevented from Allãh's reward or will be surrendered for their punishment; they shall have a drink of boiling water and a painful chastisement because of their disbelief.

QUR'ÃN [6:71]: ***Say: "Shall we call on that besides Allãh, which does not benefit us nor harm us…*:** This is an argument against the polytheists in form of a rhetorical question; and only two of the qualities of their idols – inability to benefit and inability to harm – have been mentioned here because taking someone or something as god is based on one of the two reasons: hope [of something] or fear [of something]; and if the idols neither benefit nor harm us, then there is no impetus to pray to them, worship them or seeking closeness to them.

QUR'ÃN: ***"and shall we be returned back on our heels after Allãh has guided us, like him whom the Shayãṭīn have made to fall down perplexed in the earth? He has companions who call him to the right way,*** **(saying)*: 'Come to us.'"***

"*al-Istihwã'* (اَلْإِستِهْوَاء)" means fulfilling the desire and falling down; and "*ar-rad 'ala 'l-a'qãb* (اَلرَدْ عَلَى اَلْأَعْقَاب) = turning back on heels" means straying from the right path and abandoning true guidance. True guidance indeed ends in finding the straight path and treading upon it whereas 'turning back on heels' means not treading the path and turning back, and that is indeed misguidance. That is why the verse says: "and shall we be returned back on our heels after Allãh has guided us," qualifying the 'return' occurring after the Divine guidance.

It is indeed strange to see that some people have taken the argument of this verse: "and shall we be returned back on our heels after Allãh has guided us," and other similar verses such as the statement of Shu'ayb (*'a.s.*), as quoted by the Almighty Allãh: *The chiefs, those who were proud from among his people, said: "We will most certainly turn you out, O Shu'ayb, and* (also) *those who believe*

with you, from our town, or you shall come back to our faith." He said: What! Though we dislike (it)*? Indeed we shall have forged a lie against Allãh if we go back to your religion after Allãh had delivered us from it, and it befits us not that we should go back to it, except if Allãh our Lord please…*" (7:88-89).

They have argued thereby that the Prophets, peace be upon them, before being raised as Prophets and donning the mantle of prophethood, were on the path of *kufr* (disbelief) because of the words 'returning on the heels after Allãh has guided us,' and 'back to your religion after Allãh had delivered us from it' that they have taken as proofs that the Prophets were followers of *kufr* before being delivered from it.

This is a false argument. These words and expressions are used by the prophets in the language of the religious society whose members were idol-worshippers until Allãh guided them through their prophets. We don't mean to say that since majority of the people were polytheists before therefore it is valid to relate their previous disbelief to *all* members of the society including their prophets – Allãh's true statement cannot be such. Rather we mean that it is okay to say about a religious society – that includes the prophet and his community – which its members were delivered from *shirk* after being guided by the Almighty Allãh; without Him, there will be nothing but misguidance. As for the community, they were on polytheism in the period before they were guided to the true faith [through the prophets]; as for their prophets, they were always guided by Allãh and they, without the [constant] Divine guidance, would have faced nothing but misguidance. [The emphasis here is that] if it had not been for the Divine guidance, they would have faced nothing for themselves except misguidance since other so-called gods don't possess any loss or benefit for themselves. So, it is appropriate to say about them that there is no basis for them to return on the heels after Allãh has guided them or to return to polytheism after Allãh has delivered them from it.

In short, the statement [that they were polytheists before being believers] is applicable to them in the true sense even though some members of their society – such as their Prophets – were not disbelievers before the prophethood. Faith and guidance was with them in all situations *from* the Almighty Allãh – if they had been left by themselves [without Allãh's guidance], there would be nothing but misguidance as you already know. And you also know from various past discussions on the infallibility of the Prophets that the Noble Qur’ãn has clearly stated the purity of their persons from the smallest

of minor sins, let alone the major ones, especially the most serious of the major ones and that is *shirk*, ascribing a partner to Almighty Allãh.

And His Word: "like him whom the Shayãṭīn have made to fall down perplexed in the earth?" This is the portrayal of a perplexed person who lacks insight in his affairs and strong determination in seeking his felicity; and so he abandons the best and the upright path towards his goal which has been treaded by the rightly-guided companions of him. So, now he is confused between the Satan (and his agents) who invite him towards misguidance and perdition on the one hand and his rightly-guided companions – who have reached to their stations and attained the goal – who invites him towards the guidance saying: 'come to us.' He doesn't know what to do; he is between those who are pulling him down and those who are pulling him up!

QUR'ÃN [71]: ***Say: "Surely the Guidance of Allãh, which is the* (true) *guidance, and we are commanded to that we should submit to the Lord of the worlds.*:** If the choice is between the call of Allãh, Glory be to Him, which is according to the human nature, the *fiṭrah*, which is known as 'Allãh's guidance,' and between the call of the Satan (and his agents) which is based on evil desires and taking the faith as a play and an idle sport, then Allãh's guidance is, indeed, the only true guidance.

What accompanies the call of *fitrah* is Allãh's guidance; and there is no doubt in it because the true guidance is also proclaimed by the creation and invention that is from Allãh only. And we don't wish for any religion or belief except to seek the truth, and there is no truth but with Allãh and so His guidance is never devoid of truth. The fact that Allãh's guidance is the true guidance which should be adopted and not the satanic call is obvious because all our affairs reside with Allãh: our origin, our final destination as well as our needs of this world and the Hereafter.

And His Word: "and we are commanded that we should submit to the Lord of the worlds." [aṭ-Ṭabrisī] says in *Majmaʿu 'l-bayãn:* "The Arabs say: '*Amartuka li taf'al*' or '*Amartuka an taf'al*' or '*Amartuka bi'an taf'al'* [all meaning: 'I commanded you so that you may do it']. So, '*Amartuka bi'an taf'al*' has the proposition letter *'bã'* and the meaning would be: the command is applied to this act. In the format '*Amartuka an taf'al*' the proposition letter has been deleted. Whereas '*Amartuka li taf'al'* simply means: I commanded you for the act. az-

Zajjãj [referring to the words in the verse] says: 'It means: "We are commanded so that we should submit."'"

The sentence: "and we are commanded that we should submit" is an explicative appositive for: "surely the Guidance of Allãh, which is the (true) guidance", the command to submit is the application of Allãh's guidance. So, the meaning is: 'Allãh has commanded us to submit to Him' and the active subject of this verbal clause [i.e., 'Allãh'] has been kept vague in order to facilitate the clause 'to the Lord of the worlds' thus replacing the pronoun 'Him'. This explains the reason for the command: We have been commanded by the revelation to submit to Allãh because He is the Lord of the worlds altogether – there is no other god or gods for all the worlds or for some of them (as believed by the dualists).

'Submitting' in this verse apparently means submitting all affairs to the Almighty and not just uttering the two testimonies of faith; and that is the apparent means of His Word: *Surely the religion with Allãh is Islam* (3:19), as mentioned earlier.

QUR'ÃN [6:72]: ***And that you should keep up prayer and be careful of*** **(your duty to)** ***Him; and He it is to Whom you shall be gathered:*** This displays skilful coherence of the speech wherein the command [in the previous verse] has been taken in the sense of the statement and follows the same course. As if it is said: 'We have been told to submit to the Lord of the worlds and to keep up prayer and be careful of Him.' The verse has summarized the detailed religious duties in the term: "and be careful of (your duty to) Him." It has, however, specifically singled out, from all the duties, the daily prayers by name in order to emphasize its importance and honour its status; the importance that the Noble Qur'ãn has given to the daily prayer is no doubt obvious.

His, the Sublime's Word: "and He it is to Whom you shall be gathered." It is obligatory to submit to Him and to be careful of Him because the return of humans is to Him and reckoning and compensation is in His hands.

QUR'ÃN [6:73]: ***And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth with truth; and on the day He says: "Be", it is. His word is the truth and His is the Kingdom on the day when the trumpet shall be blown; the Knower of the unseen and the seen; and He is the Wise, the Aware*****:**

A number of names and qualities of Almighty have been mentioned here in order to clarify and justify what has been said previously. The

Almighty has mentioned that the true guidance belongs to Him; and that was further explained by submitting to Him, praying to Him and being careful of Him – that is indeed the entirety of the faith. Then He explained the reason why His guidance is the true guidance that cannot be ignored: all will be gathered to Him. He further gives the full explanation by His Word: "And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth…" These names and qualities are such that even if one of those were missing, the statement would not have been complete.

And His Word: "And He it is Who has created the heavens and the earth with truth", means that the entire creation is His work and that He had done it on basis of truth, not falsehood; and if the work is not based on falsehood, then it must have a purpose and there is a purpose to creation – to return to the Almighty [for reckoning and compensation]. This is one of the two arguments that the Almighty has mentioned in these words: *And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve…* (38:27). So, creating the heavens and the earth on basis of truth leads to the point that the creation will be gathered to Him [on resurrection].

And His Word: "and on the day He says: 'Be', it is." The context shows that the objective of the statement 'Be' is the Day of Resurrection even though it could be applied to every existing creation as the Almighty says: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, "Be," and it is,* (36:82). So, 'the day' is an adverb denoting time connected to 'Be'; and the meaning is: The day He says to the Day of Resurrection, 'Be' and it will be. It is also said that the objective of the statement 'Be' is the thing [as in example of 36:82], then it comes to exist. However, what we have mentioned is closer to the context.

And His Word: "His word is the truth" This is a justification for the preceding sentence that is why it appears as a separate sentence. "*al-Ḥaqq* – the truth", means something that exists in the real sense of existence, an external existence [as opposed to a mental existence in the mind only]. If Allãh's word is His action and creation (as stated in "and on the day He says, 'Be', it is"), so His word is the truth itself, and therefore none can oppose or change His Word: *He said: "The truth then* (it) *is and the truth do I speak,"* (38:84).

And His Word: "and His is the Kingdom on the day when the trumpet shall be blown;" This refers to the Day of Resurrection as He (*s.w.t.*) has said: (Of) *the day when they shall come forth…* (40:16). The meaning of the phrase: "His is the Kingdom on the day of trumpet" – even though the kingdom belongs to Him at all times – is its manifest-

ation when all means of support will disappear and all relationships and family ties will be cut off. Some segment of this theme has occurred in previous discussions and more discussions on it and on the meaning of the trumpet will come in its appropriate place, Allãh willing.

His, the Sublime's Word: "the Knower of the unseen and the seen; and He is the Wise, the Aware." Its meaning has occurred in the past; and it is a name of the Almighty that incorporates the process of reckoning and compensation. Similarly, the two names: the Wise, the Aware. So, Allãh, by His knowledge of the seen and the unseen, knows everything inside out; neither is its outward dimension hidden from Him because of its appearance nor is its interior because of its being inside. By His Wisdom, He perfectly manages the process of creation, and separates the necessary compensation as required so that He does not do injustice or deal blindly [with the people]. By His awareness, neither a small entity escapes His attention because of its minuteness or a great entity because of its greatness.

These names and attributes perfectly clarify that all the people will be gathered to Him; and that His guidance is the true guidance; and that the religion of *fiṭrah* that He has ordered us to follow is the true faith. So, the Almighty has created the universe for a specific purpose: it should return to Him; and when He wants it to return, He shall say to it 'Be', and it will come to existence because His Word is the truth that no one can oppose. It will be clearly manifest on that day that the kingdom belongs to Him and nothing has any power on anything. On that day, on basis of wisdom and awareness, He will separate those who obeyed Him from those who disobeyed because He knows every unseen and seen reality.

The conclusions of the above discussion are as follows:

Firstly, the meaning of "with truth" is that the creation of the heavens and the earth was with truth in the sense that 'truth' is its quality. The discussion on the meaning that Allãh's actions and statements are with truth just passed above. So, the opinion expressed by some that the verse means 'He created the heavens and the world with a true word' is far-fetched. ["Truth" in this verse is the attribute of the Allãh's action, i.e., creation; and not of His word.]

Secondly, the apparent meaning of: "and on the day He says, 'Be', it is", based on the context, refers to the command for bringing about the Day of Resurrection even though the command 'Be' is commonly used for creation of all things.

Thirdly, the purpose of specifically mentioning the blowing of the trumpet (out of the various signs of resurrection) in: "on the day when the trumpet shall be blown", is to emphasize the general nature of the gathering that ties in with the preceding verse: *and He it is to Whom you shall be gathered.* "*al-Ḥashr* – the gathering" refers to the resurrection of the people and marshalling them all together in a state of confusion. The trumpet is normally blown to gather the soldiers of a barrack for an important matter; similarly, the trumpet will be blown (i.e., the second trumpet on the Day of Resurrection) in order to gather the people at the place of assembly for judgement. *So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and you shall not be rewarded aught but which you did,* (36:54).

The term '*day*' has occurred twice in this verse but in different meanings: the first instance is in form of an adverb denoting general time such as the time for the Resurrection Day, as we would say: 'the day when Allãh created the movement' and 'the moment when Allãh created the days and the nights'. Here 'the day' is part of the movement, depending on it, and 'the moment' is the day and the night. The second instance is in the meaning of the Day of Resurrection itself.

TRADITIONS

1. as-Suyūṭī, in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr,* under the verse: *He separates the truth…* [6:57] says that ad-Dãrquṭnī, in *al-Ifrãd,* and Ibn Marduwayh have quoted from Ubay ibn Ka'b who said: "The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) recited it for a person as يَقُصُّ – *yaquṣṣu*: *He separates the truth and He is the best of separators* (between truth and falsehood)." [That is, as it has occurred in the common recitation of the Qur'ãn.]

2. He also quoted under the verse: *And with Him are the keys of the unseen – none knows them but He…* [6:59], that Aḥmad, al-Bukhãrī, Ḥashīsh ibn Aṣram in *al-Istiqãmah*; Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) said: "The keys of the unseen are five, none knows them but Allãh: no one knows what will happen tomorrow except Allãh; no one knows when the wombs will let go their burden except Allãh; no one knows when the rain will come except Allãh; no soul knows in what land will it die except Allãh; and no one knows when the Hour [of Doom] will come except the Almighty Allãh." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: If this narration is authentic, it should not be considered as contrary to the general import of the verse since numbers are not to be taken literally. All the examples mentioned in the narration can be summarized in one category of future events; and there are other applications of the unseen other than these five as proven in the verse itself.

3. as-Suyūṭī also says that al-Khaṭīb has quoted in his *at-Tãrīkh* a narration from Ibn ʻUmar, through a weak chain [of narrators] that the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) said: "There is not a grain on the face of the earth or a fruit on the trees but on it is written: 'In the name of Allãh, the Compassionate, the Merciful; this is the sustenance of so-and-so.' And that is the meaning of the Sublime's Word: *and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, or anything green or dry but* (it is all) *in a clear book.*" (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: Besides the weakness in its chain of narrators, the content of this narration does not properly fit the verse.

4. al-ʻAyyãshī in his *at-Tafsīr* narrates from Abu 'r-Rabīʻ ash-Shãmī who said: "I asked Abū ʻAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*ʻa.s.*) about the Word of Allãh: *and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, or anything green or dry but* (it is all) *in a clear book.*" He [*ʻa.s.*] said: "The leaf refers to the miscarriage, the grain refers to a child, the darkness of the earth refers to the wombs, and green refers to the child who will be born while dry refers to the miscarried [foetus]. And all of that is in a clear book."

The author says: This has also been narrated by al-Kulaynī and aṣ-Ṣadūq from Abu 'r-Rabīʻ, and by al-Qummī without a *sanad.* This narration does not fit with the apparent meaning of the verse.[23] There is a similar narration quoted by al-ʻAyyãshī from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʻīd from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ʻa.s.*).

5. aṭ-Ṭabrisī in *Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn* [under verse 6:65] says: "The verse *Say: 'He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you…*' means the tyrant rulers; and: '*…or from beneath your feet…*' means the evil slaves and one who has no goodness in him. This has been narrated from Abu ʻAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*ʻa.s.*)."

Then he said: "As for the verse: *…or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties…*, it has been said

[23] Nonetheless, this narration can easily qualify as the esoteric interpretation of the verse. (*tr.*)

that it means to put one against the other by placing enmity and prejudice among them; and this has been narrated from Abū ʿAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*ʿa.s.*)." Then he said: "As for statement: *...and make some of you taste the fighting of others*, it has been said that it refers to bad neighbours; and that has been narrated from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (*ʿa.s.*) as well."

6. al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr* [under the verse 6:65] says: "The verse: *...He should send on you a chastisement from above you...*, means the tyrant ruler; and: *...or from beneath your feet...*, means the low class and those in whom there is no goodness; and: *...or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties...*, refers to tribal prejudice; and: *...and make some of you taste the fighting of others*, refers to bad neighbours."

7. al-Qummī says: "In the narration of Abu 'l-Jārūd who quotes Abū Jaʿfar [al-Bãqir] (*ʿa.s.*) saying about the His Word: *'He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you*, means the smoke and sky from the heaven; and: *or from beneath your feet*, means the sinking of the ground; and: *or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties;* refers to difference in religion and mutual accusation among the Muslims; and: *and make some of you taste the fighting of others*, refers to some of you killing the others. All this is related to the people of the *qiblah* (the Muslim *ummah*) as Allãh says: *See how repeatedly We display the signs that they may understand.*'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

8. Also, in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* ʿAbdu 'r-Razzãq, ʿAbd ibn Ḥamīd, al-Bukhãrī, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasã'ī, Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammãd in *al-Fitan*, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, Ibn Ḥibbãn, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmã' wa 'ṣ-ṣifãt* narrated from Jãbir ibn ʿAbdillãh who said: "When this verse: *He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you*, was revealed, the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) said: 'I take refuge by Thy Honour!' *...or from beneath your feet,* he (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) said: 'I take refuge by Thy Honour!' *...or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of others*. He (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) said: 'This is lighter' or 'easier.'" (as-Suyūtī)

The author says: Also, similar to this (*ḥadīth*) has been quoted by Ibn Marduwayh from Jãbir.

9. as-Suyūṭī says that Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ḥassanah, Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammãd in *al-Fitan*, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim and Ibn Marduwayh have quoted from Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqãṣ a statement from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) about this verse: *Say: "He has the power that He should send on*

you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet," The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.‘a.w.a.*) said: "This is surely going to happen, and its interpretation has yet to come." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: There are many narrations from the Sunnī sources as well as from the Shī‘ī sources from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*‘a.s.*) which say that the punishment that Allãh has threatened from above them and from beneath their feet refers to the cry from the heaven and the sinking of the land that will happen to this *ummah.* As for throwing them into confusion, dividing them in groups and making them taste the atrocities of one another, these have already occurred.

10. as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* and Ibn Kathīr in his *at-Tafsīr* have narrated many reports showing that when the verse: *Say: "He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion,* (making you) *of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of others." See how repeatedly We display the signs that they may understand*; was revealed, the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.‘a.w.a.*) sought refuge with his Lord and prayed that He would not punish his *ummah* with a variety of punishments. His Lord responded positively in case of some punishments but not in case of other punishments: throwing them into confusion and thereby dividing them into groups, and making them taste the fighting of one another.

The author says: These narrations, in spite of their numbers and a mixture of strong and weak chains of narrators, are all feeble because they go against the apparent meaning of the verse. Indeed the two verses following the verse under discussion: *And your people call it a lie and it is the very truth. Say: "I am not placed in charge of you. For every prophecy is a term, and you will come to know* (it),*"* [6:66-67] are explicit warning about occurrence [of the chastisement]; moreover, these verses from *sūrah* of "*al-An‘ãm*" were revealed all together and Allãh, the Sublime, commanded His Prophet (*ṣ.a.‘a.w.a.*) to convey them to his *ummah*. If there had been any change in form of lifting the chastisement, then it was imperative to see that in His revelation, that cannot be affected by falsehood from any direction; and we don't see any trace of such a change, instead what we see is contrary to that as seen in the discussion above that many verses from the Holy Qur’ãn support these verses in their message such as the ones in the *sūrah*s of: "*Yūnus*", "*Rūm*", etc. Furthermore, these narrations contradict many other narrations from both the Sunnī and Shī‘ī sources demonstrating the occurrence of the chastisement on the *ummah* in future.

In addition to this, these narrations [quoted by as-Suyūṭī and Ibn Kathīr], in spite of their numbers and agreement that the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) prayed after revelation of verse: *Say: "He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement…"*, they are not united in the number of [items in the prayer]: some say that there were three while others say that there were four; nor are they united in the number of cases that Allãh accepted for him: some say one while others say two. They also disagree in the category of the items: some say that it was a plea about protection from stones raining from the sky, sinking into the earth, being divided into groups and fighting against one another while some say that it was for protection against drowning into the sea, drought and infighting among the *ummah*. Still, others say it was for protection against wide-spread drought, being overpowered by a foreign enemy and infighting among the Muslims. In some it says that the subjects of the prayer was that the ummah would not unite on misguidance and that a foreign enemy would not overpower them and that He would not destroy them by drought and protect them from division and infighting. Still other narrations say that the plea was for not being overpowered by others and that He would not destroy them by drowning and would not make them fight one another. In some narrations, it says that the plea was that Allãh would not destroy the *ummah* by means of chastisement used to destroy the previous nations; He would not impose others over them, would not make them divided and not make them fight one another. Some narrations say that he [*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*] pleaded that the *ummah* be protected from the chastisement from their above and from beneath their feet and from being divided and from infighting.

Finally, many of these narrations say that the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) prayed while he was in Ḥurrah of Banū Muʿãwiyah, a village from the villages of the Anṣãr, in the northern part of Medina. This means that the prayer was made after the *hijrah* while we know that *sūrah* of "*al-Anʿãm*" is a chapter that was revealed in Mecca, all together, before the *hijrah*! And there are many other differences in the narrations which are obvious for anyone who looks into them.

If it is necessary for me to take something from these narrations, then I will choose what was narrated by ʿAbdu 'r-Razzãq, ʿAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Ibn Marduwayh from Shadãd ibn Aws who has narrated a *marfuʿ ḥadīth* from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) who said: "Verily Allãh contracted the earth for me until I was able to see its easts as well as its wests, and [I came to realize

that] my *ummah* will reach to the areas that had been contracted for me; and that I was gifted with two treasures: 'red' and 'white'. I prayed to my Lord not to destroy my people by a general drought, or confuse them in sects, or make them taste the violence of one another. He [*s.w.t.*] said: 'O Muḥammad, once I decree something, it cannot be changed and I, hereby, grant you, for your *ummah*, that I will not destroy them by a general drought and I will not impose on them an enemy besides them to destroy them until they destroy and kill one another and take one another as prisoners.' The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) said: 'I fear for my *ummah* the misguiding leaders; when the sword is unleashed in my *ummah* [against one another], it will not be relieved from them until the Day of Resurrection.'"

This narration and its content are free from most of the objections raised above, and there is no indication that this prayer was after the revelation of the verse [under discussion]. It should, however, be taken in the meaning of the total destruction and widespread drought that would obliterate the *ummah;* otherwise, the droughts, disasters and bloodsheds that the *ummah* has faced in wars imposed by the Mongols, the Crusaders and [the Christians] in Spain and other places cannot be denied. It should also be said that this prayer and plea was in the early days of Islam before this *sūrah* was revealed. The Holy Prophet (*s.a.ʻa.w.a.*), after all, is well-aware of the status of his Lord and is on a high status himself to ask his Lord to change His decree after having received these verses and being ordered to convey them and to warn his *ummah* about it.

After lengthy discussion, the verses of the Noble Qur'ãn prove that it is engulfed by the truth; and the truth is that this religion of Islam is to stay till the Day of Resurrection and that the *ummah* will not be totally annihilated, and the means by which Allãh has tested the past nations will be used to test this *ummah* also in a completely identical manner without any difference and failure. Numerous narrations from the Holy Prophet and the Imãms of *Ahlul 'l-Bayt* (*ʻa.s.*), that are authentic and clear, confirm this truth.

11. as-Suyūṭī says: "In his *an-Nãsikh,* an-Naḥḥãs has quoted Ibn ʻAbbãs regarding the verse: *Say: 'I am not placed in charge of you;'* [6:66], he said: 'This verse has abrogated the verse: *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them,* [9:5].'"

The author says: From our previous discussion, it is clear that the statement *Say: "I am not placed in charge of you;"* is an introductory context for the warning which occurs in the next verse: *For every*

prophecy is a term, and you will come to know (it), [6:67]. A statement such as this cannot be abrogated [since it is not a command, but a prediction].

12. In the discussion on verse: *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs…* [6:68], al-Qummī quotes ʻAbdu 'l-Aʻlã' ibn Aʻyan through his chain of narrators that the Messenger of Allãh (*s.a.ʻa.w.a.*) said: "Whoever believes in Allãh and the Last Day, he should not sit in a gathering wherein an Imãm is being insulted or a Muslim is being slandered because verily Allãh says in His Book that: *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse, and if the Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people.*" (*at-Tafsīr*)

13. as-Suyūṭī quotes from ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Jarīr and Abū Nuʻaym in his *al-Ḥilyah* from Abū Jaʻfar [al-Bãqir] who said: "Do not sit with the argumentative people since they are the ones who negatively engage in Allãh's verses." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)*

14. as-Suyūṭī quotes from ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd and Ibn Mundhir from Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī [al-Bãqir] who said: "Verily the dissenters are those who negatively engage in Allãh's verses." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

15. al-ʻAyyãshī quotes from Rubʻī ibn ʻAbdillãh from someone whom he mentioned from Abū Jaʻfar [al-Bãqir] (*ʻa.s.*) about the Word of Allãh: *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs…* He [*ʻa.s.*] said: "[*Engaging in vain discourses about Our signs*, means] to dispute about Allãh and to argue about the Qur'ãn." And about: *withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse*, he [*ʻa.s.*] said: "The story-teller." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: As you can see, these narrations are broader than the content of the verse, and it's actually applying the criterion on similar examples.

16. aṭ-Ṭabrisī quotes Abū Jaʻfar [al-Bãqir] (*ʻa.s.*) who said: "When the verse: *then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people*, was sent down, the Muslims said: 'What should we do? Whenever the polytheists would ridicule the Qur'ãn, we used to get up and leave them; we stopped entering the Sacred Mosque and doing the circumambulation of the Sacred House.' So, Allãh revealed: *And nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), *but* (theirs) *is only to remind, haply they may guard;* [6:69], commanding them to counsel them as much as they could." (*Majmaʻu 'l-bayãn*)

The author says: As you can see, this narration has taken the word 'reminding' as a general passive particle and has related the pronouns in 'haply they may guard' to the polytheists thus implying the following meaning: 'but remind them the reminder, haply they may guard themselves.' A problem still exists since the *sūrah* was revealed altogether while the narration talks of a specific incident regarding this verse.

17. as-Suyūṭī narrates from Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and Abu 'sh-Shaykh from Ibn Jarīj who said that the polytheists used to sit with the Holy Prophet (*s.a.ʻa.w.a.*) wishing to listen from him. But once they had heard [the verses], they used to ridicule them. Therefore, the verse: *And when you see those who engage in vain discourses about Our signs, withdraw from them…*, was revealed. He said: "Whenever they used to ridicule, he would stand up and go away. Some of them realized this and said: 'Don't ridicule since he goes away.' This is reflected in the words: *haply they may guard* against negatively engaging in the Qur'ãnic verses and he would consequently stand up. Then the verse: *And nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil),' was revealed so that you would sit with them but you shouldn't sit. Then this verse was abrogated in Medina by the verse: *And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse. Surely then you would be like them* [4:140]. This verse abrogated the verse 6:69." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

The author says: If the verse: *and indeed He has revealed to you…* [4:140] which is identical in meaning to: *when you see those who engage in vain discourses*, abrogates the verse: *and nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), then the verse: *and nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), abrogates the verse: *when you see those who engage in vain discourses*. This is not compatible with the fact that this *sūrah* was revealed altogether.

Moreover, the meanings of the three verses [6:68; 6:69; 4:140] do not have any conflict so that the second could abrogate the first and then be abrogated by the third one. This is obvious.

18. Similar to this narration is another one which as-Suyūṭī quotes from an-Naḥḥãs in his *an-Nãsikh* from Ibn ʻAbbãs about verse: *And nothing of the reckoning of their* (deeds) *shall be upon those who guard* (against evil), who said: "This is a Meccan verse that was

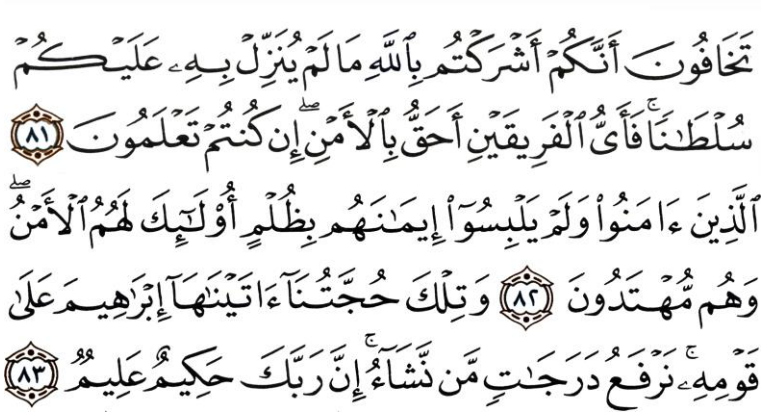
abrogated in Medina by the verse: *And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allãh's communications disbelieved in and…* [4:140], (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*)

19. Sayyid Hãshim, under the verse: *His word is the truth and His is the Kingdom…*, quotes from Ibn Bãbawayh, through his chain of narrators, from Thaʻlabah ibn Maymūn from his companions from Abū ʻAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*ʻa.s.*) about the Word of Allãh: *the Knower of the unseen and the seen*, that he [*ʻa.s.*] said: "The Knower of 'the unseen' means of what is not yet existing, and 'the seen' means what is already existing." (*Tafsīru 'l-burhãn*)

The author says: This *ḥadīth* mentions the most known examples of the unseen and the seen in our world. In the previous discussion under the verse and in other places, it was mentioned that there are other examples of the unseen also.

* * * * *

۞ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ ءَازَرَ أَتَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا ءَالِهَةً ۖ إِنِّىٓ
أَرَىٰكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُرِىٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ
مَلَكُوتَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾
فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ ٱلَّيْلُ رَءَا كَوْكَبًا ۖ قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّى ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَ قَالَ
لَآ أُحِبُّ ٱلْءَافِلِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَءَا ٱلْقَمَرَ بَازِغًا قَالَ هَٰذَا
رَبِّى ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِى رَبِّى لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ
ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَءَا ٱلشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَٰذَا رَبِّى هَٰذَآ
أَكْبَرُ ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنِّى بَرِىٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾
إِنِّى وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِىَ لِلَّذِى فَطَرَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ
حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَحَآجَّهُۥ قَوْمُهُۥ ۚ قَالَ
أَتُحَٰٓجُّوٓنِّى فِى ٱللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَىٰنِ ۚ وَلَآ أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِۦٓ ۚ
إِلَّآ أَن يَشَآءَ رَبِّى شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَسِعَ رَبِّى كُلَّ شَىْءٍ عِلْمًا ۖ أَفَلَا
تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَآ أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا



And (remember) *when Ibrãhīm said to his sire, Azar: "Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error;"* (74). *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure* (75). *So when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star; he said: "Is this my Lord?" So when it set, he said: "I do not love the setting ones* (76). *Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: "Is this my Lord?" So when it set, he said: "If my Lord had not guided me, I should certainly be of the erring people,"* (77). *Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: "Is this my Lord? This is the greatest." So when it set, he said:"O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up* (with Allãh), (78)." *Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists* (79). *And his people disputed with him He said: "Do you dispute with me respecting Allãh? And He has guided me indeed; and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases; My Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; will you not then mind?* (80). *And how should I fear what you have set up* (with Him), *while you do not fear that you have set up with Allãh that for which He has not sent down to you any authority; which then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know?* (81). *Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright,"* (82). *And this was Our argument which we*

gave to Ibrãhīm against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing, (83).

* * * * *

COMMENTARY

These are ten verses in which the Almighty Allãh mentions the arguments that He had granted to the great Prophet Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) against polytheists thereby guiding him towards His Unity and pure concept of Divinity. Then He mentions the guidance that He provided to His prophets by purifying their nature from polytheism; among them He has named Nūḥ (*'a.s.*), who was before Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*), and sixteen prophets from the descendants of Nūḥ (*'a.s.*).

In reality, these verses are elucidation for a perfect example of living by the religion of nature (*fitrah*) and standing up for spreading the belief of monotheism and purifying the concept of divinity from polytheism and idolatry; that is the faith for which Ibrãhīm stood up and defended against idolatry when the whole world was seemingly engulfed by it and had forgotten the path of monotheism that Nuḥ (*'a.s.*) and the prophets from among his descendants had introduced to the human society. These verses – consisting of arguments and guidance towards the religion of nature (*fitrah*) – are like further reflection upon the arguments that passed earlier in this chapter that Almighty Allãh has taught to His Prophet (*s.a.'a.w.a.*) by His Word like "Say this" and "Say that". The word "Say" has occurred in this noble chapter forty times, about twenty times before these verses. It seems as if it said: in what you say to your people and present to them the arguments of monotheism and rejection of polytheism that We have taught you, remember what Ibrãhīm said to his father and his people of what We had given to him of Our arguments against his people based on what We showed him of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Ibrãhīm used to argue against them on basis of Divine blessings of knowledge, wisdom and demonstration of His Kingdom based on conviction and not on fabricated idea founded on imagination and concoction that is rejected by the voice of the pure nature.

If we ponder on the tone of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) in what Allãh, the Sublime has quoted of him in these verses with minds that are free of the details seen in the narrations and history with their obvious contradictions, and that are untainted by disputes put forth by the

commentators of the Qur'ãn who have contaminated their exegeses with the narrations, historical tales, stores from the Old Testament and other materials that become popular from Isrã'īliyãt. In short, such a reflection will clearly show that Ibrãhīm's tone in these verses was a speech emanating from a pure mind, void of the variety of ideas and imaginations, put in form of words by his pure nature which was in its initial stages of intellection and reflection and had subtlety of consciousness and feelings.

An unbiased observer who reflects on these verses will not doubt that Ibrãhīm's statement with his people was closest to the speech of a primitive and simple human being who lived in an underground tunnel or a cave in the mountain; who did not associate with people except for obtaining the necessary food and clothing; who had not surveyed the sky with its stars and celestial bodies or the rising of the sun and the moon; who had not stayed in a highly populated society with its vast cities, divergence of ideas, differences of goals and objectives, and varieties of its religions and sects. Then by chance he happened to enter the organized societies and observed unusual issues unfamiliar to him such as the celestial bodies, vast land mass, groups of people busy in their jobs struggling to obtain their goals and objectives without being distracted by anyone whether moving or standing, worker or employer, servant or master, superior or subordinate, leader or follower, busy in work or devotedly worshiping Allãh.

Whatever he saw bewildered him, whatever he observed overwhelmed him, and so he started asking his associates about everything that he saw, and whatever drew his attention that surprised him just like a child who observes the vastness of the sky with its shinning sun and moon, as well as the necklace of bright stars, and asks his mother: 'What are these things that I see that fills me with delight and amazement? Who has decorated them in the sky? Who has illuminated them? Who has made them?'

We, of course, don't doubt that the initial questions that this person asks about the reality of things that he observes and that surprise him are closer to his state of loneliness and isolation from the society; and that he is asking about the purposes and goals of these entities that cannot be answered through the senses only. A human being seeks answers regarding the unknown based on whatever initial information that he possesses; he does not discover the answer regarding the unknown but by means of the information that he already possesses. This is an obvious matter seen in simple-minded people such as

children and Bedouins when they come face to face with things that they had not known or seen before, so they start inquiring about what they know briefly and asking about its reality, its origins and its goals.

The person in consideration here is the person of pure nature who had engaged in only simple means of survival and therefore his mind was not occupied the way the mind of a city dwelling person would be occupied who is surrounded by a variety and countless natural activities which does not relieve him even for a moment. The thoughts and mind of the person in consideration are untainted, and now he is surrounded with the celestial and earthly incidents whose natural causes are unknown to him. His mind, therefore, is more receptive in reaching [directly] to the cause that is superior to the natural causes – a conclusion to which a city dwelling person reaches after completing the survey of the natural causes for the incidents, that also if he has the time! Consequently, it was faster for the mind of the person in consideration to reach to the supreme cause when he saw the city-dwellers busy in adhering and worshipping Him.

A proof for what we have mentioned above can be found in what we observe: adherence to religious rituals and discussion about metaphysics is more prevalent and more important in Asia than compared to Europe; and in villages and small towns it has more prestige than compared to bigger cities, and on same basis between the bigger cities and mega cities. This is so because the more the society expands, its basic needs increase and its activities multiply manifolds which leaves no opportunity for a person to easily get in touch with his spirituality and focus on the issue of the origin and the end.

In short, when we survey the story of Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) mentioned in these verses and similar ones in verses of chapters "Maryam", al-"Anbiyã'", "aṣ-Ṣãffãt", etc. We find his situation in his arguments with his sire and his people to be similar to the situation of a simple person whom we find asking about the idols and disputing with the people about them, and talking about the stars, the moon and the sun – asking questions like one who was not familiar with what the people were doing, especially when it came to his own people who were worshipping idols. He says to his sire and his people: *When he said to his father and his people: "What are these images to whose worship you cleave?"* (21:52); *When he said to his father and his people: "What do you worship?" They said: "We worship idols, so we shall be their votaries." He said: "Do they hear you when you call? Or do they*

profit you or cause you harm?" They said: "Nay, we found our fathers doing so." (26:70-74)

This is the statement of a person who had neither seen an idol nor observed an idolater worshipping an idol even though he was in the cradle of idolatry, Babylon of Chaldea, and lived among them for a time. So was Ibrãhīm's expression, 'What are these images?', a way of belittling the idols and an indication that he does not accord them the same place accorded to them by the people, and that he does not see any sacredness and virtue in them? It seems as if he does not know them the way Pharaoh talked to Moses (*'a.s.*) when he said: *"And what is the Lord of the worlds?"* (26:23); or the way the polytheists of Meccan talked to the Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) as the Almighty Allãh has quoted: *And when those who disbelieve see you, they do not take you but for one to be scoffed at: "Is this he who speaks of your gods?" And they are deniers at the mention of the Beneficent God,* (21:36).

It seems far-fetched to think in that way since Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) used nothing but the best of manners in his speech to his father Ãzar. Even when his father shunned him and threatened him with stoning, Ibrãhīm [*'a.s.*] said to him: *"Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me.*" (19:47)

It is far-fetched to believe that in the first discussion that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) had with his father, he would belittle the lofty status of his gods in abusing and insulting tone, and thus provoke his prejudice and idolatrous tendencies. Moreover, Allãh, the Glorified, had forbidden in this religion, the pure religion of Ibrãhīm, to abuse the gods of the polytheists, so that it does not provoke them to respond to the Muslims in kind. The Almighty says: *And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allãh, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allãḥ out of ignorance,* (6:108).

After having argued with his father, Ãzar, and his people about the idols, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) focuses his attention on their lords: the star, the sun and the moon. When he saw the star, he said: "This is my Lord;" then he saw the moon rising, he said: "This is my Lord;" but then he saw the sun rising, he said: "This is my Lord, this is bigger." These expressions also reflect the situation of a person who had neither seen the star nor the moon and the sun. His clearest form of argument is when he said about the sun: "This is my Lord, this is bigger." This seems to be the statement of someone who did not know anything about the sun or the moon or the star other than the fact that he saw

the people humbling themselves towards them, worshipping them and giving offerings for them as the history of the Babylonians shows.

It is just like a situation when you observe a blurred human shape and do not know whether it is a man or a woman, you would ask: " مَنْ هَـذَا Who is this?" You will then be told: "This is so-and-so woman or so-and-so man." And when you observe a blurred shape and you cannot discern whether it is a human or an animal or a tree, you would ask: "مَا هَذَا What is that?" You will then be told: "This is Zayd or this is so-and-so woman or it is shape of such-and-such item." In these situations, you being ignorant of the reality will ask about the identity of the shape whether it is of an intelligent human or an animal or whether it is a male or a female based on what you can discern from the vague shape. But the person giving the answer, since he is aware of the reality, will respond according to the reality.

The appearance of Ibrãhīm's statement that: "This my Lord" and "This is my Lord, this is bigger", show that he did not know much about the sun other than the fact that it rises; and that it is bigger than the moon and the star; and that people refer to it for worship and rituals. Referring to this kind of [partial] knowledge by the expression "this – هَذَا [*hadhã* in masculine form]" is no doubt appropriate. But the reality that the sun was the celestial body that manages the world by its light and facilitates the night and the light by its movement as discerned by our senses or that the moon or the star rise every night from the eastern horizon and set in the opposite horizon in the west – he did not know these realities as can be seen from his expressions. If he had known this, he would have said about sun: "This – هَذِهِ [*hãdhihi* in feminine form] is my Lord, this is bigger", or he would have said: "Surely *she* is my Lord, *she* is bigger". [Note: In Arabic language, 'sun' is a feminine noun; and so the appropriate indication to it should be *hadhihi* and not *hadhã*.] Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) realized this fine point later on as can be seen in his argument with Namrūd (Nimrod) when he said: *"So surely Allãh brings the sun from the east, then bring it* (you) *from the west,"* (2:258). Referring to the sun in "bring it", he did not say '*bihi*' [being a masculine pronoun, rather he said '*bihã*' which is a feminine pronoun].

Similarly, when he [*'a.s.*] said to his father and his people as quoted by Allãh: *"What do you worship?" They said: "We worship idols, so we shall be their votaries." He said: "Do they hear you when you call? Or do they profit you or cause you harm?" They said: "Nay, we found our fathers doing so;"* (26:70-74). Ibrãhīm started by asking

about their gods by using the term "*mã* – مَا what" [which is used for inanimate things rather than "*man* – مَنْ who"] since he had no knowledge about it other than the fact that it is an object. Then when they mentioned the idols (and they didn't believe that they had consciousness and will), they said: "so we shall be <u>their</u> votaries – *fa-naẓallu laha<u>ã</u>*" with the feminine *hã*. When he heard from them about the idols [being considered as gods], then it became compelling to describe them with the power to benefit, harm and hearing in response to those who call them, so now Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) describes them with being with intelligence. But then in the story of smashing the idols, they said: *"Certainly you know that they do not speak,"* [21:65] in response to his question: "*...therefore ask them, if they can speak."* – Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) stripped them of the quality of intelligence and said: *"What! Do you then serve besides Allãh what brings you not any benefit at all, nor does it harm you? Fie on you and on what you serve besides Allãh; what! Do you not then understand?"* (21:66-67)

We cannot arbitrarily ignore these fine points and say that when Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) used the masculine form *hadhã* in "<u>This</u> my Lord, this is bigger," he was referring to the celestial body [as a body and not necessarily to the sun] or to the aforementioned entity or that in his Syriac language, like most non-Arabic languages, feminine is not taken into consideration. This is just an arbitrary view. Moreover, when his talk with the king about the sun, he specifically said: *"So surely Allãh brings the sun from the east, then bring <u>it</u>* (you) *from the west,"* (2:258), [in which he uses the feminine pronoun *'hã'*]. If the Qur'ãn did not use the style of his own language in this case, then why did he say, *"This is my Lord, this is bigger"* [using the masculine form]?

The same question will come when Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) asked his people about the idols: *"What are these* **(هَذِهِ)** *images to whose worship you cleave?"* (21:52). And also in his prayer: *"...save me and my sons from worshipping idols. My Lord! Surely they* **(هُنَّ)** *have led many men astray..."* (14:35-36). [In both these cases, feminine pronouns have been used.]

Neither is it acceptable to say that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) used masculine form in the demonstrative pronoun for the sun in order to safeguard Allãh's honour from the blemish of femininity or because the predicate has to follow the subject of the nominal clause which was masculine: "My Lord" [being the subject clause] and "bigger" [being the predicate]. All this arbitrary interpretations have no proof to stand on. The details will follow later on.

In summary, these verses and other similar verses in which the Almighty Allãh has described the arguments of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) to his father and his people on Allãh's unity and negating partners from Him are statements that contextually prove that he previously lived in an environment away from that of his father and his people and was not familiar with what the people knew as far as details of the celestial bodies and social norms prevalent among them are concerned. And that it was during his early age of maturity and discernment that he left his isolation and joined his father and found idols with him; so he inquired about their status and when he was informed about them, he argued against their divinity and put across a convincing proof. Then he argued with his people about the idols and silenced them.

Then he looked at their worshipping of a variety of idols from the stars, the moon and the sun, and he seemingly joined them in believing in them as gods, one after another: he monitored them continuously and whenever one of them would set, he would reject it and deny its divinity; then he would go to other body that they worshipped until that also would set in the day or the night as it is normal for the celestial bodies. Finally, he turned to the pure monotheism by saying: "*Surely I have turned my face, being up-right, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists;"* [6:79]. It seems that he completed his arguments in two days and a night in between as we shall discuss soon, *inshã' Allãh*, High be He exalted.

Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was aware that the universe has a creator who brought forth the heavens and the earth, and that is Allãh alone who has no partner in this matter. He was discussing whether the people, including himself, had a lord other than Allãh, from His creation such as the sun, the moon etc., who provide for them, manage their affairs and are partners of Allãh in His decisions or that there is no lord for them but the Almighty Allãh alone with no partner?

In all these stages of discussions that Ibrãhīm covered, the Almighty Allãh helped him and supported him by showing him the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and disposed his noble soul to the direction in which all things were related to the Almighty Allãh in their creation and management. So, whenever he would look at a thing, he would see its connection to Allãh, and His creation and management of it before even he sees itself and its effects. This is clear from His Word: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure;* [6:75], and later on in

that passage: *And this was Our argument which we gave to Ibrãhīm against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing;* [6:83]. *And certainly We gave to Ibrãhīm his rectitude before, and We knew him fully well* (21:51). Also, from Ibrãhīm's conversation to his father: *"O my father! Truly the knowledge has come to me which has not come to you, therefore follow me; I will guide you on a right path;"* (19:43). That can also be seen in his arguments against King Namrūd who claimed divinity as was common for many of the tyrants in the past, and from that sprouted the idea of duality; and that his people had many gods and idols that they worshipped, including the major ones such as the sun, the moon and the star (most probably the Venus) that the Noble Qur'ãn had mentioned.

This is the summary of what can be gleamed from the noble verses, and we shall discuss its contents in detail as much as we can, *inshã' Allãh*, High be He exalted.

QUR'ÃN [6:74]: *And* (remember) *when Ibrãhīm said to his sire, Azar: …*

In the [canonical] seven recitations of the Qur'ãn, the last letter of "Azar*a* – آزَرَ" has the vowel point *fatḥa* [denoting the sound *a*] and so it becomes explicative apposition or substantive apposition for "لِأَبِيهِ – *abīhi*, his sire." In some [non-canonical] recitation, the last letter of "Azar*u*" appears with the vowel point *ḍumma* [denoting the sound *u*], in which case it is indicative noun in the vocative form and would mean: "O Azar, do you take idols for gods." Yet another recitation starts with interrogative *ḥamza*: "أ أزَرَاَ – *a azra'a*" followed by "أزَرَاَ – *azra'a*" in subjective form as vernal noun of *azara*, *ya'ziru* in the meaning of support, and the it would mean: "And (remember) when Ibrãhīm said to his sire: 'Do you take the idols for gaining strength and support?'"

The commentators have differences of opinion on the first common as well as the second no canonical recitations on the word 'Azar': is the proper name of Ibrãhīm's father or is it a nickname used for praise in the meaning of the supporter or for blame in the meaning of the lame or the crocked, etc. The reason of these differences is the number of narrations in which his name has occurred as 'Tãriḥ' or 'Tãrikh' which is supported by the historical records, and even the present Old Testament says that Ibrãhīm was 'son of Tãrikh.'

They also differ in their opinions about the meaning of the word "*ab* – اَبْ ": does it mean the father, or the uncle, or the maternal grandfather, or a person of rank and authority. The basis of these differences

is also the difference in narrations: some of them indicate that he was his father and that Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) will intercede on his behalf on the Day of Judgement but that his intercession will not be granted rather Allãh will transform him into a smelly hyena and so Ibrãhīm will disassociate himself from him. Other narrations say that he was not his father rather his father was a monotheist, not an idol worshipper, as is also indicated in narrations that the ancestors of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) were all monotheists, not polytheists, etc.

Even in other dimensions of Ibrãhīm's story, the commentators have differences to a strange degree to the extent that some examples, such as those seen in the Old Testament, strip him of his status of being Allãh's friend, prophethood and messengership. They have stretched out these kinds of discussions until it ends in far-fetched conclusions that are outside the norms of the exegesis of the Qur'ãn as described by the holy verses about the purpose of pondering on them. Whoever wants to know about this may refer to the extensive commentaries, especially those on the pattern of exegesis based on the traditions.

What the reflections on the verses pertaining to the story of Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) indicate is that his first point of contact with his people was with a person mentioned in the Qur'ãn as his father Azar, and that he urged him to abandon the idols and to follow the religion of monotheism so that he can guide him until when his father forsaken him and asked him to leave him alone: *And mention Ibrãhīm in the Book; surely he was a truthful* (man), *a prophet. When he said to his father: "O my father! Why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least. O my father! Truly the knowledge has come to me which has not come to you, therefore follow me; I will guide you on a right path..." He said: "Do you dislike my gods, O Ibrãhīm? If you do not desist I will certainly revile you, and leave me for a time."* (19:41-46). So, Ibrãhīm bade him farewell and promised to pray for his forgiveness, hoping to entice him to the faith, the true success and the guidance: *He said: "Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me; and I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allãh, and I will call upon my Lord; may be I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord.*" (19:47-48). The second verse is the best indication that Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) promised to pray for his forgiveness in this world and not that he will intercede on his behalf on the Day of Judgement even if he remained a disbeliever or on the condition that he didn't know about his disbelief.

Then the Almighty Allãh narrated the fulfillment of Ibrãhīm's promise and his prayer for forgiveness of his father: "*My Lord: Grant me wisdom and join me with the good ones. And make for me a truthful tongue* (goodly mention) *among posterity; and make me of the heirs of the garden of bliss; and forgive my father, for surely he is of those who have gone astray. And disgrace me not on the day when they are raised, the day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allãh with a submissive heart*," (26:83-89). The words: *for surely he is of those who have gone astray;* clearly show that Ibrãhīm prayed for his father after his death or after separating from and abandoning him by the term '*is*'. The latter part of the verses indicate that Ibrãhīm's pray was done only in order to fulfill the promise that he had made as he himself says: 'Forgive this misguided person on the day of resurrection,' then he describes the day of resurrection as the day when nothing will be of use (neither wealth nor children) except the submissive heart.

The Almighty Allãh has clarified this reality in His Word that are in form of justification: *And Ibrãhīm asking forgiveness for his sire was only owing to a promise which he had made to him; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allãh, he declared himself to be clear of him; most surely Ibrãhīm was very tender-hearted, forbearing,* (9:114). The context of the verse shows that this prayer was done by Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) in this world so was the act of disassociating from him, not that he will pray for him and disassociate from him on the Day of Judgement. The context of the verse is the context of a general prohibitive command from which Ibrãhīm's prayer has been exempted by explaining that it was done in reality to fulfill his promise – there is no sense in exempting something that is going to take place in the future (for example on the Day of Judgement) from a legislative command given in this world and then talk about disassociation in the Hereafter.

In short, the Almighty describes the prayer of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) for his father and then his disassociation from him during the earlier stages of Ibrãhīm's era when he migrated to the holy land based on his plea for wisdom, for being included among the good-doers and for good descendents as seen in the verses above: *"My Lord: Grant me wisdom and join me with the good ones;"* [26:83]. And also the verse which includes the act of disassociating from his father and his people: *Indeed, there is for you a good example in Ibrãhīm and those with him when they said to their people: "Surely we disassociate from*

you and from what you worship other than Allãh; we renounce you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you for ever until you believe in Allãh alone" – but not in what Ibrãhīm said to his father: "I would certainly ask forgiveness for you, and I do not control for you aught from Allãh," (60:4).

Then, the Almighty Allãh mentions his intention to migrate to the holy land and his prayer for good descendents: *And they desired a war against him, but We brought them low. And he said: "Surely I go to my Lord; He will guide me: My Lord! Grant me of the good ones,"* (37:98-100). Then He talks about his travel to the holy land and granting of good children to him: *And they desired a war on him, but We made them the greatest losers. And We delivered him as well as Lūṭ* (removing them) *to the land which We had blessed for all people. And We gave him Isḥãq, and Ya'qūb as a father gift; and We made* (them) *good ones*, (21:70-72). *"And I will withdraw from you and what you call on besides Allãh, and I will call upon my Lord; may be I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord." So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides Allãh, We gave to him Isḥãq and Ya'qūb, and each one of them We made a prophet*, (19:48-49).

Finally, the Almighty describes Ibrãhīm's last prayer in Mecca which had taken place towards the end of his life after his migration to the holy land, after his children were born, after he had settled Ismã'īl in Mecca, after the town was settled and the Ka'bah had been built – that is the last statement of Ibrãhīm quoted in the noble Qur'ãn: *And when Ibrãhīm said: "My Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols…O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivatible near Thy Sacred House, our Lord! That they may establish prayer …Praise be to Allãh, Who gave me in old age Ismã'īl and Isḥãq; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer…O our Lord, grant me protection and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass,"* (14:35-41).

The sequence of the verse and its context are the best indication that Ibrãhīm's father for whom he prayed in this verse is other than the person mentioned in the verse: "to his father, Azar". The verses clearly state that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) prayed for his forgiveness based on the promise that he made to him and then he disassociated from him when he found out that he was Allãh's enemy. There is no sense in him repeating the prayer for someone from whom he has disassociated and

sought refuge with his Lord. So "his father Azar" is not his real father for whom he prayed along with his mother in his last prayer.

A subtle proof in this last prayer of Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) is the term "*wãlidayya* – وَلِوَالِدَيَّ – my parents": the term '*wãlid*' is not used but for the real father from whom one is born, whereas in the previous prayer *"and forgive my father, for surely he is of those who have gone astray;"* [26:86], and other verses where Azar has been mentioned, Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) has used the term "*ab* – أَبْ " which can also be used for the grandfather, uncle and others. The Holy Qur'ãn contain examples of this usage [of *ab* or its plural *ãbãʾ*]: *Or, were you witnesses when death approached Yaʿqūb, when he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrãhīm and Ismãʿīl and Isḥãq, One God only, and to Him do we submit;"* (2:133). Ibrãhīm was the grandfather of Yaʿqūb, and Ismãʿīl was his uncle, but were described as *'ab'*. Also, the verse where Yūsuf (*ʿa.s.*) says, "*And I follow the religion of my fathers, Ibrãhīm and Isḥãq and Yaʿqūb…"* (12:38). Isḥãq was the grandfather of Yūsuf, and Ibrãhīm was his great grandfather, but both were described as *'ab'*.

In conclusion, the Azar mentioned in the verse under discussion is not the real father of Ibrãhīm rather he had certain qualifications that allowed the usage of '*ab*' for him, and so Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) addressed him by saying "O my father". Arabic language permits the usage of *'ab'* for the grandfather, the uncle, the stepfather, the guardian and every elder who commands authority. This extensive usage of the term *'ab'* is not confined to the Arabic language rather other languages also have similar kind of usage for the terms like mother, uncle, brother, sister, head, eye, mouth, hand, arm, finger, etc., which can be discerned by one who is familiar with the subtlety and the delicacy in comprehension and expression.

It is clear, firstly, that there is no need to get into the traditional, historical and literal discussions about the term *'ab'* and whether *'Azar'* is a proper name or a good or bad nickname or name of an idol. There is no need for any of this in understanding the meaning of this verse. Moreover, most of what exists on this subject is arbitrary views without any proof, disturbing the apparent meaning of the verse and its context by bringing in astonishing combinations that they mention for the sentence *"Azar: Do you take idols for gods?"* in form of relocating the phrases or deleting them and adding in implied phrases.

Secondly, Ibrãhīm's real father is other than Azar but the Qur'ãn has not spelled out his name; it has indeed occurred in the traditions and is supported by what is seen in the Old Testament that his name is Tãrikh.

One of the delusions of some commentators is that the Noble Qur'ãn while mentioning the history of the prophets and the nations and the stories of the past, ignores important points that are considered essential elements of the stories such as the date of the event, its location, and its geographical, social and political circumstances which were crucial in formation of the inner dynamics in occurrence of the events. From such points in the matter under discussion are elements crucial in understanding this story, such as the information about the name of Ibrãhīm's father, his genealogy, the history of the era of his childhood, movement, call and migration. [But the Qur'ãn is silent about it.]

This is so, in their view, because the Qur'ãn in its stories has adopted the path guided by the art of true story-telling: the story-teller selects in his story every possible method that takes him to his goal and purpose in a good way and represents the objective in a full and mature form without putting extra efforts in distinguishing the true elements of the story from the defective ones. Therefore, in order to achieve its goal of guidance towards the success, it was okay for the Qur'ãn to adopt stories that were in circulation among the people or among the *Ahlu 'l-Kitãb* of the Prophet's days even if their authenticity was not verified and lacked the crucial elements or was just an imaginary story (such as the story of Moses and the young lad or those who abandoned their cities in thousands in order to flee death, etc.) – the art of story-telling does not exclude anything of this category after the story-teller has determined that the story is the most eloquent means and the most easy method of reaching the goal.

This is, of course, incorrect. What has been mentioned about the art of story-telling is valid but it does not apply to the Qur'ãn because the Qur'ãn is not a book of history nor a page from the pages of the imaginary stories rather it is a glorious book which is protected from falsehood from all directions. It is definitely the speech of the Almighty Allãh and He does not say anything but the truth. There is nothing after truth but misguidance; He does not use falsehood in order to promote the truth nor does He support guidance by means of misguidance. It is a book that guides to the truth and the right path; in it is a convincing proof for one who beholds it, and it is against him who forsakes it.

How can a scholar who researches for the purpose of the Qur'ãn believe that it contains wrong ideas or false stories or superstitions or fanaticisms?

I don't mean to say that believing in Allãh, His Messenger and what His Messenger has brought necessarily means that one should deny that the Qur'ãn contains anything falsehood or lie or superstitious – even though it is such; nor do I mean that every person with valid intelligence and sound thoughts should humble himself to the Qur'ãn by affirming its truth and denying every falsehood and misguidance from it through the means of knowledge that he has attained to understand it – even though the Qur'ãn is such.

What I am actually saying is that the Qur'ãn itself claims that it is the Divine Speech, written for guiding the people to their real success, it guides by the truth and towards the truth; and therefore it is necessary for one who interprets such a book and looks for its purpose and message that he should consider it as truthful in its speech, factual in its reports and whatever it explains, or he should evaluate it on basis of its purposes and goals as a guide to the path which is free from falsehood, conveying the wayfarer to an immaculate destination.

How can it be that the goal is absolutely true yet falsehood creeps along its path which calls to that goal? How can an issue be the final word yet is considered as superstitious? How can it be that the statement or news is Allãh's speech who knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth yet ignorance, stupidity, and error would advance towards it? Can light produce darkness or ignorance produce knowledge?

This is the only method that an interpreter is not allowed to ignore in exposition of the verses of the Holy Qur'ãn while he believes that it is the true speech which cannot be touched by falsehood, neither in its destination nor in its path.

As for the discussion where the Qur'ãn is true in its claim that it is Allãh's speech and that it is absolutely true in its path as well as its goal or that what does the previous holy books (the Bible and Avesta) say about the Qur'ãn and its decisions or how does it relate to other historical or natural or mathematical or philosophical or social scholarly discourses? These and similar discussions are out-side the realm of Qur'ãnic exegesis and it is not permissible to combine them with it.

Yes, Allãh's statement: *Do they not then mediate on the Qur'ãn? And if it were from any other than Allãh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy*; (4:82), says that there are doubts and thoughts that come to the minds giving rise to the idea that the Qur'ãn has

differences in the sense that one of its verse might seem to contradict another or that the contents of its verse might go against the truth and reality. If the Qur'ãn categorically states that it guides to the truth while its two verses contradict one another (in the sense that whatever is contained by one is the truth while the contents of the other one is not the truth), then the verse: *Do they not then mediate on the Qur'ãn?...* clearly states that some verses of the Qur'ãn are sufficient to dispel the ambiguity from other verses and that some of its verses clarify the unclear concepts of other verses. A scholar searching for the meaning and message of the Qur'ãn must seek help of some verses in order to understand the others, cite some verses to comprehend the others, and make some verses speak about the others. The Holy Qur'ãn is a book of call and guidance that does not deviate from its path, even by a step; it is not a book of history or story; its purpose is not that of a historical study nor is its style of the art of story-telling; it does not intend to give the genealogies or the mechanism of time and space nor other details that would enrich a historical study or fictional story.

What is the religious benefit in giving the genealogy of Ibrãhīm: son of Tãrikh (Terah), son of Nãḥūr (Nahor), son of Sarūj (Serug), son of Raʿau (Reu), son of Fãlij (Peleg), son of 'Ãbir (Eber), son of Shãliḥ (Salah), son of Arkshãdh (Arphaxad), son of Sam (Shem), son of Nūḥ (Noah)? Or to say that he was born in Ur of Chaldea around 2000 years before Christ in reign of so-and-so king who was born in such a place and reigned for this number of years and died in year so and so?

After the discussing the verses of this section, we shall put together a summary of Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*)'s story scattered in the Qur'ãn and then what is found in the Old Testament and other sources about his life and personality so that the insightful researcher can fairly see and then judge what the Qur'ãn has selected and confirmed.

Nonetheless, the Qur'ãn has not ignored whatever was necessary of the beneficial knowledge and did not forbid any discussion about the universe and its heavenly and earthly dimensions nor did it prevent anyone from enquiring about the stories of the past nations, social norms, previous generations, and seeking help through all that to acquire the necessary knowledge. The Qur'ãnic verses highly praise knowledge and encourage reflection, contemplation, deliberation and mediation in so many verses that there is no need to list them here.

QUR'ÃN: ***"Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error."***

ar-Rãghib in *al-Mufradãt* says: "The idol (صَنَمْ – *ṣanam*) is a body made from silver or copper or wood that they worshipped in order to seek closeness to the Almighty Allãh, and its plural is *aṣnãm,* اَصْنَامْ . The Almighty Allãh said: *'Do you take idols for gods?'* [6:74]; *'I will certainly do something against your idols…'* [21:57]." What ar-Rãghib says about the idol made from silver or copper or wood is just an example and not the exclusive source of its manufacture, rather it was made from whatever could be used to make an image from a variety of metals, stones and etc. It has been narrated that Banū Ḥunayfah, from al-Yamãmah, used to make an idol from cottage cheese; and sometimes they used to make it from the clay and at other times, it was just an illustrated picture.

In any case, the idols sometimes represented intangible dogmatic entity such as the god of the heaven and the earth, and the god of justice; and sometimes they represented tangible entity such as the sun and the moon. Both types of idols were found among the people of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) as seen from the archaeological finds of the ruins of Babylon; they used to worship them in order to seek nearness to their gods and through their gods to Almighty Allãh. This is an obvious example of the foolishness of human thoughts in the sense that he expresses ultimate humility – humility of a servant to his Lord – for an image which [erroneously] represents an entity of great importance, and glorifies it; in reality it means that the ultimate humility expressed by the created being for his Creator is now being expressed by the creator (i.e., the human) for his own creation (i.e., the idol). A person would take a piece of wood and carve an idol, and then he would place it [in a sacred area], worship it, express humility to it, and humble himself to it! That is why Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) has used the term "*al-aṣnãm*, the idols" in the verse as an indefinite noun [in other words, without the *'al'*] in order to show their insignificance and ignominy since they are their products, created by their own hands as has been quoted in his statement to his people: *Said: "What! Do you worship what you hew out?"* (37:95), and also because they lack the most obvious qualities of divinity: knowledge and power as he said to his sire: *What he said to his father: "O my father! Why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least."* (19:42)

So, his statement: "Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error," means: Do you take idols that have no significance in them as gods while God is an entity of great importance and so I consider you and your people to be in manifest

error. How can this error not be clear to you because it entails worship and expression of humility from the maker [of the idol] who has knowledge and power of his product that lacks knowledge and power?

Although the verse under discussion is one of the arguments (rather summary of many arguments that Ibrãhīm presented to his father and his community as described in details in many verses of the Qur'ãn), it is the first argument he had with his father and his community. The arguments of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) that the Almighty Allãh has described consists of his argument with his father and his community on idol-worshipping, his argument on worshipping the star, the sun, and the moon, and his argument with the king.

As for his argument against worship of the star, the moon and the sun, the verses prove that it was done after the argument against idol-worshipping. Reflection and deeper insight [into the verses] show that his argument against the king occurred after his mission was known, and his opposition to paganism and Sabianism had spread, and after breaking of the idols; and the beginning of his arguments was his opposition to the faith of his father and those associated to him before he confronted the people and opposed them. The first argument that he presented for monotheism was his argument with his father and his community regarding idol-worshipping.

QUR'ÃN [6:75]: ***And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure*:**

The context shows that the term "كَذَٰلِكَ – thus" refers to what was contained in the previous verse: *"…I see you and your people in manifest error"* in the sense that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was shown the truth in that [argument]. So the meaning would be: 'And with such an example of demonstration, We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth.' Based on this demonstrative pronoun and the indication in the following verse: (*when the night over-shadowed him*) which shows the connection of the later verses to the previous ones, the word "We show" refers to the past event [even though it has occurred in a future tense] just like the verse: *And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land…* (28:5).

So, the meaning of this verse would be as follows: Verily We have shown Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth that caused him to argue with his father and his people in the matter of the idols making manifest to them their error. Hence We supported him with this providence and gift (i.e., showing of the Kingdom), so he was

under this state [of Divine Grace] until the night over-shadowed him and he saw the star.

Therefore, the opinion expressed by some commentators that the words "And thus We show…" is like a parenthetical clause with no connection to verses before and after it, is not valid and should not be accepted. Same goes for their opinion that Ibrãhīm was shown the Kingdom first time when the night over-shadowed him and he saw a star.

As for: "the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth": "the kingdom – اَلمَلَكُوت , *al-malakūt*" is from "اَلمُلْك – *al-mulk*, authority, dominance" which is a verbal noun and implies the intensity of the meaning of dominance (like *aṭ-ṭãghūt*, اَلطَاغُوت the oppressor, and *al-jabarūt*, اَلجَبَرُوت powerful, in relation to *aṭ-ṭughyãn*, اَلطُغيَان and *al-jabr*, اَلجَبْر or *al-jubrãn*, اَلجُبْرَان respectively).

The meaning used in the Qur'ãn is its actual literal meaning without any modification like the other words used in the Divine Speech; of course, the corroborative application of that what be different. For example, the terms *al-mulk*, اَلمُلْك and *al-malakūt*, اَلمَلَكُوت is used by us for a kind of dominance which is of subjective and relative meaning which we have taken into consideration because of the social necessity of organizing the actions and the persons into a system that will lead to peace, justice and collective energy. Also, this dominance has the potential of being transferred, gifted, usurped and taken by force as we always witness in human societies.

Even though this subjective and relative meaning of *al-mulk* can be applied to the Almighty Allãh in the sense that the true dominance in human society belongs to Allãh, as He says: *...the judgement is only Allãh's...* (6:57); *All praise is due to Him in this* (life) *and the hereafter...* (28:70), but deeper insight into the conventional meaning of *al-mulk* (dominance) reveals its application on entities in such a way that it can neither end nor be transferred. For example, a person has *mulk*, dominance, upon himself in the sense that he has complete power on his hearing, sight and other actions that emanate from his limbs; so his ears hear and his eyes see, based on his intention and command, and they don't follow the intentions and commands of other people. This is the real meaning of *mulk* and we don't doubt its existence within ourselves in such a way that it can neither end nor be transferred. So, a person has dominance over his own strength and actions, and all of them neither is dependent on his existence, neither independent from it nor free from its need. An eye sees by the

permission of the person who sees through it and the ear hears by his permission; if the person didn't exist, there would be no eyes nor any act of seeing and no ears nor any act of hearing. Similar to the situation of the citizen of a society: he acts within it by the permission of the king or the ruler, if there was no managing power that coordinates the elements of the society, there would be no society; if he disallows certain activities, a citizen would not be able to do that [without facing the consequences].

No doubt, this meaning of *mulk* (dominance) exists for Almighty Allãh on whom depends the creation of things and managing of the system [of universe]; no creation is free from need of the Glorified Creator, neither in his own being nor in the powers and activities related to him, he has no freedom, neither alone nor when he is part of the various elements of the universe, connected to the energy of the world where some of its parts are mixed with the other forming this general visible system.

The Almighty Allãh says: *Say: "O Allãh, Master of the Kingdom!*" (3:26); *Allãh's is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth…* (5:120); *Blessed is He in whose hand is the Kingdom, and He has power over all things; who created death and life…Who created the seven heavens one above another…* (67:1-3). These verses, as you can see, relate the *mulk* (dominance) to creation and to the existence of things from Him; relating the creation and existence of things to Him is the basis for His dominance and that is the meaning of His *mulk* in which no one is His partner nor does it disappear from Him, it is neither transferable nor can it be delegated in the sense that He is no more required and is replaced by someone else.

This is the meaning of *malakūt* (kingdom) that has been explained in Allãh's Word: *His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it: "Be" and it is. Therefore, Glory be to Him in Whose hand is the Kingdom of every thing, and to Him you shall be brought back,* (36:82-83). The second verse clarifies that the domination on everything depends on the word '*kun*, say' that is uttered by the Almighty and His Word is His Action and that is His creation. Thus it becomes clear that *malakūt* means the relationship of Allãh to the existence and survival of things; and this relationship of the Creator and the created does not tolerate any partnership, it belongs to Him alone. The status of being the Nourisher that signifies dominance and management does not allow any room for delegation nor transfer of ownership.

Therefore, reflection upon the Kingdom of the universe certainly leads a person to *tawḥīd,* the concept of monotheism as Allãh says: *Do they not consider the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever things Allãh has created, and that may be their doom shall have drawn nigh; what announcement would they then believe in after this?* (7:185). As you can see, this verse follows the verse in the beginning of *sūrah* of "*al-Mulk*" (ch.67) quoted earlier.

So, by reflecting on the other relevant verses, it becomes indeed clear that the meaning of 'showing the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth to Ibrãhīm' is that He guided the blessed soul of Ibrãhīm to realize the connection of the existence of things to the Almighty, and since this connection does not accept any partnership, he immediately concluded that nothing can be nourished by other than Allãh who has taken upon Himself the management of the system and supervision of the affairs [of the universe]. That the idols were images that humans had carved themselves and gave them names that was not authorized by Allãh – such things cannot nourish the humans nor own them while humans have built them with their hands. Moreover, the celestial bodies such as the star, the sun and the moon constantly change from one state to another; they appear and then disappear from people – such things cannot dominate or take upon themselves the management of the universe, as we shall discuss later on.

His Word, the Sublime: *...and so that he might be of those who are sure.* The letter *lãm* [in لِيَكُونَ – *li-yakūna,* so that he might be] is for explanation; and the sentence is connected to another implied sentence as follows: 'so that he might be this and that and so that he might be of those who are sure.'

Conviction or surety (اَلْيَقِين – *al-yaqīn*) means the knowledge that is not contaminated by doubt in any way or shape. Probably, the verse means that he might be sure of Allãh's signs to the level described by the Almighty: *And We made of them Imãms to guide by Our command as they were patient, and they were certain of Our signs* (32:24). This leads to conviction in the Beautiful Names of Allãh and His great attributes. The same kind of conviction has been described regarding the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) in what He said: *Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go on a night from the Sacred Mosque to the remote mosque of which We have blessed the precincts, so that We may show to him some of Our signs...* (17:1); and also what He said: *The eye did not dazzle, nor did it exceed the limit. Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord,* (53:17-18). However, as for the

conviction about the Exalted Essence of Allãh is concerned well, the Qur'ãn places it above the level where any doubt, let alone the knowledge, could perceive it; His Essence is only to be acknowledged submissively.

According to the Divine Word, among the special impacts of "the convincing knowledge" in Allãh's signs is the lifting of the veil of materialism from the realities of the creation to the extent willed by the Almighty as He says: *Nay! If you had known with knowledge of certainty, you should most certainly have seen the hell* (102:5-6); and: *Nay! Most surely the record of the righteous shall be in the 'Illiyīn. And what will you know what the 'Illiyīn is? It is a written book; those who are drawn near* (to Allah) *shall witness it,* (83:18-21).

QUR'ÃN [6:76]: ***So when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star; he said: "This is my Lord." So when it set, he said: "I do not love the setting ones."…***

ar-Rãghib in his *al-Mufradãt* says: "The origin of *al-jannu* (اَلْجَنُّ [translated here as over-shadowing]) means to cover or conceal something from the senses. It is said: '*jannahu 'l-layl* (جَنَّهُ الَّيْل), *ajannahu* (اَجَنَّهُ) and *janna 'alayhi* (جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ)': so *jannahu* means covered it, *ajannahu* means he made something that would cover it just like '*qabartuhu, aqbartuhu, saqaytuhu* (قَبَرْتُهُ ، اَقْبَرْتُهُ ، سَقَيْتُهُ) and *asqaytuhu* (اَسْقَيْتُهُ);' and *janna 'alayhi* means something covered it. The Almighty has said: 'So when the night (*janna 'alayhi*) over-shadowed him…'" So the night over-shadowing him means that it let down the darkness on him which does not occur simply with the setting of the sun.

The verse: "So when the night over-shadowed him" is a follow up of what had passed earlier about negating the worship of idols since both are connected to Allãh's Word: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth.* Based on that, the meaning would be: 'We indeed were showing him some portions of the Kingdom and thus he negated the worshipping of the idols by that, and this situation continued and so when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star and said so-and-so.'

In the sentence: "he saw a star **(**كَوْكَبًا**,** *kawkaban*)"**,** the word *kawkab* has come as an indefinite noun [i.e., without *alif* and *lam*] since the passage is linked to narration of and discussion about [Ibrãhīm's argument], and it does not intend to specify that star, whether it was from the planets or the fixed stars because the main argument could apply to any of the stars that rises and sets. However, this does not

mean that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) pointed to just any star from among the stars without specifying it in any way: Firstly, because the word [as used in this verse] does not support that; it cannot be said about a person who points towards a star from among the countless stars and says: 'This is my Lord,' that he just saw a random star and said: 'This is my Lord.' Secondly, the context of the verses show that they were a people there who worshipped the specific star towards which Ibrãhīm pointed and said what he said about it.

Moreover, the Sabaeans did not worship any star and they did not hold anything sacred except the planets. What supports the view that the star under discussion here was the Venus is because the Sabaens adored and assigned the wordly events only to the seven celestial bodies that they used to call "the seven planets": the Moon, the Mercury, the Venus, the Sun, the Mars, the Jupiter, and the Saturn. The people of India were those who used to adore the fixed stars and assign the worldy events to them; so were some sorcerers and Arab idol worshippers and others.

Obviously, the star [mentioned in the verse] was one of the seven planets. The Moon and the Sun have been mentioned later on [in Ibrãhīm's conversation] while the Mercury is rarely seen because of its constrained orbit. Therefore, it must have been one of the remaining four: Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Among these, Venus is the only star whose restrained orbit prevents it from moving away from the Sun more than 47 degrees, and therefore it always follows the Sun without fail: Sometimes it would precede it and rise before the sunrise, and at that time it is known as 'the morning star' and then it sets after the sunrise. At other times it follows the Sun and appears after sunset on the western horizon and it stays for a short while in early night before setting – if it is the nights after the middle of the lunar month, e.g., 18^{th}, 19^{th} and 20^{th}, it sets at the time of moonrise; so you will observe that the Sun has set and the Venus will appear on the western horizon and then it will set an hour or two after the sunset, and then at that time or shortly thereafter the Moon will rise. From those four planets, these characteristics are peculiar to Venus, and in other planets like Jupiter, Mars and Saturn these are only incidental which occur only in special situations that it does not register in the mind, and thus it assumes that that star is the Venus. In any case, Venus is the most beautiful, the most delightful and the most shinning of the twinkling stars that attracts the eyes of a person who is looking at the sky when night descends and darkness overshadows the horizons.

This is the best explanation of the verse based on what comes to the mind when the Almighty says: "So when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star; he said: 'This is my Lord. So when it set, he said: I do not love the setting ones,' (76) Then when he saw the moon rising…" What we have said above is also supported by what has been mentioned in some of the narrations of the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*'a.s.*) that the star [under discussion] was the Venus. Based on this, we can say that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) had seen the Venus and that the people believed in the obligation of worshipping it in form of devotion, prayer and offering of sacrifice; and that the Venus was following the Sun at its setting time, and that the night was of the later half of the lunar month. When the night over-shadowed him, he saw the Venus on the western horizon until it set and then he saw the Moon rising thereafter.

Then we come to the sentence: "…he said: 'This is my Lord.'" The meaning of *"rabb* = Lord" is the owner of things possessed by him, the one who manages their affairs, not the one who created the heavens and the earth and originated everything from non-existence. Allãh, the Almighty is not a body or bodily entity, and He does not occupy space nor can He be an object of indication. What is undoubtedly clear from the statement quoted of the conversation of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) with his people concerning the idols is that he had been blessed with proof from His Lord and that he had knowledge about Allãh and His signs – and all these clarified for him that the Almighty Allãh is exalted above any form of body, image and limitations. Allãh quotes his conversation with his father: *"O my father! Truly the knowledge has come to me which has not come to you, therefore follow me; I will guide you on a right path…"* (19:43).

However, the idol worshippers and the Sabaeans did not ascribe an equal partner to the Almighty Allãh in creation, rather they ascribed the partner in form of someone or something – while being created by Allãh or at least whose existence depended on Him – was assigned by the management of the creation like the god of beauty, the god of justice, the god of fertility or to manage some of the creation, for example, the god of human or the god of a tribe or the god of specific kings and aristocrats. Discoveries of their ruins, their historical reports as well as the existing idol worshippers prove this fact. So, Ibrãhīm's statement about the planet that: "This is my Lord," intended to prove that it was the god who managed the issues, and not God, the Creator and the Originator.

This is also proven by what been mentioned at the end of the verses under discussion: *…he said: "O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up* (with Allãh). *Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists*." 6:79-80). It obviously means that he is moving away from polytheism and reaches to the conclusion that God has no partner; he does not talk about proving God's existence.

The apparent meaning of the verses show that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) accepted the fact that for all things there is God, the Originator, the Unique, Who has no partner in His Creation and Origination, and that is Allãh, the Sublime; and that humans have a Lord who obviously manages their affairs. His search was only to see whether this Lord who manages the affairs is the same Almighty God to Whom creation and origination is attributed or one of His creations whom He has taken as a partner for Himself and delegated the task of management to him. Therefore, he presents the hypothesis about the star (that they worshipped) and then the moon and then the sun, and looks into each one of them to see whether they are capable of handling the task of managing [the universe in general] and the management of people's affairs [in particular].

Although this proposition and consideration obviously occurs before attaining the convincing proof of the result – since the result is subsequent to the rational proof – it does not harm Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) [and his status as a believer]. As we had explained earlier, the verses describe the story of Ibrãhīm (and the human being) in the first phase of discerning [truth from falsehood] and of being capable of taking on the religious obligations by contemplating in matters of monotheism and other fundamental thoughts, and that he was like a slate devoid of any shapes and writings at all. Then he starts searching and begins by proving certain things and rejecting certain others in order to reach to the true belief and sound faith. All the while, he is on the path of truth and there is no blame on him during the time when he goes through the process between rejecting certain things out of lack of distinction and accepting other things on basis of complete understanding and full knowledge of the truth.

Human life by necessity goes through the stage when it transforms from lack of knowledge about essential beliefs to the stage of awareness when rationally he is obliged to seek and consider [the truth]. This is a general phenomenon in human life in which he progresses from deficiency to perfection; all humans are equal in this

matter. Of course, there are exceptions in case of some individuals that goes against this general phenomenon in which they demonstrate perceptive faculty and knowledge before the normal age of discernment and maturity as the Qur'ãn has mentioned about 'Īsã (*'a.s.*) and Yaḥyã (*'a.s.*) – that is indeed against the prevailing norm and not all human have that quality nor all prophets have done such a thing.

In short, the human being does not possess the conditions that will obligate him to have sound belief or do good deeds from the first day when the soul is breathed into him; he gradually gains that ability until the conditions are fulfilled which then obligates him to seek and consider the truth. So, his life is indeed divided into two parts: before the age of discernment and maturity and after the age of discernment and maturity, and it is in the latter stage that he is capable of dealing with matters of belief and confronts them in that stage of life. Between these two phases, there is an intermediary stage where he is confronted with the duty of seeking and considering the truth. Therein he seeks the true belief to which his nature guides him by means of arguments: Does he or the universe exist without a creator or do they have a creator? If yes, is the creator one or has he a partner? Then he looks at the signs visible in the universe for these propositions and reflects on them whether they support or deny his propositions, and so he accepts one and rejects the other. As long as his process of arguments does not reach a solid conclusion, he is uncertain and undecided; he is only at stage of assumption and reflection on the idea.

Based on this reflection, the statement of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) about the star: "This is my Lord," as well as his forthcoming statements about the moon and the sun are not based on certainty and firmness that would be considered as polytheism. It is just a proposition that needs to be considered in relation to the signs that prove and support it. This may be proved from the verses that appear to say that he was in the state of anticipation and expectation. This is one perspective.

However, Ibrãhīm [*'a.s.*]'s statement in his argument with his father that the Almighty Allãh has narrated in *sūrah* of "*Maryam*" (ch.19): *"O my father! Truly the knowledge has come to me which has not come to you, therefore follow me; I will guide you on a right path. O my father! Serve not the Satan; surely the Satan is disobedient to the Beneficent* (Allãh). *O my father! Surely I fear that a punishment from the Beneficent* (Allãh) *should afflict you so that you should be a friend of the Satan." He said: "Do you dislike my gods, O Ibrãhīm? If you do not desist, I will certainly revile you, and leave me for a time."*

He (Ibrãhīm) *said: "Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you; surely He is ever Affectionate to me;"* (19:43-47), proves that he [*'a.s.*] was fully aware of the reality, and that the one who manages his affairs is affectionate towards him and greatly honours him, is the Almighty Allãh and none else.

Therefore, his statement: "This is my Lord", is of a genre in which a person considers himself to be like them, goes along with them [in their ideas], and then presents them with the evidence that proves the weakness of their idea and the falsity of their statement. This method of argument is most appealing to the opponent's sense of justice, most effective in subduing his bias and prejudice, and most suitable in making him listen to the argument.

The sentence: "So when it set, he said: 'I do not love the setting ones.'" *al-Ufūl* (اَلأُفُوْل) means setting [of something; here it means setting of the star]. It proves the falsity of the star's lordship by attributing the quality of setting to it. The star that sets is cut off from those upon whom it had risen, and the task of managing the creation does not sit well with being cut off.

Indeed, godship and dependency is a real relationship between the Lord and the one who is nourished by Him, and that leads to the love of nourished one towards His Lord because of the natural attraction towards Him and being linked to Him. Love cannot be based on something that perishes and whose beauty ends, the same beauty that was reason for love. What we observe in the human that he often falls in love with the present and prevailing beauty because he is intensely engrossed into it and he does not pay any attention to the fact that one day it will end and vanish. Therefore, the Lord must be ever-living and not subject to change like the embellished decorations that live and then die, exist and then perish, rise and then set, appear and then disappear, attain youthfulness and then become old, are delightful and then become disfigured. This is a rational argument even though it might appear as rhetoric or poetry. Ponder on it.

Anyway, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) invalidated the lordship of the star on basis of its setting dimension in two ways: Either by alluding to the fact that he does not love it because of its setting since dependency and servitude is based on love, and one who does not love something cannot worship it. It has been narrated from Imãm aṣ-Ṣãdiq [*'a.s.*]: "Is religion anything but love?" We have explained that earlier. Or by basing on absence of love and the issue of setting was mentioned as a justification for not loving it since it is contrary to lordship and divinity.

Being object of love is an essential concomitant for lordship and divinity; and something that lacks the true and lasting beauty cannot be an object of love, and therefore it cannot be the lord. The context of the argument in this verse is apparently based on this point.

In this conversation of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*), following points can be discerned:

Firstly, there is an indication of essential link between love and lordship or between love and sense of servitude.

Secondly, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) has used the attribute common between the star and between the moon and the sun [i.e., all of them rise and then set], and has repeated the argument in their cases also. This was done either because he was unaware, as mentioned earlier, that the moon and the sun also rise and set in the same way as the star or because the people in all three cases were different groups.

Thirdly, in his statement of negating the love when he says: "I do not love the setting ones", he has used the style [*al-ãfilīyn* (اَلْآفِلِين), the setting ones] that is used for intelligent beings [and not for inanimate objects like the moon and the sun]. This was sort of an indication that something that lacks perception and reason does not at all deserve lordship as he has indicated in his statement: *"O my father! Why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least;*" (19:42), and his other statement: *When he said to his father and his people: "What do you worship?" They said: "We worship idols, so we shall be their votaries." He said: "Do they hear you when you call? Or do they profit you or cause you harm?" They said: "Nay, we found our fathers doing so."* (26:70-74). First he asked them about their idols as if he did not know anything about them; and so they replied to him that they are statues and images devoid of perception and sensation. Then he asked them about their knowledge and power while he used terms associated with those who have intelligence as an indication that Allãh must possess this quality of intelligence.

QUR'ÃN [76]: *Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: "This is my Lord." So when it set, he said: "If my Lord had not guided me, I should certainly be of the erring people."*

al-Buzūgh (اَلْبُزُوْغ) means the rising. As for the discussion about "Then when he saw…" that has already passed earlier because of its connection to the previous argument. Ibrãhīm's statement that "This is my Lord" is of a genre in which a person goes along with the others as was discussed in the previous verse.

When the moon set, he said: "If my Lord had not guided me, I should certainly be of the erring people." Here Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) has taken into consideration what he had said earlier in invalidating the argument for lordship of the star – since both the star and the moon rise and set, and setting is not suitable for lordship as he said: *I do not love the setting ones*, so the conclusion is the same for both. So his statement: "If my Lord had not guided me…" is linked to the observation he had made [earlier] concerning the moon that "This is my Lord": if he had continued to insist on it, then he would have been in error and one of those misguided individuals who believed in the lordship of the moon. The statement about the moon was an error for the same reason as given earlier about the star since the quality of setting is not exclusive to it; rather it can apply to it as well as other similar entities.

From the above, we can surmise the following:

Firstly, there were people there who believed in the lordship of the moon just as those who believed in the star. Moreover, the verse that follows: *"O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up* (with Allah),*"* (6:78) is also indicative of this fact.

Secondly, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was at that time in state of search, hoping to attain Divine guidance and expecting his Lord's grace in form of the sound belief and the indisputable perspective irrespective of the fact whether his statements are taken in the literal sense (supposing that he was indeed seeking the truth) or in the rhetoric sense (in which he initially agrees with a hypothesis in order to show its flaw). This was discussed earlier.

Thirdly, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was certain that he has a Lord who manages his guidance and his other affairs and that he was only seeking Him, either in the real sense or in the sense of pretence, so that he may identify Him: is He Himself the one who created the heavens and the earth or was it created by some of His creation? And when it dawned upon him that the star and the moon are incapable of such a task because of their setting, he expected his Lord to guide him towards Himself and purify him of the misguidance of those who were in error.

QUR'ÃN [6:77-78]: ***Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: "This is my Lord; this is the greatest." So when it set, he said: "O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up*** **(with Allãh).***"*

"Then when" is an indication of the connection of this statement with the previous argument; and even the words: "This is my Lord"

has occurred either in hypothetical sense or in the style of initially agreeing with the view [in order to disprove it] as was discussed in previous verse.

* * *

[On Usage of Masculine Pronoun for a Feminine Noun]:

The words: "This is my Lord" was also repeated in case of the moon when he saw it rising after having seen the star; and that is why, in this third case, he added the description: "this is the greatest" for the sun as final hypothesis of its lordship after proving the first two cases as invalid. It was mentioned earlier that using of the pronoun "*hãdhã* = this" while pointing to the sun was done because Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) didn't know that it was a celestial body that rises and sets from our perspective every day and night, and that the phenomenon of day and night as well as the four seasons are related to it.

Using the masculine pronoun is an indication that the person was not able to clearly distinguish the entity of his point of reference: it is just like the situation when you see shape of a person coming to you from far but you are unable to distinguish it as male or female, and so you say: "Who is *this*?" [*This* (هذا *hãdhã*) is masculine.] Similar to a situation where you cannot discern whether the shape is of a living being or an object, and so you say: "Who is *this*?" [Using the same *hãdhã*.] Probably this was the first time that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) had come out to his uncle and his people from isolation and had not witnessed the outside world and the human society, and so when he saw a celestial body like the star and the moon and the sun – whenever he saw each one of them as a shinning lamp – he said: "This is my Lord", as if he had no complete knowledge of it as we had mentioned earlier.

This is supported in a way by his statement: *So when it set, he said: "I do not love the setting ones."* There is an indication in it that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) assumed momentarily that the star was the Lord until he saw its setting and then decided that his assumption was wrong and it can't be the lord. If he had known that the star sets, then he would have denied its lordship earlier as he had done in case of the idols when he said to his uncle: *"Do you take idols for gods? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error,*" [6:74]; and: "*O my father! Why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor does it avail you in the least,"* [19:42].

It is also possible to say that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) delayed his statement: *"I do not love the setting ones",* until the star set so that he could prove to them what could be discerned by sense of observation as he had

done when he smashed the idols except the biggest one so that they can see the inability of the idols and that they are just inanimate objects that cannot prevent any harm or evil from themselves.

* * *

In explaining the masculine usage of the demonstrative pronoun ("this = *hãdhã*"), the exegetes have treaded different paths:

i.) Some say that using the masculine pronoun was in order to link it to the point of reference or the celestial bright body; in other words, it says: "this point of reference or this celestial bright body is my Lord since it is the greatest." [That is, it does not refer to the sun, which is a feminine noun.]

Although using the masculine pronounce with such an explanation is valid but there must be a reason to justify such a usage. It is not correct to do so without a proper justification, otherwise it will be permissible to change every feminine pronoun into masculine arbitrarily and that will ruin the language itself.

ii.) Some say that [the usage of masculine pronoun for a feminine object] is based on the rule of the subject following the predicate in its gender since the terms "the Lord" and "the greatest" are masculine therefore the demonstrative pronoun has followed the masculine form. An example of a reverse form can be seen in the Almighty's Word: *Then their excuse would be nothing but that they would say…* [6:23] in which the masculine predicate [لَم تَكُنْ] has followed the feminine subject [فِتْنَةٌ].

Moreover, there is a view that the people of Ibrãhīm [*'a.s.*]'s era believed in feminine gods also as they believed in masculine ones, and they describe the female gods as "*ilãhah* (إلَهَة) = god", "*rabbah* (رَبَّة) = lord" [both ending with a feminine ـه*…h*], "*bintu 'llãh* (بِنْتُ اللّه) = Allãh's daughter" and "*zawjatu 'r-rabb* (زَوْجَتُ الرَّبُّ) = wife of the lord". Based on this, it was appropriate to use the feminine "*rabbah* (رَبَّة)" [instead of *rabb*] and so the sentence should have been "*hãdhihi rabbatī*" or "*Ãlihatī*". The criticism on the predicate following the gender of the subject in: "This is my Lord", also applies to the subject following the predicate. Thus there would be no meaning in the rule of following the pronouns.

The sentence: *This is greater* is the predicate which has an elative noun ['greater'] and the rule in elative noun is that if it comes as a predicate, it should come in the noun form of *af'al* (أفْعَلْ) and it is neutral as far as gender is considered. So, it can be said that "Zayd is

afḍal (better) than ‘Umar" and also "Laylã is *ajmal* (more beautiful) than Salmã." With such a gender-neutral entity, we do not accept that it is from the masculine words that follows the subject.

iii.) Some say that using masculine form in the demonstrative pronoun was for honouring the sun since lordship is attributed to it – this is done to shield the Lord from quality of femininity.

However, they did not consider femininity as an inferior quality that needed to be shielded from divinity. The people of Babylon themselves had female gods such as Ninmah, the mother goddess, Ninkarrak, the daughter of Anu [a god of heaven], Mylitta, wife of Shamash, Zarbanit, the goddess of nursing, and goddess Anunnaki. A group of Arab polytheists used to worship the angels and consider them as Allãh's daughters. In interpretation of the verse: *They did not call besides Him on any thing but females;* (4:117), it is said that they used to call their gods by female names and would say: 'female of so-and-so tribe' referring to the idol that the tribe worshipped.

iv.) Some among the exegetes say that the people of Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) used to worship the sun as the male god and believed that he had a wife by the name of Anuunit. And so the verse under discussion reflects their belief.

However, their belief that the sun is male does not justify changing the femininity of the word to masculine. Moreover, Ibrãhīm's statement to Nimrod: *So surely Allãh brings the sun from the east, then bring it* (you) *from the west;* (2:258) ["ها, *it*' is a feminine pronoun] while referring to the sun defies their claim.

v.) Some say that Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) spoke Syriac language, the language of his people, and they did not differentiate between the pronouns and the demonstrative pronouns on gender lines rather they used masculine form for all; and that the Noble Qur’ãn has maintained his statement accordingly in masculine form.

However, this is not an acceptable explanation since it is common to follow the grammar rules of the words in spite of difference in languages; it is actually permission to follow the grammar rules especially when it comes to the meaning that is not dependent on specific wordings. Moreover, the Almighty has quoted many arguments and prayers from Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) in the Qur’ãn and in many of those cases the feminine gender has been considered appropriately. So, why should this case be different by ignoring the femininity of the pronouns? Even in his statement when arguing with the king of Babylon: *So surely Allãh*

brings the sun from the east, then bring it (you) *from the west,* (2:258). Ibrãhīm has used a feminine pronoun while referring to the sun.

vi.) The most surprising of the views on this matter is what has been mentioned by some commentators stubbornly that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) as well as Ismã'īl and Hãjar used to speak the old Arabic language. The summary of his argument is the following: The anthropologists have proven that the Arabs of the Peninsula, from dawn of history, had colonized the Chaldean cities as well as Egypt and their language had dominated those regions. Some of them have clearly stated that King Hammurabi, who was a contemporary of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*), was an Arab; and that Hammurabi was a kind and peaceful ruler, and has been described in the Old Testament as a great priest. It also says that Hammurabi blessed Ibrãhīm and that Ibrãhīm gave him the tenth of everything. He also says: It is known in the books of *ḥadīth* and Arabic history that Ibrãhīm settled his son, Ismã'īl (*'a.s.*), with his Egyptian mother Hãjar in the valley which emerged later on as the city of Mecca, and that Allãh made a group from the Jurham tribe to settle with them and be subservient to them; and that Ibrãhīm used to periodically visit them both, and that he and Ismã'īl built the Holy House of Allãh and spread the faith of monotheism in the Arab land. It says in a *ḥadīth* that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) came once to Mecca to visit his son, who had gone for hunting, and so he talked with his wife who was from Jurham tribe and he was not pleased with her attitude. Then he came again to visit his son and did not find him, and so he talked with his another wife who invited him to come in and washed his head. Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was pleased with her and prayed for her. All this proves that he used to speak Arabic. This is the summary of that commentator's argument.

However, this is not a plausible explanation because proximity of the Arabs of the Peninsula to Egypt and Chaldean land, and their interaction with them or colonizing and dominating them does not necessarily mean that their language was changed to Arabic. The language of Egypt was Egyptian and the language of Chaldean and Assyrian people was Syriac. Yes such interaction mutually influences the languages as far as some names and words are concerned as we see in the Holy Qur'ãn example of words like *al-qisṭãs* and *al-istabraq*, etc.[24]

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[24] *al-Qisṭãs* (اَلقِسْطَاس see 17:35) means balance, scale; it is an Arabized word of Roman origin. *al-Istabraq* (اَلْاِسْتَبْرَق see 55:74) means brocade; it is an Arabized word of Persian origin. (*tr.*)

As for his statement that Hammurabi was a contemporary of Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*), that cannot be collaborated by reliable historical sources, the ruins of Babylon that have been discovered, and the stone known as Code of Hammurabi (that was devised and implemented by him in his kingdom and it is known as the most ancient code of law in the world). Some scholars have said that Hammurabi's reign was between 1686 BC and 1728 BC; while other have said that he ruled Babylon during 2232–2287 BC. Whereas Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) lived around 2000 BC. Moreover, Hammurabi was an idol worshipper, and under the code of law in the stone [known as the Code of Hammurabi], he seeks help from gods for perpetuity of his laws, popular support for it and punishment for those who intend to change or oppose it.

As for his statement about Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) settling his son and his slave-girl in the southwest plains of Arabia, building of the Holy Kaʻbah, spreading Allãh's religion, and his mutual understanding with the Arabs – none of this proves that he used to talk in Arabic language. This is obvious.

* * *

Let us now return to our discussion. Allãh's statement: "then when" in [6:78] *Then when he saw the sun rising,* shows its connection to the earlier verse: *So when it set, he said: "If my Lord had not guided me, I should certainly be of the erring people.*" It proves that the moon had already set when Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) saw the sun rising. This could have happened only in autumn or winter in northern altitudes (that had the lands of Chaldea) when nights are longer, especially when the moon is in the southern constellation like the Archer and the Capricorn. During such conditions, the moon can set before the sun in the latter half of the lunar month. We earlier saw Allãh's statement: *So when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star; he said: "This is my Lord." So when it set, he said: "I do not love the setting ones." Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: "Is this my Lord?"* [6:76-77]. Upon added reflection, the statement proves that the night was from the latter half of the lunar month and that the star was the Venus which Ibrãhīm saw first in the west while it was descending and then he witnessed its setting and then the rising of the moon from the east.

The verses prove that Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) disputed with his people about the idols during the daytime and was engaged with them on that day till the night over-shaded him and at that time he saw the Venus and the people who worship it. So, he went along with them in [believing

in] its lordship by saying: "This is my Lord." He continued to observe it until it set. And that night was from the long nights of the latter half of the lunar month and perhaps the moon was in orbit in the shorter circle from the southern circles of the orbit but when it set, he rejected its lordship. He continued to look for his Lord and sought His refugee against misguidance until the sun rose. He saw it rising and of bigger size than whatever he had seen earlier of the star and the moon; so he again joined them in [believing in] its lordship even though the falsity of the lordship of the star and the moon was clear to him and they were both celestial bright bodies like it but he took its bigger size as a justification to accept its lordship and ended up saying: "This is my Lord; it is bigger." He sat anticipating the future until the sun also set and so he rejected its lordship and polytheism of his people by saying: *"O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up* (with Allãh)*."* And he affirmed the lordship of Almighty Allãh as he had affirmed His divinity in the sense of creating the heavens and the earth and originating them. So he said: *"Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him* – i.e., being submissive to the Divinity – *Who originated the heavens and the earth*, – without any deviation to the right or the left – *and I am not of the polytheists,"* – by associating anything from His creation and invention to Him in worship and submission, (6:79).

It has been mentioned earlier that the presence of Allãh's statement: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure*, in midst of these verses proves that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) indeed deduced the arguments (that he used against his father and his people) from what he used to see of the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that Allãh has blessed him with the surety – the result of showing him the kingdom – upon his heart. And this is clear evidence that the arguments that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) used were demonstrative proof emanating from the breast of conviction as seen in our explanation of his words: "I do not love the setting ones."

* * *

The following points become clear from the previous discussion:

Firstly, Ibrãhīm's statement that: "I do not love the setting ones," is a demonstrative convincing argument based on him not loving the setting ones and the incompatibility of setting with divinity.

A commentator has apparently opined that Ibrãhīm's argument was a common argument and not a demonstrative argument. He says: "The truth is that the statement [of Ibrãhīm] was a subtle allusion, not an explicit speculative argument," in which he is alluding to his people's ignorance in worshipping the stars: they are worshipping something that hides itself from them and is unaware of their act of worship. This is the basis of considering 'setting' as incomputable with divinity (as opposed to 'rising' and 'appearing') and he based his argument on it since one of the qualities of divinity is appearance even though His appearance is different to that of His creation.[25]

This commentator is, first of all, oblivious of the fact that placing of the Almighty's statement: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure,* among the verses containing the arguments is the strongest evidence that his arguments were based on what he saw of the Divine Kingdom which is the basis of his conviction about Allãh and His signs. With this proof, how is it conceivable that his argument was a common and not a demonstrative one?

The second point of this commentator's oblivion is that the argument is based on love and absence of love, not on the issue of 'setting'. Moreover, even if the argument is based on the issue of 'setting', that does not exclude it from being a demonstrative argument. Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) indeed described his reason for repudiating their divinity by saying that he found them to be setting and that he does not love the setting ones and so he does not worship them. It is a fact that a human being worships his Lord because He is the Lord, i.e., He manages the affair of the human being, and grants him life, sustenance, health, wealth, safety, power, knowledge and others things that he needs for his survival, so he is connected to His Lord from all aspects of existence. Thus, it is part of human nature that he should love whatever he needs and he should love whoever provides those needs; no sensible person can doubt this reality. So, the human being worships the Lord because he loves Him in order to seek his benefits or to avert harm from himself or both.

It is also human nature that he does not link himself to something that has no permanence except that sometimes greed or lust diverts his nature towards the enjoyment and turns him away from reflecting on its temporary and passing phase. The Noble Qur'ãn has frequently

[25] This refers to Rãshīd Riḍã in *al-Manãr*, vol.7, p.466. (*tr.*)

used this style to condemn the world and has discouraged the people from excessive attachment to its beauties and submerging into its desires. For example: *The likeness of this world's life is only as water which We sent down from the sky; by its mingling the herbage of the earth of which men and cattle eat grows; until when the earth puts on its golden raiment and it becomes garnished, and its people think that they have power over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, so We render it as reaped, as though it had not been in existence yesterday…* (10:24); *What is with you passes away and what is with Allãh is enduring…* (16:96); and *…what is with Allãh is better and more lasting…* (42:36).

So, Ibrãhīm's statement that: "I do not love the setting ones", proves that a thing that disappears from humans and has neither permanence nor stability does not deserve to be loved by them or be attached to them. The God that a human being worships should be such that he can love Him, and so it follows that God cannot disappear from him and lose him; and therefore these celestial bodies do not deserve the title of divinity. This is, as you can see, an argument that is known to the common person as well as the scholars.

A third point of this commentator's confusion is between the rising (*al-buzūgh*, اَلْبُزُوغ) and the appearance (*aẓ-ẓuhūr*, اَلظُّهُور), and he has concluded that "the rising" is compatible with divinity; rather Ibrãhīm's statement is based on the fact of rising since one of the qualities of the Lord is to be visible. [Our response is that] what has been mentioned in the verse – and that is not the basis of the argument – is *al-buzūgh* which means rising and appearing after being in concealment and that is incompatible with divinity. Moreover, the question: "Why did Ibrãhīm base his argument on setting (*al-ufūl*, اَلأُفُول) and not on rising (*al-buzūgh*)?" remains unanswered.

Secondly, considering "the setting" (*al-ufūl*) as part of the argument and not "the rising" (*al-buzūgh*) is so because rising, unlike setting, does not emanate the lack of love which is the basis of the argument. This explains the response given [by az-Zamakhsharī] in *al-Kashshãf* about using *al-ufūl* instead of *al-buzūgh:* "If you say: 'Why did he argue against them on basis of setting and not rising while both have phenomenon of change from a state to another?' I would say: 'The argument based on setting is clearer since its change is associated with disappearance and concealment.'" The argument, as you now know, is based on lack of love and not the setting itself that would

demand the shift from rising to setting. [And so this question and its answer are redundant.]

Thirdly, the argument only intends to negate the 'lordship' of the three celestial bodies in the sense of managing the world or the human life, and not the 'lordship' in sense of creation and management altogether. The idol-worshippers and star-worshippers themselves do not deny that their gods are not the Lord [in sense of the Creator] that is in fact Allãh the One only who has no partner.

This explains the opinion of some theologians who say that "the setting" has been taken as basis of the argument since it denotes a possible being, and whatever is possible is dependent on a cause and stands at the end of the chain of causes linked to the Necessary Being. This is similar to the understanding of other scholars who say that "the setting" negates divinity because it is a movement and every movement must have a mover, and that chain must stop at the First Mover who does not need anyone and does not change, and that is the Almighty Allãh.

Both these arguments, while being demonstrative arguments, are actually negating from the dependent and moving entities the status of lordship in the sense of the First Cause upon whom all the causes are dependent, and in the sense of the Creator and Sustainer upon whom all the causes rely. However, the worshippers of the stars such as the Sabaeans and others, even though they believed that the celestial bodies were eternal, everlasting and constantly in movement, yet they did not deny that all these are effects dependent in their existence and their power upon the Almighty. So these two explanations are relevant to the atheists who deny the existence of the Creator, and not to the Sabaeans and the idol-worshippers of multiple gods whom Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) was addressing in his arguments. Moreover, you know that the argument was not based on the phenomenon of 'setting' rather on the lack of love for something that sets and disappears.

As for the justification of basing the argument on the concept of possible being (that is dependent) and the concept of movement (by explaining "the setting" as something that is dependent and moved) is not valid since the Arabs did not equate 'setting' with dependence or createdness nor with change or movement. The commentator is oblivious of the fact that they don't claim that "the setting" in the verse means dependency or movement, rather they say that "the setting" is used as an argument to prove dependency or movement and change. As for the meaning of "the setting" as disappearance after visibility and

concealment after appearance, that is incompatible with the status of divinity but is compatible with lordship [in the meaning of lesser gods] as the commentator himself has confessed to it.

Moreover, even the Almighty Allãh is absent from our perception even though no change occurs in neither Him nor the phenomenon of disappearance after visibility, and concealment after appearance occur in His case. Thus, the argument that the disappearance and concealment in case of the Almighty is from our perspective, not from His perspective; and because of our preoccupation with things that divert our attention from Him, not because of limitation in His Being and lack in His power – this argument is not helpful because the disappearance of these celestial bodies, especially the daily movement of the sun, is also from our perspective since we are part of the earth that rotates daily on its own axis and turns us away from the direction of these celestial bodies; so in reality, it is us who set down from them after having risen up towards them, and it is just delusion in perception that makes us think otherwise.

ar-Rãzī has tried to reconcile all these views in his commentary as follows: "*al-Ufūl* means disappearance of a thing after its visibility. Once you know this, a person can raise a question: *al-Ufūl* indeed proves createdness since it is part of a movement; and in that sense, rising also proves createdness. So, why did Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) abandon the rising as basis of the argument and moved on to the setting to prove his point?

"The answer is: No doubt that rising and setting both are equal in proving the createdness of the sun. However, the proof that the Prophets use in calling the people towards Allãh should definitely be obviously clear in a way that it can be understood by the clever, the less intelligent and the intelligent person alike. Although the argument based on movement is strong but it is subtle and only the learned people can perceive it. Whereas the argument based on setting is a clear proof known to everyone: the power of the star disappears with its setting. And so the argument of setting proved the point fully.

"Some research scholars have said that: The act of setting down as dimension of createdness is also *ufūl;* and the best argument is the one that is suitable for all levels: the experts, the average persons, and the common people: The specialists connect *ufūl* to the phenomenon of possible and dependent being, and every dependent entity is perpetually in need and the chain of dependence must end with an Omnipotent Being as the Qur'ãn says: *and to your Lord is the goal;* [53:42]. The average persons connect *ufūl* to movement, and every moving entity is

a created being and every created being is eventually in need of an Eternal and Omnipotent Being; therefore, whatever sets cannot be god since God is the one who is needed by the one who sets. The common people perceive *ufūl* simply as setting; and they see that whenever a star nears setting, its radiance diminishes, its light decreases and its power vanishes, and it becomes like an abdicated ruler and with such an attribute it lacks divinity. So, this one sentence: 'I do not love the setting ones' is comprehensive enough to cover all levels from 'the ones b near [to Allãh]' (*al-muqarrabūn*) to 'the People of the Right Hand' (*aṣḥãbu 'l-maymanah*) and 'the People of the Left Hand' (*aṣḥãbu 'l-mash'amah*). Hence, it becomes the most complete of the proofs and the best of the arguments.

"It also has another subtle point: Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was arguing against those who were [not only star-worshippers but also] astrologers. The opinion of the astrologers is that when the star is in the eastern quarter of the horizon rising towards the sky's zenith, it has strong impact but when it is in the western horizon close to the setting point, it loses the intensity and becomes weaker. Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) used this subtle point to prove that God is a reality whose power never decreases nor does His perfection ware off while your belief is that the star, when it is in the western horizon, becomes weak, less effective and incapable of having any impact on the world. This proves the fault in the star's lordship. So, based on the beliefs of the astrologers' themselves, the phenomenon of setting has stronger appeal in showing the fault in the lordship of the star." Thus ends the relevant quotation from ar-Rãzī in its entirety.[26]

By pondering on what has been quoted, you will realize that ar-Rãzī's mastery in categorizing the argument into various parts based on difference among the people and his various explanations cannot be proven by even a single word of the verse under discussion. Nor does it negate the belief of the Sabaens and the star-worshippers since they do not believe in the celestial body as the Supreme God who has unlimited and absolute power; rather they believe in it as a dependent created being which is perpetually in motion and the earth is managed by its movement. None of the explanations of ar-Rãzī negate this belief. He apparently realized the objection after the passage quoted

[26] See Fakhru 'd-Dīn ar-Rãzī, *Mafãtīhu 'l-ghayb,* vol.13 (Beirut: Dãr Iḥyãu 't-Turãth, 1420 AH) p.42-43. (*tr.*)

earlier and so further elaborated the issue and tried at length to get out of the riddle without any success.

Moreover, the second argument that he presented [on the concept of movement] is incomplete. Movement only proves the createdness of the moving entity from perspective of its quality, i.e., the movement itself, and not by itself. The details of this argument should be sought in its appropriate place.

Fourthly, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) arranged his arguments in accordance with the signs of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth that Almighty Allãh had shown to him, and whenever the opportunity availed itself to discuss with his father and his people. In this, he used the perceivable items because he had not seen the daily changing phenomenon of the celestial bodies as mentioned earlier or because he wanted to discuss with them on basis of what was physically perceivable to them. Therefore, when he saw one of the three celestial bodies bright and rising, he said: "This is my Lord"; but when he saw it setting, he said: "I do not love the setting ones".

This will explain the plausible question that arises out of Ibrãhīm's statement: "And when the night overtook him, he saw the star…", it proves that he was with the people on the day preceding the night, so why did he not first mention the sun to negate its divinity?

It is possible that he came to his people for discussion when the time did not allow him more that whatever he argued with them concerning the idols; and so he was arguing with them during the daytime or for so long until the night overtook him.

There are other possibilities also such as the cloudy skies or that the people used to gather for worship and sacrifice only at the beginning of sunrise and he wanted to physically show them the argument.

Fifthly, it is said that the verses prove that guidance comes from Almighty Allãh, and these verses do not relative misguidance to Him. Indeed His Word: "If my Lord had not guided me, I should certainly be of the erring people;" partly proves that the human being, if left on his own nature, would be inflicted with misguidance if his Lord does not guide him. This is also the import of the verse: *…and were it not for Allãh's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure…* [24:21]. *Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allãh guides whom He pleases…* [28:56] – these verses clarify that the act of misguidance that is attributed to the Almighty refers to the misguidance in form of punishment [for ignoring the divine guidance] and

not to initial misguidance. Detailed discussion on this has passed in volume one of this book.[27]

Sixthly, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) based his argument in negating the lordship of the three celestial bodies on the premise of not loving the setting ones because of their *ufūl,* the setting phenomenon. *Ufūl* means losing something after having found it; and this is an attribute incompatible with the feeling of love that would justify the worship of the beloved. If setting is a repelling attribute in case of material entities (compelling them to cessation, death, perdition and passing away), it will be a convincing argument against polytheism and idol worshipping. It can actually even be an argument against the views of some idol-worshippers who believe in divinity of gods of various categories and luminous entities, and consider them to be beyond the realm of materialism and nature, higher than body and movement – for they clearly confess that even though these entities have pure essence and noble existence, they are perishable in face of the Eternal Light and humble under the Divine Power. With such a quality, their love will be attached only to the One who manages them and not to various gods.

* * *

QUR'ÃN [6:79]: ***"Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists."***

[On *faṭara,* originated:]

ar-Rãghib says in his *al-Mufradãt*: "The origin of *al-faṭr* (اَلفَطْر) means the vertical rapture or rip: it is said: '*Faṭar* فَطَر – so-and-so ripped.' [Its other derivatives give other means:] *Afṭara* أَفْطَرَ – he broke the fast; and *infaṭara* إِنْفَطَر it sprouted [as in a plant rupturing the earth]. Sometimes it occurs in a negative sense such as: he said, 'Do you see any *fuṭūr* – فُطُوْرٌ (i.e., any defect and weakness) in it?' And sometimes it occurs in a positive sense such as: *The heaven shall rend asunder thereby; His promise is ever brought to fulfillment,* [73:18]. '*Faṭartu 'sh-shãt*' means 'I milked the sheep with two fingers' *'Faṭartu 'l-'ajīn*' means 'I kneaded the dough and then baked a bread immediately.'

"Also, from *al-faṭr* comes *al-fiṭrah* (اَلْفِطْرَة), the nature. '*Faṭara 'llãhu 'l-khalq*' (فَطَرَاللّٰهُ الْخَلْق) means Allãh created something and made it in specific mold part of His various actions as He says in His statement: *...the nature made by Allãh* (فِطْرَتَ الله) *in which He has made*

[27] See *al-Mīzãn* (Eng. transl.) vol.1, p.70 onwards. Misguidance when attributed to the Almighty is better explained by the term "abandonment, *khidhlãn*" (*tr.*).

men; [30:30] – this refers to the innate knowledge of the Supreme that He has created among the people. 'The nature made by Allãh' means the ability of knowing the true faith that He has instilled in human being as He says: *And if you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say: "Allãh."* [31:25]"

[On *ḥanīf,* being upright, wholly:]

ar-Rãghib also says: "*al-Ḥanf* (اَلْحَنْف) means turning away from error towards rightfulness while *al-janf* (اَلْجَنْف) means turning away from rightfulness towards error. Arabs describe one who had done the pilgrimage or has done circumcision as *ḥanīf* (حَنِيْف) as an indication that he is following the tradition of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*). *Aḥnaf* (اَحْنَف) means a person with a distortion in his foot. It is said that this usage of the word is based on *at-tafã'ūl* (اَلتَّفَاؤُل) form of the word; it is also said that this usage is based on borrowing of the idea of simple deviation."

* * *

When Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) exculpated from their polytheism and idols by saying: "O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allãh)," he had done so by gradually expressing his inner dislike for a partner of God by saying: "I do not love the setting ones," and then indicated that worshipping idols was an error by saying: "If my Lord had not guided me, I should certainly be of the erring people." After an explicit exculpation in his words: "O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allãh)," Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) returns to the absolute unity in lordship – i.e., proving the lordship and worship for He who created the heavens and the earth – and denial of partnership from Him by saying: "Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth…"

'Turning of the face' is an indication of exclusive focus towards the Almighty Allãh in worship for the act of veneration and dependency demands that the dependent slave should attach himself to his Lord with full force and determination, and pray to Him and refer to Him in all his activities – and no prayer or attention can happen except by turning the face towards Him. Therefore, 'turning of the face' is considered as an indication of worship in the sense of praying to and focusing on God.

Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) describes his Lord – the Exalted Allãh towards whom he turns his face – by a quality that is incontestably unique: He originated the heavens and the earth. He has used the relative pronoun and the syndetic relative clause [i.e., "لِلَّذِي (*lilladhī*) = Him Who"] in

order to prove the known entity so that no one is left in confusion. Therefore, he said: "to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth", that is, 'I have turned in my worship to One to whom every thing is linked in its origination and creation.' This is what is proven by him and by them above all others.

By adding the word: "*ḥanīf* – being upright, wholly", Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) rejects all others whom they call as God's partners in the sense that he is turning towards Him away from others whereby denying any partnership for Him. He further affirms that by saying: "and I am not of the polytheists." So the import of his words staring with "I have turned…" is to prove the servitude towards Almighty Allãh and to deny a partner for Him; this is very similar to the import of the noble creed of Islam: *lã ilãha illa 'llãh* – there is no god but Allãh.

The letter *lãm* in "*lilladhī* – لِلَّذِي is for end or goal and denotes the meaning of "*ila* = to"; the use of *lãm* (ل) in the meaning of *ila* is common as seen in: *...whoever submits himself entirely to Allãh...* (2:112); and *And whoever submits himself wholly to Allãh...* (31:22).

Exclusively concentrating on the attribute of Allãh as the Originator (*al-Fãṭir*, اَلفَاطِر) as opposed to *al-Bãrī* (اَلبَارى), *al-Khãliq* (اَلخَالِق) and *al-Badī'* (اَلبَدِيع) [all eventually convey the meaning of creation], shows the preference that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) had for the concept of "the religion of *fiṭrah*, nature". The Noble Qur'ãn has repeated this description of the true faith as "the pure faith of Ibrãhīm" and "the religion of *fiṭrah*" in the meaning of the religion whose ideas and teachings emanate from nature of the human being and the manner of his creation that does not ever change. Verily religion is the path adopted in order to reach to the real success, and the real success refers to the desired end that an entity truly and actually seeks based on the way it was created and was equipped with the means of perfection. Never can a human being or anything else from the creation attain success if he seeks it by other than the way he was created or equipped for: he cannot attain success by abandoning food or marriage or total seclusion from the society since he has been equipped otherwise; nor can he succeed in flying like the bird or living under the sea like the fish because he is not equipped for it. So, the true religion is in accordance with the essence of *fiṭrah*, nature; and never can the holiness of Divinity guide a person (or any other potential creature obliged to follow the religion) to a successful and blessed end without creating him accordingly or without equipping him with the means to reach the goal. Indeed the

religion in the eyes of Allãh is Islam: submission to Allãh according to His guidance based on His creation.

QUR'ÃN [6:80]: ***And his people disputed with him He said: "Do you dispute with me respecting Allah? And He has guided me indeed; and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases; My Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; will you not then mind?***

[In these series of verses,] the Almighty has divided Ibrãhīm's arguments into two parts: in the first one, he initiated the discussion and argued against them; in the second one, the people initiated the discussion and argued against him when he repudiated their gods. The present verse: ["his people disputed with him"] contains the second of the two parts of arguments.

The Almighty Allãh does not mention the argument that had been presented to him but it is inferred to in His Word where He quotes Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*): "I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him," This refers to their argument that it is necessary to worship their idols out of fear. We have mentioned earlier and will discuss further that the impulse in believing in the idols as gods and worshipping them was based on two factors: either fear of their displeasure and power (since they have control over the events of this world) or hope of blessings and success from them. The more compelling of these two in their hearts was the first one, i.e., the fear. Why? Because people naturally consider what is in their hands of the material blessings and success as their property that they have acquired by their hard work in the process of their livelihood (in seeking wealth, position and status) or what they have come to own from affluent ancestor or good luck like one who has inherited wealth from a remote ancestor or found a treasure and owned it or became leader of his people in succession to his father.

So, the path of hope has lesser of an impact in pushing one towards worship; even the Muslims, with complete divine teachings at their disposal, are influenced less by promise and good-tidings compared to the impact of threat and warning. Therefore, you see that the Qur'ãn, while describing the duties of the Prophets, mentions their warnings more than their good-tidings while both are part of their duties and the methods that they use for promoting the faith.

In short, in their argument with Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) about their gods, his people chose the element of fear and warned him of the gods' power

and displeasure, and advised him to adopt their path and stick to their way in seeking nearness to the gods, and to reject the lordship of the Almighty Allãh and to only believe in Him as they believed in Him just as the final point for everything.

When Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) realized that their statement can be divided into two parts: i.) Rejecting the belief in the lordship of the Almighty Allãh, and ii.) Promoting the belief in the lordship of their gods, he disputed with them on both levels but in a way that the first one is dependent on the second.

In the argument that he presented to them about Almighty Allãh, he says: "Do you dispute with me respecting Allah? And He has guided me indeed;" In other words: 'I am in a settled situation and have already been guided by my Lord when He made me aware of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and thereby inspired to me the argument by which I can reject the lordship of others from the idols and the stars, and [made me aware] that I am in need of a Lord who manages my life; so it dawned upon me that He is the Only Lord who has no partner. Since He has guided me towards Himself, I don't need to heed to your argument and search for god-ship again since search is only relevant when a person is in search; and so search after reaching the goal is futile.'

This meaning comes to mind upon the initial reading of the verse. However, a deeper meaning manifests upon contemplation: Ibrãhīm's words: "and He has guided me indeed;" is an argument by guidance itself; in other words, guidance does not eliminate the need for an argument. This may be explained as follows: 'Verily, Allãh has guided me by teaching me the argument on falsehood of lordship of others and proving His Lordship. The guidance itself is a proof that He is the Lord and there is no lord other than Him. Guidance to the Lord is part of the actions that reflect divinity. If the Almighty Allãh had not been my Lord, He would not have guided me; instead the one who is the Lord would have provided guidance but Allãh is the One Who guided me, therefore He is my Lord.'

It was not valid for them to say that the one who has taught you what you know and inspired to you the argument is one of our gods because nothing will guide a person to something that is detrimental to it, destroys its name and denies its existence. So, the fact that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was taught to reject the godship of idols cannot be attributed to any of them.

However, what they could have said or what they have actually said is as follows: [The knowledge and inspiration that you have received] is from the act of one of our idols who has done this to you out of his anger and displeasure by distancing you from the belief in our gods, inspiring these arguments to you since he found crookedness in your mind and soul. This is similar to what the people of ʻÃd said to Hūd (*ʻa.s.*) when he called them towards belief in One God only and argued that it is Allãh only in Whom they should place their hopes and One Whom they should fear, and that their gods can neither benefit them nor harm them. They responded to him by saying that one of our gods has deceived you maliciously as seen in their story narrated by the Almighty: *"And, O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him, He will send on you clouds pouring down abundance of rain and add strength to your strength, and do not turn back guilty." They said: "O Hūd! You have not brought to us any clear argument and we are not going to desert our gods for your word, and we are not believers in you. We cannot say aught but that some of our gods have smitten you with evil." He said: "Surely I call Allãh to witness, and do you bear witness too, that I am clear of what you associate* (with Allãh) *besides Him, therefore scheme against me all together; then give me no respite,"* (11:52-55).

So, the statement of Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*): "and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases;" rejects the dubious thought [of fearing the idols] and it is, at the same time, a complete argument in rejecting the lordship of their associate-gods.

The summary of his argument is as follows: 'You are calling me towards the belief in lordship of your associate-gods and the rejection of the lordship of my Lord by threatening me that your associate-gods will inflict harm upon me, and you are warning me by putting doubt in what I have been guided to. But I surely do not fear the gods that you associate with Allãh because all of them are creatures managed [by Him], they don't possess any benefit nor any harm [for me], and since I don't fear them, your argument stumbles down and the doubt created by you evaporates.'

[Referring to: "unless my Lord pleases;" he says:] 'And if I fear them, this fear would not be from the doing of your associate-gods since they are not capable of anything, rather it will be from the doing of my Lord and He would be the One Who pleased that I fear your associate-gods and so I fear them – this fear itself would be another proof of His Lordship and another sign from the signs of His Unity

which compels one to exclusively worship Him, it cannot be a proof for the lordship of your associate-gods nor an argument compelling one to worship them.'

'The proof that the fear could be from my Lord is that: "my Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge;" He knows whatever of good and evil that occurs in His Kingdom which He has created for valid and solid purposes. So, how can it be possible that He knows about something that can benefit or harm but He is silent about it and does not confront it either by preventing it or by allowing it? Thus, if a fear comes into my heart, it is by Allãh's will and permission as per His sublime status; and this itself would be a way to prove His Lordship and reject the lordship of others. "Will you not then mind" and reflect upon what you can comprehend by your intelligence and be guided to what your pure nature indicates?'

This is explanation of his argument when he says: "I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases; My Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge; will you not then mind?"

Based on the above, Ibrãhīm's statement: "I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him," is like an appendage to the argument: "Do you dispute with me respecting Allãh? And He has guided me indeed." Nevertheless, at the same time, it is a complete argument in itself to deny the lordship of their associate-gods by not fearing them. Also, his statement that: "unless my Lord pleases," is an argument of a hypothetical nature: you are arguing for necessity of worshipping the idols out of fear while there is no fear in my heart; and if supposedly there were that fear in my heart, then that would be a proof for my Lord's godship and not for the lordship of your associate-gods since that fear would be from the will of my Lord. His statement: "My Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge," explains the basis of the supposed fear – that also would be by Allãh's will since the Creator of the heavens and the earth is not oblivious of whatever happens in His Kingdom, and so nothing happens but by His will as He is the one who manages it and sustains it. His statement: "will you not then mind," is a question coupled with rebuke, and it is an indication that the argument is based on pure nature.

* * *

The exegesis of the Qur'ãn have a variety of opinions about this verse:

As for the sentence: "Do you dispute with me respecting Allah? And He has guided me indeed;" most of them have mentioned first of the two explanations that we have given above which, in short, says that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) responds to their objection against God's unity by saying that he is not in need of arguing on this issue since Allãh has guided him and with such a guidance, there is no need for arguments.

However, the apparent context of the verse[does not support this view] since Ibrãhīm was in the state of argumentation, and this means that his statement was an argument for monotheism, not that he was not in need of any arguments.

As for the sentence: "and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases;" they have explained the first part of this sentence almost similarly to what we have said above but they have given a different explanation for the latter part: "unless my Lord pleases." They have said: 'It means: I do not fear them except if my Lord overcomes these idols, and gives them life and power so that they can harm and benefit.' Of course, this ability to harm and benefit becomes a proof of their creation and a proof of the Almighty Allãh's Unity. In other words, the meaning would be that I do not fear them at all except if my Lord decides to give life to these associate-gods so that they can then harm and benefit – then I will fear them. Nonetheless, the lordship will still belong to Allãh and it will demonstrate that their associate-gods are created entities.

Although this explanation is closer to what we had said above, the attribution of benefit and harm to the associate-gods if they were alive – in their belief some of them are indeed alive such as the angels, gods of various categories, and some of them apparently harm and benefit such as the sun – goes against the divine teachings as the Qur'ãn clearly states that ultimately benefit and harm comes from none but the Almighty Allãh.

Moreover, describing that as a proof that their associate-gods were created entities would have no impact on the idol-worshippers since they do not deny that idols and gods are creatures of Allãh; and their belief in 'eternity' of some of their gods does not conflict, in their views, with them being dependent upon a truly Eternal God.

Another commentator says that the meaning of the latter part of this sentence is that 'I do not fear their associate-gods and exclude from the general fear a fear that might be created by my Lord to punish me for some of my sins or to inflict harm upon me initially.' In other words, the exceptional clause (in the latter part of the sentence) is an

exception to earlier part denying the fear of the associate-gods, and the words 'unless my Lord…' is an exception of fear in general. The meaning would be as follows: 'I do not fear the gods that you associate with Allãh nor anything else except from the fear that my Lord may inflict upon me initially or as retribution – which I would fear.' There is no need to elaborate on the arbitrary nature of this argument.

As for His Word: "My Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge," one of them has said that this is Ibrãhīm [*'a.s.*]'s praise for his Lord after completion of the argument. It is also said that it is an implied criticism of their idols since neither do they know nor feel anything. This explanation is rejected by the fact that an implied criticism by contrasting with Allãh's power would be more appropriate to the situation than with His knowledge, and so what was the justification for moving from the power to the knowledge? This objection is also valid for the previous explanation [i.e., if Ibrãhīm wanted to praise Allãh, it would have been better to describe His power].

Another commentator said that since the Lord exempted Ibrãhīm from the distress that could have fallen upon him, he describes His knowledge of the unseen by the sentence: "My Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge," and so He does not do anything but what is beneficial, good and wise. If this explanation were valid, then it would have been better for Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) to describe His wisdom instead of His knowledge, at the least by combining wisdom with knowledge as it has occurred in many places.

Yet another commentator said that this sentence is like a justification for the exceptional clause and it means that Allãh knew beforehand that he could be inflicted with evil because of the idols (e.g., if He had willed that an idol fall down upon him and crush him or heat of the sun causes illness or kills him). However, describing the power and the wisdom would have been better justification than just talking about knowledge.

One of them said that it means that the knowledge of my Lord covers and encompasses everything, and His will is connected to His eternal and comprehensive knowledge, and His power generates His will; and, therefore, nothing from His creation that they worship can have any impact neither in His attributes nor in His actions that emanate from them, neither by intercession nor by any other means. Thus, that impact and effect could only exist if the Almighty Allãh's knowledge did not encompass everything. Therefore the intercessor would be in a position to inform the Lord of the preferred action or

inaction and that knowledge would have made it possible for the intercessor to harm or benefit someone or to bestow or withdraw something. This commentator further says: "We have derived this meaning of the sentence from the Almighty's arguments on negation of polytheistic intercession by verses such as: *...who is he that can intercede with Him but by His Permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His Knowledge except what He pleases...* [2:255]. He also said that this is the best of explanations on this verse and it is an example of the interpretation of the Qur'ãn by the Qur'ãn itself. This is the summary of his arguments.

The conclusion of his view is that the verse: "My Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge," is an explanation and reason for total rejection of any fear from the gods and others as if Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) said: "I don't fear any sort of fear from your gods and other creatures since my Lord knows everything and He will decides by His will and implements it by His power, and therefore He does not need any intercessor to inform Him of what He didn't know so that the intercessor could have any impact on the Almighty's actions and intercession."

You can realize that negating this impact as much as it depends on the Almighty Allãh's vast knowledge also depends on absolute power and will – as such, the will is an attribute of action and not of person as this interpretator has assumed – so what would be the benefit of the comprehensive knowledge if His power and will is not absolute? This can be seen in his statement in which he explains the knowledge, the will and the power altogether.

In short, this interpretation is not valid on basis of vastness of knowledge alone, it can be conclusive if it were based on absoluteness of power and will as well. But the verse mentions vastness of knowledge only. His statement that the verses on intercession also indicate this meaning is not valid either: those verses actually prove intercession in the sense of intervention in causes by the Almighty Allãh's permission, they do not negate intercession as surmised by the interpretator and so he has assumed that he is interpretating the Qur'ãn by the Qur'ãn! The attempt to negate the causes from the visible world is an unattainable task; and the Qur'ãn, from its beginning to its end, speaks about causality and confirms the general principle of cause and effect. This discussion has occurred many times in the previous volumes of this book.

QUR'ÃN [6:81]: ***"And how should I fear what you have set up* (with Him)*, while you do not fear that you have set up with Allãh that for which He has not sent down to you any authority; which then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know?***

Then Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) approaches the idol worshippers with another argument that proves contradiction between their words and their actions. In other words, their action belies their statement which can be summarized as following: 'You are asking me to fear the idols that should not be feared while you yourselves do not fear the God who should be feared; so I am more secure than you if I disobey you and don't follow your command.

'What you are asking me to fear, they don't need to be feared because there is no evidence to prove that their smaller and bigger idols are independent in harming and benefitting so that one should fear them. As for your lack of fear regarding the one who should be feared, well, you yourselves have assigned partners to the Almighty Allãh in lordship while Allãh has not sent down any proof on which you can rely since creation and origination is from the Almighty Allãh, to Him belongs the Kingdom and to Him belongs the command. If He had taken some of His creation as a partner unto Himself, making incumbent upon us to worship His partner, then it was upon Him, and not anyone else, to clarify the matter to us and show the reality in it. This could have been done by linking it with signs and proofs proving that He has partners in such and such issues, and that also either through revelation or through argument of tangible nature. And none of these exist.'

Based on this explanation, the words: "what you have set up (with Him)…" is contextually linked to the statement: "…for which He has not sent down to you any authority." However, this clause has come after the interjecting statement about them not fearing Allãh for their polytheism because it was more appropriate at this place as is obvious.

And His Word: "which then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know?" is the conclusion of the argument. All together, this is an argument against them in contradicting themselves by asking Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) to fear their gods as they were asking him to fear something which should not be feared while they themselves do not fear Allãh who should be actually feared.

It is clear from the above that the clause about idol worshipping: "…for which He has not sent down to you any authority" is just a hypothetical statement as required by the type of argument used in the discussion, it is not a real concept. In other words, it does not prove

the possibility that Allãh could allow assigning of partners to Himself who could then be worshipped. No, not all. This clause is similar to our day-to-day conversation when we say: 'You don't have any evidence to prove your claim' in response to a person who threatens us with a superstitious issue claiming that it could benefit or harm us. As followers of *tawḥīd*, we can present this statement as follows: 'Allãh has not sent down any evidence.'

Based on analytical logic, the statement in the verse could be presented as *qiyãs istithnã'ī* (i.e., a mixed hypothetical syllogism in modus tollen form) in which the first conditional premise has an exceptional clause in order to prove the second premise. For example, we can say:

'If Allãh had sent down a proof that the idols have power to harm, then your fear of the idols would be valid.

'Allãh has not sent down any proof.

'Therefore, your fear of the idols is invalid.'

And it is known that there is no reality in the first premise of this argument. So there is no need to say that the conditional clause: 'He has not sent down any authority' is for sarcasm or that it is for indication that this was an essential condition for idol-worshipping similar to the verse: *And whoever invokes with Allãh another god – he has no proof of this…* (23:117), or other such assumptions.

The *bã* in the sentence: "لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ – *lam yunazzil bihi*" is in the meaning of 'with' or 'for'. Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) has described them and himself as "the two parties" and did not say: "You and me" or something similar to it in order to refrain from any provocation of prejudice or egoism, and in order to show that the difference and separation between the two is in fundamental issue and the basic tenet of the faith which cannot be mixed in any way.

QUR'ÃN [6:82]: *"Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright."*

While presenting his argument in the previous verse, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) had asked them who is worthy of having security: *"…which then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know?"* Then he responded to them since the answer was obvious in which the two parties cannot differ – a response of this nature cannot be delayed by the questioner waiting for the respondent since the respondent does not oppose the questioner in this matter and so there was no fear of rebuttal from him.

The Almighty Allãh has narrated their confession in this matter in the story of the breaking of the idols: *He said: "Surely* (some doer) *has done it; the chief of them is this, therefore ask them, if they can speak." Then they turned to themselves and said: "Surely you yourselves are the unjust." Then they were made to hang down their heads* [saying]*: "Certainly you know that they do not speak."* (21:63-65)

The context shows that this verse is the statement of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*). And the view that this could be the statement of his people or that it is the Almighty Allãh's statement as a judgement between the two opposing parties – the context does not support this view at all.

In any case, the verse contains a strong emphasis [on security for the believers] as reflected in multiple predicates in the nominal clause such as: "they who shall have the security" a nominal clause which is a predicate of "those" and all together they form a nominal clause and are a predicate for "those who believe…" Similarly, the sentence following "those who shall have the security", i.e., "they are those who are aright" is a nominal clause. It concludes that those who believe and have not mixed up their faith with injustice are undoubtedly deserving of security and guidance. There is no doubt in this.

There is no ambiguity in the conclusion of the verse that security and guidance are from fruits of the faith provided it is not mixed with injustice. "*al-Lubs* or *al-labs* (اَللَّبْسُ or اَللُّبْسُ)" means covering, concealing as ar-Rãghib has mentioned in his *al-Mufradãt:* "The origin of *al-labs* means concealing." [In this verse,] it has been used metaphorically in order to show that this "injustice" does not negate the root of faith since it is part of human nature that cannot be totally eradicated, rather injustice conceals it, nullifies its impact and does not let it manifest its right effect.

"*aẓ-Ẓulm* (اَلظُّلْمُ) injustice" means moving away from the equilibrium of justice. Although the word has occurred in this verse as an indefinite noun in a negative context implying a general meaning that cannot be associated with faith (*īmãn*) in any shape or form, but the context shows that the injustice that prevents the manifestation of faith and of its desired, good, results is a kind of injustice which has a negative impact upon faith and not the injustice which has no impact upon it.

Indeed *aẓ-ẓulm* in its first impression in people's mind refers to the social injustice: violation of the social right by taking away a person's life or his honor or his property without any legitimate reason. But then the people extended its meaning and named every violation of law or social norm as injustice; rather any sin or disobedience of a

legislative order was known as injustice committed by the sinner in regard to himself. Furthermore, disobeying the Almighty Allãh (since He has the legitimate right of obedience) or opposing the religious duties was also known as injustice even if it was done by mistake or out of forgetfulness or ignorance – even though such a violator of duties was not to be punished. In addition to all this, even ignoring an advice and the Divine recommendations unknowingly is considered as being unjust to oneself. This also covers a person who was negligent in following the health guide-lines or ignored the effective ways of improving his health. The basis of expanding the meaning of *ẓulm* was analysis of the cause of violation.

In short, the meaning of *ẓulm* has been expanded greatly but not all its applications have negative impact on the faith. Those applications of *ẓulm* that do not cover sins and disobedience of divine orders – such as the acts committed by mistake or out of forgetfulness or ignorance – do not have any impact on the faith whose function is to bring a person closer to bliss and true success by the pleasure of the Lord, the Almighty. Such things have no impact on the faith.

So, His Word: "Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who shall have the security" means that the faith which gives security – against every sin and disobedience that hinders its effect – is dependent on absence of injustice.

However, herein is the fine point of reflection: the intentional sin (that we discussed fully at the end of 12th [Eng.] volume of this book) is of a variety of degrees depending on the difference in perspectives. An intentional sin may be considered *ẓulm* in views of one people but not by another.

So, a person who is at the crossroad of monotheism and polytheism, and then believes that the world has a Creator who has brought forth its various components, divided its various parts, and has kept its earth and sky apart, and considers himself and other creatures as being sustained and nurtured by Him, and that the real human life can only be attained by believing in Him and submitting to Him – the obstinate *ẓulm* for such a person is ascribing partners to Allãh and believing in other gods like the idols, the stars, etc. as shown by Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) in his previous statement: *And how should I fear what you have set up* (with Him), *while you do not fear that you have set up with Allãh that for which He has not sent down to you any authority…*

A person who has treaded this path and believes in Allãh alone, when he is confronted with the injustice of the major sins (such as

causing distress to the parents, devouring an orphan's wealth, killing an innocent soul, committing adultery and drinking intoxicants), he knows that the manifestation of good results of his faith depends on refraining from this kind of injustice. Allãh has promised him to forgive the minor sins if he refrains from the major ones: *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins and cause you to enter an honourable place of entering;* (4:31). Losing this result of faith is the misfortune of being chastised for these sins even though this will not be the everlasting chastisement like the chastisement of idol-worshipping (*shirk*), rather it will eventually come to an end either when its term expires or through intercession, etc.

Whoever acquires this level of righteousness and attains a share of awareness of his Lord's status, he recognizes a higher form of injustice such as doing the disliked (*makrūh*) actions, neglecting the recommended (*mustaḥab*) deeds and indulging in the permissible (*mubãh*) activities. A level higher than this would be the injustice of neglecting the noble traits and spiritual potentials in one's self. At even a higher level, the barriers in the path of love for Allãh and seeking His nearness are considered as injustice.

So, faith (*īmãn*) at all these various stages gives security to the faithful one and keeps misfortune away from him provided he refrains from that same level of injustice (*ẓulm*).

Therefore, the term "*ẓulm*" in the verse: "those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice" is of general import but its application varies depending on the difference in the level of faith. However, since the context of Ibrãhīm's statement was of debate against the idol-worshippers, the *ẓulm* here would refer to the *ẓulm* of polytheism only; and the "security" which follows this faith is the security against the fear of perpetual misery and ever-lasting chastisement. Nonetheless, the message of the verse is independent from its context and explains that security and guidance are indeed results of faith provided it is devoid of all types of injustice that conceal its impact as mentioned earlier.

As for the "*īmãn* = faith" mentioned in the verse, it is of a general type and it means the belief in divinity, a belief that can be conditional to what preserves it or what destroys it. When it is contextualized by the words: "and do not mix up their faith with injustice," it refers to belief in divinity of Allãh and rejection of associate-gods. In the previous verse, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) quoted the idol-worshippers' statement about their associate-gods and belief in them even though they were

God's creation as a statement that has no proof or authorization from Allāh, and that by believing in their associate-gods, they are seeking to avert evil and misery even though they cannot harm nor benefit anyone. Whereas Ibrāhīm (*'a.s.*) fears and believes in Him Who is his Creator Who provides guidance and manages the universe with His command and will in all issues because of His comprehensive knowledge. Then he asked the question: which of the two parties is worthier for security and success by belief in the Lord: both parties believe in the Lord but with a major difference – one believes in a Lord based on proof and the other believes in a Lord without any proof, rather the proof is against them.

It is, therefore, clear that the meaning of "*īmān*, faith" in "those who believe" is the general belief in divinity which has been further restricted by the words: "and do not mix up their faith with injustice," thus focusing on the belief in Almighty Allāh which is the true belief. Think and reflect.

So, the following points became clear from the above:

Firstly, the faith in this verse refers to the faith in the Divinity and not the faith in the Creator of the universe – the opponents were not atheists but polytheists.

Secondly, the injustice mentioned in this verse is of general type that can harm the faith and corrupt it by sins. Similarly, the security mentioned in this verse is a general security from misery of disobedience and sins. "To go aright" is also of general nature and it means to be free from misguidance, even though contextually it is applied to the misguidance of polytheism.

Thirdly, the term injustice is also general depending on the different levels of faith (*īmān*).

* * *

While talking about the general meaning of *ẓulm,* a commentator says:

The security mentioned in the verse is restricted for those who believe and do not mix their faith with injustice. If the general meaning is applied without considering the context of faith, then the meaning will be as following: Those who believe and do not mix their faith with any kind of injustice – neither against themselves nor against their *īmān,* neither against their physical and psychological actions of religious or worldly nature nor against other creatures from the intelligent beings or non-intelligent beings – such people shall have security

against Allãh's religious punishment for sins and evil deeds as well as from His worldly punishment for not observing the norm in the chain of cause-and-effect (e.g., poverty, diseases, illnesses, etc.). This security will not cover those who are unjust to themselves or others since the unjust would have no security; actually, every unjust person will face punishment even though the Almighty Allãh, out of His vast mercy, will not punish every unjust person for every injustice, rather He will forgive many of the sins of this world; and He will punish whomsoever He wants and forgive whomsoever He wants in the hereafter with the exception of *shirk* (idol-worshipping).

He further says: This meaning of the verse is right by itself; and it follows that no responsible person should feel general amnesty from all types of fears (religious and worldly chastisement or legal and natural punishment) except the fear of the awe and majesty of the Almighty that is the hallmark of those who have attained the level of perfection.

He also said: If the meaning of security is not applied generally then the meaning of the verse would be that those who believe and do not mix their faith with the great injustice (i.e., *shirk* – ascribing partners to Allãh), they shall have security from the religious chastisement (which is related to the principles of faith): perpetuity in the abode of chastisement. In the world, they shall be in the state of fear and hope. He then concludes that the apparent meaning of the verse denotes the general meaning, and has based his argument on the understanding of the Prophet's companions who said that when the verse was revealed, it created extreme anxiety among the people and they said: "O Messenger of Allãh! Who among us has not been unjust to himself?" He (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) informed them that the injustice [in the verse] refers to *shirk.* The context of the verse also perhaps indicates this as well as the fact that its subject is *īmãn*, faith. This was the summary of his statement.

There are several problems with this interpretation:

Firstly, what he has tried to prove from the understanding of the companions does not correlate to the meaning that he has presented: what they understood from injustice was equal to sins and disobedience whereas what he has presented is broader than that in meaning.

Secondly, what he has proven as the general injustice (even in cases that are not really in the list of sins), and then judged it to be a correct interpretation is actually far-fetched from the meaning of the verse. The verse intends to say that security and guidance are effects of the faith, provided it is not tainted with injustice that engulfs it and

neutralizes its effect. This injustice is indeed the act of disobedience in form of sins. However, what is not considered a sin – for example, inadvertently eating a food that is harmful to the bodily health – obviously does not neutralize the effect of the faith, i.e., security and guidance. The verse does not speak about the effects of injustice outside the context of faith as the Almighty said: "those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice" in which He has made faith (*īmãn*) the subject and tied it to absence of injustice, and made security and guidance as its effects; He did not make injustice the subject so that the verse would be expected to explain its effects. The verse intends to enumerate the effects that emerge from the true faith; whereas injustice – with its very vast subject and its ensuing effects – is not subject of the verse at all. Therefore, his statement that 'this meaning of the verse is correct by itself' is positively invalid.

Thirdly, his statement that: 'And it follows that no responsible person should feel general amnesty from all types of fears' is a clear confession that there is no application for the general meaning of security, and its necessary conclusion is that his statement loses its validity. What is the benefit of a statement in supporting arguments that has no application?

Fourthly, the meaning that he has finally chosen, i.e., injustice refers to the specific injustice of *shirk*, is not valid either since the wording in the verse is general. Of course, it says that faith should not be tainted with *shirk* so that it does not obstruct its impact but that is an example of applying a general term to a specific case. But to take a specific meaning from a general word – without any circumstantial or verbal, attached or detached, indication – is not acceptable in the art of eloquence. This is obvious. As for the Prophet's statement that he has quoted: 'This refers to *shirk*'; this does not clearly indicate that *shirk* is the literal meaning of the verse and its application. We shall discuss this further, Allãh willing, in the section of Traditions.

QUR'ÃN [6:83]: *And that was Our argument which we gave to Ibrãhīm against his people; We exalt in ranks whom We please; surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing*:

The use of "*tilka* (تِلْكَ) that" for indicating something from a distance [instead of "this"] denotes eminence and greatness for the argument since it is a convincing argument based on nature and whose premises are derived from it.

As for the Almighty's Word: "We exalt in ranks whom We please;" The term "*darajãt* (**دَرَجَات**)" [translated as "ranks"] was initially used for steps of the ladder and then its usage was expanded and was applied for levels of perfection in moral arena such as knowledge, faith, honour and dignity, etc. Allãh's act of exalting whomever He pleases in ranks means that He bestows a person with moral perfection and real virtues in qualities that are humanly attainable such as knowledge and piety as well as qualities that are humanly non-attainable [rather they are bestowed by Divine Grace] such as prophethood, messenger-ship, sustenance, etc.[28]

Although the term *darajãt* has occurred as an indefinite noun, in a general sense, it is nonetheless certain contextually that it refers to the ranks of knowledge and guidance. Allãh has indeed exalted Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) by guiding him, showing him the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, giving him conviction, decisive arguments and knowledge. While talking about the ranks of knowledge, the Almighty says: *Allãh will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high rank...* (58:11).

The verse ends with the words: "surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing," in order to emphasize that all this was done by the wisdom of the Almighty and His knowledge just as the arguments that He had given to the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) as mentioned earlier in this chapter before these arguments were based on His, the Sublime's Wisdom and Knowledge.

Finally, the change in this verse from the first person to third person [while talking about Ibrãhīm] was done in order to please the heart of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) and to confirm the matters discussed inhere.

TRADITIONS

1. aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates in *al-ʻUyūn* from Nuʻaym ibn ʻAbdillãh ibn Tamīm al-Qarashī, may Allãh be pleased with him, said: My father narrated to me from Ḥamdãn ibn Sulaymãn an-Nayshãbūrī from ʻAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm who said that he attended the gathering of

[28] Adding 'sustenance' alongside prophethood and messengership might seem odd but it refers to the Islamic belief of Divine Decree about the means and maximum limit of sustenance (*rizq*) – that is entirely at Allãh's discretion and not fully result of the human exertions. (*tr.*)

al-Ma'mūn while ar-Riḍã (*'a.s.*) was with him. al-Ma'mūn said to him: "O Son of the Messenger of Allãh! Do you believe that the prophets are infallible?" He [*'a.s.*] said: "Yes." Then al-Ma'mūn asked him about some Qur'ãnic verses on this issue, and among those questions that he asked him was the following: "Can you tell me about the Word of Allãḥ, to Whom belong Mighty and Majesty, about Ibrãhīm: *So when the night over-shadowed him, he saw a star; he said: 'This is my Lord.*'" ar-Riḍã (*'a.s.*) said:

"Verily Ibrãhīm found himself among three groups of people: a group that worshipped Venus, a group that worshipped the moon and a group that worshipped the sun; and this was at that time when he came out from the den in which he was hidden. When the night overshadowed him, he saw the Venus and said: 'This is my Lord' in order to negate and inquire about it. And when it set down, he said: 'I do not love the setting ones' because setting was a quality of the created being and not a quality of the Eternal God. When he saw the moon rising, he said: 'This is my Lord' in order to negate and inquire about it. And when it set down, he said: 'If my Lord had not guided me, I should certainly be of the erring people.' Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: 'This is my Lord, this is bigger than the Venus and the moon' in order to negate and inquire about it, not for accepting. And when it also set, then he addressed all the three groups (worshippers of the Venus, the moon and the sun): 'O my people! Surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allãh). Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists.' Ibrãhīm only said what he said in order to show them the falsity of their belief and to prove to them that worship of entities that have the [setting] quality of the Venus, the moon and the sun is not valid, and that worship is valid for their Creator and Creator of the heavens and the earth. Moreover, he had argued against his people by what Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, has inspired to him as He [*s.w.t.*] said: *And that was Our argument which we gave to Ibrãhīm against his people.*" al-Ma'mūn said: "May Allãh keep you long, O son of the Messenger of Allãh!" (*'Uyūnu akhbãri 'r-Riḍã)*

The author says: This narration, with its contents, clearly supports a number of points that we derived from the context of the holy verses. Some other supporting narrations will come below. As for what the narration says about Ibrãhīm's statement: 'This is my Lord' that it was actually in order to negate and inquire rather than to inform and agree – this is one of the ways of interpretation of the verses that was

presented by the Imãm (*'a.s.*) in order to reject the argument of al-Ma'mūn, and that does not contradict the other ways of its interpretation, if there are any, as we shall see later on.

The Imãm's statement "setting was a quality of the created being" does not necessarily mean that the argument is based on "setting quality" of the created being as some have mentioned since it is possible that the argument was based on "not loving" and that in turn was based on the phenomenon of setting as a quality of the created being which cannot be an object of love. Think and ponder.

2. aṣ-Ṣadūq narrates from his father and Ibnu 'l-Walīd who both narrate from Sa'd from Ibn Burayd from Ibn Abī 'Umayr from Hishãm ibn Sãlim from Abū Baṣīr from Abū 'Abdillãh (*'a.s.*) who said: "The father of Ibrãhīm was an astrologer of Namrūd (Nimrod) ibn Kan'ãn; and Namrūd did not do anything but after consulting him. So, he looked at the stars, in one of the nights, and in the morning, he reported to Namrūd: 'I saw last night something surprising!' Namrūd asked: 'What was it?' He said: 'I saw a child being born in our land in whose hands will be our destruction; and it will not be long before he is conceived.' Namrūd was surprised by this and asked: 'Has he already been conceived by a woman?' He replied: 'No.' Part of the knowledge that was given to the astrologer was that the fire will burn that child but he was not told that Allãh will rescue him from it." The Imãm then continued: "The women were then separated from their husbands so that no one could be conceived. However, Ibrãhīm's father met his wife and Ibrãhīm was conceived. He thought that this is the child and so he sent for the mid-wives to come and check his wife. The Almighty Allãh made the foetus cling to the back and the midwives said: 'We don't see anything in her womb.' Finally, when Ibrãhīm's mother gave birth, his father decided to take him to Namrūd. His wife pleaded: 'Don't take your son to Namrūd so that he may kill him. Let me take him to some cave and place him in it until he dies; don't be the one to have killed your own son!' He said: 'So go.' She took him to a cave, nursed her [and placed him inside] and put a stone on the cave's entrance and left him. So, Allãh placed his sustenance in his thumb; whenever he would suck it, milk will come out of it; he would develop in one day like others develop in one week, and he would develop in one week like others develop in one month, and he would grow in one month like others grow up in one year. He stayed as long as Allãh wanted him to stay [in the cave].

"Then his mother told his father: 'Would you allow me to go to that child and see what happened to him?' He allowed her. She went to the cave and saw Ibrãhīm with his eyes lightening up like two lamps; she picked him, held him to her chest and nursed her. Then she went back to her home. His father inquired about him. She said: 'I have buried him in the ground.' She would go outside on the pretext of having work to do and then go to Ibrãhīm, hold him, nurse him and returns home. Once he started moving, his mother went to visit him as usual. When she started to leave, he got hold of her dress. She said: 'What is the matter?' He said: 'Take me with you.' She said: 'I will have to ask your father.'

"So, Ibrãhīm continued to stay in *ghaybah*, hidden physically, concealing his reality until he made his appearance with truth by Allãh's command and Allãh manifested His powers in him." (*Kamãlu 'd-dīn wa tamãmu 'n-ni'mah*)

The author says: [ar-Rãwandī] the author of *Qiṣaṣu 'l-anbiyã'* has quoted the same narration from aṣ-Ṣadūq from his father and Ibnu 'l-Walīd taking the chain of narration all the way to Abū Baṣīr from Abū 'Abdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq, *'a.s.*] who said: "Ãzar, the uncle of Ibrãhīm, was an astrologer of Namrūd who did not do anything but after consulting him, said: 'Verily, last night, I saw something strange!' Namrūd said: 'What was that?' He said: 'I saw a child being born in our land in whose hands will be our destruction.' So, he separated the men from the women; and Tãrikh [Ibrãhīm's father] had [before that] slept with the mother of Ibrãhīm who became pregnant…" Then he [*'a.s.*] continued the *ḥadīth* to the end.

The unity in the chain of narrators of both narrations as well as the content of both (with exception about the father vis-à-vis uncle of Ibrãhīm) led the author of *al-Biḥãr* to write: "It seems that what ar-Rãwandī has narrated is the same narration [as that of aṣ-Ṣadūq] but he has changed [the issue of Ibrãhīm's father] in order to bring it in line with the principles of the [Shī'ah] Imãmiyyah." Then al-Majlisī [the author of *al-Biḥãr*] has explained this narration and other similar narrations that talk about Ãzar the idol-worshipper as Ibrãhīm's father as narrations based on *at-taqiyyah* (dissimulation).

A similar *ḥadīth* has been narrated by al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr*, al-'Ayyãshī in his *at-Tafsīr*, and it has been narrated in Sunnī sources from Mujãhid by aṭ-Ṭabarī in his *Tarīkh* and from other sources by ath-Tha'labī in *Qiṣaṣu 'l-anibyã'*.

At the least, one thing worth mentioning is that the scholars of *ḥadīth* and history are unanimous that Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*), during his early years, was hidden in the cave out of fear that King Namrūd would kill him. Then he came out of the cave and argued against his father and his people about the issue of idols, the Venus, the moon and the sun, and also argued against the King's claim of divinity. The context of the verses supports this aspect of the narration.

As for the father of Ibrãhīm: The historians have written that his name was Tãrikh or Tãriḥ, and Ãzar was either his title or name of an idol or a positive nickname ('the helper') or a negative nickname ('the lame') in their language given by Ibrãhīm to him.

They have mentioned that this idol-worshipper named by the Qur'ãn as Ibrãhīm's father against whom he argued was Tãrikh, his biological father and his true parent. This is supported by a number of the scholars of *ḥadīth* and theology from among the Sunnīs but has been rejected by a group of their scholars as well as the Shīʻahs who are almost united against it except for what is seen among some *muḥaddithīn* who have included such narrations in their books. The best argument that the opponents – i.e., those who say that the idol-worshipper Ãzar was not Ibrãhīm's father rather he was his uncle or his maternal grand-father – are the narrations that have come from both schools of thought that the ancestors of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) were all monotheists and that none among them was an idol-worshipper. The debates between the two groups have continued.

The author says: The discussion of this nature – in whatever way it ends up – is outside the scope of the discussion of Qur'ãnic exegesis. Although the scholars from both groups are in need of presenting their *ḥadīth*-based proofs and deriving the right conclusion from them but we are not in need of them because the Qur'ãnic verses, as discussed earlier, prove that Ãzar, the idol-worshipper, whom Allãh has mentioned in these verses of *sūrah* of "*al-Anʻãm*" was not the real father of Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*). The narrations that say that Ãzar was Ibrãhīm's real father – with all the contradictions that are in the narrations – are against the Holy Book and do not deserve any attention. So, there is no need to explain them away as narrations based on *taqiyyah* with all the difference among the Sunnīs themselves.

3. ʻAlī ibn Ibrãhīm al-Qummī, under the verse: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth…* says: "My father narrated to me from Ismãʻīl ibn Marãr from Yūnus ibn ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn from Hishãm from Abū ʻAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*ʻa.s.*) who said:

"He [*s.w.t.*] opened for him what is on the earth and those who are on it; what is on the heaven and those who are on it and the angel who carries it; and the throne and those who are on it. He similarly did this for His Messenger (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) and the Chief of the Believers [ʻAlī] (*ʻa.s.*)." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: A similar narration has been quoted in *Baṣã'iru 'd-darajãt* by two chains of ʻAbdullãh ibn Muskãn and Abū Baṣīr from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (*ʻa.s.*) and by a chain of ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn from al-Bãqir (*ʻa.s.*); and al-ʻAyyãshī has narrated it from Zurãrah and Abū Baṣīr from aṣ-Ṣãdiq (*ʻa.s.*) and from Zurãrah and ʻAbdu 'r-Raḥmãn al-Qaṣīr from al-Bãqir (*ʻa.s.*); and [the Sunnī commentator, as-Suyūṭī, has] narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn ʻAbbãs, Mujãhid and as-Suddī from the earlier commentators.

While talking about the Throne (*al-ʻArsh*), we shall soon discuss the *ḥadīth* of ʻAlī (*ʻa.s.*) about *al-ʻArsh* that has been narrated in *al-Kãfī*. He says in it: "Those who carry the Throne and those who are around it are the divine scholars to whom Allãh bestowed His knowledge." Then he said: "This is the Kingdom that Allãh shows to His chosen ones, and showed it to His friend [Ibrãhīm] (*ʻa.s.*) as He [*s.w.t.*] said: *And thus did We show Ibrãhīm the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that he might be of those who are sure.*" This *ḥadīth* has commentary on other issues that have come in exegesis of 'showing the Kingdom' and confirmation of what we said earlier. Allãh willing, the full explanation of this *ḥadīth* will come in *sūrah* of "*al-Aʻrãf*" (ch.7).

4. al-ʻAyyãshī in his *tafsīr* narrates from Abū Baṣīr from Abū ʻAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*ʻa.s.*) who said: "When Ibrãhīm saw the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, he saw a person committing adultery so he invoked evil upon him and the person died, then he saw another person [in the same state] and he invoked evil upon him and he also died, and then he saw three persons [in the same state] and invoked evil upon them and they died as well. So, Allãh revealed to him: 'O Ibrãhīm, your prayers are answered, so do not invoke evil upon My servants; if I wished, I would not have created them [in the first place]. I have created my servants in three categories: a person who worships Me and does not associate anyone with Me; a person who worships other than Me but He can never escape from Me; and a person who worships other than Me but in his loins is one who will worship only Me [and so I spare him].'" (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: This is a *mustafīḍah* narration,[29] and al-Kulaynī has narrated it in *al-Kãfī* with a full chain from Abū Baṣīr from the Imãm [*'a.s.*]; aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated it in *'Ilalu 'sh-sharãyi'* from the Imãm [*'a.s.*]; and aṭ-Ṭabrisī has narrated it in *al-Iḥtijãj* from al-'Askarī (*'a.s.*). [Among Sunnī commentators,] as-Suyūṭī has narrated it in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* from Ibn Marduwayh from 'Alī (*'a.s.*) from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*), and [in another chain] from Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh. al-Bayhaqī has narrated it in *Shu'abu 'l-īmãn* from the chain of Sharḥ ibn Ḥawshab from Ma'ãdh ibn Jabal from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) and from a number of commentators without full chain of narrators.

5. al-'Ayyãshī narrates in his *at-Tafsīr* from Muḥammad ibn Muslim from one of the two Imãms [al-Bãqir or aṣ-Ṣãdiq] who said about Ibrãhīm [*'a.s.*] when he saw the star: "He was looking for his Lord and had not disbelieved; and anyone from the people who thinks like that [i.e., is in search of the truth], he is like him."

6. al-Qummī in his *at-Tafsīr* says that Abū 'Abdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*'a.s.*) was asked about Ibrãhīm's statement: *"This is my Lord."* Did he commit *shirk* by his statement: "This is my Lord?" He [*'a.s.*] said: "Whoever says that today is a polytheist; but in case of Ibrãhīm, there was no *shirk* since he was seeking his Lord. However, that statement from someone else would be *shirk*."

The author says: The opposite of the seeker of the truth is someone for whom the guidance and clear proof has been established; such a person cannot just suppose something as god that *shirk*.

7. al-'Ayyãshī in his *at-Tafsīr* narrates from Ḥujr who said that al-'Alã' ibn Sayyãbah sent someone with a question to Abū 'Abdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*'a.s.*) about Ibrãhīm's statement: 'This is my Lord': "If someone says this now, he is considered by us as a polytheist." He [*'a.s.*] said: "It was not *shirk* in case of Ibrãhīm since he was in search of his Lord. From other than him, it would be *shirk*."

He also narrates from Muḥammad ibn Ḥumrãn who asked Abū 'Abdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*'a.s.*) concerning Allãh's statement about what Ibrãhīm said: "This is my Lord." He [*'a.s.*] said: "He didn't reach to anything [of *shirk*]; he intended something other than what he said." (*at-Tafsīr*)

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[29] If a *khabar wãḥid* has multiple narrators, it is known as *mustafīḍah* narration and its status is elevated closer to that of the *mutawãtir ḥadīth*. (*tr.*)

The author says: Perhaps the Imãm meant that by saying: "This is my Lord" Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) did not mean anything more than the word itself and did not have any other meaning beyond that. In other words, he said it as a hypothetical statement or accepted the premises in order to prove its falsity as mentioned earlier [in the commentary].

8. as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* under verse: *Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice,* says that Aḥmad, al-Bukhãrī, Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥãtim, ad-Dãrquṭnī in *al-Afrãd,* Abu 'sh-Shaykh and Ibn Marduwayh have quoted from ʿAbdullãh ibn Masʿūd who said: "When the verse: *Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice,* was revealed, it distressed the people and they said: 'O Messenger of Allãh! Who among us has not being unjust to himself?' He [*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*] said: 'It is not what you think; have you not heard the virtuous servant saying that: *Verily, polytheism* (shirk) *is the great injustice?* It is indeed *shirk*.'

The author says: 'The virtuous servant' refers to Luqmãn as Allãh has quoted him in *sūrah* of "*Luqmãn*" (ch.31). This *ḥadīth* shows that *the sūrah* of "*al-Anʿãm*" was revealed after the *sūrah* of "*Luqmãn*". We have mentioned earlier that explaining the term 'injustice' as *shirk* is actually applying its most appropriate example and that *shirk* is an unforgiveable sin unlike any other sin whatever it may be. The proof for what we have said will come in the narrations [below].

9. as-Suyūṭī says that Aḥmad, aṭ-Ṭabarãnī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqī in *Shuʿabu 'l-īmãn* have narrated from Jarīr ibn ʿAbdillãh who said: "We departed with the Messenger Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) from Medina when a rider appeared towards us. When he came close, he greeted us. The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) said to him: "From where do you come?" He said: "I am coming from my family, my children and my tribe seeking the Messenger of Allãh." He [*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*] said: "You have found him." The person said: "Teach me what is the faith (*īmãn*)?" The Holy Prophet [*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*] said: "Testify that there is no god but Allãh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allãh; and establish the prayer, give the charity, fast in Ramaḍãn and do the pilgrimage of [Allãh's] House." He said: "I accept."

Then his camel's forelimb went into the rats' hole and he fall over with his head down and died. The Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.ʿa.w.a.*) said: "He is of those who did a little [as far as deeds are concerned] but will be rewarded abundantly; he is from those whom Allãh had described as: "T*hose who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice – they are those who shall have security and they are those*

who go aright." I saw wide eyed houris putting a fruit of Paradise into his mouth, and so I came to know that the person had died hungry." (*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr)*

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has also narrated this from al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī[30] and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Ibn ʻAbbās a similar narration; al-ʻAyyāshī has narrated the same in his *at-Tafsīr* from Jābir al-Juʻfī from an unnamed person from the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*).

as-Suyūṭī also says that ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd has narrated from Ibrāhīm at-Taymī that a person asked the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) about this verse but he [*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*] was silent till a person came and accepted Islam and didn't live long before he joined a battle in which he was martyred. The Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.ʻa.w.a.*) said: "This person is among: *those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice*."

10. as-Suyūṭī says that al-Fāriyābī, ʻAbd ibn Ḥamīd, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Abu 'sh-Shaykh, al-Ḥākim (who has even authenticated the narration) and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib about the verse: *"those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice"* who said: "This verse was revealed about Ibrāhīm and his companions especially, and it is not for this *ummah*."

The author says: This narration does not conform to the general principles derived from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. Verily the verse does not contain any special command specific to one community and not the other like the practical laws legislated for one era and not the other. As for the faith (*īmān*) with its effects on different levels as well as the injustice (*ẓulm*) on different levels (affecting the *īmān* negatively), this is an issue bestowed in the human nature with no difference in time or nations.

Some commentators have tried to explain this *ḥadīth* by saying that perhaps he meant that Allāh has specifically granted to Ibrāhīm and his people a security against the general chastisement of the here-after and not just the security against perpetuity in it. Probably the reason for this exclusivity – if it were valid – is that the Almighty Allāh did not impose upon them anything but monotheism leaving the matters of laws to their strict civil system in matters of personal and behavioural laws.

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[30] al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī was a Ḥanafī Sūfī scholar, not be confused with at-Tirmidhī, the famous compiler of *Jāmiʻu 't-Tirmidhī,* one of the six canonical compilations of *ḥadīth* among the Sunnīs. (*tr.*)

Researchers have discovered the Code of Hammurabi, the righteous king who lived during Ibrãhīm's era and whom he welcomed and took one-tenth tax from him as it has been mentioned in the Book of Genesis (in the Old Testament); and so the Code is similar to the Torah in most of its laws. As for Allãh introducing the ritual *ḥajj* through Ibrãhīm, that was only for the people among the descendants of his son Ismã'īl and not among his Chaldean people. As for this *ummah:* its followers of *tawḥīd* will still be punished for sins according to their level of gravity since they were charged with a complete code of law and will be accountable for its implementation. Here ends the commentator's argument.

There is obvious arbitrariness in his argument. We have already mentioned earlier that King Hammurabi lived in the beginning of the year 1700 BC while Ibrãhīm lived approximately in the beginning of 2000 BC.

Hammurabi was a good king in his own religion, just to his people, practically committed to the laws that he legislated, diligently imposed the laws in his domain in the best way, and, as it is said, they were the earliest civil laws – in spite of all this, he was an idol-worshipper and sought help from the gods of idol-worshippers as he himself wrote after completing his Code as seen in the tablet discovered in the ruins of Babylon. Those gods he mentioned in his statement at the end of the Code, he thanked them for granting him the great kingdom and made him successful in spreading justice and laying down the laws. The gods that he prayed for their help in preserving the laws from distortion are Mīrudãkh, the god of gods and god of law and justice, Zamãmã and Ishtãr, the gods of war, Shãmãsh, the god who maintains justice in the sky and the earth, Sīn, the god of the heavens, Ḥãdãd, the god of fertility, Nīrghãl, the god of victory, Bal, the god of destiny, and other gods like Biyltīs, Nino, Sãjīlã, etc.

Moreover, what the commentator has said that Allãh did not impose on Ibrãhīm's people anything but monotheism leaving the matters of laws to their strict civil system is rejected by the Qur'ãnic narrations which talks about Ibrãhīm's prayer (as seen in his prayers in the *sūrah* of "*Ibrãhīm*" [ch.14]), it mentions how Allãh revealed to him the doing of good deeds and giving charity (as seen in the *sūrah* of "*al-Anbiyã'*" [ch.21]), and legislated *ḥajj* and permissibility of cattle's meat (as seen in the *sūrah* of "*al-Ḥajj*" [ch.22]). Part of his *sharī'ah* was also the disassociation with the idol-worshippers (as seen in the *sūrah* of "*al-Mumtaḥinah*" [ch.60]), and he used to prohibit every kind of

injustice that was against human nature (as seen in the "*Sūratu 'l-An'ãm*" [ch.6], etc.). Also, part of Ibrãhīm's *sharī'ah* was physical purity (as seen in the *sūrah* of "*al-Ḥajj*" [ch.22]), and there are narrations that he introduced the *ḥanīfiyyah* tradition which consists of ten things: five related to the head and five related to the body, including circumcision. He used to greet by the greeting of peace (as seen in the "*Sūratu 'l-Hūd*" [ch.11] and "*Maryam*" [ch.19]).

Allãh, the Sublime, has indeed said that: *...the faith of your father, Ibrãhīm...* (22:78) and: *Say: "Nay!* (We follow) *the religion of Ibrãhīm, the upright one..."* (2:135), whereby He has described Islam, with its doctrines and practices, as the religion of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*). Although this does not mean that Islam with its elaborate code of law was introduced from days of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) – rather the reality is contrary to that as mentioned in: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrãhīm and Mūsã and 'Īsã...* (42:13) – it proves that Allãh's laws are based on a principle or general principles that emanate from the nature: whatever conforms to it is subject to commandments and whatever does not conform to it is subject of prohibitions. After mentioning the arguments against *shirk*, and some general commandments and prohibitions, the Almighty Allãh addresses His Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) as follows: *Say: "Surely,* (as for) *me, my Lord has guided me to the straight path;* (to) *a most right religion, the faith of Ibrãhīm the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists."* (6:161)

If what the above-mentioned commentator has said was the fact that Allãh did not lay down any code of law for Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) and his people, rather He left them to the prevailing civil laws of the time, i.e., the Code of Hammurabi – then that Code would be endorsed and valid in Allãh's eyes, and would be part of Ibrãhīm's religion, and so shall the Islamic faith (that has been described in the Qur'ãn as the pure religion of Ibrãhīm) [be linked to the Code of the idol-worshipping king] thus making it one of the Divine faiths with a revealed scripture!

The undeniable truth is that it was the Divine revelation that provided the past prophets and their peoples with the general principles for social life in this world and [success] in the hereafter (such as the acts of worship), and the general norms (of good and evil) that would guide the sensible human being towards forming a good society and refraining from injustice, extravagance and supporting the tyrants, etc; and then enjoin them to be members of the society equipped with such guidance and to call for acquiring good and piety, and refraining from

evil, indecency and mischief irrespective of the socio-political nature of those societies whether they were governed by oppression of the unjust and tyrants or by benevolence of the just rulers and their organized political systems.

However, no elaborate code of laws was sent down before the advent of Islam except in the Tawrãt (Torah) which had some laws similar to what was in the Code of Hammurabi. It is true that the Tawrãt was sent down by Allãh to Mūsã (*'a.s.*) and it was preserved by the Israelites but it is also a fact that they lost it during the conquest of [the Babylonian King] Nebuchadnezzar II (Bakhtnaṣr) who annihilated them, destroyed their Temple and only a few of them survived who were enslaved and taken to Babylon and lived there until [the Persian] King Cyrus (Kūrush) conquered Babylon, emancipated the Israelites and allowed them to return to Jerusalem. Ezra, the High Priest, was allowed to write the Tawrãt for them after its copies had perished and its contents were forgotten, and they had become used to the Babylonian laws that were prevalent among the Chaldeans.

With such a history [of losing the Tawrat and the rewriting of it in an environment influenced by Babylonian laws] how can it be said that Allãh has endorsed whatever of Hammurabian Code is found in the Jewish laws? The Qur'ãn confirms only some of what is in the present Tawrãt. Nonetheless, one cannot deny that some man-made laws (established outside the Divine revelation) contain some useful and good laws.

11. al-Kulaynī narrates in *al-Kãfī* through his chain of narrators from Abū Baṣīr from Abū 'Abdillãh (*'a.s.*) who explained the verse: *those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice*, as *shirk*, polytheism.

12. al-Kulaynī narrates through another chain of narrators from Abū Baṣīr from him [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*'a.s.*) who explained the verse [and the term 'injustice'] as "doubt." (*al-Kãfī*)

The author says: al-'Ayyãshī has also narrated this *ḥadīth* from Abū Baṣīr from him (*'a.s.*).

13. al-'Ayyãshī in his *at-Tafsīr* narrates from Abū Baṣīr from Abū 'Abdillãh (*'a.s.*) that he said: "I asked him [*'a.s.*] about the Word of Allãh: *those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice*. He [*'a.s.*] said: 'We seek Allãh's protection, O Abū Baṣīr, from being among those who have mixed up their faith with injustice.' Then he [*'a.s.*] said: 'Those are the Khawãrij (Khãrijites) and their companions.'"

14. al-ʻAyyãshī narrates from Yaʻqūb ibn Shuʻayb from Abū ʻAbdillãh (*ʻa.s.*) about His [*s.w.t.*]'s Word: *those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice.* He [*ʻa.s.*] said: "It means misguidance and whatever is beyond it." (*at-Tafsīr*)

The author says: It seems that the meaning of misguidance in this narration is *shirk* which is the source of all the injustice and the sins and disobedience beyond it. Or it could refer to the lowest level of injustice which manifest in form of sins, and beyond it would be *shirk* which is an intensified form of misguidance – after all, all sins are misguidance.

These narrations, as you can see, give multifarious meanings in explaining the term "*ẓulm*, injustice" in the verse: idol-worshipping, doubt, and the ideas of the Khawãrij; and some narrations have explained it as the love for the enemies of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*ʻa.s.*). All this proves what we had said earlier that the "*ẓulm*" mentioned in the verse is of a general meaning and it applies to its various levels based on the level of understanding.

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THE STORY OF IBRÃHĪM, PEACE BE UPON HIM, AND HIS PERSONALITY

This section consists of various Qur'ãnic, academic, historical and other discussions.

1. The Story of Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) in the Qur'ãn:

From his childhood until the beginning of his discernible age, Ibrãhīm used to live in isolation from the society of his people. Then he came to them and joined his father, and found him and his people worshipping the idols. He was not pleased with what he saw since his nature was pure and blameless, blessed by Allãh, the Glorified who showed him the truth and the kingdom of everything – in short, the true word and the good deed.

Therefore, Ibrãhīm [*ʻa.s.*] started arguing with his father against worship of the idols and calling him to abandon them and to adopt monotheism of Allãh, Glory be to Him and to follow Him so that He may guide him to the right path and remove him from the control of the Satan. He continued to argue against his father and to insist upon

him [to abandon idolworshipping] until the latter scolded him, pushed him away from himself and threatened to stone him if he does not stop criticizing his idols and disliking them.

Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*), however, was courteous towards his father out of kindness and compassion as he possessed noble character and pleasant speech so he bade him farewell and promised to ask forgiveness for him. Then he separated himself from him, his people *and whatever they worshipped besides Allãh*, (19:49).

Thereafter, he argued against the people in matter of idols (21:51-52; 26:69-77; 37:83-87) and argued against others who worshipped the sun, the moon and the star until he proved the truth to them and he came to be known as one who opposed the idols and gods (6:73-82). [This continued without any incident] until one day, the people went for a collective worship out of the town and he pretended to be sick and so didn't go out with them and stayed back. Then he entered the temple of idols and planned to trick them by cutting their idols into pieces except the big one so that they may refer to it when they returned. When the people returned and saw what had happened to their idols, they investigated about the perpetrator. Some of them said that they had heard a young man known as Ibrãhīm talking ill of them.

They summoned him to their gathering; then brought him to the public so that the people may be witness. They asked him: "Did you do this to our gods, O Ibrãhīm?" He replied: "Actually, this big one seems to have done it; ask them, if they can speak?" He had left the big one intact without breaking it into pieces and had placed an axe on its shoulder or something similar to it so that they may see that he is one who has broken the idols.

Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) had said that while he knew that they did not believe him since they knew that the idol is an inanimate item which cannot speak. He, however, said whatever he said so that he could say to them: 'Ask them, if they can speak,' in order to make them openly confess that the idols are inanimate objects that do not have life and consciousness. It is then that they turned to one another and said: "Surely you yourselves are the unjust;" and they reflected within themselves and said: "You surely know that they do not speak." He said: "What! Do you worship, besides Allãh, what neither harms you nor helps you? Fie on you and on what you worship besides Allãh! What! Do you not then understand? Do you worship what you curve yourselves while Allãh has created you and what you do?"

They said: "Burn him and help your gods." So they built a pit and started a blaze of fire; all the people joined in this matter and threw him into the fire. Allãh, however, made the fire cool and harmless for him, and defeated their plan. (21:57-71; 37:88-98). It was during these events that he was presented to the king whom people worshipped and considered as a god. The king argued with Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) about his God. Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) said: "My Lord gives life and causes death." The king challenged this argument by saying: "I also give life and cause death" by killing one prisoner and releasing another. So, Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) now argued more clearly so as to nullify his fallacy; he said: *"So surely Allãh causes the sun to rise from the east, then make it rise from the west; thus he who disbelieved was confounded,"* (2:258).

When Allãh rescued him from the fire, Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) started calling the people towards the pure faith, the faith of monotheism. Just a few people believed in him. Among those few, Allãh has named Lūṭ and Ibrãhīm's wife with whom he had migrated; he had married her before traveling from his place to the holy land.[31]

Then Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) and the believers who were with him repudiated from their people, and he personally repudiated from Ãzar whom used to call 'father' but who was not his real father. He then migrated alongwith his wife and Lūṭ to the holy land so that he may worship Allãh, Glory be to Him, without any hindrance from the unjust and tyrannical group of his people (60:4; 21:71). It was there when Allãh, Glory be Him, gave him the good tidings of Ismãʻīl and Isḥãq, and after Isḥãq, Yaʻqūb, while he had become an elderly and reached the old age. Ismãʻīl was born to him, then Isḥãq, and Allãh, Glory be to Him, blessed him, his two son and their children.

Thereafter, upon the command of his Lord, Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) went to the land of Mecca that was without any vegetation, and settled his son Ismãʻīl who was an infant [and his mother] therein and then returned to the holy land. Ismãʻīl grew up in Mecca and later on a group from the Arab who lived close by settled around him and that was the beginning of the city of Mecca.

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[31] The proof of the faith of some of his community members can be seen in: *Indeed, there is for you a good example in Ibrãhīm and those with him when they said to their people, "Sure we disassociate from you…*" (60:4); and the proof that he had married before leaving for the holy land can be seen in his prayer for a righteous son from his Lord in: *And he said, "Surely I go to my Lord; He will guide me; my Lord! Grant me* (a son from) *among the doers of good deeds.*" (37:100)

Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) used to occassionally visit Ismãʻīl in the land of Mecca before the city and the Kaʻbah was established, and even after that (2:126; 14:35-41). Then he built the Kaʻbah, the Sacred House, with the help of Ismãʻīl – that was the first house established for the people from Allãh as a blessing and guidance for the world, in it are clear signs such as the Maqãm Ibrãhīm; and whoever enters it will be secure (2:127-129; 3:96-97). He called people for *ḥajj* and instituted the rituals of pilgrimage (22:26-30).

Allãh then ordered him to sacrifice his son Ismãʻīl (*ʻa.s.*). So, when his son was with him in the rituals, and when he reached the age of working with him, Ibrãhīm said to him: "O my son! Surely I am seeing in dream that I am sacrificing you; consider then what you see." He said: "O my father! Do what you are commanded; if Allãh pleases, you will surely find me of the patient ones." So when both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead, We called out to him saying: "O Ibrãhīm! You have indeed proved the vision true; surely thus do We reward the doers of good." (37:101-107)

The last that the Noble Qur'ãn relates of Ibrãhīm's stories are his prayers when he was in Mecca as quoted in the *sūrah* of "Ibrãhīm" (14:35-41) which ended with his words: *"O our Lord, forgive me and my parents, and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass."*

2. The Status of Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) Before Allãh, Glory be to Him, and his State of Worship:

The Almighty Allãh, in His Book, has bestowed upon Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) the most beautiful of praises, thanked his struggle in His way the best of thanks, repeatedly mentioned him by name in more than seventy places in His Book,[32] and enumerated many of His blessings upon him.

Here are some of those blessings: *Allãh granted him his rectitude before* (21:51); selected him in this world [among the chosen ones] and promised that he will be placed among the righteous ones in the Hereafter – this is *when his Lord said to him, "Submit!" and he said, "I submit myself to the Lord of the universe;"* (2:130-131). He [*s.w.t.*] is the one who made him turn his face towards His Lord being upright,

[32] To be precise, the name of Ibrãhīm (*ʻa.s.*) has occurred sixty-nine times in the Qur'ãn. Of course, his mention without using his name would be more than that (*tr.*)

wholly to Him and was not to be among the polytheists (6:79); He is the one granted tranquility to his heart and gave him certainty by showing him Allãh's Kingdom of the heavens and the earth (2:260; 6:75); Allãh took him as His friend (4:125); placed His mercy and blessings upon him and his family, and described him as one who was satisfied (53:37); He praised him as forbearing, tender-hearted and oft-returning (to Allãh) (11:73-75); and He also described him as a nation which was sincerely obedient to Allãh and he was not one of the polytheists, rather he was grateful for His blessings; He chose him and guided him to the right path, He gave him good in this life and promised to place him among the righteous ones in the Hereafter. (16:120-122)

Allãh also described him as a true prophet (19:41); and counted him among His believing servants and among the good ones; and greeted him with peace (37:83-111); and that he is mentioned among those who were men of strength and insight, (38:45-46). Allãh appointed him as a leader for the people (2:124) and made him one of the five Major Prophets who were given the scripture and law (33:7; 42:13; 87:18-19); Allãh gave him the knowedge, the wisdom, the Book, the kingdom, the gifts and gave perpetuity to his descendents. (4:54; 6:74-90; 43:28); and He placed prophethood and revelation among his descendents (57:26), and blessed him with a truthful tongue among the people of the Hereafter (26:84; 19:50).

These are the divine positions and spiritual statuses that Almighty Allãh has bestowed to Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*); and the Holy Qur'ãn has not described the qualities of any of the prophet and noble messengers, and their statuses, the way it has fully described his qualities and noble statuses. Refer to the interpretation of each of these positions that we have described in its appropriate place in what has already passed or what I shall, God willing, explain since getting into them at this place would take us away from the purpose of this section.

The Almighty Allãh has preserved Ibrãhīm's noble life and religious personality by naming this upright religion as Islam just as Ibrãhīm had named it, and He has attributed it to him: *...the faith of your father Ibrãhīm; he named you Muslims before...* (22:78); and he said: *Say: "Surely,* (as for) *me, my Lord has guided me to the straight path;* (to) *a most right religion, the faith of Ibrãhīm the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists,"* (6:161).

He also made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, that Ibrãhīm had built as the *qiblah* of the people, and instituted the *ḥajj* rituals – these are

actually rituals that depict the story of him settling his son and his slave-girl [in Mecca] and of sacrificing his son Ismã'īl and how he strived to move in the direction of the Lord and patiently bore challenges and difficulties for His sake as it was mentioned in the commentary of: *And* (remember) *when We made the House a rendezvous for men…* (2:125), in Volume One of this book.

3. Ibrãhīm [*'a.s.*]'s Blessed Impact in Human Society:

One of his overwhelming impact is that the faith of monotheism, wherever and with whomsoever it exists, is traced back to him. The religions that are today described as monotheistic are: the Jewish faith which is traced to Prophet Mūsã s/o 'Imrãn (*'a.s.*) whose geneology goes back to Isrã'īl who is Ya'qūb s/o of Isḥãq s/o Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*); the Christian faith which is traced to Prophet 'Īsã s/o Maryam (*'a.s.*) who is a descendent of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*); and the Islamic faith whose founder is the Messenger of Allãḥ, Muḥammad (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) whose geneology goes back to Ismã'īl s/o Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*). So the belief of monotheism is his noble legacy for the world.

Moreover, in Islam, one can also observe Ibrãhīm's teachings such as ritual prayer, charity, pilgrimage, permissibility of eating the meat of cattle, repurdiation of Allãḥ's enemies, the greeting [of peace], the ten rituals about physical cleanliness (five in the head and five in the rest of the body) – those of the head are cutting of the mustache, lengthening the beard, combing the hair, brushing the teeth and using toothpick; those of the body are shaving the bodily hair, circumcision, clipping of the nails, washing the body after major impurity and purifying oneself by water.[33]

A comprehensive search proves that whatever good traditions (in beliefs and deeds) in the human society exist are from the legacy of the noble prophethood as we indicated in the previous discussions. Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) has a positive legacy on all humans of this era irrespective of the fact whether they realize it or not.

4. Ibrãhīm [*'a.s.*]'s Story in the Present Torah:

The Torah says: And Te'rah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Hâ'ran. Now these are the generations of Te'rah. Te'rah begat Abram, Nahor, and Hâ'ran; and Hâ'ran begat Lot. And Hâ'ran died before his father Te'rah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the

[33] As quoted in *Majma'u 'l-bayãn* from *Tafsīru 'l-Qummī.*

Chăl'dees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sâ'raī; and the name of Nahor's wife, Mĭl'cah, the daughter of Hâ'ran, the father of Mĭl'cah, and the father of Ĭs'cah. But Sâ'raī was barren; she had no child. And Te'rah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Hâ'ran, his son's son, and Sâ'raī his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chăl'dees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Hâ'ran, and dwelt there. And the days of Te'rah were two hundred and five years; and Te'rah died in Hâ'ran.[34]

The Torah further says: Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Hâ'ran. And Abram took Sâ'raī his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Hâ'ran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sī'chem, unto the plain of Mô'reh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Bĕth-el on the west, and Hā'ī on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sâ'raī his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife; and they will kill me, but thee they will keep alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the

[34] The Book of Genesis, chap.11, vrs.26-32 (*tr.*).

Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.

And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sâ'raī Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.[35]

Then the Torah says: And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bĕth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bĕth-el and Hā'ī; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Pĕr'izz-īte dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.' And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Go-mŏr'rah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zō'ar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.[36]

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[35] The Book of Genesis, chap.12, vrs.1-20 (*tr.*).
[36] The Book of Genesis, chap.13, vrs.1-12 (*tr.*).

It further says: And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gŏmor'rah, and the king of Ad'mah, and the king of Zeboi'im, and the king of Bē'la (the same is Zō‘ar;) and they joined battle with them against them in the vale of Sĭd'dĭm; With Chĕd-or-lā'ō-mer the king of Ē'lam, and Tĭ'dal king of nations, and Ăm'ra-phĕl king of Shĭ'när, and A'rī-ŏch king of Ĕl'la-sär; four kings with five. And the vale of Sĭd'dĭm was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gŏ-mor'rah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Go-mŏr'rah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.[37]

The Torah says: And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Măm're the Ămorīte, brother of Ĕsh'cōl, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hō'bah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.[38]

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chĕd-or-lā'ō-mer and the kings that were with him, at the vale of Shā'veh – the same is the King's Vale. And Mĕl-chĭz'e-dĕk king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.' And he gave him tithes of all.

And the king of Sodom said unto Abram: Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Ĕsh'cōl, and Măm're, let them take their portion.'[39]

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[37] The Book of Genesis, chap.14, vrs.8-12 (*tr.*).
[38] The Book of Genesis, chap.14, vrs.13-16 (*tr.*).
[39] The Book of Genesis, chap.14, vrs.17-24 (*tr.*).

Until it says: And Sâ'raī Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hā'gär. And Sâ'raī said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sâ'raī. And Sâ'raī Abram's wife took Hā'gär her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

And he went in unto Hā'gär, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sâ'raī said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee. But Abram said unto Sâ'raī, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sâ'raī dealt hardly with her, and she fled from her face. And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hā'gär, Sâ'raī's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sâ'raī. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.' And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ish'mael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seest me? Wherefore the well was called Be'er-la-haī'-roi; behold, it is between Kā'desh and Be'rĕd. And Hā'gär bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hā'gär bare, Ish'ma-el. And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hā'gär bare Ish'ma-el to Abram.[40]

The Torah says: And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for

[40] The Book of Genesis, chap.16, vrs.1-16 (*tr.*).

me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.[41]

It further says: And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations…[42]

The Torah says: And God said unto Abraham, As for Sâ'raī thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sâ'raī, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

And Abraham said unto God, O that Ish'ma-el might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ish'ma-el, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And He left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.[43]

Then it narrates the story of the Lord coming with two angels to destroy the inhabitants of Sodom, the people of Lūṭ. They came to

[41] The Book of Genesis, chap.17, vrs.1-8 (*tr.*).
[42] The Book of Genesis, chap.17, vrs.9-12 (*tr.*).
[43] The Book of Genesis, chap.17, vrs.15-22 (*tr.*).

Ibrāhīm who hosted them and they ate from the food that he had prepared from the calf that he had slaughtered and the curd and milk that he offered them. The angels gave the good news to Sārah of giving birth to Isḥāq; and they also mentioned the matter of the people of Lūṭ. Ibrāhīm tried to disduade them from destroying them but they convinced him, and then the destruction took place.

The Torah then describes Ibrāhīm's move to Ge'rar and how he settled therein and told its king, Abim'e-lech, that Sarah was his sister. The king took Sarah for himself but God came to him in dream and told him not to take someone's wife. He called Ibrāhīm and rebuked him for calling his own wife as his sister. Ibrāhīm apologized and explained that he had done so out of fear of death. The king returned Sarah to him and gave him plentiful wealth. (Similar to the story of Fir'awn [of Egypt mentioned earlier].)

The Torah says: And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have borne him a son in his old age. And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.[44]

And Sarah saw the son of Hā'gär the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.'[45]

And Abraham arose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hā'gär, putting it on her shoulder, and

[44] The Book of Genesis, chap.21, vrs.1-8 (*tr.*).
[45] The Book of Genesis, chap.21, vrs.9-13 (*tr.*).

the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Be'er-shē'ba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hā'gär out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hā'gär? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew; and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.[46]

The Torah continues: And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here am I. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Issac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Mō-rī‘ah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.[47]

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham

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[46] The Book of Genesis, chap.21, vrs.14-21 (*tr.*). In Islamic narrations, Ismã‘īl's wife was from the Jurham, a Yemeni tribe. (*Author's note*)

[47] The Book of Genesis, chap.22, vrs.1-8 (*tr.*)

stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Je-hō'vah-jī'reh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Be'er-she'ba; and Abraham dwelt at Be'er-shē'ba.[48]

Then the Torah describes Isḥãq's marriage to a girl from his own tribe, and then death of Sãrah at the age of 127 years in Hebron, and thereafter Ibrãhīm's marriage to Keturah who bore him sons; then it talks about the death of Ibrãhīm at the age of 175 years and his sons Isḥãq and Ismã'īl buried him in the cave of Machpelah and that is in the present-day city al-Khalil (Hebron).

This is the summary of the stories of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) and his life history as seen in the Torah (in the Book of Genesis, chapters 11 to 25). It is necessary for a critical scholar to compare what has come in the Old Testament with Ibrãhīm's story in the Holy Qur'ãn, and then he can form his opinion.

5. [Contradictions & Inconsistencies in Torah's Narration:]

The inconsistencies in the sentences of the story mentioned in the Torah and contradictions in its conclusions confirm what the Holy Qur'ãn says that the Bible has been subjected to interpolation.

[A] The major flaw in the story is that it has neglected to describe his early struggles and his arguments with his people, and the trials

[48] The Book of Genesis, chapt.22, vrs.9-19 (*tr.*).

and tribulations that they inflicted upon him; and these are the shinning aspects of his history.

Among its flaws of neglection is Ibrãhīm's task of building the Sacred Kaʻbah, declaring it as a secure sanctuary, and instituting the pilgrimage. No religious scholar or a social critic would doubt that this ancient structure which continues to stand on its foundations since 4000 years is from the major Divine signs that reminds the people of Almighty Allãh, it has preserved the truth for a long time, and it is the first house of Almighty Allãh that was established for the people as a source of blessing and guidance for the world.

This neglect stems from nothing but the Israelite bias of the writers and authors of the Torah that pushed them to erase any mention of the Kaʻbah and only to enumerate the altars of sacrifice that Ibrãhīm built in Shechem [present day Nablus], East Jerasulem, and the hill of the Lord.

[This is also reflected] in the way they have described the noble prophet, Ismãʻīl: that he was a wild ass of a man against every man and every man's hand against him; and that he had no nobility rather he was banished by his father, and grew up becoming an archer! *They desire to extinguish with their mouths the light of Allãh; but Allãh will perfect His Light* [Qur., 61:8].

[B] Among other flaws of the Torah is that it attributes actions to Ibrãhīm that do not fit the status of prophethood or the spirit of righteousness and magnanimity: for example, the statement that Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine to Ibrãhīm and blessed it; and he was the priest of God the Most High.[49]

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[49] Some commentators have explained this by saying that this Melchizedek was the same as Amraphel, the king of Shinar, mentioned in the earlier part of the story, and that he was actually Hammurabi, the author of the Hammurabi Code, who was from the early kings of Babylon.

There is a great dispute about the time-frame of Hammurabi's reign, and most of what is said about him does not does fit the era of Ibrãhīm's lifetime who lived 2000 BC. For example, in the book *al-ʻArab qablu 'l-Islãm* it said that Hammurabi reigned in Babylon in years 2232–2287 BC while in the Hammurabi Code, as quoted in *Aqdam sharãyiʻ 'l-ʻãlam* by F. Edward, it says that his reign was in years 2167–2205 BC; and yet the *Qãmūs aʻlãmi 'sh-sharq wa 'l-gharb* says that he reigned in Babylon in the years 1686–1727 BC, and the *Qãmūsu 'l-Kitãbi 'l-muqaddas* says that he reigned in 1920–1975 BC.

The most obvious proof that denies the suggestion [that Melchizedek was Hammurabi] is the discovery of the rock in the ruins of Babylon that has the Hammurabi Code which contains names of the Babylonian idols – this proves that Hammurabi was an idol-worshipper and he could not have been the priest of God the Most High. (*Author's note*)

[C] Among its inconsistencies is that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*), in one instance, told the princes of Pharoah of Egypt that Sãrah was his sister (and he advised her to support his statement by saying to her: "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister; that it may be well with me for thy sake, and that my soul may live because of thee.") And, in another instance, he told Abimelech, the king of Gerar, that Sãrah was his sister. So the Pharoah took her as a wife once, and then Abimelech took her as a wife the second time. And in the first case, he explains away his statement as "his sister in faith" and in the other case as "his father's daughter from a woman other than his mother."

The mildest conclusion of Ibrãhīm's statement (that does not fit the status of one who was God's friend) is that he was presenting his wife to the Pharoah and Abimelech deceitfully so that they make take her as their wife while she is a married woman! He does this in order to acquire precious gifts and gain the wealth from them both!

All this inspite of the Torah's clear statement that Sãrah, at that time and in particular when Abimelech took her, was an old woman of seventy years or more – an age when normally a woman loses the grace of her youthfulness and the purity of her beauty. Moreover, the flamboyant kings and the tyrants are attracted only to young girls who are exceptionally beautiful and stunningly gorgeous.

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[D] [Comparing such narrations in *ḥadīth* literature:]

Similar stories can be seen in the narrations of *Ṣaḥīḥu 'l-Bukhãrī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) said:

Ibrãhīm did not tell a lie except on three occasions. Twice for the sake of Allãh when he said: *"I am sick,"* and he said: *"*(I have not done this but) *the big idol has done it."* The (third was) that while Ibrãhīm and Sãrah were going (on a journey) they passed by (the territory of) a tyrant. Someone said to the tyrant, "This man (i.e. Ibrãhīm) is accompanied by a very charming lady." So, he sent for Ibrãhīm and asked him about Sãrah saying: "Who is this lady?" Ibrãhīm said: "She is my sister." Ibrãhīm went to Sãrah and said: "O Sãrah! There are no believers on the surface of the earth except you and me. This man asked me about you and I have told him that you are my sister, so don't contradict my statement." The tyrant then called Sãrah and when she went to him, he tried to take hold of her with his hand, but (his hand got stiff and) he was confounded. He asked Sãrah: "Pray to Allãh

for me, and I shall not harm you." So Sãrah asked Allãh to cure him and he got cured. He tried to take hold of her for the second time, but (his hand got as stiff as or stiffer than before and) was more confounded. He again requested Sãrah: "Pray to Allãh for me, and I will not harm you." Sãrah asked Allãh again and he became alright. He then called one of his guards (who had brought her) and said: "You have not brought me a human being but have brought me a devil." The tyrant then gave Hãjar as a girl-servant to Sãrah.

Sãrah came back (to Ibrãhīm) while he was praying. Ibrãhīm, gesturing with his hand, asked: "What has happened?" She replied, "Allah has spoiled the evil plot of the infidel (or immoral person) and gave me Hãjar for service."

(Abū Hurayrah then addressed his listeners saying, "That [Hãjar] was your mother, O Banū Mã'u 's-Samã' [i.e. the Arabs, the descendants of Ismã'īl, Hãjar's son])."

There is a *ḥadīth* in *Ṣaḥīḥu 'l-Bukhãri* through multiple narrators from Anas and Abū Hurayrah, in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* from Abū Hurayrah and Ḥudhayfah, in *Musnad* of Aḥmad from Anas, Ibn 'Abbãs, and it has also been produced by al-Ḥãkim from Ibn Mas'ūd, by aṭ-Ṭabarãnī from 'Ubãdah ibni 'ṣ-Ṣãmit and Ibn Abī Shaybah from Salmãn, by at-Tirmidhī from Abū Hurayrah, and by Abū 'Awãnah from Ḥudhayfah from Abū Bakr – the *ḥadīth* of intercession of the Holy Prophet (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) on the Day of Resurrection. It is a long narration which says that the people will approach the prophets, one after another, asking them for intercession with Allãh; and whenever they would approach a prophet and ask him for intercession, he will send them to the next prophet and apologize because of his mistakes until they reach to the Last of the Prophet, Muhammad (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*), who will positively respond to their plea. In that narration, it says that when they will approach Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) asking him to intercede on their behalf with Allãh, he will say to them: "I am not fit for this because I have lied three times," referring to his statements: "I am sick", "the big idol has done this" and "tell him that I am your brother."

Proper reflection does not support the contents of these two narrations, as mentioned by some researchers. If the narrations suggest that the three statements described as lies were not outright lies but kind of double-entendre and amazing expositions (as eluded in some words of the narration in some versions of the Prophet's saying that, "Ibrãhīm did not utter a lie except three, all of them for the sake of Allãh"; and his description that, "none of them are lie, rather they are

for support for Allāh's religion") – then why did Ibrāhīm, in the narration of the Day of Resurrection, count them as his sins and as barriers for intercession, and apologizes on that account? Moreover, with such an interpretation, the lies would be counted as his struggles for the sake of Allāh and as his good deeds for the faith, if at all it were permissible for any prophet to lie for the sake of the faith. However, you know from the previous discussion on "Prophethood" in volume two[50] of this book that lying is absolutely not permissible for prophets (*'a.s.*) since it will totally erode the trust in their information [from the Divine revelation] and statements.

If such types of statement can be considered as a lie and a barrier from intercession with Almighty Allāh, then Ibrāhīm's statement when he saw the star, the moon and the sun, "this is my Lord, this is my Lord" is more deserving of being described as a lie that prevents intercession that stems from nearness to Almighty Allāh.

Furthermore, Ibrāhīm (*'a.s.*)'s statement quoted by the Almighty Allāh, *Then he looked at the stars, looking up once, then he said, "Surely I am sick."* [37:88-89], is devoid of any context that shows that it was a lie and unreal; it is most probable that he was sick with a kind of illness that did not prevent him from smashing the idols.

Similarly, when the people asked him: *"Have you done this to our gods, O Ibrāhīm?"* he answered them (while they knew that the idols were inanimate items devoid of any sense or will), *"Surely this their chief must have done it;"* and then added the remarks, "*therefore ask them, if they can speak*" – this cannot be counted as a lie since it is a statement in circumstances of rebuke in order to lead the opponent to accept the error in his views. And so the people had no way out but to confess by saying: "*Certainly you know that they do not speak."* That is when Ibrāhīm said: "*What! Do you then serve besides Allāh what brings you not any benfit at all, nor does it harm you? Fie on you and on what you serve besides Allāh…?"* (21:62-67)

If the narration intends to say that the three statements of Ibrāhīm (*'a.s.*) were real lies, then that would constitute an obvious denial of the Book of Almighty Allāh! We leave that to the understanding of a serious scholar by referring to the second section of this discussion on "Ibrāhīm's status with Allāh and his state of worship" that Allāh has praised him with the best of praises and appreciated him in the best way. How can the mind of a serious scholar aceept or apply the words

[50] See *al-Mīzān*, Eng. transl., vol.3, p.204. (*tr.*)

of the Almighty: *And mention Ibrãhīm in the Book; surely he was a truthful* (man), *a prophet* (19:41) on a lying person who easily lies when he finds himself in difficulties? How can Allãh shower those noble praises upon a person who does not care about Him in matters of right or truthfulness? Exalted is the personality of Allãh's friend from such thoughts!

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As for the reports narrated from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*'a.s.*), they affirm the substance of the story of the Torah but they exalt Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) beyond any attribution of lie and other actions that are not appropriate for his noble character.

The most comprehensive story of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) appears in *al-Kãfī:* [al-Kulaynī] from ʻAlī [ibn Ibrãhīm] from his father and a number of our companions from Sahl [ibn Ziyãd], altogether from [al-Ḥasan] ibn Maḥbūb from Ibrãhīm ibn [Abī] Zayd al-Karkhī who said: I heard Abū ʻAbdillãh [aṣ-Ṣãdiq] (*'a.s.*) saying:

"Verily Ibrãhīm was born in Kūthã-Rubã[51] and his father hailed from that place. The mother of Ibrãhīm and the mother of Lūṭ, Sãrah, and Waraqah (or Ruqayyah) were sisters who were daughters of Lãḥij; and Lãḥij was a prophet (*nabī*) but not a messenger (*rasūl*).

During his youth, Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was on the religion of *fitra* (the innate faith that Almighty Allãh has created within the people) till He guided him to His religion and chose him.

He married Sãrah, the daughter of Lãḥij, thus she was his materinal cousin. Sãrah owned many sheep, vast land and had good status [financially]. She gave all her possessions to Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) who managed it, improved it; and the sheep and the agricultural produce increased to the extent that there was no one in Kūthã-Rubã more financially stable than him.

When Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) smashed the idols of Namrūd, the latter ordered him to be arrested and tied, and prepared an enclousure [for firebond] which was filled with firewood and the fire was lit in it. Then he ordered Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) to be thrown into the fire to burn him. Then they waited for the fire to die out and then went to the enclourse – lo, they found Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) safe from the bounds.

When Namrūd was informed of this, he ordered to exile Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) from the town and to prevent him from taking his sheep and

[51] It was a suburb of Kūfah, and al-Jazarī [in *Mu'jamu 'l-buldãn,* vol.4, p.487] has written it as 'Kūthī.' (*Author's note*)

possessions. So, Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) protests against it and said: "If you take away my sheep and my wealth, then it is right upon you that you should return to me the time of my life that I spent in your town." They took the issue to the judge of Namrūd who pronounced the judgement that Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) should hand over what he has acquired in their town and that Namrūd's people should return to Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) whatever of his life he spent in their town. Namrūd was told of this judgement and he ordered them to leave him, his sheep and his wealth alone but to expel him [from the town]. He said: "If he says in your town, he will corrupt your religion and harm your gods." So, they expelled Ibrãhīm alongwith Lūṭ (peace be upon both) from their land towards Syria. So, Ibrãhīm left with Lūṭ (who did not part from him) and Sãrah. He said to them: *"Surely I am going to my Lord; He will guide me,"* [37:99] that is to al-Quds.

Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) took his sheep and wealth, and made a box and placed Sãrah into it and locked it tightly out of sense of honour of her. He travelled until he left the realm of Namrūd and reached the domain of an Egyptian known as ‘Arãrah. Then he passed by the tithe collector who approached him to tax his possessions. When the tithe collector reached to the box, he said to Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*): "Open this box so that we can tax what is in it." Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) said: "Estimate whatever you like of gold or silver that can be in it so that we pay its tithe but don't open the box." The tithe collector insisted to open it. Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) angrily opened the box. When Sãrah – who was known for her beauty – appeared to him, the tithe collector asked: "What is this woman to you?" Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) said: "She is my wife and my maternal cousin." The tithe collector asked: "What caused you to hide her in the box?" Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) said: "Out of sense of honour for her so that no one sees her." The tithe collector said: "I will not leave you till I inform the king about you and her."

The collector sent a messenger to the king with the information. The king sent a word to bring the box to him. When they came to take the box with them, Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) said: "I will not leave the box until my soul leaves my body." They informed the king about him who said: "Bring him as well as the box with him."

So, they brought him, the box and all his possessions to the king. The king asked for the box to be opened. Ibrãhīm said: "O the King, in it is my wife and my maternal cousin. I am willing to sacrifice all that I have instead of opening it." The king forced Ibrãhīm (*‘a.s.*) to open it. When he saw Sãrah, his conscience was not able to restrain his

foolishness from extending his hand towards her. Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) placed himself between him and her out of sense of honour and said: "O Allãh! Prevent his hand from my wife and maternal cousin." His hand froze, neither could he reach her nor take it back towards himself. The king said: "Is it your Lord who has done this to me?" He said: "Yes; my Lord has sense of honour and dislikes something forbidden; He is the One Who has come between you and the immoral act that you intended to do." The king said: "Ask your Lord to return to me my hand [as normal]; if He responds positively, I shall not touch her." Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*): "O my Lord! Restore to him his hand so that he may stay away from my wife." The Almighty Allãh restored his hand. The king then looked to her with his eyes, and then turned towards her with his hand. Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) placed himself before him out of sense of honour and prayed: "O Allãh! Prevent his hand from her." The king's hand became stiff [again] and couldn't reach her. The king said to Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*): "Indeed your Lord has sense of honour and so do you; ask your Lord to restore my hand; if He does so, I will not repeat [my mistake]." Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) said: "I will pray to Him provided you don't ask me again to pray if you do the mistake again." The king said to him: "Yes." Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) said: "O Allãh: If is he true, then restore his hand." And so his hand was restored.

When the king saw the sense of honour and the [Divine] sign concerning his hand, he gave importance to Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*), respected him, honoured him and extended protection to him. He said to him: "You are indeed secure from me as far as she is concerned or whatever that you possess; so go wherever you wish. But I have a request of you." Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) said: "What is it?" He said: "I want you to allow me to serve her [Sãrah] through a beautiful and intelligent Egyptian [slave] who will be her maid." Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) agreed to it. So, the king called the maid and gifted her to Sãrah; that maid was Hãjar, the mother of Ismãʿīl (*ʿa.s.*).

Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) continued his journey with all his possessions.

[While biding Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) farewell,] the king walked behind him out of respect and honour for him. So, the Exalted Allãh revealed to Ibrãhīm to stop and not walk ahead of a arrogant ruler, rather he should walk behind him as I have placed him ahead of you; so walk behind him out of respect and honour for him as he is in control and there must be a chief in the land, whether good or evil.

So, Ibrãhīm (*ʿa.s.*) stopped and said to the king: "Go forward as my Lord has revealed to me momentarily to respect and honour you,

and to place you ahead of myself and to walk behind you out of respect for you." The king said: "He revealed to you this?" Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) said: "Yes." The king said: "I testify that your Lord is Friendly, Forbearing and Generous, and you are indeed attracting me to your faith."

The king then bade farwell to him. Ibrãhīm travelled until he reached northern part of Shćmćt (Greater Syria) and left Lūṭ (*'a.s.*) in the southern part of Shãmãt.

When Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was delayed in getting a child, he said to Sãrah: "If you wish, you can sell Hãjar [to me] hopefully, Allãh can bless us with a child through her, and so he shall be an offspring for us." So Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) bought Hãjar from Sãrah, had relations with her, and thereafter Ismã'īl (*'a.s.*) was born.[52]

* * *

[E] [Who was the sacrifice: Ismã'īl or Isḥãq?]

Among the inconsistences of what has been mentioned in the Torah is the story of the sacrifice that the child to be sacrified was Isḥãq and not Ismã'īl. It is so while the story of settling Ismã'īl in the land of Tahãmah (i.e., Mecca), building the Sacred Ka'bah, instituting the ritual of pilgrimage which talks about suffering and hardships that he and his mother faced for the sake of Allãh, and the *ṭawãf* (circumambulation around the Ka'bah), the *sa'ī* (walking between the hills of Ṣafã and Marwah), and the ritual of sacrifice – all these confirm that the sacrificed one was Ismã'īl and not Isḥãq (*'a.s.*).

The Gospel of Barnabas says that Jesus rebuked the Jews for their statement that the sacrificed one was Isḥãq and not Ismã'īl. In its chapter 44 (verses 11-12), it says: "Then spake God, saying to Abraham: 'Take thy son, thy firstborn Ishmael, and come up the mountain to sacrifice him.' How is Isaac firstborn, if when Isaac was born Ishmael was seven years old?"

As for the Qur'ãn, its verses are almost clear that the sacrificed son was Ismã'īl (*'a.s.*). After describing the story of smashing the idols and him being put in the fire that Almighty had made cool and safe, He [*s.w.t.*] says:

And they desired to outwit him (Ibrãhīm) *but We made them the lowest. And he said, "Surely I go to my Lord: He will guide me. My Lord! Grant me* (a son from) *among the doers of good deeds." So We gave him the good news of a forbearing boy. And when he reached*

[52] *al-Kãfī,* vol.8, p.370-373; in its new edition produced and annotated by Dãru 'l-Ḥadīth (Qum), see vol.15, p.815-819 (*tr.*)

(the age of) *working with him, he said, "O my son! Surely I am seeing in dream that I am sacrificing you; consider then what you see." He said, "O my father! Do what you are commanded; if Allãh please, you will surely find me of the patient ones." So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead, We called out to him* (saying)*: "O Ibrãhīm! You have indeed proved the vision true; surely thus do We reward the doers of good. Most surely this is a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice; and We perpetuated* (praise) *to him among the later generations. Peace be upon Ibrãhīm; thus do We reward the doers of good; surely he was of Our believing servants. And We gave him the good news of Isḥãq, a prophet among the good ones. And We showered Our blessings on him and on Isḥãq; and of their offspring are the doers of good, and* (also) *those who are clearly unjust to their own soul,* (37:98-113).

Anyone who reflects on the holy verses has no choice but to accept that the sacrificed son whose birth was annunciated by the Glorified Allãh in His Words (*So We gave him the good news of a forbearing boy*), and that the other annunciation which He [*s.w.t.*] mentioned later on in that passage (*We gave him the good news of Isḥãq, a prophet among the good ones*) is different from the first good tiding. The latter good news was about Isḥãq (*'a.s.*) which is other than the one annunciated earlier and which is linked to the story of sacrifice.

The narrations in the Shī'ī sources from the Imãms of *Ahlu 'l-Bayt* (*'a.s.*) say that the sacrificed son was Ismã'īl (*'a.s.*) whereas the narrations from the Sunnī sources are different: some mention Ismã'īl (*'a.s.*) and others mention Isḥãq (*'a.s.*). However, you know that the first set of narrations are in accordance to the Qur'ãn.

* * *

aṭ-Ṭabarī, in his *at-Tãrīkh,* says: "The early scholars of the community of our Prophet Muḥammad (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*) differ on the son that Ibrãhīm was ordered to sacrifice. Some of them say that it was Isḥãq while the others say it was Ismã'īl. Indeed, both types of narrations have come from the Messenger of Allãh (*ṣ.a.'a.w.a.*). If there were an authentic narration among them, we don't need to refer to the other [but it is not so]. However, the proof from the Qur'ãn about validity of the narration which says that it was Isḥãq is more clear and obvious compared to the other version."

He goes on to say: "As for the proof from the Qur'ãn that we said earlier that the narration of Isḥãq is more correct, is based on

Almighty's statement informing us of His friend Ibrãhīm's prayer when he left from his people and migrated towards his Lord towards Greater Syria with his wife Sãrah. He said: *'Surely I go to my Lord: He will guide me. My Lord! Grant me* (a son from) *among the doers of good deeds.'* This was before he came to know Hãjar and before Ismã'īl's mother came to him. Our Exalted Lord then continues the narration about accepting Ibrãhīm's prayer and giving him the good news of a forbearing son, and then Ibrãhīm's dream that he is sacrificing his son when he reached the age of working.

"And we don't know of any good news given to Ibrãhīm in the Qur'ãn about a male child except Isḥãq; and that is His Word: *'And his wife was standing* (by)*, so she laughed; then We gave her the good news of Isḥãq and after Isḥãq of Ya'qūb'* (11:71). And His words: *So he conceived in his mind a fear on account of them. They said: 'Fear not.' And they gave him the good news of a boy possessing knowledge. Then his wife came up in great grief, and she struck her face and said: 'And old barren woman!'* (51:28-29).

"This is so because in all instances that the good news of a son to Ibrãhīm has been mentioned, God's good news to him is mentioned in relation to his wife Sãrah. Therefore, it follows that the good news in His word: *So We gave him the good news of a forbearing boy'* is similar to other instances in the Qur'ãn which talks about the good news given to him from his wife Sãrah.

"The objection that Allãh did not order the sacrifice of Isḥãq and that the good news from Allãh about his birth and birth of Ya'qūb came after him the sacrifice does not support the validity of what has been alleged otherwise. This is so because Almighty Allãh indeed ordered Ibrãhīm to sacrifice Isḥãq after Isḥãq reached the age of working; and it is possible that Ya'qūb was born before Isḥãq's father was ordered to sacrifice him.

"Similarly, there is no ground for the objection to allege otherwise on basis of the sheep's horn seen hanging in the Ka'bah since it is not improbable that it was carried from Greater Syria to the Ka'bah and was hung in it."

I wish I could know how aṭ-Ṭabarī was oblivious to the fact that when Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) prayed to his Lord for a son (when he migrated towards Greater Syria while Sãrah was with him and there was no news of Hãjar at that time), he prayed in the following words: *My Lord! Grant me* (a son from) *among the doers of good deeds* – he asked his Lord for a son but did not specify that he be granted through

Sãrah in order to link the good news that followed thereafter to the good news about Isḥãq. He just said: "My Lord! Grant me…" and did not say, "My Lord, grant me through Sãrah…"

As for aṭ-Ṭabari's statement that it is wellknown from other instances in the Qur'ãn that the good news was about Isḥãq and therefore the good news in this case should also be applied to him (and we shall discuss those instances later one) – this is itself a supposition without any proof. Rather the proof is against him because Almighty Allãh, in these verses, mentioned the good news of "a forbearing son" followed by the story of sacrifice, and then again mentioned the good news regarding Isḥãq. No one who reflects on the context of these verses would doubt that the subject of the second good news is other than that of the first good news. Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) was given the good news, before Isḥãq, of another son and that is none other than Ismã'īl. The narrators, the reporters and the historians are all unanimous that Ismã'īl was born to Ibrãhīm before Isḥãq.

* * *

[F] Among the examples of inconsistence is the obvious contrast in what the Torah says about Ismã'īl: it clearly says that Ismã'īl was born to Ibrãhīm before Isḥãq by almost fourteen years and [then it says] that Ibrãhīm banished him and his mother Hãjar after Isḥãq's birth when he laughed at Sãrah. Then it continues the story of their settlement in the desert and the running out of water that Hãjar was carrying and about Ismã'īl's thirst, and that the angel showed her the water. Any serious reader of this story of Ismã'īl can discern that he must have been a breast-feeding infant at that time. So, you should reflect and ponder over those verses [quoted earlier from The Book of Genesis, chap. 21, vrs. 14-21]. And this is in accordance to what has come in our narrations.

6. [The Torah Ignores Ismã'īl (*'a.s.*):]

The Holy Qur'ãn gives the best of attention to the story of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) himself as well as in relation to his two noble sons, Ismã'īl, Isḥãq and their descendants. This is contrary to what we see in the Torah which exclusively pays attention to Isḥãq and the Israelite people while it does not pay attention to Ismã'īl except to put him down and to degrade his status. Even the sparse mention that it has in this regard is not without inner inconsistences: it once mentions the Exalted Allãh address to Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) that 'verily your remaining

descendants will be from Isḥãq;' and then in another instance, it quotes His address that 'verily Allãh will bless your descendants from seed of Ismã'īl and make him a great nation.' On the one hand, it describes him as a wild ass constantly fighting the people and the people fighting him, who grew up as an archer, banished from his father's home, and on the other hand, it says that God is with him!

[G] Two Objections on the Qur'ãnic Narration of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*):

By pondering on what we said about the story of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) in the Qur'ãn, the response to two objections raised against the Holy Book will be clear.

First Objection: Some of the Orientalists have made an observation that the Qur'ãn, in its Meccan chapters, does not mention Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl (peace be upon them both) except in the way it mentions other prohets that they were on the monotheistic path, warning the peolpe [against polytheism] and calling them toward the Glorified Allãh. It does not mention the building of the Ka'bah and its connection to Ismã'īl, and that both [the father and the son] were calling the Arab people to the religion of nature and pure faith. However, the Medinan chapters such as "*al-Baqarah,*" "*al-Ḥajj*" and other chapters describes the father-son relationship of Ibrãhīm and Ismã'īl, and presents them as fathers of the Arab people to whom they introduced the religion of Islam and as builders of the Ka'bah, the Sacred House of Allãh.

"And the reason for this difference is that Muḥammad relied on the Jews in Mecca. But so when they constantly took an antagonistic stand against him [in Medina]; he had to find other supporters. This is when his shrewdness lead him to a new appraisal of Ibrãhīm as the father of Arabs – this is how he was able to distance himself from the Jews of his own time and establish his ties with 'Jewishness' of Ibrãhīm by considering him as the father of the Arabs, the founder of their religion (Islam), and the builder of their holy mosque in Mecca, a city which was preoccupation of his mind."[53]

Reply: The Orientalists have degraded themselves by attributing such a lie to the Noble Qur'ãn, a book which is universally known and is not hidden to any easterner or westerner. Any serious scholar will notice that the Holy Qur'ãn does not flatter any polytheist or Jew or

[53] This has been quoted by an-Najjãr in *Qiṣaṣu 'l-anbiyã'* [Beirut: Iḥyãu 't-Turãthi 'l-'Arabī, n.d.; p.73-74] from [Snouk] Hurgronje and [Arent Jan] Wensinck in [the Arabic version of] the *Encyclopedia of Islam* [vol.1, p.28]. (*Author's note*)

Christian neither in Meccan chapter nor in Medinan chapter; and its tone in rebuking the Jews and others does not change because of it Meccan or Medinan time of revelation.

However, since the Qur'ãnic verses were revealed gradually according to the events related to the religious call and since the challenges related to Jewish community occurred [in Medina] after the migration, obviously any remark about them and any explanation about their antagonistic attitude will be found in the verses that were revealed in numerous Medinan chapters. This is similar to the details of the religious laws that were revealed in Medina whenever the need was felt in relation to the events unfolding.

As for the claim of two Orientalists that any mention of the relationship of Ismã'īl to Ibrãhīm, the building of the Ka'bah and the establishment of the pure religion [of monotheism] is to be only found in the Medinan chapters, this is rejected by what the Almighty Allãh has said in s*ūrah* of "Ibrãhīm", a Meccan chapter, when He quotes the prayer of Ibrãhīm: *And when Ibrãhīm said, "My Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols…O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivated near Thy Sacred House, our Lord! That they may establish prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits; haply they may be grateful… Praise be to Allãh, Who gave me in old age Ismã'īl and Isḥãq; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer."* (14:35-39) Similar verses revealed in *sūrah* of "aṣ-Ṣãffãt" were quoted earlier about the story of the sacrifice.

As for the 'Jewishness' of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*), the Qur'ãn rejects that affiliation in the Word of the Almighty: *O people of the Book! Why do you dispute about Ibrãhīm, when the Torah and the Injīl were not revealed till after him? Do you not then undersand? ...Ibrãhīm was not a Jew or a Christian, but he was* (an) *upright* (man), *a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists.* (3:65-67)

Second Objection: The Sabaeans, the star-worshippers who have been mentioned in the Qur'ãn when Ibrãhīm confronted their gods by saying: *So when the night over-showed him, he saw a star; he said, "This is my Lord…*" lived in the city of Ḥarrãn to which Ibrãhīm migrated from Babylon or from Ur. This means that his argument with the star-worshippers took place a while after his argument with idol-worshippers, the smashing of the idols, and him being put into the fire. This does not correspond to what appears in the Qur'ãnic verses that the arguments with the idol-worshippers and the star-worshippers

happened altogether in two days within his arrival to his father and his people as discussed earlier.

Reply: This criticism is actually related to the interpretation that occurred in explanation of the relevant verses and not to the Qur'ãn itself.

Nonetheless, the critic has ignored the conclusions of history and the correct reflection in this matter.

As for the point of reflection: The religion of the Sabaeans was prevalent and famous in some major cities of the country those days, and so its presence in its other cities and the spread of its adherents in its various regions is not that a far-fetched idea.

[A Brief History of the Sabaeans:] As far as history is concerned, it talks about the spread of the Sabaean faith like the spread of idol-worshipping in Babylon and the presence of many temples built in the names of the stars, and their corresponding idols were placed therein. The history of Babylon and its surrounding area talks about the temple of the sun-god and the moon-god around 3200 BC; and the names of the sun-god and the moon-god can even be seen carved in the Code of Hammurabi that was close to the era of Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*).

We have earlier quoted from *al-Ãthãru 'l-bãqiyah* of Abū Rayḥãn al-Bīrūnī[54] that Yudhasaf appeared in India at the end of the first year of the reign of Tahmūrth; and he invented the [ancient] Persian script, and called the people to the Sabaean religion and a great many people followed him. It was also mentioned that the Pishdadian kings and some of the Kayanis who resided in Balkh held the sun, the moon, the planets, and the other elements in high esteem until Zoroaster appeared at the end of the thirtieth year of Peshtasav's reign.

al-Bīrūnī's discussion continued to the point where he said that the Sabaeans attributed the management of all affairs to the sky and the heavenly bodies, and believed that they are living things having the characteristics of speech, hearing and sight; they revered the light. One of their legacies is the dome above the niche in the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus: it was their prayer house, and at that time even the Greeks and the Romans followed the same religion. With the passage of time, it came under Jewish control and they turned it into a synagogue. Later the Christians took it over and converted it into a church. Then came the Muslims, and they made it into a mosque.

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[54] See *al-Mīzãn* [Eng. transl.], vol.1, p.278, under "A Historical Discussion" [2:62], (*tr.*)

He further said that the Sabaeans had numerous places of wroships, and their idols were named after various names of the sun, and were shaped with fixed patterns, as mentioned by Abū Ma‘shar al-Balkhī in his book, *Buyūtu 'l-‘ibãdãt.* For example, there was a temple of Ba‘lbak that housed the idol of the sun; a temple of Qirãn that was related to the moon and was built in its shape like a shawl worn over head and shoulders. And there was a village nearby, Salamsīn by name which is corruption of its original name, Ṣanam Sīn, the idol of the moon; likewise, there was another village called Tar‘ūz, that is, the gate of Venus.

They also claim that the Ka‘bah and its idols belonged to them and that the Meccan idol-worshippers were adhering to the Sabaean religion; and that Lãt (the [famous] idol) was named after Saturn and ‘Uzza (another [famous] idol) was named after Venus. This is the summary of Abū Rayḥãn al-Bīrūnī's statement from *al-Ãthãru 'l-bãqiyah*.

al-Mas‘ūdī says that the Sabaean religion perhaps evolved from idol-worshipping, and that it evolved from idol-worshipping perhaps because of the similarity in their origins. The idol-worshippers were worshipping the idols of the sun, the moon, the Venus and other stars in order to seek nearness to their gods and from them to the Supreme God.

al-Mas‘ūdī, in *Murūju 'dh-dhahab*, says that most of the people of India, China and others nations believed that Allãh, to Whom belong Might and Majesty, was a physical entity, and that angels have bodies with fixed dimensions and weights; they believed that Allãh, the Sublime and His angels where concealed by the sky. This prompted them to adopt images and idols of various forms and shapes that they worshipped as representation of God's image or the angels' image, and some were in image of human being, etc. They used to offer sacrifices to the idols and made vows regarding them as a way of seeking nearness to the Almighty.

They continued on this for some time until some wise men among them pointed out to them that the planets and the stars were closest visible entites to Almighty Allãh, and that they had characteristics of life and speech; and that the angels were the link between them and Allãh. They also believed that whatever happens on this earth is the reflection of the movement of the stars based on Allãh's command. So, they started venerating the stars and offering sacrifices to them so that they may benefit them. This continued for some time.

When they saw that the stars disappeared during the daytime and sometimes in the night also because of atmospheric obstructions, some

of their wise men suggested to them to make idols and statues in image of the stars – and so they ended up making idols and statues based on the number of the bigger and famous stars. Each group of them started venerating one of those stars and offering sacrifices to it that was different from what was offered by others. They believed that if they venerate the idols that they had carved, the seven celestial bodies will do for them whatever they wished. And they built an exclusive temple for each idol and named the temples by the names of those stars.

Some believe that the Sacred House [in Mecca] is the temple of the Saturn; and that this House has survived during the passing eras and venerated during most of its history because it is the temple of the Saturn; and the Saturn has protected it since longevity and stability is from its characteristics. They believed that anything releated to the Saturn will not perish. They also believed in other supersptitions whose narration here will tire the reader.

Anyhow, with the passage of time, they started worshipping the idols as a means of seeking nearness to God and abandoned the worship of the stars. They continued in this way until Yudhãsaf appeared in India. Yudhãsaf, an Indian, then left India for Sind and then went to Sajistãn and Zãbulistãn (these were ruled of Fīrūz bin Kabak), and then he went back to Sind and then to Kirmãn. Then he claimed to be a prophet and thought that he was God's messenger, and an intermediary between God and the people. He came to Persia at the beginning of the reign of Tahmūrth, the Persian king; some say that it was in reign of King Jam. Yudhãsaf is the first to start the Sabaean traditions as we mentioned earlier in this book.

Yudhãsaf called people towards asceticism in this world, and to concentrate on the higher spiritual realm that is the origin of the human souls and is considered the heart of this world. By proposing some specious arguments, he revived the worship and veneration of the idols among the people; and by using a variety of deceitful and dubious means, he justified idol-worshipping in their minds.

Those who are expert in this area and this era of history say that it was King Jim [of Pishdadian dynasty] who glorified the fire and called the people to venerate it. He used to say that the fire resembles the light of the Sun and the stars, and light was in his views better than darkness. He also believed that light has a variety of degrees. Those who came after him went their different ways in venerating whatever they thought would get them closer to the Almighty Allãh.

al-Masʿūdī then describes their major temples which were seven in number: The Kaʿbah was the temple of Saturn; a temple at the top of Mars mount near Isfahan; the temple of Mandustãn in India; the temple of Nawbahãr, near Balakh, named after the Moon; the temple of Ghamdãn, in Sanʿã' (Yemen), named after Venus; the temple of Kãwsãn, in Farghãnah, named after the Sun; a temple in highlands of China, named after the First Cause. And there were major temples in Greece, Rome and in the lands of the Slavs that were named after the stars such as the temple of Venus in Tunis.

Then al-Masʿūdī mentions that the Sabaeans of Ḥarrãn[55] had temples named after the substantial ideas and stars such as the temple of the First Cause, the temple of intellect, the temple of chain [of cause and effect], the temple of physical form, and the temple of soul – all these were build in a circular form. Then there was the temple of Saturn in hexoganal form, the temple of Jupiter in a triangle form, the temple of Mars in a square form, the temple of the Sun in a square form, the temple of Mercury in a triangle form, the temple of Venus which was internally in a triangle form and externally in a square form, and the temple of Moon in a octogon form. As we mentioned earlier, the Sabaean has codes and secrets that they conceal [from others]. This is the end of what al-Masʿūdī had said and it is similar to what ash-Shahristãnī has mentioned in his *al-Milal wa 'n-niḥal*.

* * *

From what we have described, the followings become clear:

Firstly, the polytheists who worshipped idols as their gods also worshipped images of stars, the sun and the moon, and that they had temples named after them. Therefore, it is possible that Ibrãhīm's argument against the stars, the moon and the sun was with the polytheists who believed in them also and not with the Sabaeans. It is also possible that it was aginst some Sabaeans in the city of Babylon or Ur or Kūthã-Rabã as mentioned in some narrations quoted earlier.

The story as narrated in the Holy Qur'ãn apparently shows that Ibrãhīm (*'a.s.*) argued against his father and his people, and patiently endured their aggression for the sake of Allãh until he separated himself from them and abandoned them by emigrating from their land towards the holy land without first diverting his journey to Ḥarrãn and then from there to the holy land. What the history books have said

[55] Since Sabaean faith was prevalent in Ḥarrãn, the Sabaeans were also known as Ḥarrãniyūn. (*Author's note*)

about his migration first to Ḥarrãn and then from Ḥarrãn to the holy land has no basis other than the Torah or some unreliable reports from the Isrã'ilite spittles – this is obvious to anyone who ponders upon *Tãrīkh* of aṭ-Ṭabarī and other sources. Moreover, some sources[56] mention that the Ḥarrãn described in the Torah was a city near Babylon between Euphrates and Khãbūr, and that it is other than the present-day Ḥarrãn which is near Damascus.

Yes, al-Mas'ūdī mentions that the remnant of the major Sabaeanes' temples during this time – that is year 332 AH – is a temple in the city of Ḥarrãn at the Bãbu 'r-Raqqah known as Maghlitiyã and that is known among them as the temple of Ãzar, the father of Ibrãhīm al-Khalīl (*'a.s.*). The Sabaeans have many stories on Ãzar and his son Ibrãhīm – of course; none of their statements has any validity.

Secondly, just as the polytheists were sometimes worshipping the sun, the moon and the stars, similarly the Sabaeanes erected places of worship and temples for worship of entites other than the stars, the moon and the sun. They even established temples for the First Cause, the intellect, the soul, etc., just like the idol-worshippers and sought nearness to them. Herodotus, in his *History*, describes the temple [of Jupiter] in Babylon that it consisted of eight towers raised upon one another and that the topmost tower had a spacious temple, and inside the temple stands a couch of unusual size, richly adorned, with a golden table by its side. There were no statue of any kind set up in the temple, nor was the temple occupied of nights by anyone except a single whom the people affirmed to be chosen by Allãh for service and companionship.[57]

Perhaps this temple [at the eighth tower of Babylon] was dedicated to the First Cause which is devoid of any shapes and images even though sometimes they would portray Him as per their own imaginations as mentioned by al-Mas'ūdī. It is confirmed that their philosophers deemed Almighty Allãh above the physical forms, shapes and material attributes, and described Him with appropriate qualities. These philosophers, however, were afraid of the masses in expressing their true belief about Allãh either because the people did not have the capacity to understand that aspect or because of political expediency and interest that compelled them to hide the truth.

* * * * *

[56] *Qãmusu 'l-kitãbi 'l-muqaddis* under "Ḥarrãn".

[57] The History of Herodotus, a Greek historian of *circa* 500 BC. [See *The History of Herodotus*, translated and edited by George Rawlinson, vol.1 (NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885) bk.1, ch.179.]

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APPENDIX 'A'
A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES
THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMÃMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by Means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh.	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh,	Rasūlu 'llāh, Nabiyyu 'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabī' I, in the Year of Elephant, (25/8/570 AD).	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH, (25/5/632 AD).	Natural	Holy Madīnah, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles.	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth year after the declaration of the Prophethood, (2/1/615 AD).	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH, (26/8/632 AD).	Injured	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 years before the declaration of the Prophethood, (25/5/600 AD).	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH, (27/1/661 AD).	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)`.
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar).	15th Ramaḍān. 3 AH, (1/3/625 AD).	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH, (6/3/670 AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Aṣghar).	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH, (8/1/626 AD).	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH, (10/10/680 AD).	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā.	Holy Karbalā' (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH, (6/1/659 AD).	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH, (31/10/712 or 20/10/713AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH, (16/12/676 AD).	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH, (28/1/733 AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH, (20/4/702 AD).	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH, (14/12/765 AD).	Poison	Holy Madīnah, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm.	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abdu 'ṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH, (28/10/746 AD).	25th Rajab, 183 AH, (1/9/799 AD).	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second).	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah,148 AH, (29/12/765 AD).	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH, (24/8/818 AD).	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs – Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second).	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH, (8/4/811 AD).	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH, (25/11/835 AD).	Poison	Holy Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third).	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH, (27/9/827 AD).	3rd Rajab, 254 AH, (28/6/868 AD).	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā) Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH, (3/12/846 AD).	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH, (1/1/874 AD).	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā', Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qāim, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghāib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH, (29/7/869 AD).	Still alive, but in occultation.	---	---

APPENDIX 'B'

List of the *sūrah*s (chapters) of the Holy Qur'ăn, their serial number, names, transliteration in Latin and place of their revelation.

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	*as-Sūrah*	Chapter	Place of Revelation
1.	الفَـاتِحَـة (فَاتِحَةُ الْكِتَاب)	*al-Fãtiḥah* (or, *Fãtiḥatu'l-Kitãb*)	The Opening (or, the Openning of the Scripture)	Makkah
2.	البَقَـرَة	*al-Baqarah*	The Cow	Madīnah
3.	آل عِـمْرَان	*Ãl 'Imrãn*	The House of 'Imrãn	"
4.	النِّسَاء	*an-Nisã'*	Women	"
5.	المَـائِـدَة	*al-Mãidah*	The Table	"
6.	الأنـعَام	*al-An'ãm*	Cattle	Makkah
7.	الأعْـرَاف	*al-A'rãf*	The Battlements	"
8.	الأنـفَـال	*al-Anfãl*	The Spoils	Madīnah
9.	التَّـوْبَـة	*at-Tawbah*	Repentance	"
10.	يُـونُس	*Yūnus*	Jonah	Makkah
11.	هُـود	*Hūd*	Hood	"
12.	يُـوسُف	*Yūsuf*	Joseph	"
13.	الـرَّعْـد	*ar-Ra'd*	Thunder	Madīnah
14.	إِبْـرَاهِـيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham	Makkah
15.	الحِجْـر	*al-Ḥijr*	El-Hijr	"
16.	النَّحْل	*an-Naḥl*	The Bee	"
17.	الإِسْـرَاء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey	"
18.	الـكَهْـف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave	"
19.	مَرْيَـم	*Maryam*	Mary	"
20.	طٰـهٰ	*Ṭã hã*	Ta ha	"

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	as-Sūrah	Chapter	Place of Revelation
21.	الأَنْبِيَآء	*al-Anbiyã'*	The Prophets	Makkah
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage	Madīnah
23.	المُؤمِنُون	*al-Mu'minūn*	The Believers	Makkah
24.	النُّور	*an-Nūr*	Light	Madīnah
25.	الفُرْقَان	*al-Furqãn*	Salvation	Makkah
26.	الشُّعَرَآء	*ash-Shu'arã'*	The Poets	"
27.	النَّمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ants	"
28.	القَصَصْ	*al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Story	"
29.	العَنْكَبُوت	*al-'Ankabūt*	The Spider	"
30.	الرُّوم	*ar-Rūm*	The Greeks	"
31.	لُقْمَان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman	"
32.	السَّجْدَة	*as-Sajdah*	Prostration	"
33.	الأَحْزَاب	*al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates	Madīnah
34.	سَبَاء	*Sabã'*	Sheba	Makkah
35.	فَاطِر (المَلَئِكَة)	*Fãṭir* (or, *al-Malãikah*)	The Originator (or, The Angels)	"
36.	يسٓ	Yã Sīn	Ya Sin	"
37.	الصَّافَات	*aṣ-Ṣãfãt*	The Rangers	"
38.	صٓ	*Ṣãd*	Sad	"
39.	الزُّمَرْ	*az-Zumar*	The Companies	"
40.	المُؤمِنْ	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer	"
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished	"
42.	الشُّورَىٰ	*ash-Shurã*	Counsel	"
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments	"
44.	الدُّخَان	*ad-Dukhãn*	Smoke	"
45.	الجَاثِيَة	*al-Jãthiyah*	Hobbling	"
46.	الأَحْقَاف	*al-Aḥqãf*	The Sand-Dunes	"

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	as-Sūrah	Chapter	Place of Revelation
47.	مُحَمَّد (ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad	Madīnah
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory	"
49.	الحُجُرَات	*al-Ḥujarāt*	Apartments	"
50.	قٓ	*Qāf*	Qaf	Makkah
51.	الذَّارِيَات	*adh-Dhāriyāt*	The Scatters	"
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭūr*	The Mount	"
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star	"
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon	"
55.	الرَّحْمٰن	*ar-Raḥmān*	The All-Merciful	Madīnah
56.	الوَاقِعَة	*al-Wāqi'ah*	The Terror	Makkah
57.	الحَدِيْد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron	Madīnah
58.	المُجَادَلَة	*al-Mujādalah*	The Disputer	"
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering	"
60.	المُمْتَحَنَة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman Tested	"
61.	الصَّفْ	*aṣ-Ṣaf*	The Ranks	"
62.	الجُمُعَة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation	"
63.	المُنَافِقُون	*al-Munāfiqūn*	The Hypocrites	"
64.	التَّغَابُن	*at-Taghābun*	Mutual Fraud	"
65.	الطَّلَاق	*aṭ-Ṭalāq*	Divorce	"
66.	التَّحْرِيم	*at-Taḥrīm*	The Forbidding	"
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom	Makkah
68.	القَلَم	*al-Qalam*	The Pen	"
69.	الحَاقَّة	*al-Ḥāqqah*	The Indubitable	"
70.	المَعَارِج	*al-Ma'ārij*	The Stairways	"
71.	نُوح	*Nūḥ*	Noah	"
72.	الجِنّ	*al-Jinn*	The Jinn	"
73.	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped	"

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	*as-Sūrah*	Chapter	Place of Revelation
74.	المُدَّثِّـر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded	Makkah
75.	القِـيَامَـة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection	"
76.	الإِنسَـان (اَلدَّهْـر)	*al-Insãn* (or, *ad-Dahr*)	Man (or, The Time)	Madīnah
77.	المُرْسَـلاَت	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones	Makkah
78.	النَّـبَاءِ	*an-Nabã'*	The Tiding	"
79.	النَّـازِعَات	*an-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers	"
80.	عَـبَسَ	*'Abasa*	He Frowned	"
81.	التَّـكْوِيـر	*at-Takwīr*	The Darkening	"
82.	الإِنفطَـار	*al-Infiṭār*	The Splitting	"
83.	المُطَفِّـفِـين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters	"
84.	الإِنشِقَـاق	*al-Inshiqãq*	The Rending	"
85.	البُـرُوج	*al-Burūj*	The Constellation	"
86.	الطَّـارِق	*aṭ-Ṭãriq*	The Night-Star	"
87.	الأَعْلَى	*al-A'lã*	The Most High	"
88.	الغَـاشِيَـة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper	"
89.	الفَجْـر	*al-Fajr*	The Dawn	"
90.	البَـلَد	*al-Balad*	The Land	"
91.	الشَّـمْس	*ash-Shams*	The Sun	"
92.	الَّيْـل	*al-Layl*	The Night	"
93.	الضُّـحَى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon	"
94.	الإِنشِـرَاح	*al-Inshirãḥ*	The Expanding	"
95.	التِّـين	*at-Tīn*	The Fig	"
96.	العَـلَق	*al-'Alaq*	The Blood-Clot	"
97.	القَـدْر	*al-Qadr*	Power	"
98.	البَـيِّنَـة	*al-Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign	Madīnah
99.	الزِّلْـزَال	*az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake	"

Serial No.	السُّوَرة	*as-Sūrah*	Chapter	Place of Revelation
100.	العَـادِيات	*al-'Ãdiyãt*	The Chargers	Makkah
101.	القَـارِعَـة	*al-Qãri'ah*	The Clatterer	"
102.	التَّـكَاثُـر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry	"
103.	العَصْـر	*al-'Aṣr*	Afternoon	"
104.	الهُـمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter	"
105.	الفِـيْل	*al-Fīl*	The Elephant	"
106.	قُـرَيْـش	*Quraysh*	Koraish	"
107.	المَـاعُـون	*al-Mã'ūn*	Charity	"
108.	الـكَوْثَـر	*al-Kawthar*	Abundance	"
109.	الـكَافِـرُون	*al-Kãfirūn*	The Unbelievers	"
110.	النَّصْـر	*an-Naṣr*	Help	Madīnah
111.	تَبَّـتْ (لَهَـبْ)	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab*)	Perish (or, Flame)	Makkah
112.	الإِخْـلاَص (التَّوحِيْـد)	*al-Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd*)	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)	"
113.	الفَـلَق	*al-Falaq*	Daybreak	"
114.	النَّـاس	*an-Nãs*	Men	"